

Alternatives Collection

Communication and Human Rights



Aimée Vega Montiel
Editor



Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias
en Ciencias y Humanidades
International Association for Media and Communication Research

COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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FOREWORD

JANET WASKO
IAMCR PRESIDENT

Communication and Human Rights is a collection drawn from the conference of the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) held in Mexico City at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in July 2009.

The IAMCR is the preeminent worldwide professional organization in the field of media and communication research. The association is a Non-Governmental Organization and maintains official relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, having established a consultative relationship in 1957.

The IAMCR is truly international and includes members from all over the world. Its members promote global inclusiveness and excellence within the best traditions of critical research in the field. The association represents a community of scholars who utilize online and offline opportunities for building strong, collegial and supportive networks. The organization disseminates information about research and research needs through various platforms, as well as maintaining professional relationships with a wide range of media and communication organizations, including regional associations such as the Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación, the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, the International Communication Association, and the European Communication Research and Education Association, as well as national organizations.

Overall, the IAMCR attempts to stimulate interest in media and communication research and seeks to improve media and communication policy and practice, especially from international and interdisciplinary perspectives. The organization seeks to strengthen and encourage communication research worldwide and

promotes the full participation of new scholars, women and those from economically disadvantaged regions. In addition to research projects in a variety of areas, the association also has contributed to the development and improvement of the education and training of journalists and other media professionals by means of appropriate research and other activities.

The IAMCR's conferences regularly rotate through continents and regions, each with appropriate and timely themes that set the agenda for the meetings. The choice of the theme "Communication and Human Rights" for the 2009 IAMCR conference in Mexico City was not surprising, given the rich and extensive discussion of these issues by communication researchers worldwide. The issue of human rights is inextricably tied to communication, especially the right to communicate, as discussed by authors in this volume. And, while this important research and discussions has taken place previously at IAMCR conferences, the focus on communication and human rights as the theme of the Mexico City conference successfully focused special attention on the definitions, history, and explication of this theme.

We are fortunate now to have this volume that features the opening lecture of the conference, as well as thoughtful and expert discussions of a wide range of issues related to this topic. Especially appreciated is the section on languages and the IAMCR, which remains a difficult and complex problem for a truly international association. Also noteworthy are the sections that present Latin American researchers' work to English language readers.

This collaboration between the IAMCR and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México is an example of the bilingual activities that are necessary to build an understanding of global media and communication problems. We welcome this collection and look forward to the continued debates and actions that it may inspire in the area of communications and human rights.

PREFACE

ANNABELLE SREBERNY
IAMCR PAST PRESIDENT (2008-2012)

It is most appropriate that the IAMCR conference in Mexico in 2009 took human rights as its focus. Human rights have become a key theme in political, social and economic development around the world, often recognised as much in their breach as in their application.

The discourse of human rights was formalised in the 1940s after the atrocities of World War Two, together with the recognition of “genocide”, a term first developed in 1944, and the notion of “crimes against humanity”. Yet the history of the notion of human rights reaches back into history and has been utilised by philosophers and theorists from a range of cultural traditions, while the formalization of human rights can be found in the development of international humanitarian law as it developed from the mid-nineteenth century.

Human rights enjoy universal recognition even as different cultural and political systems articulate varying notions of rights. The original formulations have been extended to recognise rights of specific groups that include women, children and indigenous peoples.

Rights are at the centre of many contemporary debates. Some argue that discourses about rights are too individualised and omit a concern for collectivities. Others are concerned that political rights have become prioritised over economic provision, even that a rights discourse has become a weapon of powerful states to promote specific forms of development. Yet others worry that rights mean little without attendant obligations. Many people struggle to achieve human rights while for others, existing rights are sometimes taken for-granted and even eroded with little resistance.

For our academic and practitioner fields of study and engagement, the issues around human rights are particularly acute. In many countries, journalists and other media professionals are still threatened by severe constraints on expression. Concern is mounting about the erosion of information rights and privacy rights in the current digital era. Intellectual property rights are a site of confrontation between capital and creativity. A long-standing philosophical and legal debate rages around the meaning and the practice of the “right to communicate”. In multicultural societies and in a globalised environment, however, the freedom of expression exercised by some confronts the cultural sensitivities of others, sometimes with violent consequences.

Thus the complex of issues around human rights lies at the heart of the research and policy concerns of IAMCR. They also present a challenge for us as an international organization that seeks to intervene in policy domains and to have a voice in international debates: how do we decide what our positions should be?

These are amongst the most crucial issues of our time and Mexico provided a splendid opportunity to debate them. It was a fascinating conference.

PROLOGUE

AIMÉE VEGA MONTIEL

The United Nations Charter of 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 require that all states recognise, establish, protect and enforce human rights at global, regional, national and local levels. Since their adoption, the recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of every person has forced the international community to recognise and assume its responsibility in the promotion of universal respect for and protection of human rights as well as to guarantee the indivisibility of human rights and their interdependence with peace and development.

As pointed out by Cees J. Hamelink (1994), human rights provide a “universally available set of standards for the dignity and integrity of all human beings”. The fulfilment of these standards, based on the principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, inviolability, inclusiveness, diversity, universality and participation, is directly linked to the possibilities of communication as a right. In this sense, the MacBride Report (1980) says that the right to communicate is a prerequisite for other human rights. Particularly, we must recognise the existing connection between the right to communicate and those human rights that guarantee public participation. Thus the right to communicate involves other basic human rights, such as freedom of expression, the right to information and universal access to information and knowledge, but also the participation of citizens in decision-making processes about communication and information policies, the promotion of cultural diversity by the media and new information and communication technologies, access of social groups that have historically been excluded from the public sphere to resources and tools to realise their

right to communicate and the protection of privacy and confidentiality of communication.

The importance of communication as a basic human right is also established in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”.

However, while recognising the importance of communication in contemporary societies and its positive impact, we must not ignore the negative aspects resulting from the lack of access which prevents many groups from exercising their communication rights.

Peace, democracy and development will only be achieved if we guarantee the principles of communication as a human right, the right to communicate for all. Consequently, we consider it imperative to promote the analysis, discussion and formulation of information and communication strategies and policies from the perspective of human rights. This is a responsibility we cannot postpone and it is the *raison d’être* of this volume which brings together contributions from specialists who, coming from diverse areas of expertise and political action, contributed to the discussion of this issue that is central to global coexistence within the framework of the conference of the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) held in Mexico City at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in July 2009.

The Local Organising Committee of the 2009 IAMCR Conference wishes to express its gratitude to all the authors who have made this book possible as well as to the IAMCR and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, especially its Centro de Investigaciones Interdisciplinarias en Ciencias y Humanidades, for their confidence and great support.

Salud.

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INTRODUCTION: COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

NÉSTOR GARCÍA CANCLINI

Thank you very much for the invitation to participate in this Conference of the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). Specialising in communications has been my way as an anthropologist to analyse culture and society, as I believe that the inclusion of the cultural industry and the most recent forms of communication, not only the local ones, is necessary in order to do anthropology.

I feel a little insecure on the subject of human rights because I haven't dealt with it in a very focussed way. As all of you, I am aware of the current human rights issues and their history. I have been involved with several institutions dedicated to this subject. Currently, I am working with the Asociación Mexicana de Derecho a la Información.

It is very important that the Organizing Committee for this Conference chose this subject, as it is of worldwide strategic importance and quite relevant to the current situation of the media. I applaud the choice of Mexico as the location of this conference as, without a doubt, it is one of the countries in which human rights are more frequently violated, a condition that the social movement is trying to solve.

I recently attended an artist's discussion panel. They talked about human rights in contemporary art. One of the participants, a specialist in gender issues and feminism, said that while the most widely known and dominant media event is perhaps that of the *Muertas de Juárez* (The dead women of Ciudad Juárez), in recent years there have been many more deaths. That's the way it is, we live in a situation in which femicide and gender violence remain, without a doubt, very important matters. However, violence against indigenous people and other discriminated groups throughout history are just as important and their scope covers all of society.

The Italian movie *Gomorra* is currently showing in Mexican theatres and in theatres in almost every country, as one of the effects of globalization's simultaneity. If you have seen it, you will have noticed that, at the very end, there are some notes on the effects of the narration being presented as fiction and document. One of the facts mentioned is that the Italian *Camorra* has an enormous impact on the international economy, as it invests in many countries around the world. For example, it has invested in the reconstruction of the New York Twin Towers. Another scandal mentioned—and it is in fact a huge scandal—is that over 30 years the *Camorra* has assassinated four thousand people.

In the past two years, twice as many people – more than eight thousand – have been killed in Mexico. It is in the face of situations like these which take place in our nation, as well as in others, that I would like to begin with the question: Actually, who cares about human rights? Research and discussions of this issue have been headed by lawyers, philosophers, politicians and members of social movements. At this conference, I mainly want to discuss two perspectives developed in recent years: that of anthropology and that of communication research. I am interested in these two disciplines because of the way they present the universal problem of human rights and of the different approaches they consider.

The other question we have to ask ourselves is related to the first one: Can it be said that human rights are universal? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is actually more a desire than a reality. Let us take an example: the French Revolution, as the background for the creation and recognition of human rights, took place more than two centuries ago. Yet, more than a century and a half after that historical event, in most countries around the world, women could not vote.

In that sense, we know of the different perceptions on humanity, culture and individual and collective rights in western, Asian and African countries. Notwithstanding the differences, perhaps it would be possible to generalise the form and content of culture and communication rights. The differences between cultures and the way in which they understand human rights are further complicated by the differences between knowledge disciplines, from philosophy and theology to the social sciences.

This is why I want to briefly refer to the need for an interdisciplinary approach to cultural and communication rights. As you know, each of the social sciences offers a different way to study societies. For anthropologists, this investigation implies working mainly with differences and worrying about the things that make us homogeneous. Sociologists stop and observe the movements that make us equal and those that increase disparity. Specialists in communications tend to think about

differences and disparities in terms of the inclusion and exclusion of information and entertainment media. According to each of these disciplines, cultural rights are understood using different codes.

For anthropology, which specialises in differences, cultural rights have to do with community membership and the possibility of communicating with others. From the perspective of some sociological theories critical of inequity, culture is something that is acquired by being part of the elite, something that adheres to thought and taste. Cultural differences arise, according to some authors, like Pierre Bourdieu, from the unequal appropriation of economic and educational resources. Communication research believes, almost always, that having culture means being connected. Therefore, the communications debate on cultural rights often refers to freedom of expression, intellectual property and media access. Given these differences, it is not possible to imagine an evolving process of substitution of some theories for others.

The problem is to find out how community culture, distinction culture and *dot com* culture coexist, collide or ignore each other. It is a theoretical issue and a key dilemma for the social and cultural politics of this transdisciplinary project, which consists not only of recognizing differences, but of correcting inequities and connecting majorities to the globalization networks. To define each one of these three terms, difference, inequity and connection, we have to think of the how they complement and differ from each other. None of these subjects have the same format they had 20 or 30 years ago, and even less so, 50 years ago when the IAMCR was founded. Above all, they have changed since technological globalisation simultaneously interconnected nearly the entire planet and thus created new differences, inequities and disconnections. Where is this debate and this transdisciplinary relationship situated in Latin America? In statements made by government organisations of modern western countries, cultural rights seem to circle around the development of personal potentialities and the respect for differences between groups. Human rights are thought to be related to the preservation of language, of homeland, of community relations. In recent years, organisations such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) have given socioeconomic rights a central role: work, social security, food, education, housing, and equal access to such goods. In their studies, ECLAC, and IACHR, as well as other institutions, have broadened the notion on human rights to cultural rights. Even the individual notion of cultural rights—which considers them to be more than only language or local cultural rights—shows that the assessment

of differences must be complemented by what I would call connective rights, i.e. participation within cultural industries and communications.

The right to be different is analysed together with integration and equality rights, along with relative participation in the various exchange networks. In Latin America we don't have a unified way to organise differences, inequities, connections and disconnections, nor do we organise rights in these three areas. Some prefer to stress ethnic, national or gender differences and that is the reason why they sponsor autonomy projects as diverse as the Aymaras natives project (which seeks to transform Bolivia into the Republic of Qullasuyo), the Mexican Zapatistas and analogue movements in Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Guatemala, which seek to attain community self-government and so gain respect for their positions within the modern nations in which they exist.

Governments that assume, at some level, differences and national interests, but commit themselves to sponsoring more independent projects for endogenous development, are in another sociopolitical category. In these cases, at the core of the political project, there is not an ethnic difference defined in identity terms, but the characterisation of internal and international inequity as a problem generated by a history of unfair exchanges. These governments consider the asymmetry produced by the first liberal era of capitalism an historical outcome and ask themselves how to overcome inequities arising from the irresponsible opening of national economies; the dispossession of educational, economic and cultural resources and the transfer of wealth from majorities to unproductive and speculative national and international financial elites.

The traditional left sectors and so-called populist movements pursue the mobilisation of popular fronts, including blue collars, unemployed, indigenous, agricultural worker associations, and urban citizens in countries like Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico and many other countries in the region, arguing for the recovery of national management capacity, the improvement of wealth distribution and a fairer position in globalisation negotiations.

There is a third and less developed view that highlights the decisive role of information and communication technologies in transnational restructuring and in labour, commercial and consumption processes. It posits that the key to developing an efficient program is the inclusion of broad sectors in technological advances. The political programme of this position seeks to overhaul education, update the production system and mobilise and expand modern resources. Not all supporters of this view behave in the same way, as some of them are more technocratic and others try not to connect elites with transnational business

movements without questioning the social implications of this internal and global articulation.

It is difficult to picture any type of transformation towards a fairer regime without policies that are able to communicate these different approaches towards the claiming of rights. Such approaches should be able to give voice to those who are different through ethnic, gender and regional policies and to correct inequities arising from such differences and other inequitable distributions of resources while at the same time connecting society with information, with the health, welfare and cultural repertoire that is expanding on a global scale.

We know little about efficient ways to operate simultaneously within these three approaches and how they mutually reinforce each other. I think this is one of the major challenges for communication and cultural research. The theoretical and cultural positions of the three approaches I have explained conceive differently of the citizenship that entitles us to demand rights. As Amartya Sen demonstrated when he articulated the problem of poverty as complete dispossession, the threshold for citizenship is achieved not only by respecting differences but by achieving the minimum amount of resources that qualify us for participation in society. What are these qualifying resources? Work, health, purchasing power and other socioeconomic rights, along with what he calls the basket of education, information and knowledge, that is, the skills that can be used to get a better job, more income and to communicate information to the world.

Segmented and unequal access to cultural industries and particularly to the interactive products that provide updated information broaden, according to Amartya Sen, “the distances in access to timely information and the development of adaptive abilities that allow more possibilities for personal development and thus generate better chances of effective socioeconomic integration”.

In this context, we come to the point of asking what are appropriate cultural rights and communication policies in a time of economic concentration and polarisation of what here we will call *unequaled differences*. We know that diversity exists not only because different sectors of society choose to develop in different ways but also because they had unequal chances to access goods. In conclusion, there are ethnic, linguistic, gender and age differences that are not necessarily conditioned by inequity and there are other differences caused by inequity.

The Argentinean author Ana María Fernández published in the Colombian but internationally renowned magazine *Nómadas* (volume 30, April), a very interesting article that proposes this notion of unequaled differences to describe the construction of differences through the mechanism of power: gender, class, ethnic

or geopolitical. It points out that differences are not formed first and followed by an unfair and unjust society. Therefore, the question is not only the description of differences or inequities but the elucidation of the different hermeneutic categories that allow the visualisation and formulation of the production-reproduction of the different biopolitical devices that configure in one movement this difference and this inequality. It is not enough to count the poor and talk about poverty, to describe the cultural characteristics of a subordinate community or to reveal women's specificities. Instead, Fernández points out, we must explain the biopolitical devices that construct identities in such an unequal manner, to expose the multiple domination and subjection networks between subordinates and dominants in the construction of their identities as unequaled differences.

Both forms of diversity, those that exist historically among cultures and those that generate socioeconomic and communicational inequities, are affected by the procedures that we could call a *media funnel*. The variety of styles and forms of interaction and the coexistence of cultures are reduced as they are captured by the media. Sociocultural plurality that was before homogenised by unification or national *mestizaje* policies is now suffering a major reductionism, proportional to the monopolistic concentration of publishing and audiovisual industries under journalistic and transnational music media companies.

In the moment when social sciences and cultural policies of various states recognise and investigate heterogeneity, it is selected and impoverished through what Brazilian anthropologist José Jorge de Carvalho has called intercultural equalization policies. This author uses the well-known concept of *world music* as an example. Such a concept attempts to avoid the extremes, even collecting different kinds of music and subjecting them to a unified and stereotyped melodisation, compatible with the hearing formed on other continents.

What is currently happening with diversity policies and the rights of those who are different? In issue 4 of magazine *Pensamiento Iberoamericano*, coordinated by Alfons Martinell and myself, both specialists in ethnic, gender, education and media diversity in Latin America and Spain, we presented an assessment of the progress and setbacks in these areas. There is a general conclusion: diversity is undeniable. Yet it has little power. Declarations made at Ibero-American and presidential and culture ministry summits tend to recognise such diversity and at the same time they underline shared historical tendencies.

Why then are integration programmes so ineffective? Similar questions brought about the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted in 2001 by the member states of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (Unesco) and the Convention on Cultural Diversity, approved by an overwhelming majority, opposed only by the United States and Israel, at the 33rd General Conference of Unesco, in November 2005, and whose delayed application to specific processes shows more and more difficulties than achievements. At the same time progress has been observed when constitutional articles include recognition of *multicultural countries*—Colombia in 1991, Ecuador in 1998. However, discrimination and interethnic conflicts persist and the rights of the excluded reach but little effective recognition.

What then are the consequences of these discrepancies between multicultural declarations and social processes in which the respective rights are denied? Is national cooperation in the defence of human rights possible? Again, we encounter cultural diversity and the difficulty to generalise coexistence.

I would like to once again take up some ideas from a text I read at the meeting held in Buenos Aires, involving Spaniards and Latin Americans, a few weeks ago, on the current situation of cultural cooperation in our region. I find it appropriate to remember that we now think that so called Latin American unity—it is a bibliographic common place—exists less as a common identity than as a sociocultural space. Instead of looking for an essential definition of *Latin Americanness*, we would best talk about a shared cultural, political, socioeconomic and communicative space for the coexistence of heterogeneous audiences with different identities, languages and itineraries. There are no biological grounds, nor is there any common tradition, to assure a shared and unified development or the creation of equal rights for everybody. Yet, it is not such diversity that creates more difficulties when facing cooperative development, human rights and communication policies but the despising of differences and the worsening of socioeconomic and communicational inequity.

How can these ineffective processes and frustrations be overcome? At the very base of the spoiled cultural, development and cooperation relationships, some authors find chronic differences between education inequities and the inability of schools to incorporate current demands for development. How do we educate the new generations on migration and multilingualism and provide them with the ability to understand the connections between cultural industries and digital networks that create new modes of access and intercommunication? If access to cultural goods is conditioned mainly by education, because of the educational lag and decadence of education systems in Latin America, almost all links to development and progress of social and cultural rights are hampered.

How far can a generalised education, which is said to guarantee access to national shared values, go if the necessary updating and specialisation for global

innovation is not included? We now are at a different stage from that of last century, when meetings like this one discussed media diversity. The unresolved diversity and intercultural issues have become more pressing as audiovisual industries join in digital circuits and thus create new differences and inequities, not only territorial or historical, but according to new modes of access. As the management of these interactions falls more and more into the hands of transnational companies in the editorial, cinema, television, and digital service fields, the cultural rights of every citizen and society are diminished.

Political integration and the goals of equality and justice are diminished in the face of the new commercial negotiation agendas. The multiplication of integration experiences amongst states, like the Southern Common Market or those between Spain and the European Union with some Latin American countries, have shown few common continuous results. Partly on account of political instability and also because of the weak structure of public agencies and relationship divides among country blocs, arising from economic confrontations between private and state interests. Within the field of communications, both the European integration process and the precarious Latin American integration programmes have done little to overcome communication gaps or broaden rights.

Can we aspire, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, to research and cultural policies leveraged in strategic circuits or in digital networks, both in private and public access and in online creativity? Or is it barely possible to expect them to continue handling the ancient “protected species”: books, museums and author cinema? What human and communicational rights are we able to exercise and promote? If we look to what is happening with policies trying to develop culture, the conclusion is that wrong notions prevail in anachronistic places. It is fatigue without imagination. Most of the national cultural policies and the international cooperation policies still revolve around people, material goods, and institutions located in a physical space. All of the above is useful. Yet, in the era of the dematerialisation and digitalisation of symbolic goods, culture departments devote most of their budgets to managing museums, to the construction of cultural centres that function as spectacular architectonic references and to paying the salaries of institutions such as museums, theatres, orchestras, and libraries, representative of illustrated culture and situated in specific points of the city.

The states that, since the massive expansion of the media, have ceded to private companies unilateral decision-making powers over content and economic conditions about the use of theatres and television do not assign funds or personnel to researching and promoting the contribution of digital communication to the

restructuring of the digital public sphere of rights of access to communication networks.

In an era of transnational communication, the activities of government and most social sectors—even many non-governmental organisations, trade unions, and social movements—still place at the centre of their concerns convincing people to visit the institutions located in major or average-sized cities, in privileged neighbourhoods, the theatres, museums and concert halls, and creating some kind of resource for editors and publishers to survive and to make youth read more. Public polls on public subsidies for these institutions and their reading habits show that young people—and not only they—watch more movies than before, but not at theatres - on television, video and through the internet, via downloads. What use have they made of the computer, internet and mobile phones in recent years? They have used them to stay informed, to send and receive messages and to study, do homework and share data. All of them are forms of written expression. However, in the iPhone era, there continue to be books and government publications that pit books against television.

In recent years the ministries of culture of some Latin American countries have finally been driving research on cultural consumption, as there still remain localised consumption practices, spawning interest in research of the people that attend theatres, cinemas, libraries and museums. Nowadays, we would appreciate if policies were reformulated to fit such data and better serve a population's cultural rights, but we are in the era of access. Besides fostering independent movie clubs, supporting non-commercial publishing of classical authors and supporting the arts that galleries and biennials won't show, if we want to seriously meet the articulation of culture and communication with development, we must face uncomfortable questions.

I quote only two examples. International cultural cooperation on coproduction and joint distribution seems to now be a first need. The only continent that has made some relatively important progress in these areas is Europe.

One of the few post-rhetorical programmes generated by chiefs of state summits in Latin America is Ibermedia. It was created in 1998 and, after 10 years, it exhibits measurable contributions to the growth of film production in Spanish and the recognition of diversity. It has given grants to 348 films and fostered coproduction networks and cooperation agreements that favour the established filmmaking industries in Spain, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. These projects have included 14 more countries that could increase their production, ranging from Colombia and Chile to Ecuador, Panama and the Dominican Republic, that now have their own relatively significant film production.

Ibermedia directives acknowledge that they are only the first steps towards the creation of an Ibero-American audiovisual space, until now hampered by distribution and exhibition issues. Of course, in first place we would have to mention the obstacle of American hegemony in theatres, but also the lack of policies to access other media—television, video, and DVD—that would pay for production costs. Though it represents progress on cooperation and coproduction, such a step is not enough without achieving a co-distribution that would actually improve circulation on new screens and the formation of audiences willing to assume their rights as spectators. Filmmakers benefit from coproduction, especially in peripheral countries, as this method helps promote the creation rights of such filmmakers. However, only redistribution programs promoting the multicultural exhibition of every continent would contribute to affirming audience rights and achieving an intercultural understanding of the world.

The last issue I will address is maybe even more complex and difficult: How to work with those included, those excluded, and with those that don't want to be included in cultural development policies? The defence of cultural rights of universal access to goods, almost always, involves a social universe that rotates in an apparently coherent way around an axis. However, the modern world, interconnected by technological globalisation and an interdependent economy, breaks up and then disintegrates in crises such as the one we are currently experiencing.

Economist Paul Krugman quotes William Butler Yeats to describe global disorder as a “turning and turning in the widening gyre”. I remember this Nobel Laureate that already in March 2008 spoke about the tendency of many economies to disconnect themselves from the American recession and the ones that follow it. This has brought, among other consequences, the cutting of credit lines and investment between countries which deactivates international cooperation programmes for more balanced development. One of the main effects of this disintegration and world crisis is the cutting—even in the United States and in some of the main European economies—of credits and investments in cultural and communication fields and also of the necessary investments for innovation financing such as digitalisation of audiovisual media that could broaden access rights to cultural goods.

Serious problems existed before the technological and digital bubble burst, but the end of the real estate bubble and other cuts have worsened the thinning budgets of museums, theatres, publishing houses and cultural television channels in the United States, Europe and Latin America. The metaphor of a universe rotating around an axis is being replaced by that of fragile bubbles and repeated budget cuts.

I want to stop a moment on the image of uncoupling, not only of some economies from others but that of some broad social sectors. In development literature, cultural and communication activities were said to be inclusive resources. Social and cultural policies were better valued when they favoured institutional participation and citizenship exercise. Today, rejection of these claims is rife. I want to mention a few examples. In the catastrophic Argentina of 2001, crowds in the streets demanded that “all of them get out!” In many of the recent elections in Latin America, presidents have been chosen from outside political parties, from Alberto Fujimori and Hugo Chávez to Fernando Lugo. The growing number of people who do not vote, especially among young people, is obviously linked to a growing political dissatisfaction, to the search for employment in informal markets, to piracy consumption and, in its more drastic expression, to the country’s abandonment of its migrants. All of these are active forms of distrust towards the prevailing social organisation. Recent polls among young people in Spain, Mexico and Argentina show their lack of interest in the state’s participation and wellbeing proposals and scepticism that civic activities—like voting in elections—would broaden the exercise of their rights. Many of these youngsters prefer inclusion in more experimental networks among people their age, with those that provide employment—even if precarious or illegal—and consumption and communication goods—even if pirated. Even remote communication through digital media provides them with more specificity, as voice and imaging make the relationship instantaneous and provide them with verifiable effects that take place in expressive networks, not abstract structures.

To conclude, I want to underline that I chose these two examples to point out the double risk that makes necessary a relocation of the culture-development-communication-human rights articulation. One register is the political activities within institutions and existing programs; that is why I spoke about Ibermedia. The other aspect is one situated in a field usually taken as anti-politics. This tendency involves people suspicious of grand institutional accounts who do not care to be included therein but who prefer to explore group development or collective methods which cannot be reduced to the exclusion-inclusion antagonism.

Assumption of this double track involves understanding the current conditions beyond the modes of interconnectivity and belonging structured by the legal culture on which inter-governmental and national agencies are focused. It implies such radical changes as not calling free downloads of cultural materials piracy and not thinking that non-corporate communication networks are a threat to development.

Perhaps, issues regarding the diversity of development and human rights would seem appealing to the new generations if we were able to picture culture as something more than just a Google commercial portfolio, five or six publishing houses and two or three record companies interrupted by the presence of underground videos on YouTube. Perhaps, the words *culture*, *communication*, and *human rights* are reinventing their sense of expression in other constructions of meaning whose power depends on what happens with the intellectual rights of creators and the connective rights of audiences.

**COMMUNICATION
AND HUMAN RIGHTS:
GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES**

COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: *INDEX ON CENSORSHIP*

J O G L A N V I L L E

We're coming to the end of an era in Britain, an era that began with the election of New Labour 12 years ago—with its great promises of open government. It's a slightly bitter experience for the British public to remember the commitments made then. Tony Blair called New Labour's pledge to transparency an "unbreakable" promise to the British people. This, said our prime minister in waiting, would be an antidote to the public's "disaffection from politics". This was very much a reaction to the sleaze of the Tory party—after 18 years in power.

Any of you who have been following British politics over the past few months will know that there's never been a greater trust crisis in the political establishment. And the ultimate irony is that it was the government's jewel of the crown so far as transparency is concerned—the Freedom of Information Act of 2005—that actually precipitated this new crisis. We were, shockingly, one of the last countries in Europe to have a legal right to public information.

Let me just briefly sketch for you what happened. When the Freedom of Information Act was passed, campaigners requested details about British politicians' expenses—detailing what they've claimed for according to their allowances. This was hugely resisted by the government—and right up to the end, they—and parliament—attempted to control just how much information was released to the public. In the end, thanks to a good old-fashioned leak to the press, everything came out. And almost the entire political class has been embarrassed in the process—as one politician after another has been exposed fiddling their expenses. Or at least taking the British public for a ride.

We've lost our first ever female home secretary after revelations that her husband claimed pornographic films on his wife's expenses. We have had Members of

Parliament claiming for mortgages that do not exist, we have had another claiming for the cleaning of his moat (a moat for those of you who don't know is a ditch filled with water that surrounds your castle, to keep the barbarians out), and yet another claiming for building a special island for the ducks in his garden. If any of you ever had a stereotypical view of the British—slightly seedy at one extreme and exceedingly posh at the other—then this will help to reinforce it.

Clearly, one of New Labour's biggest mistakes was the belief that it could make a commitment to transparency while continuing to protect a culture of secrecy. It may seem obvious, but you cannot promise open government without having a government that is, well, open... And again, Tony Blair's words come back to haunt him. The New Labour manifesto stated: "Unnecessary secrecy in government leads to arrogance...". It's only thanks to relentless, dogged campaigning that this has come into the public domain at all. And it is no coincidence that the most determined campaigner of them all was an American, Heather Brooke, who lives in Britain. Coming from a culture where access to information is the lifeblood of journalism, where journalists rely heavily on public records, she was puzzled about British political culture and its lack of transparency, where what counts most is not *what* you know but *who* you know.

What the expenses debacle exposes is, I think, a fundamental ambivalence towards free speech and freedom of information in British culture. And this is despite the fact that freedom of expression is now a positive right in English law; which only happened when New Labour incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into English law. We do have to give them credit for that.

There has been a growing sense, in fact, that there is a retreat from the support for free speech. To take one example: if you look at the legislation over the past 12 years, what is particularly striking is the amount of laws that have been passed restricting the right to protest. There was an outcry last April following police behaviour at the G-20 protests in London. A passer-by died after being assaulted by the police. There were 250 complaints about police behaviour from protestors, including 50 complaints for excessive force. What is encouraging, following the outcry, is that the police have actually acknowledged they failed to meet their human rights obligations. Whether this is lip service or whether we really will see an overhaul as promised, remains to be seen.

But I think more broadly, in British culture, there is less tolerance for free speech. There has been a growing acceptance that it is better for society if speech is suppressed than given free rein. And there are multiple examples of this, in the arts as well as politics. The roots of this go back 20 years, to the response to the

publication of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses*. Then we saw intellectuals and politicians argue for the first time that censorship could be a good thing in the name of protecting other cultures from offence. The more recent, widespread justification for censorship has been in the name of national security; though actually it is nothing new. What has changed since 9-11 is its scope.

This shift is continuing to have an impact on journalists, academics, students, political activists; right the way of course to former Guantanamo detainees and to British citizens who were detained in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Dubai. Some of whom are currently accusing British intelligence, MI5, of being complicit in torture.

Last year, in a particularly troubling case, a postgraduate student at Nottingham University downloaded the Al Qaeda Training Manual from the internet and he emailed it to a friend of his who worked at the university, to print the document for him, for his research. He didn't, by the way, download it from a jihadi website, but from a US government website. It's freely available; you can even buy it on Amazon. Someone in the department saw the document, called the police and the two were detained for six days under the Terrorism Act. What was particularly troubling here was not simply the interpretation of the law, so that the mere possession of a document can be a criminal offence, or the police's response; but the fact that someone working in the university itself thought that the printing of this document on a university printer was grounds for calling the police. Surely the university is the one place where discovery and the free flow of information are paramount. It is a measure of how fear and suspicion has seeped into the public consciousness, and the idea that that freedom should be limited.

There has also been prosecution against students and even a schoolboy under this legislation. In these cases, unlike the Nottingham case, they all had a worrying interest in terrorism and violence. But they were not guilty of any crime or conspiracy. They talked about going to Pakistan, they were clearly attracted by violence, but there was no evidence of any plot of any kind. The main evidence against them was the material they had downloaded from the internet. They were prosecuted for possessing an article "in circumstances which give rise to a reasonable suspicion that possession is for a purpose connected with the commission, preparation or instigation of an act of terrorism". They were all convicted and sentenced; and the conviction was overturned on appeal. The young men spent nearly two years in jail.

I am hopeful, that with these cases, the police and Crown Prosecution Service will think twice before they detain, arrest or prosecute anyone on the basis of their reading material. Both these cases were prosecuted under the Terrorism Act 2000—and what has particularly concerned lawyers is how loosely many of the laws

have been drafted—which has made it possible to prosecute people for possessing extremist literature.

But I think these cases are also indicative of a wider trend that is all about how we access information online. What we're finding is that the law is changing so that individuals can be prosecuted for possessing information that they've downloaded; and we are finding that it is happening in the case of obscene or pornographic material too. In the old days it was the publisher who would be taken to court, today it's the consumer. And that is a major change in how the government seeks to control our access to information.

At *Index*, we have been particularly concerned by how terrorism legislation is used against journalists who are investigating terrorism. What we have found, repeatedly, is that journalists who report on terrorism—who write an article or make a film for television—can expect a visit from the police asking for all their notes and sources. In most cases, a great deal of bartering will have to take place in court, the judge will limit the scope of the police's request, the journalist will usually be able to keep their sources confidential and surrender less sensitive material. But what many journalists feel is that the police go on fishing expeditions—just to see what they can get—without concern for their professional integrity, the danger to their livelihood and sometimes their lives, never mind the principle of confidentiality of sources; which has been recognised by the European Court as a fundamental bedrock of press freedom. In some cases we find that some of the material the police ask for is in the public domain on websites, even published in magazines. In the most recent case, earlier this year, the police wanted the notes and sources of a journalist from Northern Ireland, Suzanne Breen, whose life would have been in very serious danger if she had handed them over.

Now threats to national security are of course recognised as grounds for overriding the right to free speech. But what seems to have broadened quite alarmingly is the definition of terrorism. And the broad use of the law to criminalise activity that cannot be called terrorism by any stretch of the imagination. Under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act, the police can stop and search you without reasonable grounds. It has been used against people protesting against climate change and most famously against an 80-year-old man who heckled the foreign secretary at a conference. In other words, it has become a routine means for policing political expression. The government brought in additional legislation after the bombing on the London underground in 2005 that makes glorifying terrorism an offence; and which technically means that even calling for the downfall of an authoritarian regime can be a criminal offence.

Now, I spoke at the beginning about the sense of an era coming to a close. And a reckoning that is only just beginning, and which will I'm sure, continue for many

months, is how far the government and intelligence services sanctioned torture. There are a number of cases now where British citizens and residents who were arrested and tortured in Pakistan and Bangladesh, have claimed that British intelligence questioned them when they were being held. And there's evidence that the British also provided information that was used in interrogations that involved torture. It has emerged that intelligence officers were told that they should not intervene if torture was taking place, as the prisoners were not in their custody or control. But in international law, this level of involvement of British intelligence makes them complicit in torture.

There is currently a case being fought in the High Court in London by the media—including *Index*—to release information about the treatment of a former Guantanamo detainee, Binyam Mohamed. The government wants to censor a summary of 42 documents relating to his mistreatment. Binyam Mohamed was first tortured in Pakistan, where he was also questioned by an MI5 officer. He was then sent to Morocco, where he endured further appalling torture. The questions he was asked in Morocco, including details about his life in England, make it clear that the information must have been coming from the British. We now know that MI5 gave information to the Central Intelligence Agency that was passed to the Moroccans and used as the basis of his interrogation. The government is doing all it can to keep the information hidden. It has even been accused of misleading the Court in its efforts to stop publication of the summary. The police have just begun an inquiry into the case of Binyam Mohamed and Amnesty International is calling for a full public inquiry into all the allegations.

It is not the only example of evidence that is very much in the public interest and that is being kept secret. There is another case—Rangzieb Ahmed—where not only has some of the evidence been kept secret, but so has the judge's ruling. Martin Scheinen, the United Nations special rapporteur on human rights, has accused the British government of concealing illegal acts "to protect itself from criticism, embarrassment and—most importantly—liability".

This is then, a very depressing end for a government that promised to be so squeaky clean and transparent. I find it remarkable that no one has resigned over these revelations and that there is not in fact a greater outrage. Nor is it encouraging to look to America and to see President Obama reneging on his promise to release photographs of further prisoner abuse in Afghanistan as well as Iraq.

By the time the full truth of the government's sanction of torture comes to light it is likely that New Labour will be out of power. And the Conservatives, who are now so much on the side of the angels, may also, like Obama, find reasons of expediency for keeping information out of the public domain.

COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: UNESCO'S ROLE

K W A M E B O A F O

It is really good to have the opportunity to attend another IAMCR conference. The last conference I attended was in Barcelona, Spain, a number of years ago. As some of you know, I used to be a very active member of the Association, having served for a long time as a member of the International Council and was indeed elected a Vice-President of the Association at the General Conference in Brazil in 1992. I had to relinquish that position when I first joined the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) in March 1993. I should also express my gratitude to the organisers of this conference for offering Unesco the opportunity to share with you some information on our perspectives on the conference theme and our programmes dealing with communication and human rights. The theme of this conference, communication and human rights, is both appropriate and timely, coming as it does after the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008. I am certain that many a paper will be presented in the next few days dealing with different aspects of and perspectives on the conference theme, including scholarly and conceptual analysis as well as research findings. What I plan to do in the minutes given me, is share with you not so much a conceptual analysis but rather information on some of Unesco's recent normative actions and operational programmes and projects dealing with communication and human rights.

To begin with, it is important to recall that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in December 1948, was the first universal standard-setting instrument to proclaim equal dignity and rights for all members of the human family. It enshrined a set of individual rights and fundamental freedoms which should be implemented for

“everyone, everywhere and always”, as noted by Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of Unesco [1999-2009]. Perhaps, it is a sign of its universality that, since its adoption 61 years ago, the Declaration has been translated into more than 330 languages. Let me note that four of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are within Unesco’s direct competence. These are:

- The right to freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to seek, receive and impart information (Article 19).
- The right to education (Article 26).
- The right to take part in cultural life (Article 27).
- The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (Article 27).

In all those four human rights, Unesco works to: a) encourage and disseminate human rights research; b) promote education in human rights; c) lead action in the fight against all forms of discrimination at national, regional and international levels; d) encourage cooperation among all actors and networks, and e) promote democracy and further reflection on new forms of violence, intolerance, discrimination and violations of human rights. Based upon its functions as a laboratory of ideas, a standard-setter, a clearing-house and a capacity-builder, the Organization’s actions centre around generating and sharing knowledge, protecting human rights, renewing and reinforcing commitment to human rights education and providing advisory services and technical assistance to Member States. Indeed, Unesco’s Constitution, adopted in November 1945, obliges the Organization to promote and protect human rights when it proclaims in Article 1 that the purpose of the Organization is “... to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among its nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without discrimination of race, sex, language or religion, by the Charter of the United Nations”. It was with the purpose of reinforcing its work in human rights that in 2003 Unesco adopted a strategy on human rights which denotes the Organization’s actions in mainstreaming human rights in all its programmes and projects; promoting policy-oriented research; disseminating knowledge on human rights; and strengthening partnerships.

To commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Unesco, along with its networks of partners, organized a number of activities worldwide to promote the rights enshrined in the Declaration and sensitise the

general public about Unesco's essential contribution to the reinforcement of those rights pertaining to its fields of competence (under the general UN theme of *Dignity and justice for all of us*). Unesco's Director-General launched the Organization's celebrations on 10 December 2007; incidentally 10 December is also International Human Rights Day. In his address on that occasion, the Director-General noted: "The Universal Declaration has given invaluable impetus to the advancement of human rights. The 60th anniversary of its adoption is first and foremost, an opportunity to evaluate the situation of human rights throughout the world, to analyze obstacles that impede their enjoyment, and to reflect on challenges that could become major obstacles to the implementation of human rights tomorrow". The activities organized included exhibitions, symposia, conferences, special publications and other documents. Most relevant to the theme of this IAMCR conference was an international symposium and exhibition on freedom of expression, held at the Unesco headquarters in Paris in October 2008. That symposium brought together more than 400 participants, including representatives of Member States as well as of major non-governmental organisations, policy-makers, Nobel Prize laureates and World Press Freedom Prize winners and media professionals who examined the particular significance of 19th Article of the Declaration which enshrines freedom of expression as a fundamental, inalienable human right¹ in the context of dialogue, democracy and development.

Another event worth mentioning here, was the presentation on 10 December 2008 by the Director-General of Unesco of the Unesco/Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights² to Mr. Stéphane Hessel³ of France who

¹ Article 19 states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers".

² The Unesco/Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights (which replaces the Unesco Prize for Human Rights Education created 30 years ago) rewards the efforts of institutions, organisations and individuals that have made a particularly important contribution to the promotion of human rights through education, research and efforts to raise the awareness of decision makers and the general public. The prize, which is awarded every two years, is funded by a donation from the city of Bilbao (Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, Spain).

³ Stéphane Hessel was rewarded for his exceptional contribution "to the promotion of a culture of human rights, justice and dignity" as well as his "personal involvement in the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". Born in 1917, Stéphane Hessel has been a tireless advocate of human rights and helped draft the text of the Declaration. In 1962 he created the Association for Training of African and Malagasy Workers (AFTAM). A member of the French Higher Council for Integration, the French National Consultative Commission on Human Rights and the French Higher Council for

participated in drafting the Universal Declaration 61 years ago and who remains an untiring champion of human rights. Unesco also organized a round table, entitled “Putting human rights into practice: the role of education”, in Paris on 10-11 December 2008 which brought together researchers, academics and representatives from ministries of education in a number of countries to discuss the implementation of human rights education in national contexts, share experiences and practices and also identify areas in which human rights education should be reinforced. There were other similar events organized by the National Commissions for Unesco and other Unesco partners all over the world to promote the four main rights pertaining to our organisation’s fields of competence and encourage reflection about them. Unesco’s commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights officially ended in February 2009, with the establishment of an International Centre for the Advancement of Human Rights in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The principal objective of the Centre is to promote and enhance human rights education at the national, regional and international levels through research, training, dissemination and exchange of “best practices” and lessons learnt. The Centre is expected to open officially in 2010 on the occasion of Argentina’s 200th republican anniversary.

I have cited the activities above as illustrations of Unesco’s operational actions dealing with human rights in general. The remaining sections of this presentation will focus on normative and operational actions specific to Unesco’s communication and information programme.

UNESCO’S NORMATIVE ACTIONS ON COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

On the normative side in communication and information, Unesco has a specific mandate, enshrined in its Constitution, to foster “the free exchange of ideas and knowledge” and “the free flow of ideas by word and image”. It is enjoined to “collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image...”. Thus, Unesco is the only UN agency

International Cooperation, he was also—at almost 80 years of age—a mediator during the occupation in 1996 of the Saint-Bernard church in Paris by illegal immigrants.

with a special mandate to defend press freedom and the Organisation recognizes that press freedom is central to building strong democracies, promoting civic participation and the rule of law and encouraging human development and security. One may argue that freedom of opinion and of expression constitute the cornerstone of any democratic society and a solid and indispensable basis for development. Indeed, the right that guarantees freedom of expression is widely seen as underpinning all other human rights and democratic freedoms. If individuals do not have the right to freely seek, receive and impart their ideas and opinions, they may also not be able to benefit from other human rights. The right to freedom of expression and opinion also has a corollary, namely freedom of the press, which is normally perceived as the individual's right to freedom of expression extended to the media. It is more and more generally accepted that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are of importance for the *three Ds*: development, democracy and dialogue. A number of studies and scholarly work have documented the correlation or inter-relationship between a free press and the three Ds. Without an open space for the multiplicity of ideas to flourish, societies fail to progress by any measure on the political, social, cultural, economic and human development scales.

In 1976, Unesco issued a report on means of enabling active participation in the communication process and analysis of the right to communicate. It was in response to Resolution 4.121 adopted by the General Conference at its 18th Session in 1974 which called on the Director-General to “study and define the right to communicate in consultation with competent organs of the UN and with professional organisations and other interested institutions”. Among other things, the report examined the concept of *the right to communicate* and its relationship with other human rights and discussed the possibilities of access and participation in the communication process. It stressed:

The changing world situation is bringing about profound changes in human communication. These changes are leading to new and enlarged perspectives. A strong relationship between human communication needs, the development of communication resources and human rights becomes evident. This relationship may be stated in the following way: mankind has the right to communication resources required to satisfy human communication needs. The right to communicate reflects the individual human need to communicate (Unesco, 1976: 7).

The report further noted that “the concept of the right to communicate is [...] still evolving and the immediate need is to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of the meaning and implications of the right as seen in different socio-economic systems and cultures and to promote widespread interest and debate on the issues involved” (Unesco, 1976: 7). I have cited that seminal report because it gave rise to a number of debates, scholarly presentations, research, analyses and publications as well as the formation of advocacy groups in the subject area. Unesco has over the years been involved in, supported and promoted many of these policy debates, scholarly research work, analyses and publications, including the often-quoted McBride Commission whose report stated:

Everyone has the right to communicate: the components of this comprehensive human right include but are not limited to the following specific communication rights: (a) a right to assemble, a right to discuss, a right to participate and related association rights; (b) a right to inquire, a right to be informed, a right to inform and related information rights; and (c) a right to a culture, a right to choose, a right to privacy and related human development rights (...) The achievement of a right to communicate would require that communication resources be available for the satisfaction of human communication needs (MacBride, 1980: 173).

Unesco’s commitment to the fundamental principles for freedom of expression, access to and the free flow of information goes beyond the normative level, beyond advocacy, promoting and enhancing international cooperation. One should stress the other side of the right to freedom of expression, which is the ability to use it. Thus, providing capacity building for media professionals and ensuring media and information literacy skills for each and every citizen permeate Unesco’s programme in communication and information. For the remaining sections of my presentation, I wish to share with you some examples of the operational actions which Unesco undertakes in promoting the exercise of the right to communicate. The illustrations cover our actions on: a) promoting freedom of expression, press freedom, independent and pluralistic media systems; b) establishing Unesco Chairs in Human Rights and Democracy; c) strengthening public service broadcasting; d) media education and information literacy, and c) promoting and reinforcing community media.

PROMOTING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, PRESS FREEDOM, INDEPENDENT AND PLURALISTIC MEDIA SYSTEMS

In 1945, three years before the adoption and proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the founders of Unesco identified “the free flow of ideas by word and image” as a vital prerequisite for mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples as well as for their cooperation.

Unfortunately, the realities of the Cold War, during which the fight for control of information was one of the main issues, reduced this fundamental principle to a declaration of intent which does not carry any real weight outside Western democracies. The free flow of information was, in fact, a principle which contradicted the constraints of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes prevalent in most of the countries at that time. As the German philosopher Hannah Arendt wrote in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: “The force possessed by totalitarian propaganda lies in its ability to shut the masses off from the real world”. In 1989, when the Berlin Wall came down, thus marking the end of the Cold War, the 25th Unesco General Conference adopted a New Communication Strategy to replace the very controversial New World Information and Communication Order. The objective of this New Communication Strategy was “to render more operational the concern of the Organization to ensure a free flow of information at international as well as national levels and its wider and better balanced dissemination, without obstacles to the freedom of expression, and to strengthen communication capacities in the developing countries so that they can participate more actively in the communication process”. In adopting this New Communication Strategy, the General Conference clearly expressed the intention of Member States to return to the prime objective of the Organization as defined in its Constitution which is to facilitate “the free flow of ideas, by word and image”.

As part of the strategic plans or to translate the strategy into operational activities, Unesco, in collaboration with the UN Department of Public Information and press freedom organisations throughout the world, organized a series of seminars in different regions designed to promote free, independent and pluralistic media systems. These took place in all regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab countries and Europe. The Declarations of Windhoek, Almaty, Santiago, Sana’a and Sofia were adopted at the closing of the seminars and were subsequently endorsed by the Member States of Unesco.⁴ The first of these seminars took place in Windhoek, Namibia, 29 April to 3 May 1991.

⁴ For detailed presentations of these declarations see Unesco (2003).

Participants in that seminar adopted the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press on 3 May 1991. The Windhoek Declaration was endorsed by the 26th Session of the Unesco General Conference in November 1991 and led to the UN General Assembly Decision of 20 December 1993 to establish 3 May as World Press Freedom Day. Since that proclamation by the UN General Assembly in 1993 and the establishment in 1997 of the Unesco/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, the World Press Freedom Day and the award of the World Press Freedom Prize each year have become key events in Unesco's actions in promoting, sensitising and raising awareness about freedom of expression, press freedom. Also, Unesco supports such international and regional organisations as the International Freedom of Expression Exchange, the Media Institute of Southern Africa, the Media Foundation of West Africa, the Network of Latin American Newspapers for a Culture of Peace and Latin American Network of Radio Stations for a Culture of Peace in Latin America to provide information on freedom of expression issues as well as abuses and violations and raise awareness of the dangers confronting media professionals around the world. Similarly, Unesco provides support for the formulation of national legislation dealing with press freedom to ensure that they are in line with internationally-recognised standards which acknowledge the right to access information and freedom of information. The Organization is working towards recognition of the freedom to access information held by public bodies as a universal right. At the moment there are about 70 freedom of information laws across the world and 20-30 new ones are under preparation. It provides technical and financial support to strengthen independent and pluralistic media systems, particularly in developing countries and post-conflict zones.

ESTABLISHING UNESCO CHAIRS IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

As a component of its actions to encourage studies, debate and dissemination of research findings on human rights and in line with its function as a laboratory of ideas, Unesco has established about 60 Unesco Chairs on Human Rights, Democracy and Peace in different countries. Such Unesco Chairs have been set up at universities and other institutions of higher education in such countries as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic and Mexico (in Latin America and the Caribbean); Benin, Ethiopia, Mali, South Africa (in Africa); Belarus,

Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (in Europe); Egypt, Israel, Morocco (in the Middle East); and India and Thailand (in Asia and the Pacific). In general, the purposes of these chairs are to promote: a) high-level research, training, documentation and information dissemination in human rights, democracy and peace; b) international collaboration among researchers and academics and giving impetus to the dissemination of knowledge on human rights issues; and c) education for human rights, peace and democracy. I should also mention here that Unesco established Chairs in Freedom of Expression in Argentina and Fiji to, among other things, create a culture of freedom of expression through enhanced university education in press freedom issues. However, for various reasons, the Chairs in Freedom of Expression have not been as active as the other Chairs mentioned earlier.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING

For several decades now, Unesco has been very active in promoting the concept and strengthening of public service broadcasting for education, human rights, cultural diversity and civil society development. This has been done primarily through support for research, conferences, technical and advisory services to Member States or institutions who desire to transform their broadcasting systems into public service broadcasting. We have also produced such publications as *Public service broadcasting: cultural and educational dimensions* and *Public service broadcasting: a best practices source book*. Such publications provide information to media professionals, decision-makers, researchers and other interested people/institutions on the core public service broadcasting concepts related to legal, regulatory, financial and other major issues recognised by the international professional community. In October 2005, Unesco, in collaboration with the Portuguese National Commission for Unesco, organised an international conference on promoting public services in the media: human rights, tolerance, multilingualism and the fight against discrimination. The conference provided the space for representatives of media regulatory bodies, media professionals, academics, civil society organisations and human rights advocates to discuss and exchange ideas on how the media can best further human rights, cultural diversity and the struggle against racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination. These actions are based on the premise that genuine, editorially independent public service broadcasting can reinforce open dialogue and provide society with diverse programmes.

MEDIA EDUCATION AND INFORMATION LITERACY

Unesco holds the view that media and information literacy is essential to empowering diverse population segments in all societies to enjoy the benefits of the right to communicate. To participate in their own development, people must be free to “seek, receive and impart information and ideas”, as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. An all-inclusive concept of media and information literacy has three related objectives, namely to: a) give access to all kinds of media that are potential tools to understand society and to participate in democratic life; b) develop skills for the critical analysis of messages, whether in news or entertainment, in order to strengthen the capacities of autonomous individuals and active users; and c) encourage production, creativity and interactivity in the different media of communication. Media and information literacy enables improved understanding of the functions of media in a democracy and inculcates the critical knowledge needed to assess media content and engage with media. For more than a quarter of a century, Unesco has been supporting, promoting and encouraging programmes and international cooperation in media education/literacy, dating back to the Grünwald Declaration of 1982⁵ which recognised the need for political and educational systems to promote citizens’ critical understanding of “the phenomena of communication”. Unesco’s strategy in promoting media education consists of awareness-raising about the importance of these fields at all levels of the education process—teacher training, primary, secondary and lifelong education—as well as establishing guidelines and promoting policies for curriculum development. In the context of this strategy, the Organization initiated in May 2008 a project aimed at fostering media and information literacy among young people throughout the world through the integration of media and information literacy as a part of teacher training curricula. The pilot project intends to enrich teacher training curricula with media and information literacy components in a number of countries in Africa, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. The results of the pilot will be synthesised and shared with a view to enhancing teachers’ abilities to impart media and information literacy and encouraging decision-makers and authorities at education ministries to introduce those components in the education curricula.

⁵ Grünwald Declaration on Media Education, adopted at the Unesco International Symposium on Media Education, Grünwald, Germany, January 22, 1982.

PROMOTING AND REINFORCING COMMUNITY MEDIA

When we speak of the right to communicate, we should acknowledge that different segments of the national population in each society must have access to communication structures, resources and facilities. However, people at the grassroots community level are often in no position to “seek, receive and impart information and ideas”, as stated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Often they are not able to speak out, express their needs, aspirations and fears, and participate in the decisions that concern their development. Therein lies the rationale for action to increase access to communication media, especially for women, young people, and population segments living in rural communities and disadvantaged sections of urban areas and to build or enhance local human capacity in the use of communication and information technologies for development activities.

Unesco is aware that it is those communities most affected by poverty which are least able to impart and obtain information. As a result, they are prevented from fully enjoying their rights; they are excluded from public debate and unable to influence decisions that have a profound impact on their everyday lives. Unesco's action to foster universal access to information and knowledge consists in assisting Member States in establishing national information policy frameworks which give particular attention to the empowerment of users, particularly girls and women, the youth population and people with disabilities to access information and knowledge. The Organization undertakes work to raise awareness about the necessity to formulate these appropriate policy frameworks and promote the concept of community media, most especially in developing countries. It also provides technical and financial assistance to set up, strengthen and operate community radio and community multimedia centres (CMC) in many regions of the world. Unesco has assisted in establishing about 130 CMC in African, Arab, Asian-Pacific, Caribbean and Latin American countries. Experience and studies indicate that such community radio and CMC contribute to catalysing the voice of the community and help them to express their views and opinions on issues that affect their lives.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Unesco's obligation to promote and protect human rights was established by its Constitution adopted on 16 November 1945, three years before the adoption of

the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Organization played an instrumental role in the adoption of that Declaration⁶ and its medium-term strategies, normative actions, programme strategies, priorities and projects in its domains of competence—education, culture, the sciences, communication and information—have consistently given a place of pride to the promotion and strengthening of human rights. Over the past 63 years of its existence, Unesco has adopted about 60 conventions, declarations and recommendations which are directly or indirectly linked to the human rights that fall under its competence. As Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura, the Unesco Director-General noted in his message on the occasion of Human Rights Day on 10 December 2008: “Unesco has given particular emphasis to the right to education, education in and for human rights, the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression, participation in cultural life and the protection of cultural diversity⁷ and the realization of the right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications”. My presentation has attempted to provide information on some of the standard-setting and normative actions as well as operational programmes carried out by Unesco which relate in one way or another to the theme of this IAMCR General Conference.

In her presidential letter on the IAMCR website page devoted to this conference, Professor Annabelle Sreberny remarks that “the complexity of issues around human rights lies at the heart of the research and policy concerns of the IAMCR. They also present a challenge for us as an international organisation that seeks to intervene in policy domains and to have a voice in international debate: how do we decide what our positions should be?”. I trust that this conference will be an interesting, interactive and productive sharing of research findings, information and ideas and that the various presentations will contribute to the decision of what the IAMCR positions should be in the international debate on communication and human rights.

⁶ In 1948 Unesco created a committee which included leading intellectuals, philosophers and political scientists that sent out a questionnaire to a number of personalities (such as Mohandas Gandhi and Aldous Huxley) soliciting their opinions on the idea of a universal declaration of human rights. Based on responses received to the questionnaire a report was prepared which indicated that, despite cultural differences, Members States of the UN shared certain principles and common ideals. The results of the survey facilitated the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948 in Paris.

⁷ Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the 31st Session of the Unesco General Conference, Paris, November 2001.

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COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: ARTICLE 19

A G N È S C A L L A M A R D

Article 19 is a human rights organisation established 20 years ago. Based on Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, since its creation, it has encouraged people's right to express their ideas and the free flow of information. It is an international organisation with headquarters in London and representation in countries such as Mexico, Kenya, Jordan, Nepal, Senegal and Brazil among others.

The efforts undertaken by Article 19 cover different issues. One is related to the defense of political ideas—for example, fostering trade unions to express their political ideas; another is freedom of the press and a third one refers to the right to information. All these issues are analysed in the framework of human rights and communication.

The communication revolution that has taken place, particularly in the last ten to fifteen years, constitutes a challenge to us human rights activists. The way that we interact with this galloping communication transformation is in fact one of the most important challenges that the human rights community must face day after day. For this lecture, I shall analyse a particular challenge that has to do with the core of what we face, the relation between equality and freedom of expression and the repercussions and implications that they have on communication.

As we all know, human rights, through the projects and institutions that laboured to put them on the international agenda after the Second World War, set forth non-discrimination as the central principle to be applied to international relations. The importance of non-discrimination, I think, is well understood since human history is filled with manifestations of racism and intolerance that have harboured genocide and crimes against humanity. Setting forth this principal

manifests the focus on equality and non-discrimination. Our third line of work refers to the right to information; it has also been laid as the cornerstone of the human rights project. In fact, the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UN) in 1946 established freedom of information as a fundamental human right and a very important part of the freedoms to which the organisation is consecrated. This position has been adopted by different organisations around the world; one that I must mention is the Inter-American Court of Human Rights that has established freedom of expression as the core on which democratic societies base their existence. In consequence, you could say that a society that is not well informed is not necessarily a free society.

I think that the centremost role of information has been well understood by the thinkers that propelled the human rights perspective after the Second World War; they demonstrated that the calamities committed against humanity during centuries had required control of society's expression and consciousness. Slavery, genocide, holocaust and other calamities have held expression and information control as a central element since it is the precondition for real power, the extension of physical power to the spiritual and mental realm.

I must clarify that promotion of the freedom of expression and the right to information principles has not been an easy task for human rights activists or for the international community. On the contrary, the telecommunications revolution has made the conjunction of these three principles increasingly challenging.

Surely you have heard about different incidents related to discrimination and violence, manifest in the contents of communication media; as is the case of women, minority groups and indigenous people's representation. Each and every one of these issues underline the difficulties we face to attain equilibrium of the said principles.

Another example of the difficulties pertaining to this equilibrium has to do with non-discrimination. We might believe that most of the population has Internet access yet nothing could be further from reality. Another expression of the difficulties manifests itself in community communication. In countries such as Mexico this is an acute problem since community radio is not allowed in legislation even when it is an important means of communication and freedom of expression that benefits the poorest groups among which are the Indian communities. A recent example has to do with the *Tierra y Libertad* radio transmissions in the northern region of Nuevo León state, run by Héctor Camero, who was warned by authorities in June 2009 that he was exploiting a frequency without the required legal permit. The same happened with a radio station operated by a Purepecha community and

since its director does not speak Spanish, she has had a hard time getting ahead on the case. Both stations are axial to their communities, both have been applying for a license since 2002 but neither has attained it, partly because in Mexico there is no inclusive legal framework, partly because broadcasting licenses in Mexico are assigned according to discretionary criteria; only 13 of the 1,200 radio broadcasting applications have been assigned.

This is just a representative example of the many difficulties that social communicators experience and it underscores the difficulties that harmonising the human right to equality with the human right to communication poses.

At Article 19 we face the challenge of understanding the factors that underlie these processes, some of which have to do, as the community radios in Mexico, with the normative framework that makes equilibrium between the rights to equality and freedom of expression hard to attain, and generate questioning on the limits put on freedom of expression when it acts, by means of offense, against human rights and becomes an impediment to the right of equality. So, human rights activists are working jointly with lawyers around the world seeking to establish equilibrium between equality and freedom of expression.

Continuing with this line of thought, one of the key aspects of interaction between freedom of expression, equality and the right to information is rooted in the non-discrimination principle. Although obvious, it is a principle that nevertheless is often forgotten; yet, in terms of the spirit of international human rights legislation, its practice is essential to propel freedom of expression, equality and the right to information.

Equal access to communication media implies inasmuch a negative duty, to not restrict access to media, as a positive duty, to assure pluralism and diversity. Therefore, when pluralism and diversity are not respected, or not fulfilled, not only has the right to equality been violated, but the right to freedom of expression has been violated as well. I believe that this is an important concept that we must put up front, that governments have the obligation to provide an environment that enables independent communication media to flourish to satisfy the public's right to receive information from different sources.

An aspect of pluralism is that all groups in society have access to all media. Inter-American Court has stated that freedom of expression requires that all media be open to all, without discrimination and, more precisely, that there be no individual or group excluded from free access to mass media. In the same sense, regional international and local courts have taken an important position regarding monopolies. For example, in 1993 the Human Rights Committee of the

UN recommended that States should set effective measures to avoid media control by the few and so repel interference of everybody's right to freedom of expression.

This reasoning was extended to monopolies and to all forms of communication media, not only radio and television. There is another aspect that has to do with pluralism and diversity and is also central to freedom of expression, the state's duty to allow and foster the existence of three kinds of communication: private networks, public service broadcasting and community broadcasting. Once again, it is a recognition already promoted in international law and in international standards, but not applied by governments.

To conclude, the promotion of these principles seeks pathways in a very difficult environment. I have mentioned in this presentation some very simple principles that affect the equilibrium between the right to equality and freedom of expression. And yet the most important problem is the lack of political will to respect that equilibrium. We know that controlling the right to equality, freedom of expression through the government becomes acute.

The conclusion for Article 19 and other human rights activists is the following: freedom of expression and equality are fundamental rights and their fulfilment is important so as to benefit the other human rights; both uphold and reinforce each other to promote the other human rights; therefore, there can be no freedom of expression without equality nor can there be equality without freedom of expression.

COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: THE UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR

F R A N K L A R U E L E W Y

Communication has been evaluated from the technological and the digital leap point of view, from media analysis and even regarding its economical aspect, as an investment. But in this presentation, I will consider it from a *rights* perspective; i.e. as part of people's rights.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights links the equality and dignity principles to all human rights but particularly to freedom of speech and access to communication. Furthermore, we constantly ratify that all rights are universal and interdependent, that all rights have the same category and the same importance. However, some rights facilitate the exercise of others. In this sense, freedom of speech and access to communication is essential to promote all other rights.

When I started my mandate as the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, on 1 August 2008, I aimed to provide it with a proactive approach. Up until that moment, the Special Rapporteur Office had undertaken this responsibility only from the perspective of freedom of the press and the protection of journalists. An approach of course that I uphold and that is a priority for democratic society in general and for public access to information, for the right to opinion and the freedom of speech. In fact, there has been some progress in this specific matter; France and Greece presented to the UN's Security Council a resolution regarding journalists' protection in conflict zones and under armed conflict conditions. We are now trying to broaden this concept to the protection of journalists at all times. But there are nations not living under armed conflict and yet journalists in their territory are targets for systematic attacks. This is the case of Mexico, which has

one of the highest press worker murder rates. As I said before, maintaining this perspective is important, but so is the vision of freedom of speech as something that goes much further.

First, obviously, it is an individual right, but it is also a collective right. One of the aspects that I wish to consider within this scope is that regarding the sectors that have been excluded from communication in Latin America—e.g., native peoples lacking freedom of speech, another example is the Declaration of the Durban II Conference, held in Geneva in April 2009, regarding the use of freedom of speech to fight racism and discrimination.

The Islamic world claims, and with reason, that stereotypes have been imposed upon it. In the context of the international fight against terrorism, this community suffers the stereotype of being viewed as terrorists. They, of course, have the right to stand up against this form of discrimination. However, the mechanism they propose is mistaken. I have expressed that this situation must be dealt with by the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and not from the freedom of speech perspective, since restricting freedom of speech from a religious point of view is a kind of censorship that benefits power sectors or a dominant religion. This is where freedom of speech also encompasses public religious expressions or social minorities, such as migrating peoples in Europe or Latin America, who travel around the world without being heard, without an identity, even without any rights. This is the moment to raise our voices to restore freedom of speech for these sectors.

Another example of these sectors is women. At a gender equity conference recently held in Geneva, it was suggested that if we paid attention to the freedom of speech for women issue, starting with young girls, the expression and visibility of childhood would be different. Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Marta Santos Pais, concurred on the need to insist on freedom of speech as a right that must be actively developed in childhood within the family, the community and all fields related with children. It is a way to dignify childhood and give it a chance to develop critical thought, the ability to have its own opinions and to express them and have them respected. Additionally, it is an instrument to fight child abuse and violence.

If we prioritised the development of critical thought and freedom of speech in young girls, we would be fighting violence against women and sexual and domestic violence as well as gender equity violations. These are the important issues that can be currently tackled from the freedom of speech perspective.

On a different note, there is a particularly controversial field: the boundaries of freedom of speech. It is controversial, since the focus of all UN Rapporteurs working

on various rights, but particularly the UN's Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression, must be positive. This is even expressed in the name assigned to them. It is a mandate to protect and promote the right of freedom of opinion and expression, one which has a positive character and a positive vision of those who have been excluded from this right.

There are limitations but we must clarify that they are exceptions that must be stipulated by law and must be exercised by the judiciary system—and not by the arbitrary decision of political leaders—once the social need of a limitation is proven to protect other rights. Pursuant to this, a worldwide public approach regarding the eradication of child pornography should be promoted. It is an important and relevant limitation, since this crime is a form of violence against childhood, not just against young boys and girls who suffer from it, but against the public that watches it.

However, the limitation is not pertinent in the case of religion. We cannot talk about the defamation of a religion, since defamation as a crime exists to protect the reputation and honour of people and religions have neither honour nor reputation. For better or worse, they are spiritual, philosophical and theoretical subjects to be discussed. We must promote a respectful attitude towards religions, not through censorship but through motivation. On this note, the United Nations and its Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) are working to launch a theoretical and practical training program for journalists, with the aim of promoting journalistic codes of ethics, voluntary codes that can be adopted by the guilds themselves, not imposed by government or regulation, with the objective of promoting respect for religious and cultural differences. For a long time, Unesco has also fostered a campaign for the development of a culture of peace, in which freedom of speech is the central issue as the mechanism to better understand cultures and as an instrument to fight discrimination and oppression.

The Durban II Conference—which was very controversial due to the fact that the United States, Canada and the European Union left before the Conference began, but acknowledged by Norway, which chose to participate due to the central nature of the discussions regarding the approaches on human rights—concluded with the signature of a consensual document promoted by the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights. In this document paragraph 58 is particularly relevant as it states that freedom of speech is one of the fundamental bases of democratic pluralistic society and even that it must be understood as an instrument in the global fight against racism and discrimination. This paragraph is of the utmost importance as it summarizes freedom of speech and communication as a human right and as a way to fight against all forms of discrimination, be they based on race, religion,

ethnic group, gender or different physical capabilities. This is the vision that can vindicate approaching communication from a different perspective: the human rights perspective.

Regarding pluralism, I must state that it is one of the most controversial issues in the whole world, particularly in Latin America. Pluralism happens to refer to the need to foster the diversity of opinions expressed in a given society, which requires media diversity to guarantee access of every sector to make their culture visible. However, pluralism is hindered by media concentration—expressed that way so as not to call it monopolies or oligopolies.

There are good examples contrary to the above, like Argentina, where a bill called *audiovisual services* was recently proposed; actually, it comprises radio and television frequencies. Its origins can be traced to the 21 principles that the Coalición por una Radiodifusión Democrática (Coalition for Democratic Radio Broadcasting) and the civil society drafted and presented to the Argentinean government, who transformed them into a bill and gave it back to the social groups for review, to then present it to Congress. The developers of this bill go further than anybody before them in the classical classification of commercial, community and public radio and television frequencies and in the definition of the percentage allotted to each sector, assigning 33% to each one.

I use this example because I consider it important to acknowledge the people's right to have a communication system of their own. However, it is rather common to hear about absurd cases, such as the sanctioning of a communitarian indigenous radio station with the arrival of 120 policemen to confiscate the station's equipment and with one of their collaborators being summoned to a criminal proceeding even when she was at a disadvantage since she does not speak Spanish. It should be pointed out that the radio station has a transmission of five megawatts. This is absurd because the true menaces to communication are monopolies and media concentration, not communitarian radio stations from indigenous villages. Diversity and pluralism are, therefore, the basis for fully exercising freedom of speech.

Finally, I am going to mention another issue in the field of communication and human rights: the role of communication in the fight against poverty. Poverty has thousands of historical reasons, each of a different nature, yet it has not decreased. Instead, it grows in spite of the Millennium Goals. One of the tools we must include in these goals for poverty eradication is access to communication. Access to communication refers to accessing information, freedom of speech and education. However, there is an element that has not yet been included, and it is the fact that communication involves us in the possibilities of development because it is not only

a civil and political right but also an economic and social one. It would, without a doubt, boost access to development that the United Nations has so much fought for.

Nowadays, communications must be regarded as a fundamental tool for participation in local, national and international development plans. Such plans must take into account its economic dimensions because communication is strongly related to the access to electronic media, its social dimensions because of the means it provides to building citizenship, and political dimensions because it involves the participation of all. It represents a great challenge we must face.

Summing up, access to communication is part of the right to development. Therefore, we must stress the fact that sectors that have historically been marginalised must have effective access to communication and information. From the perspective of pluralism and a culture of peace, we must favour universal access to such rights.

LANGUAGES IN IAMCR

THE ARABIC IMPERATIVE IN IAMCR

I B R A H I M S A L E H

The primary question is: “What constitutes knowledge of languages?” (Cook, 1992: 579). Throughout our entire recorded history, languages have come into and gone out of fashion as a preferred tool of international communication. Today, linguistic diversity has become an issue of great importance, especially that of changes in the vitality of a language and its implications for individuals and societies.

Multilingualism is a common and increasing phenomenon in the current global society, especially since languages are not isolated entities and in many cases there are no clear boundaries between them. Such diversity illustrates the “range of variations exhibited by human languages” (<www.terralingua.org>); but generally it refers to the ability to use more than two languages.

David Crystal (2000) gives five reasons to justify the importance of language diversity:

1. Ecological diversity
2. Expression of identity
3. Storage of history
4. Sum of human knowledge
5. Interesting in themselves

Having said that, it is neither new to think about international languages, nor possible to maintain their status permanently. However, languages are communication tools and are affected by politics.

We can't talk about languages within IAMCR without mentioning the notion of "identity crisis", the conflict of self and society, coined by Erik Erikson's Theory of Human Development.

There is a close link between human development and human rights, given by the role of social networks and social capital, which is represented by civil society. However, the globalisation paradox has further deepened the gap of a "fragmented world" (UNDP, 2002), and has made urgent the reconsideration of the current communication structures, content and policy agenda.

There are two sides to the issue of language and IAMCR:

1. Why is Arabic not integrated within IAMCR?
2. Why do Arab scholars and professionals not contribute sufficiently and effectively to the academic and professional fields, especially through IAMCR?

I believe it mandatory to fully engage people from all over the world and to involve everyone's intellect and expertise; including Arab scholars and professionals in more than 22 countries.

It is also important to encourage the use of the Arabic language in various spheres of contemporary life, thus bridging the gap between Arabic and its contemporary usage, particularly in the scientific and cultural fields.

In contrast, Arabic faces many real and worrying challenges pertinent to its existence and its intrinsic role in determining the identity of the Arab world in the age of globalisation.

For example, Arab professionals and scholars seek to enhance their research skills and technical knowledge, or human capital, in order to compete in the current media globalisation. But, for example, the wages in the field are miserable and the dangers many.

Arabs face dangers from the known and the unknown, dangers arising from crossing the red lines and the unseen lines. In the meantime, international organisations and associations like IAMCR do not understand or fully support their inclusion making their desperate efforts not only unrewarded but their daily burdens endlessly exhausting, frustrating and suffocating.

Facing the inclusion of languages within IAMCR is a difficult dilemma that must be addressed: How can Arab scholarship become integrated without support and motivation? How can Arab scholars and professionals achieve balance between high-end enhancement of their skills and maintaining their already difficult life?

My reflections here relate to two interrelated issues; describing the problems and suggesting solutions:

First are the problems and challenges facing the engagement of Arab scholars in the IAMCR.

There is a general dilemma facing journalism education in the Arab world that ranges from the deterioration of professional standards and skills to the disconnection from reality.

Most Arab universities and media institutes refrain from financing and supporting journalism research and practice outside of the local domains for two reasons: financial limitations and the fear of prospective civil liberties development.

Regardless of the reason, the simple fact of the gradual abandonment of social empowerment remains along with that of declining government investment in the field and its related activities.

As a result, journalism education is strictly manipulated by state intervention, censorship and legal and regulatory issues. Hence, journalists and scholars in different parts of the Arab world are used to being on the front lines, fighting for basic human rights, while being confronted with oppressive laws and regulations. The conspiracy theory about other languages still hinders the process of their learning.

The main challenge is that journalism education lacks any incentive for professionals and academics to learn foreign languages and integration with the global arena must be viewed as a practice of institutional representation.

Such a dim picture results from the insufficient funding allotted to vocational and language training and journalism research, creation and innovations lack mechanisms relating scientific research to service and production sectors, scarcity and inefficiency of technological advancement in service and production units.

But the worst impediment of all lies in the huge discrepancy between the living standards, amenities and facilities unequally available to those who are either from wealthy or poor families, from urban or rural backgrounds or those enrolled in public or private universities. Hence, learning a foreign language for the majority of poor societies is still considered a far-fetched dream that can hardly come true.

To capitalise on the benefits and avoid the shortcomings due to lack of language diversity within IAMCR, there are a number of strategies that I suggest to maximise the potential of including Arabic and other non-IAMCR languages:

First, developing an inclusive language diversity system, encouraging group members to learn about other cultures, religions and ethnic groups, based on a principle of respect and focusing on similarities rather than on differences; and discussing how differences can be a positive element to reach a common

understanding of what the language, as well as its context, is about and what it represents as a whole.

Second, encouraging IAMCR members to gain real understanding of different media, culture and ethnic backgrounds by developing respect for the others' beliefs, attitudes and values. This would make all group activities as inclusive as possible regarding governance bodies, panels, research and all other activities; also it would avoid hurting other people's feelings and reassure them that their beliefs, values and issues have not gone unheard.

Third, broadening the International Collaborative Research issues, introduced in 2008 in Stockholm, in the Journalism Research and Education Section of IAMCR. Such cross-cultural and linguistic studies not only help connect researchers and members, but they also bond the whole IAMCR community and allow a space for unprecedented knowledge and mutual respect.

Fourth, monitoring communication language choices, especially with group members who do not speak English as their native language, avoiding offensive misinterpretation of meaning that might result from context changes due to translation.

Fifth, reviewing communication procedures, ensuring they are truly inclusive. This proposal can be achieved by screening a feature film of the host country with subtitles to help other members get a rough feeling for the language, culture and society, and emphasizing the significance that language diversity has in maintaining IAMCR as a truly international organisation.

Sixth, developing a digital library at IAMCR, including different resources in different languages. The starting point should include the three languages recognized by IAMCR, English, French and Spanish. Growth must be attained by sponsoring partnerships in different regions to help translate materials already available, and including new resources from non-IAMCR languages, and then translating them into the three recognised languages.

Seventh, develop a new work group focusing on the linguistic issues of media and communication research. This can be achieved by covering the same events in different languages or assessing the role of language in shaping media in one country and another.

Eighth, introducing the Friends of IAMCR idea, where outstanding research paper authors and promising scholars would be encouraged to attend IAMCR events, providing them with financial assistance and translation of their work to allow accessibility and encourage cross-cultural communication. Such a proposal would not burden the IAMCR budget by adding about USD 20 to every registration fee, and events could be scheduled every year to support this cause.

Ninth and final, translating one or more of the exceptional research papers or books by IAMCR members that are published in non-IAMCR languages (Arabic, Chinese, German, Hindu, etc.), to the three IAMCR languages. This task should be handled by a committee responsible for selecting and approving the choice of such publications and the junior scholars in need of travel support from the previous proposal.

I love you when you bow in your mosque, kneel in your temple, pray in your church. For you and I are sons of one religion, and it is the spirit.

Khalil Gibran

(1883-1931), Arab journalist, painter, writer, and philosopher.

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TOWARDS LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN IAMCR

AIMÉE VEGA MONTIEL

I confess that when the IAMCR invited me to participate in this plenary meeting about “The languages at IAMCR”, a sudden question came to my mind: How and what should one think about this process within the framework of our association? Should it be done from a scientific or a political perspective?

In grappling with these questions, I came to understand that separating the analysis of the consequences of this process on the development of scientific activity from its political implications is simply not possible. Therefore, my participation in this meeting is motivated by a desire to put in place some of the effects of this process in the scientific communities that, as we will see, are conditioned by their relationship with the English language.

This analysis goes hand in hand with a set of proposals tending to the creation of linguistic diversity. I shall refer to these proposals as keys. I understand these keys as the methodological foundation for knowing, thinking, imagining and creating concrete actions that contribute to the democratisation of relationships within the IAMCR and, in the words of Antonio Pasquali, the creation of viable, accurate, particular and pluralistic, fair and equitable communication.

THE NECESSARY DIAGNOSIS

Brazilian anthropologist Renato Ortiz writes in *La Supremacía del Inglés en las Ciencias Sociales* (The Supremacy of the English Language in the Social Sciences) that “globalisation conjugates in English”. I begin my analysis with this quote

because I understand the discussions of this meeting should not escape analysis of the dominance of the English language in the scientific field. In this context, the notion of *power* is imperative for the analysis of a process marked in some ways by hierarchy and domination.

After World War II, English became the cultural language in three main areas: the market, tourism and science. English is the language of globalisation; fields such as Information Society were built in English. It also became the second spoken language in most countries of the World—including Latin America, where learning English is still a privilege. Most cultural products around the world are also expressed in English.

In the realm of science this is paradoxical, as, on the one hand, the value and practical purpose of English for our work is very important. It is the language that allows us non-Anglo-Saxons to communicate with English and American researchers, but also with other European (Portuguese, French) or Asian researchers and so on, and to reach agreements to improve the quality of life for societies. On the other hand, the linguistic predominance of the English language does not contribute to the collective sense of our work. Instead, it divides it by establishing a hierarchy. Such effects are expressed at thought and action outline levels. In this sense, we can talk about at least three major implications.

The first one is the influence of Anglo-Saxon scientific communities on the construction of the object of study, i.e. on the theoretical and methodological definitions used for research.

The second is the influence on the agenda of investigation, which directly affects the objects of study and, consequently, the funding that universities, organisations and governments assign to it. The inconvenience is that there are many problems in the southern regions that, not qualifying as a priority, become invisible and it may therefore prove difficult to find a solution to them.

The third one lies in the creation of the structures that determine our work—national and regional systems and boards of investigation—and establish the criteria to measure the productivity of researchers, creating a hierarchy of knowledge and erasing specificities. In this sense, we know that both publishing and being quoted in English is highly valued and sometimes this is detrimental to ideas. I remember the sad confession that a European researcher made at the European Communication Conference of ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association), held in Barcelona in November 2008: he pointed out that his interest in working with Latin American researchers and universities had been detrimental to his productivity, as publications in Spanish are not recognized in evaluations in his country.

Thus, the usefulness of English in the context of globalization is an indisputable fact. It is a useful communication tool but its prevalence has also created a language hierarchy and, in the words of Renato Ortiz: the consequent intellectual segregation creates inequities among us.

We have historically lived the risk, the constant threat of the establishment of a hegemonic model representing the world that legitimates theories, methods and problems. That model is widely known: the market. In this context, scientists do not escape its domination; it is the one that rules society and us as a part of it. It governs our logic of production and participation. Thus, demands for competition prevailing over those of cooperation have invaded the scientific field and there exists therefore a latent threat that collective scientific action will be undermined.

I understand that all of the researchers of the world are subject to these systems so I ask at this point: what can we do as a community? I think the answer lies in the struggle for a broader policy of language or, more specifically, for linguistic diversity at IAMCR. Why? Because this enables us to enrich our conceptions and perspectives of the world. For example, the contributions of Latin American scholars to communication studies have been fundamental at least in two major areas: communication policies and cultural studies—with special emphasis on the convergence between communication and culture.

I mentioned at the beginning that my talk has two purposes. The scientific one has been expressed. The political is manifested by acknowledging languages as a representation of the conditions and needs and, specifically in our field, of scientific paradigms. Thus, if a given language is the expression of a worldview, striving for linguistic diversity will enable us to acknowledge the idiosyncrasy and identity of the concepts and consequently to widen our horizons when thinking of social matters.

What specific measures do I propose to achieve linguistic diversity at the IAMCR? These are some of them:

1. Support for activities that grant prominence to regional communication research, in coordination with regional associations (The Latin American Communication Research Association, the Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, the European Communication Research and Education Association).
2. Continued promotion of the representation of all regions in IAMCR coordination bodies: Executive Committee, International Committee, Sections and Work Teams.

3. Continued promotion of the representation of all regions in consultancy bodies of IAMCR attending organisations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to influence the research agenda.
4. Promotion of international research, not only gathering researchers from around the world but also acknowledging regional issues.
5. Stimulation of research and publication of regional analyses seeking participation of regional publishing houses.
6. Effective expression of ideas in the three official IAMCR languages, publishing all of the Association's papers in English, Spanish and French. To this end, the regional and national organisations require similar structures to those of the IAMCR in terms of Work Teams and Sections for the ruling of abstracts, in their corresponding original languages.
7. Finally, I broadly suggest that the IAMCR be the means by which all communication researchers of the world influence policies of scientific production.

FINAL NOTE

As a scientific community, we the communication researchers of the world aim with our work to contribute to the struggle for democracy in communication systems and strive for political and cultural diversity. In my opinion, promoting such diversity within our association is essential. That is why I celebrate the effort of this meeting.

I want to close my lecture in the same way I started it, quoting Renato Ortiz: "It would be ideal to speak all the languages in which the social sciences are expressed. We would then possess not a universality of spirit, but a library at the service of a greater wealth of knowledge". Thus, I sum up the utopian ideal of this morning with the aim of recovering specificities by making languages relevant, as they are the expression of our worldviews.

LANGUAGES, RESEARCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

D I V I N A F R A U - M E I G S

IAMCR, as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with observer status at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) and the Economic and Social Council, has the obligation to provide translation of its conferences in at least three official United Nations (UN) languages, English, French and Spanish, in addition to the language of the country organising the conference. In certain countries the rule, although costly, has been upheld. However, over time, especially in English-speaking countries, this obligation has not been met. This currently poses a problem, as an international organisation which has taken part in the debates on the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions does not seem to have the zeal to resist the cultural and intellectual domination of the English language.

Such are the questions around the language issue in our field: he who controls the concepts and the language of intellectual exchange controls the international market of ideas. But instead of complaining as we have done in the past to no avail, it is necessary to consider how our uses and practices can be modified to solve this domination problem in a fair way to the benefit of all.

ACTUAL SOLUTIONS

In order to find solutions within IAMCR, I would like to involve the audience in a brief survey. This survey puts special emphasis on our translation and interpretation practices. I will make a quick estimate based on the number of hands raised.

A little quiz

1. Who has ever used “reverso.net”? Nobody, 0% use it.
2. Who knows Translators Without Borders? Only one person, 99% do not know it.
3. Who knows how much a translator charges per word? Now, I see that 20% know the fee. In France, a translator charges 12 cents per word, so, an article of 7,000 words costs around 900 Euros.
4. Who has asked a bilingual spouse, significant other or student to translate a text? It seems that many people have, around 50%.
5. Who has used a PowerPoint presentation in English while reading a text in their own language? 50%.
6. Who among you writes long abstracts in English when publishing in your own language? Around 40%.

The meaning of the answers

I asked these questions because I think there are many possible solutions to the language problem. There are many practical options, though it seems that people are not aware of them or just do not use them, making them less effective in communication terms.

Number 1 is a technological solution. Translation search engines are getting better and provide first drafts very quickly. They are getting cheaper but they are unreliable and must be checked by a human expert. This seems to be the option least used and known by the audience in Mexico (1% according to raised hands).

Number 2 is a collaborative solution. It is that of a civil society NGO, where translators deal with documents fast and for free in settings where other NGOs are in need. I used their help, with due credit, during the World Summit on the Information Society; they helped the coalition on education and research provide text in various UN languages overnight, on the basis of a glossary of communication terms that I jointly established with them.

Number 3 is a professional solution. In France, a word costs 12 Euro cents, putting the price of a basic article (7,000 words) at about 900 Euros (tax included). It is costly and time-consuming but still the most reliable, though the author’s final reading is necessary and not always possible.

Numbers 4 and 5 are do-it-yourself makeshift solutions, and they depend on goodwill, and sometimes, high symbolic prices. *These seem to be the most used by the audience in Mexico (40% according to the show of hands)*

Number 6 is an editorial solution. It makes publishers modify journal abstract practices, uses internet storage capacity to avoid translating a whole piece (900 Euros) yet gives the gist of the data, the results and the contact coordinates of the author (for those researchers that are interested).

There is no single, one-size-fits-all solution, but there is a real improvement in technology and more is to be expected. There is no easy solution when simultaneous translation is needed at conferences, with the exception of cases when there are only four or five people in the audience (if you get a student or colleague to do consecutive translation). And yet it seems that people use a very limited range of these options, which do not empower them as much as they could expect.

WHAT IS LOST IN TRANSLATION?

In spite of technological progress and of the actual range of solutions, there still are reasons to worry about languages in research. At a global exchange level, where English becomes the *lingua franca* with the advantages and disadvantages such a position poses for everyone (including English language speakers, as it becomes “UN-ese”), assessing the language question is closely related to the human rights of expression and communication of ideas.

Concepts and actions

For those of us who are multilingual and multicultural, translation related tasks are no simpler, if anything, they are more frustrating. We are more aware of the translation risks: the essence of a notion gets lost; translation may lose concepts. That is my greatest worry when trying to hold a dialogue at the international level, since I fear we are not sharing concepts or theories and therefore our dialogue is not enlightening. That is one of the troubles resulting from the domination by the English language of the market of ideas, as has been so well put by Aimée Vega.

The problem of English domination in the market of ideas must be examined in a detailed and objective fashion. It is real and it is a hegemony that hurts, as he who controls the concepts, controls the marketplace of ideas. A few examples are:

Example 1. “Les droits de l’homme marchent sur les pas de la révolution française” cannot be translated directly as: “Human rights walk in the footsteps of

the French Revolution”. In English rights don’t walk and a revolution doesn’t leave footsteps. So, the likely translation would be: “The advocates of human rights took their inspiration from the legacy of the French Revolution”.

Example 2. “L’attribution du risque médiatique est un acte politique” becomes “Suggesting that there is risk in the media themselves is a political act”, which weakens the whole sentence and therefore the proposed idea.

In English, concepts cannot do things; there has to be somebody doing the action or implementing the notion. By adopting English, our community of thinkers and intellectuals is actually adopting a posture that is perceived by many cultures as deeply anti-intellectual. For some, being translated is very difficult to accept, as it defeats the purpose of a whole life spent creating ideas and principles. For others, it means the loss of what constitutes our social identity and justifies our social utility. For everyone, it jeopardizes our intellectual position, the refusal to be at the mercy of the market, which often transforms us into research entrepreneurs (*publish or perish*) instead of creators and innovators.

Identity and style

The example of concepts relates directly to identity and through it to a person’s individual rights, especially dignity. Such is the case of style, which is even more annoying than that of ideas. Most researchers spend their entire life perfecting their phrases, chiselling away at a paragraph for hours and days, adding a nuance that feels just right. The most famous among us tend to be the ones who have the perfect balance between ideas and style. And it can all disappear in translation since translators tend to dispel ambiguity and clarify notions so that readers don’t think that the translation is faulty.

Results can be phenomenal, especially when it works in reverse mode: the success of French Theory is a cultural misunderstanding due to the hidden agenda of translation—that is, disambiguation, I would venture to say: the translators of Foucault, Bourdieu, Derrida, Kristeva and others have made them much more accessible to the English reader than they are in their native French to the French! They have made them fit the American project of identity politics in a way that they were never able to foster in their own culture and we, the French readers of these same authors in France, have not detected in them anything about gender, homosexuality or ethnicity, and none of those issues have penetrated our universities!

This does not represent a real problem, in the sense that translation at least allows for “creative” interpretation by others. However, the saying *traduttore traditore*

can certainly take challenging intellectual twists. In any case, better betrayed than not translated at all.

Diversity of intellectual and scientific expressions

A new right begs for attention to language in research and therefore also translation - the right to diversity, as proclaimed in Unesco's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Style and research language are a part of cultural expression and are deeply subjective, even when dealing with scientific topics, which are allegedly objective (like mathematical language). But the United States of America have not signed this treaty and the Bush administration actually vowed never to do so, well aware that they would have to pay attention to this topic: a new right, a concept in action that could lead to trial or process of law. The hegemony of English is at stake and with it market dominance.

Diversity in research languages is deeply related to the awareness that other "brands" of research exist and are needed and lost due to lack of their translation or to the hidden agenda of translation. Some research brands may be absent from international conferences such as that of IAMCR because they have no translation budget or are too minor or confidential to have a critical researcher mass. Such examples were seen at IAMCR in Paris, when we celebrated the association's 50th anniversary, when fellow specialists in semiotics, visual culture, cognition and other areas felt under-represented. Some domains are at risk of remaining invisible or below the research radar or of stagnating at the periphery, though we all know that it is often there where innovation emerges. So we need to stop just coping with what is lost in translation and provide proactive solutions.

WHAT CAN IAMCR DO TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS ISSUE?

Besides stimulating actions within IAMCR, we must think about the actions towards the outside world, especially those related to our political role as an international NGO that represents something more than its own community facing the UN. The role of researchers as knowledge and information disseminators encompasses the need to identify solutions and to stimulate their use in all spheres in which we intervene.

Within the Association

- Have linguistic representation on different boards and committees and create more connections with regional associations.
- Develop more links with regional associations and with various exchange languages; this would reflect our community's diversity.
- Uphold the symbolic policy of proposing translation to our three languages during major plenary meetings, as an act of resistance, and so that we are always reminded of this need.
- Support conference organisers in finding additional funds in their own countries. Some countries, like France, create special programs to finance translation for international conferences held in France.
- Create a glossary, maybe in coordination with ICA and Translators Without Borders, for the terms that are specific to our research area. We need a communication lexicon that is reliable and interoperable. For example: "media risk" should not be translated as "media scare" because it drops out of the actual debate on risk theory and the relationship with the referencing systems that matter to our community. Another example: "Information Society" in Arabic is translated as "community of data", which falls short on other dimensions that some of our own researchers would like to add. This glossary could then be used by students or spouse translators and by professional translators.
- Create a working group on languages in the media within IAMCR. Not only book and paper translation but national or regional dubbing and subtitling policies are important to research work.
- Develop a research portal on communication, in the Alliance of Civilizations style, with media education and publications that may be read in their original language. Researchers that have good reading comprehension of another language, even if they don't feel confident to speak it, can feed their thoughts and enrich their references through this simple document storage system.

For the scientific community at large

- Identify the various solutions (technological and other) successfully adopted by our community and foster their widespread use.

- Contact Unesco and push for the creation of open source translation tools and search engines to be made available to the community at large.
- Monitor the implementation of Unesco's convention on multilingualism in cyberspace and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
- Adopt a shared position with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions and other multilingual NGOs to promote multilingualism as a right and as a critical resource.

This long review of the many options available harbours the ambition to show and convince ourselves that there are several solutions to reaching a better understanding amongst each other that will provide us all with more opportunities to exchange our ideas and perspectives.

THE IBERO-AMERICAN IMPULSE

M A R I A I M M A C O L A T A V A S S A L L O D E L O P E S

As a Latin American scholar, it is very gratifying to be here. I have participated in other scientific gatherings and conferences such as this one and also in intellectual exchanges with members of the international community of communication researchers. I am therefore familiar with the topic of this panel since I have together with my Mexican colleague Raúl Fuentes Navarro studied the emergence, organisation and changes in communication fields in Latin America. In this context the debate on languages is not a recent one. It involves a knowledge embedded in the social and historical conditions and the scientific processes of Latin America. I therefore consider it of the utmost importance that the IAMCR, of which I am member, should promote changes to become more pluralistic and representative of diverse communities.

I speak on behalf of Latin America and therefore on behalf of the Portuguese and Spanish languages. In this sense, I assume my Ibero-American identity, the identity of a region in which the Ibero-American Confederation of Scientific and Academic Communication Associations (Confibercom, for its acronym in Spanish) was recently created. This confederation gathers associations from Latin America, Spain and Portugal working in the same field. Having established my position at this panel, I shall address the matter at hand.

Scholars such as Jesús Martín-Barbero and Octavio Ianni have led research on this continent in terms of quality, but also perception, as they have stressed, in various ways and for some time, the importance of researching relationships between Ibero-America, Europe and the United States. These authors point out the disparities in said relationships, as researchers of this region are considered to be recipients of

theory and selectors of thought categories to create our subjects of study. However, history itself shows us that Latin America has a long and solid research tradition and that since the 1970s research has been strongly promoted through the creation of postgraduate programs—master and doctoral degrees, increasing participation by scholars in the debate of communication issues within our countries and the increasingly important role of national science and technology production systems and yet—as Raúl Fuentes points out—we represent an unnoticed community.

And that is no small matter; because we were defined as members of a specialised branch of sociology and not as the autonomous discipline of communication. Therefore, it is fundamental to acknowledge the joint effort of researchers, teachers and students to make our field institutionally acknowledged by social sciences. Today, we have national associations that promote several activities, such as publications, conferences and seminars, all aimed at making the work of our scholars known. Some examples in Brazil are the Brazilian Society for Interdisciplinary Communication Research and the National Association for Postgraduate Studies; and in Mexico: the Mexican Association for Communication Researchers (AMIC, for its acronym in Spanish).

We have conferences such as this one which become suitable spaces for continuing the dialogue and achieving recognition from the international community, as has been done by the AMIC, the Latin American Communication Researchers Association (ALAIC, for its acronym in Spanish), the Latin American Federation of Faculties of Social Communications (FelaFacs, for its acronym in Spanish), the Ibero-American Communication Association, the Portuguese Communication Sciences Association and the recently created Spanish Communication Research Association. The purpose of this enumeration is not merely to cite acronyms or to list national and regional associations but to direct attention to fertile scientific production, an enthusiastic mobilisation and passion for communication research in its various fields and competences. From the organisations mentioned above, the recently formed Confibercom has emerged. Its objective, of the outmost importance, is to bring together national and regional associations such as ALAIC and FelaFacs.

Confibercom has a more specific purpose: that those who of us who work in the field of communication get to know, read and exchange knowledge and experiences among ourselves. To this end, we still have much work to do. As Renato Ortiz pointed out, we must admit that it is an ongoing process which has to do not only with translations but which involves more profound issues. This profoundness has to do with an interest for each other, an interest for what we theoretically define as diversity and heterogeneity. In the same manner this is why

this association, my association, the already pluralistic and multicultural IAMCR, must also be multi-scientific.

What strategies should we promote? Here I am speaking about Latin America; Ibrahim Saleh from Egypt has spoken about the region of the world in which he works. I thus want to point out that in this forum there should be an Asian representation, colleagues from Japan and China, as we are ignorant of their reality. That is why I want to finish by acknowledging the good will I have seen today and which yesterday was translated in the session that Nico Carpentier led for presentation and discussion of the survey that the IAMCR, the International Communication Association and the European Communication Research and Education Association conducted among the scientific community to the end that we get to know each other. On this matter, I want to point out that this data must be disseminated and that a broader invitation should be extended. The invitation to take the survey was extended in English and I think this is the reason for the low level of response from Latin America, Spain and Portugal. It is important to make it broader as the data collected by the survey is highly relevant. We must acknowledge the heterogeneous view within IAMCR on promoting proposals with a pragmatic and useful nature, like those set forth by Aimée Vega Montiel. Yet to discuss this issue is in and of itself a very important task and it allows us to visualize a promising future for our association.

**RESEARCH, MEDIA
AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

WOMEN'S HUMAN AND COMMUNICATION RIGHTS

M A R G A R E T G A L L A G H E R

A few months ago I was collecting data on the impact of development communication projects. One of the evaluation reports I looked at—it was a study of a community radio station run by village women in south eastern Kenya (Jallov and Lwanga-Ntale, 2007)—asked the women to talk about the impact of the radio station on their lives. They said: “The status of women both at household and community levels has improved a lot. Men used to despise us saying that there is nothing big that we can do... Now, we are seen as real human beings”. That comment started me thinking about some of the things I will talk about today. The first point is these women’s sense of achievement at being seen as “real” human beings—a state that apparently they had not experienced previously—tells us there is a deep void in any human rights discussion that does not explicitly, and I stress *explicitly*, acknowledge and elucidate the specific position of women within the human community. Analysis that claims to include both women and men in a general rights framework hides the deeply gendered division of power and rights within communities everywhere. The result is disastrous for women’s human rights.

Those women in Kenya were fortunate. Through their community radio station they not only gained respect and entered public life within the village, but they also found a way of speaking out about deeply degrading issues: rape, sexual assault, physical violence and alcoholism, that from childhood they had been taught to keep quiet about and to accept. For millions of women around the world, this never happens. They live out their lives not as “real” human beings, but in a state of fear and silence that arises specifically from the fact of having been born female. Pre-natal sex selection, female infanticide, so-called “honour killings” and femicide are among

the most brutal means of ensuring that women are never heard, indeed sometimes never born. They are all forms of gender-based violence against women as defined in 1992 by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that affects women disproportionately”.¹

In 1993 the parallel term *gender-based censorship* was coined by the Filipina feminist writer, journalist and human rights activist Ninotchka Rosca (Tax *et al.*, 1995: 23). At first glance, the expression *gender-based censorship* may seem an exaggerated or emotive way of describing how women’s communication rights are curtailed. But if we think of it in terms of the suppression of women’s voices *because* they are women, or in ways that affect women *disproportionately*, echoing the CEDAW definition, it helps us to analyse women’s invisibility—or sometimes their hyper-visibility—in communication processes, not as something particular to this or that media system or media genre, but as a quite fundamental aspect of social, economic and political relations.

Of course censorship exists in different forms in all states. And women, whether as citizens or as journalists, who criticise aspects of state politics, corruption and so on can be silenced in the same ways used to silence men who speak out; though, in practice, even these forms of censorship may be affected by gender. For instance, Article 19 has documented that rape, gang-rape and sexual smear campaigns are common forms of punishment used against women activists and journalists.² But gender-based censorship is much broader, more pervasive and usually more subtle than officially organized suppression. It is embedded in a range of social mechanisms that silence women’s voices, deny the validity of their experience and exclude them from political discourse. Its effect is to obscure the real conditions of women’s lives and the inequity of gender relations that prevents them from exercising their human rights.

Not surprisingly, the social and cultural practices that result in women’s silencing are echoed, and sometimes amplified, by the media. This has been well documented by research. For instance, every five years since 1995, the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) has provided a one-day snapshot of “who makes the news” in the newspapers, radio, and television of more than seventy countries. The 1995 study found that women were only 17% of the world’s news subjects, the people who are interviewed or whom the news is about (Media Watch, 1995). Ten years later, the figure was 21% (Gallagher, 2006). Regional differences are slight: in 2005 they

¹ See UN General Assembly (2006).

² See for example Article 19 (2008, 28-30)

ranged from a high of 26% in North America to a low of 15% in the Middle East. Everywhere, expert opinion in the news is overwhelmingly masculine; men are 83% of experts and 86% of spokespersons. Perhaps even more disturbing is that only 34% of the so-called *popular opinion* is provided by women. It is quite extraordinary that the voices selection to represent ordinary citizens is so radically skewed. There is not a single major news topic in which women outnumber men as newsmakers. Even in stories that affect women profoundly, such as gender-based violence, the male voice prevails. In 2005 64% of news subjects in these stories were men.

The results across the three time studies (1995-2005) are strikingly consistent, and they have been replicated in research carried out over longer time frames. For instance, a one-month study in twelve South African countries in 2002 found that only 17% of news subjects were women (Media Institute of Southern Africa and Gender Links, 2003). Of course, the numbers only tell a tiny part of the story. Behind them lies the power structure—social, political, and economic—that itself silences women. News values intertwine with political priorities to portray a particular view of what is important. Issues that are central in women's lives come low down in the scale of what is regarded as newsworthy. The 2005 GMMP found that only 4% of news stories dealt in any way with issues of gender equality or inequality. And if women in general are underrepresented or misrepresented in media content, this is doubly so for older women and those who are not members of the dominant national culture.³

While figures like these are important in documenting women's systematic silencing, it is crucial to look at them in terms of what they tell us about what it means to be a woman and about women's experience of the world. To give just one example, one of the most pernicious forms of discrimination is the denial of women's authority and leadership. The 2005 GMMP found a gross under-representation of female politicians in the news of almost all the 76 countries studied. Even in New Zealand, where there was a female prime minister and women accounted for 32% of politicians, only 18% of politicians in the news were women. And even when they *are* given space, women in public life are frequently undermined or muted by sexist comment or questioning. No one who followed the 2008 American presidential campaign will forget the depths of misogyny that welled up against Hillary Clinton.⁴ Shortly before that, in Germany we saw the extraordinary television spectacle of Angela Merkel and Gerhard Schröder—leaders at the time, of the country's two main political parties—being questioned by a well-known talk show host about

³ See for example Valdivia (2000) and Media Monitoring Project (1999).

⁴ See Fortini (2008) and video *Sexism Sells* (2008).

their political lives. But while Schröder was asked about his relationships with Presidents Putin and Bush, Merkel was asked if she found Brad Pitt attractive and whether her husband helped her to understand men. And if that seems hard to believe, consider what happened in April 2009 in Israel, when two ultra-Orthodox Jewish newspapers actually altered a photograph of the new Israeli cabinet so as to remove two female ministers. One of the newspapers simply blacked the women out; the other one digitally replaced the women with images of men (BBC online news, 2009a). It would seem funny were it not so completely tragic. So we need to understand these different expressions of unwillingness to accept women as autonomous political subjects and the pervasive definition of women as deviant objects within a masculine world, as a very specific, gender-based barrier to women's exercise of their communication rights.

I said earlier that gender-based censorship obscures the real conditions of women's lives. One of the ways in which this happens is by making it difficult, dangerous or impossible to voice issues that threaten to reveal the ways in which women's lives are devalued by the state. Again, the 2005 GMMP found that only 1% of news stories dealt with human rights and women's rights, and only 1% with gender-based violence. Why is there such silence on these issues? For instance, the United Nations Children's Fund estimates that a woman dies every minute due to complications in pregnancy and childbirth (Unicef, 2008). Yet in July 2009 in Zambia a news editor from the country's biggest-selling newspaper *The Post* was arrested after she distributed pictures of a woman giving birth without medical assistance during a strike by health workers. The pictures were not published. They were simply sent to a small group of government ministers and non-governmental organisations. The news editor, Chansa Kabwela, was accused of circulating obscene material and pornography, and if convicted could have faced up to five years imprisonment (BBC online news, 2009b).

When it comes to exposing the state's complicity in real pornography, however, journalists risk even greater consequences. As was the internationally well-known case of Lydia Cacho who, because of her work in uncovering prostitution and child pornography networks in Mexico, was illegally arrested and has been targeted by death threats, defamation suits and police harassment. The widespread abduction, rape and murder of women—notorious here in Mexico, as well as in countries such as Guatemala and Chechnya—go without investigation by the police and unreported by the media. Human rights journalists and activists who dare expose these crimes risk the ultimate penalty of death. That was the fate of Natalya Estemirova in July 2009 in Chechnya. Of course, activists and journalists living in repressive regimes

who publicly question the living conditions of women or who promote women's rights are particularly threatening to the status quo. For example, when last year [2008] the Iranian women's magazine *Zanan* (Woman) was shut down after many years of publication; the reason given was that it was "publishing information detrimental to society's psychological tranquillity" (*Index on Censorship*, 2008).

Regarding human rights, Amnesty International describes women as being in "double jeopardy". It says: "Discriminated against as women, they are also as likely as men, if not more so, to become victims of human rights violations".⁵ In the same way, we can see women as being in double jeopardy when it comes to communication rights; women's right to information, to expression, to be heard, are violated in quite specific ways *because* they are women. So any grounded discussion of communication rights that does not speak explicitly—and again, I stress *explicitly*—about women's communication rights will result in quite an inadequate analysis of the issues at stake. We still face an uphill task in bringing feminist analysis which does speak of women's rights, together with other strands of research and writing on communication rights. In this, as in many other areas of media research, we seem to have two parallel bodies of work in progress. I first wrote about these 25 years ago, in relation to the debates on the New World Information and Communication Order (Gallagher, 1986). Today, as far I can see, the situation is not fundamentally different.

I think this is partly due to a lack of familiarity with feminist literature, and a consequent misunderstanding of what feminist media scholarship is actually about. To give just one example: the introduction to one of the most recently edited collections published on international communication—which will certainly be widely read—suggests that what it describes as the "feminization" of media studies is associated with research into so-called "softer" topics (Thussu, 2009: 2). I am not really sure what this means, but I do know that for many years feminist media scholarship has been concerned with issues of power, rights, democracy, information flows, policy, technology, political economy and so on, all of which are at the working core in our field. Feminist analysis may focus on these issues in a slightly different, perhaps less familiar way. But because of this different focus, feminist scholarship has the potential to expand our critiques and our understanding of the issues that media and communication research seeks to explain and the world that many of us would like to change. As such, it deserves the attention of all critical media scholars across all disciplines.

⁵ Quoted in Amnesty International USA (2005).

So let me leave you with a couple of observations from two very different but equally thoughtful and thought-provoking feminist scholars. Though neither of them specifically works in the field of media and communication, each can contribute to the way we might think about framing our research. Cynthia Enloe writes on international politics and security. In her book *Globalization and Militarism* she urges us to “take women’s lives seriously”. Unless we do, she says, we cannot reliably explain why the international system and what she calls globalized militarism, work the way they do (Enloe, 2007). “Taking women’s lives seriously” may seem deceptively simple and obvious; but in fact, it requires a radical re-thinking of the way many of us approach problems and formulate research questions. Read her book and you’ll see why.

Catharine MacKinnon is a lawyer whose work focuses on pornography, violence against women, and international law. In her essay “Are Women Human?”, published 10 years ago as part of a collection to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, she analyses the failure of the Declaration to address the distinctive ways in which women are deprived of human rights, and its failure to understand these as a deprivation of humanity. She goes on: “It is hard to see, in [the Declaration’s] vision of humanity, a woman’s face. The world needs to see women as human” (MacKinnon, 1999). Her assertion may seem over-charged or provocative. But is it not exactly the sentiment of the Kenyan village women with which I began my remarks?

To be seen as real human beings, women’s lives need to be taken seriously. If we remember this in our research, I believe we will bring a sharper spotlight onto the specific gender-based obstacles that must be attended, if women are to exercise their human and communication rights.

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THE COMMUNICATIVE CITY

C E E S H A M E L I N K

On a cold January morning a man played the violin in a Washington metro station. He played during rush hour when a large number of people passed on their way to work. For about 45 minutes he played six pieces composed by Bach. Only a few stopped and listened for a brief moment, about twenty people gave him money, he collected USD 32. When he had finished, no one applauded. The only ones who noticed something remarkable was happening were some children that stopped to listen but their parents pushed them on. The violinist was the world famous musician Joshua Bell who had played the night before for a jam-packed theatre in Boston with seats averaging USD 100. The Joshua Bell story suggests that the modern urban context is not receptive to the most pervasive mode of human communication across the borders of culture, religion and origin: music. This raises the question whether urbanites can communicate at all.

For the first time in history humans will become the *urban species*. In the years to come some 70% of humanity will live in cities and many of these urban spaces will be mega-cities. This means that within these spaces people will have to find ways to live together and deal with the conflicts it implies. The quality and sustainability of life in the city will largely depend upon the ways in which the urbanites manage to communicate with each other. Will there be willingness, capacity and facilities to render the cities *communicative spaces*?

In assuming the communicative space cities proposal, a critical role will be played by the design and development of urban space; this will determine if the city offers or not a human communicative space.

As it has been argued, conflict in itself is not inherently negative. All processes of change involve conflict. The real focus should therefore identify creative forms of conflict management that keep the inevitable conflict within a safety zone. The conflict is not a danger itself, but its escalation to damaging and violent levels is. In conflict management preventive action is essential. Too often interventions and mediations take place when it is much too late and when too much damage has been done. The key question therefore is how to prevent the escalation of low-intensity urban conflict to high-intensity urban conflict? A provisional answer may be found in addressing the quality of urban communication. Often enough, urban communication is understood as a provision of information and this is undoubtedly very important. Certainly in democratically governed cities citizens need to be well informed about urban matters. Moreover, citizens need to be regularly consulted through the voting polls, local referenda or public hearings (Castells, 1991). However, even when all this is done in very satisfactory ways, the city would not necessarily be a *communicative city*. The *communicative city* is a place that invites its inhabitants and guests to interact with each other in *disarming conversation*. This type of urban conversation is essential to prevent the escalation of conflictual encounters into violent outbursts. *Disarming conversation* is an approach to human interaction that keeps the escalation spiral of conflict under control.

In urban space people interact in a myriad ways, often fleetingly, anonymously, non-verbally, and such encounters can be inspirational—stimulating our fantasies: “what if I had said something to her?”, absolutely insignificant, comforting—the consolatory effect of a friendly smile, or the familiarity of a person we routinely see—irritating, unnerving or even intimidating. Some interactions have an intended or unintended physical component which can be desired or undesirable.

One form of human interaction is conversation. This could take many different forms. Conversation can be an informative exchange, such as a simple question and answer session about where to find the post office. It can be small talk about the weather or the misery of public transportation while waiting for the bus. It can also be the nasty dispute about perceived misconduct by other users of urban space.

The kind of interaction that would seem crucial to conflict de-escalation could be described as *disarming conversation*. This concept has been chosen since many people enter urban space heavily armed with what Erving Goffman called *civil inattention* (Goffman, 1963). People are prepared to avoid others through a body language that keeps them at distance. They glance at others, but see no faces, much like in dreams. They often carry expanded egos—this is *My space*—or fearful minds to urban interactivity. They are ready for combat. They may want peace, but follow

the old Roman dictum that advises if you want peace, prepare for war (*Si vis pacem, para bellum*). They have not yet learnt the lesson provided by the peace movement that if you want peace you should prepare for peace (*Si vis pacem, para pacem!*).

In order to engage in peaceful urban interaction, or at least prevent encounters from spiralling into violence, city dwellers need to prepare for *disarming conversation*. This is the kind of exchange in which people feel that they are taken seriously, in which they see the other as a *face*, accept the other's *alterity* as non-threatening, learn from the encounter and experience the joy of co-creative *out-of-the-box* thinking where conflicts become opportunities with many more options than the limited choices that initially restrained the interacting parties. Most of the disputes that people engage in take the form of the classical dilemma: a difficult, sometimes impossible choice between two options. In the *disarming conversation* people discover that most conflict situations do in fact offer choices within a surprisingly large number of options. If we were to conclude that neither deadly conflicts, nor avoidance or separation walls offer sustainable solutions for urban living, the only alternative would be the effort to engage in conversation, take the risk of interacting and accept that people are strangers to each other. This only works however, if people trust each other. But why would the other, who has strange convictions, be *bona fide*? Trust is difficult in societies where today's *fear traders* in politics and media teach us that—in times of uncertainty and chaos—we should fear the others. At this point in human history crucial choices must be taken on how the inevitability of *conflictual co-existence* should be coped with.

It is obviously important that people learn how to converse in a disarming way and it would be tempting to offer a menu of courses, seminars and books on this communicative skill. Much like it is done in such books as *Communicating Effectively for Dummies*, by Marty Brounstein, or in training manuals on cross-cultural communication competence or in seminars on non-violent communication (Rosenberg, 2003). All these efforts focus on the improvement of communication skills. This undoubtedly, is all terribly important and much needed. However, the top priority should be creating the conditions under which people will at all be inspired or seduced into the disarming conversation! Under what conditions does urban space offer an environment that is conducive to this type of interaction? A guiding consideration in dealing with this question may be that both too much communality and too much diversity make meaningful human communication difficult, if not impossible.

If urban space is too homogenized, like in the increasingly popular shopping malls, diversity tends to be negated. At the mall we are all the same: fun-shoppers

having a good time. What is there to converse about? *Mallization* of the city does not provide optimal conditions for the communicative city concept. In addition to its Disney-park-type lifestyle homogenization, there are serious limits to freedom of speech and little, if any, privacy in its private space. On the other hand, if urban space is too differentiated, the urbanites may also have nothing to converse about with each other. The gated communities and the Bronx districts have little to say to each other! The *fortress city* obviously obstructs the communicative environment. It destroys the possibility to communicate perceptions, expectations, grievances, humiliations, the hatred that people may harbour.

The communicative conditions that are essential to prevent the escalation of urban conflict are the collective responsibility of urbanites; it is up to them to develop the communicative city.

RIGHT TO THE COMMUNICATIVE CITY

The notion of the communicative city is the embodiment of a fundamental human right. It represents the entitlement to an urban environment where architectural, spatial, psychological, topological and time-related conditions invite people to impart, seek, receive and exchange information, ideas and opinions, to listen and learn from each other in an ambiance where their autonomy, security and freedom is optimally guaranteed. Actually, the right to the communicative city brings together a whole set of other human rights, such as the right to free association, privacy and participation in cultural life. In addition to the earlier concept of the right to the city, developed by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in his book *Le droit à la ville* (1968), the *human right to a communicative city* should be developed. The right to the city was inspired by the basic belief that decision-making processes in the cities should be reframed so that all urban dwellers have a right to participate in urban politics and in the shaping of their environment. The right to the city has been explored by researchers in cities such as Rome, Paris, Toronto and Sydney. Much work has focussed on access to public space, urban citizenship, marginalization, exclusion and women's rights to the city. Communication as conversation is so far, not among the topics of urban research. In the literature on the right to the city there are references to access to public information and to the right of free expression, but not to interactive urban communication as conversation. In the World Charter on the Right to the City the notion of interactive communication does not appear and a revision of the Charter should include the right to a communicative city!

Without pretending to be exhaustive, some of the conditions that create an urban space that invites disarming conversation can be provisionally listed:

- Public space. Does the city—despite the processes of privatisation—have enough public space left for people to meet?
- Privatised public space. Does the city have places that—although privately owned—function as public meeting places (your favourite pub)?
- Freedom. Do meeting places provide for *free speech*; can people express opinions and ideas without the risk of intervention?
- Trust. Can people communicate without the intimidation of 24/7 surveillance?
- Time. Are there time constraints on access to public meeting places, such as closing hours for public parks?
- Sites of wonder. Does the city offer views that inspire people to converse with others?
- Outdoor activities. Are there many small markets and a host of cultural events?
- Reflexivity. Are there places where people can withdraw for inner conversation with themselves?
- Flexibility. Does the city have a good balance between large, open spaces and small, intimate spaces?
- Diversity. Is there a variety of architectural structures and socioeconomic functions like in the world's great street? (Jacobs, 1993).
- Human scale. Do city dwellers feel that their urban space has human proportions?
- Comfort. Are there places where people can sit and rest, like benches in parks, sufficiently comfortable?
- Playgrounds. Are there enough playgrounds for children or *jeu de boules* (bowling game) places for adults?

The way cities structure and manage their public space is obviously essential to any effort towards enhancing social interaction among urbanites. In addition to management of the physical environment, there are also economic and sociocultural elements that enhance or obstruct urban social interaction.

There is however more. If we had an optimal urban grid, would urban dwellers be able to engage in disarming conversation? Beyond the physical and socioeconomic environment there has to be a psychological environment that overcomes essential obstacles to urban conversation. This environment would have to adequately address the issues of heterogeneity, speed and mindlessness.

HETEROGENEITY

The city is a place of heterogeneity, a place of differences. Dealing with the permanent provocation, as Foucault conceives it, that heterogeneity poses is exceedingly difficult for many people! Coping with heterogeneity in communication requires of people to begin recognising the polyphonic structures of their own minds. The dialogue between different people is only possible if the internal *self* extends into the external *others*. This implies that we understand our inner self as a society (Minsky, 1985) populated by many different *I-positions* with the capacity of conducting dialogues among themselves. Dialogical self theory (Hermans, Kempen and Van Loon, 1992) proposes that the self is extended to include both internal and external positions, both *I-position* and positions of others. The extended self breaks through the separation between self and society. Only when we learn to communicate with the plurality of our own identities, can we communicate with others. We need to first engage in dialogue with ourselves, i.e. with all the different *I-positions* we live with and then discover that others—my friend, my wife, my enemy—are part of these positions. Meaningful communication with others demands that the dialogical self is extended to these others. Only then can the Cartesian obstacle of distinction between me and the other be resolved and we may communicate as members of the same universe.

SPEED

The city is characterized by the tremendous speed of its movements and interactions. Disarming conversations demand time. For most city dwellers this means that they have to learn the art of slowing down.

One of the tools the city offers its citizens are pedestrian traffic lights. In many of the world's cities one can observe how masses of people rapidly cross the streets ignoring traffic lights, unless there is a police officer or an immediate danger of being run over. Waiting for the red traffic light is an important exercise in slowing down and creates even the opportunity to say something to another human being. The essential problem with speed is that whereas our bodies may move at cyber speed, our minds are still dwelling in earlier ages. As Leda Cosmides and John Tooby have phrased it: "Our modern skulls house a stone age mind" (Cosmides and Tooby, 1997: 6). This raises the question as to whether our minds can catch up with our bodies. Can our minds cope with the problems of modern urban life?

MINDLESSNESS

Much of urban interaction is mindless. People run without seeing faces, pass each other as strangers in the night, without feeling responsibility towards the others. People speed along the urban routes in cocoons that broadcast the signal: *I don't mind you, please don't mind me!* The mindlessness of modern urban life implies the mindless speech mode.

It is more characteristic of urban than of village life that numerous bystanders see a fellow human being beaten and kicked and don't intervene. They may even complain if other onlookers stand in their line of sight. Modern cities need massive training programs in mindfulness.

An important question that inevitably comes up is whether the communicative city is an unrealistic proposition. Much of the thinking about communicative behaviour of city people has been influenced by the classical 1938 article on urban sociology by Louis Wirth titled *Urbanism as a Way of Life*. According to Wirth the city is characterised by the size of its population, the density of life and its heterogeneity. As a result urbanites develop a modality of coexistence that is impersonal, fleeting and one-dimensional (Wirth, 1938: 12). Most contacts in the city have a business-like, one-dimensional character. Critics of this observation have pointed out that cities are more complex and multi-layered, that they consist of different domains and spaces in which people relate to each other in a variety of ways. The communicative city is inspired by those urban sociologists, like Thaddeus Müller whose work demonstrates that urban social life in the public domain can be *warm*. Interactions among people in the city's public space can be personal and intimate and not necessarily anonymous and cold (Müller, 2002). Müller's findings—based upon his research in Amsterdam—indicate that “urbanites make the public realm meaningful by wilfully and playfully interacting with others in this realm” (Müller, 2002: 189).

CONCLUSION

If indeed cities are the collective future of humankind there is an urgent need to find creative approaches to urban conflict management. One such possible approach is the development of urban space in ways that facilitate *disarming conversation*. This kind of urban interaction recognises the reality of urban conflict and offers a tool to prevent conflicts moving from safety into danger zones.

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MEDIA EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

D I V I N A F R A U - M E I G S

I have decided to focus my presentation on the media education field from a human rights perspective due to my recent experiences as a researcher collaborating with the European Council, the European Commission, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. This is an effort that is also being promoted within IAMCR, particularly in the Media Education Research section. My presentation is based on two of my publications regarding media governance: *Mapping Media Education Policies in the World: Visions* (Frau-Meigs and Torrent, 2009) and *Media Matters in the Cultural Contradictions of the “Information Society”* (Frau-Meigs, 2011).

Margaret Gallagher is completely right when she says that the new generations must receive the codes that will allow them to understand and be sensitised to the concepts and principles drafted sixty years ago. I am trying to do this in a direct and explicit way, using public policies based on media education within the human rights framework. I am particularly interested in developing a perspective aimed at the ethical practices of young people in order to explicitly teach the subject of human rights.

This must be done because nowadays media education has become a neoliberal panacea, evident in the European directive on Audiovisual Media Services; it mentions media education as a concession to the fact that states have scaled back restrictions allowing all types of publicity. The current investment in media education responds to a commercial logic that allows for diminished protection systems (for consumers, minors) on the one hand and insufficient state participation in the sector and self-regulation of the private sector on the other. It is a way to privatise the risk of the digital divide and the individualisation of education, under

the guise of *empowerment*. This is a short term type of investment and it only works in a context in which the public is reduced to a consumer group whose non-critical consent is the final challenge.

An enriched, sustainable and even beneficial democratic investment must place media education on a different level, making use of the competences and the strategies of people, insisting on power and knowledge relationships, which are currently terribly asymmetrical. Its association with human rights and civic knowledge is essential: education to improve citizenship, environmental education and the like may be easily delivered through the media, especially if the public service value of the new cyberspace networks is legitimated and established to act as a counterweight to the deregulated neoliberal system.

In order to develop the cognitive skills related to the representation and the mediation of the media, I often talk about the 7 Cs or the seven basic competences of media education: comprehension, criticism, creativity, consumption, citizenship, intercultural communication and conflict. These 7 Cs reintroduce value to both education and the media and the values, many of them inherited, of human rights issues. They can act as a socialised cognitive perspective to educate young people in democracy. The 7 Cs can modify behaviour related to communication media and promote sensibility towards mutual tolerance, responsibility, dignity, respect and common good. They have the potential to transform current civic apathy into civic activism, as young people become content producers and social network creators.

MEDIA EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: NEW THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

As a researcher, like many of you, I think that it is hard to include the human rights analysis in our research because it involves different values and is related to very subjective principles. The important thing is having an explanation system that can be made explicit throughout the research. Consequently, my idea is that human rights are our global GPS, our Global Positioning System, in terms of values. This proposal implies a revised perspective on human nature: not so much the version of past centuries: “man is the wolf of man” but the cyber version of the 21st century, *soft and smart*, in which the person is a plastic being, with a collective intelligence socialised by the media. This version implies seeing the role of “values” from the perspective of knowledge and the interaction between the brain and the environment

through the media; finding a good scale of interaction to analyse human rights phenomena, the GPS.

As a researcher, there is another element that I must consider, which is having a reference framework from various approaches and schools of thought allowing this GPS to make sense. In this field, we must not forget that the media are agents of socialization that promote values which provide meaning to our attitudes. Therefore, a lot of work is needed to prove to young people that media education helps them to grow in human rights.

This education must come from the theoretical “bricolage” created by the reference frameworks mentioned above. In this sense, for example, political economy provides the codes for understanding the powers involved in the media industry, anthropology provides the codes for understanding the role of the media in everyday life and the way that people use the media on a day to day basis, law provides the codes for understanding legislative processes, philosophy and the sociotechnical dimension, which are also part of the reference framework I am trying to elaborate.

This “bricolage” exercise implies formulating research questions related to these subjects. One of them is: How do we find the right interaction scale to analyse implementation of human rights at an international level? Others are: Where do we test the theory that says human rights are our GPS? Who are the performers and where are the most efficient ones to test this? How do we analyse the media when cross-border industrial flows are not linear, nor are human rights uniform or applied in the same way in all countries, bringing about all the uses and abuses that we all know?

This “bricolage” must be placed inside the new scientific cognitive frameworks, based on concepts such as plasticity, reactivity, connection, participation, co-regulation, networks, co-evolution between person and machine. Our communication and information sciences also propose perspectives about networks, flows, audiences, media goods and services, cultural expressions and a development perspective with post-colonial, post-communist and feminist transformations. This GPS only makes sense in a *cosmopolitical* reading of the world: non-linear, non-cause and effect, but rather reticular, multi-causal, multi-polar and procedural.

RIGHTS BEYOND MORAL AND ETHICS

Another challenge for researching communication and human rights is maintaining a balance between the two classic postures on rights and values, morals and ethics.

One of them has to do with the normative instance, with the idea that rights, specifically universal rights, are top-down abstract and theoretical principles which imply duties and responsibilities and social justice applied by the state. This view corresponds to the approach of the 18th century.

But there is another perspective that appeared concurrently; it speaks not of regulation but rather of ethics as something operational, emerging from below, and it takes a pragmatic vision of the day to day exercise of rights, seeing them as participation rather than as duties and responsibilities, as part of the virtues of each autonomous person and society. Within this framework, social justice is expected to come from the individual, resulting from self-regulation, not law, as guidelines and an ethical code of practice.

Modern times require modern processes which is why I believe that the current process of generating human rights is more heuristic, more systemic, more adapted to situations, more open-ended with the state and the individual implicated in the mechanisms of resolution; they are involved in legislation and sanction, which is the field I work in as a consultant for new policies and rights issues in cyberspace. Rights are obtained and understood in the process, not necessarily as an obligation from the start; this is why we must create conflict-solving mechanisms (one of the 7 Cs) that are generative, open and, therefore, solid.

In this regard, other research questions come to mind: how can we develop the uses and practices, the capabilities that will foster positive attitudes towards the media and, particularly, human rights? How do we prevent transforming human rights into services, as is currently happening with many of the new media, sponsored by people who, having the means to access them, are creating differing levels of citizenship? Where will property and social justice stand in the cyberspace environment? How do we ensure that human rights do not become an ideology and maintain them as a fundamental, flexible reference with enough space to create new evolutions, for example the right to diversity? How do we ensure that human rights continue to be a generative process and not a frozen ideology?

The previous points create the foundation for my arguments, with which I try to put pressure on legislators, showing them that at present there is plasticity in human rights which can be creative, systemic but which has to do with being connected, with participation, with empowerment of the individual when facing structures and infrastructures out of his control. It also has to do with distributed intelligence, especially in the field of regulatory practices. This is why I think that the appropriate places to carry out these actions are the European Council, international organisations that handle the media and regulatory cosmopolitical dimension and

involve the social responsibility of all actors. Our social usefulness as researchers can be valued there and hopefully we may have impact in the legal environment, although it will never be as strong as that of industrial lobbies.

TOWARDS AN ARTICLE 31 OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION?

Linked to this point is a particularly important issue, which is the criterion that we, as researchers, must follow in order to define the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on which we must focus our work to prevent them from becoming a frozen ideology. There are two types of solutions: improving the current articles, stretching them into cyberspace or proposing new articles that reflect the new situation created by cyberspace. These strategies are not mutually exclusive.

Articles 18 and 19 pertain to freedom of opinion, expression and information diffusion; they establish protection against censorship and make it possible to use the media as a petition and protest tool. The right of access to infrastructure and contents would have to be added to these rights. Such access is of capital importance since it reverberates on sustainable development and social justice (digital and cultural gaps), it impacts on equality between men and women, children and adults, poor and rich, and it must be public, not just labour oriented or commercial.

Article 12 addresses privacy which allows for the protection of data and which could also include the protection of anonymity. It would be necessary to add the right to *encryption* in order to protect identity and anonymity, as the right to not be observed without permission and the right to a personal safety box in which to keep personal data without it falling to commercial interests or third party malevolence.

Articles 26 and 27 dealing with education and participation in the scientific and cultural fields could contain many of the ethical and practical issues regarding young people. It would be necessary to add the right to media education, the right to access public information and open knowledge (the *commons*), the right to share knowledge and creative content, the right to interoperability, to open standards and the neutrality of networks, in order to protect people from existing property and content monopolies.

At Unesco, another field of the cosmopolitical dimension, my colleagues and I are discussing whether or not an Article 31 which would be related to human rights promotion in cyberspace is worth fighting for. You might ask: what would that be? What has not been covered yet? What can we not transfer to cyberspace of the human rights that already exists? Do we need to specify the gender concept? Do

we need to specify more communication rights to be added to information rights? Do we basically need to go in the direction of a right to internet governance by means of an Article 31?

For the time being, we have preferred to lean towards a code of ethics for the information society that deals extensively with the governance of media and the cosmopolitical validity of the media. We are developing it in the Information for All Programme (IFAP) in order to put forth the problems we see with cultural goods and creative industries, regarding open environments. We think that maintaining the idea of media regulation with proportionality, lawfulness and effectiveness under international supervision is essential. We also believe it is important to think about the intervention mechanisms in case of violations.

It is a very fragile process, more pedagogical than legal, and it aims to sensitise all parties involved to issues of human rights in cyberspace. Also, it will be a long process, since we can expect much resistance both from the public and the private sector. But human rights also found many difficulties before they were adopted by countries. Hope and patience are also part of the research.

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THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE, NOT YET FOR ALL

RAÚL TREJO DELARBRE

Rosa Cruz is an indigenous woman who lives in Ocumicho, a little town in the northern part of the Mexican state of Michoacán. She barely speaks Spanish but she likes to participate in Radio Uekakua (Radio The Favorite), established by the community eight years ago. Rosa Cruz became a radio hostess and used to greet her neighbours in the Purepecha language, she used to receive their messages and answer them in a service oriented manner. On 29 January 29th, 2009 the radio station was raided by a hundred Agencia Federal de Investigación (Federal Investigation Agency) officers. They dismantled and seized the technical equipment and threatened the people present, all of whom were women. When she noticed that all of the town's streets were closed by the police, Rosa Cruz ran to the radio station; she was worried about two of her daughters-in-law who also work there. The police arrested her and without any explanation held her responsible for Radio Uekakua operations.

Today, Rosa faces charges for taking possession of Mexican national property—the radio-electric spectrum—and faces a possible 12-year sentence in prison. Radio Uekakua commenced its legal regularisation process in 2002 but the Mexican government—which legalised a dozen other community stations three years prior to this incident—did not pay attention to this particular radio station. Radio Uekakua had a transmission power of five watts that barely allowed it to reach the nearest towns.

The intolerance suffered by Rosa Cruz and other people who like her face persecution for exercising their communication rights stand in contrast to the expansion of communicational resources and their accessibility in the world. We are, in this 21st century, at the threshold of a fascinating information society, where the combination of digitalisation and telecommunications means more messages,

ubiquitous and global connections and unprecedented yet promising possibilities for interaction. However, in some areas of communication, we come across limitations and patrimonialisms worthy of the 19th century.

Unequal access to communicational options is a source of additional stress, in the performance as well as in the study of the media. Bound by commercial, corporate, political, union interests and other restrictions, the contemporary media tend to resist societal demands and participation. Thus, it seems appropriate yet paradoxical that the subject of the annual Conference of the International Association for Media and Communication Research be human rights and communication. While specific issues such as international communication, sports and media, communication and AIDS or Islam and the media are being analysed, the general context of this Conference is the problematisation of human rights.

Many colleagues at this Conference have analysed on previous days the background of this articulation. The freedom promulgated since the French Revolution, more than two centuries ago and the human rights granted by the Universal Declaration 61 years ago are included in almost every democratic constitution and in the predominant common sense of our societies. Today it is almost unthinkable for a political or social leader to declare himself against freedom of speech. However, the recognition of such a right has encountered important obstacles, ranging from the persecution of communicators to the preservation of legal regimes and practices that nourish or favour the performance of authoritarian communication. It is communication in the hands of a few and addressed to the many more who do not have the means to significantly influence its contents.

The use of communication as a commercial battering ram or in other cases as a political propaganda tool creates messages that are schematic, repetitive and of poor content. The concentration of many media in few hands prevents society from being anything other than the sole consumer of such messages.

Technological development and corporate consolidation combine themselves to favour such a situation. Even if they provide options for participation and expression that supersede conventional media, the new technologies have also been used to strengthen the communicative capabilities of private corporations. At the same time, the concentration of business which fuses capital and infrastructure and pretends to do the same with audiences and content results in a reduction of the communication options that could otherwise be available to our societies. The interests of the political class, who will usually do anything to profit with media acquiescence, favour limitations on communication and rights to expression.

The media are formidable resources to reach consensus and mobilise entire societies but also to confuse and promote or strengthen the subjugation of citizens to authoritarian regimes. Media populism which reproduces old client-based habits is currently taking root in the media and in some cases openly subordinating them to its interests; this is becoming a new obstacle for contemporary democracies. The monopolisation of media resources that Berlusconi has achieved in Italy, the subjugation of dissident media set forth by Putin in Russia, the control of the information network sustained by the Chinese government, the usual persecution of dissident journalists in Cuba controlled by the Castro brothers, the use of public and private media to spread the autocratic project perpetrated by Hugo Chávez in Venezuela - all are different expressions of the arbitrary use that political power makes of the media, damaging the rights to expression and information.

In Mexico two companies, Televisa and TV Azteca, hold 93% of the commercial frequencies used by private television. Only three out of every 10 Mexican homes have subscription based television service. Therefore, 70% of the Mexican audience does not have access to other television services than those provided by these two companies. In the case of radio, most frequencies are controlled by around ten communicational groups. The press is also seeing a process of concentration.

None of those media have efficient rules for exercising the right to reply, which is one of the most elementary forms of the freedom of speech. The most influential corporations in radio and television regard themselves as owners of the radio-electric spectrum—which formally is national property—and the government acts as if this is the case. In Mexico, the media syndicates have prevented the incorporation of new competitors in television and they demand of the state a persecution policy towards the scarce social groups who try to implement other forms of radio broadcasting. Héctor Camero, the promoter of the Tierra y Libertad (Land and Freedom) radio station in Monterrey, Nuevo León, faces prosecution like Rosa Díaz, the Purepecha woman of Radio Uekakua.

Media legislation in Mexico does not stipulate limits on the concentration of communication resources, it does not favour diversity, it does not limit misleading advertising, it does not protect the rights of children nor does it promote high-quality content. In Mexican legislation television viewers and radio listeners are not acknowledged as citizens, only as consumers—using the differentiation emphasized by Néstor García Canclini. Freedom of speech is subjected to the discretion of media corporations. True public media is non-existent in Mexico. Television and radio stations under federal and local government control face severe restrictions, including their use as political propaganda tools.

A veritable paradox of the contemporary world is that we have a communication infrastructure and data flow that would indeed allow us to call ourselves the Information Society; but at the same time in many of our countries we suffer financial and commercial interests, political selfishness, ideological fundamentalisms, obsolete legal regimes, digital and cultural gaps, all of which hinder or simply prevent us from exercising our rights to communication and freedom of speech.

Media research is essential to documenting and explaining the conditions under which communication is exercised. Without serious and systematic work on the circumstances and content of the media, taking into account its languages and practices, capable of understanding them in their social contexts, conceiving of them as tributaries of popular culture but also as political power resources, studying their audiences inasmuch as their production modes, considering their juridical, technological and historical implications among other disciplinary aspects, we would not be able to understand the media itself and it would be impossible to design public policies capable of promoting communications interested in the communication rights of their corresponding societies.

Whichever commitment is reached, it will never replace the academic rigour demanded by media research to make it truly useful. The seriousness demanded of its methodological frameworks, the mandatory verifiability of the data provided and the possibility to discuss and compare its results and reflections in a broader sense require that media and communication research be subjected to the broadest and most open scrutiny.

Hence, such research will allow us to understand the media and its effects to contribute to designing communication capable of building a community or, in other words, capable of being a space to create and solidify citizenship.

**PERSPECTIVES ON
COMMUNICATION AND HUMAN
RIGHTS IN LATIN AMERICA**

RIGHTS OF MAN AND COMMUNICATION IN LATIN AMERICA

ANTONIO PASQUALI

Acknowledging that communication is a *conditio sine qua non* for the emergence of relationality in the political animal, as ancient as the pre-Socratics. This should have forced us some time ago to assume the *right to communication* as a categorial component of the human being, at the head of the catalogue of human rights.

One of the most prominent types of the right to communication is one the Anglo-Saxon linguistic area termed *freedom of expression*. From its inception, this definition was both limited and restrictive. In essences it denotes a first-generation or individual right, of the so-called rights *against the State*. This concept is so prominent that in the scientific literature of this field of study, and even beyond, it often tends implicitly to identify genus and species, as if the right to communicate were exhausted in freedom of expression.

From archetype to stereotype, we have ended up totemising and freezing “freedom of expression” in ever less thought-out formulas, which we use to reproduce in perpetuity famous definitions from the past. Many Vestals, particularly in the field of law, have turned these into intangible, ahistorical dogmas, overloaded with more and more hermeneutical subtleties yet refractory to questioning or examination.

The time to question that stereotype—steering clear of heresies obviously—arrived some time ago. Age-old moral precepts fall away when they no longer serve as a guide for the free and responsible option in the face of unprecedented forms of praxis; while established definitions perish when they are unable to give account of new realities. The tremendous complexities of the freedom of expression,

the freedom to be informed and to inform, or the right to knowledge of our age are no longer served by the antiquated notion of *freedom of expression*. Immense pressures exerted by the increasing complexity of the socio-political framework, spectacular scientific development and the subsequent advent of ever more complex symbolic universes have made the hackneyed and once glorious idea of *freedom of expression*—as defined at the beginning of the 18th century—obsolete, exposing its gnoseological and practical limits.

This is how an investigation that takes into account the historicity and renewal of knowledge perceives it today. Yet there are other pressures. Here we are speaking of empirical ones, of the socio-political milieu. With the implacability of a hyperrealist painting, they too expose the inadequacy of that antiquated concept to the new complexities. You do not have to be self-professed determinists or positivists to recognise the natural relationship, even symmetry, between specific historical situations and particular philosophical, ethical or aesthetic shifts. The fact that Aristotle, the epicureans and the stoics, for example, abandoned as the basis of their moral edifice, the platonic *dikaíosúne* or justice, a social perfection, to extol as supreme virtues the contemplative life and even *ataraxía* or imperturbability, individual, non-engaged virtues, is clearly symmetrical to the Athenian crisis of democracy, the imperialist adventure of Alexander and the satrapies. Our own icon, the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, is symmetrical to the American wars of independence and the French revolution. It should not come as a surprise then if that inadequacy between a new form of communicating and the old rules is heavily felt in Latin America, having once again become an enormous socio-political laboratory; and it may well end up giving birth to a conceptual renewal.

A necessary conceptual *aggiornamento* and the pressures of an extremely complex domestic political environment with respect to communications are felt at once by this author also. I am Venezuelan. After 40 years of uninterrupted democracy, over the last decade my country has lived through another episode of militarist autocracy (its twenty-sixth since Independence). The inspiration this time has been Castro's communism, characterised *inter alia* by a media war between the unprecedented yet ineffectual gigantism of the government media and various independent spokespersons from the opposition, increasingly weakened by government harassment. Some of these battles, such as the closure of broadcaster RCTV, have been seen around the world. "The media—says one of the reports whose details are noted below—occupy the centre of the political confrontation [...] There is a tendency towards naturalisation and social acceptance of the violence against

the media and communicators”.¹ At this point in time there is probably no other country where the issue of the media is as raw as it is in Venezuela. Even people on the street are asking themselves what freedom of expression is, what is it for and how to defend it. The regime insists that this freedom does exist, and in full. This is true as we will see, but the proportions are insufficient.

As a critic of the regime, I have never been troubled on account of my journalistic opinion pieces. However, I cannot forget that my little patch of freedom has coexisted—between 2002 and February 2009—with 1 349 attacks on freedom of expression, the great majority of them coming from the government itself or those in favour of the government, including 293 attacks and assaults on people or property, 172 legal or administrative impediments, and at least five murders. There is another unusual variable, only adding complexity to what is already complex. Venezuela’s president is a big brother figure without precedent in world media history. By 31 December, 2008, i.e., after little more than nine years in power, Hugo Chávez had accumulated 2 810 hours speaking on radio and television. Converted into eight-hour shifts with a 250-day working year, this means that he spent one year and seven months in front of the cameras and microphones. All that is needed to do this is to add up the 1 719 hours of his *Aló Presidente* (Hello President) program and the 1 091 hours of the 1 751 *cadenas*, which is how we in Venezuela call the compulsory linkup of the entire radio and television network to the government signal. Chávez indoctrinates the country at a rate of 46 minutes 19 seconds a day, 365 days a year. It is an abuse of a dominant position that has literally become an attack on the freedoms of the private broadcaster and the media consumer; a novel way—unimaginable in 1789, of course—to seriously restrict several facets of what now constitutes freedom of communication.

The most relevant documents of the past concerning freedom of communication and expression, with their insights and limitations, evidently warrant a tip of the hat and, in the case of the *exception française*, a rescue operation.

The subject we casually call *freedom of expression* today was vigorously championed by thinkers and politicians, mainly Anglo-Saxon, of the 18th and 19th centuries within the narrow scope of what are now termed first-generation

¹ These data are reproduced from the publications *Provea* <<http://www.derechos.org.ve>> and *Espacio Público* <<http://www.espaciopublico.info/index.php>>, two Venezuelan non-government organisations monitoring domestic events concerning human rights. The main source for those relating to the appearance of the presidency in the media, calculated by these organisations, is the monitoring done by AGB Nielsen Media Research.

rights or individual freedoms. Its chief goal was to guarantee citizens a *freedom of speaking against the government*. For example, publishing uncensored *seditious libels* against the established authority or refuting the imposition of an official religion (something that never goes away for good: the latest and most democratic constitution of the Maldives still only grants nationality to practicing Muslims).

One of the strongest arguments put forward by theorists from those mercantilist societies—as in the case of American legal thought with the Holmes/Brandeis doctrine—was that freedom of expression was necessary for there to exist a *free market of ideas*, as the close analogy, almost identity, they saw between freedom of expression and freedom of trade. It is important to keep those original motives in mind as they are still heavily bound up with the notion of *freedom of expression* used today in WASP culture. The rest of the world ended up adopting that same phrase, while loading it with different cultural connotations to its founding features. Incidentally, this helps explain the series of mutual misunderstandings that have contaminated the international polemic around the notion of the *free flow of information* for the past 30 years.

The fact remains that our expanded capacity for self-expression has made our freedom of expression more complex. The old definitions fail to demonstrate, either in spirit or letter, enough genericity or universality for the new codes and ways of communicating and their expressive and social consequences to be subsumed in them. The English Bill of Rights of 1689 mentions only *freedom of speech in Parliament*. The Virginia Bill of Rights of 1776, considered the first modern human rights instrument, goes no further than *freedom of the press, one of the great bulwarks of liberty*. The Massachusetts Bill of Rights of 1780 states that *the liberty of the press is essential to the security of freedom*. The subsequent United States Bill of Rights of 1791—i.e. the amendments to the 1787 Constitution—in its famous First Amendment, and taking its cue from Voltaire, talks of *no law[...]* *abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press....* Meanwhile the Bolivarian Constitution of Angostura of 1819 refers to *la libertad de opinion y de expresión* (freedom of opinion and expression), anticipating Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights by 129 years, which also lists *freedom of opinion and expression* among the essential rights of man, but adds modern ingredients inherent to this freedom (though often left out by *ex officio* quotes), such as the right to “seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. Taking a step further in the task of renovating the old *freedom of expression*, the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights talks about *freedom of thought and expression*, whereas the Declaration of Principles

on Freedom of Expression of the Organization of American States (OAS) of 2001, marks a different tone: it returns “communicate” to its rightful place and speaks of a *right to communicate his/her views*.

Breaking with chronological order, we have left Article 11 of the *Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen* of 1789, our *exception française*, to last. Even today its text surprises more than the odd communication theorist. Anticipating both the Universal Declaration of 1948 and the OAS Declaration by nearly two centuries, instead of sticking to formulas already in use, it reads: “*La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l’homme; tout citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement, sauf à répondre de l’abus de cette liberté dans les cas déterminés par la loi*” (“The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man. Every citizen may, accordingly, speak, write, and print with freedom, but shall be responsible for such abuses of this freedom as shall be defined by law”). The first thing to underscore here is a return to the broader, all-inclusive concept of *free communication*. Secondly, there is an anticipation—the only one possible for that period—of what in 1948 would become the right to investigate, receive and spread ideas by any means of expression. Great minds were at work in the 1789 Declaration (including Condorcet, Lafayette, Mounier, Mirabeau and Sieyès, not forgetting that 13 of the voters at the Assembly had fought in America on the side of the pro-independents). Almost certainly, however, the surprising *free communication* was chipped in by Lafayette, the Declaration’s drafter-in-chief, in charge of its submittal to the Assembly as its chairman. Lafayette not only fought for independence in America. He studied the Virginia and Massachusetts *bills of rights*, discussed his own project with Jefferson and perhaps consciously chose not to adopt the Anglo-Saxon formulas in favour of the more generic *communiquer* of Voltaire, Rousseau and even Galileo. In one of his texts prior to the Declaration, entitled *Motion sur les droits de l’homme, et de l’homme vivant en société*, he forged for the first time an essential concept that would be taken up a century and a half later by the Universal Declaration. Democratic communication theorists should make it our epigraph: *the free communication of ideas by all possible means*. This aspect of the 1789 Declaration is not merely a semantic curiosity either. To go deeper into the issue and look for consensuses in the cultural diversity, it suggests, for *freedom of expression* we should read *freedom of communication*. In 1948, the father of information theory, Claude Elwood Shannon, also adopted a similar decision to favour genus over species by titling his seminal work: *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*.

* * *

How, then, would we draft a *vulgata editio* of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration for the digital age? What do we think is inherent *stricto sensu* to *full freedom to communicate* today?

Let's go back to our sixty-year-old, though still quite fresh, article from the pre-digital age: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

What if, before pencilling in any answers, we stress its fundamental aspect one last time: this article is not solely for the use of journalists and politicians. Before being a postulate of social communication (its deontological desideratum), before even being a mainstay of democracy (its political role), freedom of communication or expression is the ontological condition *sine qua non* of human relationality, of coexistence in dialoguing reciprocity with the other, our *nihil obstat* for admission to the anthropological dimension, the *zoon politikon*.

To best assume the modern complexities of that form of freedom, we suggest construing this article as a physicist with the light refracted through a prism would, in our case, a pentagonal prism. Full freedom to communicate would then be a kind of rainbow resulting from the free movement of the message through the five faces of our pentagon, namely:

First: Freedom of code. The power to express ourselves through freely chosen, non-restricted or non-proprietary codes. This is not the lesser face of the prism. The Canadians used to ban the Inuit from expressing themselves in their mother tongue, as did the occupying Japanese with the Koreans. In 1939, the Francoist Propaganda Ministry banned the use of regional languages. The eradication of a mother tongue, a natural super-code, in fact constitutes one of the most odious crimes against freedom of communication. The issues of proprietary codes, *open source*, encoding, malicious codes and the like, speak to this face of the prism.

Second: Freedom of channel. The power to make use, directly or indirectly, of any desired vicarial channels to send or receive messages, without conditions, supervision, espionage or noise. One side of this is free *access* to receiving media; the reverse is free *participation* in its broadcasting use. This freedom is variable given the relevance of each canal changes over time (the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was abolished in 1966; 20 years later, Echelon was born, a satellite system able to spy on billions of messages a day). Their democraticity coefficients differ too. This is why there is a need to ensure greater balances in *participation* and to condemn

the *far west* law of “first come, first served” or oligopolistic concentrations. *Index*, burning of books and works of art, compulsory closure of channels, manipulation in the concession of frequencies or consumables, and obstructing the use of channels, from television to the Internet, are forms of casuistry in the severing of *access* and *participation* with a protean ability to adapt to technological change. Of all the information and communication technologies, only the Internet is presently able to guarantee the right under Article 19 to send messages regardless of borders or audiences. That is, to the extent the net is, as it is today, limited to being a *human interaction*, given that an *Internet of things* with a poor outlook for freedoms lies ahead.

Third: Freedom of access to sources. Major segments of our freedom of communication have been entrusted to *two-step flow* mechanisms: an intermediary locates the information upstream to satisfy the social right to be informed downstream; however, access to informative sources is often problematic. If the main state-citizen discrepancies used to arise from problems of content, nowadays they spring from access to public sources. Seemingly democratic governments manipulate and conceal them just as a general staff would in wartime. Manipulation and concealment of sources leads to distortions and information *black-outs*, facts are replaced by rumour, and the credibility of the informer and freedom of knowledge are undermined. Any obstacle in accessing public or private sources that are supposed to maintain transparency leads to a commensurate loss in our freedom to communicate, by the deliberate silence of whoever ought to be our interlocutor.

Fourth: Freedom of message or contents. In the past (and often even today) our problem was limited to this fourth face of the prism. Communicating whatever you wanted to without interference used to be enough to be able to claim that *freedom of expression* existed. This is the linear, naïve or self-interested view of our freedom. Many of the great political or mercantile confiscators of the media and their contents pay tribute to this view, creating the false belief that my slim freedom, exercised in the flesh with my next-door neighbour, and its unlimited freedom of code, channel, sources, contents and audiences, are equivalent.

Fifth: Freedom of recipient audiences “regardless of borders”, to quote Article 19. This is the freedom, accorded to any broadcaster, to choose without limitation (except for those formally agreed upon) the amount, quality and location of audiences they wish to reach with their messages. Only the large, the powerful, the arrogant and, today, the users of the Internet, enjoy this fifth freedom to the full. There are many cases of compulsory severance of audiences: broadcasters shut-down or left without frequencies that are able to reach certain social spaces, demotion of

undesirable communicators to channels with lower audience penetration, whole societies with technical-economic impediments to broadcast freely to the rest of the world, public radio and television services that are left without full coverage, etc.

To say today that a society enjoys full freedom of communication implies, then, checking for the simultaneous presence of those five structural components: freedom of code, channel, source, content and audiences. To barely tolerate the fourth freedom to pretend to the world that *freedom of expression* does exist, while tightly controlling its other four aspects—which many authoritarian governments currently do—is to reduce this freedom to fiction and caricature, or to safeguard a freedom with 18th century arguments that pleads for backing with 21st century arguments.

This articulated and updated approximation to the concept of *freedom of communication* could be of some use to researchers and communicators, governments, victims of governments, clerks and courts with jurisdiction in human rights-related cases. This author would be grateful for any remarks they may have on this.

THE RIGHT TO IDENTITY AND COMMUNICATION

F Á T I M A F E R N Á N D E Z C H R I S T L I E B

To talk about human rights today, in a country like Mexico, with so many violent deaths and countless kidnappings, journalists included, raises the question: what has happened to communication? In the last three years, Mexicans have seen the first page of the daily news turn red: drug cartels rolling the heads of their recently beheaded rivals, attacking military and police headquarters, eliminating the media workers that annoy them and killing civilians that dare to denounce them.

One wonders what the political class does in the face of these problems. Where are the institutions to which the Mexican Revolution of a century ago gave rise? Where are the human rights that were won long ago? Nobody has gotten used to what we see. I suppose everyone, within their own field, has added to their research agenda the communication issues that could finally put an end to this nightmare.

To be in a public space without fear of ending up in the middle of a shootout is a human right. It is a citizen's right to demand that government officials respond to and take responsibility for what is happening. It is each and every person's right to live without fear in a land abundantly endowed by nature. In the field of ecology, we could also say that we have the right to live in cities free of contamination, to have rivers without toxic residues, woods free of clandestine logging and clean streets. We could go on listing the rights that we can't exercise for the time being.

The right to reply, for example, although set out in the Mexican Constitution, cannot be exercised in practice as it has been impossible to establish communication between those who developed the initiatives to regulate it and other legislators. Political parties and their followers continuously block every possibility of communication by labelling the adversary a person of despicable ideas. The zone

of convergence is the last thing they seek. It seems that one identifies with a political group by distancing oneself from those that do not belong to it. Mexican citizens, as in many other parts of the world, vote for the *least-worst* option for public office and we now feel powerless facing the magnitude of the obstacles we need to overcome to exercise so many rights that could be translated into a more fortunately organized collective life. There are so many tasks that do not depend on our social groups. As Norbert Elias would say: we have unleashed destructive forces that have brought about unplanned developments and we are now bound to think about each one of the human frameworks, starting with the most immediate.

Which are the rights that we can make our own, regardless of the way constitutional and de facto powers, like drug trafficking, behave? Which are the rights rooted in our humanity and that we need in these times of worn-out politics and unleashed consumerism? Which are the rights that could form the foundation for the exercise of other rights? There are many. There is one that has just begun to enter the legislative arena but its main ingredient could never be a juridical object. I am talking about the personal right to identity. Who am I, facing political chaos? With whom do I identify myself in this sea of self-concern where everyone sees each other as a social or academic stepping stone? Who am I facing unleashed consumerism? What do I still keep from my first environment and which new vital ingredients have I discovered and adopted?

Who am I?, the first question of any identity, has become a right enshrined in the law in some cases; for example, for the children of parents who were kidnapped and disappeared during the years of Latin American dictatorships or during the *guerra sucia* (dirty war) in some of our countries. The question *who am I?* also found juridical shelter many years ago in children born out of wedlock. The question *where do I come from?* formulated by adopted minors has been echoed by legislation in several countries forcing the state to keep records of biological parents for adopted individuals who would like to know their origins.

There is another much more intimate aspect of identity that never will or should be a matter for judges or public authorities and that is ours to exercise. The question "Who am I?" has been put forth since humanity began to exist. The legacy of classical Greece and the best ontology of all time have been enriched in the last half century with a contribution by researchers from various disciplines that have put an emphasis on identity and offered a magnificent unexplored field to communication specialists.

I have reached these grounds, where several disciplines converge, driven by classroom circumstances. I want to tell a story that was pivotal: "Teacher, I want to draw my genogram with data from my biological parents but I only have information

on the adoptive ones". Long silence. I stammer a few words to overcome the surprise caused by the sentence uttered by a student in my Psychology and Communication course. From that moment on, I began researching the subject. What does Mexican legislation say about this kind of right to identity? Is it possible, for all who wish, to have state support to locate their biological parents? Is there some kind of legal link with them? I can think of many more questions in this legal line of reasoning, until it all comes to a halt. What is most important in all this? What would it do for this young lady to find out about her parents? Why not just leave it alone, just be grateful for the care and affection given by her adoptive parents and forget about the biological ones? Why not just leave the school paper at its initial objective, which was to identify the type of communication she had with each family member? What if she delivers a report only on the forms, styles, elements and aspects of her everyday communication with those around her, just like her schoolmates?

The semester ended but that doubt haunted me for years until I was able to verify with actual subjects the benefits not only of information obtained about the biological family but of communication with parents alive or deceased. Even when the greatest tragedies precede an adoption, if communication is established with the parents, whether it is in person or not, peace and clarity emerge for the affected individual, even when they decide not to involve those parents in their lives. Numerous therapeutic schools confirm each day that exercising this kind of right to personal identity translates into a vital force; not only for adoption cases but also when the father leaves home or in the case of forced disappearances. Parents need not be alive or physically present to establish communication, the elements of which are already being researched. In recent years I have witnessed the strengthening of personal and collective identity simply through recognition of and thanks for the origins of the biological family.

This may be one of the reasons why some countries, Spain among them, have included the right of knowing biological parents in their legislation (Spain, 2007).¹ Since 2007, the relevant public authorities are obliged to store the information they possess related to a child's origin, particularly information about the identity of their parents, as well as the child's medical history and that of his or her family. Mexico, on the other hand, has in recent regulations² eliminated the rights derived

¹ Article 12 of the Act 54/2007, of December 28th, on International Adoption, "Derecho a conocer los orígenes biológicos" (The right to know one's biological origins)

² The legislation regarding adoption in Mexico is not of a federal nature. Each state has its own regulations. In Mexico City, changes were made to the Civil Code that extinguished the existing

from biological relationships and learning about the background of one's biological family now requires a judicial ruling. There is nothing that requires authorities to keep information about biological parents despite the large number of applications and the future of genomic medicine.

The right to a complete identity, exemplified here with adoption, has many other aspects, some of which involve shedding light on the dark places of relationships at the core of the family system. No one can do without his origins; there is no human being treading this earth exempt of influence from those who reared him and from his genes. Most of these things keep working up to the moment of death; the issue is with what frequency and quality of self-communication.

We should also think about the right to identity from the perspective of certain phenomena that have grown in the first decade of the 21st century. I want to exemplify such phenomena with the answer given by another student, 18 years of age, when I asked her why she delivered her lecture reports with different names and using initials instead of surnames: "Oh, those are my alter-egos in Second Life," she said. And I was even more surprised when she told me about her lives under different accounts. Watching her fascination with the characters she plays online, I couldn't stop thinking that Zygmunt Bauman (2007) would find in her the perfect incarnation of the consumer turned into product, of the subject giving up his place to become a marketable item through fictitious characters. What worried me the most is that during group interaction, she was rather shy, uncomfortable with the looks of her flesh-and-blood classmates, as if she could not assume her real identity, as if she could not communicate with others through what she really is.

We are surrounded by unconscious relationship dynamics which are poorly explored by communication and which are decisive to identity. If we do not decipher them, we will be defending them blindly, without knowing we are trapped in invisible loyalties, as Hungarian physician Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (2003) calls this phenomenon. Our history and that of our family system is the first step to finding our identity.

To get into all of that means to overcome, as Jesús Martín-Barbero (1987: 151) said, that deceitful safety provided by the reduction of communication problems to the media. Communication questions start here, with the first relational dynamics, with the questions that generate resistance and that we sometimes prefer to dodge.

affiliations between the adopted child and his parents, without mentioning the protection of information related to blood parents in case the adopted child would need to know them before coming of age. Mexico City Official Gazette, May 25th, 2000.

Which is my inner configuration? In the end, who am I? What are my assets and my deficiencies? What do I have to offer in my relationships with the other? What do I contribute to communication, that structural component of coexistence? Am I willing and do I know enough myself to relate to others and change our communication patterns? None of these questions is answered through judicious introspective exercise. There is no introspective method to get to know oneself,” Marco Millán says, “because the only sensible way to actually do it is to face something different (Millán, 2009: 25).

Antonio Pasquali expressed it wisely in the revised publication of his *Comprender la comunicación* (Understanding Communication): “Every change in established communication patterns will imply a change in coexistence and vice versa” (Pasquali, 2007: 136). And here, in the understanding of our own communication patterns and in untangling the ingredients of our identity lie the key and roots for making this inhospitable environment we were given a more livable one.

If we have the disposition to communicate with ourselves though our relationship with others, we may be able to enter that other sphere from which Martin Heidegger asks: “Will we be ever be able to say that entering the essence of personal identity through thought might come to be someday?” (Heidegger, 1988: 95). Hopefully we will.

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TELENOVELA AND HUMAN RIGHTS: FICTION NARRATIVE AS A COMMUNICATIONAL RESOURCE

M A R I A I M M A C O L A T A V A S S A L L O D E L O P E S

It's hard to think of contemporary

Brazil without thinking of novelas

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This document is a reflection on the Brazilian *telenovela* from two perspectives. The first demonstrates how the *telenovela* in Brazil has, over time, meshed with the country's culture to become one of its most distinctive elements. Today, it is possibly the one that best characterises the national narrative. The second supports the hypothesis that the Brazilian *telenovela*, after achieving a considerable degree of credibility, has become a public space in which to debate representative issues of the country's own experience of modernity, thereby acting as a *communication resource*. The use of this resource might allow the sharing of cultural rights, ethnic diversity and social coexistence, which would lead to greater awareness and motivation for actions to tackle the conflicts and inequalities that mark Brazilian society. The aim of this text is to gain a deeper and better understanding of how a narrative that was intended as women's entertainment can come to perform that function.

FIRST PERSPECTIVE: THE TELENOVELA AS NATIONAL NARRATIVE

To talk about culture in Brazil today necessarily involves mentioning the Brazilian *telenovela*. It could be said that the *telenovela*,¹ 46 years after it first appeared, has

¹ The *telenovela*, as we know it today, emerged as a fictional format for television broadcast in 1963. It

achieved public recognition as an aesthetic, cultural product, which has made it a central figure of the country's culture and identity. The *telenovela* could also be regarded as one of the most representative phenomena of Brazilian modernity. It combines the archaic and the modern, uses modern anachronistic and imaginary narrative devices and its stories are heavily marked by the nationality-mediatisation dialectic. This odd situation in which the Brazilian *telenovela* finds itself has put it in the, if not unique, at least peculiar, position of being a *national narrative* that has become a *communication resource*. It communicates cultural representations that act—or at least tend to act—in favour of social inclusion, environmental responsibility, respect for difference, and the construction of citizenship.

The *telenovela* in the Brazilian social and television scene

The central presence of televisión² in a country situated on the periphery of the western world could be described as just another paradox in a nation which, throughout its history, was repeatedly represented as a society of severe contrasts: wealth and poverty, modernity and archaism, south and north, coastland and interior, city and countryside. In fact, television is implicated in reproducing representations that perpetuate various connotations of inequality and discrimination. However, it should be acknowledged that it penetrates deeply into Brazilian society because of its peculiar ability to feed a *common repertoire*, whereby people of different social classes, generations, sexes, races and regions position themselves and recognise one another. Far from promoting consensual interpretations, and closer to producing struggles

can be defined as a long-duration fiction narrative, with daily showings taking in around 200 episodes; i.e., on average it is broadcast six days a week, for eight months.

² Television arrived in Brazil in 1950 and throughout its history the State has influenced the industry in different ways. Even today, the State holds the right to grant and cancel television concessions. Its policy has always been to stimulate the television business model. For this reason there has never been, strictly speaking, any experience of public television in the country. In addition to being one of the biggest advertisers in the mass media, the State, particularly since 1964 and during the military regime, transformed telecommunications into a strategic element of its national development, integration and security policy. Moreover, in addition to increasing its power to control programming through regulations, intense censorship and prescriptive policies, the military government invested heavily in infrastructure, enabling the formation of national networks (microwave system, satellites, etc.). At present, the country has six national free-to-air networks: Globo, SBT, Record, Rede TV, Bandeirantes and TV Brasil. All of these are private barring the last one, which is public and was created in December 2007.

for the interpretation of meanings, that shared repertoire is in the foundation of the representations of an *imagined national community* which television, more than any other medium, manages to continually capture, express and redefine.³

Television divulges news that is accessible to all, irrespective of social background, class or region. It therefore allows television viewers access to repertoires that used to be restricted to traditional socialising institutions such as school, the family, the church, political parties or the state apparatus (Lopes, 2003). At the same time television is a medium for advertising, steering the consumption that inspires the formation of identities (García Canclini, 1995). In this sense, television—in particular the *telenovela*—is emblematic of the emergence of a *new public space* in which the control of the formation and of the available repertoires has become more complex. Until recently this was the monopoly of intellectuals, politicians and governments, i.e., those with dominant positions in society.⁴

Doubly contradictory is the emergence of this public space in the arena of the private sector where, not coincidentally, the *telenovela* became the most popular product and the biggest source of income in Brazilian television, especially at TV Globo. Moreover, the *telenovela* grew up addressing *private life*. It is, quintessentially, a narrative on the family.⁵ The *telenovela* affords visibility to particular matters, behaviours and products, while at the same time excluding

³ Benedict Anderson (1991) suggested the notion of an *imagined national community* to describe the emergence of nation states in 19th century Europe and associated the consolidation of the feeling of belonging to an imaginary community with the rise of the written press and national languages (*print capitalism*). The ritual of reading the daily newspaper is highlighted as an example of a practice that contributed to the consolidation of that feeling of national community. The notion is useful in understanding the significance of *telenovelas* in Brazil, since the act of watching those programmes daily, at a certain time over the course of nearly 50 years, constitutes a ritual shared throughout the nation. These people know the genre's narrative conventions well and assimilate the patterns shown by them, as references through which they go on to define "ideal types" (in the Weberian sense) of Brazilian family, Brazilian woman, Brazilian man and, also, of Brazilian corruption, Brazilian violence, etc. This is why I have used that notion of *imagined national community* to indicate the representations concerning the Brazil broadcast by the *telenovelas*, and how they produce important references for re-adjusting the concept of nation and national identity. In the case of Brazil this, as I intend to demonstrate, refers to the paradox that the *telenovela*—a fictional narrative—turned into a *narrative of the nation* and a new public space for debate about the state of the country. And this is how it is able to be defined as a *communication resource*.

⁴ Joshua Meyrowitz (1984) suggests that the opening up of the repertoires of spheres restricted to men or women, young people or adults, is an important characteristic of television as a mass vehicle.

⁵ Evoking Mexican intellectual Carlos Monsiváis, the *telenovela* is a *family narrative on the nation*, in which a war is seen as an event in which an uncle died and a town as a place where a relative lives.

others. It defines a certain model that regulates the intersections between public life and private life.⁶ Using these categories to analyse the *telenovela*, it could be argued that the period from 1960 to 1980 was structured around representations that formed an imaginary array capable of synthesising Brazilian society in its *modernising* movement.

This modernisation movement was picked up by a narrative whose representations conveyed the private anguishes of middle-class families in cities such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. With the diversification of the structure of television (subscription television, video, the growth of competition) and the social and political transformations that happened during the nineteen eighties and nineties (political re-democratisation, new social movements, the globalisation process), that capacity of the *telenovela* moved towards new social representations which question the previous representations with modernising traits. This is how a kaleidoscopic, multidimensional narrative of the daily life of Brazilians took the stage.⁷

⁶ I apply the concept of both *agenda setting* and *cultural forum* (Newcomb, 1999) to the *telenovela*, as will be seen further on.

⁷ *Telenovela time* was a creation of TV Globo in the seventies, when it started producing three *telenovelas* a day. That time slot runs between 17:30 and 22:00 hours. Globo synchronised the schedule of each *telenovela* and ended up defining specific audience habits. Currently [this text was presented in 2009], the first slot, beginning at 17:30 hours, is occupied by *Malhação*, the only soap opera on Brazilian television catering to the child-teenage audience. This is followed by the *six o'clock telenovela*, which is usually period or romantic-based; the youthful, comedic-oriented *seven o'clock telenovela*, with up-to-the-minute issues, and the *eight o'clock telenovela*, dealing with social issues for adults. A twenty-minute regional news program is shown between 18:00 and 19:00, and the country's main news program, lasting 40 minutes, is broadcast between the *telenovela* at seven and the prime-time *telenovela*. The logic behind this palimpsest has become a tradition owing to the combination of news and melodrama, fiction and reality. Its contiguity has been the subject of repeated analysis and study. To speak of the Brazilian *telenovela* inevitably involves the *telenovelas* of TV Globo, which have had the biggest hand in the specificity of Brazilian television fiction. That specificity, known as the *Globo quality standard*, is the result of a set of factors ranging from the technical and industrial nature of the production to their aesthetic and artistic level, encompassing authorship construction of the dramaturgic text. Globo's *telenovelas* can therefore be seen as having a leading role in the construction of a *national television dramaturgy*. On average, a 200-episode *telenovela* runs to USD 16 million, at a cost of around USD 80 000 per episode. On average, a daily episode has 34 recorded scenes, equivalent to about half a feature-length film, or three of these films a week. They require 20 hours of shooting and 27 hours of editing for a 45-minute episode of gross content to be aired (without commercials). Normally, between 60% and 70% of the *telenovela* is shot in the studio and 30% to 40% on location. The production employs about 200 people. A successful *telenovela* achieves an audience of around 45%, a 58% share and an average of 45 million viewers.

The production of a national television dramaturgy or “I watch Brazil in the *telenovela*”

The consolidation of the *telenovela* as television’s most popular and lucrative genre is closely related to a transformation in language by Brazilian authors, starting from the experience gained in radio and cinema. The opposition between the *realist telenovelas*, critical of the country’s social, cultural and political reality, and the weepy *fantasy telenovelas* or soap operas, marked the debate among professionals in the *telenovela* industry, as well as in the literature on the subject and in the opinion of the audience.⁸ Beyond that dichotomy, it is interesting to note that while the prototype of the *fantasy telenovelas* (which has more in common with the *telenovelas* produced in other countries, such as Mexico) tries to steer clear of social and political content, and does not admit humour, the other version, which is considered “national”, in spite of incorporating contemporary topics, also adheres strongly to the soap opera-esque canons of the genre.

Starting in the sixties, and continuing with the model advanced by TV Tupi,⁹ Globo’s *telenovela* contrasted with the *fantasy* style that dominated earlier productions and afforded a *realistic* alternative (Ortiz, Borelli and Ramos, 1989; Mattelart and Mattelart, 1989). This is how the break came about with the model represented by the *telenovela* *Sheik de Agadir*—Globo, 1966—which was plagued by characters with foreign names, living through complex dramas with formal dialogues and pompous wardrobes and set in exotic times and places.¹⁰

The concept I refer to as the *communication resource of the Brazilian telenovela* began to take shape with the *telenovela* *Beto Rockfeller*, produced by TV Tupi in 1968. This paradigm took plots to the contemporary universe of Brazil’s big cities, incorporating the use of locations, colloquial language, smart humour, a degree of ambiguity in the psychology of the characters and, above all, a repertoire of references that are shared by Brazilian people. It tuned into the liberal desires of a young audience—of both sexes—who had recently arrived in the city in search of

⁸ According to research by Target Group Index, carried out in October 2008, 68% of television viewers never watch *telenovelas* produced in Latin American countries, such as Mexico and Colombia.

⁹ TV Tupi was the first television network in Brazil. It marked a period as a precursor to television-specific dramaturgy based on Brazilian themes and characters. Its bankruptcy in the seventies was followed by the onset of TV Globo’s hegemony.

¹⁰ The data relating to *telenovelas* for this text were gathered by the Centre for Research on the *Telenovela* of the School of Communications and Arts of the São Paulo University (founded in 1992) and particularly from its Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction project.

education and integration into the poles of modernisation. From there came the imposition that, as the genre's communication resource, each *telenovela* had to have a "novelty", i.e. a topic that would set a given *telenovela* apart from its predecessor and, at the same time, would be able to "spark" interest, comment or debate among both the viewers and other media, as well as the consumption of products related to it, such as books, music or clothing. The evolution of the way love, feeling and man-woman relationships came to be represented in the *telenovelas* from the seventies onwards also became evident.

The option for a clear definition of time and space—the contemporary scene situated in the realm of the nation—strengthens the *telenovela* vocation to constantly blend and renovate the images of daily life in a Brazil that is modernising. This is identifiable through two structural planes of any *telenovela*: constant innovation in the search for current issues and the clear *effect-demonstration* of the patterns of consumption experienced by the characters and presented to viewers, with the possibility, concrete or otherwise, of integration through consumption. That almost obsession for the conjuncture and fashion is adapted to the serial, interactive structure of the soap opera and repeatedly mobilises the melodramatic genre as a cultural mould (Martín-Barbero, 2001) and communication resource.

The plots of the *telenovelas* are generally built around the opposition between men and women, different generations or social classes, or rural and urban, 'archaic' and 'modern' locations, represented as intrinsic, simultaneous and ambivalent trends of contemporary Brazilian life. Other dramaturgical resources, such as false identities, switched babies, unknown parents, unexpected inheritances and social mobility through love, are a recurring presence that cheerfully coexist with references to national issues and repertoires contemporary to the period in which the *telenovelas* are broadcast.

Positioned as the leading product of a television industry of some magnitude, the *telenovela* became one of the biggest and most important spaces in which to frame the country's problems: it went from private intimacy to social issues. This communication resource's peculiar ability (to synthesise the public and private, political and domestic, news and fiction, male and female) is etched into the narrative of the *telenovela*. It combines the formal conventions of the documentary with those of the television melodrama. And it is precisely this, I believe, which epitomises the Brazilian *telenovela* and creates the paradox of "seeing" Brazil mucho more in that narrative than in the news. *Telenovelas* very often create an identification between their fictional characters and public figures, and between their plots and real issues.

There is even a clear tendency to increase the plausibility in the stories. In fact this is heavily demanded by the public itself.¹¹

This combination of genres and news can be found, for example, in the insertion of historic documentaries in the sequences of *telenovelas*, from *Irmãos Coragem*, in 1970, a contemporary *telenovela*,¹² through to *Terra nostra*, in 1998, a period *telenovela*.

An illustration of this is the ‘invasion’ of reality in the *telenovela Porto Dos Milagres*, of 2001, where, during the commercial break, electoral campaign advertisements were broadcast containing the characters from the *telenovela*, causing a *reality* effect of propaganda made by actual political parties. Lastly there is the incorporation of the news program, an action which, taken to its ultimate consequences, came to be known as *social merchandising* (Schiavo, 1995). However, without that designation, the *telenovela O Espigão*, of 1974, had already presented a campaign about the environment.

Telenovelas have publicised the work of non-governmental organisations (ONGs) and, in one called *Explode coração* (1995), it even involved mothers of missing children. They have included the Landless Movement and, in *O Rei do Gado* (1996), two well-known Brazilian senators took part in the wake of a fictional senator. *A Indomada* (1997) contained a denouncement of child labour exploitation; *Zazá* (1997) tackled issues surrounding AIDS; *Laços de Família* (2000) looked at bone-marrow donation and took on real doctors to explain a young woman’s cancer. Other issues have included drugs and testimonies from real addicts undergoing treatment in *O Clone* (2001); urban and domestic violence, breast cancer and alcoholism in *Mulheres Apaixonadas* (2003); illegal immigration to the United States, drug trafficking, paedophilia on the Internet and issues concerning people with visual problems in *América* (2005); rights of children with Down syndrome, bulimia in children, AIDS in Africa, alcoholism and the possibility of its treatment, ordinary people’s accounts of their struggles in life at the end of each chapter in *Páginas da Vida* (2006); racism and the decriminalisation of the *favela*, as a principal scenario, in *Duas Caras* (2008); schizophrenia and the

¹¹ There are frequent criticisms from both the media and the public of certain situations dealt with in *telenovelas*, accusing them of being unreal and prone to fantasy. There is a tendency to demand more realism and less fiction, restricting the authors’ poetic license. That tendency towards realism, or more accurately, towards naturalism in the stories narrated, is perhaps the basis for the mechanisms of legitimatisation and credibility of *telenovelas* in Brazil. For more on the relationships between fiction and reality in the Brazilian *telenovela*, see the works of Lopes (2003, 2004) and Motter (2001).

¹² To avoid repetitions, all *telenovelas* cited without the producing broadcaster are by TV Globo.

treatment of real people with mental illnesses through music and painting in *Caminho das Índias* (2009).

Interweaving of Public Life and Private Life

The staging of social and political events and issues relates to the mentions made about the *naturalistic* nature of the *telenovela* and the explicit references to the life of the country. Earlier I mentioned the hypothesis of the *telenovela* in its *agenda setting* role, given their power to table issues that are then followed frequently and discussed in depth by the country throughout the eight months of their duration. Questions including agrarian reform, *Coronelismo* (the power of local oligarchies), real estate speculation, multinationals, political corruption, racism and minorities are examples of what I referred to as the *telenovela's communication resource*: an ability to incorporate issues in the public realm into the private sphere in its narratives. Nevertheless, those issues are inseparable from the romantic plots, family affairs and interests concerning love, marriage and separation. It is the logic of the personal and family relationships that presides over the narrative of social issues. And this is precisely where the power of this narrative lies: its ability to convey the public space through emotional relationships, in terms of how it is experienced, blending it with day-to-day living, felt on a variety of levels (subjective, emotional, political, cultural, aesthetic, etc.).

The amalgamation of the public and private domains in the *telenovela* makes it possible to synthesise a broad set of issues into detailed figures and plots, and at the same time intimate that specific personal dramas may be of wider significance. Notable examples here include a story of artificial insemination told in the *telenovela Barriga de Aluguel* (1990); a heart transplant in *De Corpo e Alma* (1992); environmental destruction in *Mulheres de Areia* (1993); the arrival of the Internet in *Explode Coração* (1995); urban violence in *A Próxima Vítima* (1995) and *Torre de Babel* (1998); violence against women and the elderly in *Mulheres Apaixonadas* (2003); human cloning and drugs in *O Clone* (2001); visual deficiency in *América* (2005); Down syndrome in *Páginas da Vida* (2006); racial and sexual diversity in *Duas Caras* (2008), and mental health in *Caminho das Índias* (2009). However, the trend of the female characters, as well as the representations of love and sexuality, is where that characteristic capacity of *telenovelas* to draw together public and private experiences is most fully expressed (the description of a World Bank investigation is an example of this).

In addition, *telenovelas* also went on to represent women's careers and economic independence, reproductive technologies (*Barriga de Aluguel*, 1990; *O Clone*, 2001) and the formation of new family ties when a single mother decides to raise children conceived in different relationships (*Laços de Família*, 2000). *Telenovelas* have also staged, with increasing regularity, interracial marriages (*Corpo a Corpo*, 1984; *A Próxima Vítima*, 1995; *A Indomada*, 1996; *Por Amor*, 1997; *Suave Veneno*, 1999; *Laços de Família*, 2000; *Porto dos Milagres*, 2001; *Celebridade*, 2003; *Da Cor do Pecado*, 2004; *Duas Caras*, 2008), and homosexual relationships, between both young and adult men, and between women (*Vale Tudo*, 1985; *A Próxima Vítima*, 1995; *Por Amor*, 1997; *Torre de Babel*, 1998; *Mulheres Apaixonadas*, 2003; *América*, 2005; *Duas Caras*, 2008). And, even more importantly: the naturalist treatment given to those issues means they cannot shy away from the elements of conflict and prejudice, which gives the *telenovela* much credibility in the eyes of the audience. The effect of this credibility is that *telenovelas* bring into circulation and debate messages about tolerance, the right to difference and the rights of minorities, in spite of the virtually inevitable 'happy ending' of these stories. The public repercussion of the *telenovelas* is perhaps owed to the boldness with which common everyday dramas are treated.

The extent to which the ultimate moral of the story relates to conventional or liberal models depends on the symbolic negotiation of the meanings at stake; full negotiation of mediations involving authors, producers, market researchers, institutions, as well as censorship, the church, black, feminist and gay movements, ONGs and different types of *telenovela* audiences.

What is evident is that the dramas of *telenovelas* are no longer linear or unilateral. On the contrary, they are quite nuanced and marked by an ambivalent swing between transgression and conformism. The treatment of racial and sexual discrimination is becoming more and more informative, anti-dogmatic and supportive of tolerance and respect for minorities. In this respect, the *telenovela* appears to be shaping up as a line of force in the construction of a multicultural society in Brazil.

SECOND PERSPECTIVE: THE *TELENOVELA* AS A COMMUNICATION RESOURCE

In the first part of this document, the theoretical discussions based on empirical observation helped me to craft the concept of the Brazilian *telenovela* as the national narrative. I will now try to characterise that narrative as a *communication resource*, which, as I mentioned earlier, was constructed in the historical overlapping of that

television genre and format with changes in Brazilian society, primarily from the seventies onward.

To broach the *telenovela* as a communication resource is to identify it as a narrative that brings together implicit, deliberate pedagogical actions, which are institutionalised in the country's communication and culture policies. In other words, it is to recognise the *telenovela* as a component of communication and culture policies aimed at developing citizenship and human rights in society.

We have seen how the cultural matrix of the melodrama acts as a constituent, prime element of the *telenovela* in its role as narrator and articulator of the nation's self-image. I have already mentioned the hypothesis that the Brazilian *telenovela* is a communication resource because it is able to merge the melodramatic matrix with a naturalistic treatment as the basis of its credibility. Moreover, that strategy of hybridising fiction and reality is heavily marked throughout the narrative.

Pedagogic role of the melodrama

Any genealogy of the Brazilian *telenovela* has to begin with a look at the *original pedagogic role* in the cultural matrix of the melodrama, which has been reformulated over the years, taking on a realist physiognomy that has become increasingly naturalised and marked. This means that, because of the very nature of its language (Bakhtin, 1981; Jakobson, 1970) and the workings of the self-image (Morin, 1969), the *telenovela* presents itself as an implicit, spontaneous pedagogic action, activated by the relationship between the *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1975) of the narrated world and the lived experience.

However, over the course of its development, the *telenovela* began to incorporate an *explicit pedagogic action* that occurs deliberately, whose discourse contains explanations, concepts and definitions, and forms an opinion on the issues dealt with therein. That explicit, deliberate enunciation of the narrative finds support in the devices of the *melodramatic imagination* and the *aesthetics of excess* (Brooks, 1995), and in the dimension of the moral and pedagogic role of the melodrama.

The melodrama came about with a mission to educate. René-Charles Guilbert de Pixérécourt called it writing for those who “cannot read”, for that new public, the majority uneducated, in whom he wanted to inculcate certain healthy moral and good political principles, says Thomasseau (2005: 29). Nevertheless, for that

purpose, it would have to consider that new nascent sensibility and encode it into the genre, as Martín-Barbero (2001:152) mentions:

The political passions roused and the dreadful scenes experienced during the [French] Revolution have exalted the imagination and exacerbated the sensibility of masses of people who can finally afford themselves the pleasure of putting their *emotions* on stage. And for these to be able to unfold, the stage will be full of jails, conspiracies and executions, immense tragedies suffered by innocent victims, and traitors who in the end will pay dearly for their betrayals [...] Rather than being a means of propaganda, the melodrama will be the mirror of a collective consciousness.

Concomitant to the perfecting of the *telenovela's* bardic role (Fiske, 1987) as the central narrator of stories in contemporary society, over time the audience acquired the cultural competence to understand that narration. In the history which the *telenovela* has built up over the years, the melodramatic matrix—a way of narrating—has been repeated over and over, yet at the same time, it has incorporated novelty and has been transformed according to the social demands of each historical context. What is sought through that historical evolution is the effect of credibility through a deepening of the *naturalist* treatment of social issues in the plotlines. This was particularly the case in the nineties, where it outstripped the *realist* premise of the seventies.

From the beginning of the nineties, it introduced social rhythms into the dramaturgic event, from the most hectic to the most contemporary and explosive. This was because, while the social aspect in the *telenovela* of previous decades spoke to gaps between rich and poor or between city and countryside, in the nineties it took on issues pertaining to the more insistent public agenda, such as corruption, drug trafficking, the political crisis or poverty (Martín-Barbero and Rey, 2004: 171).

The “cultural forum” as a space for debate about meanings of the *telenovela*

Looking into the nuances of the audiovisual hegemony of the *telenovela* means analysing how and by what mechanisms the cultural industry responds, through

its formats, to certain social demands (Williams, 1975) during times of profound transformations. Under the premise that cultural products reflect the social conditions into which they are introduced, the Brazilian *telenovela* soaks up social changes and reinvigorates their expressions: the hybrid nature of the genre is affirmed in the present historical time. Thus, a specific contamination takes place between fiction and reality, between the *telenovela* and society.

Analysing society as a whole, Vattimo (1992) identifies the central role of the media as agents of the *decentring* of modernity and defines contemporary society as a society of *generalised communication* (Vattimo, 1992:7). The media form part of the dissolution of the unitary point of view and of an explosion of world views, transmitted by the radio, press, television, Internet, etc. Consequently, they put into circulation a variety of information, knowledge and interpretations of social reality that are not necessarily related directly with the daily experience of the subjects. If the plurality of cultural voices that have acquired visibility (ethnic, religious, cultural and aesthetic minorities, etc.) and items of information about the world might be seen as the realisation of enlightenment emancipation based on humanity's self-awareness, that ideal is refuted: since it is in the hands of big capital, possible emancipation lies in the awareness of the lack of a single, objective principle of reality. Vattimo says:

Reality, for us, is rather the result of the intertwining, the “contaminating” (in the Latin sense) of the multiple images, interpretations, reconstructions that vie with each other, or which, somehow, without any “central” coordination, are distributed by the *media* (Vattimo, 1992: 13).

It seems logical, therefore, that interpretative variations of reality may be identified *both on the production side of telenovelas*, with its professionals considered as cultural performers, *and on the side of the public*. Between these two groups, analysis has prevailed over the latter, in which the multiplicity of meanings is associated with the hypotheses suggested by Stuart Hall in his influential essay on decoding (Hall, 2001).

In any case, on both sides, there is more interest in the negotiated interpretation, which makes it possible for the *telenovela* to be seen as a *cultural forum* (Newcomb, 1999), where the plurality of interpretations of its contents and how these may contribute to change are recognised. The strategies of interpretation contain all the agents of the *telenovela*: audience, authors, producers, directors, etc. As Newcomb points out, it takes a dense text to attract an audience this massive in a cultural

environment as complex and conflictive as the globalised one is, identified by diversity, difference and distinction.

Between belonging and banishment

The *mediation* of the mass media can be considered a condition of the social experience and the relativism of the culture itself by reason of the existence of many other cultures, because the *decentring* consists in the assumption of the existence of other realities beyond the concrete world around us. “Living in this multiple world means experiencing freedom as a continual to and fro between belonging and banishment” (Vattimo, 1992: 16).¹³

In the same sense, in the current context of tension between belonging and *detritorialisation*, combined with the mediation of the media to give meaning to daily experiences, García Canclini (1995) provides a new key to understanding the exercise of citizenship in globalised societies, particularly Latin American ones, where the ideal of modernity has failed to materialise and the policies of “economic progress” have resulted in penury, unemployment, illiteracy and social inequalities of every kind.

Aided by the concept of *cultural citizenship*, García Canclini understands that being a citizen does not just mean enjoying the rights which bureaucratic apparatuses afford to those who were born in a specific territory—the political-cum-legal and abstract notion of citizenship—but also the social and cultural practices that give social networks a sense of belonging. According to García Canclini, that practice is consumption, especially consumption of the audiovisual mass media. The hurried growth of those media is a witness to the change that has taken place since the last century in the makeup of the public and the exercise of citizenship.

However, the electronic media that enabled the popular masses to break into the public sphere shifted the role of citizen toward the practices of consumption.

¹³ In the same sense, Victor Turner analyses the specific qualities of the liminal phase of ritual processes (in Newcomb, 1999). These are involved in the concepts ludic, consumption and carnivalesque. During the liminal phase, there is an inversion or suspension of the social and moral normative structures present in the day-to-day social context, which are the conditions of *detritorialisation* and *becoming*, etc. This is an intermediate phase, when one is neither wholly in nor wholly out of society. It is a period of leave, in which rules can be broken or bent, roles can be inverted, categories subverted. That author’s suggestion is that the essence of liminality lies in a release from normal constraints, enabling the deconstruction of “uninteresting constructions of common sense, of the nonsense of daily life and in its reconstruction in new forms, some even bizarre and monstrous”.

This is how other ways of becoming informed, of understanding the communities to which one belongs, and of conceiving and exercising rights were established. Disillusioned with state, party and trade-union bureaucracies, audiences resort to radio and television to achieve what public institutions fail to provide them: services, justice, reparations or simply attention (García Canclini, 1995: 23).

In the same way García Canclini frames the issues of the relationship between consumption and citizenship, so De Certeau (1994) approaches daily life as a space of struggle between reproduction and cultural creation. The clash takes place between the “strategies” of the dominators and the “resistance tactics” of the dominated. Through those invisible, ephemeral tactics, the common man, the man in the street, the ordinary guy, discovers gaps for creation and subversion of the established order. “The quotidian is invented in a thousand ways of furtive hunting” (Certeau, 1994: 38).

In accordance with Vattimo’s conception about the liberating nature of the communication society, television—and the *telenovela* in particular—may be seen as a public space that makes available information and repertoires to which only certain sectors of society used to be privy.

Realism and the pedagogic action implicit to naturalism and the deliberate pedagogic action

Based on an attempt to categorise the Brazilian *telenovela* into three phases: sentimental, from 1950 to 1967; realist, from 1968 to 1990, and naturalist, from 1990 onward, my hypothesis is that, at the beginning of the last period, the Brazilian *telenovela* began treating issues with a heavily *naturalist* representation, in which the discourse becomes identified with reality-truth itself (Xavier, 2005), enabling the *telenovela* to gain plausibility, credibility and legitimacy as a pedagogic action.¹⁴

¹⁴ Not all are in agreement with that explicit deliberation: “In the eagerness to show a new constructive dimension of television, several programmes are favouring contents with a ‘didactic’ register to the detriment of good dramaturgy. *Telenovelas*, in the tradition of the French novel-by-installments of the 19th century, which Marlyse Meyer dealt with in her book *Folhetim*, have for a long time alluded to current events. In the eighties and nineties, references to social and political issues formed part of the genre’s conventions, with direct allusions to the campaign [social movement for the right to directly elect the Republic’s president, annulled by the military regime] or characters who, for example, would warn about the need for using condoms. Today, these references have become obligatory and ‘official’. The ‘politically correct’ tone of current productions destroys the possibility of artistic creation” (Hamburger, 2004).

The evolution of the close link between fiction and reality, according to the development of this pedagogic dimension that is ever more explicitly and deliberately expressed, is complemented by the concept of a *documentarising reading* (Odin, 1984), i.e., a reading where it is possible to treat all *telenovelas* as documents.¹⁵

Referring to a film, Roger Odin mentions that the documentarising reading is an effect of the reader's positioning and it is centred on the image the reader forms about the enunciator: in the documentarising reading, the reader constructs a real *I-origin*. Thus, that reading is able to treat any film as a document, whether it is fictional or a documentary in the true sense.

One way of activating that reading mode is to begin with the stylistic resources used in the audiovisual text (internal production mode): the presentation of the credits, blurred focus, shaky image, direct sound, the look into the camera, etc.

Odin also believes that a film belongs to the documentary group when it clearly integrates in its structure the instruction to carry out a documentarising reading based on the stylistic figures mentioned above.

Generally, the forms of enunciation described consider the classic continuity montage, whose main aim is to cause us to have a very distinctive relationship with the fiction, as if it were developing by itself, without any mediation; as if we were watching something as autonomous as certain events in our daily life (Xavier, 1983: 13).

Social merchandising and communicative resource

The naturalist or documentarising discursive devices that have begun to be used deliberately in the Brazilian *telenovela*, combined with diversification of the melodramatic matrix, are known—as mentioned a few pages back—as *social merchandising* (SM).

SM¹⁶ could be defined as a communication resource that consists in the incorporation of explicit or implicit *socio-educational messages*, having real or

¹⁵ It should be noted that this line of argument emerged from the remarks I made about a set of *telenovelas* that were mentioned in the first part of this document.

¹⁶ According to TV Globo's Annual Responsibility Balance, the objectives of SM are: to spread knowledge and promote ethical and universal values and principles. Examples of this include: the defence of human rights, the promotion of the conscientious vote; the fomenting of changes in attitudes and the adoption of new behaviours (social innovations) to deal with matters of public interest, such as breastfeeding, the use of condoms, fighting prejudice, the promotion of social criticism and the relevant rules of social aspects, and stimulating debate in society about issues such as disarmament, comprehensive education, etc.

fictional content, within the plots and threads of dramaturgic television productions. Socio-educational messages are understood to be those created deliberately and systematically with defined aims, like those perceived as such by the audience. This audience then draws teachings and reflections from dramatic situations that are able to bring about a positive change in the knowledge, values, attitudes and practices circulating in society at a given moment.

The mere appearance of a fact within the plot of the *telenovela* (pregnancy, alcohol consumption, domestic violence, racial discrimination, an occupational accident, etc.) does not qualify it as SM. It is necessary for there to be, for example, a reference to preventive, protective, reparative or punitive measures, an alert to causes and consequences associated with improper customs and behaviour, an evaluation of the diversity of opinions and viewpoints, etc.

Although SM has now spread to Brazilian television dramaturgy in general, TV Globo systematised and institutionalised its use in the nineties, where it became a trademark of Brazil's national fiction. There is much research to be done on the relationship between the construction of the Brazilian *telenovela* as a *realist telenovela* with a marked social content and the institutionalisation of SM within it. In 2008, there was much discussion in the media about the results of the Inter-American Development Bank's research on the influence of TV Globo's *telenovelas* on the reproductive and social behaviour of women.¹⁷

The memory of a *melodramatic imagination* (Brooks, 1995) is said to be there in the SM discourse, where the imbrication of realism with melodrama is present

¹⁷ "The plotlines of novelas often include criticisms of traditional values. For example, the event of 1988, the *telenovela* *Vale Tudo*, presented a protagonist who was capable of stealing, lying and cheating to achieve her goal of maintaining her wealth at any cost. Globo has also brought to the screen modern lifestyles of female emancipation in *telenovelas* such as *Dancing Days*, broadcast in 1978, where the protagonist was an ex-convict who fought to rebuild her reputation and regain the love of her teenage daughter. The reduction of fertility rates has been greater in years immediately after *telenovelas* were aired that included cases of upward social mobility, for women with ages nearest to the age of the novela's female lead". The above statements appear in the work "Novelas brasileiras tem impacto sobre os comportamentos sociais", in *Observatório do Direito à Comunicação*, available at: <<http://www.iadb.org/NEWS/detail.cfm?language=Portuguese&id=5104>>. Furthermore, there are signs here which suggest that the content of *telenovelas* also influences the divorce rates. When the female protagonist of a *telenovela* was divorced or unmarried, the divorce rate increased by an average of 0.1 percent. The Inter-American Development Bank's studies can be found on the internet: "Novelas e fertilidade: evidência do Brasil" is available at: <<http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1856122>>, and "Televisão e divórcio: evidência das novelas brasileiras", at: <<http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1856109>>.

in the 21st century as a means for access to education in times of social inequality and exclusion social, in the same way as Pixérécourt conceived the melodrama with respect to the social transformations of the 19th century. The SM device is confirmation of the *telenovela* as a hybrid discourse, as a *cultural form* that is in dialogue with its historical moment and conforms to the requirements inherent to the social fabric. In our case, it is a means of social inclusion, of informal education, through the melodrama, the *telenovela*—a readily accessible cultural commodity.

I therefore consider SM to be a deliberate pedagogic action aimed at “those who cannot read or write” using elements of enunciation with popular recognition. Could we not consider SM as the freely offered “practical advice”, which Benjamin (1991) talks about, in its more modern form? Might not SM be the mediator of a *second literacy* (Martín-Barbero and Rey, 2004), based on oral culture, replacing the memory of an education for the people using the melodrama—as it used to do in the 19th century—now in the context of the tensions that exist between social demands and market interests? Has perhaps an imagination that continues to be valid for narrating reality, the *melodramatic imagination*, taken shape there?

Communication seen as an available resource for policies of communication–culture

I would like to cite two authors who take up Martin Heidegger’s notion (2002) of the resource in terms of *available reserve* and its transposition to communication and culture: George Yúdice (2004) and Giovanni Bechelloni (2002).

For Yúdice, culture in our time—characterised by an accelerated cultural globalisation—can be seen as an available resource for socio-political and economic development, a source of its progressive participation in an age where political participation is in decline. Globalisation multiplied contacts between different peoples, facilitated migrations and complicated the use of culture as a national resource. Art has been pegged back completely by a broad conception of culture that is able to resolve problems, even those of job creation.

Those observations are corroborated by the concept of *cultural capitalism* (Rifkin, 2001), where the dematerialisation characteristic of many sources of economic growth—for example, intellectual property rights, as defined by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organisation—and the greater distribution of symbolic assets in world trade (films, television programmes, music, tourism) have given the cultural sphere a bigger role than it has had at any

other time in the history of humanity. There is a kind of culturalisation of the new capitalist economy based on intellectual and cultural labour.

In this thesis, according to Yúdice, culture has been assumed by different groups, institutional or otherwise, inside or outside the formal spheres of power, sometimes to perfect social conditions—as in the creation of multicultural tolerance and civic participation in the defence of cultural citizenship and cultural rights—sometimes to stimulate economic growth through cultural development projects, and sometimes to create a favourable, balanced political environment for development. These projects may even include questions of cultural consumption and emergent cultural industries—creative industries, as Manuel Castells sees them—to provide content for media convergence.

However, Yúdice's thesis as regards culture needs to be extended—beyond its explicit and economic utility—and supplemented with that of the communication resource so that it can be communicated.

Today, the complexity of our society should also be seen from the angle of *complexification* of the individual, which suggests more than ever the importance of communication as a possibility for opening up to, recognising and comprehending others. In this context, communication can be understood and practiced as an *available resource*.

We think about the resource of communication—through the use of new languages and environments, of prostheses or technologies—as breaking down barriers and breaking out of borders to broaden the capacity for social inclusion, to build new balances between innovation and tradition, to share a conception of human culture as a permanent capacity to learn, and to bring about the modification of the environment by facing up to uncertainty and promoting changes. Thinking about communication in those terms means considering human action for inclusion and reception, for building and maintaining a shared social order, continually expanding the amount of meanings that can be considered. Communication, understood and practiced in this way, becomes a *resource* for listening to the different, the other.

Bechelloni (2001) notes in the concept of *ambivalence of communication* that just as it is impossible not to communicate, at the same time there arise difficulties in communicating. This hinders the discovery of a “lever” that can be activated to halt destructive conflicts, to set in motion the virtuous cycles aimed at cooperation and to build the groundwork of the global public sphere that might be considered an indispensable premise for regulating the international community, based on shared meanings and unified minimum values. This “lever” can only be based on the

common recognition of the universal value of the person, of his or her rights and duties, which are grounded in the unicity and the diversity of each human being. The culture of communication stems from the recognition of each individual or person as a leading actor, responsible for the communicative action. The human being is also a subject who finds knowledge through communication. The introduction of diversity, the rise of peaceful coexistence and sustainable development, as well as the assertions of rights to, and representations of, cultural differences, constitute communication resources.

In that sense, the singular institutionalisation of the *telenovela* in the communication culture of Brazilian society can be conceived as the discovery of a “lever” to be activated in the quest for cultural citizenship, in the recognition of cooperative forces, as well as the conflicts that arise to that end.

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DEMOCRATIC COMMUNICATION POLICIES

MIQUEL DE MORAGAS

I propose to relate human rights to communication research through an axis that allows us to situate this debate historically and update it: the axis of democratic communication politics.

BRIEF HISTORY

Searching for great trends, we may remember that the idea of *democratic communication policies* dates back to the immediate post-war period, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948) acknowledged in its Article 19 that “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. The communication policy (rather, information policy) was then entirely bound to politics, as a constitutive and inviolable element of democracy and this is still the case.

But since then the defence of human rights has involved other goals related to communication. Among the most important are those referring to the confluence of communication and cultural policies. The fundamental demand for the right to information (access, political freedom of expression) is now complemented by new demands: the right to linguistic and cultural pluralism, to cultural diversity and identity. How can we delimit one or the other from the right to communicate?

The relationship between communication and cultural policies is not new. We may remember, for example, that back in the 1980s the positions that opposed

the implementation of communication policies, positions that we could call “anti-MacBride”, systematically ignored their cultural dimension, as they also ignored the references to development and social change of those policies. It was an attempt to discredit them and confuse them with authoritarian policies for information control.

Even the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) backed away from its suggestion that communication policies be defended. It was thought a better idea to not talk about them. This oblivion has been analysed in a monographic publication (InCom-UA, 2005) dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the publication of the MacBride Report. Two other distinguished pioneers of Latin American research in this field participated in the publication: Antonio Pasquali and Luis Ramiro Beltrán.

However, the reviled “communication policies” showed up again in international debate in the 1990s, with new ideas and challenges. This time, however, dissociated from the former commitment to international equilibrium and cooperation, they were expressed in the new languages of the information society, at a time when political leaders and ideologists of large corporations began to replace independent academic thinkers in the international debate on communication.

The critical point of these new approaches is precisely their ignorance of the convergence of culture and communication in contemporary society. The health of this relationship can be diagnosed by analysing the structure of public administrations, on a local, national and international level. The first diagnosis points out that we are very far from coordinating policies, to the detriment of both culture and communication. As a paradigmatic example, we can quote the World Summit on the Information Society, whose second phase held in Tunis in November 2005 was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and not Unesco.

In Europe, during José Manuel Durão Barroso’s first term as president of the European Commission (2004-2009), three decisions dissociating administrative authority from communication and culture were made:

- The cultural administration lost its authority over the mass media.
- The information society administration absorbed those competences and the General Directorate for Society and Information and Media was created.
- An *administrative* divorce took place between the new information society and cultural policies.

It is true that it will become harder to claim administrative competences of crossover phenomena such as culture, social welfare, information, mass media and

so on but it is also true that this demands new organizational forms with more administrative crossover.

The new policies of information society tend to be absorbed by technological and industrial priorities, in which the commercial aspects of the cultural industry are the most important. Participation, access and cooperation postulates are thus forgotten and replaced by competition postulates.

UNESCO CONVENTION OF 2005

In this context, a fact of special relevance occurred that in some way represents a counterweight to this technocratic and competitive tendency: the approval of Unesco's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, celebrated in 2005, which has already been signed by various countries and jointly by the European Union.

This may be a diplomatic, yet effective, way for Unesco's retaking of communication policies along with international cultural policies and, more specifically, with its commitment to cultural diversity and identity in the new economic forms and communications sphere of globalization.

Unesco may take part in the invigoration of communication policies, even if indirectly, as long as it conceptualises its cultural policies globally, including the roles of media and new network communications technologies.

At this point, I wish to remember a historical document that demonstrates the slow progress of these ideas: the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies of the World Conference on Cultural Policies of 1982, which, besides a new and important definition of culture, generated important ideas, all of them current, that is, with pending objectives to be fulfilled:

- Appeal for the adoption of cultural policies.
- Acknowledgement of the particular and the universal in culture.
- Emphasis in the cultural dimension of development.

The Unesco Convention, like the 1982 Mexico City Declaration, acknowledges cultural values: equal dignity of all cultures, links between culture and sustainable development, the dual economic and cultural nature of cultural activities as well as its vulnerability. It thus legitimates democratic intervention in the communication/culture sector and reasserts the sovereign right of states to protect and promote the

diversity of cultural expressions. And, equally important, it places this protection within the coordinates of international (cultural) cooperation.

CULTURAL CHALLENGES OF COMMUNICATION POLICIES

From a juridical and political point of view, we can say that the *raison d'être* of and foundation for communication policies are expressed in the updated understanding of human rights with respect to the relationship between culture and communication.

In Europe, the main pending task of communication policies is to defend, regulate and guarantee pluralism and political and cultural diversity in the media.

In September 2008, the European Parliament insisted before the European Commission on the need to arbitrate measures favouring media pluralism, which also means—and this is where the political conflict resides—regulating the increasing concentration of multimedia enterprises. In this regard, it is very significant that the European Parliament looked to the Unesco Convention for the necessary support to claim such a regulation, exceeding the power of media lobbies in favour of pluralism.

On that occasion, the European Parliament reminded the Commission that repeatedly “it has been asked to draw up a directive that would aim to ensure pluralism, encourage and preserve cultural diversity as defined in the Unesco Convention on cultural diversity, as well as safeguard access of all media companies to the technical elements that can enable them to reach the public in its entirety” (European Parliament, 2008a).

However, pluralism (the adoption of a legislative corpus capable of protecting it by limiting media concentration) is not the only challenge of current European communication policies. The agendas of communication policies are filled with new cultural challenges as important as:

- Commitments regarding minorities within states.
- Redefining public service in the digital era.
- Independent authority constitution in the audiovisual sector, which in some way occupies the space that the first approaches attributed to the National Communication Councils at the San Jose de Costa Rica Conference organized by Unesco in 1976.
- Media support policy (urgent in light of the economic crisis).
- Distribution of the radio-electrical spectrum: regulation of the establishment of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) and its social applications.

- Reuse of the digital dividend resulting from releasing the frequency bands that are currently being used by conventional analogue television.

All of the above implies making decisions of great cultural importance. For example, there are several alternatives for DTT regulation: to benefit or not benefit the local media, to favour private communication regarding public service; to promote open broadcast television or alternative paid subscription television. The reuse of the frequencies liberated from the digital dividend can open or close the door to community communication, which is greatly ignored by European communication policies and most member states (European Parliament, 2008b).

THE MEDIA: A CULTURAL PROBLEM

Half a century ago we could consider the media transmitters of information. Today, we know that they have many other political, social and cultural functions and responsibilities.

Important structural changes—both technological and practical—of the media have become evident. We can observe fast progress in the penetration of household internet and mobile devices. In contrast, a progressive decrease in radio audiences and newspaper readers can also be seen. Theatre attendance has shrunk to a historical minimum. All of the above is especially meaningful if we consider the fact that the critical points coincide with the cultural practices of young people.

In such a context, the *super informative offer*, the main challenge for communication policies—and we might add, for cultural policies—is to face the progressive loss of quality and credibility of information. Several studies have shown that the multiplication of television channels has not translated into diversity, but in more homogeneous genres and references.

This all puts forth great cultural problems - cultural consumption and the availability of content - and calls for a redefinition of the role of communication policies, which now involves a review of the concept of public information service beyond the traditional attention given to audiovisual media.

Is this about problems with communication policies or cultural policies? It is about a common challenge: the need to position ourselves in the digital era and answer a paradigmatic change, a change in which communication policies must extend beyond the mass media and cultural policies must include them.

The coexistence of different supports in the modern communications system, the conventional media and on-line media, the new forms of information consumption present today a new focal interest, a new nucleus: content production and its adaptation or synergy with different platforms. This problem is seen as one of the greatest challenges of communication and cultural policies of the future.

According to Jesús Martín-Barbero (2008), to think concurrently about communication and culture poses a permanent challenge between technological determinism and cultural pessimism and has resulted in the idea of a *common culture*, which is formed not only by the arts but also the media, by literate cultures and also subcultures. All cultural policy includes a communication model (of diffusion or audience participation) that respects the heterogeneity of cultural productions or simply arbitrates the forms of diffusion of centralized production. Therefore, an interesting summarizing concept is introduced: *cultural policies of communication*, which would join both policies.

THE SCHOLARS ROLE

What can scholars do in this area?

The question, updated by the relationship between human rights and communication, also puts before us the question of the responsibility of communication studies.

Communication research has the important task and responsibility of defining and defending communication policies, and therefore, as argued above, of defending human rights and the rights to information and culture.

Communication policies currently demand not only a significant political effort but also continuous theoretical work to understand the importance and the role of such policies for democracy.

Within this framework, the contribution of the independent academic sector has two main aspects: the critical and the propositional. Critical communication research bears the task of discovering structural imbalances and explicit censorship and interpreting the manipulation of public opinion (manipulation of content and access to sources).

However, communication research is also concerned with propositional contributions, not only with the debate about the nature of these policies, of utmost importance since they need be legitimated for their democratic value, but also about the prospects of ways to adapt to the challenges of technological convergence.

In this sense, I wish to point out the contribution of Latin American research. The first democratic communication policies were born and developed in Latin America, and in this process communication researchers played a very important role. I have always said that Europe, particularly Spain, and more specifically my small country, Cataluña, are indebted to this tradition.

Latin American research has been able to combine the study of economics and communication policy with a renewal of cultural studies integrated in a new interdisciplinary approach to communication, *from media to mediation, but also from mediation to media* –if I may quote Jesús Martín-Barbero. Both tendencies are not at all incompatible, on the contrary, they complement each other and are necessary to developing communication studies involved with media democratisation. The convergence of these two tendencies has to point out the renovation program for communication studies.

SCIENTIFIC POLICIES AND COMMUNICATION INVESTIGATION POLICY

This means that communication research policies are also an important part of communication policies. They were and will remain an important part given the complexity and convergence of the fields of politics, development, culture, social welfare, technology, globalization and others.

The critical and propositional perspectives must also be applied to the state of research. Actually, the production and diffusion of communication research can be regarded in a fashion similar to that in which we study the film industry (or the audiovisual industry):

- Limited resources allocated through scientific policies to social studies and humanities and increasingly limited resources for communication studies.
- Concentration (international) trend of big publishing houses (books, journals) that function as *majors*.
- United States-Great Britain axis control of publishing, while the production of all of the other regions barely reaches the global scale.

Hence the importance of associations like IAMCR, a common ground for independent scholars to exchange ideas, methods, and research results.

This activity also constitutes a contribution to the defence of human rights, which are so closely related to communication and cultural rights.

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STRATEGIC CHALLENGES: INFORMATION SOCIETY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

J E S Ú S M A R T Í N - B A R B E R O

In order for the term *Information Society* to cease being a cliché or a wildcard used whenever we deal with a challenging current affair, we must begin by deconstructing the ambiguity that the *information* concept holds today. Back in 1980, the MacBride Report spoke of a *new order of information* but it was referring to news information, which back then, was going through an unbalanced process in most nations, caused by the bigger international information agencies and media conglomerates. Today we say that information has become a new paradigm in the structure of society; thus implying that information is par excellence the actual *added value* whether:

1. Incorporated in a product's material composition, shape or genetic transformation.
2. Added to the processes of production in *flexible manufacturing* which organizes information flows of invention, programming and evaluation within their merchandising and marketing processes.
3. Transformed into a product in and of itself and placed at the base of the so-called *information economy*, i.e., the digital goods market that links production to knowledge circulation and culture at an increasingly rapid rate.

However, this new conception implies an overvaluation of information that can only be fairly appreciated when compared to the *devaluation* of non-computerised traditional knowledge i.e., the more *informal* trades, such as peasant survival strategies, immigrant life experiences, elder's memories, etc. Ultimately, *information society* the world over means the beginning of a global interconnection process

of all that has an informational value—enterprises and institutions, countries and individuals—and, at the same time, the disconnection of all that does not serve this purpose. Thus, we are now witnessing the most profound reorganization of the centres of power that assign value to the world as we know it.

THE BATTLE FOR RIGHTS IN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The United Nations declaration written for the World Summit on the Information Society (wsis) states: “The supremacy of law accompanied by flexible, stable and applicable regulation which accounts for national realities is indispensable to generating trust and reliability within the information society”. However, this declaration does not make explicit the constitutive relationship between the *new rights* that society’s computerisation implies and the human rights known before. This is the *freedom of communication* in its broadest complexity, that is, the right to *participate of and in knowledge*; the right of citizens and social groups to access information, both as recipients and producers; the right to a *balanced flow of information* between regions of the world and between the countries of a given region, such as Latin America. The acknowledgement of these new rights is based upon the value that knowledge has acquired within the *network society* as an elementary public good:

We are talking about a society in which the conditions for the generation and processing of information have been substantially altered by a technological revolution centred on the processing of information, the creation of knowledge and information technologies. That does not mean that technology is a determining factor [...] [but rather] it constitutes a paradigm of a new kind, in which all the processes of society, politics, war, economy, are affected by the capacity to process and distribute information in a ubiquitous manner, within the totality of human activity (Castells, 2002).

This new paradigm fosters a process converting knowledge into *technoscience*, driving the hyper-specialisation of knowledge and making scientific research a highly strategic ingredient of the techno-industrial complex: from the study of the human genome to the production of transgenic organisms, research today mobilises huge amounts of capital from global companies that foster complicity between scientific research and commercial operations. The right of citizens to

public communication of knowledge becomes ever more crucial under the new conditions of technological hegemony of knowledge and under the new economic pressures on its production and circulation. We must, at the same time, safeguard society's right to access that other knowledge that comes from social experience and the right for everything related to the options and decisions about development of and investment in scientific and technological research to be an object of study and matter of public debate.

The condition that aggravates the political underdevelopment of communication-related human rights—freedom of information and knowledge—is the growing consciousness of the value of difference, plurality and diversity at the level of civilizations and ethnic, local and gender cultures. Yet, we are facing a powerful standardisation movement of the everyday imaginary, fashion and musical taste, of body image and social success expectations, in the most successful movies, TV programs, videogames and the like. This tension can foster social creativity insofar as market logic doesn't crush the ability of citizens to differentiate between what is culturally valuable and what is commercially successful. It is not about opposing but differentiating: culturally valuable products can be found in the commercial field and vice versa. Some of the most valuable film and music creations have become commercially successful. The axis of this debate crosses the deep relationship between the defence of the cultural diversity of communities, whether they be civilizations, ethnic groups or local cultures, and the awareness of citizens of the right to difference. Yet the social viability of both lies in regulatory frameworks of local and global scope, which are the strategic spaces in which economy and culture coexist. Those regulatory frameworks can only be the result of a negotiation between public, private and independent actors, from the national, international and local fields; because like the global forums in Davos and Porto Alegre, and especially the preparatory meetings of the WSIS, these actors now have agencies, organisations and associations capable of representing the different interests at stake.

BLURRED AND UNSKETCHED MAPS OF THE WORLD

What does the word *cyberworld* mean? It is the world that emerges from the current technological mutations, some of which specifically challenge anthropology. We are used to relating this discipline to the world of the past so more than one reader will be shocked and put off by the challenges that such a broad and yet strict conceptualisation represents—*technological change* demands a radical renewal of

the anthropological line of thought, as it concerns sensitivities and rituals, social relationships, cultural narratives and political institutions—and the explicit positions adopted on the relationship between social movements and new technologies and between the local know-how and global and national public politics.

A contrasting phenomena with the above is the social uses of technology. Researcher Susana Finquielevich (2005) carried out a study in a small municipality located on the Buenos Aires coastline, where an amazing communitarian appropriation of one of the most diverse and advanced types of technology takes place. There, business administration made feasible a social and educational democratisation project, not only to the local population, but to the whole country. This experience was priceless both in terms of its outreach and in terms of the lessons on civic pedagogy it provided:

Created in its beginnings as an introductory course on the use of a PC within a classroom, consecutive modules have been added to the program, including pedagogical practices, information administration, web design [...] The objective is to train the teachers in the proper use of ICTs in education, so that their classes are not focused on the traditional tools (Word, Excel, etc.) but on tools that allow them—both teachers and students—to claim the new cyber-territory, to browse through it, integrate virtual networks and, above all, to publish their own contents on the Web (Finquielevich, 2005).

The complex web of technology and society has yet another side to which access can only be gained via the long road of the history of the technological revolution. In a tight story loaded with a particular sense of humour, José Luis Villaveces (2005) tells this little told history. Its telling has been opposed by a modernity that making an absolute of its own *reason* has made us deaf to any sound beyond binary distinction and linear opposition. Yet, it turns out that the history of sociotechnical relationships is *polyphonic* (in a Schoenberg style) and does not move in just one direction: it does not go in a straight line from Greek *techne* to Illustration's *epistheme*, as many French and European scholars would like to think; instead it has gone through many other places and speeches, other material criteria and creativities. And, what is most important, we are now again walking a new road, not a way back—our current situation is not linear either—we are going in new directions that will take us to new technologies and *new know-how*, *new ways of knowledge*. According to Villaveces, it is through technological mutation that we uncover the depths of the breakdown of modern reason; and it

affects not only the way of thinking of the world but also democracy, as the way the world is organized and governed.

Alexis Greiff and Mauricio Nieto (2005) have discussed another breakdown in modern reason. There is nothing more frustrating and deceitful for the countries of the southern hemisphere than the way in which northern hemisphere countries have disguised the economic, cultural and political dominion there has been and still is in technological development as unselfish universal human progress. However, this breakdown in the invisibility screen that Eurocentrism built does not mean that the scientists of the northern hemisphere have abdicated the hegemony they still favour, or that the governments from the south are seizing this opportunity to re-build their modes of relations or to *re-appropriate* knowledge and technique. It is true that sociological and historical research of science and technology has moved forward discovering the co-optation schemes of our own academic and political institutions, but there is still a lot of work to be done in the conceptual field—to think over the “non-centred universe” that Michel Serres talks about (2001)—as well as in the ideological field—transcend denouncement by unveiling concrete control and co-optation mechanisms—and in the political field- redefine the subordinate and deterministic view of *development* as the intensive use of the agrochemicals that turn our fields into deserts and the biotechnology that not only extracts our communities’ knowledge, but returns it as a perverted form of dependence and dominion.

But technology is not entirely made of science; it also draws on *art*. And art is also displaced in terms of sense and value, in its exercise and social function, on account of the mutation introduced by technology. From a vast experience in that field, and some pioneer texts in the Latin American field, the Brazilian Arlindo Machado (2005) has alerted to the propagandistic euphoria, with its pseudo-utopia boisterousness, which seeks to silence and hide the broadening sociocultural gap resulting from private and privatising use of cybernetics. Also, based upon the reflections of the Czech-Brazilian philosopher Vilém Flusser (of whom it is high time we had Spanish translations), Machado investigates what there is of radical novelty in technological change and how it connects specifically with the art world in its capacity as a human liberator, i.e., creativity and freedom. But he also researches the profound contradictions introduced by the *automation* dimension of digital arts, the *net-art*, which creates a new *stereotype* that infects most of that art with an extreme escapist formalism, stealing its capacity to estrange and shock, to question and subvert the immobility that grips social and cultural life.

One of the most strategic scopes of the new techno-social horizon, however underdeveloped, is the *private appropriation of knowledge*, and the legitimising

role of the devastating deregulation that legitimates a good deal of *technological thinking*. Calling things by their proper name and introducing unconventional points of view, Clemente Forero-Pineda (2005) has related the historical process that brought about the disappearance of *wastelands*—the lands that were originally assigned to *common use*—with the “progressive narrowing of scientific public spaces and the deepening of the technologic gap that makes access to scientific knowledge difficult to most nations of the world”. One of the most profitable traps through which this process operates is the indispensable protection of *intellectual property*: a spurious category—as it brings the intellectual work to the same level as commercial goods—that also mystifies *copyright*, a right that is definitively co-opted by the *patents* idea and its commercial pseudo-jurisprudence. Forero-Pineda has uncovered the different forms and scopes of submission that research and knowledge suffer due to the dismantling of the multiple modes of regulation that hindered the extension and invasion of the public fields of knowledge, methods, and all information considered *public* by *property*. By detailing the restriction processes and even the perversion of the so called *colaboratories*, Forero-Pineda has led us to an unexpected political background in this matter: the actual accessibility of a country’s researchers to a live or “acting” science is closely related to an only apparent external variable, that of a population’s shared access to knowledge. The challenges and probabilities that this enlightening and democratic perspective establishes demand a more decisive debate on the entire education system of each Latin American country, a debate that has not yet begun or, what is worse, that is rendered impossible by successive placebo reforms with which education is being treated.

If there is a dimension of the social life being transformed radically by the current technological mutation, it is the spatial experience. Yet, even in the decisive reflections that Paul Virilio makes on social acceleration, the prominence of temporality devaluates the specificity of spatial changes. The first person, by far, to alert the social sciences to this condition was Michel Foucault, who in a 1967 lecture stated: “The great obsession of the 19th century was history, development, crisis, cycles, accumulation, the overload of the past, the overload of the dead, and the cooling of the world”, and continues in the following line: “Maybe this current age is rather that of space, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of proximity and distance, of step to step, one of dispersion”, and reinforces his idea saying: “We are at a stage in which the world is experienced less as a great living form developing in time, and more as a web that connects points and weaves itself” (Foucault, 1999: 15).

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: NEW DEBATES

Uruguayan researcher Judith Shutz has put forth the difficult and conflicting relationships between scientific-technical research and the university institution, detailing the contradictory situation being experienced in Latin America. To begin with, this researcher asserts: “Since the second half of the 19th century and in an extraordinarily dynamic way in the 20th century, emerging technologies have been associated with solid cognitive bases; inversely, such technologies, partially due to their complexity and partially due to the speed of their emergence, became a steady flow of new questions posed in the propositional knowledge field” (Shutz, 2005). Since then, the main issues have been twofold. First, can our universities dedicate themselves mainly to teaching and transmitting what is already known and done, ostracizing—and inevitably ostracizing our countries—from innovative research and technological invention? Second, what kind of relationship with private enterprise would enable our universities to manage knowledge in a way in which priority is placed on agendas that put the greater collective development demands above commercial and academic power group interests? The multiplicity and relevance of levels to be admitted to debate and the experiences that must be considered are a strategic contribution to the times of change that we are going through.

Another stressful environment that has been frequently disregarded so far, but which the free trade agreement “negotiations” conducted by our countries have finally brought forth, is the relationship between the political and the academic world. Regarding this scenario, Andrés Burbano (2005) has drawn a map correlating biological diversity, genetic technology and social development. Among these there are three main points of *non-communication*. First, the *translation* procedures through which the unstoppable private seizure of biological resources makes progress. Thus, the *patent process* of US agencies for botanical species that not only implies expropriation from their “original” communities but also the perverted simulation by which encounter of a plant by an explorer is transformed into a *techno-scientific invention*. Second, our lack of adequate attention—both in scholarship and public policies—to the *translation processes and devices* by which biodiversity is structurally related to local cultures and sensibilities, since only by knowing those *translations* and their corresponding policies would we be able to face processes like those implied in a free trade agreement. This lack of attention is showing its tragic consequences in the still major disconnection between academic knowledge—hundreds of anthropology and sociology theses on knowledge and technique systems from traditional communities stowed away in university libraries—and

the expert knowledge with which we should be facing the vocabulary “traps” used by the northern negotiators to *translate* our biological resources to their business language. And third, the creative tension between biotechnology and art, especially when, by means of the convergence of genetic re-engineering projects and aesthetic experiments, a *transgenic design* is made possible in urban green spaces.

The relationship between information and communication technologies (ICT) and education has been lucidly conceived by Argentinean researcher Alejandro Piscitelli (2005), who here sees a debate smudged with old prejudice and false shortcuts in addition to all kinds of fundamentalisms. Above all, the core of the matter is that our educational “systems” must stop thinking in an instrumental way about “the technological change”—aids and remedies for whatever is not working in education—since that change “installs a constellation that encompasses what is chosen and what is not, what is foreseen and what cannot be, what is wanted and what is not”. The change disrupts the parameters of what we understand as teaching and learning. And, lastly, it is all about assuming technology as a constitutive part of culture, which implies no longer talking about the isolated *effects* that must be avoided in order to think ethnographically, i.e., small modifications in the starting conditions may produce unforeseeable transformations.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION FOR THE MAJORITIES

For the first time in the history of mankind, majorities can access the best and greatest of cultural, artistic and scientific creation thanks to the digital revolution. But that profound and revolutionary advance in the democratisation of culture and knowledge is now hindered by a perverse misunderstanding: that which claiming defence of “intellectual property” clashes with the possibilities created by information technologies. It is all political and social meaning that is at stake here, demanding from jurists and IT system engineers, creators and managers, politicians and information theorists an analytical and imaginative effort capable of creating *new forms of democratic regulation* to protect *the various modes of copyright*, without mistaking them for the interests of large cultural industry corporations since masked by a deceitful handling of the “intellectual property” idea, where the “property” part is *the important* and the “intellectual” part is depreciated and abandoned to *marketing* and *rating*. Currently, those interests are blocking the possibilities of cultural democratisation opened up by digital networks. In the end, the issue is

the way in which the new digital cultures transform the very concept of property and they do so when they insert culture's refusal to be reduced to economy at the very core of the so-called new economy or *Information Economics*. This is the battle fought by national governments, like Canada or Brazil, to escape the Microsoft monopoly and attain "software freedom" for their countries. If the information society wishes to be egalitarian, at the very least it can only be so by *liberating* the socio-cultural potential of the new ICTs from the obstacles set by monopolies that associate producers and mass media with banks and advertising industry, thus forming a new type of information conglomerate or *global media*, whose biased vision of "intellectual property" considers that the only valuable asset is expansion of property.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND DIGITAL CONVERGENCE

Digital convergence is the new name of a process and a paradigm whose first manifestation was, by the late 1980s, "communication transparency". It was a fully *integrated*—in the sense provided to that word by Umberto Eco—paradigm, because it proposed the "everything is communication" ideology, whose translation to *information terms* unashamedly legitimized the deregulation of market logic. Therefore, the political scope of that first manifestation of technological convergence is none other than the technical justification of economic concentration. In the re-designing of our states through neoliberal policies, the *decentralization* fostered by the new technological configurations has now changed from an ideological cover to the most cynical media concentration in oligopolies that were unthinkable a few years ago. From the beginning marked by AOL's acquisition of Time-Warner in the United States to the merger of Vivendi-Seagram-Canal+ in Europe, *hyperconnectivity* as the second manifestation (television-Internet-mobile phones) confronts us with the intensification of economic concentration, being what *limitless digitalization* means in the technical field.

But this convergence-concentration process of media power cannot lead us to strip its other side of all visibility or value, that is, the strategic part implied by technological mutation that has now empowered and thickened the new communications ecosystem. The audio-visual cultural experience transformed by the digital revolution aims to establish new *community* modes (artistic, scientific, cultural) and *a new sphere of public matters*. They are both linked to the emergence of a *cultural visibility* that is the scene of a decisive political battle,

currently experiencing the delocalization of knowledge, disrupting its old but still arrogant hierarchies, expanding the spaces in which knowledge is produced and the circuits through which it travels, and enabling both individuals and collectives to insert their everyday oral, audio and visual cultures into new languages and new writings. The *palimpsest* of multiple cultural memories of the people of Latin America never had better possibilities to appropriate the *hypertext* in which reading and writing, knowing and doing, arts and science, aesthetic passion and political action interact and intertwine.

Technological convergence then means the emergence of a new *cognitive economy* ruled by the displacement of the status of the number, which from symbol of dominion over nature is now becoming a universal mediator of knowledge and technical-aesthetic operations. It implies supremacy of the sensory-symbolic over the sensory-motor. Digitisation makes possible a new way of interaction between the abstract and the sensible, completely rewriting the borders between knowledge diversity and know-how modes.

The proliferation speed of mobile phones towards the poorest strata in our countries and their access to e-mail marks an unexpected process of connecting majorities to the digital network. These majorities come to inhabit the new *communication space* through which they can connect emigration territories to the home country, exchanging music and photographs with their kin and friends on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean and all around the world.

A particular and pioneering digitally mediated cultural convergence experience, to which academia is not yet paying close attention, is that of adolescents and young people. For them, the computer is no longer a machine, but rather a *cognitive and creative technicality*. Obviously, teachers are fully entitled to wonder what happens to someone's body when he spends so many hours in front of a screen. But the real problem is not what the computer is doing to the body, but rather how these new ways of inhabiting a body affect it and new knowledge about it, technobiology or genetics, both in their possibilities and perversions.

Digital convergence introduces to public policies a deep renovation of the communication capabilities model, since we have travelled from the unidirectional, linear and authoritarian paradigm of *information transmission* to the *network* model, i.e., the *connectivity* model and an *interaction* that transforms the mechanical mode of remote communication to the *proximity interface*. A new paradigm that translated into a policy privileges the synergy between many small projects over the complicated structure of the massive and heavy apparatus of both technology and management.

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