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Beyond the infodemic: a conceptual framework for understanding disinfodemic, misinfodemic, and malinfodemic in the contemporary information ecosystem

Além da infodemia: uma proposta conceitual para compreender a desinfodemia, a misinfodemia e a malinfodemia no ecossistema informacional contemporâneo

Más allá de la infodemia: una propuesta conceptual para comprender la desinfodemia, la misinfodemia y la malinfodemia en el ecosistema informacional contemporáneo

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Abstract:
This article proposes a theoretical expansion of informational disorder studies through an ecological perspective of informational circulation. It argues that classical approaches, although essential for classifying false, manipulative, or decontextualized content, offer limited explanations regarding the structural conditions that enable their propagation in digital environments characterized by data overabundance. Based on a bibliographic review and conceptual analysis, the study discusses infodemic as an ecological condition of contemporary circulation and proposes the concepts of misinfodemic, disinfodemic, and malinfodemic as analytical categories designed to explain different dynamics of informational disorder propagation. The model integrates contributions from Communication and Information Science, incorporating elements related to digital platforms, algorithmic mediation, attention economy, and cognitive saturation. It concludes that understanding informational disorder requires shifting the analytical focus from content itself to the ecological conditions of its circulation.

Keywords:
Informational disorder; Infodemic; Ecology of informational circulation.

Resumo:
Este artigo propõe uma ampliação teórica dos estudos sobre desordem informacional a partir de uma perspectiva ecológica da circulação informacional. Argumenta-se que as abordagens clássicas, embora fundamentais para classificar conteúdos falsos, manipulativos ou descontextualizados, oferecem explicações limitadas sobre as condições estruturais que favorecem sua propagação em ambientes digitais marcados pela superabundância de dados. Com base em revisão bibliográfica e análise conceitual, o estudo discute a infodemia como condição ecológica da circulação contemporânea e propõe os conceitos de misinfodemia, desinfodemia e malinfodemia como categorias analíticas destinadas a compreender diferentes dinâmicas de propagação da desordem informacional. O modelo desenvolvido articula contribuições da Comunicação e da Ciência da Informação, incorporando elementos relacionados às plataformas digitais, à mediação algorítmica, à economia da atenção e à saturação cognitiva. Conclui-se que a compreensão da desordem informacional exige deslocar o foco analítico do conteúdo para as condições ecológicas de sua circulação.

Palavras-chave:
Desordem informacional; Infodemia; Ecologia da circulação informacional.

Resumen:
Este artículo propone una ampliación teórica de los estudios sobre el desorden de la información desde una perspectiva ecológica de la circulación de la información. Se argumenta que los enfoques clásicos, aunque fundamentales para clasificar contenidos falsos, manipulativos o

descontextualizados, ofrecen explicaciones limitadas sobre las condiciones estructurales que favorecen su propagación en entornos digitales marcados por una sobreabundancia de datos. A partir de una revisión bibliográfica y un análisis conceptual, el estudio discute infodemia como condición ecológica de la circulación contemporánea y propone los conceptos de misinfodemia, desinfodemia y malinfodemia como categorías analíticas diseñadas para comprender diferentes dinámicas de propagación del desorden informativo. El modelo desarrollado articula aportes de las Ciencias de la Comunicación y la Información, incorporando elementos relacionados con las plataformas digitales, la mediación algorítmica, la economía de la atención y la saturación cognitiva. Se concluye que comprender el desorden de la información requiere desplazar el enfoque analítico del contenido a las condiciones ecológicas de su circulación.

Palabras clave:
Desorden informativo; infodemia; Ecología de la circulación de la información.

1. Introduction

The consolidation of digital platforms, network communication and the algorithmic circulation of content has profoundly transformed the dynamics of production, circulation and consumption of information. If, during much of modernity, the main social challenge consisted of expanding access to knowledge, the contemporary scenario is characterized by an opposite reality: information overabundance. The expansion of digital networks, associated with permanent connectivity, the attention economy and automated content recommendation mechanisms, has produced a communication environment marked by the continuous and accelerated circulation of data, in which the ability to select, verify and contextualize information becomes progressively more complex.

In this context, the circulation of information no longer represents just a process of transmitting content and becomes a structural problem of digital societies. The speed of information flows, the permanent competition for visibility, the logic of engagement and the mediation exercised by algorithms significantly alter the conditions of knowledge production, favoring the fragmentation of attention, cognitive overload and the reduction of time allocated to critical reflection. More than a simple quantitative increase in available information, we observe the constitution of a communication ecosystem characterized by permanent saturation of stimuli, in which contents of different natures simultaneously compete for the attention of individuals.

It was in this scenario that the concept of infodemic gained centrality, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, being widely used to designate the excess of information that makes it difficult to identify reliable and scientifically verifiable content. Although this notion has contributed significantly to understanding the impacts of information overabundance on

decision-making processes and public health, its use has remained predominantly associated with excess information, offering limited explanations about the different dynamics that structure the contemporary circulation of content in digital environments.

At the same time, the categories misinformation, disinformation and malinformation were consolidated in international literature, used to distinguish false content shared without the intention of causing harm, deliberately false content produced to manipulate and true information used strategically to cause social, political or symbolic damage. These categories represent an important advance in understanding information disorder by allowing us to differentiate the nature and intentionality of content. However, they remain focused on the classification of informational objects, offering less attention to the ecological conditions that favor their massive circulation in environments characterized by informational saturation.

Therefore, we start from the understanding that the contemporary information crisis cannot be explained exclusively by excess information nor solely by the typology of disinformative content. The communicational logic of digital platforms produces a structural environment in which different phenomena coexist, interact and mutually enhance their effects. The overabundance of information reduces individuals' cognitive processing capacity and creates favorable conditions for misleading, manipulative or strategically decontextualized content to circulate with greater speed, less possibility of verification and greater reach.

Given this scenario, this article seeks to answer the following research question: to what extent are the concept of infodemic and the classic categories of information disorder sufficient to explain the contemporary dynamics of content circulation in digital environments marked by information saturation? As a response to this problem, an expansion of the theoretical model of information disorder is proposed through the formulation of the concepts of misinfodemic, disinfodemic and malinfodemic. It is argued that such concepts do not constitute mere terminological reformulations of categories already consolidated in the literature, but analytical categories designed to understand the epidemic dynamics of circulation of these contents in an informational environment characterized by an overabundance of data, communicational acceleration and the algorithmic mediation of digital platforms.

2. From informational disorder to the ecology of circulation

Discussions about information disorder have intensified in recent decades due to the expansion of digital platforms and growing concern about the impacts of the circulation of false, misleading or manipulative content on social, political and economic life. Although phenomena

of this nature predate the internet, contemporary communication infrastructure has significantly altered the speed, scale and scope of information circulation, giving new dimensions to the processes of production, sharing and consumption of content.

Among the main contributions to understanding this scenario, the model proposed by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) stands out, which systematized information disorder based on the distinction between misinformation, disinformation and malinformation. According to the authors, misinformation corresponds to the circulation of false or inaccurate information shared without deliberate intention to cause harm; disinformation refers to the intentional production and dissemination of false content with the aim of manipulating individuals or groups; while malinformation consists of the strategic use of true information to cause social, political, moral or reputational damage (Wardle; Derakhshan, 2017). This typology has become one of the main international references for studies on disinformation, offering relevant analytical criteria to distinguish both the nature of content and the intentionality involved in its circulation.

At the same time, the World Health Organization (WHO) consolidated the concept of infodemic, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, by defining the phenomenon as an excess of information — correct or incorrect — that makes it difficult for the population to access reliable and scientifically verifiable content (WHO, 2021). The dissemination of this concept represented an important advance in shifting part of the academic attention from the falsity of content to the consequences produced by an overabundance of information. In this context, the concern no longer focuses exclusively on the existence of disinformation and also includes the effects resulting from information saturation on the processes of decision-making, knowledge production and public opinion formation.

However, the transformations that have occurred in the contemporary communication environment suggest that the circulation of information cannot be understood solely by analyzing the content or the volume of information available. The economic model of digital platforms is based on permanently capturing users' attention, converting time spent, engagement and interaction into economic assets. As Han (2022) observes, contemporary society is characterized by a permanent overload of stimuli, in which excess information progressively reduces individuals' contemplative and reflective capacity. In this environment, attention becomes a scarce resource continually disputed by different social, economic and political actors.

This dynamic is intensified by the functioning of recommendation algorithms, responsible for selecting, ordering and distributing content according to criteria predominantly related to engagement probabilities. Instead of operating as neutral mechanisms for organizing

information, algorithmic systems actively participate in defining what gains visibility on digital platforms, favoring content capable of generating emotional reactions, shares and a high volume of interactions. As a consequence, the circulation of information becomes conditioned not only by criteria of public relevance, but also by commercial logics associated with the attention economy.

In this scenario, the permanent excess of stimuli produces relevant cognitive effects and the acceleration of information flows, associated with the continuous multiplication of competing content, reduces the time available for verification, contextualization and critical reflection, favoring forms of quick and superficial consumption of information. Cognitive saturation thus becomes a structural characteristic of the contemporary digital environment, compromising the ability of individuals to distinguish, interpret and critically evaluate the content that circulates on platforms.

Although the contributions of Wardle and Derakhshan (2017) and the World Health Organization (2021) have been fundamental in consolidating the debate on information disorder and infodemic, it is observed that both remain predominantly focused on the classification of content or the characterization of excess information. Less attention has been devoted to the structural conditions that enable, enhance and sustain the massive circulation of this content in digital environments mediated by platforms, algorithms and permanent disputes for attention. In other words, the literature consistently explains what is circulating and what the characteristics of the content are, but it still offers limited answers about the communication ecology that favors its propagation.

It is precisely in this gap that this discussion falls. Before understanding the different types of content that make up information disorder, it is necessary to understand the communication environment in which these contents circulate, compete for visibility and produce social effects. From this perspective, it is proposed to partially shift the focus of content analysis to the ecological conditions of information circulation, recognizing that the architecture of digital platforms, the attention economy, algorithmic mediation and cognitive saturation constitute central elements for understanding the contemporary information crisis.

3. The limits of current literature: from content classification to circulation dynamics

The advances produced by the literature on information disorder, especially based on the typology proposed by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), represent a fundamental contribution to understanding the different types of content that circulate in digital environments. By

distinguishing misinformation, disinformation and malinformation, these authors established an analytical model capable of differentiating the nature of content and the intentionality present in their production and sharing processes. Likewise, the concept of infodemic, disseminated by the World Health Organization, expanded the debate by highlighting that excess information constitutes, in itself, a problem for decision-making and public communication.

However, although these approaches have contributed significantly to the consolidation of the field, it is argued that they remain concentrated on two main dimensions: the classification of content and the characterization of informational excess. In other words, the literature accurately describes what circulates in digital environments and what the characteristics of different types of content are, but pays less attention to the structural conditions that enable its circulation, amplification and permanence in information ecosystems marked by an overabundance of data.

This distinction is relevant because the circulation of information does not depend exclusively on the properties of the content. On digital platforms, true, false, inaccurate or decontextualized content simultaneously compete for users' attention in environments mediated by recommendation algorithms, engagement metrics and accelerated communication flows. Under these conditions, the ability of a content to achieve wide dissemination does not only arise from its veracity or falsity, but also from the characteristics of the communication environment in which it is inserted.

Therefore, understanding information disorder requires partially shifting the analytical focus from content to circulation. The central question is no longer just identifying whether certain information is true, false or used maliciously and starts to consider how different content behaves when inserted in an environment characterized by informational saturation, attention economy and algorithmic mediation. In contexts of high information density, the mechanisms of propagation, visibility and consumption become as relevant as the nature of the messages themselves.

This shift does not imply denying the relevance of the categories already consolidated in the literature, but recognizing their explanatory limits in the face of the transformations promoted by digital platforms. Wardle and Derakhshan's typology remains essential for understanding the nature of information disorder, but it was designed to distinguish modalities of content, and not to explain the systemic dynamics of their circulation in environments characterized by permanent excess of information. Likewise, the concept of infodemic adequately describes informational overabundance, but does not differentiate the different

processes through which mistaken, deliberately false or strategically decontextualized content takes advantage of the conditions produced by this environment to expand its dissemination.

Thus, an analytical gap is identified between two complementary perspectives. On the one hand, there are studies dedicated to the classification of informational content; on the other, the approaches aimed at characterizing infodemic as a phenomenon of excess information. Between these two dimensions, the understanding of the ecology of information circulation remains little explored, that is, the structural conditions that favor, enhance and hide different processes of content propagation in digital environments.

It is therefore assumed that the contemporary information crisis does not only arise from the existence of false information or the excessive volume of data available, but from the interaction between these elements in a communication environment deeply conditioned by digital platforms, the attention economy and the permanent acceleration of information flows. Understanding this interaction demands an analytical model capable of articulating the nature of content with the ecological conditions of its circulation, shifting the analysis from isolated information to the ecosystem in which it is produced, shared and consumed.

It is from this gap that the theoretical proposal presented in the following section is developed. Instead of replacing the classic categories of information disorder, we seek to expand them, incorporating an ecological perspective of circulation capable of explaining how different forms of information behave in environments characterized by informational saturation and the algorithmic mediation of digital platforms.

4. The conceptual proposal: from infodemic to the epidemic dynamics of information circulation

The literature on information disorder has consolidated important categories to distinguish the nature and intentionality of content that circulates in digital environments. However, as discussed in the previous section, there remains a gap in understanding the ecological conditions that favor its circulation in contexts marked by an overabundance of information. Based on this finding, we propose an expansion of the analytical model of information disorder through an ecological approach to circulation, capable of articulating the information environment with the different dynamics of content propagation.

From this perspective, infodemic is not only understood as an excess of information, but as a structural condition of the contemporary communication environment. It is characterized by the continuous production, circulation and consumption of large volumes of data on digital

platforms, a phenomenon intensified by algorithmic mediation, the attention economy and the acceleration of communication flows. The main effect of infodemic consists of the cognitive saturation of individuals, reducing the time available for verification, contextualization and critical reflection. Their intention is not to deliberately manipulate information; it is a systemic condition produced by the very functioning of the contemporary digital ecosystem.

In this environment of information saturation, different circulation processes begin to operate differently. The first of them is called misinfodemic. Unlike misinformation, which describes false content shared without the intention of causing harm, in this sense misinfodemic refers to the epidemic spread of incorrect information resulting from the structural conditions of communication acceleration. Its central mechanism is the speed of information circulation. The pressure for real-time updates, competition between media outlets, content producers and digital influencers, as well as the permanent need for visibility on platforms, which reduces the time spent on investigating, checking and contextualizing information. As a result, inaccurate or misleading content begins to circulate massively, not due to a deliberate project of manipulation, but as a consequence of the dynamics of the contemporary communication ecosystem. misinfodemic, therefore, depends on infodemic to exist, finding in it structural conditions — excess information, acceleration of flows and competition for attention — the environment that favors its occurrence.

disinfodemic, in turn, corresponds to the epidemic circulation of deliberately false content produced with the aim of manipulating individuals, social groups or institutions. Its fundamental mechanism is not error, but the intentional fabrication of falsehood. Unlike misinfodemic, disinfodemic presupposes planning, strategy and political, economic, ideological or symbolic purpose. Your relationship with infodemic is not one of belonging, but of structural use. In environments marked by excess information, the high density of content reduces the ability to track and verify, creating favorable conditions for fraudulent narratives to camouflage themselves among legitimate information. infodemic thus functions as an ecological environment that favors the circulation of disinfodemic, increasing its reach and making it difficult for users to identify. As it derives from the concept of disinformation Wardle says that: "Disinformation is content that is intentionally false and designed to cause harm. It is motivated by three factors: making money; exerting political influence, whether foreign or domestic; or simply causing problems for the sake of it." (Wardle, 2017, our translation).

malinfodemic refers to the epidemic circulation of true information used strategically to produce social, political, moral or reputational damage. While disinfodemic operates through the fabrication of lies, malinfodemic operates through the manipulation of the truth. Its

mechanism consists of the decontextualization of facts, the selective disclosure of information, the exposure of private content or the strategic reuse of originally true data in contexts different from those in which they were produced. As with disinfodemic, its intention is deliberately manipulative. infodemic does not produce malinfodemic, but offers the communicational conditions that favor its circulation, reducing the ability of individuals to critically contextualize the content consumed.

The distinction between these phenomena allows us to understand that the contemporary information crisis cannot be explained exclusively by the nature of the content nor simply by the excess of information. infodemic constitutes a structural condition of the contemporary informational environment, while misinfodemic, disinfodemic and malinfodemic correspond to different circulation dynamics that develop in this same ecosystem, each mobilizing specific mechanisms, intentions and forms of propagation. Instead of establishing a hierarchical relationship between these concepts, it is proposed to understand them as distinct, but ecologically related, phenomena, whose interaction contributes to intensifying informational disorder in digital societies.

This proposal expands the classic model of information disorder by shifting part of the content analysis to its circulation dynamics. While the categories of misinformation, disinformation and malinformation remain fundamental to identifying the nature and intentionality of information, the concepts proposed here seek to explain how these different forms of content behave when inserted in an environment of permanent information saturation, characteristic of contemporary digital platforms.

5. Synthesizing the proposal: ecological model of the circulation of information disorder

synthesizing the theoretical proposal developed in this article by representing informational disorder from an ecological perspective of circulation. Unlike models focused exclusively on the classification of content, the proposal presented here is based on the understanding that the circulation of information occurs in a communication environment deeply conditioned by the architecture of digital platforms, algorithmic mediation, the economy of attention and the overabundance of data. Regarding algorithmic dynamics Pariser (2011, p. 9) explains that: “The internet shows us what it thinks we want to see, but not necessarily what we need to see.”

In this context, infodemic is understood as a structural condition of this environment. Its main effect consists of producing a scenario of information saturation, in which the high

density of content reduces individuals' ability to select, contextualize and critically evaluate information. infodemic, therefore, does not correspond to a specific type of information disorder, but to the communicational environment that conditions the contemporary circulation of information. One of the fundamental dynamics for understanding this phenomenon is precisely that of data as products, where the important thing is to sell information, even if it is misinformation.

In this way, this audience and business model turns networks into ecosystems where individuals are mostly exposed to information compatible with their previous beliefs, considerably increasing cognitive biases and vulnerability to misinformation. According to Kahneman (2011), this behavior is linked to "System 1" of the human mind, which is fast, intuitive and emotional, tending to confirm one's own beliefs rather than questioning them. At the same time, the content distributed by algorithms shapes users to reject data from professional sources and any type of contradiction.

Understanding the landscape of disinformation in digital media is crucial to analyzing this ecosystem, which masks disinformation under the label of “content” — a euphemism for what it actually represents on these platforms: a “product”. Realizing that this false information is produced without commitment to the truth, benefiting a specific group of actors, allows us to see artificial intelligence as a cog in this problem. This dynamic reflects the logic of Rêgo (2025, p. 210), for whom algorithms operate strictly as business models: “Algorithmic structures that, permeated by the opacity of digital platforms and guided by their business models, enhance disinformation and practices of polarization and misunderstanding.”

In this context, disinformation is part of a political economy of information, structured in a circuit of production, circulation and monetization that involves multiple agents. Far from being a mere anomaly in the system, it functions as a central element in the economic dynamics of digital platforms. Content producers and technology companies operate in an ecosystem where user attention is converted into economic value, favoring publications with high engagement potential, regardless of their veracity. This logic is similar to that of traditional radio and television audiences: the longer the user remains connected, the greater their exposure to advertising. Shoshana Zuboff argues that algorithmic logic plays a central role in this process: “Surveillance capitalism unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data.” (Zuboff, 2019, p. 8, our translation)

It is in this environment that another contemporary technology, artificial intelligence, acquires particular relevance. AI-based tools, especially those aimed at generative creation, allow you to design automated texts, images, audio and videos with a high degree of realism.

This technical capacity significantly reduces operational costs and exponentially increases the volume of publications produced in a short space of time. As Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (2014, p. 9) point out, contemporary digital technologies are characterized by scalability and replication potential, attributes intensified by intelligent systems: “Digital technologies can replicate valuable ideas, insights and innovations at a very low cost.” (Brynjolfsson; McAfee, 2014, p. 9 our translation)

Muniz Sodré (2006) argues that contemporary media increasingly operate through “sensitive strategies”, mobilizing affect, emotion and the sensory as central resources of persuasion and control. This perspective allows us to understand that the phenomena of disinfodemic and malinfodemic are not only based on factual falsehood, but on the strategic exploitation of the affective dimension of individuals within the scope of the platforms' attention economy.

It is in this environment that three distinct circulation dynamics manifest themselves. misinfodemic results from the acceleration of information flows and the pressure for speed, favoring the massive spread of incorrect information without the deliberate intention of causing harm. disinfodemic corresponds to the systematic circulation of deliberately false content, produced with manipulative objectives. malinfodemic, in turn, is characterized by the strategic use of true information, however decontextualized or selectively mobilized to produce social, political, moral or reputational damage.

Although they share the same communicational environment, these phenomena have different mechanisms and intentions. The relationship between them is also not one of hierarchical dependence. infodemic does not directly generate disinfodemic nor malinfodemic. What is proposed is that the informational saturation produced by infodemic creates ecological conditions that favor the camouflage, amplification and circulation of these phenomena. In the same way, misinfodemic emerges from the structural characteristics of this environment, especially the communicational acceleration and competitive logic that guides the circulation of content on digital platforms.

The ecological model proposed here shifts the analytical focus from the nature of content to the structural conditions of its circulation. Instead of understanding information disorder simply as a problem of veracity or falsity of information, it is argued that it should be analyzed as a result of the interaction between content, platform architecture and communication dynamics that characterize the contemporary digital ecosystem.

6. Discussion

The theoretical proposal presented in this article partially shifts the analytical axis of informational disorder from the classification of content to the understanding of the ecological conditions that structure its circulation. This shift allows for the establishment of an interdisciplinary dialogue between Communication and Information Science, areas that share an interest in informational phenomena, but traditionally approach them from different objects and perspectives. While Communication devotes greater attention to media processes, technological mediations and the dynamics of circulation of meanings, Information Science focuses on the production, organization, retrieval, mediation and use of information. The ecological perspective proposed in this work seeks to bring these fields closer by understanding that the circulation of information constitutes a phenomenon that is simultaneously communicational, technological, cognitive and informational.

This approach becomes particularly relevant in the context of digital platforms. Unlike traditional means of communication, platforms not only perform the function of hosting content, but act as active agents in organizing information circulation. Using algorithmic recommendation systems, these environments select, prioritize and amplify content according to criteria related to engagement, length of stay and probability of user interaction. As a consequence, the circulation of information is no longer determined exclusively by public relevance or social interest and becomes strongly conditioned by computational and economic logics that privilege content capable of capturing attention.

In this scenario, the attention economy plays a central role in understanding the dynamics of information disorder. In an environment characterized by an abundance of data, human attention becomes a scarce resource and is continually contested by platforms, media outlets, content creators, political agents and economic organizations. Excessive informational stimuli reduces the time available for critical analysis, favoring quick and superficial forms of consumption. infodemic, understood in this article as a structural condition of contemporary circulation, intensifies this process by producing an environment of cognitive saturation that makes it difficult to contextualize and verify information.

The increasing incorporation of artificial intelligence systems further increases this complexity. Generative AI tools, automated text production systems, speech synthesizers, image generators and recommendation algorithms significantly increase the capacity for large-scale content production and dissemination. This transformation does not imply that artificial intelligence is, in itself, responsible for informational disorder. However, by reducing

production costs, accelerating the circulation of content and enhancing algorithmic personalization mechanisms, these technologies expand the structural conditions that favor the spread of different forms of information disorder in the digital ecosystem.

In the field of journalism, the conceptual proposal also offers new interpretative possibilities. The transformations brought about by real-time communication and competition for audiences have profoundly altered the production routines of newsrooms. The pressure for speed, exclusivity and continuous updating often reduces the time allocated to investigating, checking and contextualizing information. In this context, the propagation of incorrect content does not always result from manipulative intentions, but from the structural conditions imposed by the logic of digital circulation. The category of misinfodemic seeks precisely to explain this phenomenon by understanding that the massive dissemination of errors can result from the acceleration of communication flows and the permanent competition for attention, therefore distinguishing itself from the deliberate strategies present in disinfodemic and malinfodemic.

At the same time, the proposed differentiation between disinfodemic and malinfodemic has relevant implications for the development of public policies and strategies to combat information disorder. Although both phenomena have a deliberately manipulative purpose, their operating mechanisms are different. disinfodemic is based on the strategic manufacture and circulation of false content, requiring actions aimed at identifying coordinated campaigns, monitoring artificial dissemination networks and strengthening transparency mechanisms on digital platforms. malinfodemic operates through the instrumentalization of true information, mobilizing processes of decontextualization, selective exposure and strategic framing. Coping with it, therefore, goes beyond simple factual verification and demands reflections on information ethics, protection of personal data, privacy, right to context and responsibility in the circulation of authentic content.

Likewise, misinfodemic demands specific strategies. As its origin is related to the structural conditions of production and circulation of information, its confrontation depends less on content removal mechanisms and more on the strengthening of verification routines, media and information education, the valorization of journalistic investigation and the review of communication models excessively oriented by speed and engagement. Recognizing this distinction helps to avoid homogeneous responses to phenomena that have different causes, mechanisms and objectives.

The implications of the proposal presented in this article therefore go beyond the formulation of new concepts. The ecological model developed here seeks to offer an analytical structure capable of understanding the interaction between the communication environment,

platform architecture, algorithmic mediation and different dynamics of information circulation. By shifting part of the content analysis to the structural conditions of its propagation, it is argued that information disorder must be understood as a systemic phenomenon, produced by the interaction between digital technologies, attention economy, communication practices and individuals' information behavior.

From this perspective, the main contribution of this work is to propose that coping with information disorder cannot be based on universal strategies. Each circulation dynamic mobilizes its own mechanisms, produces different effects and requires specific responses from digital platforms, journalism, public policies and media and information education programs. By articulating concepts from Communication and Information Science in an ecological perspective of circulation, the model proposed here expands the explanatory potential of classical approaches in literature and offers new possibilities for future research on digital platforms, artificial intelligence, information governance and contemporary communication ecosystems.

Final considerations

The increasing complexity of digital ecosystems poses new challenges to understanding information disorder. The intensification of data circulation, the algorithmic mediation of platforms, the attention economy and the permanent acceleration of communication flows have profoundly transformed the conditions of production, circulation and appropriation of information, requiring analytical models capable of understanding not only the nature of content, but also the structural conditions that favor its propagation.

Based on this finding, this article sought to demonstrate that the classic approaches to information disorder and infodemic remain fundamental to understanding the phenomenon, but present limitations when confronted with the communication dynamics of digital platforms. While the consolidated literature offers consistent instruments for classifying content and characterizing information excess, it was argued that there is still room to expand the understanding of the relationships between the communication environment, information circulation and the production of information disorder.

In this sense, the main contribution of this work consists in proposing an ecological perspective on information circulation, understanding that the processes of information disorder cannot be analyzed separately from the structural conditions produced by the contemporary digital environment. More than a terminological exercise, the proposal presented seeks to offer

an analytical model that articulates technological infrastructure, platform architecture, algorithmic mediation, informational behavior and circulation dynamics in the same interpretative structure.

The implications of this perspective go beyond the theoretical plane. By recognizing that different circulation dynamics operate through different mechanisms, it becomes possible to understand that public policies, content moderation strategies, media and information education initiatives and journalistic practices demand specific approaches to face the different processes that make up contemporary information disorder. Understanding the ecological conditions that favor the circulation of manipulative content can contribute to the development of strategies that are more compatible with the complexity of the digital environment.

Finally, it is recognized that the proposal presented here is eminently theoretical in nature and constitutes a starting point for future investigations. Empirical studies will be able to evaluate the applicability of the model in different communication contexts, analyze its explanatory capacity in specific events of information circulation and explore its interfaces with topics such as artificial intelligence, governance of digital platforms, information behavior and regulation policies for digital environments. It is expected, therefore, that this proposal will contribute to expanding the debate on information disorder and stimulate new research agendas capable of integrating, in an interdisciplinary way, the fields of Communication and Information Science in the face of the challenges posed by contemporary digital ecosystems.

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