# Political Communication in Latin America:
## Democratic Challenges in Contexts of Disinformation and Radicalization

## Presentation

Political communication in Latin America is currently shaped by profound transformations in the public sphere, driven by the expansion of digital platforms, the large–scale circulation of misinformation and disinformation, and the intensification of political polarization and radicalization. While digital media have expanded opportunities for participation, visibility, and mobilization, they have also contributed to the erosion of trust, the fragmentation of public debate, and the normalization of radical discourses and practices.

In this context, the **Political Communication Research Section of IAMCR** calls for its **Regional Conference for Latin America 2026**, to be held on **August 5, 6, and 7, 2026**, at the **Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio)**, Brazil. The conference theme, *"Democratic Challenges in Contexts of Disinformation and Radicalization"* builds directly on the debates initiated at the IAMCR Political Communication LATAM Regional Conference 2025 in Puebla, Mexico.

The 2026 edition seeks to deepen theoretical, methodological, and empirical discussions on how disinformation, digital populism, hate speech, algorithmic governance, and political radicalization are reshaping democratic processes in Latin America. Special attention will be given to comparative perspectives, South–South dialogues, and innovative research agendas that address the specificities of the region within broader global dynamics.

Taking place in a year marked by major electoral processes in the region – including the Brazilian general elections – the conference provides a strategic space for critical reflection on information integrity, public trust, political representation, and the quality of democratic deliberation under conditions of digital disruption in Latin America.

The conference aims to offer a collegial and inclusive academic environment, prioritizing in–depth discussion within working groups, constructive feedback, and the strengthening of regional and international research networks. Efforts will be made to keep participation costs accessible in order to reduce structural inequalities between institutions, countries, and researchers.

From Rio de Janeiro, one of Latin America's most emblematic cultural and intellectual hubs, we invite scholars from across the region and beyond to engage in a transdisciplinary dialogue on the intersections between communication, politics, technology, and democracy.

*International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)*
*Political Communication Research Section / Regional Conference LATAM 2026*
Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC–Rio), Brazil / August 5–7, 2026

## Preliminary General Program

The conference will include:

- Opening and closing plenary sessions
- Keynote lectures
- Thematic panels
- Working group sessions

A detailed program and the list of confirmed keynote speakers and panelists will be announced in due course.

## Themes

The Conference encourages original submissions that explore diverse aspects of (digitally) mediated communication and its interconnections with political actors, discourses, practices, and publics. Particular emphasis will be placed on:

- Comparative research projects
- Contributions from underrepresented regions and communities
- Interdisciplinary approaches
- Innovative methodological designs
- Theoretical advancements in political communication research

## Suggested Working Group Themes (non-exclusive):

1. Press–Politics Relations
2. Media Systems and Global Communication
3. Political Campaigns and Electoral Communication
4. Social Movements, Artivism, and Digital Activism
5. Gender and Political Communication
6. Political Entertainment and Digital Populism
7. Social Media, Polarization, and Hate Speech
8. Media Effects: Attitudes, Behavior, and Participation
9. News Media and Politics: Performance, Framing, and Coverage
10. Grassroots Communication and the Political Sphere
11. Disinformation, Fake News, and Information Disorders
12. Political Discourse, Rhetoric, and Ideology
13. Propaganda and Strategic Communication
14. Epistemology, Methodology, and Empirical Research Techniques
15. Technopolitics, Participation, Artificial Intelligence, and Democracy

## Participation Modalities

The conference will adopt an **on-site format**, with two possible modalities:

- In-person paper presentation
- On-site attendance (subject to availability)

## Language of the Conference

Abstracts may be submitted in any of the official IAMCR languages (**English, Spanish, or French**) as well as **Portuguese**. Nonetheless, presentations and discussions during the conference will take place in **Portuguese and Spanish**.

## Submission and Presentation of Papers

Abstracts must be submitted, **until April 3, 2026**, through the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdpJvYKs5mAeMSo2Hi-Vq8fSqtWKLRPJnZluvHur_iiqceLYQ/viewform.

- Maximum length: **700 words** (excluding references)
- Structure: **IMRAD format** (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion)
- Reference style: **APA 7th Edition**
- Submission limit: **Up to two abstracts per participant** (one as sole or lead author, one as co-author)

Only participants who have paid the registration fee and present their work at the conference will receive a participation certificate.

## Review Process and Presentation Format

In accordance with IAMCR global guidelines, all abstracts will undergo a **double-blind peer review** by two reviewers, with the support of the Scientific Committee. Evaluation criteria include:

- Methodological rigor
- Use of and/or contribution to theory
- Clarity and readability
- Originality and relevance
- Relevance to the field of political communication

Accepted papers will be allocated:

- **15 minutes** for presentation (in-person)
- **30 minutes** for collective discussion and feedback within working groups, facilitated by a discussant or commentator

*International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)*
*Political Communication Research Section / Regional Conference LATAM 2026*
Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC–Rio), Brazil / August 5–7, 2026

## Publication Opportunities

After the conference, authors will be invited to submit full manuscripts for consideration in a **special issue of** *Revista ALCEU* (PUC-Rio), subject to the journal's independent peer-review process and editorial guidelines.

## Important Dates (2026)

- Opening of abstract submissions: **February 9, 2026**
- Deadline for abstract submission: **April 3, 2026**
- Acceptance notification: **May 4, 2026**
- Registration opens: **June 1, 2026**
- Deadline for discounted registration: **July 3, 2026**
- Conference dates: **August 5–7, 2026**

## Costs

| | Before July 3, 2026 | Before July 3, 2026 | After July 3, 2026 | After July 3, 2026 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Middle income countries*** | **Lower middle income countries*** | **Middle income countries*** | **Lower middle income countries*** |
| IAMCR Non-Associated Participants | $ 50 USD | $ 35 USD | $ 60 USD | $ 45 USD |
| Student Participants | $ 25 USD | $ 17 USD | $ 30 USD | $ 22 USD |
| Assistants | $ 10 USD | $ 10 USD | $ 10 USD | $ 10 USD |
| IAMCR Associate Participants (20% discount) | $ 40 USD | $ 28 USD | $ 48 USD | $ 36 USD |

*\* According to the IAMCR classification for internacional conferences: < https://iamcr.org/membership-fees >.*

## Scientific Committee

Afonso de Albuquerque (Brazil), Carlos Muñiz (Mexico), Hernando Rojas (Colombia), Ignacio Siles (Costa Rica), Luciana Panke (Brazil), Manuel Alejandro Guerrero (Mexico), Marcelo Santos (Chile), María Helena Weber (Brazil), Martín Echeverría (Mexico), Michele Goulart Massuchin (Brazil), Mireya Márquez (Mexico), Natalia Aruguete (Argentina), Phillip Kitzberger (Argentina), Rousiley Maia (Brazil), Sandro Macassi (Peru), Sebastián Valenzuela (Chile), Ximena Orchard (Chile), Wilson Gomes (Brazil), William Porath (Chile)

## Institutional Support

- International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)
- Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC–Rio)
- Department of Communication (DCOM/PUC–Rio)
- Graduate Program in Communication (PPGCOM/PUC–Rio)
- National Institute of Science and Technology in Digital Democracy (INCT.DD)
- National Institute of Science and Technology in Democracy and Informational Sovereignty (INCT.DSI)

## Local Organizing Committee (PUC-Rio)

Arthur Ituassu (Chair)
Marcelo Alves
Tatiana Dourado

## Contact

For further information, please contact:
**Dr. Arthur Ituassu**
Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC–Rio)
E-mail: ituassu@puc-rio.br