

## EDITORIAL

# *Media, Society and Creative Practice across Technological Landscapes* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Prof. Dr. Belina BUDINI*** \_\_\_\_\_

This issue of POLIS, Journal of the Faculty of Human Sciences, Education and Liberal Arts is dedicated to the theme “Media, Society and Creative Practice across Technological Landscapes.” It brings together contributions that examine how technological change is reshaping public communication, democratic participation, education, visual culture, identity formation and creative practice.

The call for papers for this issue invited interdisciplinary approaches to journalism and AI, disinformation, media literacy, platformization, political communication, digital rights, visual communication, creative industries, education, design culture and the role of the arts in social transformation. The articles selected for this issue respond to these concerns by addressing one of the defining questions of our time: how do societies preserve knowledge, trust, creativity and democratic agency in increasingly mediated and algorithmically structured environments?

The issue opens with a concern that is central to contemporary democratic life: the relationship between technological mediation, participation and public trust. The article on technological mediation, democratic participation and trust in Albania examines the promises and risks of digital governance in a post-communist context. Its focus on access, agency and accountability is particularly relevant for societies where e-government expands rapidly, while institutional trust, civic participation and digital equity remain uneven. The Albanian case gives the article strong regional relevance and places POLIS within current debates on digital democracy and governance.

This concern with participation is extended through the article on civil disobedience across contexts, which compares Gandhian methods of nonviolent resistance with Eastern European movements such as Solidarity in Poland, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia and the Peaceful Revolution in East

Germany. Although not centred on digital technology, the article enriches the issue by reminding us that democratic participation is not only institutional or technological; it is also civic, moral and collective. Its focus on nonviolent discipline, withdrawal of consent, mass mobilization and alternative democratic institutions offers a broader historical and theoretical frame for thinking about public agency in moments of political transformation.

A second major concern of the issue is the transformation of visibility and attention. “The Algorithmic Gaze” offers a powerful conceptual framework for understanding short-form video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts. In these environments, visual culture is no longer shaped only by authors, audiences or institutions, but by algorithmic systems that rank, recommend and monetize attention. The article shows how creativity is increasingly organized through templates, metrics and platform logics, raising important questions about meaning, authorship and cultural value in the age of algorithmic curation.

The issue also turns to political communication in hybrid media systems. The article on Luxembourg demonstrates how legacy journalism, social media platforms, digital campaigning, micro-targeting and networked citizen participation coexist and compete within contemporary democracies. Although focused on a small European state, the article speaks to wider transformations that also affect Albania and the Western Balkans: the fragmentation of public discourse, the rise of platform power, the challenge of misinformation and the need for democratic accountability in digital communication.

Education appears in this issue not merely as a field affected by media change, but as one of the most important spaces for responding to it. The article on the psychoeducational implications of media discourses examines how traditional and digital media influence perception, social attitudes and civic engagement. Its emphasis on media literacy, critical thinking and ethical awareness directly addresses the need to prepare younger generations to navigate information disorder, persuasive framing and emotionally charged public discourse.

The article on linguistic identity construction in online spaces expands the issue toward digital discourse, sociolinguistics and identity studies. It examines how individuals construct and perform linguistic identities across platforms through code-switching, self-presentation and hybrid forms of expression. By foregrounding algorithmic visibility, the article shows that identity online is not only personally performed but also technologically mediated.

Creative practice and education are further explored through the article on digital tools in Albanian art education. This contribution highlights both the opportunities and the challenges of integrating technology into artistic training. It shows that digital transformation in art education requires more than access to tools; it demands institutional support, teacher preparation, curriculum

modernization and attention to social inequalities. In this way, the article connects creative industries, pedagogy and digital inclusion.

The issue is enriched by contributions on Albanian ethno-choreography and the transformation of folk dance under communism. These articles bring attention to rhythm, ritual, movement, ideology and cultural memory. Although they do not focus primarily on digital technologies, they broaden the issue's understanding of mediation by showing how artistic forms have always been shaped by institutions, social structures and systems of representation.

Taken together, the articles in this issue demonstrate that technological landscapes are not only technical environments. They are cultural, political, educational and aesthetic spaces in which power, identity, creativity and trust are constantly negotiated. The issue therefore reflects the interdisciplinary mission of POLIS and of the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Liberal Arts at the European University of Tirana: to bring media studies, communication, education, applied arts, cultural analysis and democratic thought into productive dialogue.

At a time when public discourse is increasingly fragmented, attention is algorithmically organized and truth is often contested, the humanities and social sciences have a renewed responsibility. They help us ask not only what technology does, but what kind of society, culture and citizenship it makes possible. This issue of POLIS contributes to that task by offering critical, applied and regionally grounded scholarship on the changing relations between media, society and creative practice.