Introduction

Presentación

Television and its New Expressions

La televisión y sus nuevas expresiones

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Television is perhaps the most symbolic invention of the 20th century. Television's various dimensions transform it into a complex reality open to analysis from different angles: knowledge, technology, society, culture, politics, semiotics and narratives among others. As a mass media from the industrial era, television takes on many of its particularities, and is projected onto this century in which –it is said– we are experiencing structural change. In many countries around the world it is the basic means of communication through which individuals are entertained, informed and learn, and in this sense it is transversal to the internal workings of social systems, maintaining a focus on consumption in both developed and developing countries (euphemistically speaking). It is accessible to those with material resources that exceed their immediate needs and to those who barely survive. The majority of homes have one, regardless of the religion of the viewers, be they from single-parent, two-parent or same-sex homes, or whether they live in the country or the city. Television genres have broken away from film genres, and there is a proliferation of new genres which, as they become more successful, are globalized and consumed across the world's North-South divide.

It is true that the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICT) has captured the attention of specialists, researchers and non-specialists alike, and their growing importance has impelled the development of analytical proposals that seek to understand their expansion and social uses. ICT have been developed and implemented much more quickly than other communication technologies: their rapid innovation (they say that what Internet develops in three months takes the industry one year), new business models and wide variety of uses have supposedly eclipsed the industrial media of the last century, to a greater or lesser extent. Yet television continues to be the main mass media, although consumption is tending to decrease in some countries, especially among children and adolescents, precisely the social space that ICT have colonized.

This century is witnessing changes in the communicational system, due in part to industrial and cultural convergence, appropriations and various social uses which are generating an info-communicative system at individual and industrial levels that seeps into the daily media consumption of the individual and organizations, constructing a new symbolic-technological scenario in which each medium and ICT is finding its locus in individuals and social collectives.

This is also a time for creativity in media-influenced cultures. Languages are created and recreated at continental communication level due to the development of new ICT devices, but also because of the observation of individual and group consumption, appropriation and information distribution

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practices. Interactivity no longer occurs just in the ICT world; television and other industrial media forms have had to leave their sets and offices and go down to the street to observe and listen to the new habits that are being generated. In the info-communicative system, there is an evident shift away from a focus on the self to a focus on the «other» in order to capture the interest and loyalty of individuals in the new economy of attention. This has led to the current burgeoning use of ethnography, although we cannot forget that the precursors in this area were Brazilians who have used it to analyze their soap operas for decades.

This context of change in the sector has led to a renewal of communications policies; since the initial proposals of Luis Ramiro Beltran there has been a lot of movement in this area but progress has perhaps been less concrete than expected. The subject has been debated since the end of the last century, often in technical terms but equally as often in socio-political terms, based on the digitalization of television media. What started off as a technical issue now considers policy designs that span various positions, some closer to the interests of industry and others to individuals. Obviously the issue is more complex and has several relevant dimensions; and it is no less true that the characteristics that society assigns to television are what is ultimately being debated. While some have tried to dominate the debate with technical jargon, individuals and groups have begun to mobilize around this issue. A recent, relevant example is legislation for the sector in Argentina. If we all consume television, then why can't we, as citizens, decide its future as well?

As indicated, television is a central media form that is transforming as society changes. Although there is no consensus on the direction of the mutations we are experiencing at the macro- and micro-social level, there is at least agreement on the terms of the debate. On the one hand, decisions are increasingly placed on the shoulders of individuals, whereas just a few generations ago it was the groups and communities they belonged to that were the main actors in the ideas and expectations of a better future, and it was said: «you have to change society in order to be happier». Today we probably need to see society as overshadowed by institutionalized individualism, in the sense that Beck proposes. On the other hand, new issues are now at the center of public concern: the environment, cultural diversity and gender rights, among others. It is not that the issues of the last century are no longer valid –such as inequality and social injustice– it is that new realities mean different readings at the individual and social group level. It is within

this context that we situate the articles of this monographic report in the latest edition of «Comunicar».

Let us review the authors' contributions.

The relationship established by teenagers with television is, and has been, a central topic of academic research and public debate. Quiroz (Universidad de Lima, Peru), using data obtained qualitatively and quantitatively in different urban areas of Peru, offers us an up-to-date perspective that reveals the wide-ranging use of television by this age group, especially by subjects in the provinces. For these adolescents, television is an integral part of their daily media consumption, and they do not establish distinctions between «new» and «old» media, since digital platforms and television play an equal part in their daily lives, based on their individual needs. Parents and teenagers value this audiovisual media type since it allows them to connect to different realities beyond their local communities, as a result broadening their subjective and cultural horizons, and also allowing them to learn (for example, on cable television) beyond school and teachers.

Television obviously has an industrial dimension that is necessary to understand in order to shed light on its evolution and future. Mastrini and Becerra (Universidad de Buenos Aires and Universidad Nacional de Quilmes in Argentina) offer valuable, interesting data on the extent of concentration and structure in television in Latin America's Southern Cone nations (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, as well as Brazil). The trend points to a concentration in media structure that is complex and multi-dimensional. Factors that have generated this situation include industrial convergence resulting from digitalization and, especially, the emergence of Internet. Current media exploitation requires sustaining fixed costs that imply enormous capital outlay, and television is also a highly globalized media form that exceeds the limits of nation-states' authority, which merits changes to legislation. This is especially relevant as the growing media concentration of the last five years starts to affect cultural diversity and pluralism in those countries. The panorama presented by Mastrini and Becerra offers ample material for the public debate that has already begun in Argentina, and which is being generated in Chile and Uruguay.

The article by Phillipi and Avendaño (Universidad Diego Portales, Chile) deals with new challenges in this field from the Communication and Education perspective, based on transformations within the info-communicative system, as a particular result of digitalization and cultural convergence. The natura-lization of the communications media, especially by teenagers and children, has generated conditions for allowing the subjects to develop their expressive habits. However, we must consider the subjective dimension of the construction of narratives and, at the same time, the growing participation in the debate on public issues, so as to create a stronger connection between the motivations of the subjects and the public space. The authors propose the development of «communicational empowerment» which, along with integrating and promoting the formation of communicative competences, can help narrate reality and life experiences from a personal and collective point of view. That is, participating in conversations and narrations that lead to social inclusion through the use of digital platforms based on daily life.

The vast majority of television news programs that talk about individuals in various parts of the world present news of natural disasters which destroy lives and natural resources and, in many cases, change the landscape. The attention and emotion invested in this type of information is discussed in the paper by Souza and Martinez, based on the earthquake that hit Chile in February 2010. In addition to a screen analysis that shows how Chilean television approached the issue, they include the perceptions and opinions of subjects on the television coverage of the earthquake. The guiding concept of the article is «emotional hyper-activation», which constitutes a form of television representation that uses the logic of spectacle, although situated along the informative line. Television has a double functionality: on the one hand «self-centered», giving more importance to capturing and keeping audience, so characteristic of a highly competitive television system and on the other, «socially-centered», guiding the actions of subjects in an environment that is not only destroyed physically but also confusing in terms of the appropriate actions needed to remain calm after the catastrophe. This is a highly valuable, original and innovative paper on a topic that is not much studied, because it approaches the issue from a double dimension: media representation and reception of disasters.

Lull and Neiva (University of San Jose in California and University of Alabama, USA) develop a central conceptual issue of communications and television phenomena. From a Darwinian perspective, they analyze the relationships between biological conditions and culture/communications and, on a

broader dimension, socio-cultural situations. The properties of culture –in which symbolic communicational processes are developed– allow us to go beyond cultural determinism, even overcoming perspectives generated by analytical frameworks of cultural imperialism and social contagion that have reappeared within the context of globalization. The communicative processes framed within the cultural realm, even in environments of dictatorship or media concentration, allow subjects to generate new proposals of meaning, especially using digital technology. Cultural innovation forms part of the conditions of existence and, in this sense, communications can contribute to the creation of conditions for a more inclusive and harmonious social life.

Just as James Lull has made significant contributions to research in television reception processes, in Latin America Valerio Fuenzalida (Pontificia Universidad Catolica, Chile) has contributed to the understanding of the relationship between television and education from the audience perspective. In his article, he presents an overview of the region with regard to the importance of subjects' education through television, which breaks free from the restricted view of education promoted by traditional schooling. His proposal –supported by empirical research during the 1980s– facilitates understanding of the different television genres from an educational point of view, from news to soap operas, including docu-reality shows, among others. In Latin America, television has helped people and groups to learn how to face life's challenges, given the low educational effectiveness of other social agencies. It is not about learning rational school topics dating back to the Age of the Enlightenment. In the home, subjects have developed educational expectations about television, as they connect proposals of television meaning to their existential realities, to their subjective private spaces. The article explores the spaces with most educational meaning, based on the appropriation of television by subjects.

Rincon (Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia) deals with a fundamental issue in future television: new contents. The changes taking place in the info-communication system have a central component in culture, in the changing direction of meaning; just as some contents disappear, others open up new spaces for narrative experimentation and the search for new aesthetics according to new subjects and changing environments. Digitalization also offers the possibility of working creatively on multiple screens, with space for television stories based on the identities of groups that so far have had no television presence.

An issue that is always worthy of debate and research is the meaning of public television in the near future. These types of media inherent to the paradigm of public service, especially in the last century, have never before faced so many challenges and opportunities as presented by digitalization. Medina and Ojer (Universidad de Navarra and Universidad de San Jorge, Zaragoza, Spain) analyze the case of the BBC as an enriching public television experience in an age in which the market tends to close spaces not only to the public, but also to the third sector of communications. In this scenario of communications policy design and review, we must analyze these innovations in the public sphere in order to achieve a progress based on the possibilities offered by digital platforms.

Emotions are a fundamental aspect in the television experiences that we have and will have in the future. Fernandez, Revilla and Dominguez (Universidad Complutense and Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, Spain) look at these from a social, discursive perspective, specifically based on focus group findings. This paper distinguishes between different dimensions in the complex emotional relationship between subjects and proposals of television meaning. This article can generate new practices in the area of individual education and training on television since, through adequate educational-communicative strategies, individuals can understand their own emotional registers in their interaction with television.

Finally Noguero, Aguilera and Borges (Universidad de Malaga, Spain) provide results and analysis of mobile TV from the perspective of teenagers. In this article, the multiple screens through which the television experience is lived will find information and a useful model for approaching this emerging Internet-generated reality. Here we question the (in)ability of the television industry to create contents according to the new forms of cultural consumption of today, especially those based on the characteristics of young people.