OLD PROBLEMS AND NEW HYBRIDIZATIONS IN THE MEXICAN MEDIA SYSTEM: the informative positioning of the media on Facebook and Twitter

ANTIGOS PROBLEMAS E NOVAS HIBRIDAÇÕES NO SISTEMA MEDIÁTICO MEXICANOS: o posicionamento informativo de meios de comunicação no Facebook e Twitter

VIEJOS PROBLEMAS Y NUEVAS HIBRIDACIONES EN EL SISTEMA DE MEDIOS MEXICANO: el posicionamiento de los medios en Facebook y Twitter

German Espino Sanchez
Professor at the Autonomous University of Querétaro. Member of the Sistema Nacional de Investigadores (SNI) of Mexico. Doctor in Political Science at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. yomeros666@hotmail.com.

0000-0001-5226-230X

Bruno Reis
Universidade de Lisboa. reisbr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT:
The digitalization of the mass media proposes a hybridization relationship between new and old practices, and this procedure is a challenge both for traditional media and for digital media. In this study we will analyze the positioning of 16 Mexican news outlets on social networks Facebook and Twitter, trying to understand how this presence in the digital sphere proposes the configuration of their information strategies. Our substantive conclusion is related to the observation that the studied digital media has a great propensity to be present on Twitter, but the traditional ones predominate on Facebook, and those media that are more followed on social networks by more netizen propose a media coverage of more sensational content.

KEYWORDS: Democratic journalism; Digital journalism; Network analysis; Hybrid media systems; Social network system.

Introduction

The state of the art suggests that the new media do not come to supplant the old ones, but that both end up converging in a process of hybridization, this article is trying to verify how this apparent fusion operates in the Mexican media space. What interests us here is the debate about whether behind the transformation promoted by digital technologies there are old and new problems that obscure the panorama of democracy. This investigation attempts to understand how technological reconversion takes place in the Mexican context. The research carried out an analysis of how the 16 most relevant Mexican media outlets, traditional and digital, position themselves in the universe of social media. This article has two main purposes; 1) understand the communicative strategies that digital and traditional media adopt on the social networks Facebook and Twitter, and 2) verify whether we are witnessing a reconfiguration of the analyzed media system, trying to understand whether such a procedure affects the informative standards

expected from democratic journalism. The research was conducted in late 2017 and early 2018 as a case study proposed by Barrio et al. (2006) and Stake (2005). Based on this methodology, the aim is to problematize a social phenomenon in order to understand it in depth. Qualitative and quantitative techniques are used to gather 1) formation from traditional main national news producers and 2) data from media networks (Twitter and Facebook). The information is triangulated to validate the data. In this analysis, the information gathered from the former is compared to the latter, to 1) observe whether "digital native" media are displacing traditional news products on the Internet and 2) analyze whether the high standards of democratic journalism are maintained in the new media system emerging in Mexico's second decade of this century.

The causes of the crisis in democratic journalism

In recent decades, after the flourishing and consolidation of the network society (Castells, 2012), the media and journalism have entered a process of economic and credibility crisis, in our view due to three fundamental aspects.

Firstly, because we are witnessing a substantial change in the social function of journalism. Since the end of the 19th century, journalism has consolidated itself as one of the bastions of democracy, the journalist assumed the role of "watch dog", informing and alerting citizens about the actions of the government and interest groups (Hallin & Mancini, 2008). In democratic societies, news systems play an important role in promoting an informed, tolerant and participatory citizenship (Curran et al., 2009), which presupposes a given expectation of information ideally linked to the values of truth and independence (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2004), with particular emphasis on Latin American democracies that still suffer from political instability (Roveda & Rico de Sotelo, 2012). This model of democratic journalism began to have problems in the mid-20th century, losing its hegemony in the generation of information, in the panorama of a digital ecosystem that allowed open access to a wide range of information resources. This change imploded a business model that was based on payment information and that now competed with access without financial compensation, all in the context of a consumer society strongly marked by a digital culture in convergence (Jenkins, 2006; Flattum, 2011). This caused a gradual dissolution between the borders of information and entertainment, a hybridization towards infotainment (Thussu, 2007).

The media ecosystem is particularly centered on a 'spectacle culture' that simplifies information processing, particularly issues of a political nature (Crosbie, 2008). According to Curran (2009), we are witnessing a communication-entertainment that normalized a

"tabloidization" of journalism that undermines the role of information as a democratic instrument.

Secondly, due to a reconfiguration of the media ecosystem, since the 1970s, mass media has moved towards a niche logic (Crosbie, 2008), in particular with the emergence and subsequent massification of cable television, which allowed hundreds of television channels to be available at home and the emergence of a multitude of specialty magazines (due to the spread of offset printing).

In the nineties, with the popularization of computers and the Internet (Castells, 2009), new digital means of communication emerged, expanding the public's media diet. The effect of the pulverization of the media space had a decisive impact on the media that operated in pre-digital formats, suffering audience losses due to the increasing segmentation of the market.

The last phase of this socio-technical transformation emerged in the 21st century with the development of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0. At this stage of technological development, we are witnessing the flourishing of social networks, such as: Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), Twitter (2006) and Instagram (2010). These digital tools have enhanced niche digital communication, where millions of people collaborate daily (Jenkins, 2006), and it is interesting for us to verify in this investigation to what extent they have enhanced the promotion of a digital public space, as advocated by authors such as Higgins (2018) and Benkler, Faris and Roberts (2018).

Thirdly, economic crises are pointed out as another of the major causes for the failure of democratic journalism. Since the 2008 crisis, the worst recession developed countries have experienced since World War II, media advertising sales have fallen in almost all OECD countries, including Mexico (Nygren and Dobek Ostrowska, 2015), the which led to significant layoffs in many media organizations.

Concomitantly with this critical situation in the media, we are witnessing a large-scale reconfiguration of the political aspect and the emergence of strong populist movements, with a propensity to harass and limit the exercise of democratic journalism. For example, in the United States, Donald Trump's presidency was characterized by promoting "alternative truths" and harassing information professionals (Higgins, 2018; Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018).

Given the situation described, it is now important to discuss the current information paradigm, a digitalized journalism that calls for renewed business logic and information practices.

Digital journalism and the reconfiguration of the information system

21st century journalism is strongly influenced by digital technologies, which has motivated and continues to motivate profound changes in the routine of journalistic production and information dissemination models (Stencel and Perry, 2016). Among the new trends in digital journalism, the following stand out: 1) the dissemination of news on social networks and the consequent interactivity between the media and users; 2) the production of multimedia content, with special attention to video production; 3) daily and permanent updating of information; 4) the production of information by amateur users; 5) the development of innovative technological platforms for journalism and, 6) the financing of news production by users (crowdfunding).

We are also witnessing the emergence of new professional profiles for the exercise of journalistic activity (Stencel and Perry, 2016). Currently, journalists develop multiple skills for all types of media; this profile is called a "multitasking journalist", capable of working simultaneously on different platforms and mastering different informative languages. This journalist must be able to address the entire information creation process, including photography, editing, writing and news production (Nygren and Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015).

The challenges of the digitalization of information have changed the training offered by communication schools themselves, expanding the set of skills taught, in line with the challenges of cyberjournalism. Having skills in social network management (Crosbie, 2008) and data analysis are valuable tools today to practice the profession, which implies an advanced skills of computer knowledge.

The profession of journalist also faces the prominence of bloggers and influencers who gain prominence in the public sphere without having to comply with the ethical standards of journalists, that means they are potentially promoting non civic information agendas. In the United States, some of these digital actors have become campaign consultants for politicians, interest groups, government agencies and even the media, the best example is Stephen Banon, who coordinated part of Donald Trump's digital campaign in 2016 (Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018). Based on the problem we want to address here, in which the transition to digitalized information has changed the modes of journalistic production, the relationship between content and the public and the role of journalism in democracy, it is now important to discuss the effects that these changes are producing in the public debate.

Information in times of convergent hybridization, a possible reading based on the main theoretical currents

The paradigm shift, resulting from the transition from an analog communication model to a digital one, proposed three interpretations to think about how this transition process reorders public space; 1) the leveling theses; 2) addressing the culture of participation and convergence; 3) the proposal of the media hybridization system and as a counterpoint 4) critical studies of digital culture.

Regarding the battle for the conquest of the public space between old and new media, there are two conflicting theoretical interpretations. In the first place, the "equalizing hypothesis" argues that the arrival of new media contributes to the revitalization of the role of political actors in representative democracies. In this sense, the Internet would facilitate communication between citizens and political actors (Margolis, Resnick & Levy 2003) and simultaneously broaden the horizons of discussion in the public space that would help equalize the conditions of access for minority sectors (such as the new media).

In contrast to the leveling thesis, the "normalizing hypothesis" of public space it proposes that despite technological innovations, the status quo prevails in the public space, because the dominant actors (such as the traditional media) have more resources and more influence, allowing them to maintain control of the public space (Margolis, Resnick & Levy 2003).

In second place, Henry Jenkins elaborates the concept of "convergence culture" to explain how traditional and new media, old and new audiences, old and new technologies, and media industries of all kinds converge. Henry Jenkins (2006) speaks of processes that are shaping the culture of Western societies in developed countries, they are three, 1) media convergence, 2) participatory culture, and 3) collective intelligence. These processes are interrelated and together are sometimes referred to as "convergence culture".

In third place, from political communication, Andrew Chadwick (2014) explains that in the 21st century we have "hybrid media systems", because of how the logics of old and new media collaborate. In the hybrid media system, in addition to competition, there is also collaboration and even interdependence between traditional and new media. In this hybrid system, new forms of action emerge, such as the speed and dissemination of news on social networks. While traditional media maintain a large audience share, new media generate loyalty within their communities; All this translates into a growing fragmentation of audiences.

These first three formulations end up having as a common denominator an optimistic position on the uses and effects of technologies in public spaces. A vision that is opposed by currents that criticize these positions (Pariser, 2010; Zuboff 2015; Center for Humane Technology, 2018). We must remember that in the first decade of the 21st century, technological optimism predominated, with the appearance of social networks in 2004 and their determining role in Obama's presidential campaign in 2008 (Castells 2010; Chadwick, 2013). Subsequently, social movements emerged driven by the convening power of networks, as is the case of the Arab Spring and Occupy in 2011. In this context, cyber-optimist authors such as Castells (2012) predicted that social networks would be vital for the social movements and for the development of a digital deliberative democracy.

But in the second decade of the 21st century, processes were developed that challenged the optimistic outlook for the development of digital technologies; Critical currents of cyber-optimism emerged. These currents began by pointing out the inequality that constitutes access to cyberspace, the "normalization theses" consider that despite technological innovations, a logic prevails that reinforces the current status quo. Dominant actors and corporations already had more effective and symbolic resources, maintaining control of public space (Margolis, Resnick and Levy 2003).

This asymmetry of resources is expressed in the uses that these agents make of cyber resources; critical currents highlight the serious problems of cyber surveillance, an aspect that gained public importance after the accusations of Edward Snowden (Benkler, Faris & Roberts, 2018). They also problematize the way in which technology companies usurp our data and sell it without the users' consent (Center for Humane Technology, 2018). In this sense, we are alerted to how technology develops "surveillance capitalism" (Zuboff, 2015). The Big Data culture serves companies that use user data to carry out personalized advertising processes and even political manipulation, as was the case of Cambridge Analytica (Benkler, Faris and Roberts, 2018). In this way, the mainstream corporations of Social Network System would be involved in processes of commercial exploitation and political manipulation of people (Zuboff, 2015; Center for Humane Technology, 2018).

Regarding the construction of a deliberative public sphere based on social networks, critical authors warn that digital marketing agencies have currently specialized in developing large structures of political action on social networks (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017). Digital agencies develop large human-cyber structures to drive opinion trends on social networks (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017; Benkler, Faris, & Roberts, 2018). Many

authors point out that most opinion trends on social networks are not organic, but driven by these digital marketing agencies (Center for Humane Technology, 2018).

In this context, in the last years of the second decade of the 21st century, the emergence of a digital deliberative democracy begins to be ignored, now there is talk of how public space can be manipulated by hackers and digital agencies at the service of governments and large corporations. (Bradshaw & Howard, 2017; Benkler, Faris & Roberts, 2018). On the other hand, it is worth to talk about the manipulation of electoral processes, in particular the Cambridge Analytics scandal and its multiple political implications, this process has created a growing and widespread feeling of distrust in deliberative processes (Benkler, Faris & Roberts, 2018). The four examples of this kind of manipulation would be: 1) Brexit, which led the United Kingdom to leave the European Community; 2) the plebiscite given to the Colombian people on the peace process, in which the "no" won; 3) the triumph of Donald Trump in the campaign for the presidency of the United States, and 4) the independence process of Catalonia (Silverman, 2016; Alandete, 2017; Benkler, Faris & Roberts, 2018).

Finally, some critical authors denounce that social networks exploit sensationalism to intensify social belligerence (Boyd in Pariser, 2010). In this sense, critical authors conclude that social networks do not predominate in the debate on transcendental issues in the public sphere, but rather a discourse of celebrities, fake news and a call for the commercialization of ideas (Centre for Humane Technologies, 2019).

Thus, critical positions emphasize that several interconnected social processes are currently developing that lead to a crisis in current democracies (Benkler, Faris & Roberts, 2018; Morlino, 2019), among which stand out: 1) the consolidation of digital agencies that manipulate digital public opinion trends; 2) Internet users polarization processes in social networks; 3) consolidation of populist authoritarian governments; 4) crisis of traditional democratic journalism and emergence of a new digital public space with little credibility and 5) usurpation of the privacy of online users. Starting from this conceptual framework, let's look at the Mexican case, where we propose to analyze the configuration of its media space.

Framework of the Mexican media system; portrait of a crisis

Hallin and Mancini (2008), state that media systems are structured in relation to political systems, such that media in democratic systems tends to be plural and independent, a reflection of social plurality. On the other hand, in authoritarian regimes,

the media tends to submit to autocrats and those who serve them as their spokespersons.

It should be clarified that a country's media system does not always work coherently for either a democratic or an authoritarian regime, but often consists of media outlets contradicting and opposing each other and rarely working in a coordinated manner. In contemporary democratic societies, media systems usually do not work as a uniform chorus of voices, but in what is a permanent discussion that promotes a deliberative public sphere (Higgins 2017).

Sallie Hughes (2006) considers that during the period of the authoritarian regime of Mexico, "authoritarian journalism" was the dominant model. However, during the transition, large national newspapers led the consolidation of a "democratic journalism" model.

Hughes (2006) assumes that by the end of the transition period there was also a consolidation of a "market-driven journalism" predominantly across the television stations. In this model, journalists developed pluralistic coverage, but their newsrooms were ruled by the market roles and exhibited a lack of independence. The author further suggests that civic journalism and market-driven journalism would have replaced authoritarian journalism in Mexico since the mid-1990s. It should be clarified that Mexico's democratic transition has neither been a linear or coherent process, but rather a tortuous one full of inconsistencies.

In order to unveil the transformation of the media system in Mexico, we will show the crisis experienced by the main media corporations, focusing on the case of the most important media corporations in the country, namely: Televisa, TV Azteca, Grupo Imagen and *El Universal*

The 2016 survey of the Federal Telecommunications Institute tells us that there are televisions in 96% of Mexican households. In addition, 74% of the population acknowledged that they watch open television programs (IFT 2016).

In the latest decades, Televisa has been considered as the most important Spanish-speaking media corporation in the world. It is also the one that receives most of its revenue from official advertising (Media Ownership Monitor 2018), because it is the one that is reported to have the largest audience share in the country.

Despite Televisa's dominance, from 2014 to 2018 there were significant drops in the corporation's revenues (Televisa 2017). In mid-2017, a profound restructuring of Televisa's news system was announced, the most important TV channel replaced the whole of its newscast programs. The cancellation of its nightly star newscast stands out, being that it was the newscast product with the highest rating in the country, despite it

being very costly and that it generated losses. The announcement said it would be replaced by a new, much more economical half-hour broadcast. Despite this crisis, the corporation maintains a very intense news bar. The trick is that the whole news system is sustained by the same reporters and news editors, who report to different programs, thus maximizing the yield of the raw material that is in the news.

The decline in Televisa's corporate revenues continued in 2017 (Televisa 2017). In October 2017, Emilio Azcárraga Jean resigned as president of the Televisa corporation, leaving Bernardo Gómez and Alfonso de Angoitia in charge. Analysts (Villamil 2017) contend that this resignation was motivated by the sustained drop in revenues of recent years and due to the failure of the restructurings that were also undertaken throughout that time.

Secondly, we must talk about TV Azteca. This is considered the second most important Spanish-speaking media corporation in the world, following Televisa in importance (Media Ownership Monitor Mexico 2018). TV Azteca is part of a conglomerate of companies among which Elektra and Banco Azteca stand out.

At the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the TV Azteca media corporation plunged into a crisis with losses in the millions because most of its television programs did not sell enough advertising, resulting in them working in the red (Martínez, July 17, 2017).

Reports to the Mexican Stock Exchange in 2014 and 2015 recorded a decline in the media corporation's profits (Mérida, October 18, 2015). In 2015, the company initiated a restructuring of its TV content. Ricardo Salinas handed over the management of the media corporation to his son Benjamín Salinas, who began to cut programs considered to be a burden for the company and abandoned exclusivity contracts with actors. Fewer telenovelas were produced, opting instead to produce more reality shows that come with lower costs and have a greater impact on the public (Mérida, October 18, 2015).

The third large corporation that was born in Mexico is Grupo Imagen, owned by Olegario Vázquez Raña. This businessman is the owner of Grupo Empresarial Angeles, a corporation that "has important investments in businesses related to tourism, health and finance throughout the country" (Media Ownership Monitor 2018). Since 2003, the Grupo Angeles corporation bought several radio stations. In 2006 it bought the *Excelsior* newspaper and its Internet portal. Finally, in 2015, it acquired an open television channel, Imagen TV (Media Ownership Monitor 2018).

Previously, the corporation had a cable TV channel called Cadenatres, with which they began to operate a television station for a limited audience.

In an interview for *Forbes* (Torres 2017), Olegario Vázquez Raña acknowledges that the *Excelsior* newspaper was not a profitable business, but considered it could be a good business, which seems contradictory. Perhaps the underlying issue is that in Mexico the purchase of a media outlet facilitates relations with the government, which has been denounced many on the international media front (Ahmed 2017; Cattan, 2017). In this sense, Olegario Vázquez Raña was right, the hundreds of millions of dollars invested in media soon yielded substantial government advertising. The NGO Fundar contends that in 2016 alone, Grupo Imagen obtained 23 million dollars in official advertising from the federal government (Fundar in Media Ownership Monitor Mexico 2018).

Finally, we need to review the case of the main newspaper o México: *El Universal,* it is famous because it has the most visited news portal in Mexico (*El Economista* 2018). Media Ownership Monitor Mexico (2018) explains that since its origin this newspaper has been linked to the politícians of the authoritarian regime.
Some specialists (Arreola 2013) warn that Internet users do not visit it because of its credibility, but because its digital version develops "satellite pages" that function as niche media. They publish a wide variety of information and much of it is dedicated to entertainment issues, popular culture topics such as tourism, food, health, sexuality, etc. In short, *El Universal* would seem to have achieved a large audience share thanks to its "market-driven journalism" strategy.

There are many other national media outlets immersed in a deep crisis, for example, the *La Jornada* is a newspaper that during the six-year term of Enrique Peña Nieto depended on the advertising granted to it by the presidency (Ahmed 2017). Other critical media such as the *Proceso* magazine have suffered a deep crisis due to their poor marketing and an advertising veto by the federal government *(La Jornada* 2014).

Broadly speaking, this is the characterization of the main Mexican media, which we will now study from the point of view of the impact they have on the digital environment.

Methodology to analyze the impact of the media on Facebook and Twitter

According to the latest data available from the National Institute of Statistics of Mexico, the rate of Internet users was 70.1% (INEGI, 2019). It is necessary to clarify that Mexico's Internet penetration is increasing considerably, but most of the population continues to be closely linked to television and radio, therefore, these means of communication are viewed with distrust by the population as shown in Graph I.

Figure 1 - Consumption of political information in the media of Mexico
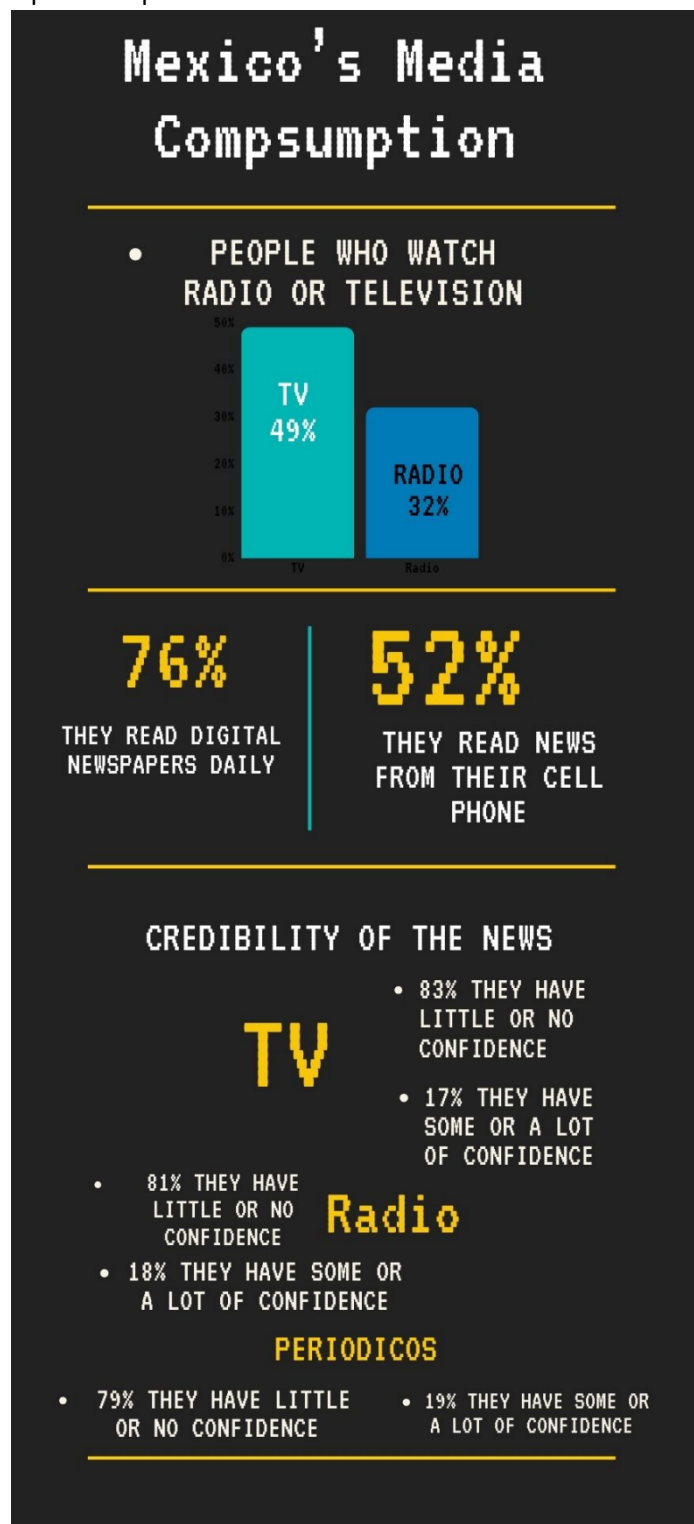
Source: Media Ownership Monitor México 2018 (Cencos & Reporters without borders).

For this research, we analyze the networks of both the main traditional and digital media outlets in Mexico. In the study, the news products of those that work within the tradition of democratic journalism were ranked, not those media outlets that only produce entertainment. A methodology similar to that proposed by México Social (2016)

was designed. It is one that coincides with those used in international studies, where influence is measured by various factors and not only by the number of followers (Gerodimos & Justinussen 2014).

The objective was to unveil the level of influence exerted on the media by the Twitter and Facebook networks, to explore if digital media outlets are displacing the traditional media ones in the wider digital public space. In this research, the Twitter and Facebook accounts of the most prominent Mexican media outlets were analyzed, first in an analysis done to determine their relative penetration in the market, giving us an idea of the traditions media outlets to select for the subsequent analysis. The analysis was carried out in the second half of 2017.

The aim is to measure the influence of the 16 media outlets, all of which have an official Twitter and Facebook profile. These media analyzed are, 1) *Milenio*, 2) *Reforma*, 3) *La Jornada*, 4) *El Universal*, 5) *Excelsior*, 6) *Sin Embargo*, 7) *Animal Politico*, 8) *Sopitas*, 9) *SDPNoticias*, 10) Noticiarios Televisa, 11) Azteca Noticias, 12) Imagen Informativa, 13) *Proceso*, 14) Noticieros Radio Formula, 15) *Reporte Indigo*, and 16) Aristegui Noticias.

Twitter impact study of Mexican media in 2017

The Twitter accounts of the media were analyzed. Data collection was carried out during the months of September, October, November and December 2017. The data presented for each of the accounts has a cut-off date of September 8, 2017.

In this study, influence is considered a complex element, which cannot be measured solely by the number of followers of each account. It is necessary to analyze the impact that media outlet accounts garner from their Twitter account. For this study, four indicators are identified to measure the influence that media outlets garner on social networks; the proliferation, interaction, support, and the number of active followers each account has.

1. Proliferation refers to the production of messages and the number of views each message amasses. This also includes the number of retweets generated by an account.

2. Interaction measures how many retweets, replies and favorites the account's messages achieve.

3. Support is an indicator that allows you to see the influence directly. Endorsements offer a window to 1) how users give legitimacy to an account by enrolling it in a list[1], 2) the number of recommendations made to follow an account, made visible thanks to the

---

[1] Lists are used to create specific groups on topics that allow you to track the publications of the selected accounts. When news outlets are included in a list, this means that people want to know what the outlet publishes.

use of the hashtag #FF (Follow Friday) that has become popular among Twitter users as a way for them to make recommendations to others.

4. Unlike on Facebook, many Twitter users tend to often abandon their accounts (inactive accounts), so the list of followers of the accounts tends to be exaggerated. Based on this, we decided to only count active followers. To do so, we purged the inactive accounts from the databases of each of the media outlets. To exclude inactive followers, the following types of profiles were eliminated; 1) accounts that do not have any tweets published, 2) those that do not follow more than one other account (influence on Twitter depends on interaction, if an account does not follow anyone it is presumed that it does not interact), and 3) accounts that do not have followers even if someone posts messages to that account (if they do not have followers, no one sees their posts).

The indicators (proliferation, interaction, support, and followers) are taken from different measurement and data extraction tools. For this study, the Twitonomy, Twt Dominator, Klear platforms were used, as well as the advanced Twitter search engine in conjunction with import.io. It is necessary to note that the indicators presented only contemplate the data that the extraction tools allow it to obtain, which are quantitative data.

For proliferation and interaction, the last 3,200 tweets from the aforementioned accounts are taken as a sample. In the case of the backup, the data generated by the accounts is taken from their origins to the moment of observation.

Regarding the number of followers, we must warn that some of the accounts have more than 2 million followers and there are no tools that allow us to obtain the data in its entirety. For this reason, in most accounts it was decided to take a statistical sample. The determination of each sample was obtained with a sampling error of 0.5% and a confidence level of 95%, extracted historically according to the characteristics of the software used (Twitonomy and Twt Dominator), the most recent followers were privileged for each of the accounts. The results obtained were then placed on a Likert Scale for a ranking from 5 (highest) to 1 (lowest).

Based on the set of categories we have proposed, the results indicate that the media outlets with the greatest influence on Twitter are: 1) *El Universal*, 2) *Milenio*, and 3) *Animal Politico*. In summary, it appears that the influence of the media on Twitter is not related to the type of media, whether traditional or digital native, nor by the different platform types (TV, radio or press) since each type of media has different behaviors in the proliferation, interaction, support, and number of active followers for each account.

Among the digital native media platforms that achieve a good level of influence on Twitter the top three are *Animal Politico*, *Aristegui Noticias*, and *Sopitas*. Noticieros

Televisa is among the top five while Azteca Noticias placed last. The results are displayed according to their proportional Likert scale (see Figure II).

Figure 2 - Twitter influence ranking

RESULTADO FINAL

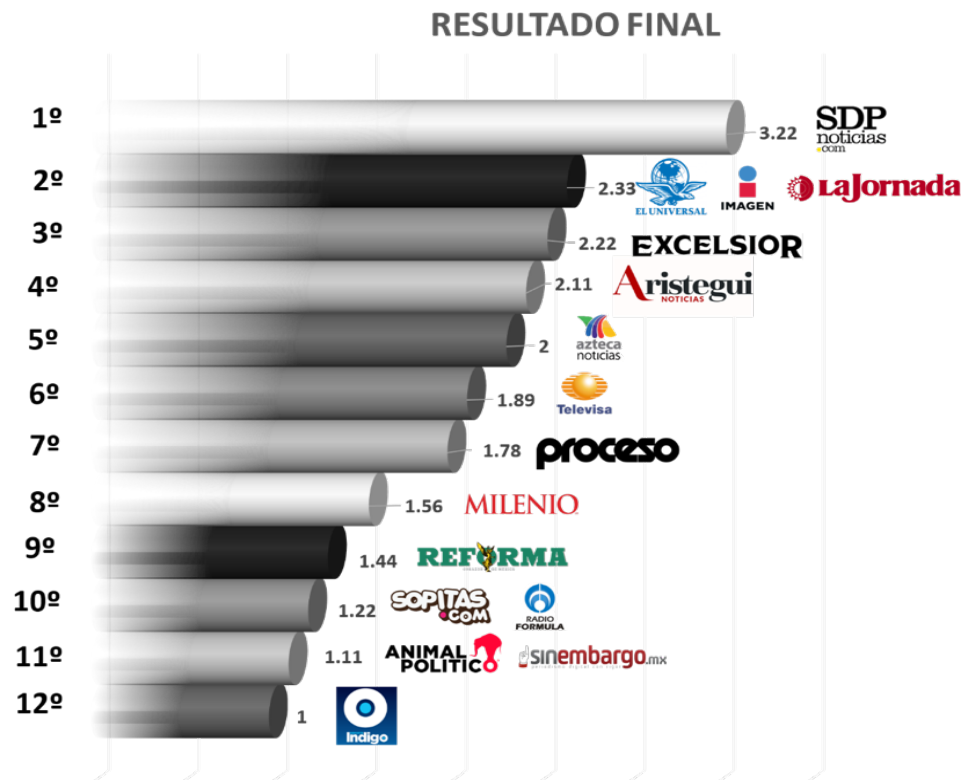Reference: Author, ranking of media accounts of Twitter (2017).

Facebook impact study of Mexican media in 2017

Data collection was carried out from November 2017 to January 2018. As in the Twitter case, the indicators that allow us to see the proliferation, interaction, support, and the number of followers for each account are analyzed. However, the indicators that are built around the four aforementioned indicators change due to the data collection and processing system characteristics afforded by Facebook's architecture. The data were obtained through specialized software for data mining of Facebook: Octosync, Likealyzer and Fanpage Karma.

Taking into account the set of indicators, the results indicate that the media outlet with the greatest influence on Facebook is *SDPNoticias*. In second place is *El Universal*, joined by Imagen Informativa and *La Jornada*. As can be seen in Figure III, traditional media (except *SDP Noticias* and *Aristegui Noticias*) are the ones that dominate on

Facebook, while almost of all the digital media outlets are located at the bottom of the list.

Figure 3 - Facebook influence ranking

RESULTADO FINAL

Source: Author, ranking of media accounts of Facebook (2017).

The final result indicates how *SDPNoticias, La Jornada, Azteca Noticias, Animal Político, Sopitas* and *Milenio* have varied levels of social network influence on each of the social media networks. On the other hand, other media such as *El Universal, Excélsior* and *Proceso* have similar levels of influence in both networks.

Conclusions

Traditionally, the platforms are considered to have very different audiences. On the one hand, Twitter serves more specialized audiences such as journalists, politicians and the informed population. Twitter accounts function as a spokesperson for politicians and personalities in the public space (Higgins 2018). Facebook, on the other hand, seems to focus on a more generic population and specializes less on "serious" topics. In general, Facebook is more for entertainment (Uribe 2016). Facebook convenes larger audiences, while Twitter focuses on a more specialized and much smaller circle. Facebook's

penetration rate in Mexico is around 92%, while Twitter is at 40%, but on this latter network, almost half the accounts are inactive users (MilwardBrown 2017).

On Facebook, traditional media dominate over digital natives, this is due to traditional media being better positioned in the media market. The only exception is *SDPNoticias*, as the best ranked media on Facebook. Traditional media have been gathering large audiences for decades and thanks to this they have a predominant position. In addition, these media corporations have great economic and intellectual resources to dominate the Internet. This would confirm the hypothesis of normalization: the mainstream media transfer their influence to the Internet.

In contrast, on Twitter, digital media have a large presence, this could be due to the fact that *Animal Politico* appears in third place (above Televisa) in the Twitter ranking, while *Aristegui Noticias* is in fourth place, and *Sopitas* in fifth, leaving *Sin Embargo* in eighth place. These results support the equalizing thesis: new media could have good ground to stand on in their fight against the big companies on the Internet.

El Universal coincides in the first places in both studies. On Twitter, it takes first place, and second on Facebook. This is corroborated in other studies that have been conducted to rank media on the Internet (*El Economista* 2018). We could conclude that *El Universal* was the most influential media on the Internet during the study period.

It is disappointing to see Televisa in fourth place on Twitter and sixth on Facebook. At one time, Televisa was the most important media corporation in the Spanish-speaking world. Perhaps it was because of this poor positioning that in 2017 Televisa bought a 50% stake in SDPNoticias, and then bought the satirical content website El Deforma. As Televisa's digital strategy fails, it buys media to move ahead to catch up, but has not been able to correct its deficient digital strategy.

But if Televisa has serious problems, TV Azteca is frankly out of the game when it comes to the digital market, despite it being the second largest Spanish-speaking media corporation in the world. On Facebook, it places sixth among outlets that have a low economic investment threshold (*SDPNoticias* and *Aristegui Noticias*). TV Azteca is in 14th place on Twitter, which demonstrates its relatively null reach among the most informed public. It must be recognized that Grupo Imagen has grown tremendously in its social networks, especially if we add the influence of its newspaper, *Excelsior*. Despite Grupo Imagen being a newer corporation, it is now on a par with Televisa and far surpasses TVAzteca.

Anyone would think that the dependence of the Mexican media on official advertising would have nothing to do with the technological reconversion, but this may not be the case. Many analysts have pointed out that large Mexican media outlets

became uncompetitive exactly when this type of innovation was the engine of the digital economy (Bustillos 2017; Chadwick 2014). It should also be noted that much of the news media in the United States and the world are suffering from social, political and technological transformations. However, we insist, some first world countries are in an environment of innovative media cultural production, which is not the case in Mexico.

Apparently, digital convergence has toppled on the old models of Mexican journalism. The greatest criticism we can make is that they do not generate innovative cultural products. Not even the big media corporations such as Televisa and TV Azteca are able to generate transmedia cultural products or the type that achieve greater penetration in social networks, to give some examples. But the worst thing is that, as they have been doing for decades, most of the production of Televisa and TV Azteca is conservative, productions that reproduce patriarchal stereotypes that are also quite classist, etc. These media companies are burdened by their recent past of officialdom (Ownership Media Monitor Mexico 2018). Perhaps it is reflective of the weight of their historical burden, that the Mexican population does not believe in traditional media and much rather prefers to believe in social networks.

From this research we can sustain that, in 21st century Mexico, there is already a hybrid media system, where cultural and technological convergence is already decisive. That is why traditional media outlets aspire to have a predominant position in the digital market, but at the time of this study they have not yet been able to achieved it. One of the elements that seems to contribute most to this effect is the structural resistance to breaking with procedures and practices of the past[2]. It should also be noted that the media that had the greatest impact on social networks are part of the line of sensationalist journalism, such as *El Universal* and *SDP Noticias*.

With the results presented, we observe that the new hybrid systems reproduce unfavorable conditions for the development of a deliberative democracy. However, the emergence of digital media with democratic commitment (such as *Aristegui Noticias* and *Animal Politico*) may provide hope that a digital public space can provide an alternative to present other agendas and information models.

---

[2] There is a privileged relationship between large media groups and the Mexican government. Still as remnants of the 2008 crisis, which worsened the economic situation of groups such as Televisa and TV Azteca, with losses in the order of almost 50% of the value of their shares on the stock exchange (Carbajal, June 1, 2020), which the president of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), forgave part of the tax payments to public finances. Furthermore, the AMLO government allocates most of the investment to large media companies without transparency rules (Fundar, 2020).

References

Ahmed, A. (December 27, 2017). Using Billions in Government Cash, Mexico Controls News Media. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/25/world/americas/mexico-press-government-advertising.html

Alandete, D. (November 11, 2017). Russian network used Venezuelan accounts to deepen Catalan crisis. *El País*. https://elpais.com/elpais/2017/11/11/inenglish/1510395422_468026.html

Arreola, F. (2013). Excélsior #FTW, Reforma con fuga de plumas. *SDPNoticias*. https://www.sdpnoticias.com/columnas/2013/07/31/excelsior-ftw-reforma-con-fuga-de-plumas

Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network Propaganda, Manipulation, Disinformation and radicalization in American Politics*. New York. Oxford, University Press.

Bermúdez, D. (2018, 30 de enero). Las inversiones de 2017 en la industria de medios digitales de México. *El Economista*. Ciudad de México. https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/tecnologia/Las-inversiones-de-2017-en-la-industria-de-medios-digitales-de-Mexico-20180130-0065.html

Bradshaw, S., & Howard, P. N. (2017) *Troops, Trolls and Troublemakers: A Global Inventory of Organized Social Media Manipulation*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope – social movements in the Internet age*. Chichester. Wiley

Center For Humane Technology. (2018). Key issues overview. https://www.humanetech.com/key-issues#key-issue-areas

Chadwick, A. (2014). *The Hybrid media system*. New York. Oxford University Press.

Crosbie, V. (2008). (2008). La transformación de la prensa escrita de EEUU. *Cuadernos de periodistas*. No.*15*. pp. 23–44. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5280373

Curran, J., Iyengar, S., Brink L., & Salovaara-Moring I. (2009). Media Systems, Public Knowledge and Democracy: A Comparative Study. *European Journal of Communication*, 24 (1). 5-26. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2009-03770-001

Domínguez, A. (2017). *Imagen TV, la tercera cadena. [archivo de video]*. https://www.facebook.com/yosoycomunicacionuaq/videos/1393195190759864/

El Economista, (2018, 30 de septiembre). *Ranking de Medios Nativos Digitales*. https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/arteseideas/Ranking-de-Medios-Nativos-Digitales-20170830-0177.html

Flattum, J. (2011). *Convergence and the entertainment society*. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=51b86909af34e2ab815fb648c55fcac5d27671f6

Fundar (2020). Primer año del gobierno de AMLO: el gasto en publicidad oficial a la baja, pero persisten malas prácticas. *Boletin de prensa*. https://articulo19.org/primer-ano-de-gobierno-de-amlo-el-gasto-en-publicidad-oficial-a-la-baja-pero-persisten-las-malas-practicas/

Gerodimos, R., & Justinussen, J. (2014). Obama's 2012 Facebook Campaign: Political Communication in the Age of the Like Button. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19331681.2014.982266

Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (2008). (2008). *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Higgins, M. (2017). Mediated populism, culture and media form. *Palgrave Communications 3*. University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/s41599-017-0005-4

Hughes, S. (2006). *Newsroom in conflict, Journalism an the democratization of México.* Pittsburgh. University of Pittsburgh Press.

IFT. (2016). *Encuesta Nacional de Consumos Audiovisuales.* [National Survey of Audiovisual Consumption]. Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones. http://www.ift.org.mx/sites/default/files/encca2016_vf-compressed.pdf

INEGI. ((2018). Encuesta Nacional sobre Disponibilidad y Uso de Tecnologías de la Información en los Hogares (ENDUTIH). INEGI. https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/saladeprensa/boletines/2019/OtrTemEcon/ENDUTIH_2018.pdf

Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture, Where old and new media collide.* New York. New York University Press.

Kovach, B. e Rosenstiel, T. (2004). *Os elementos do Jornalismo.* Porto: Porto Editora.

Levy, D. A. L. & Rasmus K. N. (2010). *The Changing Business of Journalism and its Implications for Democracy.* Reuters Institute for the study of journalism. Oxford University. United Kingdom. https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/The%2520Changing%2520Business%2520of%2520Journalism%2520and%2520its%2520Implications%2520for%2520Democracy.pdf

Margolis, M., Resnick, D., & Levy, J. (2003). "Major parties dominate, minor parties struggle: US elections and the Internet", In Gibson, Rachael; Nixon, Paul & Ward Stephen (Eds.), *Political parties and the Internet: Net gain?* (pp. 53-69). London: Routledge.

Martínez, C. (2017, 17 de julio). La apuesta es México; invertiremos aquí: Benjamín Salinas. *El Universal.* http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/cartera/telecom/2017/07/17/la-apuesta-es-mexico-invertiremos-aqui-benjamin-salinas

Martínez, C. (2018, 14 de julio). Televisa pone a la venta Radiopolis. *El Universal.* http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/cartera/economia/televisa-pone-la-venta-radiopolis

Media Ownership Monitor Mexico. (2018). Who runs the media in México. Centro Nacional de Comunicación Social (CENCOS) and Reporters without Border. http://mexico.mom-rsf.org/en/

Mérida, J. (18 de octubre de 2015). "TV Azteca, adelgazan las telenovelas y engordan series y realities". *El Universal.* https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/espectaculos/television/2015/10/18/tv-azteca-adelgazan-las-telenovelas-engordan-series-y

México Social. (2016). Índice de Impacto en Twitter de las y los articulistas de medios impresos mexicanos. México Social. http://www.mexicosocial.org/index.php/2017-05-22-13-54-57/hemeroteca/2012/item/980-indice-de-impacto-en-twitter-de-las-y-los-articulistas-de-medios-impresos-mexicanos

Milwardbrown. (2017). Estudio de consumo de medios y dispositivos entre internautas mexicanos. México: MilwardBrown. https://www.iabmexico.com/estudios/consumo-medios-2017-infografia/

Morlino, L. (2019, 25 de noviembre). "¿Volver a estudiar el autoritarismo? Democracias iliberales y nuevos autoritarismos". Conferencia Magistral. Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro.

Nygren, G., & Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2015). *Journalism in change, Journalistic Culture in Poland, Russia and Sweden.* Peter Lang Edition. Germany.

Pariser, E. (2010). *El filtro burbuja. Cómo la red decide lo que leemos y lo que pensamos.* México. Taurus.

Reuters. (21 de febrero 2019). Utilidad neta de Televisa cae 83.6% en 4to trimestre de 2018. *El Universal.* https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/cartera/utilidad-neta-de-televisa-cae-836-en-cuarto-trimestre-de-2018

Roveda, A., & Rico de Sotelo, C. (2012). *Comunicación y medios en las Américas. Entre la gobernanza y la gobernabilidad.* Bogotá, Colombia: Ponticia Universidad Javeriana.

Silverman, C. (2016). This Analysis Shows How Viral Fake Election News Stories Outperformed Real News On Facebook. *BuzzFeed.* https://www.buzzfeed.com/craigsilverman/viral-fake-election-news-outperformed-real-news-on-facebook?utm_term=.fcBA5Vdjwl#.emGMVdX6xr

Stencel, M., & Perry, K. (2016). "Superpowers: The digital skills media leaders say newsrooms need going forward". Tow-Knight Center for Entrepreneurial Journalism. http://towknight.org/research/superpowers/

Televisa. (2017). Televisa Investor Presentation, Third Quarter 2017. https://www.televisair.com/~/media/Files/T/Televisa-IR/documents/quarterly/2017/3q17-171026-eng/171026%20-%20ENG%203Q17.pdf

Thussu, D. K. (2007). *News as entertainment: the rise of global infotainment.* London. Sage.

Torres, J. (2017). Olegario Vázquez Raña, los secretos de un millonario [video]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfxhrtG2XrM

RESUMO:
A digitalização dos *mass media* propõe uma relação de hibridação entre novas e velhas práticas, sendo este procedimento um desafio quer para meios tradicionais quer para os meios digitais. Neste artigo iremos analisar neste estudo o posicionamento de 16 órgãos de informação mexicanos nas redes sociais Facebook e Twitter, tentado perceber como esta presença na esfera digital propõe a configuração das suas estratégias informativas. A nossa conclusão prende-se com a constatação que os meios digitais estudados têm uma grande propensão para marcar presença no Twitter, porém os tradicionais predominam no Facebook, sendo que aqueles meios de comunicação que são mais seguidos nas redes sociais propõem uma cobertura mais sensacionalista.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Jornalismo democrático; Jornalismo digital; Análises de redes; Sistemas híbrido de meios; Redes sociais.

La digitalización de los medios de comunicación involucra una relación de hibridación entre nuevas y viejas prácticas, este processo es un reto tanto para los médios tradicionales como para los medios digitales. En esta investigación se analizará el posicionamiento de 16 medios de comunicación en las redes sociales Facebook y Twitter. Con esto se trata de entender como este proceso de la esfera digital ha reconfigurado las estratégias informativas de los medios.

Nuestra conclusión principal sustenta que los médios digitales tienen un predominio en Twitter, pero los tradicionales predominan en Facebook. Los medios que tienen más impacto en las redes sociales desarrollan una estratégia de contenidos sensacionalista.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Periodismo democrático; Periodismo digital; Analisis de redes sociodigitales; Sistema híbrido de medios; Redes sociodigitales.

RESUMEN: