Inter-relations among cultures, technicity and citizenship in the work of Jesús Martín-Barbero[a]

Inter-relações entre culturas, tecnicidade e cidadania na obra de Jesús Martín-Barbero

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ABSTRACT
The text aims to reconstruct the ways that Jesús Martín-Barbero problematizes the links between culture, citizenship and technicity, bringing some reflections on his contribution to the contemporary investigation dedicated to this question. In the researcher's reflection, the culture field, in its imbrications with the technicity, is conceived as a crucial space of constitution of social conflicts and emergency of new citizenship characters. Technicity operates as a structural dimension of these processes, in complex and multidimensional sociocultural articulations. His proposals continue to offer productive bases for thinking these issues and invite us to consider other aspects that emerge in today's digital environments and cultures.
Keywords: Martín-Barbero, citizenship, technicity, cultural identities, citizen communication

RESUMO
O texto objetiva reconstruir os modos como Jesús Martín-Barbero problematiza os nexos entre cultura, cidadania e tecnicidade, refletindo sobre sua contribuição para a pesquisa contemporânea dedicada a esta problemática. Na reflexão do pesquisador o campo da cultura, em suas imbricações com a tecnicidade, é pensado como espaço crucial de constituição da conflitividade social e de emergência de novas figuras de cidadania. A tecnicidade opera como dimensão estruturante destes processos, em articulações socioculturais complexas e multidimensionais. Suas propostas continuam oferecendo bases produtivas para pensar estas questões e nos convocam também a considerar outros aspectos que se afiguram nos ambientes e nas culturas digitais na atualidade.
Palavras-chave: Martín-Barbero, cidadania, tecnicidade, identidades culturais, comunicação cidadã

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INTRODUCTION

IN JESÚS MARTÍN-BARBERO'S thoughts, a researcher with a transcendental contribution to the Latin American field of communication, we find thought-provoking reflections about the interrelationships between culture and citizenship linked to the expansion and penetration of media in our societies and the processes of globalization within the contemporary context. From these reflections, here we are interested in those made after the first edition of his seminal work, *De los medios a las mediaciones* (*Communication, culture and hegemony*), published in 1987, when the problematic of media was gradually shifting. This repositioning takes a more definite form from later works, which incorporate *technicity* as mediation, until its assumption as a structuring dimension of our societies. This change in Martín-Barbero's thinking begins to be expressed when the map for *cultural mediations of communication* proposed in his work is revised[1], arising a new type of thinking, the *communicative mediations of culture*, which is made explicit in a new prologue for the reprint of that book[2]. In this first movement, the researcher includes technicity in the set of redesigned mediations. In later texts, technicity is given even more prominence and is now thought of as the structural dimension of our societies, in affinity with the transformations driven by media and, more contemporaneously, by digitization.

Thinking from the Latin American scenario, Martín-Barbero conceives, within that change, that the field of culture (which has always been at the core of his reflections since his 1987 work) presents itself as a crucial space for the constitution of social conflict and the emergence of *new forms of citizenship* in contemporary times – while being crossed by the processes of globalization and structurally constituted by technicity.

Since we consider that these reflections continue interrogating us and offering productive clues for thinking such questions, in this article, we propose to systematize the researcher's proposals for thinking about the interconnections between cultures, technicity and citizenship[3]. Along with this systematization movement, we also seek to support the reflection on his contributions to contemporary research on these issues.

To meet this objective, we conducted a theoretical research in the author's texts that deal with these questions, published after his work *De los medios a las mediaciones*, between 1997 and 2018. The selection we made includes books, texts published in works organized by other researchers and in digital scientific journals, and that deal with issues that we deem relevant for issues of our interest. Within this movement, we privileged the texts written by the author himself as a pledge to recover such questions from his thought. Our

[1] This is the edition published by Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, in 1987 (Lopes, 2018).

[2] This inflection is demarcated in the introductions to later reissues of the work From Media to Mediation, published by the Andrés Bello Convention, Bogotá, in 1998 and by the University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), Rio de Janeiro, in 2001 (Lopes, 2018).

[3] On the occasion of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the book *From the Media to the Mediations*, *MATRIZes* journal published in 2018 a dossier entitled *Jesús Martín Barbero: 30 years of the media to the mediations*, dedicated to his work. Texts from this dossier were used to compose the reflections developed here. In the same year, the journal *Intexto* also published a dossier entitled *Mediações, trajetos e ensinamentos: tribute a Jesús Martín-Barbero* (Mediations, paths and teachings: Tribute to Jesus Martín-Barbero), the result of a colloquium held by the Graduate Program in Communication of Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (PPGCOM-UFRGS), at the end of November 2017, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the aforementioned work in which we participated. The debates also followed the reflections of this text.

propositions were also nourished by research contributions and contemporary reflections related to digital media for the complementation and/or the debate of the author's proposals.

In the itinerary proposed within this article, we will initially go through the ways in which the interrelationships between technicity and citizenship are problematized within the author's work. In a second move, our trail will follow the reflections that the author undertakes on public space and digital media related with citizenship. In the last part of the path, we will bring some reflections about Martín-Barbero's approach and contribution for the investigation of these issues, also highlighting some aspects worthy of consideration for an update and amplification of the author's proposals regarding emerging issues in the area of digital media.

CULTURES, COMMUNICATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN JESUS MARTÍN-BARBERO'S THOUGHT

The treatment of the interrelationships among cultures, communication and citizenship acquires particular relevance in the trajectory of Martín-Barbero's thought when the author acknowledges that technological mediation is becoming a key dimension – one about to become a structuring factor in our societies. It is from this path of the author's reflection that we will deal with in this first part of this article.

The interrelationships between media and cultures in the context of Latin America are a key theme across the author's various works that constantly gain new configurations along this path. These reformulations are linked to his cartographic epistemic position, which confer movement to his reflections in affinity with the transformations of our societies, especially in the field of communication. His work is thus marked, as accurately pointed by Lopes (2018), by a

permanent process of complexification . . . [which is shaped by] movements of advance and retakes, partial systematizations, always incomplete, in the way of mobile archipelagos that gathered, show the continent of a living theory in close dialogue with their context transformations, that is Latin America inserted in the world". (p. 41)

In the reflections that we analyzed, the researcher's concern to distance himself from proposals that reduce the complexity of reality and the role of media in it are present. In *De los medios a las mediaciones*, his conception seeks to challenge epistemic targets that understand communication only from the

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media point of view. In his proposal to understand communicational processes from the articulatory *mediations* of the process, different instances reveal a challenging stance that defies media-centrism, facing conceptions inscribed both in functionalism and Structural Marxism. This does not mean, in our view, that he failed to consider the relevant social role of media – as certain later criticisms would point out –, but that he thought them in a perspective that did not reduce the constitutive multidimensionality of communicational processes[4].

More recently, when thinking about technology, his clash occurs with conceptions that, as he says, present a "harmful combination between techno-logical determinism and cultural pessimism" (Martín-Barbero, 2014, p. 17). His epistemological position thus seeks to problematize the technique more broadly to construct a complex and multiperspective look to challenge the dualistic reasoning with which we are accustomed to thinking about it – a reflection that underlies the progressive thickening of the conception of technical mediation.

To locate our itinerary in the author's work, it is interesting to return to *De los medios a las mediaciones*, a book released in 1987. In it, Martín-Barbero conceives culture as a key dimension for the understanding of Latin American communication processes linked to politics. Culture is thought of, among other things, as a crucial mediation in people's interrelationships with media. Nurtured by a historical and transdisciplinary perspective, he reflects on the processes that link the media with the Latin American cultural field and its strategic role in the construction of hegemony. The author is also attentive to the multiple forms of linkage, resistance and replies constituted from the cultural field that challenge, give dynamism and create contradictions in the processes of hege-mony construction.

Over the years we have found in the studied texts[5] that are lined with the changes in the Latin American scenario, the author tries to understand with precision the redefinitions of the cultural field driven by globalization, the media, and more recently, by the new communication technologies. The media dimen-sion acquires greater prominence, centrality and epistemic density starting with recent texts from the late 1990s. In this reflection line, Martín-Barbero considers that a new technical system is consolidated on a planetary scale, transforming various areas, including the space-time experience of societies. A technique, by deepening its presence and social insertion, becomes a structuring element of our realities.

> …technique – which was considered for centuries as a mere instrument or uten-sil, that is, as something devoid of the lower cognitive density now sees its status radically transformed, becoming *a structural dimension* of contemporary societies

[4] This reading generally converges with those made by Lopes (2018) and Jacks & Schmidt (2018), in their texts on the author's work.

[5] We study the treatment of these problems in the following works: Martín-Barbero 2002a, 2002b, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009d, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2014a and 2014b, 2018.

while, at the same time, filling itself of symbolic and cultural density[6]. (Martín-Barbero, 2009d, p. 22, emphasis added)

This recognition of the centrality of technology in societies progressively aligns itself with the thinking of other Latin American researchers who, in the late 1990s, came to consider that, in the process of systemic expansion and penetration of media in our societies, technology acquires a central role as shaper of the most varied fields and experience domains. Such a perspective visualizes that this epoch change is more productively thought of as a process of mediatization of societies[7]. Even so, in our understanding, one of the elements of the originality of the author's reflection lies in his insistence to consider the mediations that complexly articulate media processes to the communicational and societal dimensions.

In Martín-Barbero's comprehension, technology achieves contemporary systemic and transversal penetration, shaping a new techno-communicative environment[8] that viscerally pervades the world of life. The complexity and social imbrication that media reach is considered from the idea of the constitution of a *comprehensive communicative ecosystem*, despite presenting unequal modes of action and differentiated uses and social appropriations. Technicity configures, in this context, new modes of perception, new languages, sensibilities and writings. Within this scenario, the author reflects that the place of culture in society changes "when the technological mediation of communication ceases to be merely instrumental, it thickens and becomes structural."[9] (2002, p. 225).

This interpretation line, which we consider productive for discussing contemporary processes of social mediatization, comes close to Sodré's (2006) reflections on the contemporary constitution of a *media bios* (*bios midiático*), driven by digital technologies, a sphere imbued in social reality, configuring mediatized *ethos*, understood as customs, behaviors, cognitions and perceptions marked by crossing media.

In this progression of his thinking, Sondré's reflection on the action of communication technologies linked to globalization, maintains the complexity of his focus, seeking to examine its contradictions as driving a scenario that fosters transformations in the field of cultures, their *perversities and possibilities*.

Considering perversities in relation to economic dimensions, globalization promotes dominant market penetration in society, increasing poverty and social inequality. The national scenario, as an articulator of the political, economic and cultural dimensions of societies is weakened, as well as the national and local boundaries[10]. In the cultural field, driven by media action and, more recently, by that of digital technologies, the logic of cultural globalization infiltrates people's

[6] In the original: "la técnica – que fue durante siglos considerada como mero instrumento o utensilio, es decir, algo desprovisto de la menor densidad cognitiva ve ahora transformado su estatus radicalmente, pasando a constituirse en dimensión estructural de las sociedades contemporáneas a la vez que se llena de densidad simbólica y cultural". This and other translations of the author.

[7] This is the case of researchers such as Verón (1997) and Mata (1999) who, in the late 1990s, propose the notion of mediatization to understand the transformations related to the role of media in our societies.

[8] The notion of techno-communicative environment, as explained by Martín-Barbero in an interview with Mariluce Moura, published in the Fapesp journal, feeds on Javier Echeverría's thinking on the third environment. The first environment, inhabited by humans would be the natural one; the second and third, created by humans are, respectively, urban and techno-communicative (Martín-Barbero, 2009e).

[9] In the original: "quando a mediação tecnológica da comunicação deixa de ser meramente instrumental para espessar-se, adensar-se e converter-se em estrutural"

[10] Martín-Barbero (2014a) notes that one of the most striking features of globalization, in its neoliberal deepening phase in Latin America, is the growing divorce between State and society. This is due to the State's difficulty to respond to demands and social needs, to the extent that it is pressed and watched by the institutions of global economic unification.

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daily practices, generating profound changes in their living conditions. Among its consequences are the reconfigurations of identities, driven by structural transformations linked to the decentralization of societies, fragmentation of cultural landscapes, and the multiplication of identification referents. These processes drive profound changes in the living conditions of local cultures, indigenous peoples, black people, regional cultures, and gender.

Thus globalization, combined with the systemic action of media, accelerates the uprooting of identities by inscribing them in the market logic and its flows, concomitantly disabling their complexities and conflicting aspects. Media and information technologies become producers of cultural globalization by introducing referents that represent deterritorialized styles and values (Martín-Barbero, 2003, 2010b). The phenomena of convergence, simultaneity and time acceleration, dynamized by new technologies, also shape the temporal experiences of societies, pressuring them to settle into a continuous present, collaborating for the production of ephemeral experiences. Temporal acceleration dilutes the bounding and normative power of tradition and its ability to contribute to project the future of societies.

On the other hand, within the scope of possibilities, Martín-Barbero states that these processes have been driving – among other phenomena – a revival of identities, which function as spaces of belonging and as strategic spheres to introduce contradictions in the logic of globalization:

> What galvanizes identities today as a struggle engine is inseparable from the demand for recognition and meaning. And neither one nor the other are formulable in mere economic or political terms since both are referred to the very core of culture, as a world of belonging to and sharing with. This is the reason why today identity is the force most capable of introducing contradictions in the hegemony of instrumental reason[11]. (Martín-Barbero 2009b, pp. 3-4)

In Latin America, cultural communities are turning into, key areas for the reconstitution of a sense of collectivity, reinventing their identities, renovating their uses of memory and heritage, transforming into productive spaces for the articulation between the local and the global. These aspects represent the emergence of *new forms of citizenship*, that act and seek to construct empowerment strategies based on culture.

New social movements (such as ethnic, gender and ecological movements) emerge in this context and struggle to be socioculturally recognized, as the author argues, "'Citizenly' visible in their difference; something that gives them a new way of politically exercising their rights since the new visibility catalyzes the

[11] In the original: "Lo que galvaniza hoy a las identidades como motor de lucha es inseparable de la demanda de reconocimiento y de sentido. Y ni el uno ni el otro son formulables en meros términos económicos o políticos, pues ambos se hallan referidos al núcleo mismo de la cultura, en cuanto mundo del pertenecer a y del compartir con. Razón por la cual la identidad se constituye hoy en la fuerza más capaz de introducir contradicciones en la hegemonía de la razón instrumental".

emergence of new political subjects"[12] (Martín-Barbero, 2009a, para. 1). They highlight the difficulty of democratic liberal institutions to account for cultural diversity and point to the need for policies that extend rights for all sectors of the population (2009c).

These tendencies unveiled in the author's reflections, in general, have manifested themselves in our societies, but they differ in the contexts and situations of each country, region and even locality. We experience contemporary scenarios marked by the advances of neoliberalism, by political inflections to the right in Latin American countries like Brazil, by new forms of repression, control and criminalization of social movements. These are some of the aspects that must be concretely problematized in our investigations to update the author's reflections.

Martín-Barbero conceives that communication is a constitutive dimension of the life of cultures; in his words "a culture is alive only when it is able to communicate, that is, to exchange and interact with other cultures"[13] (2009c. p. 155). He argues that *narration* is also constitutive of cultural identities. Along this reflection path, he offers us important clues to think about the social and political recognition of identities: a need to be socially narrated in their complexities and contradictions; the possibilities for using and combining the different forms of reporting, of the diversity of *languages* and the expressive creativity present in collective groups and social communities with the multiple communication possibilities opened by contemporary media experiences.

> For a plurality of cultures of the world to be politically considered, it is indispensable that the diversity of identities can be told, narrated. This in both their own "languages" and in the "intermediary language" that today traverses them through the "translation and hybridization" movement, from oral to written, audiovisual to hypertextual – and to an interculturality in which the dynamics of the economy and world culture mobilize, not only the heterogeneity of groups and their readjustment to global pressures, but also the coexistence of very different codes and narrations within the same society, thus undermining our experience of identity so far[14]. (Martín-Barbero, 2009c, p. 156)

This relationship between communication and culture is currently emphasized by the changes driven by the technological communication networks that affect the perceptions of communities about themselves and their ways of constructing identities. For the communities, this scenario represents both a threat to the survival of their cultures but also an opportunity to break away from exclusion and to reinvent future prospects. Globalization and new technologies

[12]In the original: "'cidadaneamente' visíveis em sua diferença; o que dá espaço a um novo modo de exercer politicamente seus direitos, pois a *nova visibilidade* catalisa o surgimento de novos indivíduos políticos".

[13]In the original: "uma cultura somente está viva quando é capaz de comunicar, ou seja, de intercambiar e interagir com outras culturas".

[14]In the original: "Para que a pluralidade das culturas do mundo seja politicamente considerada, é indispensável que a diversidade de identidades possa ser contada, narrada. Isso tanto em cada um dos seus 'idiomas' quanto na 'linguagem intermediadora' que hoje os atravessa por meio do movimento das 'traduções e hibridações' do oral com o escrito, o audiovisual com o hipertextual – e de uma interculturalidade na qual as dinâmicas da economia e da cultura-mundo mobilizam não somente a heterogeneidade dos grupos e sua readequação às pressões do global, como também a coexistência de códigos e relatos muito diversos no interior de uma mesma sociedade, abalando assim a experiência que tínhamos até agora de identidade" (Martín-Barbero, 2009c, p. 156).

thus open opportunities for struggles to expand the citizenship sphere by enabling the mixing of cultures in a social emergency scenario of different worldviews that challenge the hegemony of Western rationalism. The expansion of new technologies, and their progressive appropriation by subordinate social sectors opens renewed opportunities for the construction of a counter hegemony across the world.

CITIZENSHIP, COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Another question that we recovered in the texts by Martín-Barbero (2002, 2009b, 2010b) to problematize aspects of citizenship linked to the communication field, concerning the links between communication and the public space. Communication is regarded by the author as a constitutive dimension of public space, a sphere linked to what pertains to everyone in society, and that receives the greatest publicity possible. The public *constitutes the citizen space*, articulating common interests and promoting communicative interaction, being a scenario of circulation of heterogeneous interests and plural discourses, and should make it possible to recognize the diversity of existing social positions. Communication, in this context, would have the role of exposing the controversial themes and their different interpretations, enabling public deliberation and access to social debate.

Media has become a constituent environment of public life and social recognition, and these are fundamental in the *expansion or restriction of the public* (*audience*), that is now constituted by its grammars, logic and operations. The public expands when diverse actors can be recognized, when civil society can express itself in its plurality, when it qualifies the citizens' comprehensions of their problems and/or the orientations of rulers, when their constitution materializes from a citizen isonomy. The public is restricted when there are distortions of information, trivialization of processes, superficiality in the treatment of social complexity, dilution of argumentation and conversation, and predominance of business logic (Martín-Barbero, 2002, 2010b).

Martín-Barbero believes that *reciprocal recognition* is a fundamental element in the constitution of citizenship and that it is linked to the rights to inform and to be informed, to speak and to be listened to, indispensable to participate in community decisions. The dispossession of the right to be seen and heard – which is equivalent to socially existing/mattering, both individually and collectively – is thus an *obvious form of citizen exclusion*.

For the recognition of cultural diversity to be effective, Martín-Barbero (2009b) reflects that certain rights must be expanded in our societies: the

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right to participate and the ability of communities and citizens to intervene in decisions that affect their lives, linked to the need for reliable information, in which the common interest predominates above business interests; the right to expression in mass media and community media of all cultures and sensitivities that comprise the wide diversity of countries.

Considering the situation in Latin America, he notes certain advances in the relations between citizenship and communication, particularly in two levels that qualify the public. The first level concerns the growth and empowerment of media by community citizens, which contribute to the constitution of a citizen's network of public space for debate of all that does not fit in private media and that goes beyond the local. The second level is represented by the opportunities that internet has brought for the constitution of citizen interaction spaces linked to the exchange of experiences, and the sharing of worldviews and proposals in global/local articulations.

Considering the role of digital networks in these processes, Martín-Barbero seeks to consider their complexities. They are simultaneously

open and closed, integrating and disintegrating, totalizing and detotalizing, niche and unfolding, where logics, speeds and temporalities, as diverse as those that interweave oral narratives with the intertextuality of writing, and the hypertext intermedialities, coexist and mix[15]. (2010b, p. 49)

The author also observes the fact that the technological revolution has been contributing to increase inequalities among social sectors, cultures and countries. In his perspective, digital networks are not environments only dominated by the directions and sense that the capitalist market seeks assign to the Internet – although this dimension cannot be disregarded since it is effectively part of its function. On the one hand, social networks enhance modifications and hybridizations between the public and the private domains, overlapping these spaces and diluting their borders; on the other, they promote the visibility of cultures by opening up renewed alternatives of expression that challenge the exclusionary power "of printing".

. . . we are facing a technological change that has now shaped a new communicative ecosystem. An ecosystem where the audiovisual experience, affected by the digital revolution, points to the constitution of a cultural visibility, today a strategic scenario of a decisive political battle against the old and excluding power of printing, that for a century and a half ignored the difference and the richness of orality and cultural visualities that now, when least expected, interweave their memories in the

[15]In the original: "abiertas y cerradas, integradoras y desintegradoras, totalizadoras y destotalizantes, nicho y despliegue em el que conviven y se mesclan lógicas, velocidades y temporalidades tan diversas como las que entrelazan las narrativas do oral con la intertextualidad de las escrituras y las intermedialidades del hipertexto".

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imaginary of virtuality to give new meaning and new form to cultural traditions[16]. (Martín-Barbero, 2014a, p. 25)

To us, this reflection by Martín-Barbero offers a productive clue to think about the potential that new communication technologies have for the experimentation and production of new accounts that incorporate multiple expression and aesthetic possibilities, capable of taking advantage from the social creativity and diverse communication skills of subjects.

Networks are also the place of emergence of a remodeled social fabric and a refurbished public space, marked by new sociability forms. These networks participate in the current intertwining conditions of the social with cultural and political aspects, the formation of public opinion, and the exercise of citizenship.. They open possibilities for expanding public discourse and social creativity linked to citizen participation. They also "mobilize the social 'imagination' of collectivities, enhancing their capacity for survival and association, protest and democratic participation, defense of socio-political and cultural rights, and the activation of their expressive creativity" (Martín-Barbero, 2009c, p. 154).

Concerning digital technologies, the author considers the fact that they are relational and cooperative as an innovative element, enabling the expansion of *collective intelligence* using new modes of knowledge production that digital networks encourage. Martín-Barbero appropriately warns that this form of collective knowledge production has historically been present in the communities and social groups in Latin America – e.g., in the knowledge of medical practices, design, colors and cuisine of indigenous peoples. However, digital networks have been allowing uses in which this production goes beyond those traditionally present in communities, opening opportunities for the creation of shared knowledge that defies historical exclusions and socially constituted cognitive gaps (2010c, 2014b).

This opportunity is relevant for citizenship since information and knowledge are key elements for it to be exercised. In this sense, the author acknowledges the constitution of spaces for cultivating *a renewed emancipatory political culture*, linked to the circulation of information, expanded access to them, especially in digital networks: the communities appropriate the networks to transform their experiences into narrations, taking advantage of the possibilities opened by the convergence between oralities and cultural memories with the new languages, emerging writings and narratives through digital technicity.

In our view, these reflections by the author point to concrete possibilities that digital technologies open in terms of their citizen appropriation.

However, we cannot fail to consider the persistence of obstacles to this effective appropriation; obstacles related to: internet regulations and their effective implementation; restrictions of access to it, which is not universal yet; the effective mastery of technological skills to act, which are not equally present among people; the existence of certain logics within digital cultures that do not favor citizen uses of technologies; the interests of corporations that dominate the digital world and materialize in the ordering definitions of network platforms, resources and applications that are offered; the constitution of surveillance and control processes with geopolitical and commercial purposes, which contradict the emancipatory possibilities opened by digitization. These factors – among others – contribute to restrict the broad appropriation possibilities of digital media and of expression, experimentation and expansion of the knowledge of subjects, communities, groups and social movements. We must also note that in the very research field, ethical laws that, driven by the intention to protect citizens, end up hindering – if not inhibiting – possibilities of access, and sharing, of knowledge and accounts from communities and social groups with investigators.

Returning to Martín-Barbero's (2011) proposal, reflecting on the challenges related to Latin American research in the field interrelationships among cultures, citizenship and technicity in the digitization context, he points out two areas that are crucial in the construction of the future of Latin American societies. The first one concerns the constitutive experiences of *contemporary communicating subjects*, linked to the new relationships between *aesthetics and politics*, which are enabling the reinvention of politics and its emancipatory meaning. These questions are related to transmediality and convergence, phenomena that refer to two new orders of processes and practices. The first question is associated to a new mode of interaction among media, genres and formats with senses related to the sonorities, oralities and visualities that contaminate languages, redefine borders and enable the emergence of hybrid narratives and written accounts: "transmediacy produces a convergence of innovation and even invention, that will sometimes create new things and new users"[17] (Martín-Barbero, 2011, p. 457). The second question emerges from social uses, whose creativity inaugurates new configurations of the sensitive. Dialoguing with Rancière (2005), the author points out, as an innovative aspect in the field of art and techniques, that the blurring of boundaries that placed the communication producer and the receiver, art and the spectator in differentiated poles/spaces. Digital technicity is linked to "new forms of experience that transform sensory

[17] In the original: "la transmedialidad produce una convergencia de innovación e incluso de invención que hace nacer a la vez nuevas cosas y nuevos usuarios".

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[18] In the original: "nuevas formas de la experiencia que transforman los regímenes de lo sensible, o sea de la percepción y el afecto, del pensamiento y la palabra. Que es por donde pasan los caminos de la emancipación social, a la vez cultural y política".

[19] In the original: "'artes em ação' que, saindo dos espaços e tempos da arte, viram do avesso as memórias e expressões culturais ao evidenciar que elas, mais que produtos, são experiências e que juntam memória e invenção".

[20] In the original: "das revanches sociais, das resistências culturais, das sabotagens políticas, das transfusões das identidades ou das subversões estéticas".

[21] In the original: "las nuevas prácticas y hábitos sociales colaborativos: nuevos modos de relación con, nuevas dinámicas de reapropiación de lo viejo, nuevas formas de hibridación de contenidos y géneros".

regions, that is, of perception and affection, thoughts and words, where the paths of social emancipation go through, both culturally and politically"[18] (2011, p. 453-454).

Those transformations are expressed in the citizenship field, among other means, in ways that the subjects act and make themselves visible, materializing and embodying citizenship in performances, these "'arts in action that, coming from the spaces and times of art, turned the memories and cultural expressions inside out by showing that they, more than products, are experiences and combine memory and invention"[19] (Martín-Barbero, 2009a, para. 3). Thus, the festivals, the rites and the theatricality of the marches become a constitutive part of citizen actions, "social rematches, cultural resistance, political sabotage, identity transfusions or aesthetic subversions"[20] (2009a, para. 3). To us, these reflections offer fruitful insights to reflect on the ways in which communities, groups and new social movements today are constructing their ways of expressing themselves, making themselves visible and fighting for citizenship, which mix diverse languages, *performances* and renewed expressivities.

The second area mentioned by the author for the construction of the future of our societies refers to the challenges and opportunities for change in education models posed by technological convergence and transmedia. One of these challenges would be the development of participatory cultures that consider and promote the subjects' multiple skills and competencies, and their expressive creativity in learning processes. In this context, Martín-Barbero recovers the Argentine researcher Alejandro Piscitelli's reflection regarding the presence and performance of *polyalphabetisms*, where what matters is not exactly the new supports (media), but "the new practices and collaborative social habits: new modes of relationship with reappropriation of old dynamics, and hybridization of new forms of contents and genres"[21] (Martín-Barbero, 2011, p. 460). Within this reflection axis, education emerges also as a key element for the construction of citizenship and includes strategically thinking the interrelationships with media in the communicative processes from a citizen perspective. We consider this thought as a provoking perspective from the author to underpin renewing educommunicative processes, both in the classroom and in the various social scenarios (collective groups, communities, social movements, cultural groups), so the subjects' communicative, expressive and aesthetic competences are valued, as well as their experiments and creativity in media and digital appropriations, for the formation of a critical look of reality and for the construction of citizenship.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES REGARDING MARTÍN-BARBERO'S PROPOSALS

The proposals worked out by Martín-Barbero that we retrieved here continue to offer productive and thought-provoking keys for thinking about contemporary mediatization processes and their articulations with cultures and citizenship. As a developing thought process, his reflections give greater centrality to technical mediation as a comprehensive dimension that crosses across the multiple social dimensions. His cartographic epistemic look, sensibly connected to the concrete processes of Latin American countries, allows the researcher to think procedurally about the interrelationships between technicity and the emergence of new citizenships in the cultural field *in a complex perspective* that seeks to consider the multidimensionalities that constitute these interconnections to reveal contradictions, and the possibilities that also appear.

To bring to reality and broaden Martín-Barbero's reflections, we believe that establishing some aspects arising from recent research and problematization related to digital communication processes is productive. Peruzzo (2018) provides a first basis from the systematization and reflection on the results of investigations related to the use of digital media by communities, groups and contemporary social movements. She shows in her analysis that the internet and digital social networks have contributed to disseminate content and strategic information to support citizen actions; to share meanings and to generate a sense of belonging among members; to the visibility of proposals, demands and claims; to establish expanded dialogues with society; to articulate public manifestations and processes of organizing, mobilizing and coordinating actions. The perspectives brought by digital communication have favored the development of local/global articulations between communities and movements, and collaborated for the establishment and consolidation of social movement networks.

Other researchers have reflected that the advancement of digital networks has also driven breaches on confidential, political, economic and copyrighted information (Moglen, 2012). Yet, it has also provided opportunities for the constitution of plural news coverage and for the experimentation of new models of citizen journalism, different from those performed by hegemonic media (Marquezan, 2016).

However, to properly adjust digital environments and their contradictions to complement and update the researcher's reflections investigated here, we must consider that the processes linked to international capitalism have led to the establishment of monopolies that control the service and data flows of subjects using digital platforms. The tendency to concentrate ownership and business in a small number of transnational economic groups in cyberspace,

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fueled by the privatization of technological and resource environments – which originally provided free and public access –, harms competition and favors the invasion of user's privacy (Peruzzo, 2018). As Silveira (2006, p. 79) warned, "the concentration of communicational power within the information society could be much greater than that of mass media in the industrial society"[22].

Associated with this, new monitoring, surveillance and control modalities in the digital environment emerge and deepen, based on the piracy of user data, its treatment and use to model, as well as to persuade consumers' behavior, exercising citizen control by the State with political and ideological interests, as pointed out by the reflections of Mattelart & Vitalis (2015), Bruno (2008) and Silveira (2006). A recent study showed how these forms of surveillance and control restrict the construction and exercise of citizenship – such as Albuquerque's investigation (2018), which reveals that the use of digital networks by Porto Alegre's socio-communicational movements served to criminalize the subjects of these movements. An exploratory research conducted in late 2018 with women's movement members in Porto Alegre[23] also points out that these movements are beginning to rethink their communication strategies, including redefinitions and restrictions on the use of social networks given the possibilities of criminalization that arise in the new Brazilian circumstances related to Jair Bolsonaro's government.

Therefore, it is necessary to also consider other aspects of contemporary digital reality when discussing digital citizenship, including: the issue of algorithms and the constitution of filters that significantly limit the chances of developing extended network interactions and access to diverse information (Pariser, 2012); the artificial manipulation of content by robots and other replication mechanisms to accelerate their dissemination; the unethical and anti-civic uses of networks such as those made for the dissemination of Fake News, productions that are linked to the deliberate use of misinformation as power and citizen control stratagems ; the disqualified participation in digital environments (banal, fake, defamatory content); tendencies towards personalism and individualism to the detriment of the collective spirit when using networks (Peruzzo, 2018). Despite of significant advances, societies continue to have differences and limitations in people's access to digital media and digital competencies for their mastery and appropriation.

In the face of contemporary contexts, we must emphasize the need for complexly thinking about the role of digital for the construction of citizen communication processes, without reducing such processes to the technological dimension or oversizing such dimension, an effort to which Martín-Barbero's epistemic perspective invites us. In our view, it is essential

to consider the multidimensional imbrications of media and communication processes in the citizenship construction processes. In this sense, the study conducted by Castells (2013) signals that the movements that occurred in Tunisia, Egypt, the Arab countries and Spain (The Outraged) – as well as the Occupy Wall Street triggered in the United States, which he studied – were built not only on digital networks, but also on *multimodal* communicative connections. In this same direction, Porto's (2019) investigation on the communication processes of the Pataxós from Bahia is expressive, showing how historically constituted sociocommunication networks are linked with the digital appropriations of the Facebook social network in a multidimensional communicative fabric that brings together Pataxós struggles and the construction of citizenship.

These are some of the many questions that continue to challenge empirical research to advance in the understanding of the relation between media, cultures and citizenship. Given its complexity and multidimensional character, such problem demands the construction of transdisciplinary epistemic perspectives for its comprehension, a line that guides Martín-Barbero's formulations. It also requires the creation of trans-methodological strategies marked by crossings of methods, as well as of reformulations and inventions for their research (Maldonado, 2008). These challenges urge us to keep working for the construction of possibilities for a better perspective on these phenomena, and to position ourselves in the empirical field of new citizenships to understand, as Martín-Barbero invites us to, "what sounds, speaks, shouts, insults, curses, while at the same time, inaugurates, invents, oxygenates, liberates, emancipates, creates" (2009a, para. 4), constituting reasons for our *hope*. M

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