Dominant thought, education and mass media

Pensamiento dominante, educación y medios de comunicación

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Abstract

Communicating is more than just transmitting information. The development of technology and the Internet have revolutionized the act of communicating in the world and new communication spaces have been created. The media are usually at the service of a certain power, which can be public or private. However, in this article the emphasis is placed on the interests that certain powers of the private sphere have and the use they make of the media to defend and promote those interests. However, this power can also give rise to forms of resistance that serve to subvert the established order. The media serve as speakers of unique thinking and sometimes do not allow the creation and recreation of new perspectives from which to consider reality. But the media can also become a tool for building critical citizenship in interpreting facts. This critical citizenship can lay the foundations for what can subsequently be considered media citizenship. Education can provide a beautiful setting for the rigorous formation of that media citizenship that faces the new times of communication from a critical and conscious perspective. The new times require a citizenship that knows how to live up to the demands of the media.

Keywords

Mass media, private interests, self-critical attitude, dominant thinking, criticizes education, citizenship media.

Resumen

Comunicar es algo más que transmitir información. El desarrollo de la tecnología e Internet han revolucionado el acto de comunicar en el mundo y se han creado nuevos espacios de comunicación. Los medios de comunicación suelen estar al servicio de un determinado poder, que puede ser público o privado. Sin embargo en este artículo se pone el acento en los intereses que tienen determinados poderes del ámbito privado y el uso que hacen de los medios de comunicación para defender y promover dichos intereses. No obstante, ese poder también puede dar lugar a formas de resistencias que sirvan para subvertir el orden establecido. Los medios de comunicación sirven como altavoces del pensamiento único y en ocasiones no permiten la creación y recreación de nuevas perspectivas desde las que considerar la realidad. Pero los medios de comunicación también pueden convertirse en una herramienta para construir una ciudadanía crítica en lo referente a la interpretación de los hechos. Esa ciudadanía crítica puede sentar las bases de lo que posteriormente puede ser considerada la ciudadanía mediática. La educación puede brindar un hermoso escenario para la formación rigurosa de esa ciudadanía mediática que se enfrente a los nuevos tiempos de la comunicación desde una perspectiva crítica y consciente. Los nuevos tiempos requieren de una ciudadanía que sepa estar a la altura de las exigencias mediáticas.

Palabras clave

Medios de comunicación, intereses privados, actitud autocrítica, pensamiento dominante, educación critica, ciudadanía mediática.

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Introduction

The media play a role in society and can sometimes represent a double-edged sword. The information offered is based on interests that are not ethical. However, the media can also be spaces for the emergence of resistance to unethical powers or behavior. It is important that citizens be careful with the information they receive and that they process it from a critical attitude. If citizenship is not critical, it runs the risk of reproducing a "singular brand" of thought and not creating and recreating new ideas that can face situations that lack justice. Thus, we are faced with an important challenge that consists in the critical formation of a citizenship oriented towards the media aspect and that knows how to face reality in a conscious and courageous way.

The objective of this article is to reflect on the phenomenon facing today's society, in order to propose a perspective that finds its origin in a new educational proposal. This new educational proposal will have to go towards the formation of a media *ethos* of citizenship to know how to face the new times.

Educational programs should be oriented from an early age to combat singular thinking and build a mindset open to new perspectives on the world. Lipman, with his program of Philosophy for Children, already pointed out years ago towards the opening of sights from a questioning attitude. We must build a media citizenry and take advantage of

the media to think about new scenarios where justice, and not injustice, is the basic pattern of construction of our reality. And it is that Philosophy is closely linked to Education, because educational *praxis* can be perfectly observed from the philosophical perspective as Rubén Bravo (2008) states.

The research methodology used consists of the bibliographic analysis of the proposals of several specialist authors in this field, as well as a personal reading of the reality that I face, always from a hermeneutical point of view.

Throughout the article we will proceed to the presentation of old and new means of communication from the terrain of emerging borders. The relationship between power and communication must also be addressed in order to know the new scenario in which the citizenship is immersed. In addition, and as a proposal, I propose that educational systems build a new educational praxis oriented towards the formation of a critical and courageous citizenship for the new media age, in short, a media citizenship, as will be discussed at the end of this article.

Old and new media

To communicate is to share meanings through the exchange of information. The communication process is defined by the technology of communication, the characteristics of the senders and receivers of the information, their cultural reference codes, their communication protocols and the scope of the process. Meaning can only be understood in the context of social relationships in which information and communication are processed (Castells, 2009, p. 87).

Following Castells (2009) a distinction will be made between interpersonal communication and social communication. The interpersonal is produced between two people and is interactive. In the second case, in which you can find mass communication, which is aimed at the whole society, can be interactive but is usually unidirectional. Within this are the press, radio and television.

The Internet and new digital technologies and mobile telephony have developed interactive networks that communicate the local with the global, often created by the users of the networks themselves. In 2008, there were 1.4 billion Internet users and 3.4 billion people with mobile telephony[1]. The ability to send messages from many to many, in real time or at a specific time. From a functional and social point of view, the new

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media associated with the Internet cannot be compared with the traditional mass media, since the Internet is a tool for work, study, entertainment, information, etc.

The so-called blogosphere, YouTube, the so-called social networks, such as Facebook or twitter, social and political debate forums, etc. are Web spaces with contents shared by users, they are the product of this digital revolution that has generated the information society and the so-called Net generation. This irruption has brought about important changes at many levels: the definition of issuers and receivers in which issuers and recipients are the media and their presumed audience.

From a social perspective, networks fulfill four characteristics (Marí Sáez, 2005, p. 81) that impact the way communication is carried out and the creation of new social tissues and new forms of solidarity, the characteristics of which would be:

- Flexibility: since it is a network that is built on the fly, open to the needs of the environment.
- Horizontality: since it is a decentralized structure in which the participants in the network constitute autonomous nodes with decision-making capacity, horizontality is at the service of participation.
- Interconnection: They are able to connect different areas that have their own characteristics and particularities.
- Proximity: in addition to its functional nature for greater efficiency of communication, the transmission of data and information, it is a collective process of creation of new social fabrics and new solidarities, since it highlights aspects such as co-operation, and the participation.

The Net revolution has had impacts on the advancement of the global culture, spreading forms of behavior and lifestyles, generating a greater tension between individualism and communalism, since the networks by being open and communicating the local with the global, are a another space of multiculturalism.

Likewise, it is important to warn about the risks that this revolution entails. All technologies can be used to oppress and liberate, since this type of communication can be highly functional to the needs of the capital of the globalized economy, whose objective is to expand its power to these new virtual spaces, putting communication at the service of economic interests. At the same time they have accelerated the emergence of a new political subject. Social actors and citizens from all over the world

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are using this new capacity of communication networks to advance their projects, defend their interests and reaffirm their values. We will now see how that capacity is translated in the form of power.

The media and power

Information and media are now at the service of companies. It is too difficult to differentiate between a journalist and a communicator from the interests of a business group, although we already know that one informs and another praises and hides. Journalists, so to speak, become "business journalists" or "public relations journalists". As with politics, there is a loss of public confidence, which seriously harms the credibility of the media. It is producing what Ignacio Ramonet (1995) has termed as "political-media- endogamy".

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This can be seen at the moment when certain media, which are owned by certain business groups, censor certain information because it can be harmful to them when it comes to making a profit. A fact that perfectly exemplifies this is that in the USA where one in five members of corporate media directories is part of these multinationals, which are among the largest 1000 in the country[2]. That said, it is not surprising that some media adopt measures that are in line with the policies of certain groups.

You can attend the so-called "democratic censorship". That it does not occur as in totalitarian regimes, but rather because of an over-information that generates information asphyxia and conceals information. This is another indicator of democratic degradation and how to exercise power in society.

The vocation of journalism has been reviled, the traditional journalistic work closely linked with the birth and conception of the defense of freedom, democracy and pluralism, has succumbed to the triple alliance, media-economic power-political power. This, together with a sensationalist treatment of the information, makes the journalist a puppet, "now they are clearly more reactive and less meditative and are more attentive to events but less sensitive to the context" (Ramonet, 2011, p. 54). It is a kind of journalism aimed at preventing public opinion from understanding anything, and at masking reality, which is the opposite of the spirit of the trade, as Durandin points out below.

> The intention to deceive establishes the difference that distinguishes lying from involuntary error. But this feature particularly points to misinformation. Indeed, while lies between people are often somewhat im-

provised, those that are designated by the term disinformation have an organized character, they are something produced by specialized services (Durandin, 1995, p. 45) [...] in which we call misinformation, there are no charitable lies, there is no "pious lie". Misinformation is done in the interest of the misinformed and often aims to harm the interlocutor (or a third party, through the intermediary of the interlocutor) (p.45).

The power of the media resides now in the hands of a handful of economic and financial groups, as well as in the main multinational companies of the planet. These economic powers are the new masters of world society, as the director of the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique* comments:

Globalization, therefore, is also the globalization of the mass media, the communication of information and the Network. The masters of the Network are the same from one end of the planet to the other: Time Warner, Walt Disney Company, News Corporatión and Bertelsmann, dominating the entertainment industries: Hewlett Packard, Samsung, Dell and Hitachi, first electronic groups for the general public; AT & T, NTT, Verizon and Deutsche Telekom, dominating the telecommunications market; Alcatel, Nokia, Cisco Systems and Motorola, leading manufacturers of telecommunications equipment; Hewlett Packard, Dell, Acer and Lenovo, reigning in the computer equipment market; Microsoft, Oracle Corporatión, Symantec and SAP AG, first computer software manufacturers; Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, main social networks; Google, Yahoo! And Bing, at the head of the search engines; and other multinationals such as Apple, Sony, LG, Philips, eBay (owner of PayPal), Amazon, etc. (Ramonet, 2011, pp. 60-61).

To analyze the relationship between power and means of communication, it is necessary to establish what is meant by power in this work. For this purpose, Castells' definition in Communication and power will be used: "Power is the relational capacity to impose the will of one actor over another's on the basis of the structural capacity of domination integrated into the institutions of society" (Castells, 2009, p. 74).

Power is therefore relational and domination is institutional, power requires coercion (violence) and the construction of meanings (discourse). Power relations have to be filled with meanings, such as general interest, to obtain acceptance of the dominated and avoid recourse to violence, these meanings are what constitute the legitimacy of power, in the words of Castells:

[...] but coercion alone cannot strengthen domination. The ability to achieve consent or at least to instill fear and resignation with respect to the existing order is fundamental to impose the rules that govern the

institutions and organizations of society. And in all societies, these rules represent the relations of power incorporated in institutions as a result of the processes of struggle and compromise between competing social actors... (Castells, 2009, p. 74).

Thus, the result and reflection of power relations are the institutions, and political and social organizations, which constitute what he calls the crystallization of power.

This idea corresponds to what Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1976), called discourse and violence as mechanisms through which power operates to obtain acceptance of the dominated, in prisons, hospitals, schools is the disciplinary discourse the one that legitimizes the power. But power relations are non-social relations, Castells continues, since the violence exerted to maintain it nullifies the relational capacity of the dominated.

If power is the ability to impose one's will, then the focus has to be on finding the way to model minds, to change consciousness, if communication in a broad sense, is the natural vehicle of human beings to relate, power is created and reproduced in that interaction, as discussed below:

If the primordial battle for the definition of the norms of society and the application of these norms to daily life revolves around the molding of the mind, communication is fundamental in this struggle, since it is through communication as the human mind interacts with its social and natural environment (Castells, 2009, p. 24).

However, the power cannot be abstracted from the relations of the subjects of power, although this relationship is asymmetric, as Castells (2009) points out, power is not absolute, this is where the resistance of the subjugate can be, when this resistance becomes stronger than the degree of acceptance it is when relationships are transformed. In this sense, based on the fact that all social structures are mediated by power, so that the participation of an actor takes place, it is necessary that said actor intervenes in these power relations and this is always done against other social actors, that is, a competitive confrontation occurs. In this sense, communities are contradictory social structures arising from conflict and negotiation, as evidenced below:

The process of institutionalization of (dominant) rules and norms, and the challenge to these rules and regulations by actors who do not feel well represented in the functioning of the system, occur simultaneously, in an incessant movement of reproduction of society and production of social change (Castells, 2009, p. 24).

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To challenge existing power relations, alternative discourses that can overcome the disciplinary discursive capacity of the state by reducing the levels of acceptance of the dominated (modeling of the mind) are needed, as a necessary step to neutralize their use of violence (use of force and Foucault's disciplinary discourse) and this discourse takes place today in the media, as indicated here:

> I argue that the process of formation and exercise of power relations is radically transformed in the new organizational and technological context derived from the rise of global digital communication networks and is the fundamental symbol processing system of our time (Castells, 2009, p. 24).

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For the researcher from La Mancha, the media are not the Fourth Estate, they are much more important: they are the space where power is created. The media today constitute the space in which power relations between rival political and social actors are decided (Castells, 2009, p. 263). The media are the essential resource to control and direct the population.

The media has become the pillar of politics, which is why Castells has called politics, as a media politics. Whoever does not have a media presence does not exist. Therefore, in the political sphere, the control of the media translates into the control of power (Castells, 2009, p. 262). In this sense, the subjects that hold power can be perfectly identified, if they are identified and reveal who are the owners of the media in the world and what are their connections with politics.

The role of the media in social change. The network society, something more than a virtual space of communication.

Castells suggests that if we know how and who builds power through the media, one can find a way to subvert it, modeling the minds, changing the consciousness where power is created, in the media. It was already pointed out that coercion alone does not strengthen domination, if social organizations, institutions and discourses are the crystallization of said power, power is reproduced through them and although it is true that the dominant system is reproduced through its institutions, it is no less true that agents in contradiction can advance in their positions within social networks.

In this space of resistance is the germ of counterpower that can make change possible. The resistance to power and its capacity for transformation could also be explained from the point of view of the theories

of Touraine's production and Giddens' structuring, since the agents in resistance would produce new institutions, organizations and discourses. In this way, their concepts of structure and agency would explain the social dynamics of change, overcoming structuralism and subjectivist reductionism (Castells, 2009, pp. 34-39).

Political change involves the integration of new values, rules and norms in institutions and throughout society. Changes are social processes, and as such take their time; we must be attentive to the signals and codes of communication that occur in social relationships.

The changes do not come alone, are driven by conscious social actors, immersed fully in the emerging reality that permeates new values in the face of the inadequacy of the dominant system.

One of the agents of change today, are the social movements, which represent the new political subject. Castells (2009) has defined the political action or processes of change promoted by social movements as insurgent policies, which for him are the mediators between cultural change, or social awareness and political change.

Following the sociologist, if as has been said, the media in the digitalized network society are the creators of power, the current social movements entered into the public space through the media to dispute the dominant power. "We are building an autonomous counter-power interconnecting the movements and creating our own alternatives without waiting for the government and helping others reach them too. Pau, activist of Infoespai. Barcelona" (Juris, 2008, p. 282).

In the 21st century, society is being built around digital networks, in what the sociologist from La Mancha has called the network society.

The creation of information and communication networks such as Indymedia or the digital edition of open source has been decisive in facilitating the access of society in the creation and control of media in an autonomous way. So that the actors of the counter-power have accessed the most important means by which the minds are modeled, to create new values and promote social and political projects.

They are the alternative means of communication, self-managed and created by social movements to dispute the hegemony (in Gramscian terms) of economic power, those who are confronting the power where it is created, de-constructing the dominant discourse while building "another discourse" on moral and justice grounds. These media together with mobile telephony, have allowed social movements to call mobilizations and spontaneous protests like the one that followed the 11M attacks, as well as coordinate joint actions around the world, create content

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and messages of their own in what Castells (2009) called online electronic civil disobedience. In this context of dispute over media power, social movements have emerged that create self-managed networks such as the open source movement, the German project Oekonux (from oekonomy and Linux), a distribution list of people committed to post-capitalist research based on the principles of free software. The new horizontal networks are called mass self-communication, "which decisively increases the autonomy of communicating subjects with respect to communication companies as users become senders and receivers of messages" (Castell, 2009, pp. 23-24).

The problem of multiculturalism in the network society is also addressed by Castells (2009), arguing that cultural diversity, the encounter between different worldviews, has generated rejection and exaltation of identities, islands of resistance, and social conflicts, but the encounter, at the same time creates integration codes to produce communication. Affirming that communication protocols between different cultures are the key to the network society, because without them there would be no network, but dominant and dominated links, in multicultural communication. The important thing is not the content, but the very process of communication, since it is the producer of the protocols. Therefore, in the very process of communication, the necessary protocols are built, the culture of the network society. To the extent that these networks are capable of extending a common cosmopolitan culture, the project of global democracy would be closer.

The media as mechanisms of diffusion of the singular thought

Five decades ago he already warned about what would come to be called "singlural thinking". We can find it in the work of Marcuse that receives the title of the one-dimensional man (Marcuse, 1984). The one-dimensional thinking of which Marcuse spoke to us, is precisely what today has culminated in what is known as "singluar thought". Such discourse is built on the principle of the predominance of the economic over the political. Marcuse presents a one-dimensional society that is characterized by showing us as rational what is really irrational. Thus, we can already elucidate, as the buoyant economic rationality on which singular thinking is justified, is truly an irrationality in every rule. To mask all this irrationality in the form of rationality, a meticulous language has been

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constructed to justify the status quo (Foucault's discourse) (1999) that does not reveal the contradictions and conflicts generated by this postulate in reality. Needless to say, the amplifiers of this language are the mass media that are responsible for disseminating it to all corners of the world to perpetuate it.

This way of presenting the irrationalities masked by forms of rationality, hiding the perverse ideology on which they arise, is accompanied by an announcement about the joint death of ideologies and history, it is the end of history, the ideologies have died, and there is only room for the singular thought. This avoids the possibility of raising any critical and alternative thinking, of that of the establishment, that could lead to a significant social change, because what is important here is to show us reality as an immovable and unquestionable fixed photo. That is to say, as if the social reality were something "natural". The prevailing postulates lead us to assume, in an unconscious way, aspects that are not normal as if they were something normal, considering that this is the only possible way to conceive.

This apparent solidity of the so-called singular thought is raised on a pillar characterized by the uncritical assumption and also on the ideas of democracy and market, both intimately linked to a supposed freedom. There is therefore a verifiable relationship between the unique thought and the current model of the media, because we have to represent reality as the only possible, as the extremely "objective" representation of this reality. The mass media therefore build reality according to their interests.

The impressive scientific and technological advances of recent decades have served as a stimulus for the neoliberal postulates of *laissez faire, laissez passer*:

> The belief in the charitable character of laissez faire came to replace that deposited in Divine Providence: both promised to take man on the right path, provided that its rules are respected. The faith in the market as a panacea gave rise, in the words of Polanyi (1944) to "the most violent and widespread of the explosions of religious fervor that humanity has known." The universe of the economic could, and even should, escape the ordinary moral rules since it was assumed that the "invisible hand" of the market would transmute the vices of private selfishness for the benefit of the social whole, justifying the inequality for the sake of an alleged effectiveness (Albiñana, 2000, p. 36).

To this impulse, as a consequence of the scientific-technical advances, it is necessary to add the disappearance of the Soviet Union, something that also facilitated the expansion of the neoliberal postulates.

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The growing process of globalization, accompanied by a global exchange of signs, was accelerated by the computer revolution and communication. These revolutions that have changed the order of the world have led to a great outbreak of two sectors that today become the fundamental pillars of contemporary capitalist society: information networks and the financial market.

The world of the financial market is a space that has benefited significantly and perfectly adapted by the two revolutions mentioned above. This is because it has four characteristics that make it more sensitive to these changes: it is immaterial, planetary, permanent and immediate. Behind this world lies a dominant ideology: the singular thought, as Ignacio Ramonet points out:

> Caught up. In today's democracies, more and more citizens feel trapped, soaked in a kind of viscous doctrine that, insensibly, involves any rebellious reasoning, inhibits it, disturbs it, paralyzes it and ends up drowning it. That doctrine is the only thought, the only one authorized by an invisible and omnipresent opinion poll (Ramonet, 1995, p. 26).

The first principle on which the unique thought is based is that the *economic is above the political.* A totally wrong principle, because economic issues are also political issues and therefore must be addressed from the economic policy field. The other principles on which the single thought is based are already known, although I think it is necessary to recall them again in order to make a more adequate reflection of what this article is trying to explain. The market becomes that space in which there is an invisible hand that corrects the deviations of capitalism in its course of obtaining greater benefit, not of distribution, but of obtaining and increasing. Financial markets are the epicenter of daily global economic activity, whose signs of movement determine the direction of the economy on a global scale; free exchange as an incessant aspect of commercial activities that engulfs society in consumerism; the international division of labor, which hinders the organization of workers and diminishes their labor rights; the struggle between currencies, which struggle to see which is stronger; competition and competitiveness, used by economic powers to justify many of their atrocities; deregulation, where there are no rules regulating economic flows; privatization, which is carried out with the excuse of reducing public deficits and improving the economy, etc. In short, the unique thought has been and is functional to the development of neoliberalism.

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The constant repetition of the media gives rise to an intimidating force of such magnitude that it cripples the reflective capacity and makes the task of resisting and proposing alternatives to that system very difficult.

Television is in the highest position in the media with the most influence on society. Millions of people convert every day into television viewers watching the news and other programs with great attention. The enormous audience of television surpasses, and by far, the people who read the daily written press. The large television audience motivates strong hoarding desires among advertising and political agents. This strong desire for hoarding is due to the fact that television is an important focus of attraction of consumers, voters, products, ideas, etc. Television therefore has a great influence on the formation of opinion and that Castells (2009) calls modeling the mind, and what Chomsky and Ramonet also refer to.

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> To inform was, in a way, to provide not only the precise and verified description of an event, but also a set of parameters that allow the reader to understand its profound significance. It was to answer elementary questions: Who has done what? With what means? Where how? Why? In what context? What are the causes? What are the consequences? (Chomsky and Ramonet, 1995, p. 86).

Thus, since the power of television has prevailed over the press as a tool, "informing is, since then, to show the story in progress or more specifically, to make us attend the event live" (Chomsky and Ramonet, 1995, p. 87). No longer understanding, the only thing that matters is seeing, therefore the figure of the journalist has moved to the background behind the camera, and seeing is not the same as understanding how they want to make citizens believe. As the Roman poet Horacio said, "we are deceived by the appearance of truth" (Ortega Blake, 2013, p. 20). We cannot go back in time and reduce ourselves to the idea that only seeing is understanding.

The extreme dependence or extreme exploitation of the images supposes a problem, since the visible character of a fact cannot explain the complexity or the essence that surrounds that fact. The truly important events can hardly be understood and explained through images. How to explain, for example, with images the social conflict that exists in Ukraine at the moment? Television news programs, which are the center of television information, are destined to popularize the superfluous through riots, assassinations, confrontations, fires, in order to influence the emotions of citizens, when, rather, what must be done is to stimulate

reflection to achieve a good understanding of the event. The television news then gives priority to the sensationalist rather than the reflective, as can be read below:

> The flaw in this system is obvious: to be widely accepted as an indispensable condition of profitability - agency images have to be spectacular at all costs and to interest the greatest number of viewers. They tend to place greater emphasis on the outward appearance of the event, anecdote, scandal and action (violence, suffering, blood, death), than on ideas or explanations (Ramonet, 2003, p. 95).

Regarding the concept of truthfulness of information, it seems that a fact adopts the status of truthful not because it corresponds to rigorous objective criteria, firm and verified in its sources, but rather, on the contrary, because other means of communication are responsible to repeat the same affirmations again and again and therefore confirm them. To put it another way, it is something like if a lie is repeated many times, because in the end it seems to end up becoming a truth, *modeling the mind* of Castells (2009). The consequence of this repetitive practice based on imitation or copying, results in media information being intermixed in such a way that a difference is hardly observed. This absence of difference is seen as a single information system, making it very difficult to find the differences.

This allows us to observe that the representations that are offered to us are increasingly simple and homogeneous, paradoxically this, in a multicultural world with incessant changes and differences. However, a proposal that will serve as an alternative, and that could be built on a new educational scenario, will be presented below.

Proposal: The media as a tool for critical and transformative education

A majority of the population has been educated by traditional mass media, the unidirectionality of these media has transformed the social subject into a passive subject, receiver of information and data, which have been created from the media, which, as we said, are the creators of power. This acritical and passive social base has been the substrate on which the concentration of power that now exists on a planetary level has rested. The deactivation of society through mass media is a fact that at present may be coming to an end, hand in hand with digital communication networks as we have also pointed out.

Noam Chomsky and Ramonet suggest that information is a constructive and relational process, together with citizen mobilization for which the researcher's research and analysis effort is required, so that it also becomes an issuer. Below you can read the proposal of both thinkers.

First, because the televised news, structured as a fiction, is not made to inform, but to distract. Then, because the rapid succession of brief and fragmented news (about twenty per newscast) produces a double negative effect of overinformation and misinformation. And, finally, because wanting to inform oneself without effort is an illusion that has to do with the advertising myth more than with civic mobilization. Learn home and at this price the citizen acquires the right to participate intelligently in the democratic life (Chomsky and Ramonet, 1995, p. 91).

The participatory form in which information is constructed, through the process of interactive and global communication, is driving changes in the perception of reality that is no longer presented as flat as in traditional media, but responds to a complexity in that the subjects are involved as agents of change.

Del desarrollo de actitudes cuestionadoras e indagadoras, por tanto crítica y reflexiva habla así mismo David Buckingham, cuando sostiene que "necesitamos desarrollar una teoría de la Educación para los Medios, que tenga en cuenta la actividad de los aprendices como constructores de sentido, y los constreñimientos sociales e institucionales bajo los cuales esa actividad se lleva a cabo" (Buckingham, 2000, p. 14). Buckingham's comment is an important reflection because it refers to the educational aspect so necessary for the formation of that critical autonomy that will be addressed later. However, Buckingham is not the only thinker who emphasizes the educational aspect, Masterman also proposes in this regard.

Audiovisual education is essential not only for the exercise of our democratic rights, but also to defend ourselves from the serious excesses of manipulation in the media with political ends [...] audiovisual education is also an essential step in the long march towards a true participatory democracy and in the democratization of institutions. Generalized audiovisual literacy is essential if we want all citizens to exercise power, make rational decisions, be effective agents of change and participate actively in the media. In this broad sense of 'education for democracy' is where audiovisual education can play the most significant role (Masterman, 1993, p. 28).

The last section will address the issue of the autonomy of citizenship to be well educated in the media. However, this new concept will

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take into account the education that will be treated next, of course in the critical sense, in addition to the empowerment of citizen participation, and the urgent need to transform the information provided by the media into knowledge to increase our moral growth.

A tener en cuenta una premisa importante que representa y que señala Masterman cuando se refiere al experimento que llevó a cabo el profesor de arte de Nottingham, Fred Bazler (Masterman, 1993, pp. 35-36). Los medios no son neutrales, construyen la realidad interesada cargada de los valores de los que lo manejan. Estas construcciones se realizan a través de unos signos o sistemas simbólicos que son representaciones de dicha realidad, por ello resulta necesario descifrar la utilización de esos signos y su combinación, es decir, descifrar el significado que se les ha otorgado. The critical interpretation of that system of symbols, to unveil the substrate of power and manipulation, is essential in the horizon of the transformation of discourses and the change in the correlation of forces, as Mastermann points out below.

> The ideological power of the media is, in a certain way, proportional to the apparent naturalness of their representations, since the ideological power of a product of the media lies mainly in the capacity of those who control and elaborate it, to make it happen by real, true, universal and necessary what are inevitably selective constructions and loaded with values, in which particular interests, ideologies and ways of understanding (discourses) are inscribed (Masterman, 1993, p. 36).

There is an educational program that is the Philosophy for Children program, as an educational action alternative to develop what Lipman (1998) calls complex thinking. Within this complex thought one can find the criticism of that thought. The critical dimension proposes an education oriented from life and for life, that is immersed in reality, which pronounces the world in the Freirean sense. In this sense all the values and conceptions rooted in education have to go through this critical analysis, from the production of knowledge and therefore the educational contents, to the pedagogical proposals, since what is proposed is an education and knowledge that part from reality itself, therefore with a dynamic, changing and relational and therefore collective sense. In this sense and regarding the objective of achieving audiovisual education Masterman proposes that students must achieve *critical autonomy* in the sense in which it is presented below:

> I must say that one of the primary objectives of audiovisual education should not be to obtain from students the ability to faithfully reproduce

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ideas, critical points of view or information provided by the teacher. Nor should it only consist of encouraging the students' own critical perspective in the classroom, however important this may be. The task, really important and difficult, of the media teacher is to sufficiently develop the students' self-confidence and critical maturity so that they are able to apply critical judgments to the documents of the texts *they find in the future.* The hard test of any audiovisual education program is to check the extent to which students are critical in the use and understanding of the media when *the teacher is not present.* The primary objective is not simply critical knowledge and understanding, it *is critical autonomy* (Masterman, 1993, p. 40).

The content should not only be based on the acquisition of technical skills for media management, in our proposal education should be sociocentric, educating students in the critical analysis of the media, so that their use and creativity is put at the service of society.

The aim is to turn the classroom into a research community so that the students are able to identify the different discourses that underlie the communication networks, so that they perform a contrasted search by diverse sources of information.

The proposal presented in this paper, goes further, since in that interaction of the class with reality, from life and for life, an opening to the environment is required, it is not enough the analysis of the discourses, it is necessary to incorporate reality, to establish the intersubjective dialogue with the different agents involved in communication, to contrast the discourses with reality, to put them on the ground in this investigative process. This is the way in which the plurality of subjects can be incorporated into the discourses created by the research community or class.

In this case, the activity of the research community will provide different approaches for analysis, which will greatly enrich the process of learning and construction of knowledge/information, since there is a wide range of perceptions and experiences that can be contrasted. This situation breaks completely with the traditional banking education of which Paulo Freire (2003) speaks. Through intersubjective dialogue, audiovisual education will be a questioning and critical teaching of the unique thought created by the dominant discourse, as indicated below:

A philosophical approach to learning, which is not a simple pedagogical method, let alone a series of techniques that teachers can put into practice on Monday morning, but rather guiding principles towards a complex process, which face many of the common sense approaches to teaching and learning (Masterman, 1993, p. 47).

In the last century and in the environment of traditional mass media, characterized by the unidirectionality of the message, there was a concern in the educational field for the effects that these media were having on society and the subject. In this context, the analysis of the relevant role played by the mass media in the creation of one-dimensional man and singlular thought was placed (Marcuse, 1984). Social researchers identified the risk posed to society by a unidirectional communication loaded with an interested discourse that did not represent the reality of many of the recipients, whose objective is to dominate society by penetrating into our minds (modeling the mind), Castells (2009). The mass media, and television above all, were producing a passive and uncritical social subject, which made any attempt at social change impossible, as can be read below:

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> Different sectors of civil society, popular organizations and social movements can more effectively influence the definition of the contents of the media based on the analysis of reception processes. A central aspect of the current debate focuses on the role of social institutions in the joint articulation of demand culture, especially collectively [...] The pedagogical and philosophical thinking of Paulo Freire has been very significant in the configuration of many of the ER projects. Much of what is at stake in the current discussion of ER in Latin America is the right of subjects, individual and collective, as well as the right of peoples to say their word through the media in front of a a minority issuer, often oblivious to the reality of our continent (Masterman, 1993, p. 25).

In the educational field, the ER-Education for reception emerged, as an educational experience that tried to question the supposed neutrality of the media, and from there to educate citizens in critical and active autonomy. Efrén Orozco, talks about this experience:

> What in our opinion identifies the diverse experiences of the ER as such, is the concern to make the receiving subjects, individual and collective, distance themselves from the media and their messages, which allows them to be more reflective, critical and, therefore, independent and creative; that is, that allows them to recover and assume their active role in the communication process (Orozco Gómez and Charles Creel, 2002, p. 21).

However, the emergence of new media has overcome this proposal. Internet networks present features that allow horizontal, open and interactive communication, as has already been seen. Where the subjects are no longer receivers but simultaneous transmitters and receivers in real time, so that the communication and the discourses that are generated

in it are a plural construction, because networks do not circulate a dominant discourse, there is a plurality of discourses.

In these moments, social movements no longer pursue so much to have an impact on the media, but rather they are connected actors, producers of discourses in a horizontal relationship. New technologies allow the development of personal autonomy.

This does not mean that the risk of mastery has disappeared, so critical education about the media is still alive. The organic communication law approved in 2013 by the National Assembly of Ecuador, is an example of whether it is possible the participation of various sectors of the population in the development and management of information content of the media[3].

It is possible to encourage participation through an education endowed with a critical and reflective sense, assuming the communicative model that is adopted in the present work, which is the Freirian dialogue framed within the Philosophy for Children program. This dialogue is a meeting of reflection and action, aimed at the transformation and humanization of the world, breaking with the patterns of lack of criticality and passivity promoted by the dominant thought. The important thing is that not only will you encourage critical and reflective participation in the school so that you get closer to understanding the media, but it will be promoted in other areas of life such as the family, neighborhood associations, social movements, etc. Critical and reflective education about the media means weaving a common thread between reflection and action, between theory and practice, thus discovering new social spaces from which to build a participatory democracy. In addition, as you can read later, media citizenship is another of the pillars on facing the challenge suggested by the media.

The critical autonomy as media autonomy: The media citizenship

As we have been seeing throughout this article, one of the primary objectives of education in and about the media is the promotion of the autonomy of students and citizens. It has also been seen that in a context of constant media influence on the part of the mass media, educating for autonomy supposes, at first, educating in the ability to criticize. That is, to educate in the capacity for critical and reflective interpretation of the information offered by the media, elucidating the possible interests and

intentions that it may have. It is about promoting an autonomous citizenship in the media, since this is essential for the construction of a participatory democracy, because a media citizenry is also an active citizenry. For this, it is decisive to promote moral sensitivity in the following sense.

> In other words, it is necessary, for the cultivation of critical thinking, to enrich the argumentative capacity with the use of moral sensitivity, opening intelligence to the perspective, rights and legitimate interests of others. At this point, the communicative technology puts us in contact with stories and images that are of great help to educate in this moral sensitivity contributing to humanize the thought, so to speak, so that finally it assumes those personal responsibilities that are so necessary for active citizenship (Gozàlvez Pérez and Aguaded Gómez, 2012, pp. 6-7).

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Education must be capable of promoting empowerment for the development of an autonomous life in the midst of a reality that constantly influences and imposes values and styles through dominant thinking. Education has to contribute to human development, and this cannot happen without the "other diverse" therefore it must be oriented towards full participation in political, social, cultural and economic life. Educating to build an active citizenship cannot leave out the means of communication or ignore the network society in which people live and configure themselves. Therefore education must be present in the media and these in education. Professor Vicent Gozálvez (2012), speaks of a "mediatic citizenship", in the civic sense of the word, the participant subject in communication networks must be a critical citizen in the sense in which Buckingham exposes them, since he points out that without critical awareness, the necessary autonomy to build a citizenship cannot be given (Buckingham, 2003, p. 107). The educational systems, in addition to facing the media challenge, also face issues that have to do with the pluralities that make up the society in the sense highlighted by Vivas-Herrera (2015), however, that would be the subject of another work.

Educating for an interpretative citizenship will achieve for people not to succumb to the dominant thought, and not be remote-controlled in the sense suggested by Giovanni Sartori (2001). In addition, it is necessary to weave networks of intersubjectivity based on dialogue in educational systems to better carry out the hermeneutical act in the sense in which I already raised at another time (Terrones Rodríguez, 2017).

However, and it is worth remembering again, the critical capacity is unavoidably accompanied by a self-critical capacity, since the alternative educational program of Philosophy for Children, has as its main

component, the self-corrective capacity, which is linked to the capacity for self-criticism. To educate for media autonomy in the critical sense, is to educate in a rational and reasonable opinion.

The education in the media that is being referred to is very well expressed by Vicent Gozálvez:

> Media education is the effort to transport the person from hermeneutically muddy and passive towards a creative and acting hermeneutics, towards a way of interpreting and giving meaning that imposes distances, that doubts, that is suspicious or acclaims, that thinks about emotions and the values in relation to the media and that from there looks critically. A well-educated hermeneutics pushes the person towards weighted criteria of audiovisual evaluation, towards an autonomous hermeneutics that helps to overcome the manipulable discouragement or the systematically cynical suspicion of previous moments. In other words, education works to achieve the goal of the audiovisual citizen as a free hermeneut, prepared to enlarge his freedom in an ethically active way (Gozálvez, 2012, p. 156).

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Once we have reached this point, what is important to show is that in the network society in which we find ourselves immersed, a large part of human communication takes place in mass interactive media. An education is not possible outside of the network society, therefore, without neglecting the risks to which it has aimed and precisely to avoid them, it is important to take advantage of the advantages they offer in terms of building citizen participation and transformation of democracy, aware of the difficulties involved in communication in a multicultural environment, it is proposed to promote plural participation both in the classroom and in the media through the dialogical method.

Conclusion

Citizens must live up to the "media" time that they have lived. We have the obligation to take advantage of all the technological tools to train in a new dimension, the media. Technological progress continues its course, and this affects the media in an important way. In the midst of a world in which we are immersed by the constant rain of information, it is necessary that we adopt a critical and transformed dimension, and the means of communication can serve us for that. That is, or we adopt a critical attitude towards the media or the media will blind our critical dimension.

Thus, education represents a fascinating field in which to invest these efforts of the formation of a media citizenship for the 21st century.

Throughout this article we have reflected on the phenomenon faced by the citizens of the present, and we have come to the conclusion that if we do not constitute together, all and all, new educational praxis oriented towards the formation of a new media ethos, we will hardly be able to face what is happening and what is yet to come.

Notes

1   See https://www.xatakamovil.com/mercado/la-gran-industria-de-la-telefonia-movil. Retrieved on September 20, 2017.
2   See http://rebelion.org/noticia.php?id=9638.
3   See the law at http://ecuador.indymedia.org/media/2012/02/38137.pdf

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