

Revisiting Paulo Freire: An Introduction

Reverendo Paulo Freire: Uma Introdução

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INTRODUCTION

THE JOURNAL **MATRIZES** hereby launches this special issue dedicated to the centenary of the birth of Paulo Freire (1921-1998). The following set of texts, bringing together articles and testimonials from authors from various countries, attests to the strength and relevance of the theoretical-practical contribution of this citizen of the world born in Pernambuco, in North-eastern Brazil. These analyses intend to explore the contributions of Freire's thought to the fields of communication, education and to civil society development, taking into consideration the local realities from which they emerged.

Only one of Freire's (1969/1983) books directly and more broadly addresses the scope of communication; it is *Extension or Communication?* published in 1969, originally in Spanish, during Freire's exile in Chile. This book became an important reference for the studies and practices of participatory communication worldwide and was decisive for the review of diffusion models (Peruzzo, 2020b), which took communication as a tool to guide the reproduction of models considered modern and developed, without paying attention to local experiences and knowledge.

Approached more broadly, the transversality of communication in Freire's pedagogical perspective can be discussed from at least three perspectives. The first combines language, education and communication. The second links education and communication with popular mobilization and, more openly, with processes of political engagement. The third stems from Freire's own critical positioning in relation to the media. These three inflections will be discussed

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in more detail throughout the material compiled in this edition of **MATRIZes**. However, this introduction will firstly seek to identify key features and determine moments that accompany the articles and position Paulo Freire as one of the most important thinkers of the 20th century.

ENGAGED EDUCATOR

A thinker of education for liberation, Paulo Freire has his work translated into more than twenty languages, including Urdu and Arabic, leaving a deep mark on literacy projects whose examples can be found both in Angicos (Pernambuco) or Natal (Rio Grande do Norte), in Brazil, and in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Angola, in Africa.

Freire also got involved in the organization of both national and international projects and even in public administration, seen for example in his collaborations with the Institute for the Development of Agriculture (INDAP), in Chile; the World Council of Churches (WCC), in Geneva; the Cultural Action Institute (IDAC), founded in 1971 in Switzerland, together with Elza Freire, Miguel and Rosiska Darcy de Oliveira, Claudius Ceccon and others; and with the Department of Education of the city of São Paulo (1989-1991). In the latter, Freire took on the task of managing a complex system that had been scrapped in the previous administration, by Mayor Jânio da Silva Quadros. It was then a question of recovering, from the administrative, pedagogical point of view, and valuing the staff, a formal education network comprising of 629 schools, 720,000 students, and 39,614 teachers. In 1989, the city had 9.6 million inhabitants, of which 1.2 million people were illiterates over 14 years of age.

This rich theoretical-practical trajectory is part of the engaged profile, marked by the will to transform the world, that characterized the life and work of Paulo Freire. As Pierre Furter (1967) summarized, in the tab of the presentation of the book *Education: The Practice of Freedom*:

An education as a practice of freedom can only be fully realized in a society where the economic, social and political conditions for an existence in freedom exist. Consequently, and because there can be no *pedagogical* renewal without a renewal of global society, Paulo Freire's pedagogical requirements *also* led him to take a political position.

His identification with the oppressed is well known and led him to be persecuted by the military dictatorship instituted in Brazil in 1964,

resulting in almost 15 years of exile in numerous countries. In recent years, especially with the advent of Jair Bolsonaro's government and its attack on democratic institutions, culture, the arts and education, we have experienced a paradox: while Freire's name is increasingly remembered, with his work recognized and applied in various parts of the world, in Brazil, it became the object of systematic attacks. Paradoxically, he is accused of defending a school dedicated to the formation of citizenship, of a critical spirit, a line of thinking which evidently is in direct collision with extreme right-wing regimes that are satisfied with *banking education*, linear transmission and monological models of learning.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF FREIRE'S THINKING

The Freirean project can be appreciated in the light of three large integrated dimensions: political-ideological, methodological, humanist. These dimensions are found in his writings and in the actions that he implemented, stretching from the Basic Education Movement (for the Portuguese acronym MEB) to his engagement in the anti-colonial struggles in Africa.

Political-ideological challenge

The Freirean worldview is articulated on two fronts: the widespread progressive Catholicism of the Second Vatican Council, along with the names of Theillard de Chardin, Emmanuel Mounier, Jacques Maritain, Alceu Amoroso Lima, and the Marxism, whose lineage draws from thinkers as Lukacs and Lucien Goldman. In this set of influences, the presence of the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB) – 1955/1964 –, especially through the philosopher Álvaro Vieira Pinto, informs the texts of Paulo Freire.

Such a theoretical-practical orientation, with a left-leaning ideological inspiration, can be identified from the first writings, in the late 1950s, to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1968/2000) and subsequent works. What appears in this trajectory of writing is Freire's engagement with the project of national development. In the case of Brazil that entailed bringing the popular element to the main scene of a country that asserted itself between Juscelinist developmentalism¹ and the struggles for basic reforms that were promoted during João Goulart's² short term as president. The intellectual, political, and artistic wealth in the late 1950s, until the military dictatorship took power in 1964, constituted the background from which the Freirean ideas flourished. In that effervescent scenario, promoting literacy implied promoting two movements: access to the

¹ In reference to Juscelino Kubitschek, Brazilian president from 1956 to 1961.

² Brazilian president from 1961 to 1964, destituted by a military coup d'état.



written word, the verbal code and all the consequences thereof, and the right of the citizen to actively participate in the life of the country: voting, access to power of the word, recognition of place in speech.

In a different form, informed by national contexts, similar challenges reappear in Chile, where greater popular participation was promised with the advent of the Eduardo Frei Montalva government (1964-1970). In this period, while exiled in Santiago, Paulo Freire participates in the implementation of programs of education with peasant populations, at the Institute for the Development of Agriculture (for the acronym in Spanish INDAP). This is a decisive experience informing Freire's writing of the book *Extension or Communication?* (Freire, 1969/1983). Similar challenges emerge in the complex literacy programmes Freire engaged in within African countries, programmes that emerged from the Portuguese colonial yoke and that were marked by a great linguistic plurality, in many cases of oral tradition.

Overall, Freire's work is embedded fundamentally in a political perspective of social transformation. Education and literacy are part of this effort; communication is its ontology. Ideologically, it adheres to the popular-progressive field, within which the images and representations capable of opposing and transcending the ideals of the oppressors emerge.

A question of method

It is within this political option that the so-called Paulo Freire method can be understood. This form of adult literacy methods refers to the Angicos' experience³, the basic elements being: a forty-hour format; the choice of generative words; the inclusion of encoding and decoding mechanisms; the organization of culture circles; the domain of the word and its implications in power games and the importance of dialogue, among others. What is intended, in the end, are the formative processes of consciousness, in which subjects recognize their place in the world and participate in it in pursuit of transformations that lead to a more just and egalitarian society⁴.

As several scholars point out, the methodological issue in Paulo Freire is not the plastered formatting of determinations, scripts and prescriptions to solve a problem, but rather a collective construction guaranteed by procedures that ensure the achievement of a certain purpose. Hence, the method in question does not imply an eclectic gathering aimed only at a pedagogical technical effectiveness but rather at the elaboration of commitments with the learning subjects, the ultimate purpose being reaching a liberating consciousness. Or, in the terms of Ernani Maria Fiori (1968/2005, p. 10):

³ Angicos is the village where Paulo Freire developed and implemented his literacy method in the early 1960s.

⁴ These aspects of Freire's work deeply inspired an epistemological current in the field of communication, called *popular communication* in Latin America (Peruzzo, 2020; Suzina, 2021), and with equivalents based on the same principles as *citizen communication* (Rodríguez, 2001), *radical communication* (Downing et al., 2001), and *communication for social change* (Gumucio-Dagron & Tufte, 2006; Tufte 2017).

By objectifying their world, the student finds themselves in it with others and in others, companions of their small “circle of culture”. They all meet and reencounter in the same common world and, from the coincidence of the intentions that make it objective, the communication emerges, the dialogue that criticizes and promotes the participants in the circle emerges. . . . In the circle of culture, strictly speaking, one does not teach, one learns in “reciprocity of consciences”; there is no teacher, there is a coordinator whose function is to provide the information requested by the respective participants as well as favourable conditions for the group’s dynamics, reducing to a minimum their direct intervention in the course of the dialogue.

Thus, if the so-called Paulo Freire method is based on a systematization of procedures, it is situated at the heart of a worldview of horizontal relationships that articulate bonds and exchanges between educators-learners. After all: “Here, no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world” (Freire, 1968/2000, p. 80).

Humanist inflection

Little or nothing would make sense in the construction of national projects or in the implementation of educational methods, if an attitude of respect for human beings was separated from these methods, including an attitude of overcoming alienating impositions, the right to freedom and decent living conditions. In Paulo Freire’s theoretical-practical project, adherence to emancipatory humanism is reiterated, in which subjects are no longer exploited in their work relationships, integrating themselves into affective circuits that allow the recognition of the other, the exercise of otherness and the liberation of the word of the subaltern.

It is understandable to read the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1968/2000) in the light of a political-educational action devoted to radical humanism, which emphasizes intersubjective relationships and dialogue as necessary elements for the construction of transformative sociabilities. Throughout Freire’s books, new terms, with a great affective charge, are created, as if there were a linguistic effort to affirm the sense of humanity that must preside over the bonds between the subjects and guarantee the processes of communicability: beauty, re-admiration, lovingness, incompleteness/incompletion (of people), re-admiring, existing, hoping, etc.⁵

Furthermore, the links between education/training/democracy relate, in the final analysis, to the concern with dignity in the lives of men and women: “The total disregard for the integral formation of the human being,

⁵ For further knowledge about the universe of Freirean vocabulary in its neological profusion, in the formal Portuguese language, see the work of Simões (2013).



its reduction to pure training, strengthens the authoritarian way of top-down speech that lacks, for this very reason, the intention of its democratization in *speaking with*” (Freire, 1996/2006, p. 116). Or: “It is the directivity of education, this vocation that it has, as a specifically human action, of addressing itself to dreams, ideals, utopias and goals, which I have been calling the politics of education” (Freire, 1996/2006, p. 110). And even the reflections aimed at dealing with the humanist vector that needs to accompany the work with the peasants involved in the agrarian reform, and exposed in one of the chapters of the book *Extension or Communication?*:

Humanism, seeing men in the world, in time, “immersed” in reality, is only true as long as it takes place in the transforming action of the structures in which they find themselves “reified”, or almost “reified”. Humanism which, rejecting both despair and naive optimism, is therefore hopefully critical. And his critical hope rests on an equally critical belief: the belief that men can do and remake things; can transform the world. Belief in that, doing and redoing things and transforming the world, men can overcome the situation in which they are being an almost non-being and become a being in search of being more. In this scientific humanism (which does not lack loving) the communicative action of the agronomist-educator must be supported. (Freire, 1969/1983, p. 50)

Following these key features in Freirean thinking, we will in the next section focus on the three perspectives that we consider essential to understand the influence of Paulo Freire’s work on communication research and practice: communication and education; communication and civil society development; critical approaches to communication and the media.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

There is no intelligibility that is not communication and intercommunication and that is not based on dialogicity.

–Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Autonomy*

Communication is one of the fundamental human rights. Such an assertion, in its formulations and developments, is found throughout Paulo Freire’s work. From *Extension or Communication?* (Freire, 1969/1983) to the *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (Freire, 1996/2006), the understanding that we are permeated by

“a world of communication” (Freire, 1969/1983, p. 44) persists. It is certainly not about thinking about the communicational flow within the limits of technologies or the media but referring it to the concrete life of the subjects in which self-recognition and co-participation are instituted. Hence, every effort aimed at ensuring education, developing literacy programs, fostering the growth of critical awareness, seeking the emancipation of men and women, gains power when translated into a comprehensive matter provided by the dialogue between subjects. Or even: “The intelligible is only communicated insofar as it is communicable” (Freire, 1969/1983, p. 46). Such a simple-looking formulation carries with it, at the same time, a political perspective, and the understanding that the act of communicating goes beyond simple announcement, as it mobilizes within it the exchange of experiences, a communicating reciprocity, in short, the construction of knowledge:

Knowing, in the human dimension, which interests us here, whatever the level at which it takes place, is not the act through which a subject, transformed into an object, receives, docilely and passively, the contents that another gives or imposes on him. Knowledge, on the contrary, requires a curious presence of the subject in the face of the world. It requires their transforming action on reality. It demands a constant search. It implies invention and reinvention. It demands the critical reflection of each one on the very act of knowing, through which it recognizes itself as knowing and, by recognizing itself in this way, it perceives the “how” of its knowledge and the conditioning to which its act is submitted. (Freire, 1969/1983, p. 16)

Communication arises, therefore, as a process based on inter-individual, inter-subjective displacements, of the subject’s social involvement in the world, giving meaning to human life. In a word: “Consciences are not communicative because they communicate with each other; but they communicate with each other because they are communicative” (Fiori, 1968/2005, p. 15). Away from intercommunication, verbs like educate, alphabetize, emancipate, liberate, lose their strong meanings, remaining as transmissive resources of announcements.

This Freirean perspective works as a fertilizing element of a lineage of studies that are developed around communicative-educational interfaces, or educommunication, according to a terminology that is gaining strength among media and communication researchers and practitioners. This is not the place for a discussion centred on the scope, procedures or action strategies involved in the communicative-educational interfaces. It would

be relevant, rather, to examine aspects around the introduction of means of communication in the school, and in particular examining these aspects through a critical reading of them, and also reviewing the epistemological dimensions of this process. The current health crisis resulting from Covid 19 and the expanded use of technologies as a classroom strategy, in remote or hybrid modalities of education, would contain, in itself, a theme to be explored in the educative scope and to which Freirean thinking makes an important contribution.

It is necessary to emphasize that Freire's understanding of communication as a humanizing process takes this analysis directly to the scope of formal education (among others) as an interactive space that requires the full exercise of dialogue and, accordingly, to the ability to place subjects in circuits of mutual recognition, of exercising otherness. Thus, the displacement of speech, the tensioning of values, the admission of the speech of others as capable of structuring the debate, occurs at the same time as the communicative process is instituted, thus enabling the circulation of knowledge.

It means that education as a practice of freedom (a circumstance in which the act of knowing is not limited to the known object, in view of creating communicative circuits recognizing experiences between knowing subjects) goes beyond being just an ideological motive, a slogan or a publicity motto, to constitute a democratizing structure driven by respect for formal and evaluative procedures that feed dialogue. It should be remembered that according to Freire (1968/2000), the fundamental constitutive element of dialogue is the word marked by two sides drawn to each other, those of reflection and action: "There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis.¹ Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world" (p. 87). The empty word is, in this way, alongside the announcements, moving away from the theoretical-practical movement, ultimately denying communication itself.

In other words, the dialogic educator develops the awareness that the communicable constitutes the space that allows the possibility of encounters "between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world" (Freire, 1968/2000, p. 88). Dialogue becomes a requirement for the integral formation of subjects. With this, we discard the pretextual pronouncements that aim to elaborate shared meanings and we adhere to the effective exchange of arguments, the circulation of ideas, the democratic recognition that it is possible to overcome the asymmetrical power game embodied in the discourses of dominant groups. In summary: communication occurs, effectively, when the exchange of meanings, intersubjective bonds, and awareness of the common take place.

In view of this conceptual, practical and normative horizon, it is imperative to add that Freire's thinking has not neglected or treated the presence of communicational devices as irrelevant. We must consider the terms being some that work on several fronts and that preceded the digital expansion of the internet. Hence, Freire did consider the role of computers and their functionalities. As an anecdote, during the administration of Paulo Freire as secretary of municipal education in São Paulo in the early 1990s, he purchased one of the first batches of computers to be installed in public schools in the city. According to him:

Deifying or demonizing technology or science is a highly negative and dangerous way of thinking wrong. . . .

That's why I've always been at peace to deal with it. I have no doubts about the enormous potential for stimuli and challenges to curiosity that technology puts at the service of children and adolescents from the so-called favoured classes. (Freire, 2006, p. 33, 86)

Freire (1996/2006) even explicitly recommends to progressive educators that: "not only can we not ignore television, but we must use it, above all, to discuss it" (p. 139). Despite talking about the hegemonic vehicle in the media scene at the time, it must be recognized that these opinions emerged within the scope of Paulo Freire's concerns to undertake a formal educational treatment of the communicational messages socially arranged by television.

It is worth stating: the entry of the media in school, either as equipment in support of educational actions, or as the production of messages that must be analysed from a critical and reflective perspective (in feedback movements in the encoding-decoding continuum), requires a classroom environment that is aligned with the purposes of teaching as a practice of freedom. This Freirean approach is at the centre stage of how educommunication works. It is necessary to allude that the theme of media literacy, today quite present in debates about the necessary communication-education links, appears, in its own way, in Paulo Freire's intellectual project, above all in his last writings, with greater evidence in the *Pedagogy of Autonomy* (Freire, 1996/2006). It is worth remembering, however, that if literacies express a necessary condition for the exercise of education in a broader sense, they may not be enough. After all, as defended over the years by Freire, it is necessary to unravel the culture of silence in which large sectors of the population are submerged, and to allow the voice of the silenced (often by the media themselves, by the dominant discourse and their interests to preserve privileges, or, in our days,



by the internet echo chambers) to erupt as an active element in the various communication modalities – whether technologically mediated or face to face. Thus, becoming media literate is a path that does not end with the identification of language structures and codifying arrangements, but expands to the recognition of the signifiers involved therein.

This perspective makes room for communication to be rethought in an ontological dimension, or epistemological, as Paulo Freire would prefer. This is something essential in human relationships, without which it is not possible to talk about education, nor to seek the autonomy of subjects. This is what is explained in *Extension or Communication?* (Freire, 1969/1983) and unfolds in the whole of Freire's work: the agronomist willing to pass on his technical knowledge to rural workers, disregarding the reality in which they live; the teachers viewing in the student body only the sounding boards of truths formulated by the teaching; the party leaderships that formulate slogans without listening to the militancy. Such examples make explicit, in a recurring line of meaning, the fact of denying the subject and his autonomy, which implies, in the end, breaking the communication process.

A COMMUNICATION INSPIRED BY FREIRE IN SOCIAL CHANGE PROCESSES

There really is no isolated thought inasmuch as there is no isolated man.

Every act of thinking requires a subject who thinks, a thought object, which mediates the first subject of the second and the communication between them, which takes place through linguistic signs.

The human world is thus a world of communication.

–Paulo Freire, *Extension or Communication?*

The association between education, popular mobilization and political participation processes opens up another perspective, which unfolds in the multitude and diversity of dialogues and constructions that Freire's work has with social movements and civil society organizations around the world. In this perspective, the communicative principle of Freire's understanding of education expands to all processes in which the learning of a new place in the world is proposed, and even a new configuration of the world.

For Freire, the word is the generating element of subjectivity and agency. A person ceases to be an object and becomes a subject of history as he becomes capable of naming himself and the world around him. This generative process oriented towards intervening in the world and generating social change became foundational for what has become a significant strand within communication research and practice – that of communication for social change and many associated strands known under a broad array of names and approaches, from alternative communication in the 1980s to popular and community communication of the most recent years.

Key scholars in the field of communication became inspired by Freire's action-oriented communicative practices, from Juan Díaz Bordenave, Luis Ramiro Beltrán and Cicilia Peruzzo in Latin America to Frank Gerace, Robert Chambers and many others. A common denominator was Freire's principles and his method, insisting on not only naming the world but intervening in it. Juan Díaz Bordenave drew on Freire in developing his participatory communication approach to rural communication, Frank Gerace writing the first book on Horizontal Communication in 1973, and in more broad terms, several generations of communication practitioners and civil society organisations in Latin America have drawn on the Paulo Freire method in their work with non-formal education, mobilization and media production, demanding human rights and equality.

A pioneering experience was seen in the development of Christian Basic Communities in Brazil and other Latin American countries in the 1970s and 1980s, an experience of drawing on Freire's notions of dialogic communication in enhancing subjectivity and agency and in resisting the increasingly non-dialogic configuration of any public space at that time. The authoritarianism that the military dictatorships imposed constituted the context to which the Christian Basic Communities responded, inspired also by the Theology of Liberation. It planted the seeds of a new generation of community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and social movements. A new civil society grew from this, some of which, over the years, influenced government structures, for example when Luiza Erundina won the mayor's election in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1988 and in 1989 invited Paulo Freire to become the municipal secretary of education and at the same time invited numerous activists from the surround social movements to join the municipal administration.

Beyond Latin America, Freire's ideas travelled, both via his own global work, not least in newly independent African states. However, while a lot of that work by Freire himself was organized around collaborating with African governments,



a growing numbers of civil society organizations took on his ideas, for example when the REFLECT method (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) was developed in the early 1990s by Robert Chambers and University of Sussex in the UK and became a preferred method to work with in NGOs in many sub-Saharan African countries.

What travelled internationally was the communicative ethos of Freire's work with a focus on emancipation, the autonomy of subjects, and based on a relationship of equality in every form of dialogue and exchange of knowledge.

FREIRE AND THE CRITICISM OF THE MEDIA

It is clear that Freire's adherence to the use of media platforms does not reflect an innocence vis-a-vis the role and place of the mass media – to keep to the rhetoric of the time – in social life and, particularly, in the world of schools. On the contrary, what is revealed is a kind of pragmatic recognition of a reality permeated by messages circulated by vehicles such as television, radio, newspaper etc., and which forcibly presented themselves (and continue to do so) in classrooms, in private environments for teachers and students, and amongst groups of friends within the school communities.

How to face the extraordinary power of the media, the language of television, its “syntax” that reduces the past and the present to the same level and suggests that what doesn't exist is already done . . . The world gets shorter, time is diluted: yesterday turns now; tomorrow is already done. All very fast. Debating what is said and what is shown and how it is shown on television seems to me something more and more important. (Freire, 1996/2006, p. 141)

From these and other passages in his work, it can be understood that Freire is not a critic of media development, but, again, an engaged educator against the massive, deterministic and oppressive uses of any and all communication platforms. In one interview, Paulo Freire insists on the lack of “a political decision that puts the media *also* at the service of the popular classes” (Fadul, 1987, p. 90). In this conversation, he opposes uses of the media that seek the co-option of audiences, in a similar criticism to the one he makes of banking education. In other words, there is a declared condemnation of vertical information transmission schemes that are far from dialogic procedures and autonomy of thought.

In this interview, when Anamaria Fadul (1987) provokes Freire to talk about the gap between the development of the education system and the communication

system in Brazil, he reveals two complementary concerns. The first is related to the presence of a predatory and elitist communication system, in which the popular classes only appear as “an object of strangeness” (p. 90); and the second is associated with the need of forging an educational dynamic capable of producing critical citizens of the first. In general terms, Freire’s vision of the communication system contemplated broad and unrestricted access to the media, within a perspective of equality; the reform of these vehicles to make them useful to the population; and education and recognition of the critical capacity of audiences in their relationship with media products.

I am not afraid to appear naive in insisting that it is not even possible to think about television without bearing in mind the question of critical conscience. Thinking about television or the media in general poses the problem of communication, a process impossible to be neutral . . . Hence the accurate role played by ideology in communication, hiding truths, but also the very ideologization in the communicative process. (Freire, 1996/2006, p. 141)

Such ideas helped to delineate a gap that social movements tried to fill with different strategies. Among the exponents of this approach are works such as *Para leer al Pato Donald*, an essay by Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, from 1971, and extensive training programs in Critical Reading of Communication (LCC), such as those carried out by the Brazilian Christian Association of Social Communication (União Cristã Brasileira de Comunicação Social – UCBC), between the 1970s and 1990s. Dorfman and Mattelart’s book is considered one of the pioneering works of cultural studies in Latin America. Dorfman and Mattelart’s Marxist critique of capitalist propaganda and cultural imperialism openly dialogues with Freire’s perspective, according to which “the oppressed has another reading of the messages conveyed. There is no adhesion without resistance” (Fadul, 1987, p. 92). Thus, despite acknowledging the effort of co-opting the popular classes, there was confidence in their critical and reactive capacity to appropriate media messages.

In this wake, programs such as those organized by UCBC have spread across Latin America. Among its objectives were demystifying the communication system, alerting to political-economic collisions within it, and offering tools to expand the critical capacity of citizens in relation to media consumption. There was also an interest in promoting the autonomous production of communication, starting from the communities and organizations at the bases.

LCC courses started to have a conference profile, with subsequent debates on the communication system, the cultural industry, the contradictions in the

performance of the mass media, the excesses committed by these vehicles as informers of public opinion, etc. To these themes was added a study of Christian communication and of the worship or liturgy practiced by Christian communities. The objective was to denounce the manipulation exercised by the mass media and warn about those responsible for the control and diversion of information: the sociopolitical-economic-cultural system in force in Brazil and, in general, in the world. The courses sought to point out clues for action, mainly orienting towards the exercise of alternative and popular communication. (União Cristã Brasileira de Comunicação Social, 1985, p. 6)

Finally, aware of the unequal power of the mass media, Freire also did not refrain from a commitment to being present in these spaces. In another excerpt of his interview given to Anamaria Fadul (1987), he talks about the need to occupy them, in a horizon shared with many social movements historically.

On the other hand, I want to make it clear that if it is not possible to put TV at the service of the working class, it is up to us with much more difficulty than in the case of education, to invade the TV space. When TVs invite me to participate in programs, I never refuse, as long as it's live, because this is a political task, to use time in a space that is not mine. (p. 92)

In this step, it is worth remembering that the contemporary dissemination of fake news, malicious information, denial, and intolerance, partly distributed by (in)social networks, but with overwhelming access by school segments, can be fought in the context of formal education with a Freirean program to elevate the ability to discern, the intercommunication that raises critical judgment, the emancipatory inflection of teachers and students. In other words, it is necessary to place communication at the centre of the communicative act, something that institutes communicability – through signs, complex languages, non-bureaucratized words that only distribute announcements – “that is done and lived while it is spoken of it with the power of witness” (Freire, 1996/2006, p. 37).

These efforts of placing communication centrally in a liberating process constitute a struggle also very much fought beyond the formal educational sector, in the dialogic spaces created by civil society in NGOs, in CBOs and in the multitude of social movements characterizing our time. These institutions, organisations and movements are all claiming to be present in dialogues defining our future, and in doing so, are paying their strongest tribute to Paulo Freire.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The articles and testimonies gathered in this special issue of our journal, through different ways and multiple considerations, situate Freire's path in its theoretical-practical range, emphasizing, above all, the themes of communication and its interfaces. In order to organize the articles, at least approximately, we have grouped them into four major thematic axes, capable of interconnections, when referred to Paulo Freire's work: communication beyond the announcements; communicate and educate; communication and cultural developments; communication: political frameworks and social changes.

MATRIZES thanks the national and international authors who agreed to participate in this tribute to Paulo Freire.

We hope you enjoy the reading. **M**

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