

# Editorial

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Communication is a key concept for democracy, especially in regions characterized by fluctuating and unstable economic and political conditions. Governments must be aware of the increasing importance of policies that aim to manage the large amount of information circulating through media, but when this awareness turns into excessive control and limitations, free and responsible communications are at risk. In this issue (volume 1, number 2) of the *Journal of Latin American Communication Research* (JLACR) we pay attention to the relevance of media and communication public policies, and their role in building democracy. In some sense, the issue is an obligated continuation of our earlier edition (volume 1, number 1) published in June 2011, in which *freedom of expression and media pluralism in Latin America* were the main topics. We're not expecting to have final conclusions or an end to the debate, but to set a rigorous discussion and to raise new questions for old worries.

The Editorial Board entitled the current issue as *Public Policies and Democratization of Communication*, with the objective to incorporate a set of high quality papers referring a topic of extreme importance for the research community and policy makers. As we foresaw, many manuscripts were received, due to the huge number of researchers interested in this arena in Latin America and beyond its boundaries. The discussions held in these papers led our attention to the heterogeneity and diversity of countries of the region, but also revealed many trends related to instability, exclusion, and regulation.

Even when we recognize that the concept of democracy is a mere construction and, in most cases, a utopia proposed by the dominant sector, we could think of some general aspects that orientate the unfinished project of democracy in Latin America. In this issue we focus on countries like Mexico, Brasil, Uruguay, Argentina and Chile, where media policies have much to do with freedom and social equality, the foundations of modern democracy in the Western world. The analysis of these cases can be a very good sample of what is going on in the region if we consider, for instance, the size of Mexico and Brasil and their importance for Latin American stability.

We open our article section with a paper by Ulrike Klinger entitled “Democratizing Media Policy: Community Radios in Mexico and Latin America”, where the author looks at the situation of Mexican community radio stations and traces the process of legalization of these media from 2002 to 2010. In addition, the paper offers a comparative perspective of other Latin American countries, which have largely modernized their regulation of community media. Continuing the topic of community media, Christof Mauersberger presents the article “Whose voice gets on air? The role of community radio and recent reforms to democratize media markets in Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile”. Mauersberger sketches the regulatory challenge of democratizing predominantly commercial and concentrated broadcasting markets in Latin America, analyzing legislation of three specific countries. According to the author, commercial diversification is a necessary but not sufficient condition for plural media markets, so as the democratization of concentrated media markets conflicts with the interests of commercial firms, legal reforms are only to be expected where active social movements push for changes.

The next article, by María Teresa Nicolás Gavilán, deals with peace journalism, as a practice needed for democracy. The paper entitled “Framing the news: from political conflict to peace; How the ‘framing theory’ and the ‘political context model’ can enhance the peace journalism model”, provides a solid theoretical grounding for a peace journalism model, which includes the *framing theory* (Entman) and the *politic context model* (Wolfsfeld). A paper written by Antonio Teixeira de Barros and Cristiane Brum Bernardes, “Public communications and freedom of information: Basic conditions for the Brazilian legislative media”, explores and analyzes the relationship between public communications and freedom of expression in the public systems of information in Brazil. The authors argue that the liberal conception of freedom of expression favors the right of journalists and of the means of communication in the management of the liberty of speech.

Three more articles are part of this issue. The first of them “Different and excluded: representations of the ‘other’ immigrants in the media”, by Pamela Romero Lizama, intends to demonstrate the media’s influence on society, analyzing how media influences the rejection of immigrants in the Chilean context, particularly in its relationships with Bolivians, Peruvians, and Mapuches. Another paper, by Adilson Cabral Filho, entitled “Social participation and decision-making process in communications in Brazil”, analyzes the initiative of Brazil’s 1st National Conference on Communications (1st CONFECOM), which saw the establishment of a new way of

debating communication policies in the country. The last article “*Arepas, tortillas and beijú*s: Heterogeneity of communicative struggles in Latin America”, by Gislene Moreira Gomes, takes a look at the concepts and practices of the main media struggles in the 20th century and proposes a typology of orienting matrices.

These seven papers of authors from Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Switzerland and Germany, form our second issue (Volume 1, Number 2) dedicated to *Public Policies and Democratization of Communication*. The JLACR, with the support of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) of UNESCO, the invaluable help of scientific blind reviewers, and under the direction of ALAIC, offers this open and international space for debate and discussion, and invites researchers to keep sending their manuscripts for future editions.

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