

Towards the teaching of another journalism model: a proposal for educational innovation

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Abstract: Is it possible to teach and think about Journalism beyond traditional spaces and roles (media, public organizations and companies)? With this central question, this article presents the experience of the Cuvic project of the School of Journalism of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, an instance that, through volunteering, links its students with schools and organizations of the third sector to implement communication and journalistic projects. Through interviews, we observed that the participating students identify in Cuvic a proposal of non-hegemonic journalism, that works for citizenship and social, territorial and community development.

Keywords: journalism teaching; educational innovation; journalism models; metaresearch in communication.

Resumo: É possível ensinar e pensar no Jornalismo mais além dos espaços e rôis tradicionais (meio de comunicação, organizações públicas e empresas)? Com esta pergunta como eixo, neste texto apresentamos a experiência do projeto Cuvic da Escola de Jornalismo da Pontificia Universidade Católica de Valparaíso, lugar que, através do voluntariado vincula os seus estudantes aos estabelecimentos escolares, e organizações do terceiro setor para a implementação de projetos comunicacionais e jornalísticos. Por meio de comunicação de entrevistas, observamos que os e as estudantes participantes identificam no Cuvic uma proposta de Jornalismo não hegemônica, e o serviço da cidadania e do desenvolvimento social, territorial e comunitário.

Palavras-chave: ensino do jornalismo; inovação educativa; modelos de jornalismo; metapesquisa em comunicação.

1. INTRODUCTION

The journalism schools are not only a theoretical and practical learning space, but also a space for the construction of professional models^{1,2,3}: throughout the subjects and educational plans, students are (co)constructed or presented, explicitly or implicitly, a notion of journalism and its professional role.

The relationship between professional models and the teaching of journalism is the motivation of this work: what perspective of journalism is present in the university education in Chile?, and—after evidencing the predominance of a perspective centered on the media and public and private for profit organizations—is it possible to promote a different way of understanding and practicing the profession?

Based on these questions, we combined the results of two experiences implemented in the School of Journalism of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (PUCV). On the one hand, the project *Metainvestigación de la Comunicación en Chile* (Fondecyt COD 11160842), dedicated to the analysis of the investigation and education of Journalism and Communication in the country, and whose results show a predominant focus on the traditional media and platforms and in the work with first and second sectors organizations. On the other hand, the Cuvic project, an initiative that promotes collaborative and voluntary work among journalism students and social organizations, and which is seen by the participating students as a space to do and think journalism beyond the hegemonic discourse.

2. CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

In Chile, 27 universities—of the 54 existing ones in the higher education system—teach Journalism at the bachelor's level. Our interest in teaching journalism is part of a research line aimed at the disciplinary knowledge of Communication as an academic field. Vassallo de Lopes conceptualizes the academic field of Communication as “a set of higher education institutions aimed at the study and teaching of communication, where the theory, research and university education of communication professionals is produced”⁴, an idea divided, in turn, into three subfields: scientific—referred to knowledge production practices—; educational—referred to the reproduction practices of that knowledge, through university teaching of subjects related to communication—; and professional—referred to application practices of knowledge that promotes links with the labor market.

The relationship between these subfields would support the development of Communication “as a field of institutionalized practices of production (research), reproduction (education) and circulation of scientific capital and power”⁵. Based

1. SHOEMAKER, Pamela; REESE, Stephen. **Mediating the message in the 21st century**: a media sociology perspective. New York: Routledge, 2013.

2. SANTOS-SAINZ, María. Los imaginarios de los futuros periodistas en Francia. **Revista Latina de Comunicación**, Tenerife, n. 68, p. 145-166, 2013. Available from: http://www.revistalatinacs.org/068/paper/972_Bordeaux/06_Santos.html. Access on: Mar 13, 2017.

3. MELLADO, Claudia; SCHERMAN, Andrés (org.). **Estudiantes de Periodismo en Chile**: percepción sobre la profesión, su futuro laboral y el desempeño de los medios. Valparaíso: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso; Santiago: Universidad Diego Portales, 2015. Available from: <http://periodismouc.cl/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Informe-FINAL-Estudiantes-de-Periodismo-en-Chile.pdf>. Access on: Mar 15, 2017.

4. VASSALLO DE LOPES, María Inmacolata. Reflexiones sobre el estatuto disciplinario del campo de la comunicación. In: VASSALLO DE LOPES, María Inmacolata; FUENTES NAVARRO, Raúl (ed.). **Comunicación**: campo y objeto de estudio: perspectivas reflexivas latinoamericanas. Tlaquepaque: Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente, 2010, p. 44.

5. *Ibidem*, p. 47.

on these assumptions, to review the journalism education in the university in Chile allows us to identify what idea of the profession reproduces and legitimizes the academic community itself, what models or points of views of journalism are presented to their students and which ones are absent and invisible.

Based on these concepts, considering the project *Investigación en Comunicación en Chile*: state of the art and analysis of the characteristics and projections of the national scientific community (COD 11160842), a review was made, through content analysis, of the curricular meshes and public presentation texts (graduation profiles, mission, vision, competencies of the graduate, among others) of the 27 Journalism degree programs offered in Chile nowadays.

From the analysis we see, as expected, the unanimous recognition of the media as the predominant space for the journalist professional practice (100%), followed by the organizations (92.5%) and the academy (25.9%). For the purposes of this work, it is interesting to note that specifically in the media exercise there is a distribution concentrated in traditional formats (written press: 16 mentions; radio and television: 15 mentions) and a predominance of digital media (20 mentions).

In the professional practice in organizations—and considering the division between First Sector/State; Second sector/Profitable private organizations, and Third Sector/Civil society organizations, defined by a double negation of profit and government, as a classification⁶—we observe major references to the Second sector (18 mentions), to “Entrepreneurship” (12 mentions)—which implies self-management as a future possibility of professional performance—, and the First sector (11 mentions).

In contrast, we found only one mention of community radios as a professional possibility in the media (3.7% in N=27), and three references to the third sector, in the case of organizations (12% in N=25; and 11.1% in N=27).

When analyzing the curricular meshes, a similar picture: of the total number of subjects observed (n=1513), only two, in two different universities, specify a social or community approach: “Community radios” and “Professional community practice”, equivalent to 0.13% of the total courses observed.

Thus, the professional model declared in the university journalism education in Chile would be marked by an emphasis on the exercise in traditional media, state and private organizations, and the promotion of the development of self-managed journalistic ventures (without specifying if they are inscribed in a traditional logic or alternative), while only minor reference is made to non-hegemonic or alternative journalistic exercises, such as citizen, public, community or participatory perspectives^{7,8,9}.

Given this scenario, and as a way to advance the incorporation of these other views to the university Journalism education, the Cuvic Project arises, an experience of educational innovation carried out by the School of Journalism of the PUCV, and that promotes collaborative and volunteer work among undergraduate students

6. JEREZ, Ariel; REVILLA BLANCO, Marisa. El tercer sector: una revisión introductoria a un concepto polémico. *Sociedade em Debate*, Pelotas, v. 4, n. 2, p. 3-22, 1998, p. 7. Available from: http://eprints.uem.es/39795/1/EL%20TERCER%20SECTOR_%20una%20revisi%20introductoria%20a%20un%20concepto.pdf. Access on: Mar 3, 2018.

7. MESO, Koldobika. Periodismo ciudadano: voces paralelas a la profesión periodística. *Chasqui*, Quito, n. 90, p. 4-13, 2005. Available from: <http://www.revistachasqui.org/index.php/chasqui/article/view/234/242>. Access on: Mar 15, 2017.

8. CYTRYNBLUM, Alicia. *Periodismo social*: una nueva disciplina. Buenos Aires: La Crujía, 2009.

9. MIRALLES, Ana María. El periodismo como ciencia social. *Comunicación*, Medellín, n. 27, p. 53-62, 2016. Available from: <https://revistas.upb.edu.co/index.php/comunicacion/article/view/6250>. Access on: May 13, 2018.

and social organizations of the sector in Placilla, Valparaíso—where the School is located—by instances that strengthen the journalistic and communicational dimensions of the management of these organizations.

During its first year (2017), Cuvic worked with 12 students and four organizations in the sector: an environmental neighborhood association; a cultural center and museum focused on local history and identity; a public school; and a social movement for reconstruction of the social fabric of Placilla.

The educational innovation character of Cuvic is given as a non-formal educational experience outside the classroom. This proposal is based on a conception of education as a socio-cultural process with the participation of many actors, formally and informally, transcending the University as an institutional space of the educational process.

In this sense, we collect the reflection of Flecha, Padrós and Puigdemívol, who state that “learning no longer depends so much on what happens in the classroom, but on the interactions established in all the contexts in which people intervene: school, homes, neighborhood, sports club, media, etc. Having a critical sense or being able to reflect and adopt clear criteria to argue and act are now more important tools than the ability to store a lot of data”¹⁰. Although the authors focus on the school context, we believe that their reflections can be applied to the educational process of university students.

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was carried out aiming to identify the assessment that students give to Cuvic in their educational process and the conception of the professional role from their subjective experience. In March 2018 semi-structured interviews were conducted in pairs, according to the personal affinity of the interviewees, to create a more comfortable space (Table 1). The questions were: (1) Why were you interested to participate in Cuvic?; (2) Did it generate any contribution to Cuvic?; and (3) Do you think Cuvic contributes to professional formation?

After the interviews, a thematic content analysis was carried out to identify and categorize emerging themes and associated meanings or attributes. We use this technique of interpretation in two perspectives of approaches to the data and three phases. About the approaches, in the first of *deductive* type, and considering the research objectives, we selected those fragments (paragraphs, citations) of the answers that address the topics to be analyzed. In the second, of *inductive* type, and based on the principles of the *grounded theory* of Glaser and Strauss¹¹, we carried out the first phase of analysis, built on an *open coding* of the already selected text fragments. In this coding, we identify all the emerging themes that were significant to respond to the study objectives.

10. FLECHA, José Ramón; PADRÓS, María; PUIGDELLÍVOL, Ignasi. Comunidades de aprendizaje: transformar la organización escolar al servicio de la comunidad. *Organización y Gestión Educativa*: revista del Fórum Europeo de Administradores de la Educación, Bilbao, v. 11, n. 5, p. 4-8, 2003, p. 2.

11. GLASER, Barney; STRAUSS, Anselm. *The discovery of Grounded Theory*: strategies for qualitative research. New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction, 2006.

Table 1: Sample of the interview application

Code of the interviewee	Gender	Age (years)	Time of career in 2017
Eo1	H	19	First
Eo2	H	23	
Ea3	M	22	
Eo4	H	22	
Ea5	M	21	Second
Ea6	M	20	
Ea7	M	20	
Ea8	M	22	Third
Eo9	H	23	Fourth
Ea10	M	22	
Ea11	M	25	Fifth
Ea12	M	23	

Source: Self-developed.

The second phase considered the *semantic reorganization*, grouping the emerging themes by conceptual affinity. Finally, and based on the semantic reorganization, a re-coding *and configuration of an associated conceptual categories map* was carried out in three levels: (1) *Categories* or main themes identified as areas of response to the questions/research objectives; (2) *Subcategories* or themes of conceptual affinity that configure a response to the main category; and (3) *Meanings or attributes* that provide specific content (such as assessment or characterization) for each subcategory, and which are identified according to the support of the quotes or textual lexias of the interviewees (Table 2).

Table 2: Map of categories, subcategories and attributes

Category	Subcategories	Associated meanings or attributes
Skills acquired	Technical competencies	Audiovisual production
		Communication in organizations
		Design, application and analysis of reports
		Teaching
	Soft skills	Affront and self-confidence
		Teamwork
Time management		
Learning experience	Learning community	Collective work among students
		Mutual learning and dialogue
		Quality of the work environment

Continues...

Table 2: Continuation

Category	Subcategories	Associated meanings or attributes
Learning experience	Learning community	Diversity of the group
		Relationship with teachers
		Community creation
	Pre-professional experience	Professional look to the future
Opportunity for practice and professional advancement		
Learning experience	Learning located	Application of theoretical knowledge
		Experience that gives meaning to education
	University that leaves the classroom and links with its surroundings	Knowledge at the service of others
		Learning from organizations
		Link with the community and its territory
Learning experience	Volunteering evaluation	Personal gratification space
		Integral formation space
		Social change project
Journalism Model	Journalism not only in media	Communication in organizations
	Non-hegemonic practice of journalism	Communication with people
		Resignify what is important
		Dynamizing the social fabric
	Non-hegemonic professional spaces	Journalism connected with the territory
		Local-level journalism

Source: Self-developed.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Acquired competences

The students value Cuvic as a place of development of technical and soft skills. As *technical competences*, we understand those learnings declared about knowledge and skills specifically related to professional work: (1) *Teaching*, through the implementation of school journalism workshops; (2) *Design, application and analysis of reports*, especially for evaluation work of social networks; (3) *Organizational communication*, for direct work with organizations; and (4) *Audiovisual production* through actions such as camera management, coordination of recordings and, above all, editing, learning of the most valued by students.

Although this knowledge is part of the career curriculum—except for Teaching, which is only developed eventually by those who work as assistants—,

the students value their learning early in the education process and the space in which they are applied (third-party organizations).

Now I am seeing Organizational Communication, that I name the “Cuvic branch”, because they are teaching us to work with organizations, which we already did last year. (Ea6)

Other declared learnings are transversal to the labor and personal scope—*soft skills*—such as: (1) *Time management* and the possibility of making volunteering compatible with other activities; (2) *Teamwork* as a characteristic and permanent performance methodology of the project; and (3) *Affront and self-confidence* due to the interaction within the same team and with the organizations.

As I did not have all the time available for Cuvic, it was difficult for me to say, “I want to be here, but I cannot be here completely”, then to put that limit in my time, which they have also accepted, and having been able to work directly with Cuvic, was positive for me. (Ea11, Time management)

All the work we did through the year was very group, very much to listen to... and since I always work very alone, it helped me have other visions, which we could discuss. (Ea12, Teamwork)

Personal learning was the subject of contact with others, because I am super shy, very nervous, and I was able to learn to get on a little more. (Eo4, Affront and self-confidence)

4.2. Learning experience

Beyond the content, the students value the development process of these competences, recognizing the generation of a *Learning Community*, and positively evaluate the *Teamwork* with students of different courses. As in most institutions of formal education in Chile, the classroom are made up with students of the same age and curricular advance, so interacting in a non-formal educational context with others with different ages and processes was interesting and enriching.

We were learning from the things our colleagues did, about Excel, tabulating data... we also learned about organizations. We learned a lot that way. (Ea5)

Other recognized attributes are the permanent *Dialogue and mutual learning*, the *Quality of the work environment*, and the *Diversity of the working group*.

For me, Cuvic was a contribution in the sense of Teamwork, where we sat at a table to give ideas, to work together, to listen to each other. (Ea11)

It is a really different human team, that is, we are students of all years, we work with teachers and also with alumni, that already, even if it varies, changes many things. (Ea5)

Participants evaluate the *Relationship with teachers* in a different context to the classroom as positive. This aspect is recognized as novel, because of the possibility of generating another type of encounter and common work.

[It is positive that in the School] *a project is being done, with a new look on how we relate the students to the territory, and that it is a work in conjunction with the teachers.* (Ea5)

Finally, Cuvic would contribute to the *Creation of community*, by generating links beyond the formal relationship between students, teachers and the community of Placilla:

The School, basically, is not only for one to study, but there are other things we can do and that create a community, both among students and in the territory, in this case. I believe that this is a good contribution. (Ea6)

On the other hand, the students indicate that their participation in Cuvic has meant a valuable *Pre-professional experience*, such as (1) contribution to the *Professional look to the future*, that is, to acquire new perspectives on it, and (2) *Opportunity for practice and professional advancement*, to put into practice the profession and “advance “ in relation to their fellows.

A contribution for me is that I put into practice “right away” areas of my carrer, such as the communication management that the same organizations have. It’s a subject that I really did not get much. (Ea3, Professional look to the future)

[What we see in the classes] *we can practice even before starting to work. Now is perhaps the time to make mistakes or learn in practice, because later you will be paid when you do a work like this.* (Eo1, Opportunity for practice and professional advancement)

The *Located learning* refers to one of the characteristics that students observe in the context of Cuvic: to relate theory and practice for a pertinent and contextualized learning to the reality of work with social organizations. In this sense, the following stand out: (1) *Application of theoretical knowledge* and (2) *Experience that gives meaning to education.*

It’s easy to be in the academy and autoreproduce. It’s very easy, because of course, everything we talk about is also supposed. And it seems super important to me that these assumptions can also be seen in different ways, such as applying the theory at the end. (Ea12, Application of theoretical knowledge)

Just now in the “U[niversity]” they are passing me organizational communication and branches by style, which have to do with organizations, and I feel that without living the experience of Cuvic, I could not have understood it and those branches would not have made sense to me, as if they were seeing for the first time without any community experience. (Ea5, Experience that gives meaning to education)

The volunteers value the possibility of leaving the classroom to learn in a new space: the territory of Placilla, followed by the neighbors who live there. In this subcategory—*University that leaves the classroom and links with its environment*—the participants’ responses relate their learning with (1) *Knowledge in the service of others*, (2) *Learning from organizations* and (3) *Link with the community and its territory.* In this sense, they recognize the University as a closed space for the

generation of knowledge and appreciate the possibility of “opening it up” for a social benefit and placed at the service of other people.

The academy is super institutionalized, then, take this knowledge and put it in a space where it really serves people is very rewarding. (Ea8)

Related to this, volunteers highlight the possibility of education not only thanks to their colleagues or teachers, but also *learning from the organizations* with which they worked:

It is very nice to bond with people who love their work so much. One values those spaces that are so local that they are really connecting with neighbors, with their local history, not only from what can be understood as “history”, the Battle of Placilla, for example, but from everyday life in Placilla. (Ea12)

In this same logic, the participants consider positive the generation of a *Link with the community and its territory*:

I think so [Cuvic was a contribution], especially in the School, because it gives you an image that you are not only going to study journalism, but you are also going to interact with the community. (Ea7)

Finally, and about the type of participation that Cuvic calls, students express their *Volunteer Assessment* in three dimensions, such as: (1) *Personal gratification space*, (2) *Integral formation space* and (3) *Social change project*.

It also opens other sides of the career, where you can not only work for money, but also for personal satisfaction. (Ea7, Personal gratification space)

[In Cuvic] everything is born from the gratuity, from wanting to do with another, wanting to be with others. That's super important to later be a professional. (Ea5, Integral formation space)

The experience of something voluntary for me is super revolutionary, so to speak, because you do not expect a monetary value in exchange, then your work has to be done in the same way as if they were paying you. (Ea5, Project of social change)

4.3. Journalism model

For students, Cuvic is a space that allows them to resignify their idea of journalism: they observe that *Journalism is not just media*, and that working with organizations offers a concrete experience to visualize a professional future in spaces other than the media, that, especially when entering the career, is the natural (or *naturalized*) and almost exclusive place of journalistic work.

As a student, one does not know well for “where is the micro”, or what would they like to dedicate more than to the media, then [Cuvic] leaves a bit of this logic of journalism that has been institutionalized as the press, and generates other edges, other fields where to do journalism, a different, not only the mediatic journalism. The fact of working with organizations, with people with a face, is a tremendous change for the school's perspectives on journalism. (Ea5)

The role of journalism also, in the voice of the participants, can be revisited, and offers the possibility of understanding the profession from a *Non-hegemonic practice of journalism*, materialized in three dimensions: (1) *communication with people*, by generating links and teamwork and not only the channeling of information; (2) the possibility of *resignifying what is important*, by questioning what is meant by “news” or “public relevance”, for example; and (3) the role of the journalist *as a facilitator of the social fabric*, that is, as an active professional committed to social change.

I do not understand journalism if it is not from the people, if it does not mean to communicate. That is the journalism that I like, because there are other types of journalism equally valid. (Ea5, Communication with people)

We are here not only to make things visible, but to learn from organizations and to connect with a territory. I think that is fundamental, because we could be doing a project about Santiago, about things that are institutionally “more important”, so I feel we are revaluing something that is not considered important. This opens up a tremendous space of how we are reinventing journalism, which leaves a bit of the institutional, of the traditional. (Ea5, Resignify what is important)

If before I saw as part of my ideas, from my mind, a new role of the journalist, after doing this volunteering I see that it is something real, and that organizations need this kind of help, but considering this parable that said that a person asks you for help, asks you for something to eat, until someone teaches them how to fish. In that sense, this is the help that Cuvic gives. (Eo9, Dinamizador of the social weave)

Finally, an assessment of *non-hegemonic professional spaces*, characterized as: (1) *Journalism linked with the territory*; (2) *Journalism at the local level*, all attributes related to a non-massive professional practice or institutionality, but located at a human, citizen and territorial scale.

The proposal of the projects [of Cuvic] aimed to rebuild the social fabric through memory. That caught my attention, because the journalist is not only the one who informs, but also who helps to better communicate in the territories. So, the same people recognizing the territory where they live in and what it means for them to live there or to be in contact with their neighbors, for me that is important. (Ea10, Journalism connected with the territory)

I think that journalism is still very centralized, I think it is necessary to take it more locally and to know the realities where the journalist is immersed. I think that being a journalist, one has to know the place where it makes its progress, not only the central part of this career, because obviously one focuses on the national agenda, but we leave the local aside, which can sometimes makes us richer than the great media. (Eo2, Journalism at local scale)

5. CONCLUSIONS

We know that it is difficult to think about our field from a *non-mediacentric* perspective, or to deny the relevance with which professional

development linked to organizations has been positioned in recent years. With the same conviction, we also believe that the emphasis is important to observe and denaturalize predominant tendencies, and (almost) invisible sectors.

Then, and given the evidence of a look at journalism centered on institutionality and not on citizenship, is it possible to promote a different way of understanding and practicing the profession in university education? We believe so, and in different spaces: work in the classroom, academic and professional practices, research, or link with the environment.

In this context, and recognizing that it is a limited and particular instance, we value Cuvic not only for the *disciplinary* link between students and organizations, but also for volunteering as means of participation, key in a education proposal focused on the construction of social fabric and collaborative work.

Authors such as Batlle¹², Martínez-Odría¹³ and Rodríguez Gallego¹⁴ have stated that voluntary work and community culture have a positive impact on student learning, not only in their academic performance, but also in the formation of social, civic and social commitment skills, necessary for democratic coexistence. Thus, extracurricular training actions of this kind can provide an enriching environment for learning and for the educational community as a whole.

In fact, the senses and the positive effects of volunteering are not “only” at individual level [...], but also at social level, in terms of socialization, knowledge of different modalities of perception and interaction with the social world, development of the civic sense, social responsibility and sense of belonging to a community (sense of community)¹⁵.

Thus, volunteer work can be understood as a complement to the educational curriculum in topics such as organizational communication, digital projects, project formulation, among others, but, above all, a space for new learning in social, cultural and professional dimensions. On this last point, it is important to highlight that Cuvic presents to the students a communication proposal and a situated journalism exercise that seeks the empowerment of local actors of the civil society organizations, which constitutes an innovative contribution on the same conception of journalism.

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