Communicative inequality in the discursive repertoire of collective action: The case of #YoSoy132

Desigualdad comunicativa en el repertorio discursivo de la acción colectiva: El caso de #YoSoy132

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes how communicative inequality mediates the discourse associated with collective action. Based on the analysis of the Mexican #YoSoy132 (2012), it describes how, in a context characterized by a high media concentration and a particular articulation between the dominant media system and the hegemonic political parties, the democratization of communication becomes a main claim. The text shows how #YoSoy132 sets relevant discursive links between communicative inequality and social inequality in general. Online social networks are considered as a central resource for overcoming an unequal communicational order, but also some risks and challenges associated with the use of these technological platforms and with the centrality of the communicative dimension are identified. The article concludes that communicative inequality is multidimensional and that its centrality in the discursive repertoire of the social movement #YoSoy132 has significant consequences for collective action and even for the continuity of the movement.

Keywords: Communicative inequality, democratization, collective action, media concentration, social networks.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza cómo la desigualdad comunicativa media el discurso vinculado a la acción colectiva. A partir de un análisis del caso #YoSoy132, en México (2012), se describe cómo, en un contexto caracterizado por la alta concentración mediática y una singular articulación entre sistema comunicativo dominante y partidos políticos hegemónicos, la democratización de la comunicación deviene una demanda fundamental. Se muestra cómo #YoSoy132 establece vínculos discursivos importantes entre desigualdad comunicativa y desigualdad social en general. Se considera las redes sociales digitales como un recurso central para superar un orden comunicativo desigual, pero también se identifican ciertos desafíos y riesgos asociados al uso de las mismas y a la centralidad de la dimensión comunicativa. Se concluye que la desigualdad comunicativa resulta multidimensional y que su centralidad en el repertorio discursivo del movimiento social #YoSoy132 tiene consecuencias significativas para la acción colectiva y para la propia continuidad del movimiento.

Palabras clave: Desigualdad comunicativa, democratización, concentración mediática, acción colectiva, redes sociales.

INTRODUCTION

Since the last decade of the last century, social movements have become actors with a growing presence and importance in Latin America (Sader, 2008). Its relevance has increased in parallel to the importance of communication in contemporary societies, thanks to the social impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) (Castells, 1999). Several authors (Burch, 2003; Kavada, 2005; Castells, 2012) have emphasized the importance of communication for social movements. Communication is specifically associated with dimensions as the organization, culture, identity or repertoires of collective action, understood as the set of forms and specific methods that a social group has to raise its demands, expressing a confrontation (Tarrow, 1997).

In a global scenario characterized by media concentration (Trejo Delarbre, 2010) and, at the same time, greater possibilities of citizen access to the public sphere thanks to ICTs (Dahlgren, 2005), the analysis of the interrelationships between collective action and communicative inequality is relevant and pertinent. This analysis provides an overview of this communicative inequality, from the performance of socially and communicatively subordinates groups, allowing a review of mediation between that difference in the communicative dimension and collective action. For this purpose, an analytically significant case is studied: the Mexican movement #YoSoy132.

Mexico is located in the most unequal region in the world (Gasparini, Cicowiez & Sosa Escudero, 2012), and it is the tenth Latin American country with a higher Gini index (Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe [CEPAL], 2013). In addition, it has one of the highest media concentrations of the world –89% of television stations belong to two groups, Televisa and TV Azteca (Huerta-Wong & Gómez García, 2013)– and a complicity between the media system and the institutional policy that has been defined as the "perfect dictatorship" (Vargas Llosa, 1990).

In this context, #YoSoy132 emerges directly linked to the communicative dimension. Its own name is derived from the hashtag promoted on Twitter to express solidarity with the students of the Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico City) who protested against the visit of then-presidential candidate of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)*, Enrique

Peña Nieto, on May 11, 2012. As they were accused by Mexican media of not being students, 131 students published a video on YouTube, with their university card, which generated a broad mobilization in the social networks and led to the emergence of the movement. Defined as a non-partisan citizens' movement, #YoSoy132 focus its demands on freedom of expression, the right to information, democratization of the media and effective access to the Internet (YoSoy132, 2012, May 28).

The repertoire of collective action of #YoSoy132 included demonstrations, marches, and occupations; actions specifically directed against the hegemonic media system –campaigns against television consumption or the installation of fences in media facilities– and the call for communication spaces linked to the electoral campaign, as discussions citizens among the candidates. Previous analyses have highlighted the spontaneity, contingency and complexity of movement, which is "an expression seemingly decentralized and without a clear and formal organizational structure" (Plancarte Escobar, 2013, p. 1). Based on respect for the plurality and diversity of its members, the movement was defined by its inclusive character, with no pretentions for representativeness or recognition of personal leaderships. Its organizational structure was horizontal, reticular, and collective, based in university assemblies and committees.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIVE INEQUALITY

The main conceptual approach on social movements related directly to the issue of inequality is the relative deprivation theory (RDT). According to this perspective, social movements express the feelings of deprivation experienced by their members before frustrated expectations (Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970). In the theoretical model proposed by Gurr (1970), relative deprivation is not an objective reality, but it is based on the perception of subjects about what they have and what they believe to deserve.

RDT is considered a theory of medium scope, likely to be applied in some analyses of the action and social conflict (Della Porta & Diani, 1999). Recent analyses show that the continuum relative deprivation-grievance-protest is complex and crossed by several media-

tions. On the one hand, social movements put in place mechanisms and similar processes of social psychology in relation to inequality (Snow & Owens, 2014). On the other hand its the influence of different affective and cognitive components (Van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008) or of the individual and collective dimension (Smith & Pettigrew, 2015) of relative deprivation in collective action, as well as the links between different types of inequality and types of movements (Snow & Owens, 2014). Collective action is considered a form of visibility of interests and aspirations by the aggrieved groups, through their discourse demands and specific actions (Snow & Owens, 2014).

Some studies have raised the relevance of RDT as an analytical perspective to the understanding of the 15-M movement[1] or the protests of 2011 in Great Britain[2] (Aguilar, 2012; Bostelmann, 2012). Other studies have examined the centrality of communication in the dispute over the public in the respective communicative processes of framing of social movements and the hegemonic media (Velázquez-Ramírez, 2011). However, despite the importance of communication for social movements or of the visibilizing nature of collective action regarding social inequality, there are not –as far as we know– preliminary analysis of collective action taken as the analytical axis of communicative inequality. In the studies of recent episodes of collective action, such as the Arab spring, 15-M, Occupy Wall Street or #YoSoy132 (Borge-Holthoefer et al., 2011; Fuchs, 2012; Demirhan, 2014) any analysis from this perspective.

Communicative inequality refers to differences between the various social groups in the processes of generation, manipulation and distribution of information at the group level, on the one hand, and in access to and the ability to benefit from information on the individual level, on the other (Ramanadhan & Viswanath, 2006). It is a complex and multidimensional notion that, from our perspective, is based on the concentration of media ownership and expressed in a set of trends identified by different previous analysis on communication (Trejo Delarbre, 2010; Mata, 2011; Mönckeberg, 2011; Alcalá, 2013; Huerta - Wong & Gómez García, 2013). Communicative inequality has to do, then, with the predominance of certain economic interests or ideological positions in the hegemonic media, the impossibility of an autonomous presence of certain groups

on the public agenda and a low level of access to the media, obstruction or criminalization of alternative communication or citizen spaces, lack of informative pluralism, the manipulation of media content and/or the digital divide.

Communicative inequality is particularly significant in the Latin American context, where strong institutional weaknesses are complemented with socio-economic and cultural inequality, generating enormous structural, institutional and identity inequalities. This communicative inequality would be part of a complex inequality, which includes, according to Calderón (2012), various dimensions related to the main axes of the new needs and demands of the agenda of regional social mobilization such as, example, environmental, ethnic, gender and human rights dimensions–.

A central axis in that interaction between communication and complex inequality is the democratic dimension, given the interrelations between democracy, citizen empowerment and media (Garretón, 1995) and, in particular, the links between ICTs and innovation and quality of democracy (Subirats, 2002; Levine & Molina, 2009). The technological resources of masses self-communication –in terms of Castells (2009)– offer the possibility for the actors in conflict to build their autonomy, facilitating the search for the satisfaction of their needs and demands. The use of ICTs makes the creation of spaces for alternative communication possible, as well as overcoming manipulation and even censorship, the pluralization of the public sphere and the advance of democratic dynamics of contemporary societies (Dahlgren, 2005; Dahlberg & Siapera, 2007; Barberá & Metzger, 2013).

But beyond the analysis of communication as dimension or instrument to overcome social inequality and improve the quality of democracy, it is necessary to transcend an analytical perspective centered on information about conflicts associated with other dimensions of inequality –economic, gender, ethnic– and perform a specific test around the conflicts on communication itself (Calderón 2012, pp. 28-29). Analyzing communicative inequality at the discursive repertoires of the #YoSoy132 movement allows investigating communication in its specific discursive dimension about inequality and the particularities of collective action when its emergence is linked to inequality and a sense of communicational relative deprivation.

METHODOLOGY

According to Castells (2012), in the era of Internet social movements are characterized by not being able to "formalize any organization or leadership because its consensus, its union, depends on the deliberation and proposals for each case" (p. 217). The study of the discursive repertoire of a movement with such characteristics –such as #YoSoy132– requires a multidimensional perspective that includes at least three types of sources: 1) collective texts linked to the movement (manifestos, statements, etc.); 2) interviews with active participants in the collective action; and 3) comments in the spaces of the movement in social networks.

All these sources are particularly relevant given the decentralized and spontaneous character of the movement and its emergence linked to social networks. These sources account for the multiple levels of the discourse of social movements (Johnston, 2002), thus configuring a multidimensional discursive repertoire that, only in its interaction –that therefore, transcends any individual speech–, can be considered as representative of the movement, given its particularities mentioned before.

From a qualitative perspective, discourse analysis has become an important research method on social movements (Taylor & Whittier, 2004), in particular the study of its processes of construction of meaning (Melucci, 2004). In correspondence with this, and considering the multi-dimensionality of discursive repertoires, discourse analysis has focused on the following dimensions: 1) communicative inequality and its link with other dimensions of inequality –as the socio-economic– and with the lack of quality of democracy; 2) the impact of the social mobilization in the overcoming of communicative inequality and the dimensions of this overcoming (use of social networks, alternative media, etc); and 3) risks and challenges of the centrality of communicative inequality.

First, the analysis includes 16 interviews conducted, during different periods of fieldwork, between May 2012 and October 2013 to participants in #YoSoy132. These were identified among the students from four public and private universities of Mexico City, for their systematic participation in university assemblies associated to the movement, as well as marches and demonstrations called by #YoSoy132. The selection of interviewees was determined by their willingness to participate in the study. Secondly, we analyzed some texts disseminated by the movement over the Internet. The third source for the analysis were posts and comments posted on #YoSoy132 Facebook profile between May 16, 2012 –when it was created– and December 1 of the same year, when Peña Nieto took office.

RESULTS

COMMUNICATIVE INEQUALITY, SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND DEMOCRATIC QUALITY

The #YoSoy132 movement considers the communicative dimension as a center stage of dispute, where they position themselves against the existing media order, assuming a compromise with those who occupy a subordinate position in the hegemonic communication system, described by the movement as "desperate, those that refresh their timeline every five minutes" (YoSoy132, May 28, 2012). At the same time, it denounces the "current situation of misery, inequality, poverty and violence" in the country, noting that "there are no essential differences between individuals, but inequalities in opportunities, conditions and circumstances" (YoSoy132, May 28, 2012).

In response, #YoSoy132 raises the need to "empower the ordinary citizen through information" as a condition for social change that will allow citizens "demand and criticize, with basis, their Government, political actors, businessmen and society " (YoSoy132, May 28, 2012). In that same text, facing a media scenario characterized by the concentration of ownership, the movement "makes the right to information and the right to freedom of expression its main demands, considering that social democratization and a conscious and participatory citizenship require the democratization of the media."

Lack of democracy and communication inequalities is directly linked to an institutional policy "full of empty figures and rusty speeches". As one interviewee explains, it is necessary to "truly enhance the symbolic dimension of the policy" (AA, ITAM, May 2012)[3] . Consistently, the agenda for collective action provides for legislative reform on media, but is not limited to it. It also includes the "political reform, the transformation of the Mexican judicial system and human rights" (TL, ITAM, May 2012). The criticism to communicative inequality and its articulation with social inequality

that characterizes Mexican society transcends the context of the election campaign, as shown by the shadow report prepared by the movement to the last presidential report of Felipe Calderón from September 1, 2012, two months after the elections.

The shadow report defines the presidential term of Calderón (2006-2012) as "the continuation of a corrupt system," characterized by "hunger, exclusion, disinformation, inequality, disease, dispossession, repression and death" (YoSoy132, September 1, 2012). Regarding the communicative dimension, the text denounces the increase of media concentration during the period, as well as the persecution of citizens of alternative media projects. It qualifies these government measures as "a major setback in the exercise of the rights to information and freedom of expression" and insists on the "democratization of the communication, information and dissemination media" as a first step.

In the diagnosis carried out by the movement, a correspondence is established between this communicative context –characterized by corruption, illegality, institutional and regulatory weakness, high concentration of ownership and public communication policies contrary to citizens interests– and a general context characterized by "an economic model based on poverty and marginalization of the majority of the population" that "impoverishes, excludes, marginalizes and is violent" (YoSoy132, September 1, 2012). Communicative inequality is consistent with precarious labour, the criminalization of social protest and corporatism and political patronage.

There is, in the collective discourse of #YoSoy132, a complex perspective of the inequality of Mexican society. On the one hand, the communicative concentration is considered one of the main expressions of this inequality, "so large that only six men concentrate much of the national wealth and are part of the boards of the two television stations" (RB, UAM, June 2012). But, at the same time, social inequality affects one's sense of the ordinary –the base for setting of a public sphere characterized by communicative equality–, distorting the communicative dynamic that cross social relations, as "coexistence has been lost by so much inequality and insecurity" (Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, May 24, 2012). They criticize "ignorance and material poverty, of food, and especially intellectual poverty to which Mexico is subjected", but consider even more serious

"to see the derogatory way in which how many Mexicans refer to their brothers' (Post, Facebook YoSoy132, July 5, 2012).

COLLECTIVE ACTION AGAINST COMMUNICATIVE INEQUALITY

Both participants in the movement as commentators in social media explain the mobilization as a resource "to raise awareness, because I saw that the media were not being objective" (OG, UNAM, June 2012), showing satisfaction by the emergence of a movement that denounces media manipulation and "reacts to the lack of objectivity and veracity of the media" (Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, May 24, 2012). In a context considered unfair because "there is only a very large chain [Televisa] that can do with public opinion whatever it wants" (CC, UNAM, June 2012), collective action is a response to "what they are doing, how they are manipulating information" (VR, UIA, June 2012).

Communicative inequality also affects the visibility of collective action, claiming that its repression "does not have national coverage" (OM, UNAM, July 2012). In response, there is a discursive strategy according to which social inequality justifies collective action to media strategies to discredit it, stating that "social inequality is more violent than any protest" (Post, Facebook #YoSoy132, June 12, 2012). Collective action is a remedy against unfair communicative and political order, since "if the media and political parties are not giving us the truth, we must seek it" (IL, UIA, may 2012).

The demands of communication transformation in the discursive repertoire of #YoSoy132 include, on the one hand, immediate questions linked to the electoral campaign and, on the other, long-range goals. They claim for " national coverage of the debate between candidates" and that "there is an informational bias in favor of Enrique Peña Nieto" (OM, UNAM, July 2012), but also are designate as goals to "guarantee transparent, plural and with minimum criteria of objectivity information ", establish in the media "instruments which safeguard social interest" and ensure that Internet access is "an effective constitutional law" (#YoSoy132, May 28 2012).

Thus a correspondence is established between the visibility –through collective action– of those in communicative disadvantage and the conditions of pos-

sibility of a process of general socio-political change: "We want our voices to be heard. (…) that we start a more respectable country project" (IC, UAM, June 2012). In this regard, the spaces of communication linked to the movement not only intended to report an unequal communicative order –that, in the context of an election campaign, is considered manipulative and that imposes a candidate– but to set up a movement that "seeks the true well-being of the country", focusing on major problems and demanding and proposing solutions (Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, June 3, 2012). Consistently, #YoSoy132 is defined as an option "in favor of a more just, more free country and takes its responsibility for the common welfare" (Facebook #YoSoy132, May 24, 2012).

This demand for social justice includes centrally the communicative dimension, as the hegemonic media are considered "the most visible face and the main instrument of the oligarchy that rules this country (…) companies that produce and disseminate manipulated, confusing and misleading information" (#YoSoy132, July 26, 2012). Another central aspect in that uneven communication order is the lack of public policies for the reduction of the digital divide, in relation to which high prices of connection, insufficient telecommunications infrastructure and poor digital literacy are reported.

In line with the centrality of the confrontation to communicative inequality, a fundamental dimension in the repertoire of collective action –and, consequently, in the discursive repertoires– will be the actions of communicational nature. In this case, the centrality of the communicative dimension in the discursive repertoire (media concentration, information manipulation and complicity between media and political hegemonic groups system), is not only present in those actions with a particular symbolic character developed by #YoSoy132, as the march convened for August 31, 2012 to "bury" Mexican democracy[4]. So, to the marked communicative and symbolic character of the collective action of contemporary social movements (Melucci, 1996), #YoSoy132 adds actions specifically made against the hegemonic media, as representatives of media concentration and communicative inequality. For example, between May 26 and 27, 2012 a campaign was carried out, via Twitter, #ApagaLaTele (Turn of the TV) and between July 26 and 27, 2012 a fence was

installed around the facilities of the Televisa group, to denounce an "ignominious media company that has mislead and manipulated the people of Mexico" (Post, Facebook #YoSoy132, July 26, 2012).

In addition to these offline collective actions, speeches emphasize the use of ICTs –and, in particular, social networks–, as a resource against communicational inequality for media concentration. In this sense, "the big difference [of #YoSoy132] with the movement of 1968 is the use of social networks and new information and communication technologies", having even influenced the response of power against the collective action, now focused on "trying to use the media blows to neutralize it" (RS, UIA, June 2012).

The impact of the social mobilization in overcoming communicative inequality through the use of ICTs has two fundamental dimensions. On the one hand stands the creation of alternative digital spaces to "spread our cause, which is the handling of real information and not manipulated by communication media" (CC, UNAM, June 2012). On the other hand, the appropriation of social networks is stressed, explicit on aspects as the importance achieved by the hashtags related to movement –for example: #somosmasde131, #MarchaYoSoy132, #YoSoy132, #AsambleaYoSoy132, #Dialogos132, #DebateYoSoy132-, which became trending topic between May and July 2012.

Regarding the alternative and citizen spaces of communication, in the speeches of #YoSoy132 the criminalization of "the efforts of citizens to create their own media" is denounced (YoSoy132, September 1, 2012). These spaces are considered appeals against communicative inequality in favor of sectors subordinated by the hegemonic media system, to be "a tool par excellence so that communities can exercise their right to free expression and information " (YoSoy132, September 1, 2012). But also, they contribute to the reduction of social inequality in general, because they serve "underserved voices of society," carrying information according to their needs (YoSoy132, September 1, 2012).

In relation to social networks, subjects indicate that "they give us voice; "it is an opportunity to be heard, if not by politicians or communication media, at least by other young people" (ARD, UNAM, June 2012). Given these opportunities, there is a "courageous use of these tools, as a response to the lack of veracity in

other media and the complicity between television groups and politicians" (CC, UNAM, June 2012). Especially to meet the communicative imbalance during the election campaign, "Twitter has become a great communication tool, which allows to be informed beyond national news conglomerates", showing "the great strength of this network," generating a youth movement that challenges all the political bases of a country (IL, UIA, May 2012).

RISKS AND CHALLENGES OF THE CENTRALITY OF COMMUNICATIVE INEQUALITY IN THE COLLECTIVE ACTION

In the discursive repertoires analyzed there is also a critical evaluation of the potential of ICTs to gestate communicative democratization against imbalances associated with communication concentration. In particular, the existence of a deep digital divide in the Mexican society is highlighted, so "even though the Internet has become the great engine of democracy, (…) it is our duty to inform those who have no access to this media" (CC, UNAM, June 2012). Even in the online spaces stands the importance of transcending them and make possible "that this movement arrives to the streets, houses and above all to the people who does not have the possibility (…) to access the information via the Internet "(Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, May 24, 2012).

They also signal the ephemeral nature, for example, of hashtags against a hegemonic media concentrate and permanent system, so it "would be very good that people came out to the streets, rather than only protest in social networks" (TL, ITAM, May 2012). Another challenge identified in the use of social networks against an unequal communication order is the possibility that they will turn into "a double-edged weapon: on the one hand, they foster a move never seen before in our country, but on the other hand political parties benefiting from it" (TL, ITAM, may 2012). In this regard, they denounce the creation during the election campaign of "digital armies responsible for open electoral fronts in the network, including paid tweeters and false accounts" (OM, UNAM, July 2012).

In the own Facebook profile linked to the movement, it is considered that excessive use of these digital platforms can have a negative effect. The result of such distorted use of social networks is described in terms of an "excess of information, false or anonymous accounts, lack of reality and truthfulness" and a debate "without knowledge, ideas and information, where the individual version predominates" (Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, July 14, 2012). In that same critical story line, the centrality of the communicative inequality is associated with possible negative trends in collective action, such as the lack of proposals and its limitation to the "theme of the election and the democratization of media" (Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, May 24, 2012).

Since the collective discourse tends to consider central overcoming a situation of communicative subordination –stressing the need for "issuing initiatives, informing people, keeping us organized and informed in alternative media" (Post, Facebook #YoSoy132, July 11, 2012)–, the subjects warn about the need for a comprehensive perspective of social change, reinforcing the understanding of communicative inequality as part of a context of complex social inequality. Therefore, they insist that the transformation "begins by creating social equity", articulating a "claim for a country where we live in equality, with rights and obligations" (Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, June 3 and 20, 2012).

In the case of the comments through the Facebook profile, that critical position comes even to the end of questioning the centrality of the communicative dimension in the discursive repertoire of the movement, wondering "what is 'democratization of the media'. Who made the proposal, what is it, and what would it serve for?" (Comment, Facebook #YoSoy132, June 15, 2012). This extreme position is not present among the interviewed participants, who, although they emphasize the role of the movement as a source of information on the reality of Mexico and confrontation to a concentrated and unequal media system, highlight that the slogans of #YoSoy132 "also include the reduction of poverty and inequality, because it is time to demand (…) that the current situation of inequality, poverty and violence is resolved" (CC, UNAM, June 2012). Therefore, it is considered that the collective action against the communicative dimension must include a social agenda and the objective has to be to transcend social mobilization linked to the electoral scenario, to "become something like a citizen, very politically active, watchdog" (TL, ITAM, May 2012).

These approaches –although important– do not question the centrality of communication in the collective action of #YoSoy132. Communicative inequality persists as a central axis in their discursive repertoire. In fact, even after completion of the electoral campaign, the creation of alternative communication spaces still plays an important role in the movement. As someone commented on Facebook, "if the media does not support us, it is time to create our own media" (Facebook #YoSoy132, September 12, 2012). Similarly, the continuity of the movement, mainly through communication spaces, as profiles on Twitter and Facebook, or the Másde131 Collective website (http://www.masde131.com), created on May 11, 2014, confirm the persistence of a collective action aimed at overcoming communicative inequalities.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the discursive repertoire linked to a collective action aimed at confronting an uneven hegemonic order shows that communicative inequality would be configured from: 1) a high media concentration; 2) a major hegemonic institutional complicity between media and political system; 3) a significant digital divide, and 4) the criminalization of alternative communication spaces created by communicatively subordinated groups. This inequality, in communicative terms, is expressed in a communicative domination in which the manipulation of information and the invisibility of certain groups or social events (such as the collective action itself) are articulated.

The study shows that, at least in certain communicative contexts and in times of particular political communicative density, as a general election campaign, communicative inequality can become a central dimension of the collective action. Several theoretical approaches have emphasized the centrality of communication in contemporary social movements in general, but #YoSoy132 analysis also shows that when the communicative inequality is central to the discursive repertoire of these social actors, such centrality becomes a singular mediation for collective action.

The case here analyzed reflects a tendency to prioritize the collective action of communicative nature, particularly through social networks, which are considered fundamental technological resources to overcome communicative inequality. To the recognized importance of the communicative and symbolic dimension of social movements, are added collective actions specifically directed against the hegemonic media system. Communication, therefore, is not only a dimension of collective action, but also its target –which justifies actions against the dominant media system– and a central theme of discourse repertoires related to social mobilization at all levels.

Despite this centrality, communicative inequality does not occur in isolation in the discursive repertoire, but in the context –and as part of– social inequality in general. While overcoming communicative inequality –through democratization of communication– is the first objective for social change, it is understood as part of a general process of struggle against economic insecurity, social exclusion and impoverishment of certain groups, as the prevalence of a patronage system and corporatism in institutional politics.

There is evidence of a criticism to this central role of the communicative dimension –particularly in the online communication– in #YoSoy132. On the one hand, they stress the limitations of a purely online communicative collective action and the need to transcend it. Furthermore, the continuity of the collective action is associated to transcend a collective action centered on communication and overcoming communicative inequality, opening it to a broader social agenda, in line with the multidimensionality of social inequality in general. This points out to a criticism to the possibility of a collective action for communication –understood in its most instrumental sense– as a result of a multiple centrality of the communicative dimension. This multidimensional centrality will be the result that communication is, at the same time, central theme of the discursive repertoire and objective of the collective action (communicative democratization, understood as overcoming inequality) and object and dimension of the collective action (actions against the hegemonic media system and actions of communicative nature). However, despite such criticism, the analysis of the studied case also shows the weight that mediation exercised by this centrality of communicative inequality in understanding the collective action and its evolution beyond the period of greatest activity in the protests, in which it continues to prioritize the communicative dimension –creation of alternative communication spaces, presence in social networks and digital media– as part of the strategy to overcome an unequal communication order.

FOOTNOTES

1. The 15-M movement emerged in Spain as a result of the demonstration on May 15, 2011, convened against the policies of economic austerity, corruption and as a demand for a more participatory democracy. It led to camping, protests and assemblies throughout the Spanish territory, with an extensive use of social networks.

2. Protests and looting occurred between August 6 and 12, 2011 in Great Britain. They began in the London district of Tottenham, following the death of Mark Duggan, a young person of black race, during a shootout with the London Metropolitan Police, then spreading to other areas of the capital, such as Wood Green, Enfield Town and Ponders End.

3. The texts of the interviews will be cited this way: initials of the interviewee student, university, date. The universities included are: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM); Universidad Iberoamericana (UIA); Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM) and Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM).

4. On August 31, 2012, #YoSoy132 carried out a march from the university city of UNAM to the Electoral Court of the country, in Mexico City, as a symbolic action to "bury" the Mexican democracy as that court ratified Enrique Peña Nieto as President-elect.

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