

Indigenous media and digital self-determination



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In the Next Issue

The 3/2014 issue of *Media Development* will explore the contemporary communication and media scene in the Pacific.

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The aim of this issue of *Media Development* was to begin to explore how Indigenous / First Nations / Aboriginal people are building their own media and communication networks. It was conceived as a way of reviewing some of the communication rights aspects inherent in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Article 16 of UNDRIP speaks of Indigenous peoples having “the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination.” The same Article calls on governments to “ensure that State-owned media duly reflect indigenous cultural diversity” and “to encourage privately owned media to adequately reflect indigenous cultural diversity.”

Writing in 2009 the Canadian media scholar William F. Birdsall was of the opinion that, “Considering the range of communication issues addressed in the [UN]DRIP, it could be argued that if its terms become entrenched in national law, Indigenous peoples would be, in practice, close to achieving a right to communicate. Their political struggle and its results so far serve as a model for others and demonstrate how a right to communicate may be achieved without an explicit definition of or reference to such a right.”¹

So, how is this working out in practice. How are new information and communication technologies being used to advance peoples’ rights of these peoples? What obstacles remain to be addressed?

Recently, the Indigenous New Media Symposium sponsored by the School of Media Studies hosted at the New School in New York City on 21 February 2014 brought together prominent Native American and First Nations media makers and creative activists to discuss how new media are being used in Indigenous communities to educate, organize, entertain, and advocate.

An invited panel addressed topics such as

confronting the ongoing Native stereotypes in mainstream media, the resurgence of Indigenous ways through new media, and discussed how new generations are using their artistic talents for cultural, economic, and political change.

One powerful example of indigenous media under attack comes from Guatemala, where community radio has been a vital presence in Indigenous communities since the 1960s. Indigenous peoples in the country rely on community radio to keep their cultures, languages, and traditions alive as well as to inform their communities about issues and events relevant to their lives.

Bill 4479, recently proposed by one of Guatemala’s political parties, poses a threat to community radio stations. If passed, the legislation would criminalize community radio while compromising the fundamental right to free speech and censoring dissemination of information about human rights.

In contrast, Bill 4087, provides for the legalization of community radio. It was proposed in 2010 but has not advanced. A similar law enacted in Argentina has proved beneficial to Indigenous peoples by promoting their political participation, community cohesion, and self-sufficiency. If Bill 4087 is passed into law, Guatemala will finally see the democratization of media and take a meaningful step towards ending Indigenous repression, while helping to promote peace and stability in Central America.

Once again it would seem that digital technologies and new communication platforms offer the means of self-expression and self-assertion that many Indigenous peoples seek.

However, as the following articles show, questions of accessibility and affordability, as well as ownership and control by corporate behemoths, cloud the issue. In practice communication rights do not yet extend to all and there is still much work to be done. ■

Note

1. William F. Birdsall. “Putting Practice into Theory” in *The Right to Communicate. Historical Hopes, Global Debates, and Future Premises* ed. by Aliaa Dakroury, Mahmoud Eid, and Yahya R. Kamalipour. Kendall Hunt (2009).

Digital self-development and Canadian First Peoples of the North

Lorna Roth

This article analyzes the sites of struggle through which First Peoples have negotiated communication and cultural rights for broadcasting (1991), telecommunications, and Internet infrastructure in rural and remote indigenous communities in Canada's Northern territories, focusing mainly though not exclusively, on Nunavut, the Inuit Region of what used to be called the Northwest Territories.

Between 1973 and the present, and when advantageous, indigenous peoples have convinced media policy-makers and managements to be more attentive to their specific needs by means of culturally persistent efforts and a range of technological and digital bypasses (pirate satellite dishes in the 1980s and more recently local community network servers), familiarity with bureaucratic discourses (especially those of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission [CRTC]), and strategic alliances. In broadcasting, these efforts culminated in a national channel, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (1999 -).

First Peoples' current digital self-determination strategies have successfully challenged the federal government's repetitious patterns of placing them on the socio-cultural and political margins of technology development – in media reservations.¹ While there are still many issues to be resolved in terms of infrastructure, program and project

funding, and access to the Web in small Northern and remote communities, First Peoples (including those in the South) have become articulate central players in building spaces for themselves within the new Canadian mediascape, assuring for themselves present and future places as national media citizens.

Earthbound infrastructure

Since its arrival in the North, electronic media's connective tissues have very delicately laced First Peoples to a technological modernity unimaginable in the late 1960s when infrastructure for a more accessible and diverse society was being debated in Canada's Parliament. Early discussions focused on the Telesat Act of 1969 which mapped out the parameters and coordinates of the second domestic satellite in the world – the first being Russia's Sputnik. Canada's geo-stationary satellite promised to improve South/North telecommunications (phone and fax), and to bring Southern and regional television and radio broadcast services to communities with populations of over 500 (Accelerated Coverage Plan, 1974).

Until Anik I Satellite became operational in 1973, the Far North, unlike the West, could not be connected to the Southern telecom infrastructure because of the extreme characteristics of Arctic Nordicity. These included: permafrost, cold, bog, atmospheric interference, isolation, ice, small populations, the separation of Arctic islands by water, and other interference factors which prevented the establishment of land-based microwave towers connecting the South to the North (Louis-Edmond Hamelin, 1979). Ironically, while villages were left to fend for themselves because they didn't meet the population cut-off of the government's extension plan, they persisted in joining technological modernity by purchasing pirate receiver dishes. Because these were not regulated, they were able to downlink Canadian and American programming without additional costs for program reception.

This resulted in the North having two parallel infrastructures: reception dishes supplied by Telesat under CRTC regulation and those purchased by the villagers themselves from US sources, con-

sidered to be pirate dishes, which operated outside of governmental supervision or regulation. The latter tended to be in use from the early to mid-1980s and were carefully controlled by Band or village Council Officials. In the mid-1980s, some government regional subsidies were disseminated, at around the time that the CRTC realized



Shadows of technology. Photo: © Lorna Roth.

the potential chaos of the situation and legalized these dishes.

Something new in the air

The federal government's extension of satellite services (without systematic policy input from First Peoples) had a profound impact on the North. It provided easy and fairly reliable telecom and broadcasting access for the purposes of achieving administrative, information, and entertainment goals. "Outsiders" were accustomed to dealing with an abundant information environment, but First Peoples were not. Thus the launch of Anik I can be seen as a turning point for First Peoples who were jolted into the task of finding their cultural and political spaces and voices in an imposed telecom infrastructure.

Its consequent public broadcasting menu

was characterized by the absence of indigenous representation at all levels – from CBC North management headquarters in the South to regulatory policy decisions made in the South, to its programming decisions. Until the 1980s, for example, Inuit were delegated a mere 15 minutes per week for an interview program produced

out of Montreal on CBC Northern TV service. Television, more than radio which had always been more inclusive of local indigenous peoples, became a site for struggle and negotiations over access, representation, fair portrayal, communications, and cultural rights beginning in the mid-1970s. First Peoples' absence from television (portrayal and employment) was a lacuna only to be fully addressed with the licencing of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network in 1999.

Media service in the North was in its second phase of connectivity when I arrived in Iqaluit (then Frobisher Bay) to work with the National Film Board at a live-action Super 8 workshop in 1975 aimed at teaching Inuit media literacy in preparation for a future in which they would be able to transmit their own programming, reflecting their own cultures in the words of their own language dialects. I had missed the first development stage – one in which infrastructure was limited to short-wave radio, to citizens band emergency radio, and to earth-bound microwave towers lined up alongside Western Canadian highways (such as the Mackenzie) or transportation routes leading from South to North, delivering signals to information-starved audiences eager to have access to more global worldviews as well as entertainment.

At this time, media dissemination was tied to the geo-stationary satellite, located in a reserved

parking spot in the sky, at a given longitudinal point of 35,680 kilometers above the equator (Telesat, 1980: 12). This was later followed by: point-to-point and direct broadcast satellites (DBS), which delivered signals directly to homes with fairly small, privately owned receiving dishes. These have become sophisticated enough now through digitization and compression, to deliver 10 times more signals than they used to, with the same amount of bandwidth (Roth, 2005: 83). Satellites have been fundamental to communications in the North and in connecting remote and rural regions to the rest of the country, but within smaller towns and for local uses, there is still not nearly enough access time to meet demands.

Much has been written to contextualize First Peoples' communications history. The literature focuses on various phases of its development, representational practices, analyses of its programming, and the ways in which policy evolved to the point where Canada became the first state in the world to enshrine aboriginal communications in its Broadcasting Act of 1991. The Act legislated rights of access, employment equity, and fair portrayal for all public, private, and community broadcasting in Canada, and specifically noted that multicultural, multiracial, and aboriginal constituency groups were to be given special charter rights for promotion of their languages and cultural values. This was a unique moment internationally: Canada became the first state to enshrine these minority rights in a policy which had the power of sanction for non-compliance.

In summary, by the time early 1999 came to pass, Canada's technical infrastructure supported 120 indigenous community radio stations and 13 regional Native Communications Societies (NCS) across the North each of which were funded to produce and transmit weekly broadcasts of 20 hours of radio and/or 5 hours of local language television programming reflecting specific cultures and promoting a native "perspective" (Northern Broadcasting Policy and Northern Native Broadcast Access Program, 1983). Over different historical periods, indigenous TV has been disseminated via CBC Northern public broadcasting service or Cancom (a privately-owned service), and on

a Pan-Northern distribution transponder called Television Northern Canada (TVNC) which was operational between 1991-1999 at which point the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) was approved and went on air (September 1, 1999). APTN then became the distribution entity which consolidated programming of the 13 NCS organizations.

Along with these, APTN distributes acquired programming from Canada and international sources, creates original news and current affairs, and exhibits material developed by First People media makers from Southern Canada. APTN has also become a common source of assistance in the production and distribution of First Peoples programming for the entire country. Due to budgetary constraints of government entities targeting monies for indigenous media (such as Telefilm Canada), APTN provides some employment and funding in small amounts for valuable feature film and documentary film production assistance. Its main source of funding is advertising sales, subscriber fees, and strategic alliances (APTN Annual Report, 2012: 1).

APTN is a digital channel self-organized by First Peoples to share native stories with their (international) audiences, thus providing non-indigenous populations access to previously unknown culturally diverse perspectives. As a multilingual, intergenerational, multicultural and multiracial channel and web-based live-streaming service, it has indigenized the uses of technology and shown how through their cultural persistence First Peoples have facilitated cross-cultural communications through original and creative use of the electronic grid across Canada, throughout North America and internationally through its Internet websites. APTN's broadcasting license has been renewed twice since its inception.

Is APTN a media reservation? Though some might consider it so, most recognize that it has created a constituency group strong enough to make an impact on Canadian (and international) policies, practices, and public opinion. The circulation of its content has provoked such initiatives as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (199-96), as well as the recent Truth and Reconcilia-

tion Commission, the aim of which is to investigate human rights abuses in aboriginal residential schools. Internationally, it provides programming and resources to fulfill the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 16, which argues for the communication rights of indigenous peoples. In fact, the Canadian Broadcasting Act of 1991 firmly commits to this UN Declaration as well and historically preceded it.

Unfortunately, although the digital divide in broadcasting has been addressed by APTN and other small programming initiatives, the struggle for fair web/Internet infrastructure distribution is still not satisfactorily resolved. Service disparity is most apparent in the rural/remote parts of Canada. Here, the impact of governmental thinking about technology follows the economic profit-based models associated with urban regional planning. When these concepts are mapped to the digital mediasphere in rural and remote areas, particularly in regions as isolated as the North, many factors do not “fit” adequately. These raise complicated questions about embedded notions of what access actually means in outpost regions, infrastructure cost control in large underdeveloped territories, the demand by First Peoples to be involved in policy and decision-making processes, development strategies around public/private ownership, benefits and liabilities from widespread access, and funding subsidies for service in sparsely populated communities.

Joining an intermediated modernity

When the time came a few years ago to find an Inuktitut term for the word “Internet”, Nunavut’s former Official Languages Commissioner, Eva Aariak, chose *ikiaqqivik*, or “travelling through layers” (Minogue, 2005). The word comes from the concept describing what a shaman does when asked to find out about living or deceased relatives or where animals have disappeared to: travel across time and space to find answers. According to the elders, shamans used to travel all over the world: to the bottom of the ocean, to the stratosphere, and even to the moon. In fact, the 1969 moon landing did not impress Inuit elders. They simply said, “We’ve already been there!” (Mino-

gue, 2005). The word is also an example of how Inuit are mapping traditional concepts, values, and metaphors to make sense of contemporary realities and technologies (Soukup, 2006: 239).

The outstanding issue with digital technologies in remote Northern communities is their lack of broadband/bandwidth infrastructure. Internet service providers, who do not have the same legal obligations as they do with telephone’s universality requirement, are not particularly interested in establishing infrastructure in communities in which they won’t be able to make much profit. Cost is high, profit is low; access time in the current framework is of great value as a scarce commodity. Few public subsidies by government have been forthcoming until very recently when the federal Conservative government announced a funding allocation for Northern remote and rural communities of \$305 million over a period of *five* years. Given that there are at least 300,000 families in Canada still without access to high-speed Internet, this will likely make only a small and limited difference for the immediate future (Nunatsiaq News Online, February 13, 2014).

In the larger communities of Northern Canada, telephone and Internet access, affordable broadband costs, and Web 2.0/3.0 have technically and socially changed First Peoples’ mediascapes. Aboriginal broadcasting is no longer the singular, most powerful tool of information dissemination, entertainment, and cultural reinforcement it once was when it was the only television channel with systematic native content. Like others around the world, aboriginal populations are attracted to the Internet as a way of joining postmodernity; of building virtual local, regional, and (inter)national social networks; of participating in gaming activities; and of recirculating native media content in unique ways which has opened up creative options and fascinating images never before considered on other media.

Small community users, however, still experience frustration when having to queue for their dialup access time since high speed is too expensive. In 2010, Northwestel (the largest Internet service provider in the North) customers would pay \$100 per month for high-speed Internet with

a 10 gigabyte limit on downloading and a penalty of \$10 for every gig that is downloaded over that limit (Windeyer, April 8, 2010). If you compare this to the same speed of Internet via satellite that people in Montreal receive, the Northern cost would be \$8,800 a month: (op cit. Nunatsiaq Online, June 9, 2010)

There is no doubt that First Peoples in urban areas have skilled and located themselves well within Internet space using Web 2.0 (and 3.0 when available) and are in the process of building their individual identities, their social and professional networks, and their (inter)national personae, as almost everyone in the world with “access” is doing. The *Aboriginal Technologies in Cyberspace* project leaders, Jason Lewis and Skawennati Fragnito and their team do outstanding web productions as they carve for indigenous peoples a guaranteed historical, current, and future place or “home” for First Peoples on the Internet, in digital games, in video, film and other forms of media production (<http://www.abtec.org/index.html> – retrieved on March 10, 2014).

Framing access in the interest of First Peoples – from the ground up

Affordable connectivity and its sustainable local maintenance and management must be supported by policy which is central to successful expansion of national broadband and fibre optical systems in the North. With delays in policy decisions and provision of optimal service, First Peoples are creating what I call digital bypasses to meet their distribution needs at the local level. Outstanding among creative responses to control better and more widespread community access to the Internet is a system run by Igloolik Isuma Productions, Inc., the first independent Inuit production studio in Canada.

To popularize the work of indigenous filmmakers from up North and around the world, Isuma launched a video website, IsumaTV, in 2008 with support from two relatively new players in the field: the Canada New Media Fund and Partnerships Fund of Canadian Culture Online. IsumaTV provides free and easy access to a growing archive of approximately 800 Inuktitut media

files and 2,000 other aboriginal feature and documentary films in 41 languages (Cohn, personal interview, May 2, 2012). Ironically, though the Inuit films are produced in the North, residents in the very communities where the films were produced were unable to view them because of limited bandwidth. Importantly, Isuma figured out a way to get around their restricted amount of bandwidth.

Isuma Distribution International is now running the Digital Indigenous Democracy (DID) project, that installs in each slow-speed community a low-cost, innovative package of community-based technology that allows users to jump the Digital Divide and use interactive media at high-speed” (Digital Indigenous Democracy retrieved from <http://www.isuma.tv/en/did/CMF>). Simply put, they have set up local servers in the communities, have uploaded them with IsumaTV programming at source and have connected each house by cable to the server. Consequently, rather than having to go to the Internet to watch their own programming, townspeople can connect directly to their local village servers to download or live stream Inuktitut programming.

The water solution

For more long-term solutions, several companies in Alaska have been trying to establish connectivity between Alaska, Greenland, Europe and Asia through the Arctic waters. Their plan is to set up East-West sub-oceanic fibre-optical cables to bring connectivity to distant communities through much cheaper and effective technologies by passing through the Arctic Ocean and Northwest Passage. These East/West lines could then be connected North/South to local Arctic communities in need of improved Internet service. The most recent underwater cable proposal is by Arctic Fibre, “a fibre optic telecommunications project developing one of the largest subsea cable networks in the world. The cable connects Asia to Western Europe via the southern portion of the North West Passage through the Canadian and Alaskan Arctic” (<http://arcticfibre.com/>).

Arctic Fibre will bring affordable high speed Internet access to about 52% of Nunavut’s popu-

lation to enable more reliable connectivity, again leaving out the smaller villages. The system's construction is scheduled to begin in May, 2014 and to be in service in January 2016. Its \$620 million cost will be paid by customers mainly in Asian countries: Japan, China, and South Korea (Nunatsiaq Online, January 24, 2014). The new marine cable backbone has been difficult to negotiate given that it will be passing through Canadian Arctic waters, considered to be sovereign territories – for which complicated negotiations are taking place. It will also be competing with existing smaller service providers whose current monopoly will be challenged.

It seems like the Canadian government will be supporting the proposal as on January 24, 2014, Nunatsiaq News announced that Industry Canada was to oversee 52 terms and conditions before its implementation. Furthermore, the government will not require Arctic Fibre Inc.'s undersea cable proposal to undergo an environmental hearing making it easier to begin construction without policy obstacles (Nunatsiaq News, January 24, 2014).

Sadly, it is due to climate change impacts, such as the melting of the Arctic sea, that water has begun to be considered as a potential solution in which to locate the optical fibres that will deliver signals to the North more efficiently and economically. Though this was not intended to be the primary goal of Arctic Fibre's enterprise, the potential piggy-backing of North/South communities on the East/West fibre optical highway, gives the project added value to certain Canadian Northerners who happen to be conveniently located near the planned fibre optical routes.

As important as it is to have this connectivity, the project remains disturbing to environmentalists at the same time as it is an exciting prospect for those craving sustainable and affordable Internet service.

Concluding remarks

Canadian First Peoples have come a long way in developing a multi-platform communications system for themselves through cultural persistence, creative initiatives and through building stra-

tegic alliances so that their scarce resources can be pooled. The routes they have followed since the early 1980s have been circuitous but always driven by a critical demand for an audible and visible presence within mainstream and indigenous media forms. They have followed a diplomacy aesthetic² that has enabled them to negotiate difficult demands with intelligence, sensitivity, humour, and persistence.

Having met their Canadian broadcasting objectives in the last decade, APTN is turning its attention to both strengthening its Canadian multiplatform services and considering the establishment of a collaborative international indigenous "world" television channel, similar to CNN or BBC World Service. Other indigenous media-makers such as the Igloolik Isuma team are focusing on feature film production and a range of web-based content dissemination strategies (gaming sites, virtual reality, YouTube, Ted Talks, among others). The indigenous media field is burgeoning all across Canada – from sea to sea to sea.

There will always be cultural resource and access issues, political differences, and financial challenges when doing indigenous media production and distribution. Most important, however, is that First Peoples are "out there" making an impact inside and outside their communities. They have claimed their presence in visual and oral media not just as *indigenous* media-makers but as MEDIA-MAKERS.

Having become persuasive players in building (cross) cultural spaces and places within the Canadian mediascape, First Peoples have assured for themselves present and future voices and images as national media citizens. ■

Notes

1. Here I am referring to a repeated pattern of the federal government in which First Peoples are left to find their own financial and intellectual resources for expensive utilities that are made available to urban and Southern regions of Canada as a common, easily available, and affordable service.
2. The term "diplomacy aesthetic" is one that I made up years ago in the context of a development communications class. It refers to that form of communication which is the most appropriate, beautiful, and expressive for the occasion or negotiation taking place. It is intelligent, strategically smart, considerate and respects and adopts the affective, emotional aura of the person(s) or group with whom one is engaged.

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Personal Interview

Norman Cohn, May 2, 2012.

Lorna Roth is Professor and former Chairperson of the Department of Communication Studies, Concordia University in Montréal, Canada. She has been involved in broadcasting policy development and analysis, and has consulted with First Peoples and multicultural/multiracial groups since the late 1970s on issues of technology access, fair portrayal practices, infrastructure, human resource diversity, and minority representation at the level of employment. She is author of *Something New in the Air: The Story of First Peoples Television Broadcasting in Canada* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2005) and has published extensively about the construction of cultural and racial diversity in media texts and employment opportunities.

Creating an enabling environment for digital self-determination

Rob McMahon

At the contemporary historical moment, innovations in networked digital technologies are rapidly diffusing around the world, impacting terrains of economics and politics, languages, mobilities, and cultures. As part of this process, organizations are establishing infrastructures and services in indigenous territories. These developments are not simply imposed from above: the latest expression of colonial logics. They also arise in the on-the-ground work of indigenous peoples.

A growing body of empirical evidence from Canada and elsewhere illustrates community-based technology development initiatives. Partnerships between universities and indigenous organizations, like the First Nations Innovation Project and the First Mile project, are demonstrating how indigenous peoples are encoding their distinct laws, practices, institutions, values and goals in emerging technologies.¹

These diverse activities can be interpreted through the theoretical framework articulated by scholars of indigenous resurgence (Alfred, 2009; Borrows, 2010; Simpson, 2011). Beyond expressions of resistance, such perspectives highlight the creativity of people working from marginalized spaces. Through its deep consideration of issues like community, self-determination and resilience, this work provides many lessons that can inform development practices more broadly.



The remote village of Ivujivik in Northern Quebec. Ivujivik is one of 14 villages in the Inuit territory of Nunavik. These fly-in arctic communities connect to one and to southern Canada through a satellite network managed by the Kativik Regional Government. © Rob McMahon.

But despite these benefits, community-based initiatives are often reliant on contingent and/or precarious supports from external entities like state governments. This article discusses how this challenge might be considered through establishing a state-based enabling environment for digital self-determination.

The imperative to decolonize technology development

A few short centuries ago, networks of unequal social relations between colonizing and colonized peoples intensified around much of the world, including in North America. Scholars demonstrated how colonized peoples have always exercised creative agency against these oppressive conditions (Said, 1978). However, when interpreted tempor-

ally, the preface “post” may imply that this historical period of colonization has ended, and formerly colonized subjects are now free. But in many societies colonialism continues across a range of fields, from legal and institutional frameworks to areas of culture, politics, and economics.

For example, in Canada wide-ranging studies like the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) found that government policy in fields as diverse as health, education, housing, public works, employment, and justice had, and continue to have, negative effects on indigenous peoples. As Irlbacher-Fox (2009) writes:

“Aboriginal policy focuses on ‘present suffering’ as though that suffering were unrelated to injustice and instead primarily the

result of poor lifestyle choices and the non-modern nature of indigeneity” (p.3).

In short, the structural inequalities that justified and supported the dispossession of the rights, territories, and resources of indigenous peoples are deep-rooted and continue to be expressed in policies, acts of legislation, and regulatory frameworks.

Efforts to overcome colonial conditions seek to reconfigure these inequalities. But some critics argue that state-led decolonization is a primarily symbolic venture. For example, the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s formal apology to Aboriginal peoples for the residential school system demonstrate symbolic goodwill. But many of these efforts remain constrained in practice.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, created as part of a class action lawsuit against the government and tasked with presenting a history of Canada’s residential schools, was forced to take the federal government to court for restricting access to historical records associated with the investigation.² As the [#IdleNoMore](#) movement made clear, the Prime Minister’s apology rings hollow to those indigenous peoples protesting his government’s imposition of policies associated with continued resource extraction and environmental (de)regulation on their territories. These two examples illustrate contradictions of public statements of goodwill.

Given these conditions, authors of indigenous resurgence call for solutions that better reflect the unique legal status of indigenous peoples and the inherent, group-differentiated rights and responsibilities that flow from that status (Alfred, 2009; Borrows, 2010; Simpon, 2011). This work might be operationalized in policy through an “enabling environment”: a concept that links laws and policies to the ideas, values and practices of participatory development.

Such an approach draws from work in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when theorists like Amartya Sen (1999) argued for development policies to better support and account for human agency.

Sen encouraged state governments and civil society organizations to avoid conflating the means of development with its ends. In this framework, enabling environments aim to create the conditions might that support endogenous development.

Critics warned of the negative impacts of an un-reflexive approach to human development. They questioned the ability of existing institutions, practices, policies, and discourses to adequately incorporate the voices of marginalized individuals and populations. Models of participatory development can foreground rhetoric at the expense of material transformation, and so become a form of co-optation rather than transformation.

Given the presence of structural inequalities, human development must ensure that marginalized individuals and populations gain voice and influence in this work. As Sen (1999) writes: “capabilities [of persons] can be enhanced by public policy, but also, on the other side, the direction of public policy can be influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public” (p.35). In the next section, I discuss how recent scholarship on indigenous self-determination might enrich the formation of state enabling environments.

Indigenous self-determination in the network society

In the new millennium, a consensus among UN member states on models of “internal decolonization” formally recognized indigenous land claims, self-government rights, laws, and customs. This *de jure* recognition of indigenous self-determination is expressed in the UNDRIP, a document articulated only after years of consultation with indigenous groups. These parties stressed the need to operationalize self-determination to fit their diverse lived experiences, and to this end outlined four broad categories of participatory rights (see Stavenhagen, 2011: 273-4):

- The right to participate fully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the State.
- The right to maintain and develop distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural systems and institutions.



- The right of indigenous institutions to act as a nexus between indigenous peoples and States, to support participation in public life and control over their own affairs.
- The right that States give due recognition to indigenous laws and customs.

The UNDRIP reflects a deep recognition of the laws and practices of indigenous peoples. For example, Article 3 describes self-determination as a sacred right to which indigenous peoples have been entitled since time immemorial. This is a form of self-determination that emerges from place-based laws, beliefs, and practices – a different conception than that which emerged in the Western context following World War Two and the founding of the United Nations. That prior discourse foregrounded the self-determination of states and framed issues of political sovereignty in the context of the Westphalian international system.³

But some indigenous peoples argue that state ac-

Mosusie Audlaluk (left) is a local agent for Tamaani Internet. He helps sign up new residential Internet customers and maintains the community's earth station. As part of the job, he receives subsidized ICT training and free Internet, as well as an hourly wage for occasional work. Moususie is supported by field technicians from Tamaani Internet, who assist with major problems and manage the network from the regional centre in Kuujjuaq. © Rob McMahon.

tivities in this area are used to justify and perpetuate colonial rule. Consider the sources of legitimacy of claims to self-determination (the burden of proof of the legal existence of a distinct “people” as the sovereign “self” that will exercise the “determination”). At present, there are no universally agreed-upon criteria that distinguish indigenous peoples from stateless nations. Even when this question is settled, challenges arise regarding the implementation of the right to self-determination inside a state's borders.

For example, some scholars expressed concerns over the balance of the right as applied to individuals vis-à-vis “peoples” or collectives. For indigenous peoples, recognition of a collective right helps preserve the communal dimension of their societies, worldviews, and identities. Yet collective rights may in some cases restrict individual rights: the self-determination of a group may undermine the liberty (self-determination) of individual members of that group. Today, these difficult questions remain unresolved, and are beyond the scope of this article.

Here, I consider those controversies that arise when the right of self-determination is implemented through the existing institutional structures of a state. Under international law, indigenous sovereignty must yield to state sovereignty. This means there are state-imposed limits to indigenous self-determination. Historically, these limits are framed with reference to a binary between “internal” and “external” forms of self-determination. External self-determination refers to the right of a people to determine their own international status, for example by seceding and forming an independent state. Given their relatively low populations, broad geographic disper-

sion, and high diversity, it is highly unlikely that indigenous peoples will form their own sovereign and independent states.

For these reasons, the more common position is that of “internal” self-determination, which refers to the right of a people to choose their own system of government and develop their own policies and institutions inside the framework of an established state apparatus. While some critique this approach because it allows states to set limits on indigenous sovereignty, supporters frame it as a form of negotiated autonomy.

In this context, scholars of indigenous resurgence argue that indigenous peoples focus on strengthening their own, community-based institutions, which arise autonomously from those established by states. They suggest that these indigenous institutions are best equipped to engage with the focus and distribution of political power and economic activities in their communities. This perspective supports institutions, practices, and values linked to the lived realities of members of indigenous communities. It positions diverse indigenous peoples as epistemic communities linked by shared experiences, distinct values, and a common resistance to colonialism – all of which change over time.

When used to advocate reforms to existing relationships with the state, this approach might provide these community-based institutions with increased opportunities to shape the laws and policies that impact the lives of their constituent members: indigenous peoples. Examples of such reforms include the creation of reserved parliamentary seats for indigenous representatives in New Zealand (where the Māori Party was founded in 2004), and subsidies to support indigenous media in Canada, as for Aboriginal radio stations. In the next section, I suggest that this approach can also support the creation of an enabling environment for digital self-determination.

Generating enabling environments for digital self-determination

Processes of technology development both shape and are shaped by broader negotiations over self-determination. Indigenous peoples engage

with states over the policies and regulatory frameworks that reflect the diffusion, construction and use of emergent technologies. These activities have normative outcomes: technologies are not only tools of self-determination, but can also entrench structures of colonialism.

For example, state and corporate entities have used digital networks and technologies to undertake the surveillance, control, and containment of indigenous peoples. However, to accept such negative effects at face value is to fall into the trap of social and technical determinism. It is impossible to define with conviction *a priori* the path or effects of any development. At best, we can attempt to describe its logics, activities, and structures, with the goal of critical analysis and reform.

Framed this way, the design and management of technology development links to the ongoing colonialism/self-determination dialectic. Digital networks and technologies carry a public good – information – that is used to support political participation, expose the abuses of power, and enable interactions between people over distances. Think of online platforms like social media, websites, email and blogs. Without access to such tools, indigenous peoples lack a key means to participate in political decision-making.

But compared to print and broadcast media, digital technologies provide additional affordances with deep implications for indigenous self-determination. That is because of their widespread use in areas like governance, economic development, and the delivery of health and education services. The data and services provided through such technologies are increasingly used to make decisions that impact the balance of powers among indigenous nations and state governments.

At the contemporary moment, digital networks and technologies are quickly achieving closure as the invisible platforms guiding many aspects of our lives. For now, the ways that these new technologies are being shaped and diffused are subject to public deliberation. In this context, the enabling environments supporting and constraining these projects become a key site of struggle and negotiation.

Examples of digital self-determination taking

place in indigenous communities demonstrate the kinds of initiatives that such enabling environments can support. However, they also contribute something more: new ways of thinking about how we can identify and re-shape the relations of inequality and potential that threaten to become embedded in our built environments. ■

Notes

1. Disclosure: The author is involved in these projects. For more information, please see: <http://fn-innovation-pn.com> and <http://firstmile.ca>
2. For more information about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its mandate, visit: <http://www.trc.ca/>
3. Westphalian sovereignty is the concept of the sovereignty of nation-states on their territory, with no role for external agents in domestic structures. Scholars of international relations have identified the modern, Western originated, international system of states, multinational corporations, and organizations, as having begun at the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

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La apropiación indígena de la comunicación: De acompañantes a sujetos comunicacionales

Raquel Romero Zumarán

"La rebelión la hicieron nuestros padres, ahora la revolución lo hacen y lo harán los hijos, porque nuestros padres no tuvieron la oportunidad de conocer la verdadera historia (...) aquella que nos habla de los indios, los campesinos y los originarios"
(Omar Ramírez, CSUTCB-APC-Bolivia)

La comunicación es un proceso intercultural transformador asentado en la transmisión de conocimientos e información entre culturas, pueblos y personas en base al respeto y el reconocimiento del derecho de los otros y otras a expresarse y opinar con libertad por cualquier medio de expresión, sin limitación alguna.

Por lo que se refiere a los pueblos indígenas, la comunicación ha sido y es una fuente de formación, reconocimiento y sobrevivencia cultural. Ejemplos de ello, tenemos en la historia oral cotidiana, en la estética simbólica representada en tejidos, danzas y cerámica, por decir lo menos.

Para las culturas indígenas, la comunicación tiene una estrecha relación con el entorno ambiental y la biodiversidad que les rodea, pues la conjunción con la naturaleza es la base de toda la cosmogonía indígena latinoamericana.

La comunicación: Un derecho reconocido de los pueblos indígenas

Las lenguas son el principio básico de la reafirmación de las identidades indígenas y están reconocidas como un derecho fundamental en

la Declaración de las Naciones Unidas sobre el Derecho de los Pueblos Indígenas: “...revitalizar, utilizar, fomentar y transmitir a las generaciones futuras, sus historias, idioma, tradiciones orales, sistemas de escritura y literatura...” (Art, 14).

Asimismo, en el Art. 16 de la misma Declaración se establece la Comunicación como el derecho de los/ las indígenas a contar con medios de información en lenguas propias, siendo obligación del Estado asegurar la presencia indígena en los sistemas mediáticos públicos y privados sin ninguna discriminación. (Art. 16).

En Bolivia, la Constitución Política del Estado –en el marco de un estado plurinacional, intercultural, democrático, pluricultural y plurilingüe– garantiza el derecho a la comunicación, a la información y a la libertad de expresión, asignando responsabilidades estatales en la creación de medios de comunicación comunitarios, (Arts.30, 106,107).

Un poco de historia

Vemos que en el país, por la fuerte oralidad de las culturas indígenas, hay una larga tradición de ejercicio de comunicación radial, que inicia en los años 55-60, un proceso de difusión e información de las culturas indígenas, promoviendo la integración y su aculturización al mundo occidental.

A partir de los años 70, surgen otros esfuerzos comunicacionales que respondieron a iniciativas de comunicadores/as, a emprendimientos eclesiales –de “iglesia católica comprometida”– que impulsaron procesos político-comunicacionales en contra de la discriminación y la exclusión de la presencia y la visión indígena en los medios y en la sociedad boliviana.¹

Sin embargo, será a partir de los años 2000 que se establece una diferencia fundamental en la comunicación indígena. Serán los y las indígenas

quienes asuman la comunicación desde si mismos/as, convirtiéndose en actores, sujetos y difusores de sus propios mensajes, ya sea desde sus liderazgos políticos y sindicales, como desde el quehacer comunicacional como comunicadores/as y reporteros/as populares.

Toman radios y espacios comunicacionales,

con una visión estratégica y política: la consigna es la transformación del Estado boliviano a partir de dos premisas: i) la instauración de una asamblea constituyente que refunde las bases de este estado y ii) la toma del poder político.

Para ello establecen una alianza entre las organizaciones indígenas y originarias más grandes del país² y generan el Plan Nacional Indígena Originario de Comunicación Audiovisual, la Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena (CAIB) y posteriormente esta iniciativa impulsa el Sistema Nacional de Comunicación Indígena Originario Intercultural, aún vigente.

Fueron estas organizaciones- acompañadas por el brazo técnico del CEFREC³- las que realizaron uno de los más completos y exhaustivos seguimientos comunicacionales y mediáticos al accionar de la Asamblea Constituyente (2006-2007).

Instrumento político para revertir relaciones de poder desiguales y coloniales

Desde el año 2005 con la presencia del Movimiento al Socialismo en el poder y con Evo Morales como primer presidente indígena, el posicionamiento indígena en los medios y la utilización de la comunicación como herramienta política de información, formación y divulgación se intensifican.

Se fortifica la Red Patria Nueva (ex Radio Illimani) y se crea el Sistema Nacional de Radios de los Pueblos Originarios, con 30 radios comunitarias de pueblos originarios funcionando en red.⁴



Indígenas en marcha. Foto: Archivo FCC y RRZ.

Estado de situación de algunos medios y redes comunicacionales indígenas

Redes y Medios	Prensa/ TV/ Internet/ Pág. Web	Cobertura Radial			Carácter
		Numero	Nacional/ Regional	Departamental Local	
Red Patria Nueva y Radios P. Originarios	Pág. Web.	30	x	x	Estatul y comunitario.
Sistema Nacional de Comunicación Indígena Originario Campesino e Intercultural	3 Unids de TV Pág. Web- Informacion Redes Sociales	20		x	Comunitario en alianza interinstitucional (CEFREC). - Organizaciones matrices indígenas - Pacto Unidad. - Coordinadora Audiovisual Indígena (CAIB)
Agencia Plurinacional de Comunicación IOC	Pág. Web, redes sociales. Información- Noticias nacionales e internacionales				CAIB-CEFREC- Pacto Unidad en alianza con Min Comunicaciones.
Centro de Educación y producción Radiofónica	Pág web. Información Noticias	22	Redes: Regional Valles, Altiplano y Oriente	Departamental y Local	CEPRA en alianza con radios comunitarias y de pueblos originarios, DINACOM y Patria Nueva.
Asociación de Radios Comunitarias (APRAC)	Pág. Web		Nacional	Local	Emprendimientos comunitarios e individuales con el apoyo de comunidades rurales y pueblos indígenas.
Centro de Desarrollo Integral de la Mujer Aymara (CEDIMA)	Pág. Web	1		La Paz y Oruro Departamental y Municipal	Radio Wiñay Jatha. Empoderamiento Político, económico y comunicacional de las mujeres aymaras mediante la comunicación.
Red Nacional de trabajadoras de la información y la Comunicación (RED-ADA)	Pág. Web. Difusión y producción de materiales radiales, boletines y otros.				Red de Comunicadoras que trabajan por la inclusión de las mujeres indígenas en los procesos comunicacionales.

Esta importante inversión técnica y económica fue acompañada por el reconocimiento legal de la radiodifusión indígena y comunitaria a partir de un Decreto Supremo 29174 que constituye la norma nacional.

Uno de los objetivos de este Sistema Nacional es que las radios originarias se interconecten

Nota.- Existen redes radiales y cadenas nacionales que también están relacionadas con las redes comunitarias e indígenas, pero que no tienen el carácter indígena de las ya mencionadas, tal es el caso de ERBOL y sus redes satelitales, Fides, ACLO y otras. Cuentan con noticieros e informativos en idiomas originarios.

mediante noticieros en aymara, quechua y guaraní y que las comunidades y las organizaciones indígenas se apropien de este instrumento tanto programática como económicamente. Los niveles de involucramiento son disimiles y dependen del interés de las comunidades y de los gobiernos locales para solventar algunos gastos.

“...yo sufro harto, en el estudio. Tengo que encender la radio a las cinco de la mañana, para empezar la programación. Tengo que reportar a Patria Nueva y esperar una hora y media para tomar la señal del celular” (Valentín Colque, Radio Pinini).

La situación de las radios comunitarias e indígenas es precaria, tanto en su programación, como en el equipamiento y la sostenibilidad del personal técnico. No se cuenta, en muchos casos, con servicios de internet, equipamiento y personal adecuados.

A pesar de todos los tropiezos, las comunidades organizadas se van apropiando de los medios de comunicación y de sus contenidos. Sus dirigen-

cias ya sean sindicales u originarias quienes están impulsando procesos de capacitación y de formación técnica y profesional de los y las comunicadores/as y reporteros/as indígenas para aportar más efectivamente en la construcción del Estado Plurinacional y en la descolonización de la comunicación, haciendo frente a *“los grandes medios que nos quieren confinar a espacios comunicacionales de segunda, establecen estereotipos que refuerzan la visión colonial y patriarcal de nuestras sociedades”* (Felipa Huanca, Secretaria Ejecutiva de la Federación Departamental de Mujeres Indígenas Bartolina Sisa).

Viendo el cuadro en la página anterior se concluye que los medios e instrumentos comunicacionales utilizados por los y las indígenas está concentrado en la radio por ser el medio más idóneo y cercano, ante la carencia en el país de redes de internet en áreas rurales y ciudades intermedias y el desconocimiento de las nuevas tecnologías comunicacionales, lo que está provocando importantes rezagos y brechas de conocimiento digital, sobre todo en mujeres e indígenas.

Un gran desafío estatal y de la sociedad en su conjunto será establecer espacios comunicacionales abiertos, flexibles, en ámbitos como son las redes sociales, las páginas web, la información por celulares, la transmisión de datos, el manejo de la imagen como testimonio y memoria, etc. con el fin de fortalecer una real democratización de los medios para que las exclusas de la discriminación étnica no se reproduzcan con otras facetas.

Es de destacar, la experiencia de CONAMAQ (Confederación de Ayllus andinos) que cuenta con un bagaje de manejo digital y tecnológico que les permite estar permanentemente comunicados a partir de las redes sociales y generando palestras de argumentación y discusión política.

Asimismo se pudo observar que los medios escritos (matutinos, semanarios y revistas) y televisivos tampoco son espacios ganados por la comunicación indígena. A pesar de que muchos municipios rurales cuentan con canales de televisión locales, los contenidos que se difunden no



Conversatorio comunicación. Foto: Archivo FCC y RRZ

reflejan la comunicación como un rescate de las identidades indígenas, la programación se caracteriza por películas “enlatadas” alienantes que distorsionan la realidad y destruyen los valores comunitarios.

Lo positivo y concreto en este período, es el reconocimiento implícito de las identidades e idiosincrasia indígena manifiesto en el incremento de programas indígenas y con temáticas indígenas, de locutores/as indígenas en programas no indígenas, de programas, mesas radiales, cuñas y microprogramas difundidos en lenguas originarias en horarios estelares de audiencia.

También en la prensa escrita, se observan artículos de opinión estructurados y expresados en aymara y/o quechua, lo cual testimonia que las transformaciones sociales se están reflejando en

el imaginario y en los espacios mediáticos.

Las mujeres indígenas: las grandes ausentes en los medios de comunicación.

“... Hay que fortalecer espacios radiales para expresarnos en nuestra propia lengua, mostrando nuestros conocimientos. Las mujeres somos las ausentes, hay que tomar el micrófono sin miedo, sin temor a las discriminaciones, de lo contrario siempre vamos a ser oyentes nomás...” (Entrevista a Margarita Poma, indígena aymara, reportera popular del municipio de Achacachi).

Aunque la presencia de las mujeres indígenas en espacios de representación se ha incrementado significativamente desde el 2006: más del 30% en concejos municipales, alrededor de un 15% en la Asamblea Plurinacional y un 25% en las Asambleas Departamentales, este número no se refleja en la información que sobre ellas es difundida cotidianamente por los medios de comunicación indígenas y no indígenas.

Esto demuestra una visión patriarcal del rol de las mujeres y una invisibilización de su accionar en los cargos de representación. En ello, los y las comunicadores/as establecen una negación implícita al cambio porque refuerzan los roles de género establecidos, minimizando los aportes de las mujeres al proceso de transformación boliviano.

Tal vez, nuevas formas y mecanismos de comunicación se conviertan en opciones reales de democratización de la comunicación rompiendo con la subordinación de género. Algunas organizaciones de mujeres indígenas ya lo están avizorando con mucho acierto esta situación por lo que han impulsado políticas de capacitación en el manejo y producción de materiales comunicacionales; de información y conocimiento de las herramientas digitales, lo que demuestra la importancia que las mujeres indígenas le dan a la comunicación y al carácter estratégico de la misma para el logro de sociedades más mas iguales.

“La esperanza son las mujeres jóvenes que ya manejan la tecnología y tienen que utilizarla en beneficio de sus comunidades, porque hay mucha gente que ni leer sabe...” (Rufina Condori. Encuentro deliberante- La Paz).

En Bolivia los caminos ya están abiertos por polleras al viento y ojotas que marchan raudas e incontrolables hacia nuevos derroteros, en la búsqueda de imaginarios sociales y comunicacionales más inclusivos y más justos. ■

Notas

1. Tal es el caso de Radios Católicas: San Gabriel “La Voz del Pueblo Aymara” emisora fundada por los Padres Maryknoll en 1955, Acción Cultural Loyola dirigida al pueblo quechua (1966) y otras como el Centro de comunicación radiofónica (CEPRA) en 1981 y CDIMA, el Centro de investigación y fortalecimiento de la mujer aymara, fundado en 1989, siendo pionero en este trabajo.
2. El Plan estuvo avalado por las Confederaciones de campesinos indígenas originarios (CSTUCB), la similar de Mujeres Bartolina Sisa, (CNMIOCBS), la Confederación de Markas y Ayllus del Qollasuyo, (CONAMAQ), la Confederación de Sindicatos Interculturales (CSICB) y la de Indígenas del Oriente Boliviano, (CIDOB).
3. CEFREC es el Centro de Formación y Realización Cinematográfica, asentado en La Paz y fundado en 1989.
4. Véase información adicional en <http://www.patrianueva.bo/>

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Radios comunitarias e indígenas, legítimas pero “ilegales”

Sócrates Vásquez García

La comunicación comunitaria indígena es, en muchas comunidades de Oaxaca, México (foto abajo), una defensa anclada al derecho de los pueblos al territorio ancestral. El territorio entendido como fuente de subsistencia pero también como elemento simbólico de pertenencia, de apego afectivo en el que se recrean mitos de origen, nahuales, diálogos de las fuerzas naturales, el viento, el rayo, la lluvia. Entonces el territorio es lo que se pisa, lo que está debajo y lo que está encima, en sentido holístico.

La privatización del aire, del espacio radioeléctrico, es en muchos casos inconcebible. Lo que explica que muchas radios comunitarias indígenas surjan sin tener claridad de por qué “hay que pedir permiso” en su territorio, incluyendo el aéreo. Entonces se conciben legítimas por responder a las necesidades de la comunidad y ser producto de la decisión colectiva, pero entrampados en lo legal. Es en el camino que van enfrentando diversas fuerzas que hace cada vez más necesario tomar lo estipulado en la Constitución nacional, estatal y de declaraciones universales para establecer garantías mínimas de respeto al trabajo que realizan.

Este artículo recupera las voces de muchas comunicadoras y comunicadores indígenas, de autoridades comunitarias, de colectivos y de radios indígenas de Oaxaca: unas de reciente creación y otras con un camino andado en el derecho a la comunicación desde diferentes trincheras y con diferentes estrategias

El Sur de México: Las radios comunitarias indígenas de Oaxaca

En Oaxaca, uno de los estados del sur de México, conviven por lo menos 18 pueblos indígenas, en ocho grandes regiones,¹ aunque administrativa-



mente el Estado sólo reconozca como propios del estado 16, no se puede ignorar los pueblos tzeltales y tzotziles provenientes de estados vecinos como Chiapas, que se han venido asentando en franjas fronterizas y extendiéndose al interior.² Esta situación caracteriza una diversidad cultural, lingüística y con ello formas variadas de comunicación comunitaria e indígena.³

Desde los años 80s, surgieron en las comunidades indígenas un Sistema de Radiodifusión Cultural Indigenista con financiamiento público que pertenece a la Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CDI),⁴ instancia del gobierno federal, al servicio de los pueblos y comunidades indígenas. Estas radios indigenistas, como también se les conoce, están presentes en más de 15 estados de la república mexicana, con alrededor de 20 emisoras y aunque “inciden en los repertorios culturales,” la participación de la población en la toma de decisiones es un ejercicio poco realizado y no como producto –al menos no inicial– del acuerdo colectivo, como proyecto político comunicacional de las comunidades.⁵

Este tipo de radios se conciben como parte de las políticas indigenistas del país, en su inicio el objetivo principal fue la educación y la castellanización en detrimento de las lenguas maternas, y aunque han ido cambiando estrategias en sus formatos y contenidos radiofónicos, tratando de integrarse a las necesidades culturales de los pueblos, en muchos casos se trata de impulsos culturalistas que hacen escuchar la lengua local, las fiestas, las tradiciones, sin necesariamente cambiar su proyecto comunicacional.

Algunas investigaciones al respecto han demandado “que los micrófonos y las cabinas de las emisoras permisionadas instaladas en zonas indígenas sirvan a las comunidades y organizaciones indígenas sin intermediario alguno, como lo señalan los Acuerdos de San Andrés Larráinzar” firmados por el gobierno federal y el Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN).⁶

Acuerdos en los que se apostaba garantizar a las poblaciones indígenas *el acceso a información veraz, oportuna y suficiente sobre las actividades del gobierno, así como el acceso de los pueblos indígenas a los medios de comunicación, y que se garantice el derecho*

de los pueblos indígenas a contar con sus propios medios de comunicación (radiodifusión, televisión, teléfono, prensa escrita, fax, radios de comunicación, computadoras y acceso a satélite).

En este sentido, la crítica está centrada en que no sólo se escuche la lengua sino la voz, el pensamiento, la propuesta, la organización de la comunidad como sujetos de derecho y como parte de un proyecto político comunicacional de reivindicación cultural más amplio.

Un proceso distinto es el que han tenido el surgimiento de radios comunitarias e indígenas que llevan el nombre en principio porque es resultado de la decisión de una comunidad de contar con un medio de comunicación propio, y si bien, en algunos casos en inicio ven este ejercicio como un esfuerzo en el que “no hay que pedir permiso”, en el trayecto de conformación o consolidación van analizándose los marcos jurídicos que pueden ser herramientas para defenderse de múltiples agresiones, pues parte del discurso gubernamental es que éstas, las que surgen como parte de una organización comunitaria, son clandestinas, ilegales, rebeldes, por pretender una comunicación distinta.

Aunque, a finales de la década de los 90 parecen proliferar las radios comunitarias en diversos estados del país, desde años anteriores ya existían ejercicios radiofónicos en otras comunidades. En el estado de Veracruz,⁷ Radio Teocelo tiene una trayectoria desde 1965, teniendo como uno de sus objetivos generar un tipo de comunicación para promover un cambio en las relaciones de dominación.

Se trata de cuestionamientos que señala que las cosas en las comunidades *no son lo que parecen o dicen que son* otros medios, donde la situación de pobreza, marginación en servicios de salud o educativos por ejemplo no es un asunto natural. Ante un contexto de diversidad cultural y lingüística, no es coherente una comunicación monocultural, entonces se reflexiona ¿a quién está dirigida?, ¿qué pretende? Y en este contexto ¿qué se puede hacer en las comunidades?

No se puede decir con exactitud el número de radios comunitarias que existen debido a la dinámica tan variada de creación, consolidación o desaparición. De las registradas actualmente, son

permisionadas en Oaxaca⁸ alrededor de 7 radios, ubicadas en sus diferentes regiones.

Pero también existen otras, no permisionadas e incluso no registradas, poco visibles que también están en su proceso de consolidación, comprensión de los marcos jurídicos y de decisión sobre formar o no parte de redes más amplias. Por estas condiciones es complicado ofrecer más datos de radios de éste tipo, sin embargo no hay que perder de vista que existen y en el camino pueden tomar caminos variados.

Entre las razones⁹ que podemos encontrar para que en algunos casos las radios tengan una trayectoria de 10 o más de 40 años, mientras otras están al aire sólo unos meses, están:

1) El acoso de caciques, empresarios o de agentes gubernamentales por un lado, que se profundiza por la falta de conocimiento legal en la materia, lo que implica la confianza o el miedo a crear o no una radiodifusora que sea solamente respaldada por la comunidad;

2) La falta de equipamiento y de conocimiento de herramientas y programas para la producción; que provoca poco autoestima de lo que se produce, sobre todo considerando la producción “seductora” de los medios comerciales, que no se puede negar, se mantiene en el gusto de población principalmente joven;

3) La sostenibilidad que, aunque se puede tener un respaldo en la comunidad en cuanto a contar con un local donde instalarse, muchas radios tienen que sortear la atención de pagos de luz, compra de equipo básico o cuotas gubernamentales por el trámite de permisos, por ejemplo, para aquellas que sí lo tienen.

En todos los casos, aunque con énfasis distintos, con formatos y estrategias diversas, el objetivo de las radios comunitarias indígenas en manos de las comunidades, no es lucrar, sino generar un tipo de comunicación diferente que contrarreste la ola de desinformación de otros medios y con ellos relaciones de discriminación hacia los pueblos.

¿Pero qué significa una comunicación distinta? ¿Cuál es la función de las comunicadoras y comunicadores indígenas que pueda explicar la agresión que éstas reciben? ¿Qué implicaciones ha tenido la existencia de radios comunitarias para las comunidades donde surgen? Aunque no hay respuestas únicas, una de las características de estos trabajos de organización comunitaria para la radiodifusión, es que se trata también una comunicación alternativa, distinta a la comúnmente recibida de los grandes empresas de la radiodifusión¹⁰ y que se ha caracterizado por ser lejana, monológica, es decir enviar mensaje sin buscar un diálogo con sus radioescuchas, a los que



desinforman ante grandes problemas nacionales.

En gran medida en la radio comunitaria se trata de hablar y transmitir en lengua materna, hacer un periodismo comunitario interesado por los asuntos de la comunidad de donde cada comunicador o comunicadora es parte, ofrecer los micrófonos a múltiples voces, fortalecer la comunicación oral y la memoria colectiva de los pueblos, promover la organización en las comunidades ante cualquier eventualidad, responder a la desinformación de otros medios de comunicación comerciales dando a conocer las problemáticas de diferentes contextos, en muchos casos, estar alerta e informar a las comunidades ante situaciones agresivas a las comunidades o a sus tierras, como lo son los proyectos extractivos de mineras o represas que han provocado despojos en las comunidades, además de los innegables problemas ambientales.

En algunos casos, el que puede señalarse es el de “La voz de Güila”, radio comunitaria ubicada en Valles Centrales, población zapoteca esencialmente. En este caso la radio ha sido determinante para informar de posibles intenciones de explotación de sus recursos naturales, entre ellos las minas, “entonces nosotros vamos informando aquí en la radio, ya luego la gente va preguntando más y es como nos enteramos de cómo están las cosas”, es el comentario de un integrante de la radio. Esta realidad, más que una nota periodística cualquiera, representa para el medio comunitario la posibilidad de mostrar y prevenir a las comunidades de posibles abusos.

A pesar de los marcos legales

En este contexto, las necesidades comunicativas y los proyectos comunicacionales relacionados con un bienestar en las comunidades, está desfasada de los procedimientos poco claros para que esta comunicación sea posible apoyándose en los marcos jurídicos tanto nacionales como internacionales.

Lo que la realidad de las radios comunitarias muestra en la práctica, es que existe una tensión muy grande. A pesar de que en la Ley de Derechos de los Pueblos y las Comunidades Indígenas de Oaxaca se reconoce en *el Capítulo IV el derecho de pueblos y comunidades indígenas a poseer y operar*

sus propios medios de comunicación,¹¹ y que la misma Constitución mexicana señale que “la Nación tiene una composición pluricultural sustentada originalmente en sus pueblos indígenas”, por lo que en su inciso B párrafo VI se indique que tanto la federación, los estados y los municipios deberán “Establecer condiciones para que los pueblos y las comunidades indígenas puedan adquirir, operar y administrar medios de comunicación, en los términos que las leyes de la materia determinen” el vehículo o las formas de hacerlo operativo, se entrapa porque no hay una claridad de los mecanismos para hacerlo efectivo.

La legislación nacional y estatal tiene vacíos que impiden procedimientos oportunos o de trato justo a las radiodifusoras comunitarias que lo solicitan. El Estado niega reiteradamente o por lo menos dificulta el proceso a las comunidades para operar en la legalidad. “Esta negativa se ha expresado tanto en ausencia de respuesta a solicitudes presentadas como trabas en los trámites gubernamentales”.¹²

Una situación de gravedad resulta el hecho de que ahora el procedimiento sea penal y no solo administrativo, argumentando que se infringe en la violación al territorio nacional. En este sentido, se entiende que los principios de autonomía que se ha reconocido a los pueblos indígenas, sobre todo en la Constitución oaxaqueña, no está por encima de los bienes de la Nación y su administración por parte del Estado. Lo posibilita este hecho es la falta de cumplimiento y respeto a los derechos de los pueblos a contar con medios de comunicación propios.

En este contexto, es común encontrar experiencias de radios que enfrentan acoso y agresión en sus diferentes manifestaciones. En Oaxaca, son conocidos los casos de dos reporteras y locutoras de la comunidad Triqui de la radio “La voz que rompe el silencio”, que fueron asesinadas en 2008, entre los motivos, el trabajo comunicacional que desarrollaban.

Otro tipo de agresiones han sufrido comunicadoras y comunicadores de “Radio Nandía”, de la región Cañada, mediante amenazas directas y violación al espacio radiofónico lo que provocó una suspensión temporal de la transmisión en 2006. En

el mismo año “Radio Calenda”, ubicada en Valles centrales también recibieron hostigamiento por parte del presidente municipal y un año después, en 2007 algunos de sus integrantes fueron agredidos físicamente, golpeados y agredidos con disparos. En 2008 integrantes de “Zaachila Radio” de Valles centrales también recibieron agresiones en sus domicilios. Se trata de radios que han registrado

indígena”, ésta, es una situación distorsionada cuando no alejada de la realidad.

La diversidad cultural indígena que reflejan los medios la encontramos, en Oaxaca como en México,¹³ por lo menos en dos enfoques de imágenes y discursos estereotipados, o bien como parte del folclor, enfatizando en su vestido, sus paisajes, su comida, o dónde se acumulan todos los



los hechos, de los que seguramente encontramos más que no han sido visibilizados

El tratamiento ha sido insuficiente, cuando no desvirtuado por medios de comunicación comerciales o estatales que relacionan los hechos con “problemas internos” en las comunidades, sin hablar de la inseguridad jurídica a la que el gobierno condena y la impunidad que caracteriza estos actos de violación a la libertad de expresión, de opinión, a todo el ejercicio comunicativo.

Por otro lado, aunque la misma Declaración de la ONU sobre los derechos de los pueblos indígenas (2006) refiera al derecho de los pueblos a “acceder a todos los demás medios de información no indígenas sin discriminación” y en relación a los estados, “alentar a los medios de información privados a reflejar debidamente la diversidad cultural

males, la pobreza, la marginación y los desastres naturales, de manera muy fuerte, pero esporádica, comunidades indígenas con presencia constantes en las campañas políticas de cada nuevo candidato a la gubernatura. Se presentan de manera discriminada, como “la población más pobre a la que hay que salvar” sin ser éstos realmente voceros de las realidades que viven.

La defensa de las radios

La defensa de las radios comunitarias es un conjunto de estrategias variadas. Cuando la radio tiene un arraigo en la comunidad y en las estructuras comunitarias de mando-obediencia como los cargos comunitarios, es común encontrar que la defensa de la radio sea también la defensa de la palabra –y la transmisión cultural que ello implica–

y del territorio. Esto explica que en algunos radios la gente se organice para impedir la entrada de la Policía o del ejército ante amenazas de cierre de radios –que en Oaxaca como México– se traduce en una forma generalmente violenta de decomiso de equipo y de detención de sus dirigentes o integrantes. En estos casos la resistencia mostrada por las mujeres es particularmente importante y una característica frecuente, tanto en un estado como en otro.¹⁴

Otras radios, en las que la autoridad municipal o comunitaria se tambalea o convive con diferentes fuerzas de partidos políticos o con presiones del cacicazgo, la defensa es aún más complicada y en todo caso se busca un respaldo en organizaciones nacionales o internacionales, buscando además un amparo en la legalidad.

Y es que no se puede negar cierta utilidad de los marcos jurídicos como bases argumentativas de defensa, lo cierto es que en el plano del respeto, reconocimiento, ésta es una lucha cotidiana que evidencia un conflicto de intereses entre quienes pueden tener un medio y quienes quieren tenerlo. La radiodifusión en este sentido está cooptada por intereses empresariales con cierta influencia en las instancias competentes como Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transporte (SCT), quienes condicionan permisos o sancionan irregularidades con mucha discriminación.

La radio comunitaria, sorteando el sustento cotidiano, que transmite en lengua materna, en algunos lugares único medio de comunicación masiva, que ha sido fundamental en casos de vida o muerte se pretende relegada, sin en cambio son las estrategias de sus integrantes, el respaldo de las autoridades comunitarias –que no están cooptadas por partidos político, caciques– y las redes que han logrado construirse junto con otras radios de Oaxaca, del país y del mundo, lo que posibilita su accionar político.

Una posibilidad para fortalecer el ejercicio radiofónico comunitario ha sido sin duda la construcción de redes de comunicadoras y comunicadores comunitarios –con o sin identidad indígena– para compartir experiencias pero también para actuar ante males comunes.

Éstos incluyen la falta de un permiso, la falta de

capacitación técnica, las agresiones o violencia, o las formas de mantener voluntades y construir diálogos y redes más allá de las fronteras para acercarse a diversas fuentes de financiamiento y lograr una mayor visibilización, que a la vez sea una presión política hacia los gobiernos para responder a las situación en las que viven las radios comunitarias de Oaxaca, México y el mundo. ■

Notas

1. Valles Centrales, Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur, Cañada, Costa, Mixteca, Istmo y Papaloapan
2. Datos del Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI) señalan que Oaxaca tiene una población de 3.8 millones, al 34% de población en edad de 5 años y más hablan una lengua indígena.
3. Algunas radios se consideran comunitarias y no precisamente indígenas, debido a la composición de su población. Mientras que otras son comunitarias indígenas y con ello señalan que responden a la estructura comunitaria municipal ancestral.
4. Inicialmente INI, el cual desaparece en 2003 para continuar como CDI.
5. Los esfuerzos comunitarios que se refugiaron en esta política pronto fueron cooptados, como parte de estrategia gubernamental.
6. Levantamiento armado en 1994 en Chiapas, estado sureño colindante con Oaxaca.
7. Ubicado en el golfo de México
8. La Ley Federal de radio y televisión comunitaria otorga *Concesiones* para empresas con finalidad de lucro y *Permisos* que se dan a entidades gubernamentales. En 2013 se ha incluido la denominación de comunitarias e indígenas en la legislación, pero aún falta clarificar procedimientos.
9. De acuerdo al acercamiento que hemos tenido en diversas radios de diferentes regiones de Oaxaca
10. Constitución Política del estado libre y soberano de Oaxaca
11. Constitución Política del estado libre y soberano de Oaxaca
12. Situación muchas veces discutida por la Asociación Mundial de Radios Comunitarias de México, (AMARC-MX)
13. Esto debido a las cadenas nacionales privadas que transmiten mismos contenidos en toda la república.
14. En Guerrero por ejemplo, la oposición de las mujeres evito el decomiso de los equipos de la radio comunitaria de Xochixtlahuaca Radio Ñomndaa, la palabra del agua. En Oaxaca, en 2006 el movimiento magisterial, apoyado por la Asamblea Popular de los Pueblos de Oaxaca (APPO) tuvo como estrategia tomar radiodifusoras para transmitir la realidad del conflicto, ante la desacreditación de los medios comerciales privados y estatales, la ofensiva de las mujeres fue crucial.

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La sociedad de la información: ¿Es también de los pueblos indígenas?

Mg. Gina Gogin Sias

“Desde principios de la década de los noventa, numerosas ONGS en el Perú han introducido la capacitación y/o formación de líderes como tarea prioritaria (...) El peso que va asumiendo esta particular apuesta por el desarrollo, llevó a que ... se considerara pertinente estudiar cómo las instituciones ... estaban encarando el reto de formar líderes y cómo encajaba dentro de los procesos de cambio que esta agencia de cooperación consideraba centrales: la democratización, la participación ciudadana y la descentralización. De particular importancia resultaba realizar un balance de los programas de formación de líderes para comparar estrategias, propuestas pedagógicas, logros y debilidades, y su efecto en los procesos de desarrollo y democratización. Otro propósito principal era examinar los vínculos entre las experiencias ejecutadas y elaborar propuestas para el futuro.”¹

El presente texto tiene como propósito principal, profundizar en el ámbito de lo que se conoce como capacitación y/o formación, en el campo de las ONGS; incorporando además la discusión y reflexión sobre el término “líderes”.

Sin embargo nuestra perspectiva no se centra en lo que nosotros llamamos el “paquete teórico-metodológico”, que el alumno (líder, dirigente, etc.), debe aprender; si no en tratar de pensar en qué entendemos por *aprendizaje*.

Más aún, quisiéramos también invitar al lector a pensar en preguntas como: ¿en qué consiste el aprendizaje?, qué es el conocimiento?, cómo se conoce y/o aprende?; y finalmente ¿quiénes son los actores que llevan a cabo las actividades de capacitación y formación, así como los participantes?, es decir los que componen el auditorio .

Pues este tipo de actividades, desde una perspectiva comunicacional, y el Enfoque de la Comunicación para el Desarrollo, constituyen el foco crucial de todo proyecto de desarrollo; es decir, la relación entre los llamados -promotores, técnicos, etc., y los beneficiarios- (sean o no líderes).

Como se afirma en un artículo del Grupo Chorlavi, “En términos generales, por *aprendizaje* se entiende un cambio constante en las estructuras cognitivas y comportamientos de los sujetos a partir de la interacción del entorno y donde el conocimiento no corresponde a una realidad externa a los sujetos, si no a un proceso de *construcción* llevado a cabo por ellos mismos”.²

Pero es el mundo de la vida cotidiana, el fundamento incuestionado para construir la concepción natural del mundo que los sujetos realizan, según la matriz cultural de procedencia. Por ello, quizás estas concepciones son tomadas muchas veces como “pre-científicas”; desconociendo que es lo pre-científico la realidad que parece evidente para los hombres y mujeres -comunes y corrientes-. Por ello es desde esta realidad, el mundo de la vida cotidiana; únicamente desde este escenario, puede constituirse un mundo circundante, común y comunicativo. Además sólo dentro de este ámbito podemos ser comprendidos por nuestros semejantes, y sólo en él podemos actuar junto con ellos.

¿Para qué sirve la comunicación para el desarrollo?

Muchas experiencias del campo del desarrollo y la promoción social han demostrado en los últimos años, que es posible encontrar formas efectivas de usar la disciplina de la comunicación social para contribuir a dinamizar y acelerar los ritmos del desarrollo. Esto sólo es posible cuando la comunicación se convierte en un elemento integral del proyecto y del proceso de desarrollo; y cuando se la ejecuta de forma estratégica y profesional.

A pesar que este tipo de constataciones han demostrado el importante rol que juega la comunicación en el desarrollo, creemos que aún es necesaria una intensa labor de difusión para contribuir a que la “comunicación para el desarrollo” sea aceptada en los distintos ámbitos comprometidos (el del propio desarrollo, el académico, el político, etc.), como el factor integral de los proyectos de desarrollo.

La “comunicación para el desarrollo” es una forma particular de hacer comunicación. Esta particularidad se debe a que este tipo de comunicación busca, propicia, que los individuos y las comunidades se apropien tanto de los mensajes, como de los medios (en términos de contenido y proceso). Por tanto, se trata de un proceso de comunicación que otorga poder (empodera) a la comunidad, que busca dar voz a los no escuchados, que es de “muchos-a-muchos”; y que pone el énfasis en contenidos y temáticas locales.

Por ello, quienes trabajamos en este ámbito debemos comprometernos a convencer a otros, del valor de este enfoque; ya sea publicando, promoviendo el debate, o socializando la información más actualizada; y por supuesto, continuar investigando y sistematizando experiencias de desarrollo con perspectiva comunicacional.

Una de las premisas en que basamos la importancia de incluir el enfoque de la “comunicación para el desarrollo” en los programas y proyectos de desarrollo, se refiere a las profundas transformaciones que ha sufrido la sociedad global. Por citar algunas: los desarrollos recientes en tecnología de la comunicación, los cambios en los sistemas políticos y en los medios; así como los nuevos problemas que trae el desarrollo sugieren la necesidad de asignarle a la comunicación un papel más amplio, y radicalmente diferente, dentro de los programas para el desarrollo.

El enfoque que nos brinda la “comunicación para el desarrollo”, sostiene que la comunicación es un factor determinante en la facilitación de la gente en el acceso a la información; por tanto en posibilitar también que sea la propia gente la que tome el control de sus propias vidas y establecer sus propias agendas en relación al desarrollo político, económico y social. En particular, puede

contribuir a amplificar las voces de los económica- y políticamente marginados, incorporándolas a los debates públicos y políticos del conjunto de la sociedad.

La información no se debe reducir a permitirle a la gente saber lo que debería hacer o pensar. La información es poder. Les permitiría a los individuos y comunidades construir su destino y hacer realidad sus aspiraciones. Esto sólo es posible si la información, se convierte en conocimiento. Para lo cual, hay que trabajar en la perspectiva de la “gestión de la información”.

Pues los principios de la comunicación para el desarrollo están enfocados hacia el uso de una comunicación transparente, directa, de “muchos hacia muchos”, porque deberá ser producida desde las propias comunidades afectadas. Ellos deberán ser los protagonistas de su propia historia.

El conocimiento tradicional en la visión indígena³

Los Pueblos Indígenas del Área Andina de Sudamérica, somos pueblos que desarrollamos nuestra civilización basados en el conocimiento del cosmos, la naturaleza, los pisos ecológicos y la variación del clima. Este conocimiento favoreció el desarrollo de la tecnología para la diversificación de los principales recursos alimenticios y medicinales.

Los andenes que eran laboratorios donde se experimentaban el desarrollo de la genética para conservar y diversificar las plantas alimenticias permitían, a su vez, elaborar y aplicar los mejores abonos naturales permitiendo que los conocimientos sobre los recursos genéticos y la tecnología pudieran alimentar adecuadamente a los pobladores de la civilización inca, que abarcaba casi toda Sudamérica.

Había un gran conocimiento del comportamiento del clima, de plagas y calidad de los suelos, la conservación y constante innovación en el conocimiento de los recursos genéticos significaban la seguridad de contar con alimentos sanos en calidad y cantidad para la población.

La visión indígena andina es la de criar la vida en forma heterogénea para el bienestar de todos los que integran el entorno: la naturaleza, los animales, los seres humanos, y no homogenizarla o

privatizarla sólo en beneficio individual y económico.

Si la biodiversidad vista desde la alimentación humana es la seguridad de la vida, es un bien colectivo que sirve a la sociedad comunal para garantizar la vida misma, entonces el conocimiento sobre ella es de dominio y uso colectivo.

Actualmente podemos encontrar ferias tradicionales en zonas muy alejadas de las urbes donde no aceptan las monedas, porque si quiere comprar un producto o bien en su comunidad no tiene el mismo valor de uso ni de cambio.

En las comunidades andinas actualmente el cambiar, regalar o vender una variedad de semilla de cualquier recurso genético es una acción libre, basada en la tradición.

Esto quizás se deba a que hay una clara diferencia en la producción, los conocimientos y recursos de cada zona o piso ecológico. Pues, hay una visión y práctica del disfrute colectivo de lo que la naturaleza provee, porque el fruto de la tierra, aunque sea con la mano y esfuerzo de las personas, para los indígenas es la bondad de la Madre Tierra.

¿Quién es un intelectual y quién no lo es, quiénes son los intelectuales verdaderos?: El intelectual pobre

Los intelectuales, así como los artistas, gozan de un capital simbólico que les da el reconocimiento, la consagración, y el respeto social. Aunque no formen parte de los sectores dominantes, sin embargo, dominan en tanto que poseen los privilegios que confiere la posesión de un capital cultural.

Pues el capital que poseen es de un tipo muy especial, porque es instrumento de apuesta, competencia y rivalidad en el seno mismo del campo. A esto se le añade que la naturaleza del reconocimiento no se mide en términos de dinero ni éxito comercial. Pero, hay que precisar que el campo in-



Comunicación indígena. Foto: CHIRIPAQ, Perú.

telectual, en el que incluimos aspectos como la instrucción, la educación institucional y la no institucional, es el campo en el que se expresa de forma explícita la diferenciación social.

Hay que reconocer también, que los nuevos núcleos generadores de ideas, de sentido que se producen en los sectores subalternos, nunca alcanzan ni en permanencia, ni en magnitud, a la fase monopólicamente administrada por los que detentan el poder simbólico, el de la producción y conocimiento.

Por eso, serán siempre una *minoría cognitiva*, frase que encontramos adecuada para designar a grupos sociales que también son productores de ideas, saberes y conocimiento. Es decir que pueden entrar a la categoría que presentamos, atrevidamente: *el intelectual pobre*. Pobre, pero de recursos cognitivos, de acceso a la información académica, y a los campos del saber oficial.

En el mundo actual ya es común la presencia de las nuevas tecnologías de información y comunicación, que prometen “desarrollar y modernizar” a la humanidad. Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina no están exentos de estas promesas, pese a la marginación y abandono en que viven.

La existencia de la red de internet no es un

fenómeno aislado, está relacionado con la digitalización y la multimediatización de las tecnologías de comunicación, con la globalización económica y la homogenización social. Estos fenómenos, mientras para unos se han constituido en una oportunidad, para otros son una amenaza.

“El actual proceso de transformación del escenario mundial tiene tres grandes vertientes: la económica, que define el acceso a las cosas; la política, que define las relaciones del poder; y la ideológico-cultural, ocupada con el significado y el sentido.”

Estas relaciones entre el poder y la tecnología digital contribuyen a sobrepasar las fronteras existentes entre países. Por tanto para la clase económicamente poderosa, la globalización se ha constituido en una gran oportunidad, porque la apertura de los mercados permite una mayor integración económica, más crecimiento, mayor acceso a mercados, mayor acumulación y concentración de riquezas.

Esta concentración económica creciente excluye a los más pobres y por supuesto afecta enormemente a los pueblos indígenas, porque profundiza la brecha existente entre los que más tienen y los que menos tienen, incrementa las necesidades económicas y sociales, genera desempleo y disminuye las posibilidades de los sectores excluidos de acceder al poder político, económico, cultural, tecnológico y científico.

Los movimientos sociales, los grupos indígenas, los sindicatos y otros grupos y organizaciones en todo el mundo están buscando la manera de contrarrestar este poder e implantar una verdadera democracia. Una de las formas más importantes es precisamente a través del uso de las nuevas tecnologías.

En América Latina estas experiencias no son nuevas, pues como veremos en la segunda parte de esta tesis, los medios de comunicación han sido utilizados por movimientos populares, obreros e indígenas desde los años 40 para apoyar sus demandas. El uso del internet para los mismos propósitos está un poco más limitado por la falta de acceso a las nuevas tecnologías, pero es muy probable que en poco tiempo la libertad de expresión, las pocas posibilidades de control y censura y la libre circulación de información a nivel mundial que ofrece el internet lo conviertan en un importante instrumento de lucha popular e indígena en América Latina.

Por el otro lado, para acceder a las nuevas tecnologías se requiere de una computadora y una línea telefónica, por lo menos. Pero los pueblos indígenas de América Latina en la mayoría de los casos no cuentan con los servicios básicos como la educación, el agua potable, la electrificación o las líneas telefónicas, lo que los mantiene aislados del resto de la sociedad tanto de sus propios países como internacionalmente. Frente a esta con-

statación surge la pregunta: Puede el Internet aportar en el desarrollo de los pueblos indígenas y contribuir a una verdadera democracia?

Las TIC son herramientas fundamentales para la implementación de la *Sociedad de la Información*. Éstas determinan la forma en que son comunicados el conocimiento y la información. Para los pueblos indígenas la pregunta esencial es si fuese posible utilizar esta tecnología no-indígena en sus

Foto: Jenpoj, Perú.



contextos culturales sin arriesgarse a perder su propia identidad cultural. La identificación de los desafíos y las potencialidades de las aplicaciones de las TIC con respecto al debilitamiento o el refuerzo de las culturas indígenas fue, en consecuencia, un tema predominante.

Dentro de este contexto se abordaron seis áreas de interés:

- Desafíos y potencialidades de la participación de los pueblos indígenas en la *Sociedad de la Información*;
- Conservación digital del conocimiento indígena y de las expresiones culturales indígenas;
- Consideraciones sobre las TIC y el enfoque indígena de la comunicación;
- Problemas relacionados con la diseminación de la información;
- Necesidad de capacitación de los pueblos indígenas en el uso de las aplicaciones de las TIC;
- Acceso a las TIC y a los efectos de la brecha digital en los pueblos indígenas.

En lo que respecta a la participación de los pueblos indígenas en la *Sociedad de la Información*, se enfatizó en general que ésta debería darse en sus propios términos. Muchos cuestionarios recalcaron que los pueblos indígenas deben ser capaces de determinar el uso y la aplicación de las TIC en sus comunidades, a menudo indicando también que esto debería hacerse de una forma culturalmente apropiada. De nuevo, se manifestó la preocupación por cuestiones relacionadas con la dimensión ética del conocimiento tradicional.

La diseminación a través de los medios de comunicación, incluyendo los medios vía Internet, de información racista, estereotipada, parcializada o equivocada sobre los pueblos indígenas y sobre sus situaciones, fue una preocupación predominante. Así, muchos de los cuestionarios subrayaron las potencialidades de las TIC para el combate contra el racismo. En principio, se vieron dos posibilidades para contrarrestar este tipo de información y para trabajar por un mejor entendimiento intercultural:

- El establecimiento de medios de comunicación de los propios pueblos indígenas;
- La producción de contenidos por los propios pueblos indígenas para la educación del mundo

no-indígena.

El Internet en especial fue considerado como una herramienta importante para la educación intercultural, para el combate del racismo al que se enfrentan los pueblos indígenas, así como para fomentar una mayor comprensión de los valores de las culturas indígenas. No obstante, se señaló también que estos problemas no pueden resolverse solamente por medio de las TIC, sino que se requeriría también una interacción intercultural directa.

Además, se mencionó que los pueblos indígenas necesitarían una capacitación técnica. Adicionalmente, éstos deberían someter a consideración cuestiones como la forma de presentar su información al mundo no-indígena. Finalmente, se recalcó que la digitalización de contenidos indígenas tiene que ser llevada a cabo por los propios pueblos indígenas a fin de evitar otra distorsión de su realidad.

La posibilidad de sensibilizar a una comunidad global acerca del racismo de que son objeto los pueblos indígenas se identificó como una segunda función del uso de las TIC y en especial del Internet. Las TIC ofrecerían la oportunidad de dar información detallada sobre los casos de racismo.

El establecimiento y el control de los medios de comunicación indígenas por parte de los propios pueblos indígenas fueron vistos en general como un medio esencial para ofrecer una alternativa a la información con prejuicios y para difundir contenidos desde una perspectiva indígena sobre asuntos relevantes para los pueblos indígenas. Además de contribuir a la educación del mundo no-indígena sobre el punto de vista indígena, los medios de comunicación indígenas fueron vistos también como una importante herramienta para proporcionar información a los pueblos indígenas.

Sin embargo, varios cuestionarios indicaron que no era fácil para los pueblos indígenas establecer y controlar sus propios medios de comunicación debido a los monopolios de los medios de comunicación no-indígenas y a las políticas gubernamentales. En este contexto, se mencionó también que el acceso de los medios de comunicación indígenas a frecuencias de radio y TV era difícil. Además,

se recalcó que muchos de los medios de comunicación indígenas son financiados por agencias del gobierno, lo que los hace vulnerables a las políticas gubernamentales sobre medios de comunicación de turno, con el consecuente efecto de esto sobre el apoyo financiero recibido y sobre su infraestructura.

Esto representaría un serio problema dada la dificultad de hacer los medios de comunicación indígenas económicamente viables; dificultad que a su vez está condicionada por la situación de minoría de los pueblos indígenas.

Finalmente, varias respuestas enfatizaron que es necesario establecer procedimientos por medio de los cuales los pueblos indígenas puedan controlar la diseminación del contenido sobre sus culturas y prevenir así la extensión de información racista, estereotipada o culturalmente ofensiva. ■

Notas

1. Libro "La persuasión del cambio". Díaz Albertini Javier, Heredia Nadine. Escuela para el Desarrollo. Lima-Perú.
2. Grupo Chorlavi: Proyectos de aprendizaje social. Marzo 2005.
3. Tomado de un artículo de Tarcila Rivera, Directora de CHIRAPAQ.

Mg. Gina Gogin es Licenciada en Ciencias de la Comunicación por la Universidad de Lima, Magíster en Antropología por la PUCP, con estudios de especialización en Investigación Cualitativa e investigación de mercados en Ecuador, España y Chile. Desde hace 34 años trabaja en docencia universitaria y consultoría de proyectos de desarrollo en las áreas de Comunicación para el Desarrollo, Investigación de campo, Gestión de proyectos y captación de fondos, Capacitación de relacionistas comunitarios, promotores y trabajadores de campo en general, y diseño de talleres de capacitación. Amplia experiencia en investigación de campo en zonas urbanas, rurales andinas y amazónicas como evaluadora de proyectos, investigadora cualitativa y participativa. Ha participado como consultora e investigadora independiente en proyectos de instituciones públicas y privadas, así como de organismos nacionales e internacionales como CIESPAL, el Área de Proyectos Sociales de la Embajada de Holanda, el Proyecto Salud y Nutrición Básica del MINSA, el Proyecto Pro-Joven del Ministerio de Trabajo, la ONPE, el Instituto de Investigación Nutricional, Arellano Consultores, Chirapaq (Centro de las Culturas Indígenas), Swisscontact, entre otras. Ha escrito numerosos artículos en revistas del Perú y del extranjero, así como también algunos libros; entre ellos algunos textos sobre Minería y Comunicación.

Advancing global dialogue on the rights of Indigenous People

Agnes Portalewska

The youngest mechanism for Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations is the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP). Established in 2007 by the Human Rights Council, the Expert Mechanism provides the Council with thematic advice in the form of studies and research on the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Chief Wilton Littlechild (Cree, from Alberta, Canada) served two terms as the North American representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and is currently serving a term as chairperson for EMRIP. In the following interview, he explains that the common link between the Expert Mechanism, the Permanent Forum, and the Special Rapporteur is the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

“The Permanent Forum specifically focuses on economic, social, and cultural life because it’s a subsidiary body to the UN Economic and Social Council. The Expert Mechanism is an advisory body directly to the Human Rights Council that focuses on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Although EMRIP can talk about rights, ours is a research-based mandate and we do research that’s directed to us from the Human Rights Council. The Special Rapporteur focuses on violations of rights.”

The Expert Mechanism, made up of five independent experts appointed by the Human Rights Council who serve on a voluntary basis, holds an annual five-day session in Geneva, Switzerland,



Chief Wilton Littlechild..(Photo: UN/Jean-Marc Ferré.)

in which representatives from States, Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Peoples' organizations, civil society, inter-governmental organizations, and academia take part. To date, EMRIP has completed studies on Indigenous Peoples' right to education; their right to participate in decision making and its follow-up study on extractive industries; the role of languages and culture in the promotion and protection of the rights and identity of Indigenous Peoples; and a report on its questionnaire for States on best practices for attaining the goals of the Declaration.

Most recently, in September 2013, EMRIP concluded a study on access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples. The over-representation of Indigenous people in incarceration is at epidemic proportions in many regions of the world. In Australia, Aboriginal people make up only 2.3% of the total population but over 28% of the prison population.

In Canada, the Indigenous incarceration rate is 10 times higher than for non-Indigenous adults, with Indigenous people making up 4% of the Canadian population yet 23.2% of federal inmate population.

Littlechild says that more research is needed, especially in the realm of traditional justice systems:

“How do traditional justice systems not only improve access to justice but promote truth and reconciliation in that community? We've asked to do a more in-depth look at the situation with women, youth, and Indigenous people with disabilities. What kind of challenges do they have with regard to access and justice? Indigenous participation is critical throughout that whole process. That was a very important recommendation reflected in our report that needs to be considered by our States who might be looking at establishing a truth commission.”

This will be the focus of a follow-up study this year. The recommendations from the study call on States to take a “rights-based and culturally appropriate approach to public safety and access to justice guided by Indigenous Peoples' laws and justice systems.” The report also calls for the training of law enforcement and judicial officials on Indigenous Peoples' rights, and the use of transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions, which allow for administration of justice through prosecutions, truth-seeking, reparations programs, and institutional reforms. When it comes to access to justice, increased respect for Indigenous Peoples' own justice systems as a form of self-determination in both recognizing and assigning value to these systems is needed.

Lack of awareness hampers implementation

In 2011, the Human Rights Council asked EMRIP to conduct a questionnaire seeking the views of States on best practices to attain the goals of the Declaration and in 2012 this was extended to also seek the views of Indigenous Peoples. Littlechild says that the responses, while encouraging, are too few.

“The answers to the questions are very high caliber in the sense that they’re very helpful, but what’s disappointing is the numbers. We have very few States and Indigenous Peoples responding to that question, and we feel it’s important to be able to share good practices, what is working for Indigenous Peoples in their implementation that other Indigenous Peoples can benefit from or learn from. Of course the example that’s always held up is that Bolivia passed a law that makes the Declaration a national law; below that there are other States doing good things in terms of how they are implementing the Declaration or using the Declaration in their policies and programs.”

Littlechild attributes lower participation by Indigenous Peoples to the lack of awareness about EMRIP. Another challenge is visas; delegates have trouble getting to meetings. Increasingly the UN is creating spaces for virtual participation to increase numbers:

“We are now making use of video submissions. The very first meeting held from Geneva linking to a meeting in Ottawa in Canada was an Indigenous Peoples’ meeting. They blazed the trail—after that the UN started using that more and more. But now, of course, we need to do it within our own Mechanism.” The other major challenge to participation is administrative. “Only NGO’s that are accredited by the UN can now participate in UN meetings. Traditional governments, Indigenous governments, Indigenous parliaments and councils are not organized like NGO’s. They can’t participate unless they work through an NGO. The UN should create new rules to allow for Indigenous Peoples to participate in their own rights. It’s a contradiction for an Indigenous government wanting to participate as a government to call itself a non-governmental organization.”

When asked about the impact of EMRIP and its

studies on the ground, Littlechild says:

“In Canada when there’s a national chiefs assembly, every single resolution that comes to the floor for debate and decision by the chiefs is always linked with one or more of the articles of the Declaration. They’re beginning to use and express the Declaration in their decision making, and how the study has landed on a particular matter may be reflected in their decisions. For example, right now there’s a national discussion in Canada happening on a First Nations Education Act. Not only is there general human rights law, the Declaration and the Expert Mechanism’s studies that clarify that right are there as well. At the regional level, the Organization of American States has used the Declaration in their decisions. So what’s happening now is the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Provincial Human Rights Commissions are becoming increasingly engaged in using the Declaration in their decision-making. Also we’re seeing Indigenous Peoples, in their statements of claims or statements of defense, are starting to use the Declaration more and more.”

The progress is encouraging, but still, Littlechild says, “We have a long way to go informing our local community about the rights that they have on an international level.”

One of the biggest obstacles for the Expert Mechanism is resources:

“Everything we do is voluntary. We need increased resources in terms of research, so we’ve tried to engage universities to become friends of the Mechanism. For example, in London, Grinnell University hosted a study on cultures and languages. And last year Columbia University hosted the expert group meeting on access to justice and truth commissions. Hopefully, that will continue and we’ll have a whole level of expertise in academia that steps forward to help.”

As for the Mechanism's next study:

"We will look at natural disasters that are happening in Indigenous territories; what's available from the general human rights and Indigenous rights perspective that will inform that study will help us identify what needs to happen for Indigenous communities to have the preparedness for natural disasters, and of course on a more direct level, climate change. As well, there will be a follow-up study on access to justice, as noted above. That's currently the proposal that is also in the resolution, along with those that I mentioned that will be continued. We have a very busy year." ■

Source: *Cultural Survival Quarterly* Issue: 37-4 The Future We Want: Indigenous Women of the World Unite (December 2013)

<http://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/advancing-global-dialogue-un-expert-mechanism-rights>

Changing media landscapes in Latin America

Maria Teresa Aveggio

*In a recent interview, Denis de Moraes, Associate Professor at the Cultural and Media Studies Department of the Universidad Federal Fluminense of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, described Latin America as a continent which today represents "a laboratory of hope for the democratization of information and communication." He added that this is so, "despite the fact that in the region there is a landscape still dominated by media conglomerates, almost always linked to family dynasties."*¹

A decade ago the description would have been impossible. Historically Latin America has been a continent where the media have been conceptualized strictly as private businesses, characterized by all powerful media monopolies and conglomerates.

It is a continent where a few families controlled press, radio and TV channels as well as advertising and the entertainment industry. Latin America was not a place where concepts such as democratization of the media and communication rights found a receptive audience among people in general and, in particular, among media houses and media owners. Freedom of expression was more often than not fully equated with private ownership of the media.

And yet in the last few years concepts such as communication rights and the need to democratize the media have become much more widespread and accepted not only by communication activists and groups working on alternative and popular communications, but also by a myriad of civil society groups and organizations.

Freedom of expression is increasingly being

understood as “a universal right, a right of everybody and not only of the large corporations of the media... It is a society’s right to be well informed, it is a question of justice and citizenship, linked directly to the principle of media diversity. That is why media monopolies run counter to freedom of expression and the full exercise of citizenship.”²

How did we get here?

In a way it is not surprising that the region has moved in the direction of a new way of understanding and conceptualizing the media and social communications. Despite the prevailing model which understood communications only from the commercial point of view, Latin America has a long tradition of alternative and popular communication.

Non-commercial and educational radio goes back to the early 1940s with the pioneer “miners’ radios” of Bolivia, which broadcasting in Quechua and soon came to be called the “people’s radio” when they went from being a work place radio to being in the schools, churches and even homes.³

During the 1990s and early into the new millennium, low cost radio technology facilitated community radio’s growth and it quickly spread throughout the continent. It allowed many groups to develop radio skills and operate and maintain low-potency radios serving well defined groups of people and communities: Indigenous, women, people with disabilities, community associations, afro descendants in Latin America, etc.

The media literacy movement pioneered in Lat-

in America was another dimension of the popular communication concept which was to contribute to widespread understanding of the important role played by the media. Despite the digital divide that still exists, the arrival of new information and communication technologies accelerated the appropriation of the communications sphere as a way of building more inclusive and democratic societies in the region.

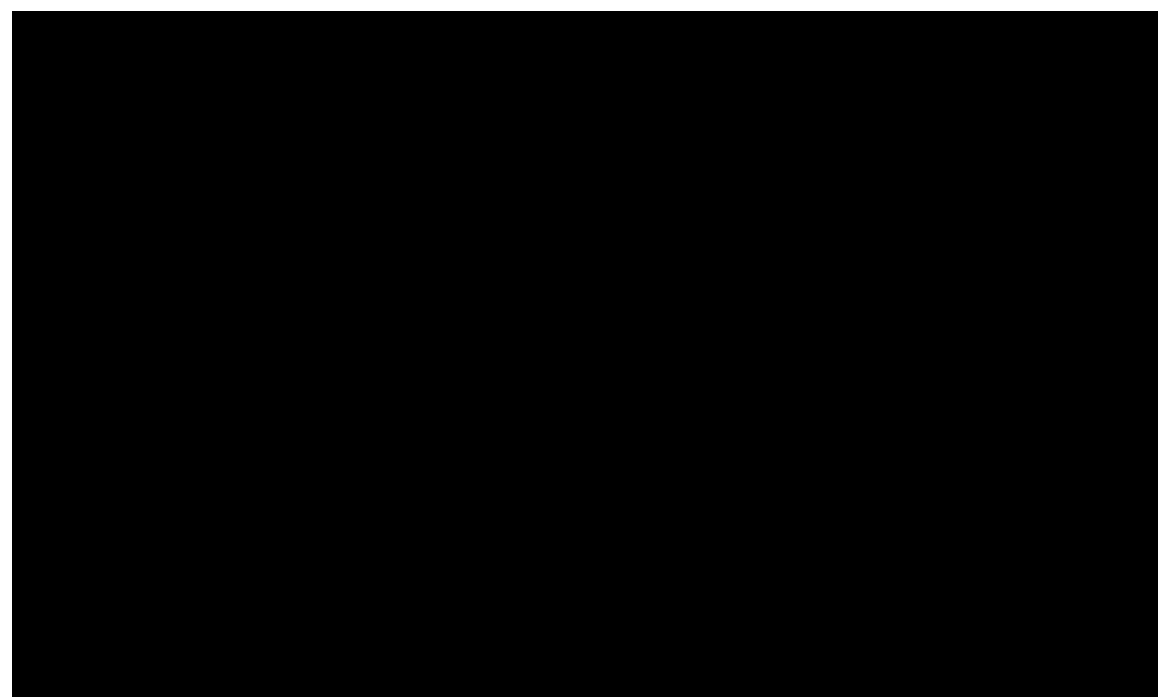
The decades-long process of empowerment of Latin American peoples through communication was to prove a strong foundation. It allowed civil societies and social movements to begin to articulate their demands and entitlements in communications beyond the acquisition of radio licenses or the publication of community newspapers and magazines, or the setting up of Internet cafes and centres, or even alternative and popular communications.

Demands now centre on society’s recognition of communication as a social right which requires reform of telecommunication laws as well as, in some cases, enshrining communication rights in legislation and even in national constitutions. The return to democratic rule in the region and the election of several progressive governments enabled a somewhat more constructive dialogue between media owners, politicians and society in general. At the same time, resistance to change has also become entrenched, as witnessed in the Argentinean case.

While countries have approached this need for reform in different ways and many are still discerning the way forward, two countries stand out as emblematic of the struggle for communication rights and the reform of legislation regulating communications.

Argentina and Bolivia

In Argentina an all encompassing social movement, known as the Coalition for Democratic Broadcasting launched and maintained a struggle that lasted several years to reform the country’s old broadcasting regulations approved when Argentina



was living under military rule.⁴ Formed by more than 300 organizations and social entities, the Coalition started work in 2004 by drafting a document which included a list of points that a new broadcasting law should contain in order to be democratic, representative and inclusive.

The document, known as the “21 Points for a Broadcasting Law for Democracy” (a reference to the 21 years since the country’s return to democratic rule), was endorsed and enriched by contributions from a wide range of social organizations. Public consultations and regional for a – organized jointly with universities, trade unions, broadcasting associations and the public in general – all contributed to developing the 21 points further. Upwards of 45 encounters and activities to discuss the proposed law took place throughout the country.⁵

The starting point for the drafting of the 21 points was that broadcasting was an activity of “public interest” and as such a new communication model was needed, one that was plural and diverse, and one which recognized not only the existence of commercial media enterprises but also, as equally valid, the existence of community and public media. Furthermore the Coalition insisted in the need to establish anti-monopoly measures and the need for the state to guarantee the rights of all citizens in matters of communication.

The long road which the new Audiovisual Media Law 26.522 had to travel before Argentina’s Supreme Court of Justice declared its constitutionality has been well documented elsewhere e.g. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/99631072/Argentina-Mapping-Digital-Media>) As well as becoming a blueprint for other countries in the region, Law 26.522 has also highlighted the importance of wide and active engagement of cross-sections of the population when contesting people’s communication rights.

In Bolivia, communication rights received unexpected recognition when the country’s new Constitution recognized the right to communication and information. In addition the Constitution stated that the mass media cannot set up, either directly or indirectly, monopolies or oligopolies.⁶

While the law was finally ratified in 2009, Bolivian communicators indicate that necessary regulations for the law have not as yet been put in place. Despite this, the actual inclusion of communication as a right and the recognition that monopolies in the media sector should not be allowed, are big steps towards a new way of conceiving the media in the region.

Ecuador, Mexico and Uruguay

These three countries have all in recent years approved new telecommunications laws which in some way or other reflect the democratizing trend which is being followed throughout Latin America with respect to communications.

In May 2013 the Uruguayan parliament received the proposed Law of Audiovisual Communication Service, which states that “It is the duty of the State to contribute to freedom of information, social inclusion and non-discrimination, promotion of cultural diversity, education and entertainment.”⁷ One of the most important and key changes introduced by this Law is the definition of mass communication as a public service that must be provided responsibly and with quality content.

After four years, in June 2013 Ecuador’s National Assembly finally approved the Organic Communication Law mandated by the 2008 Constitution. The new Law has highlighted the definition of mass communication as a public service, prohibits prior censorship and emphasizes ultimate media liability for content published.

While criticism has been levelled at some aspects of the law, it contains important innovations and incorporates key proposals put forward by advocates of the democratization of communication. It establishes the redistribution of radio frequencies, allocating 33% each to private and public media and 34 % to community media while at the same time eliminating the monopolies of audiovisual media. It establishes an obligation for private advertisers to allocate at least 10% of their annual advertising budget to media with local or regional coverage so that they may share in advertising income.

Reaction to the Communication Law has been widespread. It has now reached the Constitu-

tional Court of Ecuador where three groups have asked for the law be declared unconstitutional. The Court has convened a public audience and has allowed parties to put arguments for and against the law. It brings to mind the Argentinean case where the Clarín Group took its case to the Supreme Court in order to try and declare Law 26.522 unconstitutional.

In contrast with Argentina social organizations in Ecuador did not generally mobilize proactively in favour of the law. However, the proposals formulated by Ecuador's Communication Forum with contributions from communication networks and social and indigenous organizations have gained legitimacy in large sectors of Uruguayan society.

The same can be said of Mexico where a group of committed communicators, academics, communication activists and civil society groups has drafted "secondary legislation" to President Peña Nieto's reform of the country's telecommunications legislation. AMEDI (Mexican Association for the Right to Information) recognizes that the constitutional reform is an important achievement by a group of civil society organizations which for years has advocated normative reform. It also recognizes that the reform falls short of expectations and AMEDI is now advocating in favour of a secondary law aimed at bridging the gaps.

Ordinary Latin Americans are now becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that a handful of mega-corporations dominate the region's mass communications, including the entertainment industry. In a recent survey, 74% of Peruvians affirmed that media concentration affects freedom of the press. The survey was organized as a result of Peru's oldest and most economically and politically powerful media conglomerate Grupo Com-



ercio taking over yet another newspaper. With this latest acquisition El Comercio now controls 78% of the newspapers in Peru.

Concentration of ownership has also become an issue in Mexico where Grupo Televisa, the country's largest network of open signal television, controls 70% of the TV market. In mid-March 2014 the Federal Institute of Telecommunications (ITF) identified the group as an economic agent in the broadcasting sector and for the first time ever, it imposed a number of regulatory measures on the group. While this is not the place to discuss the details of the measures, ITF's action has been welcomed not only in Mexico but throughout the region.

In Brazil, home to another powerful media conglomerate, O Globo, and where long-running discussions about the democratization of the media have been frequently been stopped by accusations levelled by media house owners, there has been a call to follow the Mexican example and to impose restrictions on media concentration.

In Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and other Latin American countries the struggle for communication rights and the democratization of the media has also taken hold. In El Salvador civil society groups are working on a proposed regula-

tion for a Community Radio Law. In Honduras there is a stated intention to reform the existing Telecommunications Law and in Nicaragua there is a proposal to regulate public media.

Trade unions and Indigenous people join the fray

Interest in communication reform in Latin America is not the sole domain of communication activists and groups working in communication. Others such as trade unions and Indigenous people have also become part of the struggle for democratic communications. In February 2014 the largest regional workers' organization in the Americas, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (CSA-TUCA), organized a Conference on the Democratization of Communication. It took place in Montevideo, Uruguay, supported by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation-Uruguay, and brought together trade unionists from 12 Latin American countries. Participants called for laws and regulations to control media monopolies and to guarantee more plurality and diversity in the media, including broadcasting.⁸

Indigenous people throughout Latin America have taken steps to advocate for their own communication rights as well as for the democratization of the media in society. The II Continental Summit of Indigenous Communication called for legislative reforms and norms as well as for public policies which guarantee the sustainability, ownership and control of Indigenous media.

Brazil's Landless People's Movement (MST) has decided to invest in the training of popular communicators in a joint programme with the Federal University of Ceara. They too are calling for regulations to guarantee inclusion, plurality and the democratization of the media. The call is echoed by over 40 communicators meeting under the banner of "Democratizing communication for people's integration" in the Latin American Forum of Communication for Integration.

The communicators stated, "We must move towards the adoption and implementation of norms that establish communication as a right and guarantee its democratization within a framework of real equality of conditions and opportunities for

public-state, private-commercial and non-profit-community sectors."⁹

Legislatory reform in order to create more inclusive, pluralistic and democratic media is not, the culmination of the process but rather merely a starting point. However, real democratization of the media can only be achieved if it is taken up by the citizens themselves – in particular, by marginalized and grassroots people exercising their right to be heard. In that sense, there is no doubt that Latin America is indeed "a laboratory of hope for the democratization of information and communication." ■

Notes

1. <http://www.telam.com.ar/notas/201401/49878-america-latina-un-laboratorio-de-esperanza-frente-al-poder-de-los-medios.html> (own translation).
2. <http://www.cartacapital.com.br/politica/um-direito-universal> Frank de la Rue, interview given to Leandro Fortes, Carta Especial 15/12/2012 (own translation)
3. Luis Ramiro Beltrán, *La Comunicación para el desarrollo en Latinoamérica: un recuento de medio siglo*, Buenos Aires, 2005, p.6.
4. Ley No 22.285, approved in 1980, during the dictatorship of General Jorge Rafael Videla.
5. Coalición por una Radiodifusión Democrática 2010. *Defender la democracia es defender sus leyes*, ALAI, 03/05/2010 <http://alainet.org/active/37808>
6. Capítulo 7, Artículos 106 y 107. *Nueva Constitución Política del Estado*. Versión oficial aprobada por la Asamblea Constituyente 2007 y compatibilizada en el Honorable Congreso Nacional – 2008, Capítulo 7.
7. Uruguay, *Proyecto de Ley de SCA* <http://www.telam.com.ar/notas/201305/18357-llega-al-parlamento-uruguayo-el-proyecto-de-ley-de-servicios-de-comunicacion-audiovisual.html>
8. *Declaración de Montevideo*, <http://www.movimientos.org/es/content/declaraci%C3%B3n-de-montevideo-apunta-estrategias-para-democratizar-la-comunicaci%C3%B3n> April 4, 2014
9. Declaration of the Latin American Forum on Communication for Integration: Democratized communication to Further Integration, ALC, <http://alcnoticias.net/interior.php?codigo=24989&lsnh=688>

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The Right to Communication

FRAMING A PUBLIC POLICY FOR COMMUNICATION

1

The right to communication

Yes to consolidating the Right to Communication as a fundamental human right (based on Articles 19, 22 and 27 of the UDHR*) in order to bring about an effective democracy. For this to happen, this principle must be established in the political constitution of Chile.

2

Media

Yes to legislation that promotes regulating media in ways that take into account technological convergence and the Right to Communication.

3

Encouraging plurality

Yes to encouraging a media plurality: different types and ownership, management, size and editorial direction, thus ensuring content that expresses social, cultural, gender, and geographical diversity which includes first peoples.

4

State advertising

Yes to establishing a transparent and non-discriminatory framework for State advertising that includes traditional communication media and digital platforms of different types, sizes and points of view.

5

Regional, local and community media

Yes to encouraging existing regional, local and community media and to stimulating new initiatives that promote a plurality of information and regional diversity. For example, through technical evaluation, competitive funds or permanent tax benefits.

6

Internet

Yes to the right to Internet access as a universal public service, independent of a community's socio-economic situation and geographical location. Public access to the Internet and the development of digital competence must be guaranteed by the State through a public-private alliance.

7

Institutionality

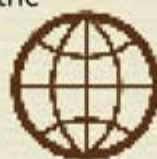
Yes to the creation of a Ministry for Public Communication Policy that is independent from Government spokespersons.

8

Digital and media education

Yes to the development of a public policy that encourages critical, creative and participatory training for citizens in communication media and digital platforms.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights*





9

Educational and cultural television

Yes to the creation, implementation and ongoing sustainability of educational and cultural television that leads to improvement in the quality of education and to it becoming a forum for the cultural expressions of citizens.

10

TVN: public television

Yes to quality public television dedicated to the common good as an expression of the regional and cultural diversity of the country, which does not depend exclusively on market forces and which is partly financed by the State.



11

Encouraging convergence in the audiovisual industry

Yes to audiovisual policies that encourage content suited to digital convergence, such as social uses of interactive digital TV, and content and applications that work across media and on many platforms.

12

Communicative citizenship

Yes to encouraging public/private/civil society/university alliances that, by through media watchdog initiatives or other means, produce information and knowledge for citizens and thereby promote the exercise of the Right to Communication.



Who are we?

Grupo Políticas Públicas de Comunicación (GPPC) (Public Communication Policies Group) is a space for thinking about, researching and formulating proposals around mediated communication and digital platforms, that seeks to contribute to reconfiguring and shaping a pluralistic, diverse and participatory digital-media system in Chile. The GPPC is made up of professionals and academics interested in promoting informed discussion about inclusive Public Communication Policies through meetings, seminars and publications that contribute to an open debate around ideas and innovations that lead to dynamic change.

www.politicasdecomunicacion.cl

**FRIEDRICH
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Por el Derecho a la Comunicación:

DIMENSIONES DE UNA POLÍTICA PÚBLICA DE COMUNICACIÓN

1

Derecho a la comunicación

Sí, a la consolidación del Derecho a la Comunicación como un derecho humano fundamental (basado en los artículos 19, 22 y 27 de la Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos) para el desarrollo de una democracia efectiva. Para ello es necesario que este principio esté consagrado en la Constitución Política del Estado chileno.

2

Sistema de Medios

Sí, a una legislación que promueva una regulación del sistema de medios de comunicación en el marco de la convergencia tecnológica y el Derecho a la Comunicación.

3

Fomento del pluralismo

Sí, al fomento del pluralismo en medios de comunicación de distinto tipo y propiedad, gestión, tamaño y orientación editorial, de modo tal que se generen contenidos que expresen la diversidad social, cultural, de género, geográfica y de los pueblos originarios.

4

Publicidad estatal

Sí, al establecimiento de un acuerdo marco para que la publicidad estatal se destine de manera transparente y no discriminatoria a medios de comunicación tradicionales y plataformas digitales de los distintos tipos, tamaños y orientaciones.

5

Medios regionales, locales y comunitarios

Sí, al fomento de medios regionales, locales y comunitarios existentes, y al estímulo de nuevas iniciativas que promuevan el pluralismo informativo y la diversidad territorial. Por ejemplo, mediante asesoría técnica, fondos concursables o beneficios tributarios permanentes.

6

Internet

Sí, al derecho a Internet como servicio público universal, independiente de la situación socioeconómica y la ubicación geográfica. El acceso a la conectividad pública y el desarrollo de competencias digitales debe estar garantizado por el Estado, en una alianza público-privada que logre este resultado.

7

Institucionalidad

Sí, a la separación entre la vocería del Gobierno y un Ministerio encargado de las Políticas Públicas de Comunicación.

8

Educación medial y digital

Sí, al desarrollo de una política pública que fomente la formación crítica, creativa y participativa de la ciudadanía con respecto a los medios de comunicación y a las plataformas digitales.





9

Televisión educativa y cultural

Sí, a la creación, implementación y sostenibilidad de una televisión educativa y cultural en el contexto de la Televisión Digital Terrestre, que aporte a mejorar la calidad de la educación y a transformarse en un espacio de encuentro de las expresiones culturales de la ciudadanía.

10

TVN: televisión pública

Sí, a una televisión pública de calidad, comprometida con el bien común, expresión de la diversidad cultural y territorial del país, que no dependa exclusivamente de las leyes del mercado y sea financiada parcialmente por el Estado.



11

Fomento a una industria audiovisual convergente

Sí, a políticas audiovisuales que promuevan la creación de contenidos para la convergencia digital, tales como usos sociales de la TV digital interactiva, contenidos transmediales y aplicaciones para multiplataformas.

12

Ciudadanía comunicativa

Sí, al fomento de alianzas público/privado/organizaciones ciudadanas/universidades que, mediante Observatorios u otras modalidades, generen información y conocimiento para la ciudadanía y así promover el ejercicio del Derecho a la Comunicación.



¿Quiénes somos?

El Grupo de Políticas Públicas de Comunicación (GPPC) constituye un espacio de reflexión, investigación y formulación de propuestas en comunicación mediada y plataformas digitales, que busca contribuir a la reconfiguración y formación de un sistema mediático-digital pluralista, diverso y participativo.

El GPPC está constituido por profesionales y académicos interesados por promover un debate informado sobre Políticas Públicas de Comunicación inclusivas, a través de encuentros, seminarios y publicaciones que aporten a un debate abierto sobre ideas e innovaciones de un cambio esencialmente dinámico.

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**FRIEDRICH
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In search of enlightenment: Church or cinema?

Kirsten Dietrich

The cinema and the Church have a lot in common – they are both “storytelling organisations” as Julia Helmke (photo right), president of the Protestant film organisation, Interfilm, puts it. In an interview, she tells us what makes a good film and when it can be considered religious.

Kirsten Dietrich: As of Thursday, all eyes are on Berlin as the International Festival is underway. And the Church is also on location! An ecumenical jury is following the festival and won't just be watching films exclusively on the topic of faith. Though it looks like they'll have plenty to do considering the variety the Berlinale has to offer: from growing up in a strictly Catholic family – the film “Kreuzweg” – up to and including a film that accompanies a Buddhist monk for one hour as he walks through Marseille. So the Church is interested in film. But why?

Julia Helmke: Because they are both storytelling organisations. The Church is a storytelling organisation that has told the biblical stories from the very beginning, preserved them and passed them on, updated them and retold them. Cinema is also a storytelling organisation that tells tales of people, also accompanied by images. That makes it interesting for the Church, though it focuses more on the word.

The first cinemas had biblical names

Dietrich: Because both organisations have created stories together. The rituals are also similar: To go to church, to go to the cinema; we sit neatly in a row, look ahead where something transcendental might happen!



Helmke: In that case, I think cinema borrowed a bit from the Church or drew inspiration from it. The first cinema complexes that existed 100 years ago also had biblical names like “Gloria”, “Excelsior” and were made to resemble cathedrals – there is a clear structural analogy. At church, you feel like you're at the cinema and vice-versa.

Dietrich: Can a film go so far as to take the function of a sermon?

Helmke: Yes, a sermon on its own wouldn't be exciting enough. A film that is said to preach a message invites a negative connotation. I would say, a full church service, yes, definitely. Hopefully, you leave feeling differently from when you arrived. You know what to expect and yet, hopefully, there is always an element of surprise!

Dietrich: That sounds like every trip to the cinema, every film you watch is automatically like that. Is the film entirely of secondary importance compared to what is shown?

Many feature films recount a “hero’s journey”

Helmke: I think the ritual itself is important and is still important today even if more people stay home to watch films. But a visit to the cinema in company or the fact that you aren’t always watching something alone, but with others and can share that experience afterwards, that’s quite important. But of course, like a good sermon or church service, it is also important that the film itself is good.

Dietrich: Are there criteria that determine whether a film is religious or draw attention to religious aspects in an appealing manner?

Helmke: There are actually very few. For a long time, reference has been made to film analysis, film dramaturgy involving the journey of the hero, that is, a person abandons his or her familiar surroundings and embarks on a journey and changes as a result of what she or he encounters along the way. In the end, the hero returns transformed if he or she hasn’t sacrificed him or herself for his community or for others. The story of salvation, of how Christ journeyed into the world, gave his life for the world, transforming people and the world as a result, can also be seen in this light.

But that is an archaic legend, a myth so to speak. As many feature films follow this pattern, you can also see religious aspects in every film. Of course, the content also conveys intriguing themes and motives. In that case, cinema, as a seismograph of our society, but also in expressing religious and cultural sentiment, is perpetually exploring the questions facing us in our lives. These are also questions of faith and religion.

Dietrich: I would like to take a moment to talk more about the hero’s journey! So this means that films like large-scale epic fantasies such as “Lord of the Rings” or “Harry Potter” where there is a lot of action have an inherently religious structure?

A pastor in a film doesn’t make it religious

Helmke: Yes, for sure. In the 1980s and 90s, there was even talk of the Hollywood religion. Films like “Terminator” with Schwarzenegger or “Ma-

trix” very clearly replicated this pattern 1-1, replete with religious motives, just think of Names like “Trinity”, “Neo” (the new saviour)...

Dietrich: How important is it to this concept if films also refer to genuinely religious themes in the stories they tell? Or if a pastor does appear, is he more an accessory or does this make the films particularly religious?

Helmke: The mere appearance of a pastor in a film is not a sign of a religious film. It is, of course, always a question of the themes dealt with in the film. What does the person on this journey encounter, what does he or she carry with him, what drives him or her? Today, I think that there are a lot of very interesting examples. Right now, I have the German film “Schwestern” by Anne Wild in mind. It deals with a sister who decides to join a monastery, for the rest of her life. Her entire family try to support her on the one hand, but on the other, they are incapable of coping with such a profound decision because all of them more or less avoid making decisions in their own lives or are still in the process of coming to a decision. I find that fascinating because it is a fundamental religious motif, the decision to turn to or to turn back to God, confessing ... and that this is done in a German film in a very light and yet touching way; I find that to be a very intriguing motif in a film that is itself interesting.

Dietrich: And also in a film that is very much inspired by the rituals and music that the viewer experiences. This means that the film very much draws on what religion has to offer!

Helmke: Yes, and I think that today it is almost a movement. Because being Christian or being religious for that matter is no longer a matter of course in our society. And filmmakers appear to be observing this phenomenon of someone wanting to be a Christian from the sidelines.

Seeing how Christianity is practised interests many filmmakers. So it is more of an outside view, which is very much appreciative and special. Be-

ing a Christian is no longer the norm and is an emerging theme for that very reason.

Dietrich: Can religion, can religious people learn something from film that they can't learn in other places where religion is conveyed?

Films are windows on another world

Helmke: It would be too simple if I recognise something in the film and say, aha, this person also believes or that's what I would do so I'm right, if the film was purely of an affirmative nature. That would be too simple and even cheesy. But continuing to be challenged and realising that people are confronted with decisions and how they deal with them; not just relying on myself but another force and eternal energy called God, is important.

For me, films have always been windows on another world. I immerse myself in something that I didn't know existed. Something that might be foreign to me and might enrich me and even lead to transformation.

I think this is particularly relevant when values and norms are concerned. But today as well, with respect to different lifestyles, films show me something that I might not be familiar with, but that can enrich me and can also question my own faith and in the end move me to adopt a broader, less restricted perspective. Of course, there's also exploring other religions where cinema very literally becomes a window on the world.

Dietrich: How aware are everyday viewers of this dimension? Well, do filmmakers not instil their films with something or suggest something to their audiences, which is not necessarily a genuine part of the film experience itself?

Helmke: The hero's journey, as I already mentioned, is also something that takes place beneath the surface. But I do think that a film does stir up more in the viewer than one might think. People talk about the film in their head and a good film is one that triggers something in me that I may not be aware of at the time.

Cinema is also an emotional machine: it reaches me first of all through feelings and I am sure that every viewer is also reached in this way and is also capable of change even though he or she may not be entirely aware of it at first. But that's why the conversation after the film or sitting down afterwards at a bar is really important so that you can talk and find out what the other person saw, thought was exciting or interesting to gain more insight. But, sometimes, films can also be relaxing, which is just fine and beneficial.

Dietrich: How can the Church connect with this broad film experience and be taken seriously, without merely using films to attract people they wouldn't otherwise be able to reach?

The Church takes a special look at films

Helmke: Protestant film work has attempted to do this in many ways for over 60 years. On the one hand, this is achieved with film discussions hosted after the film, which in some cases are led by experts. I think that's a great way of inviting people to go to the cinema as a church with a follow-up discussion that is moderated in some cases and where other aspects are discovered in the process. After all, hopefully for a long time to come there will continue to be magazines like *epd Film*, or in the case of the Catholic Church *Filmdienst*, where sophisticated critiques of film are offered.

Then there's a film company like EIKON that produces films covering special subject matter. And there are INTERFILM juries that also give prizes to films at the major festivals like the Berlinale, Cannes, and Venice but also small festivals, short-film festivals like the one in Oberhausen. I think this work is extremely effective and thorough.

Dietrich: To an increasing degree, churches or religious communities are becoming filmmakers themselves. Then there's the aspect of more and more religious persons producing religious films portraying, for example, moving stories of discovering faith. What does the church film commissioner, the Church film pro say about films like that?

Helmke: I actually don't end up watching them. That is, I very, very rarely encounter films of that kind. I very much support films being produced by members of the congregation as I know a number of them, young people in particular, who are trying their hand behind the camera. I think that's very exciting, but it is also an entirely different category and quality than films that come from professional producers. Films by religious people, as you mentioned, primarily tend to be produced in the USA as opposed to here in Germany by religious individuals but also film companies. They are intended for a very small, Christian audience.

I don't think that that sort of thing is shown in most Lutheran or Catholic parish halls or churches, but on the other hand, there are an increasing number of church services where a short film, feature films and documentaries are shown.

Dietrich: So what is the role of film in terms of the Church's exploration of art and culture? I know that ten years ago the Lutheran Church took a long look at how it dealt with culture and published a memorandum on the topic; the first draft omitted film altogether!

Helmke: It's a place for interaction. That's where Lutheran film work can still prod the official Church a bit, because in reality it was the one that also worked the longest and most intensively with culture. I think that was the mindset: on the one hand cinema and the Church's film work, which exists in any case, but on the other hand, cinema continues to stand for the arts and culture. I think many things have changed in recent years. Lutheran film work fortunately still exists, but just as in many other areas, and this needs to be said, it is really struggling to stay alive. ⁿ

This interview took place between Kirsten Dietrich (journalist, correspondent Berlinale for Deutschland Radio Kultur) and Dr Julia Helmke (Commissioner for Arts and Culture of the Hannoversche Landeskirche and President of the Protestant film organisation, Interfilm) at the time of the Berlin International Film Festival in 2014.

On the screen...

Warsaw (2013) Poland

At the 29th International Warsaw Film Festival (11-20 October 2013) the Award of the Ecumenical Jury of SIGNIS and INTERFILM went to the film *Ida* directed by Paweł Pawlikowski (Poland 2013).

Citation: "*Ida* is a strong and complex drama of a young girl brought up at a convent who undertakes a strange journey to find her true identity in the hard times of post-war communist Poland. This subtle and elliptic film, shot in an ambitious black and white cinematographic style, raises questions of family ties, forgiveness and mature faith."

Members of the 2013 Jury: Lukas Jirsa (Czech Republic); Jarosław Szoda (Poland); Jean-Michel Zucker (France).

Molodist Kiev (2013) Ukraine

At the 43rd International Film Festival Molodist Kiev (19-27 October 2013) the Ecumenical Jury of SIGNIS and INTERFILM awarded a Prize and two Commendations in the competition for full-length feature films and a prize in the competition for first professional short films.

In the competition for full-length feature films, the Ecumenical Jury awarded its Prize to *The Weight of Elephants* directed by Daniel Joseph Borgman (New Zealand/Denmark/Sweden, 2013). The film portrays the feeling of loneliness of an 11-year-old boy in a sensitive way. The acting of the characters depicts their vulnerable life credibly. Disappointment and betrayal are central experiences in the boy's life. Slowly the film manages to give the audience the feeling that goodness and hope can survive.



Still from *The Weight of Elephants* directed by Daniel Joseph Borgman

The Ecumenical Jury also awarded two Commendations in the competition for full-length fiction films. To *La jaula de oro* (The Golden Cage) directed by Diego Quemada-Diez, (Mexico/Spain, 2013) for a film about two boys and a girl heading for the USA from Guatemala in search of a better life. What starts as a competition between the two boys ends up in a relationship for life and death. In an unsentimental way, the film shows the strength of humanity.

To *Les garçons et Guillaume, à table!* (Me, Myself and Mum) directed by Guillaume Gallienne (France/Belgium, 2013). The main character, an entertainer gives a different and intelligent approach to the issue of self-awareness. The film gives us a humoristic and serious view of an existential fight for sexual identity.

Saarbruecken (2014) Germany

The 30th INTERFILM Jury at the 35th Film Festival Max Ophuels Prize (20-26 January 2014) awarded its prize To *Seme – Schlage nicht, um zu gewinnen. Gewinne, dann schlage* (Don't hit to win. Win, then hit) directed by Il Kang (Germany, 2013).

Citation: "A young German Korean accepts responsibility for himself and for his life. Only when he learns to appreciate Kendo in a new way he and his father succeed in approaching one another. Sensitively the film shows how they come closer and gain each other's respect. It convinces

by a careful composition of its aesthetic means. To leave the Korean passages without subtitles adds to the strong points of the film: The viewers experience otherness but are not excluded from understanding.

The Members of the Jury were: Hermann Kocher, Switzerland; Irina Grassmann, Germany; Wolf-Dieter Scheid, Germany.

Berlin (Germany) 2014

The Ecumenical Jury at the 64th Berlinale (6-16 February 2014) awarded its main prize in the Competition to the film *Stations of the Cross* directed by Dietrich Brüggemann, Germany/France 2014. The citation read as follows:

"14 year-old Maria grows up in a fundamental Catholic community and tries to understand what it means to give one's life to God. The 14 chapters modelled on the Stations of the Cross are coherently filmed in a tableau-style with hardly any camera-movements or music. They portray the destructive aspects of any fundamentalism but also lead us to reflect about the meaning of compassionate faith."

The Ecumenical Jury, appointed by INTERFILM and SIGNIS with the support of WACC, gives awards in the Competition, Forum and Panorama sections. The Forum and the Panorama Prize carry prize money of €2500 each, donated by the German Bishops' Conference, and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD).



Still from *Stations of the Cross* directed by Dietrich Brüggemann.

The Jury awarded a Commendation in the Competition to the film *'71* directed by Yann Demange, Great Britain 2014. "An ordinary British soldier lost in the apocalyptic inferno of Belfast is desperately trying to find his way back to his unit. Will he find any Good Samaritans among Protestant Loyalists or Catholic Nationalists to help him in this desperate situation? Though it is set in a specific historical context, this story has a universal relevance as it denounces the senselessness of violence."

The Jury awarded its Prize in the Panorama to the film *Calvary* directed by John Michael McDonagh, Great Britain/Ireland 2014. "An Irish-Catholic priest learns during a confession that he has only one more week to live before he will be killed. Will his moral integrity lead him to bear the sins of his church? Various serious topics are often dealt with in a dark humorous way. Brendan Gleeson's memorable performance will become a classic in the canon of movie-priests."

The Jury awarded a Commendation in the Panorama to the film *Triptyque* directed by Robert Lepage and Pedro Pires, Canada 2013. "Do changes in our brains alter our souls? The film explores this question with three different narratives about what and how we hear and understand. This highly cinematographic meditation offers thought-provoking observations about music, religion, medical science and our auditory senses."

The Jury awarded its Prize in the Forum to the film *Sto Spito / At Home* directed by Athanasios Karanikolas, Greece/Germany 2014. "Nadja, a Georgian migrant woman, works without any benefits as a housekeeper for an upper class Greek family. For years she has lived as a part of the family – but suddenly she is diagnosed with a serious illness just as the father of the family runs into some financial difficulties. The film highlights the inherent dignity of a woman at the margins of society."

The members of the Jury 2014 were: Karel De-burchgrave (Belgium), Gabriella Lettini (USA), Thomas Schüpbach (Switzerland), Christoph Strack (Germany), Antonio Urrata (Italy) and Dirk von Jutrczenka (Jury President, Germany).

Fribourg (2014) Switzerland

The Ecumenical Jury at the 28th Fribourg International Film Festival awarded its Prize to the film *Han Gong-ju*, directed by Lee Sujin (South Korea, 2013).

This award consisting of CHF 5'000 is conferred jointly by two institutions of the churches working in development cooperation, *Fastenopfer* (Catholic) and *Bread for All* (Protestant), to the director whose film best reflects generally ethic-



Still from Han Gong-ju, directed by Lee Sujin.

al and spiritual questions, especially questions of the meaning of life in the situation of men and women in Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, and stands for human dignity and human rights, solidarity and lasting development.

Han Gong-ju, a young high-school student, is a victim of gang rape. With great dramatic power this film denounces a sexist society which blames its victims and isolates them socially. It is possible to find within oneself the resources necessary to overcome such a tragedy, and the character of Han Gong-ju is swimming against the current of a certain kind of fatalism which would deny that life can triumph over death.

Comment by Thierry Jobin, artistic director of the Fribourg film festival: "Last December at the Marrakech International Film Festival, Jury President Martin Scorsese presented the young filmmaker Lee Sujin with the Golden Star – the dream of all filmmakers. With this first film, premiered at the Busan International Film Festival where it won two awards and winner of the Tiger Award at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, a brand new signature joins the ranks of the already rich South Korean film industry."

The Ecumenical Jury also gave a Special Commendation to the film *Constructors / Stroiteli*, directed by Adilkhan Yerzhanov (Kazakhstan 2013). Two brothers and a sister, living in a highly precarious situation, try to assert their legal rights to build a house and establish a home. Through the originality of its approach and the creativity displayed this film deals with a deeply human relationship.

Comment by Delphine Jeanneret, curator of the Fribourg film festival: "This short 67-minute film by the gifted Adilkhan Yerzhanov was screened in competition at the Festivals in Busan (South Korea), Wiesbaden (goEast Film Festival) and Edinburgh, and is the poster child for the vitality of new Kazakh cinema. The low-key black and white tragi-comedy is an absurd treatment of the theme of the struggle of individuals to retain a semblance of their dignity against a pedantic bureaucracy."

The Ecumenical Jury present at the 28th Fribourg International Film Festival consisted of Joël Baumann, Rodilhan (France) – President Alan Foale, Leeds (United Kingdom) Dorothee Thévenaz Gyax, Vevey (Switzerland) Il Kang, Hamburg (Germany). ■