

Acknowledgments

The story of this book is a play in two acts.

Act one took place in June 2018 during a meeting at the Luciano's gelateria branch near to the Google offices in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Among other topics, during that conversation we talked about our shared frustration with the relative lack of comparative perspectives in scholarship on social media. We thought that it could be worth exploring the possibility to develop a theoretical approach that would put comparative work at the center. Mora was about to start her doctorate at Northwestern University with Pablo as her advisor. For well over a year, we met weekly to discuss ideas and texts and ended up writing a manuscript that we submitted to a journal in fall 2019.

Act two occurred in April 2020 during a long WhatsApp chat discussing how to approach yet another round of revisions of the journal article. Mora had returned to Buenos Aires to spend what at the time seemed like just a few months of lockdown in the company of her family. As the conversation progressed, it became increasingly evident to both of us that the journal article format, with its strict word limit and genre expectations, was constraining our ability to both fully develop the various facets of our argument and do so in

ways that would show not only its theoretical import but also its social relevance. We ultimately realized that a book would provide a better canvas to lay out our vision, and so we wrote a proposal, secured a contract, and embarked in a year-long writing journey.

The writing process and our weekly calls about it became a life-line as the global shutdown continued far beyond what we had initially imagined and the pandemic's disruption reached far beyond the imaginable. The book in your hands is the result of an intellectual ride that helped us to hold onto something stable and to feel alive while many of the things we knew were losing stability and the level of loss was becoming staggering.

We were not alone during this creative and writing journey. Eugenia Mitchelstein, Ignacio Siles, Facundo Suenzo, and Celeste Wagner took the time to carefully comment on different versions of the book manuscript and provided us with bright and eye-opening perspectives. Larry Gross and anonymous reviewers contributed valuable feedback on earlier versions of some of the ideas further developed in this book and which were published in Matassi and Boczkowski (2021). Eszter Hargittai and Henry Jenkins, as well as David Park, Steve Jones, Santiago Marino, and anonymous journal article reviewers for *New Media & Society* offered helpful suggestions. Jack Bandy, Diego Gómez-Zara, Nicholas Hagar, Chelsea Peterson-Salahuddin, Daniel Trielli, and Erique Zhang provided important insights during a doctoral seminar on “Media Meet Technology” that Pablo taught at Northwestern University during the winter 2019 quarter, which Mora also took, and in which we first assessed the potential of the ideas that animate this book. Organizers and attendees at the Comparative Research in Media Studies Workshop, organized by Cicant—Lusófona University, University of Oslo, University of Bergen, and Católica Research Centre for Psychological, Family and Social Wellbeing, and in which Mora presented ideas contained in this book, asked us truly useful questions.

Working with MIT Press has been wonderful. Gita Manaktala, our editor, championed the project from day one, secured terrific reviews, gave us excellent insights, and was always available to answer any of our queries. At different stages in the project Erika Barrios and Suraiya Jetha provided excellent assistance. A book can unfortunately have only one home, but we also want to acknowledge the interest, support, and contributions of Mary Savigar at Polity Press. Finally, we want to thank the anonymous reviewers at MIT Press and Polity for their most useful feedback.

Pablo wholeheartedly thanks his friends and family for their support throughout the writing process during a most challenging time. As the saying goes, it takes a village, and he feels blessed for the one he inhabits. He is also deeply grateful to Mora for leading the writing process with unparalleled creativity, energy, commitment, and steadiness. Reaching middle age and a stage of career maturity has made him cherish the critical value of intellectual partnerships that make learning a lifelong process marked by a sense of excitement and discovery. Since this is the second time that he coauthors a book with a student while they are in graduate school—the first was with Eugenia Mitchelstein for *The News Gap* almost a decade ago, also published with MIT Press—he was aware from the start of this project of the unique intellectual energy that emerges when two very different generational outlooks coalesce. This generational encounter has marvelously shaped both what we say and how we chose to say it in this book, and he could not think of a better writing partner than Mora for this endeavor.

Mora is grateful to her family, friends, and colleagues for their inspiring presence in her life. She specially thanks her mentor and coauthor Pablo for opening up a world of opportunities and fostering each of them with care and generosity. Whenever the goals ahead seem too difficult, Pablo is there to offer an encouraging word and a clear path forward. During the process of writing this book,

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Studying Social Media across Nations, Media, and Platforms

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