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Comparison of values in the communication of the communes

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Introduction

In six decades of defining relations between communication and development, not only has social consensus been reached to place communication at the service of development, but also to consider development as a discipline in its own right, one that is necessary

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to improve the lives of the poor and to transform reality, especially within the community context.

By consolidating the communication link with the communes, conditions are created for the emergence of spaces of empowerment, and the promotion of consensual decision-making and planning from the needs of the population. The “sender-receiver” route is cyclical and interactive, closing the loop. In fact, the communication process for social change, which therefore is the most used in the communes, is understood as a necessarily participatory and horizontal communication process. It is planned for and addressed to a specific target audience, centred on fostering development so that individuals can become aware of their rights and claim them (Lara & Olabe, 2012).

In short, one can say that communication is a dimension of local development, one in which reality is known, transformed and defined through people’s voices. People participate in the communicational event in which they decode the truth of reality by giving it a new meaning based upon their experience of life. In this context, the study takes a tour of four geographical locations, Colombia, Japan, Ecuador, and Nigeria to manifest the peculiarities of communicative experiences; and then presents the common principles envisioned in the communities studied. A reflection on communication in the commune follows, that includes the identification of a series of characteristics for each case.

Experiences of Communication in Communes

Three communities on the outskirts of Medellín, Colombia

Acosta and Garcés (2016) analyse three communities on the periphery of the city of Medellín, Colombia, that reveal a form of collective subject that is grouped by common interests, affinity and ne-

eds. They also highlight the form of organization and cross-sectional operation of the entire group, in which the role of each participant is reinforced according to their strengths and abilities, guided by an experienced leader. In such experiences, communication plays a significant role in allowing people's voices to express their sense of community, their thoughts, and artistic or intellectual manifestations.

Acosta and Garcés (2016) report that in these communities' the communication process, and informative content, is produced locally, and aims to make an impact within the group itself. Through influencing the sensitivity and commitment, as well as the proposed objective, the process of communication is the engine of change and social transformation.

Collectives and communities seek to promote social awareness, give voice to the marginalized, and recover collective and individual memory. To do this, they propose to share needs, and organize and build links in order to affirm their rights, their society and their culture. After all, it is about prioritizing the relations and identity of society based upon the solidarity of the group of persons who bring the group together.

Communal media pay special attention to what concerns their community, community interests, ways of expression and enunciation. In this context, a communal medium of communication able to live and confront problems is also able to analyse them from the perspective of the realistic and specific needs of the affected group from which the most appropriate resolutions are likely to arise. The management of communal media presents common proposals despite the differences in the aforementioned media, as Acosta and Garcés (2016) show:

- The media become visible and meaningful as they meet and express group needs; new projects and their processes; affective bonding networks and their own identity.

- The groups exercise a mediating role, giving a form of expression to the discourses coming from their communities.

The groups are introducing new modes of enunciation and a communication practice that achieve communities' empowerment to tell their own stories. In addition to breaking the conventional logic of information and communication, through such experiences, these groups are also breaking the hegemonic imaginary and gaining agency in the making of their own image and sense of self; determining what they want to be, do and say (Acosta & Garcés, 2016, p. 32).

Yamagishi Toyosato community, Japan

In the study of Metcalf (2001), the Yamagishi Toyosato community founded in 1969 is very important, being the most populated with 1100 members in 2001 compared with many other similar communities around the world. The territory it occupies lies on the border between Tokyo and Osaka. It was founded in the mid-50s in Japan by Miyozoh Yamagishi, inspired by his engagement with socialist activities since the 1920s, and by his motto "*Unity with nature*" or "*Ittai*" in the Japanese language. His proposal is to live in a community without private property, without internal money and through self-supply.

Within the community, communication is established through meetings every morning, or meetings related to specific areas of work. There is no leader, but each area of the community is under the responsibility of one member of the community. Decisions are taken by consensus, reflecting on the needs at hand, discussing and proposing among all new ways of solving problems. Members of the community emphasize that the solutions are not perfect but optimal for the moment in question. Callenbach (2006) explains that the community office provides Toyosato residents with email accou-

nts, has a room with computers where people use what they need without prolonging their stay there.

Some of the inhabitants of the community decide to try life outside Yamagishi. The possibility of working or living there are open to all, but there are specific requirements that allow residents to continue with their current way of life.

According to Christensen and Levinson (2003), they state that as a prerequisite to entering the community, it is necessary to attend a course to become familiar with the organization and internal functioning of the community, co-habitation, conflict-resolution, and learning processes. Residents emphasize the harmony that characterise relationships within the community.

The intention of the community residents is to promote a system different from the social system implemented by the State, where corruption and private interests stand out. They sought a way out of the oppression of the system where they lived to give their families a welfare they did not obtain. However, despite everything, they must comply with State Law, which they feel restricts the independence that they seek.

Communes of Cayambe and Pedro Moncayo, Ecuador

The Casa Campesina Cayambe Foundation was founded by the Salesian Society in Ecuador in 1985 with the name of *Centro Casa Campesina Cayambe*. Through the years, it has provided help and support in the areas of health, production, education and community organization to more than 100 communes in the cantons of Cayambe and Pedro Moncayo, Pichincha province of Ecuador. In 1994 it obtained the status of a charity (Foundation) by ministerial agreement, and since 2014 is directed by Salesian Father Fernando Guamán. Its main objective is the implementation of development

projects funded by international cooperation, to address poverty and its causes.

According to Herrán (2014), these communities live mostly on agriculture and livestock; flower plantations and services providing a small percentage of families' income. The State provides education that is of poor quality due to the lack of building infrastructure and adequate or sufficient educational materials. As far as culture is concerned, the original "Kayambi" culture is disappearing due to the advanced levels of globalization that affect almost all social groups. In this context, Herrán (2014) believes that: "There is an accelerated loss of identity, and models widespread by the media (at the national level) are repeated (at the local level)".

Small groups from neighbouring territories or belonging to the same ethnic group/ family come together in associations, in search of legitimacy to sustain themselves outside the community. The main objective of these associations is the management of communal areas; conflicts resolution between neighbours; the organization of communal labour parties called *mingas* for, among other things, the construction of houses, access roads, and other communal facilities (Herrán, 2014, p. 108). Among such organizations, are: the UCOPEM (Union of Communities of Pedro Moncayo); COINOAC (Confederation of Indigenous Organizations of Olmedo, Ayora and Cayambe); UNOPAC (Union of Popular Organizations of Ayora and Cayambe); UCIJUM (Union of Indigenous Communities of Juan Montalvo); TURUJTA (Communities of Tupigachi); UCICAB (Union of Indigenous Communities of Cangahua Bajo); ÑURUCTA (Communities of Ñanolo-ma); UCIC (Union of indigenous communities of Cayambe); and the Confederation of Cayambe population. The FCCC details that 70% of the adult population belongs at least to one organization.

Communication among the communities that belong to the territory where the Casa Campesina Cayambe work is established in

a structured way, according to the needs of each association. Through a consensual process, the members of each association grant authority to a leader represent them in front of other community organizations and at the national level.

The Foundation ‘Casa Campesina’ has also its own communal communication media. Serrano (2011) and describes that in 1967, *Radio Mensaje* (Radio Message) was created by Monsignor Isaías Barriga, who intended to give a space and a voice to the indigenous communities and peasants in Northern Pichincha. The radio became a way of encouraging evangelization, education and community organization, while also playing a role in the agricultural development of local communities (Herrán-Gómez, Sánchez-Merino & Torres-Toukoumidis, 2017). Overall, the Radio Message consisted of 17 hours of broadcast per day aimed at local people who also participated in its production.

In the town of Cayambe, since the 1990s, is Radio Inti-Pacha that also attends the need of indigenous people’ and peasants’ organizations to be represented and have a space to communicate. Until today, the management of this radio is in the hands of COINCCA (Corporation of Indigenous and Peasant Organizations of Canagahua), and is financed through advertising and contributions from COINCCA. The programming is diverse and covers international, national news, medical programs, sports and other topics.

In addition to the radios, the communities of Cayambe and Pedro Moncayo have a smaller but no less important medium of communication, namely the community newspaper “Nuestra Voz” (Our Voice) that publishes 5000 copies monthly.

Serrano (2011) states that, unlike mass media, community media have a code of ethics based upon group consensus that can change over time, or even be discarded if becomes irrelevant.

Communities Ife-Tedo, Ila-Orangun, Igbara-Oke, Oka-Akoko, Aiyetoro and Ijebu-Ife, Nigeria

Being able to express yourself, followed by being understood, are the key points of communication. Ajewumi and Yemisi (2015) explain that members of a social group depend on information, just as communities depend on communication to exist. Communication generates trust, allows action and planning that lead to community development. This is synonymous with progress; however, the difficulties begin around how to communicate; how understandable to the community is the information needed to improve community development.

A research study carried out by Ajewumi and Yemisi (2015), with six communities in the Nigerian southwest, aimed to identify how the communication strategies of the program and their consumption influence the implementation of community development projects; how it was perceived by community members, and what was its effectiveness. This required communication strategies based on programs such as policy promotion, social and community mobilization, social marketing, media mobilization, development support communication and interpersonal communication, through which messages are made available to the inhabitants of the communities seeking to implement the change.

The most specific limitations regarding communication in Nigeria are associated with the traditional communicative strategy of its native population. This affects negatively the planning and therefore the execution of community development programs. Therefore, Ajewumi and Yemisi (2015) explain that education, coordination and participation have been weak and poorly structured.

The United Nations Children's Fund proposed for Nigeria a specific program to "Provoke social change through community in-

formation boards”, on the basis of “a basic mechanism led by the community to collect basic social and development information that will be used to monitor the progress of children’s health and welfare issues in an equitable manner” (UN, 2011, p. 46). After providing training in the country, UNICEF had information boards in 222 communities to work together with community leaders and the Government of Nigeria.

The communities studied were: Ife-Tedo and Ila-Orangun in the State of Osun; Igbara-Oke and Oka-Akoko in the State of Ondo; Aiyetoro and Ijebu-Ife in the State of Ogun. The sample for the study consisted of 300 people, including leaders and residents, who answered questionnaires to measure the level of influence the adoption of communication variables were having.

The study by Ajewumi and Yemisi (2015) concluded that the communities had introduced the communication strategies from the program (in their projects), and improving considerably not only the communication but also the participation of all inhabitants. From the political point of view, the authors foresee an important role for the Government to play in leading and overseeing the appropriate adoption and implementation of the communication programmes by the communities. It is vital that research on communication strategies for Development proliferates, because this results in the mobilization of actions for community development projects.

Shared principles of communication in the communes

The description and analysis of the above-mentioned four cases around the world allows us to establish the following convergences:

Exchange. Freitez (2013) confirms the importance of understanding the community as an organizational structure determined by an endogenous exchange of goods and services, co-managed by

its members. That is, there is a political economy of the word, a communication model that privileges the exchange; that recognizes that the word is not an innocuous act but an exercise of synergies produced by an exchange of knowledge and the construction of values.⁵

Equality. In each of the communities examined, the need for balance among its resident is perceived; a need to have an equitable place of expression regardless of the place or role occupied in the community. The disregard of hierarchies when dialogue is urgent allows understanding from the point of view of the human, and enables the principle of humanity to generate harmony.

Transparency. Communities' members seek clarity through networking, communication or education. This allows them to build trust both in their peers and the system in which they live.

Solidarity. The common good is a primary objective in the communes. For this, it is necessary that the members of local associations seek to establish ties of support, help and protection towards among peers. This principle is noticeable in the communities, otherwise there would not exist consensus.

Dialogue. Sharing experiences and ways of expressing needs is a point that all the social groups reviewed in this study have in common. In one way or another, each community finds a way to express itself.

Culture. Despite their desire to expand their population, ideology or way of communicating, the communes seek to strengthen their culture through meetings, to share celebrations and rituals, to promote traditions and to transmit traditional knowledge.

5 The values constructed from synergies are the result of a common valuation of interests. Therefore, more than a duty to be, or a utopian north, they are necessary values-obligations to guarantee the sustainability of the Common Pool Resource (CPR).

These six principles, identified through the application of the deductive methodological approach in the communities analyzed (Sampieri, Collado and Lucio, 2010), formalize the construction of a way to interweave communication in the development activities of the communities. Community communication through mass communication media manages to incorporate these six principles into its development projects, thus transforming them into bottom-up actions that improve people's quality of life, and changes the structures that limit community development.

Conclusions

The relationship communication-development is sequential, given that social communication produces collective knowledge. There cannot exist local development without people knowing and taking part into the sustainable development and structural change of their community.

About the relationship of communal communication with the university, we can infer that the discourse of institutional identity reflects and applies these common principles of communication. As Van Dijk (1999) states, speech is accompanied by several indicators, among which he highlights contextualization, meaning, form and action. Specifically, the first one of such indicators refers to the cross-sectional correlation of the discourse that holds affinity with group members or, in our case, sharing the values of the commune.

As far as meaning is concerned, a semantic macro structure is to be maintained through the explicit manifestation of the content, with a level of detail that enhances transparency, and by treating specifically each of the situations that occurs in the university-commune while also using the 1st person of the plural –we. In other words, everything that happens in the communal ecosystem must be nurtu-

red through clear dialogue, thus assuming the co-responsibility and belonging of the actions carried out in the university-commune.

The following so-called form derives several elements among which are syntax, sound structures, format and rhetorical structures, in which a range of resources is located to emphasize message meanings. In this case, communication in the university-commune must be provided with a language predisposed with a sense of identity that allows sharing of the university community characteristics in a simple, direct and attractive way. For this is the use of active sentences accompanied by nominalizations that contain an implication and a discursive derivability.

Finally, the action is oriented to the strategies of interaction and speech acts that imply the exposition of positive and negative situations of the environment, the favourable logistics in the university-commune must be configured following cooperation and agreement, and avoiding promises and accusations. In short-and in addition to proceeding according to the principles mentioned above namely, exchange, equality, transparency, solidarity, dialogue, and culture the communication guidelines in the communal university must also be conducted through specificity, belonging, co-responsibility, contextualization and cooperation.

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