Review of
Digital Activism, Community Media, and Sustainable Communication in Latin America
edited by Cheryl Martens, Cristina Venegas & Franklin Salvio Sharupi Tapuy

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Latin America has faced political, social, and economic protests planned by different actors in recent years. People are looking for social justice since they consider states have infringed their rights. This awakening of the people manifested through systematic protests has led some political analysts to call it the "Latin America's Spring". 2019 was the beginning of serial riots in Puerto Rico, Honduras, Venezuela, Ecuador, Chile, Colombia, and Peru. Thus, media communities in this region have played a key role and emerged as new digital social actors. Most of them have taken part in manifestations through digital activism. Within this framework, "*Digital Activism, Community Media, and Sustainable Communication in Latin America*" appears in the academic arena. This contribution explains how media communities became empowered to face and respond efficiently to Systemic Human Rights Violations. This book comprises four sections: Digital Territories: Transnational and Local Hybrid Experiences; Approaches to Decolonizing Knowledge and Communication; Digital Activism and Resistance; Documenting, Representing, and strengthening Indigenous Language and culture.

The first part describes how communities rethink the relationships between territoriality, community, and digital life. Both, first and second chapters show the use of technology by two indigenous communities to express their needs and strengthen their culture and customs. The first chapter focuses on the life of the Mexican indigenous farming community that works in Oxnard, California. For example, those immigrants wanting to maintain communication at the public level, increase their awareness and address social issues that affect them. The chapter also presents digital communication strategies to reduce the distance between the audience and the broadcasters. The second chapter shows how the use of Communication Technologies empowers the socio-communicative functions of the neighborhood experience. It considers three aspects: visualization of local initiatives, strengthening cultural identity, and re-signification of urban space. It also examines the counter-hegemonic artistic, communicative, technological, and community experience in the Chilibulo-Marcopamba-La Raya community in southern Quito by the urban community art group "Al Zur-ich" and its project "Divagaciones Sonoras". The third chapter shows the work experience of "Wayna Tambo - Red de la Diversidad" in Bolivia. This author underlines the importance of entering the digital age and taking advantage of its benefits to breaking dependence on companies that profit from the digital needs of communities.

The second part comprises four chapters: the decolonization of knowledge, intercultural dialogue, the democratization of knowledge

and communication, the defense of the digital commons, and the freedom of information and communication technologies. The first chapter introduces the decolonizing knowledge and communication approaches by studying a solar-powered canoe project in the Ecuadorian Amazon. It highlights the importance of intercultural dialogue as a facilitator to transfer knowledge. As a result, this will improve the conditions of decolonization. The second chapter shows the growing corporatization of editorial management at the international level. Also known as the Coloniality of Knowledge and the Commercialization of Research Results. In this sense, some scientific communities opted for a counter-hegemonic approach through activism, and various regional organizations supported this initiative. For instance, they created Latindex, a new information system for scientific research, technical-professional, and scientific and cultural dissemination journals. Latindex allowed publishing journals in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal. However, there is another vision that advocates the internationalization of scientific communication. The tension between these two views stems from the struggles against neo-colonial and Eurocentric practices. The author emphasizes the "open knowledge" to promote the democratization of scientific research that benefits everyone at the international level. The third chapter discusses the contributions of a Community Radio Station and Free Software Network as a communication right. Besides, this comprises free access to technologies in defending digital commons. It includes an overview of Community Radio Station passing by Communication Rights, changing communication policies regarding the ownership of analogue media in some countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Uruguay, and promoting legislative measures to achieve community media. As the Internet helps democratize communication and information tools, they run three main risks: privacy issues, fake news, and neutrality. Latin America Community Radio Station and Free Software Network insists on two theoretical pillars: the political nature of technologies and the idea of digital commons; In this sense, to defend the digital commons, community radio stations must adopt a new approach to make more accessible communication in three layers: the physical layer that includes promoting digital infrastructure, the logical layer that aims to promote free software platforms, and finally, the content layer that through the approval of some laws, give free access to cultural content and knowledge. The fourth chapter examines autonomous mobile networks in Oaxaca, Mexico. This project aims to counteract the hegemonic mobile phone systems at the international level and refrains from providing services

to populations that don't match their economic interests. In addition, this project applies technological concepts to strengthen the autonomy of communities and encourages a sustainable future for the planet.

The third underlines the effort of activists to transform digital media for addressing community needs and its challenges in some South American countries such as Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador. Regarding Brazil, the authors underline the importance of using mapping to share security alerts in real-time. That is possible thanks to the intervention of Favela's neighborhood. Concerning Chile, the authors explain how the limitations on Mapuche activism impact public opinion. In Ecuador, cyber-activism has worked to counteract the neo-extractivist narratives that demand the oil drill in the Amazon. Finally, the last chapter is about Feminist Cyber-activism that creates new opportunities through feminist knowledge and access to technology, with the only purpose to empower women. The authors show how activists become a target of political repression by the state and corporate media. Notwithstanding, they counter it through online activism and its relation to mass movements at the local and regional levels.

Finally, the last section underlines the role of the Internet and digital media as a tool that allows the storage of historical records. They also consider that this can contribute to land claims and privileges the right to self-determination for indigenous people. Since the last decade, access to technology by marginalized communities in Latin America has not only served as a working tool, but has also questioned the dominant power structures, as well as media paradigms. Another interesting point is the asymmetry that exists in access to power and knowledge. Unfortunately, this is a palpable reality in Latin America because of the inequalities that the region faces. Notwithstanding, the current situation is changing thanks to the Network of bilingual Intercultural Communicators of Ecuador (REDCI). This kind of intercultural Indigenous journalist network has created channels by foregrounding Indigenous worldview. It allowed creating a technological framework for the interaction of a wide range of Indigenous cultures. In a nutshell, the authors bring different approaches to developing strategies for strengthening Indigenous languages and cultures. They apply the agency-structure dilemma for identifying the critical issues related to digital activism at the regional level.

All in all, this book addresses the uses and appropriations of technology by different communities and their recent empowerment as well. This is due to the rapid technological change and access to technology; and how it influenced the dissemination of their cultural values through

activism and sustainable approaches to communication. The editors introduce an analysis at the micro and macro levels. On a micro-level, this comprises "local decolonial, activist, and Indigenous approaches to journalism and technology, such as community-led technology designs and approaches". The latter includes "multinational regional approaches, such as community radio networks and mobilizations of open-access databases by academic communities" (p. 3).

Through this critical vision, it has been possible to identify a new way of taking advantage of technology, particularly in indigenous communities. The methodology consists of case studies with participant observation, ethnographic diaries, and semi-structured interviews. It allowed to answer the research question on *How Latin-American community activists transform digital media through various projects and epistemological frameworks to achieve certain missions in their societies?* The editors conclude that social networks such as Facebook pages could serve as a digital communication strategy that promotes unity among members of a determinate community.

Notwithstanding, to better understand the principal aspect of the technology and its impacts on Latin America's communities, for future investigations, researchers should focus on three parts: how the technology is applied, how these technologies that come from outside are accepted, and what implications they have, and finally how these technologies are adopted.

Nowadays, the states have access to information through social media data. For this reason, a wide range of specialists need to discuss the dark side of artificial intelligence. The decolonization of the IT system from the northern hemisphere is a challenge to tackle. In this way, digital communities in Latin America could be free and more independent vis-à-vis censorship. This book interests professionals involved in media communication, sociology, anthropology, political science, conflict resolution, among others. In addition, this book is handy for researchers investigating problems related to the evolution of digital activism and community media in Latin America. Through the different available case studies, they could learn how communities become empowered based on sustainable communication in Latin America. This book is easy to read and captures the analysis of different themes raised by the authors who take part in this work. The editors have selected most of these chapters from the Connected Communities Symposium on Free, Open and Sustainable Communication in Quito, Ecuador, in 2017. This symposium was the only of its kind. Both indigenous activists and academics presented their experiences, theoretical and methodological

approaches to community media, and digital documentation of indigenous languages and cultures.

For these reasons, this book is an outstanding contribution since it underlines the empowerment of communities through the use of digital media in Latin America, aiming at sustainable communication. In conclusion, this work comes at a time of social changes in this region of the Global South that needs to understand the different approaches to digital activism and community media.