

# Carrying on the Conceptual Debate

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The need of implementing some debates related to concepts researched by the professor and researcher Valerio Brittos for many years has already involved me in the last times. Just as other colleagues at the Political Economy of Communication field, I considered that academic events and places related to our area of interests and researches would need more opportunities to clarify some ideas that make possible the improvement of knowledge production among us, and also contribute to the visibility of the work and the action that the critical thought in the Communication field proposed to the whole communication field.

Besides many opportunities of meetings and talkings, the debate in person will not be possible anymore because of the early absence of our friend. Died at the age of 48, Valério Brittos was a professor and researcher of UNISINOS (Vale dos Sinos University) at São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul state. Many of his works are published in books and articles about different topics and concepts related to Political Economy of Communication.

One of its concepts, multiplicity of offerings, was considered by Valério Brittos as about production acceleration and circulation of contents to the consumer, influencing issues as prices, audiences and competitiveness, inside not only the broadcast market as other medias.

Such understanding in the process led him to research TV in his Doctorate studies and to get closer from Audiovisual working groups Intercom - Brazilian Interdisciplinary Society of Communication and even ULEPICC - Latin Union of Political Economy of Information, Communication and Culture. The implications of this concept in economics and politics, as well as socio-cultural factors are broad, but what approaches them to

the research I've been developping – and also, of some works of Valerio Brittos - is to understand how this can imply or would make impossible the action of community communication initiatives in relation to society, as it is actually happening in a ongoing process in Brazil and worldwide.

In recent posts we exchanged, Valerio had expressed interest in knowing community communication initiatives of Rio de Janeiro, especially in the ones based on low-income communities. Faced with a broader understanding of marketing domination, the search for alternative forms of communication was necessary, but inside, however, the understanding of overcoming market principles or, at least, the evidence of ways to possible breaks.

However, there comes some different perceptions in relation to the consequences of the application of the idea of multiplicity of offerings. By acting within a specific area of the community where they are located, there are community communication initiatives in a great number and offering more contents, dealing with the multiplicity of offerings logic as part of their action, which does not necessarily solve the issues related to their production, programming and managing.

One of the main focus of the criticism focused on this term, over his work, is precisely the fragmentation of audiences, which become weakened in relation to many contents offered, answering the invitation of a consumer society that also weaks its structures and forms of organization as well as the loss of references about common contents. The internet, by the contrary to what one might conceive, would be the space of intensifying this fragmentation, not only by extending its amount, but because published and shared contents are relatively superficial.

Dealing with the multiplicity of offerings, however, is something with which new generations are inevitably learning even more and what, somehow, was being announced since the McBride Report times in the 1960's. It is possible to work it by incorporating values of plurality and diversity that include society as individuals, groups and diferent kinds of groups who contribute to local development in communities where they operate.

Therefore, the concept of multiplicity of offerings seemed to lack contextualization, because of its dual condition of criticism and contribution. Connected to it and its characterization, it would be always possible to fit a context in relation to what it is said, both in relation to reach the media, as to the involvement in the development of contents.

### **Common actions**

In this context of these debates around Political Economy of Communication and Community Communication we met each other. I welcomed his invitation to hold the first meeting of ULEPICC Brazil, at Fluminense Federal University, in October 2006, proposing, in the event program, some interfaces with other areas in the communication field. After that, we organized a book "Political Economy of Communication: brazilian interfaces", composed of texts related to the panels of the event.

Most recently I was invited by him to integrate the Board of ULEPICC Brazil, as secretary-general, with the purpose of seeking to integrate these fronts, as well as improving production and distribution of our content in the academic and social areas, establishing dialogues with teachers, researchers, students and activists of Communication and related areas, interested in a critical thought perspective.

The reception of my contribution to the dynamics of a scientific association as ULEPICC originally designed around Political Economy of Communication, only reinforces what is understood as greater academic link in our relationship, which is the willingness to accept and engage with differences, in the search for approaches that strengthen knowledge production around the critical perspective of communication and contribute to the achievement of a more democratic society.

Surely the dedication of the work and products left by Valerio Brittos will serve as inspiration to present and future generations in the academic field, as well as his concepts and reflections will still move many debates and activities around what he has always advocated, a fairer society with more solidarity on the basis of the citizenship for the affirmation of democracy.