

F.L.O.C.H.

Finding Lab for Open Consultancy Heuristics

IASS Special Interest Group on Semiotic Consulting

Semiotics, as a discipline endowed with a specific approach to meaning and language, has found opportunities for professionalization primarily within qualitative research practices in marketing. From the 1980s onward, thanks to the work of a few founding authors, such as Jean-Marie Floch, Jean Umiker-Sebeok and Eliseo Verón, semiotics demonstrated its capacity not only to provide analytical tools for the interpretation of communication, but also to build original semiotic problems based on the requests and corpora submitted by companies. Furthermore, the semiotic approach has been recognized and valued for its ability to deal with different types of expression in multimodal corpora (verbal, visual, audiovisual, gestural, etc.), allowing for the emergence of regularities and trends within a wide diversity of forms of expression.

Over more than fifty years of interaction between semiotics and organizational and business strategies, increasingly specific methodologies for analysis and intervention in consulting have proliferated. In this context, the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS-AIS) aims to position itself as a space for mediation and reflection within the semiotic community, particularly in the face of the new challenges affecting these collaborations:

- How can we map the diversity of approaches, methodologies, and possible forms of intervention in consulting?
- Are these methodologies capable of updating themselves in relation, on the one hand, to the constant evolution of academic semiotic research, and on the other hand, to the new expectations of companies?
- What becomes of qualitative analysis at a moment when LLM-based artificial intelligence platforms generate interpretations that substitute for or offer alternatives to those produced by semioticians?

Following a request for consultancy from a large multinational corporation, which led to a specific research initiative coordinated by the IASS-AIS and whose results were deemed excellent by the company itself, the intention is to establish a program aimed at enhancing the role and added value of semioticians in providing professional advice and expertise to organizations. The IASS-AIS thus proposes the creation of an international interest group representing diverse analytical approaches that claim a semiotic matrix, with the following objectives:

- to establish a space for the comparison of methodologies currently in use, in order to refine and deepen the semiotic offering in terms of practical applications;

- to host a platform for reporting on and publishing qualitative research representative of this offering, in order to document such consultancy trajectories and promote the dissemination of knowledge related to these methodologies;
- to provide training and mentoring opportunities to younger generations of semioticians who are approaching consultancy practice or wishing to pursue careers in this field.

Finally, this Specialized Interest Group (SIG) aims to promote new areas of consultancy experimentation, revitalizing semiotics' role as a discipline bridging the humanities and ecological thought, and to develop semiotic frameworks in collaboration with relevant stakeholders. A renewed investigation in practices, in dialogue with ethnography, as well as an openness to a semiotics of collectives and the reconfiguration of assemblages of human and non-human actors, allows us to envision new areas of intervention for the semiotic approach.

LIST OF SITE COORDINATORS

Giacomo Festi (NABA, Milan, Delegate for the SIG)
 Chris Arning (Semiofest)
 Andrea Basunti (Cultural Strategy for Brands)
 Eric Bertin (Université de Limoges)
 Denis Bertrand (University of Paris)
 Giulia Ceriani (Università di Bergamo)
 João Ciaco ABA (Associação Brasileira de Anunciantes)
 Filippo Gandini (Johnson&Johnson)
 Douglas Holt (Harvard Business School)
 Seema Khanwalkar (CEPT University, Ahmedabad)
 Alec Kozicki (Semiozic ÖU, Estonia)
 Dario Mangano (University of Palermo)
 Lucia Laurent Neva (Semiofest)
 Ana Claudia Mei Alves de Oliveira (CPS PUC-SP Brazil)
 Laura R. Oswald (Marketing Semiotics)
 Alain Perusset (University of Warwick)
 Jean-Paul Petitembert (Paris, ESCP, CELSA)
 Paolo Peverini (LUISS-Rome)
 Bruno Pompeu (University of São Paulo)
 George Rossolatos (University of Kassel)
 Andrea Semprini (Université Lumière Lyon 2)
 Marita Soto (University of Buenos Aires)
 Lyudmyla Zaporozhtseva (University of Tartu)

MEMBERS

Abdulahman Alallawi (Islamic University of Medinah)
 Santiago Guillén (Université Lumière Lyon 2)
 Silvio Sato (University of São Paulo)
 Hamsini Shivakumar (Semiofest)