Cultural and Educative Aspects within the Rural Context of the Jaliscan Highlands in Mexico

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Abstract In the present study, the cultural aspects in the regional societies of the border of the Jaliscan Highlands (Los Altos de Jalisco) with the Cienega region of the Mexican state of Jalisco. To this end, the digital as well as the social interconnections among neighboring regional societies and the ensemble of these are studied with the purpose of finding the use and impact of the information technologies in these regions, in order to establish bases for the governmental policies and the university strategies for the penetration of the technologies and connection to the Internet for the development of these regions. The investigation was conducted with mixed methodology by means of surveys and interviews, contrasting the data collected. With a total of 107 surveys and nine interviews, the results show that, at present, these rural regions are globalization-immersed societies, in which the influence of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have influenced their evolution. But despite efforts in this regard, sufficient means are lacking to achieve the equal technocultural development to that of urban societies. Thus, it is necessary to re-propose strategies and policies to improve the technodigital conditions of these regions.

Keywords: digital gap, social changes, integration technology, educative technology

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1. Introduction

In this work, we analyze the transformational dynamics in self-referenced societies [1] of the border of the Jaliscan Highlands and the Ciénega region of the eastern Mexican State of Jalisco, regarding their digital as well as their social interconnections [2], and their effects on education.

In his founding proposal, the Brazilian Anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro elaborated the concept of cultural transfiguration vs. the process of state domain domination of the political agencies of the nation-state and the indigenous state politics, in civilizing macroprocesses [3]. Nonetheless, the analysis of Lomnitz [1] on regional societies demonstrates that ethnic groups are constituted locally in intimate regional cultures as an inter-level adaptive strategy in the face of the globalization process [4].

Analyzing these open, trans-border digital and economic regions in order to describe how to permanently reconfigure the processes of regional adaptation to the new globalizing displays entertains the purpose of observing the manner in which public policies and the efforts of the universities, presential and virtual, exert an impact on the region's development, in such a way that bases are established to re-think or implement strategies and policies that currently focus on educative themes in these rural regions.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework derives from anthropological theoretical models focused on regional societies [1,5], globalization paradigms [6,7], and the network society [8].

Regional societies are social structures vs. the deployments of globalization in which the digital networks of network societies operate on a global scale, revealing themselves in all regional societies and transforming peripheries and semi-peripheries from the nuclei of the world economy of a worldwide system to a global system, through a new supra-territorial co-axial self-organization, and through the other, a regional sphere or a local communicational info-sphere. In the latter, the nodes disappear and the centers are collapsed and diluted informatically, generating centrifugal processes in the distinct sociocultural levels, which are at the same time accompanied by the global processes of an economic decentralization. In this respect, globalization processes engender the inter-vehicle and inter-level compatibility of social survival (local, regional, continental, hemispherical, and global integration levels) systemic inter-levels on the one hand, and systemic intra-levels on the other, due to the disappearance of the nodes, in whose interstices operate the supra-territorial flows of a cultural, social, economic,

and global disorder. In this regard, the inter-level mentalist communication flows create trans-border digital enclaves in the regional societies of minorities in nation-states, contributing to the populational formation of new monoethnic groups in other sociocultural levels.

The worldwide configuration of civilizing phenomena operate by means of the labyrinthine world economy and the network society [8,9,10,11,12] of previous structures, in transformation into a global system, which decentralizes the pre-digital axial structures, above all the economic ones, and transforms them into co-axial structures (economic and open trans-border digital regions), generators of multiple supra-territorial informatics and economic flows of decontextualizing multidirectional digital information, hybrid and centrifuged, which permanently reconfigure, through the displacement of regional heterocommunication, to local autocommunication, at the regional integration level, vs. the new local cultural patterns. The social structure of open farming communities (in this case, at local levels such as multiple, open trans-border regions), of la Ciénega/Jaliscan Highlands (Altos de Jalisco), these present from the auto-referenced self-organization and the display of the work processes involved in its native farming structural form, where the majority of the members of the domestic farming unit participate in the work camps, such as production units in this case, of their agricultural land parcel, where the small land-holder form predominates, and second, that of the *ejido*, which is land held in common [13,14,15].

2.1. Modernization of the Educative Model in Mexico and the Digital Gap

The educative model in Mexico has as one of its pillars the promoting of a digital culture with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), to the extent that, as expressed by Cantú, a Arévalo, & Vázquez [16], it is found not only in the documents of the 2016 Educative Model, but has also been present since the year 2011. In these documents, reference is made to different general and transversal principles, such as educative quality and integral formation, with a focus based on meaningful learning, in addition to special reference on the development of digital skills, which should be fomented through the learning of the ICT, the latter a pathway for insertion into the information society and the social challenges confronting Mexico. Among the needs and plans of action can be found the modernization of school centers with tools that improve the development of digital skills and the learning of the students and to ensure equal learning opportunities [16].

In Mexico, it is necessary to create a technological plan and the involvement of the private sector as a development motor in the different types of the regions of the country, whether metropolitan or rural [17], incorporating universities into the design and follow-up of technological and social-welfare projects, driving the impact and the results. Therefore, the participation is of the utmost importance of Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), in that through these, dialogue between the society and the State can come about in a manner that benefits the implementation of better alternatives and their execution. In the zone of the Jaliscan Highlands, the University of Guadalajara is the IHL that mainly exerts an impact, the technological capacity that it possesses is at present that possessing the greatest speed for connected users, but there are some upper-middle-level schools that have had to contract an external server for a connecting service to the Internet. The latter renders the services limited, or even null, at the upper-middle-level schools of the University of Guadalajara [18].

3. Methodology

The objective of this investigation was to analyze developing rural areas to determine the educative and social changes with the emergence of the information technologies, so as to, with this, establish bases for the application of university policies and strategies regarding ICT in these regions.

For this, a mixed methodology is considered, which departs from quantitative techniques, in order to subsequently complement these with qualitative techniques, ending with the contrast in results to present conclusions corroborated by both methods [19].

In this manner, three main stages are considered that are divided into surveys, interviews, and the analysis of results.

In a first stage, the area is delimited to study open, trans-border farming societies, in which a survey is carried out [20].

In a second stage, respondents are selected for being subjected to open, semi-structured interviews, utilizing Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software. Networks are created and coded, which allows for their better analysis and interpretation.

In a third stage, the quantitative results of the surveys and the qualitative results of the interviews are related to draw conclusions and to carry out proposals.

4. Results

Application of the survey gathers information on the following themes: access; limitations; characteristics; preferences; uses; spaces; interfaces; intermediaries, and virtual universities. The survey is conducted with the following characteristics:

- Universe: Males and females aged 10 years or over.
- Geographic ambit: The survey is applied in farming communities in the bordering region of la Ciénega and the Jaliscan Highlands. Sample: Randomized, with a 95% Confidence Interval (95% CI) and a CI of 9), applied to volunteers.

The interviews were carried out openly and in a nonstructured fashion, with a total of nine interview respondents, among which six were found at different times in their preparatory-school studies, three were in grade 2, two were in grade 4, and one was in grade 6. In terms of gender, there were three males and three females. There were three respondents from the San Francisco de Asís locality, two from La Purísima, one from Monte Largo, and two from Atotonilco el Alto (headquarters), which covers and extensive area of the Jaliscan Highlands and the ranching communities and farms surrounding the municipal headquarters of Atotonilco el Alto.

Next, we describe the relationship among the objectives of the investigation, the results of the interviews, and data from the interviews:

On visualizing the analysis from a social perspective, it was identified that technological emergence affects certain areas of the society, which can co-exist within the family and with friends. In addition, on occasion, the limits are exceeded and consequently, the respect, which generates problems of co-existence. On another hand, the academic dynamic is observed as modified and benefitted, the elaboration of school work is facilitated, there are programs that expedite the integration of information, and there are platforms that permit the search for reliable information. However, in the locality, the connection is not always efficient, and Internet service and mobile data networks do not reach all spaces. Additionally, the DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) connection, on being connected to various users, presents failures. Also, the mobile telephone network is not very efficient, due to that, halfway between the localities of Atotonilco el Alto and San Francisco de Asís, the mobile network reaches Network 4G, but on entering the locality, the connection is already limited, and in the preparatory school, there is no signal the majority of the time, impeding the connection to mobile data or even telephone contact.

The main means of access to the Internet are the Smartphone and the computer. The connection, while low, functions for basic things, such as sending an E-mail, speaking by Chat, posting photographs, or processing paperwork, with Facebook and WhatsApp the principal applications utilized. The latter two are employed for communication and relaxation, each with its own characteristics that allow for differentiating between and choosing which to utilize depending on each action and need.

While all of the respondents to the interviews have a computer, which is used principally for school work and homework, the respondents also have a mobile phone (the most popular device), which they utilize for accessing the social networks, sending documents, images, and videos, creating groups, conducting research, resolving doubts, or carrying out tasks or works that do not require a digital format.

The main spaces for accessing ICT are found in the preparatory school, a place with computers and Internet access, although the latter may be deficient. While some have Internet service in their homes and on their cellular phone, others turn to public spaces such as plazas, parks, or cybercafés. Normally in these cybercafés, there are persons who provide orientation on carrying out the printing of works, formats, documents, images, or photographs. With regard to self-learning, only one of the respondents had utilized a platform to learn English, which the individual did not perceive as very functional, because there was no professor with whom to resolve doubts or to interact, as would be available in person.

Thus, within this contrast, it is possible to establish that the factors that could increase the impact of virtual universities in farming communities could mainly comprise an improvement of the connections, in order for the network and the services to permit rapid and effective navigation, and similarly, for the educative spaces to increase, becoming on-line education promoters in which spaces would be opened for persons who wish to continue their studies and for them to do so by means of virtual platforms.

Likewise, it is considered important for orienting docents to be incorporated who have skills in digital formation, for them to guide the individuals who have recently begun to access virtual platforms, which would be a impulse that motivates and generates a satisfacfory experience with ICT-driven education, to promote virtual formation and, at the same time, strengthen rural farming communities.

5. Discussion

In terms of the field analysis, local spheres were observed of the regional culture of social relationships, such as the systemic interconnection of digital networks, which are local adaptations to the phenomenon of globalization expressed digitally the network society and digital modernity [10], as well as of the technocultural mutation (global, with technoregional manifestations, local levels of integration) from the cultural heterocommunication (prior to the Network-Society) and its civilizing informatics transformation, through the ICT, in the migration to the access era, materialized, in Digital Modernity [10], as well as in the Network Society [8,21] by means of global digital networks and their sociocultural phenomenological interactions at the regional level.

In the result, it is possible to observe that the rural society is not isolated and that there exists a strong presence of means of communication, ICT, and connection to the Internet through different media. Therefore, in the words of [1], the cultural spaces where the regional elite interact, in these cases school centers, or the public spaces where they connect to the Internet, permit heterocommunication at the local level. However, Facebook, with its mobile cellular telephony, implies an expansion of the world of interactions toward a digital flow sphere with global potential, which is a transformational aspect of communities of migrants deriving from decades ago, which renders these closed to neighboring peoples, that is, closed to places and open to space flows [8]. In this situation, the populations are turned, from distinct levels, toward the consumption of merchandise whose trajectory is global.

Taken together, all of this translates into novel textualities, described by Manovich [11] and Kirby [10], in which cultures can mold their own cultures in pixels and additionally can in turn be molded by situations and processes that are external to regional and domestic localities. The latter come together as regional societies with sociocultural levels of integration and articulation with the network-society, converting these informatically into open, trans-border regions.

In order for this to occur, it is necessary to update the policies and strategies that allow these communities to maintain a constant and quality-oriented outcome with the different lines of digital communication with the rest of the world, in order for these regions to be able to count on adequate connectivity. This is because, their lacking this connectivity and communication can give rise to differences among generations on their being technologically

underdeveloped and, in this case, the undermining of the bases for subsequent generations, on their being phased out of social demands within the globalized context. This limits the coverage of their social needs, which are required within a technological context in their different aspects, with inhabitants who are trained and specialized in technological areas related to their context, which could be in professional ambits (techno-agricultural or animal techno-husbandry, among others) [8].

On there being a lack of stable and good-quality technological connections, problems present on two planes: vertical and horizontal. On the horizontal plane, the society does not achieve the technological skills to cover its current basic needs, such as development with respect to the family, the society, relations among generational groups, or groups of the same affinity that, on their not being duly attended to, the generational outcome is lost, that providing the foundation for subsequent generations. On the other hand, on a vertical plane, bases will not be built for transcendence between generations. Thus, the growth of the ensemble through the generations will be reduced, giving rise to a disparity in development in comparison with other regions with similar characteristics. On the other hand, persons or societies who are limited in their access to interdigital communication tend to be unperceived, invisible sociotechnologically [22], generating a social lag that undermines the development of these regions. Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider educative as well as technological policies that promote social development to cover their horizontal needs and to foment vertical development, thus contributing to social growth on a global scale.

6. Conclusions

This coincides with Carrera & Coiduras [23], as well as with Sangrà, Vlachopoulos, Cabrera, & Bravo [24], who think that technologies modify the way in which learning, presential as well as virtual, takes place. Thus, electronic learning at a distance, and semi-presential and presential learning represent an educative model that exploits the media and electronic devices, in turn generating an evolution in educative formation and quality. Therefore, it is necessary for public policies and university strategies to be rethought according to the results of the advances acquired by these rural regions of the country, with the purpose of exerting a more efficient and effective impact on rural societies. In these, even though they are bonding with the technological media, it is necessary to reinforce efforts to endow these regions of the country with stable and good-quality digital connectivity services and opportunities. To this end, strategies should be reconsidered in these rural communities due to that, as demonstrated in the results, it is necessary to cover the need for educative opportunities and to comply with the mission to which the universities, mainly the virtual ones, have committed in rural communities [25].

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