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Plenary Session: “Overcoming attacks on freedom of speech through Qualitative Inquiry”

May, 20 - 9:30-10:50

Chair:

Pamela Zapata-Sepúlveda, Universidad de Tarapacá

Discussant:

Norman Denzin, Univ of Illinois;

Stacy Holman Jones, Monash University;

Jane Gilgun, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities;

James Haywood Rolling Jr., Syracuse University;

Angelo Benozzo, Università della Valle d’Aosta;

Patrick J Lewis, University of Regina;

Alejandro Noboa, Universidad de la República.

Alejandro Noboa’s Speech

Good morning colleagues,

I am glad to be here today and I have to apologize for my English which forces me to read my presentation instead of expose it.

I would like to thank professor Denzin and his team for give me the opportunity

to participate in this panel, it is a great honour for me.

To start the discussion and to think aiming how it is possible to overcome the freedom of expression attacks through using the Qualitative Inquire or in other words, how the QI can help to take care of the freedom of expression rights full force, that is why I am here today. The first impression on this matter, nowadays is that the freedom of expression is strongly tied to the social communication. It is not possible to know how it happens at the beginning, because this exercise depends exclusively on the people individual abilities.

However, it becomes necessary to adopt a model (Modelo Dialéctico de la Comunicación Social by Phd Piñuel Raigada and others) that allows us to detect which of the components of the Social Communication System works on the current society, and identify in each case, which ones are their incidence points inside the process of communication that can be devalue when the citizen freedom of expression rights could be diminish or cancel.

To describe the social communication system, before we have to identify three subsystems: Social, Communication and Personality. The first one merge agents, communication means of production, merchandise and sanctions. The second group combines communication actors, instruments, messages and language, and the last one, subjects, biologic organisms, objects and apprehension logic rules. All of this contextualized a historical system that serves for an era framework.

If we analyze the first social subsystem by its components, this develops, at the present, that inside the capitalist system of pursuit, profit and lucre, brings the ability to solve the influences of capital in many cases defines the chances of survival of the medium and/or the professionals in the media market. All these components mostly are compel to respond for the interests subordinate to capital. They have to sell their goods and services or create an image that allows the client to hold positions of privilege in society. This is the first problem for freedom of expression and its exercise since the professional field is strongly conditioned.

This allows us to sustain a couple of thesis that lead to a qualitative research.

The media that make possible in this century the freedom of expression are capitalist companies seeking profit for its maintenance and growth. Thus, it will be only communicable things that optimize the profit target of the media itself or its sponsors public and/or private.

An interesting line of work with this thesis, since the QI is the study of financing agents of social media communication, allowing to build and typify networks ideological and economically characterize for agents that support different media explaining clearly what are the interests set in each case.

The relationships that the Social subsystem articulates with the communication subsystem defines its performance inside the world of social communication.

The mediation role of communication that journalist/s actor accomplish (individual or collective) is translate into a corpus of mid messages whose objectives in most cases are not defined it by the actor of communication itself, but directly or secretly determines the purpose formulate by the agent of the social subsystem, which at the end sustains its existence in the market as means and on the work as a journalist held by a contract.

This leads us to secondary thesis, communication logic is determine by the logic of the market and the need to conserve or cooperate to preserve a privilege position in society. In the process it leaves identifiable and decipherable traces through the corpus of output messages, languages and even through the instruments used, which obviously are also define by economic opportunities and access to know-how.

In this case, the QI can use critical discóurse Analysis. This will lay bare the interests promote and defend the different actors of communication in their daily work.

Personality, the last element in this model, is very limited by innate abilities and acquired by the subjects of communication, lifestyles, values and ways of thinking in particular (Erwing Goffman called this mindsets). This is the space of feelings and motivations, the deepest intentions of the communication subjects, a field to reflect their preferences, acceptances and/or its rebelliousness. Is when you choose to say or not say, listen or not listen, see or not see, etc.

The thesis is that in this subsystem both communicators and receivers have an active role is the space for the subject. This is the room for rebellion and freedom of speech or freedom of silence.

In QI this is the field of qualitative microsociology, to detect hierarchical meanings by the subjects, the motivations of their behavior, values and ultimate, the field for the recovery of the actor's voice. Finally, a sociohistorical context surrounding the dynamics of global operation that describe subsystems. Its most current features are:

a. Despite countless efforts of states to legislate on the subject, bureaucratic impediments and lack of means on the one hand and absolute hypocrisy of some governments makes it very difficult to exercise of this right and professional work of journalists to inform the public.

b. The difficulties to develop the information and communicate it is in conflict zones, which foreshadows an atmosphere of manipulation and concealment of information that prevent informing on the right way, beyond those who has their own limitations of the Communication System.

c. On the other hand, the fast expansion of social media which proved to be a powerful mean in support of freedom of expression and information: can expand in much the possibilities of the flow of information between people and allow to put pressure on public and private powers. It is also true that allow an injurious use of public persons, institutions, companies, among others.

d. As a consequence of this, has taken rise the so-called yellow journalism, which alters, intentionally exaggerates the artists of information that are not relevant to public awareness and participation in public affairs, degrade the democratic system and cooperate in the culture deterioration of participation and civic responsibility in public matters.

To conclude, the question is: What the QI could do in these cases? Well, some of the options are promoting works that shows these systemic contradictions and actively working for the dichotomy democracy vs. market, turn in favor of a

renew democracy, deeply with more society commitment in the management of community affairs, whether if there are public or private. Conceptual tools and techniques exist and may have been already create it, we have to use them and take advantage of them for these purposes.

Thank you very much.”