

## PARTICIPATION, COMMUNICATION AND AUDIOVISUALS

### 1. Introduction

Part of the work involved in the proposed analysis under the title of “Participation, Communication and Audiovisuals” will be the result of cooperation between the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) and the Observatory on Participatory Practices (OPP-POVOS), which in this area has the dynamic support of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (CES, <http://www.ces.uc.pt>) and the Foundation for Citizen Studies, associated to the Regional Federation of Madrid’s Neighbourhood Associations (FRAVM, <http://www.aavvmadrid.org>).

Images, audiovisuals in all their material forms, are more than purely visual devices: *“They are a material social practice that produces a certain image and records it within a particular social framework. They involve creators and receivers, producers and consumers, and concern a wealth of expertise and skills that surpass by far the images themselves”*<sup>1</sup>. This complexity presents us with a myriad of possibilities, not only in terms of analysis, but also of experimentation within the multiple interactions that exist and may exist between communication and participation.

Part of the interest to be found in this line of work is linked to the practical and reflective factors brought up on communication by observatories on communication and journalistic practices (understanding journalism in its broadest sense, not just written journalism), taking into special consideration the most active side of communication, structured around communication watchdogs, defined as *“not only manifestations of communication policy, but also an area of citizenship construction. They are metaphors relating to democratization movements of society that aspire to express themselves through social projects and broader policies”*<sup>2</sup>. They also involve the ways these factors can help understand the relationships between “observing and constructing communication” and “observing and stimulating participation”.

### 2. Goals

The basic goal of this task has been described in the Introduction, but more specific details are required; in this case, the specificity refers to the theme of the IOPD Conference to be held in La Paz, which focuses on the relationship between participation and interculturality.

This is the core subject of analysis, and the basis on which the following lines of work and goals of this group are founded:

- **Communication and participation:** This sphere of analysis refers to the positive factors and challenges of the relationship between participation and audiovisual. In other words, the group will study the uses given to documentaries and audiovisuals in the field of participatory processes: whether they serve merely to illustrate an experience, make a process more dynamic, when they are started up, with what resources, what

<sup>1</sup> Dussel, Ines (2006). *Educuar la mirada* (p. 287), in Dussel, Inés and Gutiérrez, Daniela (coords.): “Educar la mirada, Políticas y Pedagogías de la imagen”, FLACSO, Buenos Aires.

<sup>2</sup> Rei, Germán (2005). *Ver desde la ciudadanía* (p. 12), in “Veedurías y Observatorios. Participación Social en los Medios de Comunicación”. La Tribu, Buenos Aires.

strategies can be used for the debate, etc. It is intended to develop an analysis proposal to be submitted for debate on these relations at the IOPD meeting in La Paz; also on the different kinds of participatory processes that resort to documentaries and audiovisuals, including those carried out by social movements and practices more appropriate to institutions.

- **Possibilities of communication (particularly documentaries) in participation:** This is directly related to the previous point. It would be attempted to present lines of reflection as to why the two questions are associated and why it is important to do so. Furthermore, the diversity of the new languages immersed in audiovisual production should be emphasized; the new and diverse narratives that are finding a space in the audiovisual field (e.g. the profusion of productions made by native groups), the actors it is helping to incorporate (e.g. young actors), etc.
- **Education and communication:** Within the many ties between participation and audiovisuals, the strategies that are started up in the area of education (fundamentally, in the sphere of edu-communication) could be highly illustrative and suggestive for the debate. As with other issues, it would be of interest to address specific issues that could trigger reflection.
- **The role of the documentary/audiovisual in moulding public spheres.** It would be a question of focusing part of the analysis on the virtues and risks of communication-information practices and the different strategies put into practice.
- **Construction of indicators and analysis methodologies:** It is necessary to determine the analysis methodology for which this resource can be used (whether the audiovisual is analysed as such or whether it is used as one more factor for the analysis of the process it illustrates). To illustrate part of this work, it is necessary to analyse in depth how to show, numerically and qualitatively, the question of *representations*. In other words, it should be a tool to illustrate how and in what way issues are addressed in documentaries, who explains them, what resources are used, what questions they are related to, etc.

### 3. Methodology

- **Technological work:** Subtitling of documentaries, depending on the language(s) that is/are considered necessary for their dissemination. Draw up a list of necessary reproducers, and other technological requirements. Mount documentaries to be shown in La Paz (selection of fragments).
- **Methodological work:** In collaboration between IOPD and OPP-POVOS, with reference to the above goals.
- **Compilation work:** Complete the database of the OPP's audiovisual material, request IOPD local governments for material, design a format of data sheet in keeping with the meta-files used by the OPP, prepare a presentation of the documentaries (synopses to be distributed) that will be shown in La Paz.
- **Good practices:** A selection of especially significant practices will be made, either based on the experience they illustrate or the way the audiovisual strategy is developed.
- **Dissemination work:** Identification of film festivals where the chosen material could be shown, even defining certain categories in which prizes could be awarded.

#### 4. Products

- Analysis of the documentaries, accessible from telematic environments.
- Database and mediabase.
- Presentation and workshop at the IOPD Conference in La Paz, November 2008.
- Preparation of materials - guidelines for the use of communication and audiovisual resources in the work on interculturality and participation.

#### 5. Programme

MONTH	ACTIVITIES
<i>July - August 2008</i>	<p>Dissemination of the proposal among the members of the network, compilation of new material and review of existing material.</p> <p>Work begun on proposal to be presented in November on the issue of communication-participation-interculturality.</p> <p>Viewing of material, subtitling of material obtained.</p>
<i>September 2008</i>	<p>IOPD-OPP-POVOS meeting. Selection of documentaries and materials to be worked on at the meeting, to prepare for the session in La Paz.</p> <p>Continuation of previous tasks.</p> <p>Coordination between IOPD Barcelona and La Paz.</p>
<i>September-October 2008</i>	<p>Conclude preparation of data sheets and organize documentary base.</p> <p>Coordinate preparation of the workshop in La Paz.</p> <p>Conclude the preparatory work for the IOPD meeting in La Paz</p>
<i>November 2008</i>	<p>Presentation.</p> <p>Coordinate with IOPD local governments in the search for film festivals where the competition could be held (the items and features of the competition would also need to be defined).</p>