Mexico and the global problematic: power relations, knowledge and communication in neoliberal Mexico
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CONCLUSIONS

During the last three decades, social and political conditions have unfolded and placed Mexican society in a difficult situation. Voices describing Mexico as a country on the verge of becoming a failed state resonate with increasing turmoil and instability registered everywhere in the country. In 2011 the expectation to reduce the intensities of the global problematic feels improbable. In fact, these negative prognoses are shared by diverse groups both inside and outside Mexico. Erosion of sovereignty, events of violence, instability, polarisation, unnecessary material deprivation, and cultural oppression are persistent in Mexican territories and populations. Therefore, turmoil and confusion determine important dimensions of social action. In a more theoretical dimension this study investigated the apparent decomposing nature of social action and desires by looking at the forms of differentiation between language and technology made by social assemblages in contemporary Mexico. The focus on the modes of differentiation between language and technology help establish certain referents to approach the question of how communication practices participate in the intensification of poverty and violence in Mexico. The main findings are:

1) The Mexican technolinguistic social assemblage is characterised by commercial and democratic forms of production and consumption.

2) The commercial-democratic logic behind the utilisation of communication capabilities is sustained by capitalist attitudes and desires.

3) This particular form of utilising communication creates a realm of uncritical consumption of information and knowledge, which ultimately excommunicates society at large from the possibility to use communication technologies and achieve aims different from commercial or democratic ones.

4) The visible results of the technolinguistic social assemblage in Mexico are the normalisation of chaos and the creation of a state of perplexity in the social realm; a general state of confusion that prevents the possibility to act upon the social problem and avoid the intensification of the global problematic.

To approach this thematic I formulated two new notions: the global problematic and what I have named the technolinguistic social assemblage. In order to articulate my argument around these two notions, in Chapter One, ‘Theory and Society,’ I exposed the basic tenets of assemblage theory with the objective of setting a theoretical framework that moved from the mere scientific ground to a more ethical endeavour and perspective. This approach is complemented by an elaboration of a
specific theory of knowledge and power relations. In Chapter Two, ‘Globalisation and Society,’ I presented a definition of globalisation based on the idea of social change and processes of distribution. In Chapter Three, I explained the concept of the *global problematic* in contrast to that of the social problem. In Chapter Four, I addressed what I understand by the notion of the communication setting as a part of the technolinguistic social assemblage. The objectives set out for the first four chapters are: 1) to reach a definition of the idea of contemporary globalisation; 2) to propose the sociological concept of the *global problematic* as a unit of analysis suitable for contemporary processes; 3) to present the principles of assemblage theory; and 4) to determine how processes of *actualisation* of the so-called global problematic take place.

In Chapter Five, ‘Mexican Neoliberal Assemblages,’ I framed the object of study – Mexico – within the scope of assemblage theory. In Chapter Six, ‘Neoliberal Mexico: Politics of Communication,’ I presented some of the most representative events of social instability, polarisation, and violence experienced in Mexico during the last three decades. In Chapter Seven, ‘Neoliberal Mexico and the Global Problematic,’ I defined the following notions: 1) public political simulation; 2) units of confusion in mass media; 3) normalisation of chaos; and 4) excommunication of society at large. In explaining these four aspects there is an *indication* of some of the ways in which certain communication practices – and more generally the technolinguistic social assemblage – contribute to and form part of the process of intensification of the global problematic in Mexico.

In Chapter Eight, the structural and theoretical framework proposed in this thesis engages in an analysis based on power relations and assemblage theory. This heuristic device leads to ethical debates around the topic of social and political communication in Mexico, and reveals different aspects of the economies of power and knowledge prevalent in Mexican territories. This methodology allows the determination of important elements of the *virtual diagram* that enables the *actualisation* of the global problematic in Mexico. The *virtual diagram of actualisation* of the global problematic reflects the attitudes behind the use and implementation of the possibilities offered by the technolinguistic social assemblage. This virtual diagram of actualisation can be understood as the predominant *mode* of differentiation between language and technology in neoliberal Mexico.

*Capitalist Logic of Accumulation: A Social System Based on Competition and Profit*

The logic of accumulation, competition, and profit is visible in Mexican social assemblages. The form of legislation and enforcement of rights towards communication is consistent with these criteria of differentiation. The so-called *Ley Televisa* reform is an expression of this type of desire
and attitude as the technolinguistic social assemblage takes this capitalist mode of differentiation in Mexico. This mode of differentiation is sustained in its more abstract dimension by discourse; political simulation and units of confusion being two elements found in this research that play a role in sustaining capitalist interests. On a more material dimension, this position – the neoliberal perspective – is sustained by increasing use of force. Military and police forces have been disposed to protect private interest and capital ‘at gunpoint.’

David Harvey identifies this type of project as *military neoliberalism*. This strategy has been adopted by the Mexican government assemblage and is supported by private and conservative sectors of society. Military neoliberalism provokes, among other effects, the criminalisation of social and protest movements that interfere with the advancement of investment and economic profit. This marks the process of differentiation between language and technology in its broader sense. Competition, gain, profit, innovation, and productivity mark the guidelines that government and private sector assemblages follow to create the differentiation between language and technology. The consequences of capitalist attitudes are a communicational setting prone to propagandist monologues. It is a type of *nomadic* encounter, a form of communication that prevents dialogue. This becomes visible when looking at the result that these types of capitalist-neoliberal modes of differentiation bring about – a monological commercial-democratic communication social assemblage – which distributes a substantial part of the *visible* and the *articulable* to society at large.

*The Commercial-Democratic Technolinguistic Social Assemblage Promotes the Actualisation of the Global Problematic*

The conclusions are related to the idea that the normalisation of chaos, and the processes of instability, polarisation, and violence that it stimulates, are connected with the material objective conditions present in the Mexican commercial-democratic technolinguistic social assemblage. Even more important is to note that the characteristic of the communications setting in Mexico is produced by content and communication capacities that are the result of specific attitudes and desires. The commercial-democratic nature of the communicational setting in Mexico provides particular forms of visibilities and statements, which foster the *excommunication* of society at large and the negative effects that I explain in Chapter Six. These processes are partially sustained by the corruption of language in Mexican politics.

Historically, social forces had acted in such a way that they produced the *actual* excommunication of society at large in Mexico. Actual excommunication from important components of the technolinguistic social assemblage, and the simultaneous productive alliance –
the *benevolent* relation – between the private sector and government assemblages, enable three processes that may hinder the identification and control of the manifestation of the global problematic in Mexico: 1) public political simulation; 2) distribution of units of confusion instead of units of information in mass media; and 3) the former two are effects of the excommunication process, which also enables the normalisation of chaos at the personal scale.

At this point, it is important to establish the relations within the communicational setting in Mexico – the political simulation, the distribution of units of confusion, and the normalisation of chaos. The normalisation of chaos prevents a coherent relationship between territories and populations, stimulating the intensification of the global problematic and the loss of sovereignty in Mexico. It can generally be concluded that a capitalist system based on competition and profit (social Darwinism) produces a system of differentiation between language and technology that stimulates and promotes the stratification of the global problematic, primarily by means of exclusion. In order to sustain this system, or as a natural reflex of it, the capitalist system tends to progressively corrupt language. As this corruption saturates communication, chaos and its normalisation kick in. Extreme social conditions then force the population to confront the necessity to redefine social assemblages, or to create new terminology and ‘naming’ that can articulate a different logic of associations (e.g. justice) than those drawn by neoliberal practices and desires (e.g. production) towards the social realm.

In creating new forms of association that balance social forces in order to reduce the intensity of the global problematic in Mexico, many theoreticians have expressed their hope in the power of the Internet to improve social and political communication. However, it is the control over the RES and public space that still plays a preponderant role in social and political communication practices and outcomes. We need to *rethink* the communication conditions around the use and administration of the RES before expecting that new communication technologies will resolve the global problematic. Most importantly, it requires the transformation of government assemblages into a new *machine* (see Chapter One), one that will engage in a perspective based upon *cooperation* (responsible reciprocity), in order to regain much needed sovereignty and certainty in Mexico. The demand for a shift from competition to cooperation in government assemblages is a demand for *fundamental change* in Mexico, which may affect established norms of status, hierarchy, and power. A possible transformation associated with a change in perspective is what I believe the majority of Mexicans expect – a perspective that brings a type of justice that one can *feel* at the personal scale, the most important scale of all.
Concluding Comments

This work avoids searching for explanations to the global problematic in Mexico by means of tracing long distance, global relations between Mexico and other nation states. Of course there are global or international processes that favour the perpetuation of violence and poverty in Mexico (e.g. US arms and weapons traffic). However, the main interest here when referring to the global problematic is poverty and violence, regardless of whether these events are promoted or stimulated by distant global forces. The experience of the global problematic is an ethical problem and it can be addressed at the local personal scale. The global problematic, as mentioned before, manifests regardless of cultural or geographic specificities; I would add that regardless of whether these negative effects are produced by local events or by distant global forces, the effects are identical on the ground. So to trace the causes of the global problematic exclusively from a conventional globalization power relations perspective is insufficient if an ethical dimension of the problematic – explored using assemblage theory – is to be incorporated.

Regarding the heuristic device deployed in this research, I believe that assemblage theory in general, and in particular the elaboration on assemblage theory made in this research, can contribute towards finding frameworks to explore questions from an innovative perspective, bringing fresh points of view to address and learn about social problems. It can be said that the idea of assemblages still requires further formulation in order to become a practical tool in more general social sciences research. This is particularly so in global studies, as the assemblage framework contradicts some of its fundamentals, such as the use of the nation state as the centre of analysis. By experimenting with the use of this theoretical framework through case studies (as this research has done), new research can, I believe, deliver results that could become more consistent, while delivering concrete and organised indications, illustrations, abstractions and descriptions about the case studies.

The final conclusion of this research points towards the necessity of transforming the democratic government assemblage, as it currently functions in Mexico, into different machinery. From inside Mexico, the government machinery needs to become balanced in such a way that harmonises social forces and interests, populations and territories, while addressing the development of benevolent relations with vulnerable groups in society and not only with powerful money and language assemblages that pursue capitalistic and self-interested aims. Answers to the question of which component parts of the current Mexican government need to be replaced in order to alter its capacities, and which actions upon other actions among Mexican social assemblages may help decrease the social unrest embedded in Mexican society today, remain open for discussion and analysis. Without claiming to know all of the specific characteristic components that a different
government machinery may have, it is nevertheless crucial to state that this new assemblage should be able to recover and strengthen national sovereignty, in particular in relation to outside forces, namely other nation states and transnational interests.

Producing and justifying a challenging conclusion about the necessity to fundamentally modify the nature of Mexican government in order for it to become different machinery is of importance, and it was possible to reach with a comprehensive argument because of the use of assemblage theory. This framework, I believe, enables interesting and challenging debates and raises issues that, following conventional frameworks, would be difficult to reach. The flexibility and the refreshing possibilities brought about by assemblage theory are of great value and deserving of further experimentation. Finally, regardless of whether the conclusion of this particular research and its validly can be empirically challenged, I maintain that the research is academically valuable and has the potential for further specification and explanation, while simultaneously appealing to common sense in order to find ways to harmonise destructive social forces.