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IN ECUADOR FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

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PRODUCCIÓN INFORMATIVA DE LA PRENSA ESCRITA EN ECUADOR DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DE DERECHOS HUMANOS

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the analysis of the news production of *El Extra*, *La Hora* and *La Gaceta*, three written media in Ecuador with the highest national, regional and local circulation respectively. The objective was to determine to what extent their contents are generated from a human rights perspective. Thus, two aspects were addressed: 1) informative production based on the index of violation of rights in the media, and 2) evaluations of journalistic discourse in relation to themes, sources, images and headlines. A mixed approach was used through content analysis and a focus group (FG) in which journalists participated. Among the most relevant results, the predominance of content that violates rights in two of the three media stands out in the indicators overrepresentation of reality and manipulation, although in the indicators ridicule and misuse of language there is no prevalence, there is a significant frequency of content who use language inappropriately and discriminate against individuals or groups. In addition, the differences in the organizational dynamics of the media affect journalistic routines and need to promote permanent training mechanisms on human rights.

KEYWORDS: Human rights, journalism, written press, perception

RESUMEN

Este artículo expone el análisis de la producción informativa de El Extra, La Hora y La Gaceta, tres medios escritos de Ecuador con mayor circulación en lo nacional, regional y local, respectivamente. El objetivo fue determinar en qué medida sus contenidos se generan bajo una perspectiva de derechos humanos y para ello se abordaron dos aspectos: 1) producción informativa en función del índice de vulneración de derechos en los medios, y, 2) valoraciones del discurso periodístico en relación a temáticas, fuentes, imágenes y titulares. Se trabajó con un enfoque mixto mediante el análisis de contenido y un grupo focal en el que participaron periodistas. Entre los resultados más relevantes se destaca el predominio de contenidos que vulneran derechos, en dos de los tres medios, en los indicadores sobrerrepresentación de la realidad y manipulación, aunque en los indicadores ridiculización y mal empleo del lenguaje no hay prevalencia, hay una frecuencia importante de contenidos que usan de manera inadecuada el lenguaje y discriminan a personas o colectivos. Además, las diferencias en las dinámicas organizativas de los medios de comunicación, inciden en las rutinas periodísticas y necesitan promover mecanismos de formación permanente sobre derechos humanos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Derechos humanos, periodismo, prensa escrita, percepción*

INTRODUCTION

The media, as the fundamental actors in public's opinion configuration, contribute on the constitution of political, social, economic and cultural scenarios of the peoples. Precisely because of this, it's essential to ponder about the relationship between the media and the human rights. This means to think in diverse areas, one of them is related with the challenges that appear in the context of the economic globalization (Tuvilla 1997). Many authors (Barrera 2017; Torres 2005) point out that the human rights' recognition is going through a serious setback in face of the economic policies characterized by cuts in socials investments, opening to external markets and privatization of state companies.

Therefore, to analyze media and human rights implies to think the conditions on how they are generated, in a landscape drawn by severe processes of inequality and poverty. Reguillo (1998) and Torres (2005) agree that setting the structural issues aside will be a reductionism which would prevent realizing the media's complex role in dissemination processes and human rights defense. From the perspective of Reguillo, taking in consideration these conditions, to review the link between human rights and communication is problematic due to the media: "are but the most visible expression or no more element of a structure of inequality" (Reguillo 1998:19).

In order to overcome this situation, the author proposes that a previous work, oriented toward the disassembly of discourse, mechanisms and devices which favor the naturalization of the exclusion is primordial. Thus, Reguillo (1998) proposes the analysis from three different frames: 1) the media role in a context of poverty caused by neoliberal policy, 2) binary media narratives that hinder the debate about social inequalities, y 3) the way on how women, youth and indigenous identity are built.

Along this same line, Torres (2005) explains that quoting communication and human rights involves promoting the analysis about how in a capitalist context the signs of domination and exclusion get worse as they prevent the otherness' recognition, while the notion of wellbeing is associated to consume and productivity which bypasses the possibilities of dialogue and citizen encounter. In fact, entailing a space that enables the formation of critic and reflexive citizens about their environment is one of the subjects in which many research converge (Torres 2005; Unicef 2006; Barrera 2017) and it's considered a remarkable factor when it's about linking human rights and media.

Consequently, a debate from a structural perspective is indispensable, this means evidencing the urgent need to redefine the sense of communication and think the media content in a critic manner. Thus, this orientation will be the one helping how to understand the democratization processes' claims, in order to warranty the citizen's participation (Torres 2005; Unicef 2006; Barrera 2017). These demands born after questioning this condition of those media traditionally linked to an instrumental conception, which make difficult to shape critical scenarios facing the inequity and poverty issues experienced in Latin America (Unicef 2006).

Therefore, it is urgent to rethink the role played by the audience: moving from the vision of passive entities, which only receive information, to leading actors in participatory processes, such perspectives are explained by "an exhaustion of mechanistic communicational processes" (Torres 2005:76) and that is the scenario that marks the debate on human rights. From where and how can the articulation between human rights, participation and citizenship be promoted? What role does the media play? Literature analyzes, explains and agrees that daily experience is the accurate place for this connection because it is where citizenship is built. (Reguillo 1998; Gumucio 2012).

In contrast to a space marked by the media that promote vertical practices, there are social groups that demand the democratization of communication and, from the day-to-day, promote actions aimed at humanization (Torres 2005). Such actions are driven out outside the

traditional media, which are functional actors to an economic system and, therefore, do not problematize the root causes of social inequality.

In these circumstances, the role of academia becomes fundamental, in such a way that it is possible to examine the complex relationship between the media and human rights, which carries on the debate on citizenship, participation and democracy. This is exactly the main interest of the project by *Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi*, named University Center for Media Analysis: observation and educommunication on issues of human rights, gender and interculturality, whose general objective is to think about the discourse of the media from the point of view of human rights, gender and interculturality; in order to identify discriminatory content in such a way that building educommunication participatory processes and alternative communication is made possible between the university, the mass media and the educational community of Cotopaxi.

In a particular way, this article presents the most relevant findings regarding the reaching of human rights. It is done by following-up of three written media that circulate in the city of *Latacunga*: *La Gaceta, La Hora* and *El Extra*. What is interesting to underline are the characteristics of the informative speech and thus make visible the way on how these media favor or prevent exclusionary or discriminatory practices. Based on this interest, the research question is: to what extent is the informative production of the written media *La Hora, La Gaceta* and *El Extra* produced from a Human Rights perspective?

Theoretically there is a position in the Agenda Setting, a proposal that was born at the end of the sixties and proposes the existence of two levels: 1) the media say what subjects to review, and 2) the media express how to think about certain aspects or attributes (McCombs & Shaw 1972; Rodríguez 2009). Precisely, evaluating how the media, when it is about addressing some themes, are susceptible to violating rights; sheds light on the challenges regarding the establishment of their agenda and thus helps the consideration of journalistic narratives from the perspective of

human rights. This theory was launched because methodologically it is recommended as the most suitable when working with quantitative content analysis (Aruguete 2016).

This is relevant to the investigation considering the preliminary studies, which subscribe limited number of investigations that study the relationship between the media and human rights. In addition, it will make it possible to determine the constraints and possibilities of the informative discourse in the promotion of human rights. Hence, there will be elements that will contribute to the creation of spaces and processes of educommunication targeted at the articulation of a critical citizenship about media content.

METHODOLOGY

The current research article was made through a no experimental design, a cross-sectional, descriptive and correlational kind. A mixed approach was held in order to achieve a quantitative dimension, a content analysis was used considering its most remarkable characteristics as the search for objectivity, it is systematic, it is susceptible to quantification and it is suitable for the analysis of journalistic professional exercise (Fernández 2002).

The used instrument was a structured observation guideline, prepared under the parameters of the Index of Violation of Rights in the Media (IVR) (Laboratorio de Comunicación y Derechos 2014), conceptual and technical document provided by the Communication and Rights Laboratory (CRL), which is "is a tool to analyze the media content whose objective is to provide a technical and critical perspective, supported by quantitative and qualitative data, with analysis criteria that avoid discretion" (Laboratorio de Comunicación y Derechos 2014:8).

The IVR is composed by 27 dimensions, which have their respective indicators, which means the: "concepts, expressions or media behaviors, whose presence warns of some type

of discrimination on a scale of 0 to 1" (CRL 2014:2). According to this scale, zero is equal to content with no violation of rights and one is discriminatory content. The Table 1 details the four dimensions and indicators that were analyzed in the enquiry.

The monitoring was carried out on the newspapers *La Gaceta, La Hora* and *El Extra* in their printed version, during the months of April, May and June 2019, the sample consisted of 781 journalistic productions. And the units of analysis were the complete notes of each journal. (See Table 2).

Each journal production was registered in the structured observation guideline by following the dimensions and indicators underlined in Table 1 in addition to the next elements: a) observed space section, b) title corner, and c)

presence or absence of the indicator. The pursuit was made in 3 phases:

1. Classification of the informative production according to the sections of the journal and record in the structured observation guideline

> In the first place, the productions were identified and classified according to the sections of the newspaper; subsequently, from a critical reading, it was recorded in the observation guideline.

2. Debugging the guideline's records

> The records of the guidelines were reviewed in order to ratify or correct the location of the journalistic productions according to the indicators.

3. Systematization of the guideline's results

Table 1: Dimensions and Indicators from the structured information guideline

No.	Dimensions	Indicators
1	Overrepresentation of the reality	Showing in excess or in an unjustified way, violent behaviors (real or symbolic) or their results in a real or simulated way.
2	Ridicule	Identify a person with animals or things, to humiliate us and dispossess them of their human dignity.
3	Misuse of the language	Identify someone by their characteristics or psychological (adjectivation).
4	Manipulation	Unequal or inequitable treatment of the protagonists of the news or media content, representative; or encouraging the appearance of an actor or collective in conditions of superiority or inferiority with respect to the rest or giving them a media space other than the rest.

Source: Communication and Rights Laboratory

Table 2: Sample

Daily	Observed sections	April	May	June	Total
La Gaceta	Latacunga, Cantons, Editorial, Opinion, Others.	65	65	63	193
El Extra	Provinces, Court, Daily News, Sports, Opinion, Others	91	132	119	342
La Hora	Opinion, Country, City, Global, Police News, Others	84	83	79	246
Total		**240**	**280**	**261**	**781**

Source: own elaboration

With the intention on organize and identify the extent to which the contents of these three written media violate rights, a descriptive statistical analysis of the frequency distribution was used.

When it came for the qualitative look, a focus group was carried out, in the words of Rodas-Pacheco and Pacheco-Salazar (2020) contribute to the collection of information about personal experiences, experiences and feelings, with the aim of self-explanations in order to obtain qualitative data. The instrument was a question guide developed in correlation to the specific objectives, which considered three aspects:

1) issues addressed by the media,

2) management of sources, headlines and images of the news production; and

3) challenges of news production.

An intentional non-probabilistic sampling was applied, therefore, the research team invited journalists following some inclusion criteria:

a) journalists who work or have worked in these media,

b) journalists who work in print media; and

c) journalists with experience of at least three years.

For the analysis, a constant comparative method was applied, defined as one that "seeks to identify the similarities and differences from the inductive analysis of the social incidents observed in the context of the information collected" (Schettini & Cortazzo 2015:36). Triangulation was followed as a qualitative and quantitative integration strategy, the content reviewed by directly inquiring into the productions of the three printed media enable to determine the violation of rights and through the focus group the conditions surrounding information production were closely reviewed. Regarding the ethical considerations, a research's fundamental factor was the participating journalists' authorization in the focus group. An informed consent was run based on the targets, scope, and benefits exposure, as well as the probable risks of the research. Such actions were explained at the initial contact and during the focus group articulation. The professionals involved verbally expressed their agreement about the academic use of the information. In this sense, to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality, codes were used to identify their testimonies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section includes monitoring and perspectives of the journalistic productions by dailies *La Gaceta, La Hora* and *El Extra.* In the first instance, the starting point is to map the absolute frequency of presence or absence of rights violations in the four indicators shown above, according to the sections in which they are published.

As can be seen in Table 3, in the informative productions of daily *La Hora*, the absence of content that violates rights prevails in the four indicators analyzed; even though it does not mean that their journalistic productions do not incur a certain degree of violation. When reviewing by sections, it is observed that in Country there is an increased frequency in the indicator overrepresentation of reality, in other worlds, information that excessively or unjustifiably shows violent events, whether real or symbolic. In the indicator ridicule and misuse of language, the absence of violation is maintained in all sections, while for the manipulation indicator the same frequency occurs (34-34) when it's about information production with the presence and absence of rights violations.

As demonstrated in Table 4, in the case of daily *La Gaceta*, in three of the four indicators the absence of rights violations predominates in its informative productions. The indicator where the opposite happened was manipulation, that is to say, there was a greater presence of contents that express unequal or inequitable treatment of the protagonists of the informative production, while exposing people in a situation of superiority or inferiority or by conferring a space different from the rest. In this indicator, the section where there is a prevalence of violation

of rights is *Latacunga.* In the rest of the sections, the content with the absence of rights violations remains dominant.

Finally, as can be seen in Table 5, daily *El Extra*; in three of the four indicators there is a notable absence of rights violations in their informative productions. The over-representation of reality is the predominant indicator of content that violates rights, which is explained by the red chronicle content, characteristic of the newspaper. After sections' reviewing, it's evident that the indicator appears more frequently in Court and Provinces.

In the remaining sections, there was a higher incidence of informative productions with no violation of rights.

Table 3: Results of daily *La Hora* in terms of absolute frequency

NEWS PER SECTION	SECTION	OVERREPRESENTATION OF THE VIOLENCE		RIDICULE		MISUSE OF THE LANGUAGE		MANIPULATION	
		PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE
41	Opinion	17	24	30	11	22	19	20	21
68	Country	36	32	32	36	23	45	34	34
58	City	16	42	9	49	23	35	23	35
29	Global	15	14	7	22	11	18	16	13
16	Police News	12	4	3	13	2	14	2	14
34	Others	13	21	10	24	14	20	16	18
246	TOTAL	109	137	91	155	95	151	111	135

Source: own elaboration from the data of the structured observation guideline

Table 4: Results of daily *La Gaceta* in terms of absolute frequency

NEWS PER SECTION	SECTION	OVERREPRESENTATION OF THE VIOLENCE		RIDICULE		MISUSE OF THE LANGUAGE		MANIPULATION	
		PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE
121	Latacunga	42	79	38	83	42	79	56	65
28	Cantons	12	16	11	17	11	17	18	10
25	Editorial	11	14	8	17	5	20	14	11
14	Opinion	4	10	5	9	10	4	11	3
5	Others	0	5	0	5	2	3	2	3
193	TOTAL	69	124	62	131	70	123	101	92

Source: own elaboration from the data of the structured observation guideline

Table 5: Results of daily *El Extra* in terms of absolute frequency

NEWS PER SECTION	SECTION	OVERREPRESENTATION OF THE VIOLENCE		RIDICULE		MISUSE OF THE LANGUAGE		MANIPULATION	
		PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE	PRESENCE	ABSENCE
100	Provinces	82	18	39	61	38	62	27	73
148	Court	127	21	44	104	49	99	50	98
39	Daily News	29	10	20	19	17	22	21	18
18	Sports	8	10	7	11	10	8	7	11
13	Opinion	5	8	4	9	8	5	8	5
24	Others	13	11	11	13	13	11	11	13
342	TOTAL	264	78	125	217	135	207	124	218

Source: Own elaboration from the data of the structured observation guideline

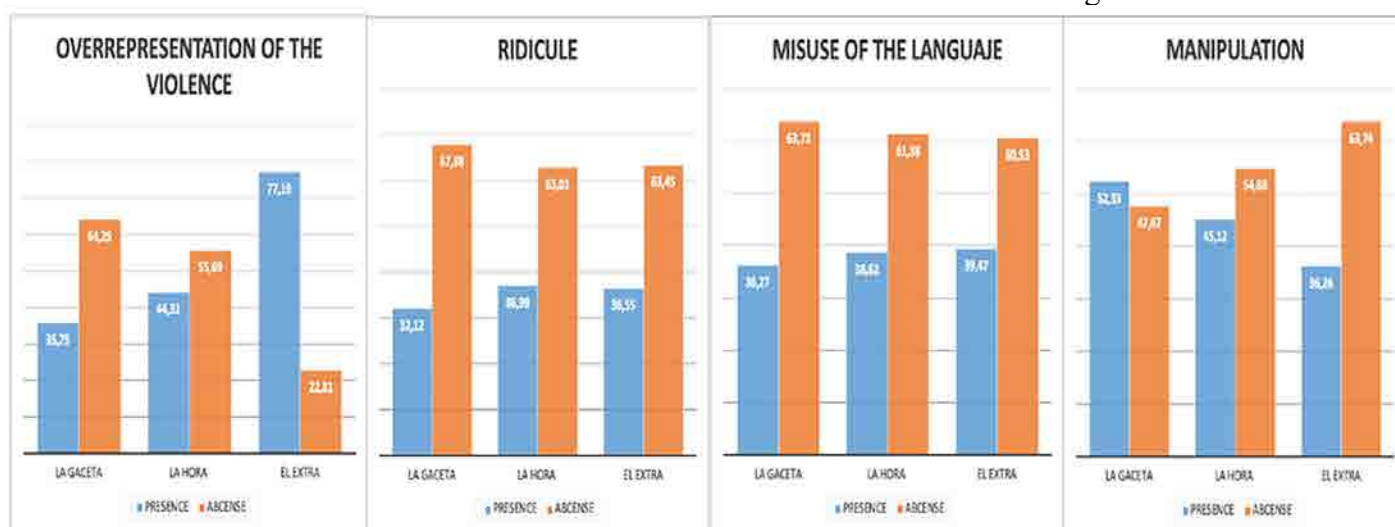Source: own elaboration from the data of the structured observation guideline

Figure 1: Summary of the four dimensions in the newspapers *El Extra, La Hora* and *La Gaceta*

Figure one shows a comparison of the four dimensions' results analyzed in the three printed media. In dimension one, overrepresentation of reality, a discriminatory content prevailed in daily *El Extra*, followed by *La Hora* and *La Gaceta*. Dimension two ridicule, showed a lower manifestation of postures that provoke acts of contempt; in all events, the highest percentage occurred in *La Hora*, followed by *El Extra* and *La Gaceta*. In dimension three bad use of language, as in the previous one, less verbal expressions that identifies someone as different due to their psychological or physical characteristics were found.

Figure one shows at last, in dimension four manipulation, in *La Gaceta* the content with violation of rights was the most visible, which means, its informative content promoted superiority or inferiority by assigning media spaces to certain topics and actors. In the case of *La Hora* and *El Extra*, no content in this sense was evidenced and the absence of manipulation prevailed.

What circumstances explain the prevalence of certain indicators in the news production of the three analyzed media? For its understanding, the focus group inquired about the themes'

characteristics of the media *La Hora*, *La Gaceta* and *El Extra* through a Human Rights perspective. From this standpoint, a first element to be noticed is that the assessment of the editorial criteria, that guide the work of the media, is given by a differentiation of these newspapers' scope of action. *La Hora*, besides having an edition upon national inquires, also has regional ones, which gives it a particularity. *El Extra* has nationwide coverage, while *La Gaceta* is eminently local.

That was a defining factor in its raiting; while *La Hora* and *El Extra* are stated as media with a clearly concrete editorial line, thus, a structure determines the information construction strategies; instead, *La Gaceta* is conceived on the opposite side. The economic conditions of each medium are indicated as the main cause of this type of situation; in this regard Suenzo *et al.* (2020), in an analysis of the press in Latin America, asserts that the main cause of the economic crisis is the change in business models which go from a traditional format to a digital one. Such transformations place the editorial line of the press media in a scenario of reinvention and redefinition, and with greater emphasis on local areas. That, moreover, is conditioned by the quality and type of resources available or not available to the media.

> I believe that at the local media level is something that should be worked in that situation, then the job's issues will be defined in order to be developed. Sometimes, for example, it can be externally seen how you work at the local media level. Then the bad critic will always be there, isn't it? But very few people know what is really experienced within the complexity around the economic issue, around various circumstances that actually prevents you obey this necessary structure that all large media has. (SI02, personal communication, april 2021)

Considering these characteristics, the informative productions of the media is produced and it is evident how they operate when prioritizing certain contents and to what extent they are constructed from a human rights perspective. The journalists emphasize that, although in some cases there is an editorial line more clearly defined than in others, just the conjunctural

events are favored, mainly those of the crime report. Such a circumstance is evidenced and explained by the lack of evaluation gastronomic reports, cultural and tourist themes. What is more, in the case of media like as *La Gaceta*, the limited number of staff forces aim this type of content: "that most mark the agenda and many times we have worked on reports; but people don't like it" (GLO4, personal communication, april 2021).

As stated in previous lines, the economic conditions among media with wide local, regional and national circulation are conceived as decisive elements in their editorial lines. These conditioning factors are expressed in the organization of their journalistic routines. The lack of clarity and, consequently, the specificity of these media affects the high praise and informational treatment given to certain types of events.

In this sense, the news agenda of the three analyzed media is marked, mainly, by the situation and within it, situations associated with the crime report are privileged. Precisely, Torre (2019) on the processes of informative construction of the press points out that editorial decisions are produced based on two linked perspectives: on the one hand, its inter-institutional logic; and, on the other, its view of the social.

Within these circumstances, the statement should be, especially, in dailies *La Hora* and *La Gaceta*: there is a tension between their intra-institutional agenda and their view of the social. They prioritize conjunctural issues, since they are the ones who call the attention of the audience. When it's about *El Extra*, its own intra-institutional ideology prefers the crime scene. This situation, in terms of Barrera (2017), occurs because there is a market logic use to guide the information through the law of supply and demand, which causes a loss of its essential value. This is convergent with the approach of Santillán-Buelna (2018) who argues that the media attention responds to what is expected in journalists' routines, which mainly implies the coverage of newsworthy events.

Along the same lines, (Mellado *et al.* 2017) agree about a primacy of emotional aspects

over information that contributes to the social and political debate of daily events. Indeed, the quantitative survey says that, mainly in the daily *El Extra* the indicator overrepresentation of reality predominates, which is explained by the insistence on crime report and, specifically, it is manifested in the section on court facts.

All this adds up a contextual factor of a regional nature: the participants in the focus group explain how the peculiarities of the Ecuadorian mountains and coast have marked their journalistic routines. Among the aspects that appear is the allusion to more open audiences, in the case of the coast, and others more closed, in the case of the mountains. The following two quotes illustrate it in a better way:

> As for people in Esmeraldas, so they see me with the camera and they say to me: miss, miss come on, we want to tell you everything that happened! They made me sit down, family members surrounded me, told me when the deceased was born, why the accident, what they were going to do, that they are asking for justice, that they ... then, I left the place with a more than complete note of what that I needed; but why? Because the crime report is seen in *Esmeraldas*, for example, it can tell you that it helps with human rights because it helps people to become visible a problem and maybe they can receive some legal help. (VE03, personal communication, April 2021)

> How the work develops in the different areas or in the zone where we are is very different, for example, I remember that I once did a coverage in an indigenous execution, we arrived at a place, they received us well; but…we went to the other community and they beat us, for example, so that marks a lot. (GLO4, personal communication, April 2021)

When considering that the press's discourse is to a certain extent a social one, the differences in information production are appreciated according to the place where the events happen. According to this, other investigations explain (Arteaga and Arzuaga 2015; Browne *et al.* 2013) the link between journalistic productions and the context. In their approaches, the authors start

by pointing out how vital is to understand and recognize the social and cultural codes of the scenarios where the events occur.

Such recognition enables the construction of narratives that attend to certain cultural representations and, therefore, will have better chances of connecting with their audience Concerning this, Campuzano & Guerrero (2019) say that the journalistic narratives need a hermeneutic process where "the other and reality are perceived, analyzed, interpreted and understood through a communicative exercise where practices, languages and diverse aspects of reality are decoded" (Campuzano & Guerrero 2019: 10).

Along the same lines, it is proposed to analyze the role of the media as producers of information under a double criterion: on the one side, a sociological order, the need to review factors on social demands; and, on the other side, an organizational type criterion, focused on the motivations and the processes of construction of the information agenda (Wolf 1987 as cited in Browne *et al.* 2013).

Among the characteristics that stand out are the way they appear constrained between the needs of the conjuncture in the face of a journalism that prioritizes a respectful agenda of the Human Rights. In this context, there is a very subtle question of journalistic productions, considering that there are many requirements to be met in order to reach a clear position of the press vis-à-vis the Human Rights. For this purpose, journalists agree on the necessary recognition and analysis of the Communication Law, the value of empathy, the contrasting of sources and the role of Communication careers in professional training processes.

Under these conditions, how can a perspective of Human Rights be shown in the written media? how have relations been manifested in condition of superiority or inferiority? Faced with this question, the participants in the focus group express, on the one hand, there are no such dealings, what has happened is the production of news content, conditioned by economic interests, specifically by advertising patterns, which mark what kinds of facts and actors have

the greatest attention. However, this perspective is considered by other participants as a evident differentiation in media management, whether for ethnic reasons, level of popularity of individuals and/or political and personal affinities:

> I remember that on one occasion a friend of who was the editor of the daily was involved in an alleged violation […] but the next day I took the newspaper and I realized that I had deleted the name of the person to whom she was giving a differential treatment to the note, because he was a friend of the editor. (MO01, personal communication, April 2021)

> For example, you are conditioned to edit the note on the cover, since the person mentioned is our client and it turns out that there is another more important note and that fair note has to do with the indigenous sector, then, it is no longer on the front cover just on the inside. Then the note goes unnoticed. (GL01, personal communication, April 2021)

Human rights visions on information agendas show self-interpellation in journalists toward their human status, and the role of the media appears weak, what is to say, in evaluating the information treatment in terms of human rights, a brief reference is made to the incidence of the editorial line and a greater weight is given to the journalist and the audience, it is therefore to be point out that, these three aspects come into tension in the discourse of the of the journalists participating in the focus group.

In this reflection, the role of the legal frameworks and their ability to influence the construction of content that is useful to the audience (Viveros and Mellado 2018) appears the strategies of information production. First, there is the human dimension, reflected in the value of empathy; and second, the technical dimension, manifested itself in the construction of facts. These approaches are convergent with what Del Carmen (2019) proposes, who explains the neuralgic role of the media in the public construction of the facts under a human rights point of view.

He adds that information directly affects the forms and degrees of empathy, which contributes

to the awareness of the audience. How is that achieved? rebuilding the facts in such a way that citizens identify themselves with this situation, generating a mobilizing effect in the short or medium term. In this same direction, Sánchez *et al.* (2016) take care about the role of the media in dealing with stigmatizing and discriminatory postures through the proper use of language, is such a way as making it possible to play an educational role in society.

The construction of facts after a human rights perspective finds its limitations when facing expressions of superiority and/or inferiority. Among the main reasons and according to the participants in the FG, those of an economic nature are mainly advertising patterns that cause a conflict of interests, influencing the information agenda itself; therefore, the journalist is perceived as restricted in their possibilities for action.

This is concurrent with the analysis carried out by Prada-Torres *et al.* (2018) about the information treatment of the media. He highlights that journalistic practice takes place in a network of relations characterized by a game of tensions, because there is a dependency, not only with media owners, but with the network of relationships they build with those who are part of their economic support. Additionally, those restrictions that are given by affective ties, as the case reported by one of the participants in the current research. The author considers these as inter-institutional limitations.

A second instance of analysis deals with the management of headlines, sources and images of the information production of the three mentioned printed media. As for the the headlines the participating journalists agree: On the one hand, the style of daily *La Hora* is cataloged as formal and direct, while daily *El Extra* is described as popular, colloquial and striking, and *La Gaceta* is qualified as a media that shows a lack of clarity in the headlines' creation. One feature they call for reflection on is the importance of these budding lines, in the sense of finding the exact words that are in line with a Human Rights point of view and also guided by the need for contextualized information. Here comes the role

of the audience and its critical look. About this, one of the participants said the following:

> In the construction of the headlines, they focus not on human rights but rather on consumerism, in which people impact on the note […] So that makes us not work in the field of human rights, Although rights are inherent to everyone, we all have rights and opportunities; but sometimes they are denigrated, they are discriminated against through the headlines. (MA07, personal communication, April 2021)

In the agenda building process, the role played by the headlines, which are not exempt from the tensions between the journalist and the editor, is highlighted. This analysis showed the marked differences in the criteria that guide the preparation of the headlines in the three media. (Sánchez-Moya 2017) considering that the headline is a first line of information, and if the responsibility for its scope is omitted; disinformation will occur. Here is where the role of a critical audience of journalistic content enters and is demanded to go beyond the reference of the headline.

Díaz & Mellado (2017) concur with this idea. They point out that using the headlines allows to observe the highly relevant topis and their editorial lines; fundamental aspect to catch the audience's attention to certain topics. At this point, it is vital to reflect on its importance in the construction of information. The challenge is to think them out of a sensationalist logic and, instead, to emphasize their management from a human rights point of view.

The Communication Law emerges as a factor which, in a certain way, forces the media to take care of the way they build their headlines. The participants note that addressing the subject in a general level, avoids falling into a violation of Human Rights, like in the case of daily *El Extra*. Once the sources were review, two points appeared as relevant: 1) the type of access, according to the coverage of the environment (national, regional or local), and 2) degree of confidence. On the first point, the difference between the management of sources in national, regional and local media became clear:

> Daily *El Extra* has a management of sources at all levels, excellent management of sources and more particularly in crime news […] what do I mean? There is, for example, an information source from the police ... they have from the policeman who just entered a week ago, a month ago to be part of the National Police, including the general who is directing all ... all the police at the country level [...] In the case of daily *La Gaceta*, I had the opportunity to spend a few months there. There is a handling of sources, let's say, but for journalists, it is not a handling of sources, let's say of the media. The same thing happens in daily *La Hora* when we worked there, we also learned to carry out a work on the subject of information sources that was quite broad, in my particular case my source was the theme of the crime report. Having to open that source. (DT01, personal communication, April 2021)

While the participants in the FG agree on this assessment, they do not neglect the role of the journalist in building trust-based relationships. This approach to the sources is evidenced in the type of information production, then, the greater or lesser access to certain types of sources is considered fundamental in the data quality and relevance presented by the media. One of the difficulties experienced by participating journalists, in the case of events of national incidence, reaching sources for a better characterization and reporting of these events is complex.

This is in addition to the obstacles in the management of sources, the expression of the differences in the organizational structures between local, regional and national media itself. Also, they constitute challenges for the journalistic exercise due to the strategies for access these sources, as well as to generate bonds of trust. If these actions were given under greater accompaniment, the establishment of an informative agenda with plural voices could be guaranteed; in relation to this Mellado *et al.* (2017) argue that the actors, sources, frequency of appearance and the focus granted are fundamental aspects in the type of information that the media constructs.

Under these conditions, it is necessary to rethink and restate the management of sources at the local level. It is evident that they face restrictions in their access, which affects the type of journalistic philosophy. And, with respect to the particularities of the use of images in these three media, participants in the FG believe that with the advent of a visual digital culture, traditional media are poised to evaluate the use of image in their journalistic narratives.

Piñuel (2020) devotes the need of new methodological and theorical approaches in a digital mediation context. The author emphasis and warns that communicative interactions do not depend exclusively on the production and dissemination of expressions; it's necessary, however, to take in consideration the enunciation contexts. In this manner, an image diverse well use shows up and four elements appear:

> 1) *El Extra,* the use of yellow and red as hallmarks; in addition, they interpellate the commodification of women's bodies, although one of the journalists mentioned the need of legal framework to avoid sexist communication, and an audience interested in other kind of content.

> 2) about *La Gaceta*, they consider the photography uses as unappropriated, because they are static images that prevent a correct communication of the message.

> 3) as for *La Hora*, they qualify an appropriate use of the image as they resort to moving images enabling a better visual impact.

> 4) both, *La Hora* and *La Gaceta* are classified as media that use formal images when constructing information.

The informational treatment of the media is conditioned by image's use therefore, it is necessary to generate analyzes spaces in the context of the strengthening of digital social networks. In this connection, some studies (Gutiérrez *et al.* 2018; Mancinas *et al.* 2019) show how the technological changes disrupt various elements that make up a culture. In this case the media are exposed to transformations characterized by their rapidity; many of them irreversible and unpredictable. Having said

that, the local media are called upon to reinvent themselves and build narratives that respond to the requirements posed by the prominence of a visual culture (Arriaga 2017; Gómez-López & García-Soidán 2020).

The elements to be taken in consideration are of different order, Minervini & Pedrazzini (2004) argue that referring to the image in the press entails the analysis of "very different graphic elements, such as illustrations, graphics, jokes, cartoons and photographs. Within this global framework, it pursues a series of functions that can be presented jointly or separately" (Minervini & Pedrazzini 2004: 2). The study of these aspects is key to give the image the prominence it needs, allowing it to go from static images to images that manage to communicate journalistic speeches.

For his part, Sánchez (2018) reflects about the use of photography in press and catalogues it as a *symbolic system* which provides the audience the conditions for a particular reality's comprehension mode; and this includes "significant experience, semantic, communicative, expressive, aesthetic, etc." (Sánchez 2018:199).

On top of all this, there are the challenges that journalists identify for news production. A first point pertains to the types of communication media required to promote reflection on events from a human rights perspective. Among the elements that stand out are the need to work under the principle of responsibility, which implies acting ethically, constantly seeking to contrast information; in such a way that audiences are allowed to approach a critical thinking in the face of journalistic narratives. Similarly, the appeal to the media to maintain coherence in their external and internal discourses, which implies, if they transmit the principles of truth and transparency outwards, this would be reflected in labor rights, as well as freedom of expression of journalists.

> Respecting human rights also starts from home, right? respect the freedom that my journalists have to be able to write the article based on the fact that they need to inform people of something, that what happened to Mon does not happen, where they changed the name of a person involved, where they

changed the photo, that kinds of things cannot happen because we need to respect the judgment […] then comes the issue that internally we must respect the job stability of the rest of our staff, in this last year, even on the issue of pandemic in the media that very little has been said at the country level, but the media hide a destabilization process within the journalistic field. (DT01, personal communication, April 2021)

Indeed, the crisis of the press is manifested in the work environment, in this regard, Suenzo *et al.* (2020) explain that the recurrence of dismissals and media closures causes a scenario marked by uncertainty and job dissatisfaction, which affects the professional values of journalists. Along with these demands, the search for journalism independent of the advertising interests marked by companies is considered a critical point, because they believe it conflicts with their professional codes of ethics. Another concept that emerged in FG was the role of the media as key actors in contributing to social transformation, and that represents an inescapable prioritization of the voices with which journalistic productions are built.

CONCLUSIONS

The guiding question of this paper was raised to what extent the information production of the written media *La Hora*, *La Gaceta* and *El Extra* is generated through a Human Rights perspective. In order to reach this goal, information's content scrutiny was done; alongside the journalists' point of view, those who have been part of these media was integrated. As stated above, news that reported a higher frequency of violation of rights in overrepresentation of reality and manipulation; were particularly related to red-chronicle facts and linked to places other than the central editorial of the media.

Although there was no prevalence in indicators such as ridicule and misuse of language, it does not imply the absence of information speeches that incur in rights' violation. Interestingly,

sections where information was most frequently reported were the same as those with the highest preeminence of violation of rights.

From what it may be concluded that there is a challenge for the written media, which should be triggered by rethinking editorial lines outside of market logic. Reflecting on this defiance brings up the following question: what types of actors should the media prioritize in managing their news agenda? In this regard, several points of analysis appeared:

a) the facts are those that determine which actors should be highlighted in the media agenda.

b) all actors require the same level of importance. Here comes the analysis on the contrasting of information.

c) the media need to privilege the voices of actors historically excluded from this type of space, specifically, from sectors of impoverished socioeconomic strata.

d) the editorial line of the medium is what establishes which actors and events will have priority, then, it goes beyond and outside the individual decision of the journalist.

In the midst of these dilemmas, a common reflection results that despite the journalists' attempts to favor some voices and / or facts, the local media face various limitations due to economic and human resources that prevent specifying that diversity of sources in their journalistic productions.

The media challenges, from a human rights perspective, and in a scenario characterized by the rise of digital platforms, it was demonstrated that, despite a leading role and consolidation of digital; there is still an important presence of traditional media. Anyway, building accessible media for the entire population will be possible by considering these three: 1) transition from traditional to digital with adequate training for journalists, 2) quality guarantees above the immediacy of the information, very characteristic of a digital medium; and 3) evaluate the possibility of legislating digital content.

In such conditions, the GF expressed the idea about the important challenge implied for the media, journalists and citizens; because today, unlike the last century, each person has possibilities, not always guaranteed, of being the owner of a medium. Finally, the results entail the indispensable analysis of the challenges faced by the media to build an information agenda from a human rights perspective.

The structure of the media deals with many tensions due to the logical demands of congruence and responsibility from the journalists. Thus, they need to re-evaluate ethical principles, recognition of rights, editorial line and processes of construction of events. Another barrier to be jump is how and which actors should be prioritized in the journalistic discourse. The outcomes yielded a tension between the actors and the events, which was assumed as a binary position. On the contrary, complementary look will be the best option.

DECLARACIÓN DE CONFLICTOS DE INTERESES: Los autores declaran no tener conflictos de interés.

DECLARACIÓN DE CONTRIBUCIÓN DE LOS AUTORES: Lourdes Y. Cabrera-Martínez 25%, Ricardo Francisco Ureña-López 25%, Pablo Esteban Lomas Chacón 25%, Franklin Eduardo Falconí Suárez 25%.

DECLARACIÓN DE APROBACIÓN DEL COMITÉ DE ÉTICA: Los autores declaran que la investigación fue aprobada por el Comité de Ética de la institución responsable, en tanto la misma implicó a seres humanos.

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