Mexico and the global problematic: power relations, knowledge and communication in neoliberal Mexico
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This research investigated the social structures and forces that enabled the intensification of the so-called global problematic. The global problematic is understood as the experience of poverty and the advance of violent events in society under neoliberal governments and policies. Of importance for this analysis is the sector of communications in Mexico during the period of time proposed for this research. From approximately 1980 to 2010, I studied the relation between communication practices and the intensification of poverty and violence in Mexican society. In order to approach this topic, a theoretical framework based on power relations as formulated by Michel Foucault and assemblage theory as proposed by Manuel de Landa was implemented to analyse the power relations existing between the government, the private sector and civil society assemblages.

The outcome of the analysis around the notion of the global problematic and the role of communications is a picture of Mexican society suffering from the marginalisation of the majority of its’ population that were kept from the benefits of communication technologies and the potential they hold for human development. There is a commercial/ democratic communicational setting in a neoliberal Mexico that aids and supports the intensification of the so-called global problematic. The results also showed that this marginalisation and the ex-communication of the most vulnerable groups in Mexico eliminate the possibility to communicate with other individuals and groups that may enrich the public debate. This obstructs the possibility of an informed political participation by society at large and exposes the imbalances of power between different sectors of Mexican society and its regrettable consequences.

The aim of this research was to clarify the role and responsibility mass media and other communication practices have in relation to the intensification of the global problematic in Mexico. A final conclusion points out the government and the political parties that are located in the government organisation as the main factor that prevents the possibility of improving the living and communication conditions most Mexicans faced at the end of the first decade of the new millennium. Two practices in communication were identified in neoliberal Mexico that contributed to this problematic state of affairs. First, a consistent practice that corrupts the use of language, a corruption of meaning that leads to the establishment of political simulation as a natural form to fill the content characterising public debates. Second, the propagation of what I denominate in this research as units of confusion. Political simulation and units of confusion, in combination, stimulated the propagation of a general state of perplexity and confusion in Mexican society – an
action that prevents constructive social and political debates that may help to decrease the intensification of the experience of the global problematic in Mexican territories and populations.

To approach this thematic I formulated two notions: the *global problematic* and what I have named the Mexican *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 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 globalisation 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 mass media – and more generally the technolinguistic social assemblage – contributes and forms part of the process of actualization and 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.

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 questions 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, particularly 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.