University of Jyväskylä. Department of Art and Culture Studies

Social Networks: Promoting Mexican Popular Cultures and Building a Participatory Culture.

Master Degree in Digital Culture

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For over 30 years, the General Direction of Popular Cultures has been in charge of promoting, preserving, and disseminating the cultural diversity of Mexico, regarding indigenous and popular cultural practices. With the increasing popularization of Social Networks, it has become almost indispensable to join Social Networks in order to exist digitally, weather you are an individual, an institution or government. Taking this fact in consideration, in 2011 the Direction of Popular Cultures joined the most utilized social Networks in México: Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, as a way to keep users updated about the activities and general information generated by the Direction. Departing form the point of view that considers Internet as a democratic space where everyone has an equal right to be represented in, this thesis explores the use that the governmental institution has given to Social Networks, and how they interact with their users to get fulfilled the institutional goals of disseminate the knowledge about indigenous cultures while trying to create a participatory culture.

This research is a qualitative case study, consisting of a set of practices of interpretation of the data publicly available through Social Networks, stressing how the social experience is created and given meaning with the utilization of Social Network Services to disseminate information. As analytical objective, it has been determinate to describe the usage given to Social Media in terms of cultural promotion, diffusion of popular cultures and construction of a participatory culture, focusing on the relationships among culture, power, class struggle, participation and ownership of the media.

Asiasanat – Keywords   Popular Mexican Cultures, Participatory Culture, Social Networks, indigenous Mexican Cultures, Media.
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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Hallinnon alainen yksikkö "General Direction of Popular Cultures" on yli 30 vuotta vastannut alkuperäiskansoihin ja populaarikulttuuriin liittyvän kulttuurin moninaisuuden ylläpitämisestä Meksikossa. Sosiaalisten medioiden myötä yksilöiden, yritysten ja muiden toimijoiden on lähestulkoon ollut välttämätöntä liittyä niihin saadakseen näkyvyyttä verkkomaailmassa. Näin toimi myös "General Direction of Popular Cultures", joka liittyi vuonna 2011 Twitteriin, Facebookiin ja YouTubeen, pääasiassa tiedottaakseen toiminnastaan verkossa. Tämä opinnäytetyö tarkastelee hallituksen alaisen yksikön toimintaa sosiaalisessa mediassa ja yksikköä vuorovaikutussuhteessa sosiaalisen median käyttäjiin. Näkökulma pohjautuu osallisuuden kulttuuriin: internet nähdään demokraattisena tilana, jossa jokaisella on mahdollisuus tuoda esiin ajatuksiaan ja tuottaa sisältöjä sosiaalisiin medioihin.

Tutkimus edustaa laadullista tapaustutkimusta. Aineistoa tulkitaan eri metodeilla, keskittyen siihen kuinka sosiaalisia kokemuksia tuotetaan sosiaalisssa medioissa ja millaisia merkityksiä niille annetaan. Tutkimuksessa käytetty aineisto on vapaasti saatavissa sosiaalisissa medioissa. Työn tavoitteena on kuvata sosiaalisen median käyttöä suhteessa kulttuurin edistämiseen ja levittämiseen sekä osallistuvan kulttuurin rakentamiseen. Analyysin painopisteenä ovat suhteet, jotka ilmenevät kulttuurin, luokkaerojen, osallistumisen, osallisuuden ja tiedotusvälineiden omistuksen rajapinnoilla.

Asiasanat – Keywords   Meksikon populaarikulttuurit, osallisuuden kulttuuri, yhteisölliset verkkopalvelut, alkuperäiskansojen kulttuurit Meksikossa, media.
Säilytyspaikka – Depository
Muita tietoja – Additional information

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1   Introduction

In the first decade of the XXI century belonging to a Social Network has become important to the extent of expendable, in order to exist digitally. Our digital existence has transformed the way in which we interact in different public spheres with friends and acquaintances. This new reality attracted the attention of several users and opinion leaders who have raised their (digital) voice to share their personal experiences regarding the predominant space that social networks have in their everyday life. For example, the New York times published, in its Weekly Magazine, the article *I Tweet, therefore I Am* (Orenstein, 2010) addressing how we use the Social Networks to shape and reflect our identities and representations in order to express ourselves, and how they have become an active and constant part of our lives. Similarly, Amanda Smith Regier, owner of the blog *Curator Magazine* wrote a very personal entry titled *I Facebook, Therefore I Am* (Smith Regier, 2010) where she narrates her experience joining, interacting, using and then quitting this widely known Social Network. Her narration opens with a shocking statement:

"Last month I committed social suicide. I deleted my Facebook account"

And it is followed by the recount of the ups and downs of turning down your profile in this popular Social Network, also reviewing all the anxiety symptoms that follow the deletion of your virtual identity. The narration also exemplifies how even the most reluctant to join Facebook are surrendering to social pressure and

signing up, because it seems that everyone is there and who has not created a profile already are getting tired of feeling excluded from events or even friend's accomplishments.

In a similar line of thought, one of the most renowned Mexican journalists, Javier Solórzano presented, in his late night show *Solórzano 3.0,* the topic *El mundo después de las redes sociales*[1] where he addressed how Social Networks have changed and reshaped our lives, habits and relationships. The topic was discussed from the points of view of three different kinds of users: an actress, a blogger consultant in web communication, and the CEO of Merca 2.0 magazine. Solórzano 3.0 is itself a show that seeks to interact with the audience through social networks by reading the messages received in Facebook and Twitter in order to build up a show plural, inclusive, critic and interactive (Nacional, 2011). The truth being told, Solórzano 3.0 has an idealistic viewpoint on the web 3.0 reaches, and has failed to actively incorporate audience's opinion expressed through social media. But despite the inexperience and novelty of the concept, Mexican television is relying in audience participation though Social Networks to enhance the audience participation.

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[1]The translation to English is *The world after social networks*. The episode I reference in here can be viewed in the following address http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tf7dzFz73s&feature=youtu.be&a in Spanish and has no subtitles available. This late night show is produced and aired by Canal Once, the broadcaster of the National Polytechnic Institute, one of the most important and renowned educative institutions in México.

It was just a matter of time before government would be tempted, if not obliged, to take an active role in Social Media and start to utilize Social Networks as means of promotion, for making their social capital visible and to level the communicative berries between the government and their public. First because the audiences have changed their arena to social networks; and secondly because social existence has been compromised to the belonging and participation in social networks. In a broader sense, Social Media has changed dramatically the interactions among media users, and has done it in less than a decade.

As proof of these changes I chose to study the case of the governmental website of the General Direction of Popular Cultures (http://www.culturaspopulareseindigenas.gob.mx/cp/). Within the last two years, the Direction of Popular Cultures have changed the way in which they administrate their governmental website and started to utilize their YouTube Channel, as well as joined two of the most prominent social network services, Facebook and Twitter. It is a representative case of how a website owned by government has changed its practices in order to embrace the use of Social Networks.

My aim with this thesis is to study, through observation, how the General Direction of Popular Cultures (referred also as DGCP by its initials in Spanish,

Direction of Popular Cultures or Popular Cultures) in Mexico utilizes Internet and more specifically, the Social Networks (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), to achieve their goals of promotion and preservation of cultural manifestations. I want to use this example because GDPC is a Direction that tries to represent and promote a minority from Mexican society and their website is not really important or extremely popular website in México, as are the Social Networks Services in general. However the Direction has been working to promote and preserve indigenous cultures for more than 20 years and has been present on the Internet since 2006. In 2010 they started to use Facebook, in 2011 they started to Tweet and in 2012 they started their own YouTube channel.

I will also revise the policies for the use of digital media from the government to comment on the use of new technology in politics and how they fulfill the functions of mass media (surveillance, interpretation, socialization and manipulation) and the participation culture. Departing from the point that Internet is a democratic space where everyone has an equal right to be represented in, I want to highlight how Social Networks allows the Direction to promote their activities in a different ways form the website and how that relates to the main objective of the Direction: to disseminate the knowledge about Popular Cultures.

This thesis is divided in five chapters. In the first chapter I will give an overview of my topic, the current situation of Popular Cultures in México and why I consider this subject worthy of study. In the second chapter I will provide the theoretical framework surrounding Social Media and Social Networks in the Information Age and the expectations placed on Internet as a democratic public space. The third chapter will provide the methodology chosen to conduct this study, how information was collected and analyzed and the reaches and limits of this paper. In the fourth chapter I analyze the messages published by GDPC to understand how and what for are utilized Facebook, Twitter and YouTube by the Direction of Popular Cultures. Finally, the fifth chapter closes this paper with a conclusion derived from the analysis of the case study and my personal considerations for further research.

The novelty of my topic lies in the application of the communication theories to analyze how government has embraced the use of social media and new technologies. Mainly because there are studies on how commercial companies are utilizing social media, or how social media has been influential in elections regarding politics. However due to the rapid changes in all topics related with the utilization of social media, not many examples on governmental use of social networks for cultural promotion have been done, I hope that this paper will contribute with the discussions on the relevance of the use of social networks by

governmental institutions and organizations whose purposes are others than entertainment and commerce.

1.1   The situation of Popular Cultures in Mexico

The website of Mexican Popular Cultures is property of the General Direction of Popular Cultures in México. The DGCP is the administrative unit whose main task is to promote the study, conservation, dissemination and development of popular indigenous cultures, but also all kind of popular, urban and rural cultural manifestations (Direccion General de Culturas Populares, 2010). The first director and principal promoter of this project was Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, renowned Mexican ethnologist and anthropologist, who founded the National Museum of Popular Cultures and brought to the table the discussion about the popular cultures, the theory of cultural control and the participation of those sectors marginalized by the cultural policies of the State. In his book *México Profundo: Una civilización negada* (1994) Bonfil Batalla proposes to rescue the culturally marginalized groups and its cultural heritage to build a new inclusive project of nation, consistent with the modern times. As of today, the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous People (PNUD) recognizes that 9.5% of Mexican population belongs to one of the more than 62 indigenous groups that are recognized in the Mexican territory, being Náhuatl and Maya the most numerous (PNUD, Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2010).

Popular Cultures in Mexico makes direct reference to Indigenous cultures[2]. Indigenous in Mexico have been neglected and marginalized since colonial times. The conquest left major trauma and identity issues among the indigenous. Even after the independence and their recognition in the Constitution, they are still regarded as victims of a pronounced inequality of opportunities, characteristic that has become a distinctive mark of indigenous peoples (for works on Psychology of Mexican People see (Paz, 1991) (Leetoy, 2007) (Bonfil Batalla, 1994)). It should be noted that to speak about indigenous, is to refer to a rather heterogeneous group of people with ethno-linguistic, religious and cultural differences. In Mexico, as in other Latin American countries, indigenous peoples are characterized as vulnerable groups without access to basic economical, educational, and health services (PNUD, Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano de los Pueblos Indígenas, 2010).

In January 1st of 1994 the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional[3] (EZLN) launched an armed upraise to demand, from the State, protection and recognition towards the indigenous of the ethnic groups that inhabit the

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[2] Although I would like to discuss in a deeper way the different conceptions around popular culture, this falls out of the scope of my research. However for a deeper understanding of the meanings around popular culture I highly recommend from Raymond Williams *The Sociology of Culture (*1981*).* By The University of Chicago Press; And *Keywords. A vocabulary of culture and society*. Oxford University Press. (1983). Another really complete and deep study in the evolution and uses of popular culture is Morag Shiach's *Discourse on Popular Culture. Class, Gender and History in Cultural Analysis, 1730 to the present* by Polity Press.

[3] It is not my aim to discuss furthermore the armed uprising and their achievements. For more information on Zapatista movement I recommend to examine their official website http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/ . The movement can also be found in Facebook http://www.facebook.com/pages/Enlace-Zapatista/200069060021944

Mexican Republic. And although Mexican government tried to counteract EZLN with a military offensive, a year after the upraising both parts engage in dialogue. After a process of negotiation, the Federal Government and the EZLN signed the Acuerdos de San Andrés Larraínzar[4] on February 16th of 1996, recognizing in the Constitution the political, legal, social, economic and cultural rights of indigenous people (Sámano, Durand Alcántara, & Gómez González, Los acuerdos de San Andrés Larraínzar en el contexto de la declaración de Derechos de los Pueblos Americanos., 2000). Miguel Ángel Sámano *et al* (2000) believe that the importance of the signing would have had major historical repercussions if the Federal Government had complied with the agreement. But as today, what has transcended internationally is its lack of fulfillment, either because the Constitution does not recognizes collective guarantees or because of the elusiveness of Mexican government commitment to fulfill them. So far the efforts of Mexican State have been oriented to inclusion and change of traditional production models which enable indigenous peoples to enter modernity.

On a different vein, the President of Mexico has recognized that foreigners feel attracted to Mexican roots and culture (Jimenez, 2011). Cultural

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[4] The whole content of the Acuerdos de San Andrés can be accessed through the following address
http://zedillo.presidencia.gob.mx/pages/chiapas/docs/sanandres.html the document is in Spanish.

manifestations such as the Day of the Dead[5] have been recognized by UNESCO as masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity (UNESCOPRESS, 2003). More recently, the hype has grown around the Mayans, due to the fact that December 21st 2012 is marked as the end of Mayan civilization's calendar, which has been interpreted as the end of the world, and Mexico is expecting more tourism in the Mayan areas (AP, 2012). Albeit the efforts of various historians and experts in Mayan civilization to correct the misconception of the Mayan prophecy[6], the fascination of people is still growing around Mayans, which has been extended into a growing interest in Mexican popular cultures.

As summary I would like to state that since the conquest of Mexico, indigenous people have been relegate from society and governmental programs. Even when the EZLN's movement served to raise awareness of their situation, the rights of ethnic groups as citizens have not been fully recognized by either, government or society. On the other hand popular cultures are highly valuated in terms of arts and history, and have drawn attention at home and abroad for its great richness and diversity. There are groups that have been working to promote cultural richness and diversity but they are more visible since the EZLN raised its voice to include indigenous in culture. Now every effort,

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[5] A good source of information about the Day of the Dead is this website: http://www.dayofthedead.com/
[6] See for example History Channel's Documental "Decoding the Past: Mayan Doomsday Prophecy http://www.history.com/topics/2012 ; many news have been generated around the topic, for instance check http://www.vanguardia.com.mx/experto_niega_profecia_maya_del_fin_del_mundo-1217181.html and http://www.vanguardia.com.mx/consejo_de_ancianos_mayas_cambio_de_ciclo_no_es_fin_del_mundo-1223943.html

mainly failed, has been directed to promote culture in terms expressed in the Acuerdos de San Andrés, and the agenda of DGCP is no exception, as its main task is to be inclusive with popular cultures.

1.2   The situation of the Internet in Mexico

According to the information from the last census that took place in Mexico in 2010, proportionally, 29.8 percent of Mexican households have a computer. Out of this 29.8 percent, only 22.2 percent of Mexican households have internet connection available. In comparison with data from 2008, there has been a growth of more than 3 percentage points in two years. As for internet users, the growth from 2008 to 2010 was 5.5 percentage points, signifying that out of the total amount of Mexican population, only 33.8 percent correspond to Internet users (INEGI, 2011). This is to say, that there is not a massive internet penetration in the country, but a growth in the use of Internet has been identified.

In a more disaggregated level, the Asociacion Mexicana de Internet (AMIPCI), in their 7th study about the habits of Internet users (AMIPCI, 2011) computes that 34.9 millions of Mexicans have access to internet. The highest incidences of Internet users corresponds to the age group of 12-17 years old with 27% closely followed by the age group 18-24 years old with 23%. As average, users spend 3.5 hours in Internet every day. The main activities online have been identified as: send/receive e-mails, instant messaging, see/download pictures and videos. To access to Social Network Sites (SNS) has become the fourth main

activity online. As entertainment activities done while using the Internet, 8 out of 10 interviewees by AMIPICI set social networks as their principal source of entertainment activities online.

Regarding the use of Social Network Services, 61% of Mexican Internet users participate in at least one Social Network, and from that 60% has daily access to SNSs. Actually, México is the Spanish-speaking country that has more active users on Facebook. Next to Facebook, Mexicans are more active in YouTube, Twitter, Hi5, MySpace and Badoo because those are the services where more friends and acquaintances are active, thus being the most attractive to other users. SNSs are being utilized to keep in contact with family members and friends, follow activities and news, and as places to interact with new people.

The use of internet is not really extended in Mexico, not all households have access to internet or a computer, however it has been registered a constant growth in the use of new communication technologies in México. Social Network Services represent the principal entertainment activity online, and although not all internet users have an account in SNSs, there has been a growing tendency to join SNSs in the last two years.

1.3   Promoting Popular and Indigenous Cultures on the Internet

The general assembly of the United Nations published the 13th of September, 2007 the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. In this

resolution the UN noted that "indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples" and they "contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind" (United Nartions, 2008, p. 3).   The Declaration arises from the concern about all the injustices that indigenous peoples have suffered throughout history, not only in Mexico, which is the concern of this thesis, but from every single indigenous group that is recognized in the world.

In terms of media, UN establishes that indigenous people have the right to establish their own media in their own languages and to have access to all forms of non-indigenous media without discrimination (United Nartions, 2008). It also remarks that they have to be represented somehow in State-owned media, and State should encourage media in general to reflect indigenous diversity. However UN does not go beyond these recommendations, which occupy only one out of the forty six articles comprising this declaration. Clearly UN concern is not stressed on media's showcase of indigenous culture, or media participation at all, but in the social struggles.

Participation of indigenous groups on the web have been studied and addressed from the perspectives of web adoption and digital inclusion. Laurel E. Dyson & Jim Underwood (2006)conducted an explorative study of 25 indigenous websites from all over the globe. They focused mainly on websites created for

and by indigenous groups and how they are utilized. In their paper Dyson & Underwood (2006) briefly deal with the challenges and limitations of the digital inclusion of indigenous people. They also reckon that websites for indigenous people are often controlled by outsiders, not people from the communities, without consultation from the indigenous they try to represent, therefore not meeting the specific necessities of indigenous peoples.

The focus of Dyson & Underwood (2006) studies is in Australian websites and Australian indigenous peoples, but they analyzed websites from all over the world. Among the website from Latin America that meets the parameters established for the research was the website of the Latin American Indigenous Council of Film, Video and Communication (CLAPCI by its initials in Spanish http://www.clacpi.org/), whose main purpose is to promote videos and films made by indigenous peoples. Among the weaknesses identified by the researches in CLAPCI's website, is that as the information is that is not aimed to people outside the target group, only Spanish-speakers can benefit, share and understand the content of the website. Similarly, the Mapuche website Net Mapu (http://www.mapuche.cl/) is unavailable in the language of those represented in the website, but according to the research contains valuable information about Mapuche peoples' issues in Spanish[7]. Language availability

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[7] When I tried to check the website content and language in 2012, it was no longer available; the research conducted by Dyson & Underwood was done in 2006. Net Mapu was self-financed by its members and collaborators; it had neither party affiliation that financed the website nor public funding of any type.

was identified as a weakness because the research was done on the context of Internet as a plural sphere where everyone has access to information regardless nationality or language, but also looking for the representativeness of the indigenous groups the websites are about, who only can get information about themselves if they speak Spanish. Although among the criteria for choosing the websites to the study were that offer an option for English language, limited or extended, but available.

Nonetheless other studies approach the incursion of indigenous peoples from the paradigm of a globalization homogenization. Edgardo Civallero (2008) writes that digital media has served to indigenous peoples to recover a part of their culture, voice out their sociopolitical situations and to inform about their struggles and hopes. The inclusion of indigenous cultures in the global digital village means that communities can collect their communitarian issues and novelties voicing the transcendence of their beliefs, as communities in Bolivia, Peru or Chile have already done. Civallero (2008) also highlights the use of Spanish and Portuguese as the main languages in which indigenous websites are written, and not the indigenous languages, because, as the main objective of indigenous website is to reach a wider audience, they prefer to use the official language of the country they live in. However it also remarks the need of multilingual websites that reduce the digital divide that has characterized indigenous cultures for centuries.

In their studies, the Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL) recognize and addresses that globalization is sharpening the historical processes of social marginalization, but also encouraging homogenization that threatens to overpower and disappear indigenous cultures. In this context information and communication technologies (ICT) can be a vehicle for knowledge transmission, contributing further to enrich the global society, while preventing their knowledge from extinction (Hernandez & Calcagno, 2003). CEPAL recognizes EZLN as an example of how indigenous can make use of ICT to become visible but also to strengthen their political processes while revitalizing linguistically and culturally their people, and encouraging them to move forward in society.

Neither of the previously mentioned studies focuses on governmental websites, but on Non-Governmental Organization's websites and websites with ethnical origin. Most of the efforts put into indigenous websites are directed towards literacy and access to ICT's in school, or to voice out political situations and struggles. It is true that the high costs in infrastructure have prevented the indigenous communities from access to technology (Hernandez & Calcagno, 2003) therefore is hard for them to create lasting cultural products such as websites, that truly reflect their interests and do not vanish away few years after they were created due to the lack of investment or updating.

Governmental websites have the possibility of develop more sophisticated designs towards the diffusion of educative material and cultural heritage promotion, because they have greater resources. None of the papers about indigenous peoples and the information society makes a deep analysis or reference to governmental efforts to put into the digital map indigenous peoples or the way in which these websites operate.

1.4   Culturas Populares e Indigenas dot Gob dot Mx

The General Direction of Popular Cultures (DGCP) is one of the 22 administrative units that constitute the National Council for Culture and Arts (widely recognized simply as CONACULTA), and it has been in charge of promoting the study, conservation, dissemination and development of popular and indigenous cultures of Mexico for over 30 years (Direccion General de Culturas Populares, 2010).   As part of CONACULTA, DGCP is included in its budget and policies, but there is no online record of the programs done by administrations prior to Felipe Calderon Hinojosa's presidential period.

In the press release from November 2010, (Direccion General de Comunicacion Social, 2010) CONACULTA communicates the structure, content and objectives of the website of Popular and Indigenous Cultures. The press release mentions that the website of DGCP is an alternative to delve into the essential aspects of popular culture in a virtual way.   Likewise, CONACULTA recognize that many are the topics of popular culture that reflect Mexico's

identity, but there are some that stand out due to their international projection. So the website is directly aimed to provide with information of the festivals and celebrations that attract both, friends and strangers. In the same way, the website provides researches about topics related to cultural diversity and specific cultural manifestations as traditional toys, games, gastronomy and languages.

The multimedia section is mentioned as being among the most interactive sections of the website as it provides access to videos, photographs and audio records of artists, events and communities representative of Mexican popular culture. About other connections, the press release mentions that the website has available links to other websites related to DGCP as the Museo Nacional de Culturas Populares or documentary center Alberto Beltrán. There is no mention to a particular service or Social Network in the press release.

1.4.1   Cultural Policies in the National Program of Culture 2007-2012

The cultural policies that guide the practices of the institutions in charge of the cultural duties in México are contained in the National Program of Culture (Artes, 2007). The document of 235 pages can be downloaded in PDF format though CONACULTA's website[8]. It contains a foreword by the President of the Republic, the president of the Secretary of Public Education, Josefina Vazquez

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[8] The program can be obtained in its printed version in CONACULTA, however, the archive can also be retrieved in its digital format in Spanish from the following address
http://www.conaculta.gob.mx/recursos/acerca_de/pnc2007_20121.pdf

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Mota, and the head of CONACULTA, Sergio Vela. The cultural program underpins the objectives, strategies and action lines that the dependencies and federal organizations in charge of culture, should follow towards the construction of a strong and competitive Mexico. This program, in essence, offers general guidelines that should be followed by all of the institutions involved into the national cultural practices.

The objectives are focused on develop strategies and mechanisms that support the diffusion of indigenous culture in media and books, but Internet is not mentioned as a category aside from media, nor is given any relevant differentiation. In its objectives it encourages the design of new schemes of communication and the extension and strengthens of the use of digital media for the diffusion and promotion of culture. Nonetheless, it specifically aims to keep the book as a central tool for education and diffusion, and if digital media is used, it is only in reference to the digitalization of cultural heritage. The digital media, publications and audiovisual materials are considered only to collect, systematize and investigate the symbolic universe of indigenous, folk art and Mexican crafts for its dissemination (Artes, 2007, p. 118), where the popular expressions are looking for its place in a global context where every country is looking to keep a strong cultural identity while being part of the globalization process.

1.4.2 The website: 2006 to the date

There have been changes in the website's format since it has become available. Web Archive projects as The Internet Archive WaybackMachine[9] has captures from the website for the period 2006 to 2011. Although not all content is available through WaybackMachine, the basic structure of the website can be retrieved from their archive. The first stored screenshot is from April 2006 and the copyright in the website is from the year 2005.

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[9] The Internet Archive is a non-profit archive that is building a digital library of Internet sites and cultural artifacts accessible for scholarship and research purposes. It has been available since 2001in the address http://www.archive.org

Figure 1. Screenshot from the Home Page of the Website of Popular Cultures in 2006

Nowadays the design shown by the website is truthful to their beginnings but the format has been update and meets the standarized format established for the entire institutional websites from government. It is noticeable that key elements have been present thought time since 2005 to 2012, like the pinwheel from the cultural diversity campaign. It is remarkable that the design has change

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to make it easier to navigate, as the previous version requires scrolling down the screen and the new version everything is distributed in the same screen.

Figure 2. Screenshot from the Home Page of the website of Popular Cultures in 2012

There are remarkable differences between both versions, for instance, the multimedia section. Back in 2006 there were different sections such as music,

popular arts, festivals, and calls for papers. The 2006 version also has a section called Inter-Active where users are encouraged to send their drawings and texts. In the old website, they use the format of photo essays to explain and showcase the information about the festivities, traditions and other popular activities. The photo essays provided an introductory text to the festivity followed by a gallery of photographs. By 2011 the essays have disappeared, and music and popular arts pages gave place to a multimedia section divided in three sections: photography, video and music. When the DGCP joined Facebook and YouTube late in 2011, the multimedia section was reduced to the sound library and the video section with 3 videos; the photo gallery disappeared. In their YouTube channel, DGCP has 49 videos to the date which are not listed in the website.

The modifications performed in the website within time show a clear strategy change. While in the early versions images related to popular cultures where favored, the latest version of 2012 is oriented towards the informative labor portraying in its majority, calls for prizes, advertises about the National Museum of Popular Cultures and governmental programs. The purpose of this research is to analysis is if the use of Social Network Services has modified the way in which the website of Popular Cultures functions.

2   Theory: Theories of Communication and Information

This chapter introduces the theories of communication and digital culture that serve as theoretical framework for this research. It discusses the role of the Internet as the tool that has leveled barriers and reduced distance between institutions and stakeholders. Also examines the concepts that are generating buzz lately such as Web 2.0 Social Media and Social Networking Services.

2.1   The Information Society and the Knowledge Society

Nowadays most of our relationships that take place in real life have also a counterpart in the virtual world. Science and technology have brought changes to the way in which we interact with each other and often the Internet is placed as the most visible trace of modernity. It has been said that we are living in the information society or the knowledge society, although there is still controversy in the multiplicity of meanings that have been attributed to the concept. Usually knowledge society refers to the transformations occurred since the industrial society developed until the mid-twentieth century. But it also refers to the transformations in the social, cultural and economic relations due to the application of knowledge and technology (Olivé, 2006).

The internet has been identified as a central piece of the modern society, due to the fact that is one of the most easily and usable ways for access and exchange of information. From an optimistic perspective, the Internet was identified as the materialization of Marshal Mcluhan's global village. Javier Echeverría (1994) in his essay *Telépolis* equals the complex structure of the World

Wide Web with the concept of the city at a distance. In the new city at a distance, that Echeverría (1994) calls Telepolis, each of the countries that have access to internet represents a neighborhood, therefore the planet is in the end juste one big city. Telepolis comes from the greek prefixes *tele meaning* distance, and *polis* meaning city. In this context of a distance city, media finds its place as the new agora squares, the knowledge centers where the issues of the city take place and are discussed. Other characteristics from the Telepolis is that allows citizens to interact with the world without leaving the house, the existence of citizens is granted by their exposure to media; and politics exists only if it is mediated. Telepolis works with the same principles of reality. The key of the new city's economy is consumption and wealth accumulation though industrialization.

The idea of the internet as new city is not farfetched from reality. It is true that Echeverria's (1994) vision was so inclusive and optimistic that has not being fulfilled; but in some areas has been exceeded, such as the group interactions which are now possible with social media and were not back in the 1990s. However he made a really accurate description of the way in which the Internet was expected to develop in order to fit the global village paradigm.

The idea that the Internet is a democratic space has been around since the early 1990s. The first generation of scholars addressing this idea talked about the

liberating effects of the Internet and its potential, but also pointed out the problem of information overload. The second generation's critic was that the Internet is not the decentralized net that everyone expected, and the prophecies about the information overload turned to be exaggerated, as many sites appeared and remained while many more passed unnoticed and disappeared (Benkler, 2006)[10].

Current research on the Internet tends to focus on the Internet's implications in five major areas: 1) inequality or the digital divide; 2) community and social capital; 3) political participation; 4) organizations and other economic institutions; and 5) cultural participation and cultural diversity (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001).

One of the key concepts that drive the social struggle in the Information society is the *digital divide*. The digital divide refers to the inequalities in access to the Internet: extent of use, knowledge of search strategies, quality of technical connections and social support, ability to evaluate the quality of information, and diversity of uses (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001). Technology is in constant development and changes with dizzying speed. It is necessary high investment in new products in order to keep up with the latest requirements that technology imposes. Usually nations that have greater income

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[10] Yochai Benkler in his paper The Wealth of Networks offers a detailed study about the internet as a democratic space and the networked information economy that is worth Reading if interested furthermore in the topic.

are more ready to embrace the information society due to the high investment they can do in vanguard technology.

Countries around the world have focused their efforts on information technology infrastructure to increase the connectivity of the users. The assumption has been that if developing nations could get the same infrastructure level as developed nations, then the benefits of information technology will flow automatically to the citizens, business and government. The United Nations (2005) recognize that a prerequisite for digital inclusion is connectivity, but is not the only one that needs to be considered.

Most countries have failed to recognize and tackle other requisites for digital inclusion. Then, the Internet has not meant a tool for overcome digital divide and is merely reproducing cross-national inequalities, because it depends largely on economic development and research (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001). Moreover, the divide between the computer literate and the non-literate tends to perpetuate divides in income and education, because without computer skills it is difficult to compete in the market and the society (Evans & Yen, 2005).

Bearing in mind the difficulties on digital inclusion for non-literate, Bolaño (2010) considers that the information society is simply a new phase of capitalism in which information technologies have acquired a fundamental relevance. In

this context, the digital exclusion only evidences the asymmetries and hierarchies of the complex structure of power that rules capitalism. (Bolaño, 2010).

The information society model is often criticized for its technological determinism and utopianism. The promise of information technologies to revolutionize the world, increase society's participation and decentralize bureaucracies do not address basic issues of the imbalance of power and wealth that lead to inequities in knowledge (Hindman, 1999). The full potential benefits of the global information society are only possible if all nations and all the peoples of the world share this opportunity equally. At the same time the distance between government and the digital-illiterate (also known as e-have-nots) has increased (United Nations, 2005). In the end, those that have no access to technology will still lack the skills required to participate of the benefits of the information society; which will keep the digital divide and prevent the digital inclusion of minorities.

Plus technological innovations in mass media have not replaced older forms of media; new media tends to incorporate the forms of earlier media. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999) proposed the term *remediation* to name the fact that no medium or media event today does its cultural work in isolation from other media. New media takes elements from old media and reuse them in a new way. The digital medium can try to refashion the older media entirely or

absorb it, but the very act of remediation ensures that the older medium cannot be entirely effaced. Therefore, the information society has not eliminated the previous ages of society, and the use of new media has to be considered to be used alongside the use of old media, because new media is merely old media remediated.

2.1.1 Representation of minorities on the Internet

The knowledge society is far from being a genuine participative democracy. For once, the phenomenon of globalization[11] is pushing society forward to a cultural homogenization. Although generally, in each country interact different interests, values and worldviews of peoples and cultures, giving place to multicultural realities (Olivé, 2006). Often indigenous peoples are counted among the cultural minorities that resist homogenization. León Olivé (2006) mentions in the case of Latin America that the public policies have focused on viewing the exclusion of indigenous peoples as a merely cultural problem, without addressing its economic and political dimensions. Therefore is necessary to discuss and provide the right mechanisms that allow effective participation of everyone in the knowledge society.

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[11] The discussion about globalization is out of the scope of this research; however as the term has been mentioned before, globalization is understood as the process and economic model, derivate from capitalism that increases the interconnection of society, leading to the integration of economies and society. It is highly related to the global village and information society for the global scale of their reach. There are plenty of works on globalization and its effects, but I recommend *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity: a Theory* edited by Mike Featherstone, 1990, SAGE Publications, to get a better picture of what Globalization has to do with global culture.

The internet will be an indispensable mean to guide and support the claim the attention of public spaces. In certain cases, the Internet has served to voice out the issues of the so called minorities: victims of terrorism, handicapped, gays and lesbians, artist, authors, ethnic minorities, immigrants, feminists; just to mention some. The reality of such minorities is conditioned by the exclusion and social marginalization. Therefore, the internet has become the place that is capable of accommodate a multitude of minorities (de Mingo Rodríguez, 2011). However it should be noted that every individual is part of a certain minority. Minorities exist in contradistinction with masses; therefore in order to form a minority whatever it is, it is necessary to separate it from the crowd for special reasons, relatively individual. Just in the same way, a member of a minority is not absolute and may be part of the crowd at the same time. The internet has favored coexistence and communication that voices out individuals; it allows also create relevant connections with organizations or other individuals with similar interests (de Mingo Rodríguez, 2011).

Now it is easier to spread information, to obtain authoritative information and interact with people from the uttermost part of the world through instant communication. The Internet has become a democratizing tool for the comprehensive information; therefore it is necessary that the access to the networks is granted for everyone. The different cultural groups and minorities find on the Internet their own virtual spaces for communication and expression

where, at the same time, they can reaffirm their cultural identity as well as opening communication spaces with other cultural groups worldwide (Miquel, Rotger, & García, 2004).

2.2   E-Government and E-Governance

It is undeniable that the increased use of technology to remain communicated has changed our attitudes towards institutions. From a commercial perspective, online stores and services such as Amazon[12] or E-Bay[13] have given to users the possibility of acquire products at any time from any place. In a similar way, news portals have made available real-time newsfeed which allows users to be informed instantly when events occur. Citizens expect the same from their government, that they provide services and information seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. Although with government, the main objective is not to sell a product but to direct, control, administrate, and regulate interactions between government and citizens. To be available to function and provide information only during working hours is not enough anymore, so, many governments have invested in websites that help them fulfill the expectations of their citizens (Evans & Yen, 2005). The incursion of governments to digital environments is known as e-government.

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[12] Online retailer of books, movies, music and games along with electronics, toys, apparel, tools, groceries and general home and garden items. http://www.amazon.com
[13] Online auction and sales' site for buy and sell electronics, collectibles and everything else. http://www.ebay.com

There is not a unified definition of e-government but there have been several attempts to define it. For instance, Shailendra C. Jain Palvia and Sushil S. Sharma (2007) provide an analysis of the definitions of e-government and its status around the world. In general e-government is regarded as a term to name web-based services from governmental authorities at the local, state and federal level. The prefix "e" is added as an abbreviation of the word electronic, meaning that the stress is given in the utilization of the information technologies to deliver government information and services to citizens. It has to be noted that in academic literature, electronic government (or e-government) has frequently turned into an epiphenomenal term to describe the research done involving the technology's impact on the functions of government (Mayer-Schönberg & Lazer, 2007).

E-government is characterized to be in its early stage of development, but aiming to transform the production processes, and the way in which citizens, business and other governments relate. Electronic government would evolve swiftly through defined stages, beginning with web presences of public agencies on Internet; followed by the interaction between citizens and the public agencies, and finally leading to offering public services online to citizens (Mayer-Schönberg & Lazer, 2007). E-governance is the resultant from the shift to the inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in governmental processes and according to UNESCO involves new styles of listening to citizens.

Some authors contend that e-government constitutes only a subset of e-governance, as e-governance is a broader concept that includes the use of ICT by government to civil society to promote greater participation of citizens in the governance processes (Jain Palvia & Sharma, 2007). E-governance is classified according to the relations that establishes. Thus we have Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), Government-to-Government (G2G) and Intra-Government (Evans & Yen, 2005). The ideal way of e-governance will lead to electronic engagement and electronic consultation, becoming finally into e-democracy.

In order to identify how e-government is taking place around the world, the United Nations (UN) have conducted a survey assessing more than 50,000 features of the e-government websites of the UN member states to ascertain how ready the Governments are to employ the opportunities offered by ICT. The survey conceptualizes the models of e-government progress and quantitatively measures the strengths and weaknesses in e-government of countries worldwide (United Nations, 2005). The web measure index is based upon a five stages model: Emerging Presence, Enhanced Presence, Interactive Presence, Transactional Presence and Networked Presence.

According to the findings of the survey on e-government readiness, the top 25 positions of the global ranking belong to developed countries, being the

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United States of America the first position. Mexico is ranked in the position number 31of the top 50 countries of the world in e-government readiness, and has the second position from the rankings for South and Central America, behind Chile and above Brazil. Mexico obtained special recognition in best practices for promoting access and inclusion: for the utilization of websites for serving citizens and business[14]; for providing information for different communities[15], and for having discussion forums on national law and policy[16]. From a general perspective it was noted that high income countries have the resources to invest in ICT which is reflected in their higher readiness to e-government (United Nations, 2005).

E-government is the latest step in the evolution that empowers the individual citizen to protect his rights and have his voice heard by his government. However, the implementation of e-government systems still face obstacles of different nature, namely institutional weakness, lack of human resources, financial arrangements, technological issues and lack of citizen acceptance and/or interest. Although e-government is supposed to reduce

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[14] The website is Tramitanet www.tramitanet.gob.mx for basic paperwork. The website has changed and now is called the "Citizen Portal", layered out similarly to Google´s page, offering a service of specialized searches in Mexican government services. It is managed by the Secretaria de la Funcion Publica and dated from April 2008.

[15] The website is eMexico www.e-mexico.gob.mx and it is managed by the Coordinacion de la Sociedad de la Informacion y el Conocimiento. The mission of this site is to effectively lead the country´s transition towards the Information Society and Knowledge. The dates featured in the website are 2003-2010.

[16] The website is Foros www.foros.gob.mx nowadays it is a forum with only one topic/page about the Influenza outbreak occurred in Mexico in 2009. All posts date from 2009 but the site has been available at least since 2001. Captures of previous versions can be obtained via WaybackMachine where other topics were discussed in the same place.

operating costs and reduce the inefficiency and bureaucracy in paperwork, the implementation of e-government policies are still being rejected due to concerns regarding the security of the information as citizens need to be assured that their information will be treated in an extremely secure environment (Evans & Yen, 2005).

It is important to remark that e-government will find more difficulties to be implemented in countries where citizens do no trust their government, as citizens may feel violated their personal information. The lack of trust to provide data to government for fear of being used fraudulently or to be kidnapped has prevented governmental portals and websites from being utilized as something more than informative sites. Mexican citizens do not rely completely in government and e-government practices, as seen with the project of the National Register of Mobile Telephony Users (RENAUT), which was cancelled due to rumors saying that the database with the personal information of millions of users of mobile services was being sold in the black-market[17].

Virtually every local government in America has an official website. The website forms the online interface between users and government. However they may also serve bureaucratic interest in facilitating the passive consumption

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[17] RENAUT was a project that consisted in register each mobile number under the personal ID Number. It was a polemic project from the beginning. A good source of information in this regard is the news-microsite collected by Noticias en Tiempo Real Zacatecas. The information is available in Spanish http://ntrzacatecas.com/temas/renaut/).

of content. The evidence of studies as the one from Michael Jensen and Alladi Venkatesh (2007) about Government Websites and Political Engagement, indicate that citizens generally do not use the websites to participate in the policy process but agree that they may facilitate greater inclusion of the political community. More than anything the websites is artifacts utilized to create images of the government in the citizen's mind.

As conclusion Donna Evans and David C. Yen (2005) recognize that at its best, e-government represents the free and effective flow of information between citizens and their government; and at its worst, it is just an empty term to refer to a different way of making available the information in a digital medium at high cost and low efficiency. Viktor Mayer-Schönberg and David Lazer (2007) affirm that e-government is merely an extension of the long history of office automation in the public sector and most scholars have focused on the gains for the public sectors, easily identifiable as facilitating the delivery of information. However, studies in local e-government have found that there are no applications designed to facilitate networking or offline meetings of interest groups (Scott, 2006). This assumption is generalizable to state and federal governmental practices. Social Media and Social Network Services come in handy to overcome the limitations of the mere informational websites that government has work with so far and move forward to a participatory network.

2.3 Mass Media

Mass media is a concept developed to refer to media that has been widely utilized to transmit messages to a rather heterogeneous but enormous passive audience. It has been extensively used in communication sciences to study the implication and impact of mass mediated messages in society. The word *media* is the plural of medium and it means middle. The communication media are the different technological processes that facilitate communication between the sender of a message and the receiver of that message. When we speak of mass media, we make reference to media that reach a relatively large audience of usually anonymous readers. The media play a crucial role in almost all aspects of our lives and affect directly how we learn about our world and to interact with one another (Croteau & Hoyness, 2003).

Doris A. Graber (2010) in her study on Mass Media and American Politics identified four main functions of mass media in relation with politics: surveillance, interpretation, socialization and manipulation. These four functions serve to conduct society towards the paths that the owners of mass media believe are convenient for them. This is a very deterministic perspective that positions control as the key concept in mass media politics. *Control* is the assumption that institutions that operate the public information supply can shape public knowledge and behavior to present specific desirable outcomes. Audiences are always in the spotlight of mass media, so the owners of mass media create

messages that can influence audiences to like or dislike certain attitudes, according to the convenience of media owners. It has been said that who controls media, controls society, to the degree of consider media the fourth estate, as an institution highly influential but whose power is not officially recognized.

The ownership of the media is a central question about the organization of mass media. The assumption behind the question is that owners of media influence the content and form of media products by their decisions: hiring or firing personnel, funding certain projects and giving platform to certain speakers, for example. Media are not exempt of conspiracy theories. The most common assumption is that a small group of owners utilizes the media to control the thoughts of the rest of us (Croteau & Hoyness, 2003).

The concept of mass media is not synonymous with mass communication or the messages it produces. One of the most influential scholars in the field of mass communication studies, Dennis McQuail (Demers & Viswanath, 1999, p. 7) defines mass communication as messages that are produced by complex formal organizations, directed to large culturally heterogeneous audiences, publicly available to anyone. What distinguish mass media from other forms of organizations is that they are organized primarily for the purpose of engaging in acts of mass communications.

Most studies of the mass media regard them as either an agent of social change or an agent of social control. The notion of mass media as agents of control is central to many communication theories and is one of the most widely tested, and accepted propositions in the field of communication, dominating the field of mass communication since the 1960s. There has been a general assumption about mass media being a key factor that accelerate national development. Likewise, The Frankfurt School and the functionalist regarded media as a social institution that plays a crucial role in the maintenance of the status quo characterizing the media as repressive ideological tools of the ruling class (Demers & Viswanath, 1999).

It has been granted much power to the mass media because we live in the assurance that media are an omnipresent force in our lives from where we learn basically everything about how to conduct ourselves in society. The images that media creates suggest which view and behaviors are acceptable and which are outside the mainstream. But it is also true that the success of media as comes from the fact that audiences are willing to accept the culture values promoted in mass media without questioning. The media thus help to integrate and homogenize our society (Graber, 2010) and to set the agenda in national goals and identities regarding economic and political forces, national legitimacy, and religious behavior among others (Williamson, 2006).

In practice, mass media has been divided in traditional media and new media. Traditional mass media are printed documents, radio and television. In his study of Latin American cultures, Robert C. Williamson (2006) pays special attention to the development of press, radio and television in the Latin American countries (including Mexico), but fails to recognize any of the Internet as mass media. Williamson (2006) recognizes that Latin America have had a slow acceptance of Internet and the digital revolution, but is open to join, what he calls, the cybertization of commerce, industry, government, and the information. But in Demers and Viswanath´s (1999) perspective, the Internet should be included in the concept of mass communication due to the number of people or social actors reached by each message emitted via the Internet. Actually, the Internet is in the leading of new media, which make use of the technology available nowadays.

New technology and the Internet have change the way in which messages reach audiences. For instance, the new technologies are leveling the barriers to communication created by time, space and political constraints and are multiplying the communication channels. In the XXI century, practically everyone can become published or broadcasted with a potential audience of millions of people. The internet as an open-access space that has created a hypercompetitive media world and diminished the traditional media control over access to mass audiences (Graber, 2010).

But even when internet has provided open access to more information, and widened the variety of sources available, there exist a reluctance to take all the information provided by internet as truth and reliable. Tools like wikis, where everyone can have access to edit information have raised suspicion about the veracity of the information there contained. For example, even when Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org) can provide easily the answers to many questions, is regarded as an untrustworthy source for academic research[18]. Society still prefers information from the official sources to shape their opinions. For instance, journalists rely heavily on official sources of information, mainly because official sources connote status and legitimacy to a news story adding prestige to the story and official sources are easy to locate and produce easy-to-use news as press conferences, news releases and public statements (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). It will be always considered a trustworthy source of information anything that a government publishes because government is one of the official sources that serve as reference for everyone.

Christian Fuchs (2010) characterizes new media as undemocratic, exploitative, individualistic and unequal. As there are few media owners, media serves the interest of the conservative corporates that excerpt pressure and try to minimize left-wing thought, as usually, conservative capitalists hold the power

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[18] There have been studies on Wikipedia´s reliability contrasted to other renowned encyclopedias as Britannica. For more information about the research check BBC News in http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/4530930.stm; and even Wikipedia has an entry about their reliability in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reliability_of_Wikipedia.

over media. The introductions of fees for content availability, the fact of requiring top technology to use and benefits is only widening the digital divide and making more evident the social differences. Those that appear on media and have access to media continue to be the ones with better education, more contacts and great prestige, which denotes the influence of those few media owners that decide what the no-owners should consume.

Also related to the control of media is the control of mass media by state. State control of the mass media is a routine element of totalitarian systems. In most cases, state-owned media act as propaganda arms of the state, promoting a narrow set of government-sanctioned images and messages. No government is exempt of media control, the government in all nations serves as organizing structures that can, to varying degrees, constraint or promote the free activity of the media (Croteau & Hoyness, 2003).

2.3.1   Social Change

Social change is defined most often as the difference between current and antecedent conditions in a social structural. The theories of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Webber have remained as the top influential theories in social change. While Durkheim compared his theory of social change to Darwin's theory of biological evolution, Marx focused on the relations of production and resulting social conflict between owners and workers as the

primal force behind change. Webber extended Marx's theory to include not only class but also status and party (Demers & Viswanath, 1999).

The mass media are shaped by systemic controls and play an important role as instruments of control. While the social control function of mass media affects all individuals and groups, it is most clearly seen when individuals and groups challenge the system in pursuit of social change. Mass mediated messages may have different effects for different audience members, and also have consequences for unintended or unrecognized audiences. Protest groups rise important issues, provide feedback, encourage systemic critics, stimulate reform, foster social change and contribute to the diversity of the market place of ideas. But even so, authorities, public and mass media can respond in a hostile manner to the challenge of established systems (McLeod & Hertog, 1999).

In the information society, mass media are more likely to be viewed as potential agents of social change based on new media's capacity to bypass structural barriers of previous eras. The new media has increased the potential for many-to-many communication allowing greater interaction among members of the audience. So it, an online audience has more interaction with other members of the audience by sharing critiques, expressions of satisfaction and challenges to the creators of mass media messages even when this feedback is ignored by the originators (Hindman, 1999).

Throughout the 1990s major social movements around the world became organized with the help of the Internet. The internet fits with the basic features of the social movements emerging in the Information Age. Social movements on the Information Age are essentially mobilized around cultural values, they fill the gap left by the crisis of vertically integrated organizations inherited from the industrial era and they tend to think local and act global. These movements find their appropriate medium organization on the Internet; they develop and open new avenues of social change, which enhanced the role of the Internet as their privileged medium (Castells, 2003).

2.4 The Web 2.0 and the Participatory Culture

With the ongoing discourse about social media and what social networks are doing for the society, there has been a growing concern about the pros and cons of the Web 2.0. The term Web 2.0 was firstly defined by Tim O'Reilly to refer to the collaboration's stage of web applications. The term has widespread throughout the world and has become an important topic, even when there is no consensus or common understanding of what Web 2.0 is making it a confusing term that is also used interchangeably with social software. Christian Fuchs (2010) has written extensively about the concepts surrounding the idea of Web 2.0. He identifies three levels in the evolution of the web based on the idea of cognition, communication and co-operation. In order to cooperate you need

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to communicate, and in order to communicate you need to cognize. Based on the understanding of knowledge as a dynamic process outlined, Web 1.0 corresponds to cognition, Web 2.0 to communication and Web 3.0 to cooperation and networked. But although the Web has become an integrated platform for cognition, communication and co-operation, Web 3.0 is not yet in existence.

Fuchs (2010)coincides with Bolaño (2010) in the belief that Web 2.0 is merely another stage of capitalism. Web 2.0 emerged from the marketing perspective and the neoliberal ideology. To be an active participant of the Web services is the ideal attitude of the neoliberal citizen. The way of achieve active participation is by creating individual profiles, accumulation of friends and individual user contributions that promote individualism and competition. However, social software is by no mean exempt of the media ownership issues, and are creating Fuchs identifies as the illusion of participation or what Marcuse defined as repressive tolerance (which is a way of totalitarian democracy).

Social software supports group communication, exploits connectivity and favors the networking of relevant content according to user's preferences. This has become important as from the marketing point of view because social software has proved to be an important source of information. Web 2.0 is serving the marketers to gather information for develops products that respond better to

desires and preferences of the users. Users are willing to engage and make available their information in the communities they built online. Communities are about feelings of togetherness and shared values, which are identifies as the essence of society and the bases of human beings, but also the basis of capitalism. Capitalist would undoubtedly exploit the collective labor and ties that the users build in their online communities (Fuchs, 2010). It is important to remark that not all software is per se social; e-mail, e-governance and e-commerce do not fall in the category of social software even though enable users to connect to other users. What make social software truly social are the dynamic interactions between people and the added value of the communications that people realize in them by supporting relevant relations and content.

The digital economy of new media is based on networking of human intelligence. More than ever, users are willing to develop and create content freely, providing information to other users and companies that could not be obtained in any other way. This is what Tiziana Terranova (2000) identified with the *gift economy*; the formulation that intersects the postmodern cultural economy (the media, the university and the arts) and the information industry (the information and communication complex)to create value over the information that circulates on media. The digital economy has been growing with the advent of Internet, speeding up the rhythms of capital's innovations and

its gaining. Media consumers tend to be not merely passive participants of pre-produced content, but participate by creating content because the Internet still seems to be that democratic place where people with similar interests can connect. The free labor refers to the user's hours spent uploading and sharing content that are not regarded as a job, therefore not being waged in any way.

And that is what participatory culture is about. Participatory culture is a culture with low the barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations. In participatory cultures the members built communities based in common interests, circulating information and collaborate to solve problems. The members of these communities believe their contributions to matter and engage in relations where they share the content they produce. However, not all members have an active participation, but the possibility of produce and share content must remain available for everyone. Participation is a property of culture, and it is emerging as the culture responds to the explosion of new media technologies, not only by learning how to utilize technology (media literacy) but by developing social skills which have to do with collaboration and networking (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel). On his idealistic take about the new city created in the Internet, Echeverria (1994) bases the economy of the Telepolis on the teleesclavos[19], the persons that involuntarily sustain the structure of the city at a distance, and

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[19] Teleeslaves, or slaves at a distance.

differentiate them from the telepolita[20], who are the citizens of the new city. Leisure times become work time as productive consumption is a first magnitude economic force of the distance city. In the economy of Telepolis is remarkable that participants express their opinion anonymously and companies gather the information without any payment. It should be noted that the participatory culture is about producers creating content through free labor. The computer has been discussed as a black box with the potential to create a learning revolution or consume the users (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel). Nonetheless, the computer needs someone behind it to make it work; the user is the one that makes technology valuable. And the Internet has provided the ideal platform for users to become producers of content as well as to bond over their interests and create communities.

2.5   Social Media

According to the dictionary Merriam-Webster[21] (2012) in its online version, Social Media (SoMe) are defined as:

> Forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos).

Merriam-Webster (2012) also states that the first known use of the term Social Media dates from 2004, although it does not offer further information about the

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[20] Adjective utilized to name the inhabitants of the new city at a distance.
[21] Definition of Social Media. Retrieved 2012, 04, 16 http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20media

context in which the term was first used. Cameron Chapman's (2009) article *The History of the Internet in a Nutshell*, mentions that the term is believed to be first used by Chris Sharpley, but still, does not mention under which circumstances the term was used in first place.

Vilma Luoma-aho (2012) organizes Social Media in ten categories according to the function they fulfill. Sites where users produce written text or video material to blogs, wikis, micro blogs, broadcasting belong to the category of content publishing and broadcasting; services as Blogger[22], Twitter[23] and Podcasts[24] belong to this category. Sites that allow sharing photos and video, like YouTube[25], Flickr[26] or del.ici.ous[27] are in the category of content sharing and social bookmarking. Websites for community building like MySpace[28], Facebook[29], LinkedIn[30] or IRC-Gallery[31] are classified as Social Networking sites. Other categories are joint production, discussion forums, virtual worlds,

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[22] Free weblog publishing tool from Google, for sharing text, photos and video. http://www.blogger.com

[23] Microblogging site for instantly connect to what is important to you. Following friends, experts, celebrities and news producers. http://twitter.com

[24] Digital media consisting of episodic series of files (audio or video) subscribed to and downloads though streamed online to a computer. There are several providers and ways to produce podcasts, usually communities inform about their podcast services regularly. For more information consult Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast

[25] Popular website for sharing videos http://www.youtube.com

[26] Online photo management and sharing application. http://www.flickr.com

[27] Bookmarking service to keep, share and discover the best of the Web. http://delicious.com

[28] Social website used mainly to share, follow and engage with products from the entertainment business. Launched in 2003. http://www.myspace.com

[29] Social utility for connecting people with friends and other people who work, study and live around them. It is one of the most popular services globally, owned by Mark Zuckenberg. In 2011 there was made a movie about how Facebook was built, called *The Social Network*. http://www.facebook.com

[30] Considered as the world´s largest professional network. For manage professional identities, build and engage with professional networks and receive job opportunities. http://www.linkedin.com

[31] Website from Finland for sharing photographs and information. http://irc-galleria.net

attachment services, social television, attachment services and also, social shopping.

Social Media can be also associated with what Howard Rheingold (2008) defines as Participatory Media. Participatory media include, but are not limited to, wikis, blogs, RSS, social bookmarking, video sharing, to name a few. Participatory media are social media whose value and power derives from the active participation of many people by making possible many-to-many communication. As it can be noted, Social Network Services, although are among the most disseminated forms of Social Media, represent only a small share of the whole universe of Social Media.

Social media is relevant to organizations because it makes social capital visible. The term social capital broadly refers to the resources that derive from the relationships among people in varying social contexts. It should be noted that is through reciprocity how people obtain benefits from participate in a certain network (Steinfield, DiMicco, Ellison, & Lampe, 2009). Social capital is also understood as the goodwill that is engendered by the fabric of social relations and that can be mobilized to facilitate action. It is also the structure within which the actor is located and the resources available to actors as a function of their location in the structure of their social relations (Adler & Kwon, 2002)[32].

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[32] For further reference on Social Capital I would advise to read the article (LO OLVIDEEE) that analyzes around 23 definitions of Social Capital, its context, benefits, and disadvantages of utilizing the term Social Capital.

Organizations are groups of people that get together to fulfill their goals. It is becoming more and more common that organizations utilize Social Media to make their resources accessible though social connections so they can get support in times of crisis. Social capital within an organization enables individuals to locate useful information and make contributions to the network of relations that they maintain (Steinfield, DiMicco, Ellison, & Lampe, 2009). The environment shapes the way in which we organize our relations; Social Media have slowly changed the way in which organizations relate to each other and among their stockholders. The utilization of Social Media has brought a new era in the relations between organizations and their audiences, an era of listening and monitoring that is headed to meet the needs of the stakeholders.

It is also true that organizations are joining and utilizing all the resources that Social Media has available because people is there, meaning that the power is shifting from institutions to networks. Nonetheless some organizations may be reluctant to invest in Social Media because they do not know how to face the challenges that presents: there is not a definite way to measure the results of participating in Social Media and requires investing a lot of time and efforts. Some companies do not want to pay a worker for solely monitor and post messages in all the resources of Social Media. If companies are making use of Social Media they cannot do it halfheartedly, they really have to get involved in Social Media and make use of them. It should be noted what Euan Semple

(2012) states: "Organizations don't tweet, people do". Social tools are personal; any message that is published in behalf of an organization comes from a single personal perspective, and the decision to adopt Social tools is one of changing the culture not the technology.

2.5.1 Social Networking Services

Manuel Castells has written intensively about the Network era and the influence of the Internet in society. For him, the internet is the fabric of our lives and also the mean to enhance sociability both at a distance and in the local community. The early users of computer networks engaged in virtual communities that became sources of values that patterned behavior and social organization. From the sociological perspective, communities are based on the sharing of values and social organization as well as a common spatial area. The internet is de-emphasizing the cultural component of communities and emphasizing its supportive role. Thus in modern society have become relevant the networks. Networks are very old forms of human practice that have taken new life in our time by becoming information networks powered by the Internet. Not all the relationships that humans have are equally relevant, however most ties are important as sources of information, of work performance, of leisure, of communication, of civic involvement and enjoyment. Now, the dominant trend in the evolution of social relationships is the rise of individualism giving place to a new (Castells, 2003).

Defining Social Networking services (SNS) we find that:

> Social Networking sites are integrated world wide web-based information, communication, and community platforms that allow the creation of personal profiles, the upload and sharing of multimedia data, networking with other users with the help of friend lists, communication by tools such as e-mail, guest books, or forums (Fuchs, Social Networking Sites and Complex Technology Assessment, 2010).

Social Network Services allow members to create a profile containing their personal information and connect with other members allowing communicating with other users though many applications[33]. Awarness Inc. (2012) has published a report with information about the social platforms or sites that were most used and popular during 2011, finding that Facebook for social networking, Twitter for micro blogging, and LinkedIn for professional networks, are the big three social platforms dominating the market; followed by the video-sharing website YouTube in fourth place and Blogs in fifth place. Most SNS are commercial and profit-oriented; they sell their users' information (Fuchs, Social Networking Sites and Complex Technology Assessment, 2010). Even so, SNS represent innovation and young people are more willing to adopt their use, however SNS are not exempt of domination structures. It is commonly said that those who owns the information has the power and Social Network Services are especially good tools

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[33] There is an extensive ongoing scholarship about Social Network Services. For further information about the whole history and scholarship I would advice to revise the article "*Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship*" by Danah M. Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison

for gathering information. Social grooming is an important human activity from an evolutionary perspective because it helps people to build relationships (Thelwall & Wilkinson, 2010).

Another study in Social Networks published by comScore (2011), positions social networking is listed as the most popular online activity worldwide. The study also recognizes that the growth of social networking is a global cultural phenomenon despite the differences in government, infrastructure and access to the Internet. Moreover comScore (2011) identified that social networking activities are not just for young people, more demographic groups are engaging in networking activities, it is everyone who is involved in social networking. The study also includes the statistics by country, out of the 43 countries analyzed.

Great hope has been place in digital networks as agents for social change. For once, digital networks may change what kind, how much, and how easily government information is accessible to citizens and potentially vice versa (Mayer-Schönberg & Lazer, 2007). And also digital networks have the ability to transcend distance to widen access to the same set of information and knowledge in a remote village in a developing economy as is available to users in the premier city of a developed country (United Nations, 2005). There is still a long way to go in the emerging world of social networks as there are more social networks that can be counted, some more are emerging every day while others

are falling in disuse. At this moment the big names in social networks remain to be Facebook for social networking, Twitter for micro blogging, YouTube for sharing videos, but there exist more than 200 social network services operating at the moment[34], which makes it difficult to reach a totality of internet users by participate on one of them. And should be kept in mind that is not the Internet that creates a pattern of networked individualism, but the development of the Internet provides an appropriate material support for the diffusion of networked individualism as the dominant form of sociability (Castells, 2003). In the end the change is not about the platforms themselves but about the interactions that occur in them made by the people.

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[34] A list containing the names and basic classification of social networks can be found in Wikipedia in the following address http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites; it claims not to be exhaustive but lists over 200 websites and has a link to networks that have fall into disuse

3   Methodology

This research is a qualitative case study carried out to gain in-depth understanding of the utilization of Social Media resources by the General Direction of Popular Cultures in Mexico. Qualitative research consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible; they turn the world into a series of representations, attempting to make sense of the phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). The principal justification for the use of qualitative research is that the stress of this research is how the social experience is create and given meaning to the utilization of SNSs' vehicles, to disseminate information.

Remarkably is that this research is situated in-between communication studies, culture studies and ethnographic style studies. Qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomena in question and assumes that objectivity cannot be achieved. The method to realize this research is direct observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 5).

The primary data for this research comprises the information publicly available in the website of Popular Cultures (http://www.culturaspopulareseindigenas.gob.mx/cp/), Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/pages/Direcci%C3%B3n-General-de-Culturas-Populares/176962872385832), Twitter (https://twitter.com/#!/dgcpopulares), and YouTube (http://www.youtube.com/user/DGCPI?feature=mhee) accounts

attached to GDPC. This all in all, includes the totality of Social media utilized by the governmental institution for their digital promotion purposes. The access to the data does not have restrictions of any kind as it is composed by public documents: photographs, texts, links and videos. From the website will be analyzed the elements that appear in the homepage, however from the Facebook, Twitter and YouTube will be analyzed the totality of the messages published by Popular Cultures as to march 4th 2012.

As analytical objective, it has been determinate to describe the usage given to social media in terms of cultural promotion and diffusion of popular cultures. The interpretation of the usage given is guided though the critical theory proposed by the Frankfurt School. The theorists from Frankfurt School were concerned about mass media and its function in society as media was seen as a vehicle through which a national mind developed. Whoever controlled the media could control a nation and what it does. For them, media was encouraging the oppressed groups to develop their own emancipator consciousness and was not about ruling class keeping control and widening the power distance (Willis, 2007, pp. 47-48). This research will be focusing on the relationships among culture, power, and domination. Culture has been regardless as a domain of struggle where the production and transmission of knowledge is always a contested process, and popular culture, in all its

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definitions and manifestations, plays an important role in the critical research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 284).

Critical research seeks also to gain interpretative understanding of the current social condition and the events and actions leading to the actual situation (Willis, 2007, p. 82). This research also highlights the power relations and social struggle that takes place in SNSs while trying to meet the need of a neglected minority. It is also trying to stress the necessity of acknowledge of the possibilities of the Social Media in order to fully understand the potential use that can be given to SNSs.

Bernand Bereleson was among the first scholars that pay special attention to the content, mainly of propaganda and printed materials. Bereleson described content analysis as the use of mass communications for testing scientific hypothesis and for evaluate journalistic practices. The main aim of content analysis is to uncover the tendencies of the content of the communication, its development and differences (Toussaint, 2001).

Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah Shannon (2005)categorized three approaches to qualitative content analysis: conventional, direct and summative. They *define* summative content analysis as the approach that goes beyond the quantitative analysis of word and topic repetition to include latent content analysis. The idea is to understand the underlying meanings of the texts analyzed, paying special

attention to the context in which the messages are embedded, so messages can be interpreted.

This paper refers to a single case study that cannot be generalized or extended to other cases of Popular Cultures websites. It can be tempting to look for similar examples in the region named under the label of Latin America. But although similar historical processes occurred to the twenty republics identified as Latin America, it diversity seems more salient than its similarities. Each county has different ethnicities, class, lifestyle and arts that should be studied separately with its peculiarities (Williamson, 2006). Certainly there are key aspects that are shared by the regions that have gone through the same process of conquest. But even when the historical processes may seem alike from a macro level, from a micro level perspective, the outcome is completely different in each region.

The focal point of the research will rest in describing briefly and roughly the specifications of the Network, the profile information given by the institution, the statistical information supplied by the service provider. It will be also assessing in which kind of relations the users engage while using the specific media and how do they build a community within the media, the kind and tone of the messages posted by the users and the responses from the institution. An appraisal would be given to the idea of how are the media and messages portraying and empowering the indigenous minorities.

It is important to remark that the research does not pretend to analyze self-representations, their validity towards the represented or the accuracy of the identity represented in the websites. Neither is assessing the use it is given to the SNSs as good or bad as promotion tools, but is looking to describe and understand how SNSs are being used for the democratization of the Internet in Mexico. The challenge of this research is to overcome the fact that the employment of critical theory by researchers has demonstrated that they have much more skill at criticizing than empowering and freeing those subjects of research (Willis, 2007, p. 85).

4   Analysis

In this chapter, the use of each of the Social Network Services is described regarding the media, the information given in their profile, the relations established among the users and the institution, the interactions between users and the nature of the messages. The accounts share the same image as avatar; embroidery of bird from different shadows of blue, green and gold, which identify them as units from the same origin, the General Direction of Popular Cultures.

4.1   Twitter @dgcpopulares

The DGCP has a Twitter account available for getting in contact with the people. Basically, Twitter is a microblogging service available since 2006. Users that are registered in the website send out messages, called *tweets*, of a length within 140 characters limit. Twitters users relate to each other by following, but the relationships of users is not reciprocal in the sense that a user can follow any other user and the user being followed need not to follow back. Common practices of responding messages have evolved in well-defined actions and language that allow different interactions among users. For instance: *RT* stands for *retweet*, *hashtags* are key words following the sign #; and the way of directing a message to a certain user or mention him is by putting a @ before the user name. Twitter tracks the most mentioned posts and hashtags placing them in the category of trending topics, dividing them according to local, country or worldwide level (Kwak, Lee, Park, & Moon, 2010). Twitter also allows sharing pictures and doing livestream video transmission.

The DGCP joined Twitter in 2011 with the username *@dgcpopulare* available in https://twitter.com/#!/dgcpopulares. As of April 2012 they have posted or tweeted 77 messages, followed 28 users and are followed by 109 users[35], but the amount of followers keep fluctuating. Their profile states that they are located in Mexico City and the account's description they set the account as the easiest, most direct, and reliable way to "find out what occurs with traditional and contemporary manifestations of popular culture in our country"[36].

Figure 3. Screenshot from the Twitter account @dgcpopulares 2012.

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[35] As to April 15, 2012
[36] Profile @dgcpopulares available through Twitter.

Most of the accounts that Popular Cultures is following are cultural institutions and museums from Mexico. DGCP only follows 6 users and 3 Mexican public figures. However, some of the accounts that Popular Cultures follows seem to be bots[37], as they have no tweets, but follow and are followed by several users. Bots create traffic but they are accounts that do not make true contributions to other users' discussions as they have no interaction with the other users. Other users seem not to be active in Twitter as they have not tweeted since around the dates Popular Cultures was opened. There are no restrictions on who can read the tweets produced by them or who can follow the account[38].

Popular Cultures started to post messages on Twitter on October 11th, 2011. The first message included a picture of the opening of the exhibition "*Un mundo y diversas vidas*" that was taking place the same day. The same day they tweeted twice, and the next tweet is from October 13th about a poetry event taking place the same day. There is constant activity during the month of October, but in November the activity decreased, to the point of being null from December 8th 2011 onwards. After that, they only seemed to reply to the account of the writer Jorge Luis Borges with a blank message. The heavier amount of message posting was between October 26 and October 29, with 28

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[37] Bots are robot programs, programmed to perform certain tasks automatically in order to generate traffic and increase the perceived relevance of the accounts.

[38] Privacy settings allow users to accept or decline followers in order to protect the messages sent.

tweets, mostly about the graphic exhibition *Tzompantli*[39] and its meaning as Pre-Columbian era's practice.

Most of the messages tweeted by *@dgcpopulares* are about events like photographic exhibitions, museum exhibitions and festivals that take place in different places in the Republic. The images that they share are either, linked to a certain event or with no description at all about the image.

Figure 4. Screenshot from the Twitter messages that show images expanded. The image on the left is the flyer for the launch of the book Narcotrafic for Innocents. The image on the right corresponds to one of the skulls from the *Tzompantli* exhibition. 2012

Apart from the messages promoting events, there is no real interaction with users. There are few retweets and messages to users are scarce, as they have barely tweeted. Only two messages are addressed to specific users. One

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[39] Tzompantli is an altar or Wall of skulls from the people sacrificed that several Mesoamerican cultures used to make. The meaning of Tzompantli was also tweeted by Popular Cultures.

was directed to the user @villelanru to answer her question about the exhibition *La Tercera Raíz* and the opening hours, the exhibition is taking place also in the National Museum of Popular Cultures. However messages are written with a friendly and simple colloquial language, the messages are simple, concrete, with no much use of abbreviation, but still, all messages are written in Spanish.

Among the few messages they have sent, only a couple of them are about specific or direct promotion of manifestations of popular cultures. For instance, it is relevant the tweet about the video *Pat Boy:* "have you ever listened hip hop in Mayan? You are going to like this". The video was retweeted twice.

Figure 5. Screenshot from the expanded Twitter message "*have you ever listen to hip hop in Mayan*?" showing a link to a video in YouTube. 2012

One of the most important accounts linked to *@dgcpopulares* is @MNCP_DGCP, the account of the National Museum of Popular Cultures administered by one of the departments of the same Direction of Popular Cultures. It is relevant because most activities from the direction takes place in the premises of the National Museum of Popular Cultures.

Figure 6. Screenshot of the account of the National Museum of Popular Cultures. 2012

The account *@dgcpopulares* seems to be unattended, as there has been no new message since December. They have failed to create a community within Twitter, as there is no interaction with users and cultural products are not promoted beyond information about new exhibitions. Likewise, there was an attempt to show new cultural products made by actual indigenous that are available in the Internet, but only one that was not extended beyond a post. It seems that the efforts to maintain an account for Popular Cultures have been diversified between *@dgcpopulares and @MNCP_DGCP,* but the Museum has been given priority as is the venue for the activities and exhibitions that the Direction has available. Although the messages are about cultural expressions related to indigenous, only the message regarding hip hop music in Mayan is the

only message that tries to give space and information about the modern manifestations of indigenous cultures created in the media.

With the Twitter account, the Direction is representing their efforts to show what indigenous cultures look like and their manifestations as folklore, not as their everyday activities and life. However they are fulfilling their commitment to give them a space in Media. The Twitter account has turned out to be another attempt to make believe the public that there is an active voice of indigenous minorities on the Internet. None of the topics covered by the tweets are addressing the basic struggles of the indigenous minorities regarding their ethno-linguistic, religious and cultural differences, or their current political, legal and economic situation.

4.2   Facebook
Facebook is one of the most known and widespread worldwide, and with more users around the globe. As social network, Facebook originated in 2004 as a tool for college students to maintain relationships among them. Later on, the website became available for anyone who has a valid email address. Each user creates a profile with the basic information including birthdate, work and education, family relations and contact info. Users' activity is shown in their Wall so their friends can comment and Like the activity, and also leave messages. Facebook members can also tag each other in their pictures so that their name appear as caption in the picture and a link to the picture for their friends to see.

For users' connections, Facebook offers options like to send private messages, post public messages on the walls of the friends, create and join groups of interest so messages are visible only for group members, post long messages in a way of notes. The news feed, which appears on the homepage of the user, provides a list of the actions and messages that friends have recently undertaken: sharing photos, commented on, games played, news read, videos watched, among other activities (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). It is also possible to create a page for business, institutions or public figures, which do not have a limit in friends because the relations are with likes, and it is different from the Persons pages.

The General Direction of Popular Cultures joined Facebook on October 11th, 2011, choosing the Page format. They define themselves as a government organization and provide their postal address, the website of the Direction plus, as basic defining information, they state that Popular Cultures belongs to CONACULTA and have more than 30 years promoting the study, dissemination and development of popular and indigenous cultures of Mexico.

As of May 2012, all pages were forced to adopt the format *Timeline*, which allows having a cover picture, and highlight stories, activities and order the content by month and relevance. They have not selected a cover image. The way of relating with the users in the page, is through likes. So far, the page for the

Direction of Popular Cultures has 652 *likes* and the mention that 10 people are *talking about this*. It means that 10 people out of the 652 that like it are actively participating in topics related to the content of the page.

Figure 7. Screenshot of the Facebook cover from the General Direction of Popular Cultures. The image shows the description of the page, images, affiliation, and how many likes the page has. 2012

The first messages posted correspond to the premises that the Direction has under its responsibility, such as the Museum of Popular Cultures and the Information and Documentation Center "Alberto Beltrán". The first comments from the users were to say that they did not know about the public library and what facilities does it offer. Although with a difference of 5 days from when the inquire was done, the Direction replied giving the information the user required: free entrance to the documentation center and open to all public. The users posted messages wishing luck to the institution and encouraging them to continue their labor with the Museum and exhibitions of Popular Cultures.

Interestingly, a user questioned them about the visitors they have monthly in CID, and the Direction answered that currently they do not have that information.

Figure 8. Screenshot of the Facebook Timeline showing the first messages posted and the replies from the users. 2012

Users posted messages asking for information about the activities, or to include them in the mailing lists to know about the activities they offer in each locality. Later in October, the messages posted by the Direction were about the activities they have available during the month. The easiness of Facebook is that it offers the possibility of posting long messages with all the information required without characters restriction, and also, allows adding a pictures or video within posts. The messages, as they are not limited in extension, can address the users in a more close way, using different words that create a bond with the receiver of

the message. For example, the Direction invites users to participate from their activities by saying "come and discover what happens", "Friends we wait for you at", "Friends, remember, we invite you", "we remind you that". Those are common phrases used to open messages and encourage people to participate from the activities they promote. The totalities of their messages are posted in Spanish.

Interestingly, the users are more willing to engage with the institution and ask for information from the Direction or to create a network to share and promote events from users, than what the Direction seems to be, by the use they are giving to the network. The User Carlos Amador asked help for his daughter's homework, regarding the assignment of finding 5 poems, 5 songs, 5 stories and 5 jokes in the native languages of Mexico. He mentions that there is not enough information available on the Internet, and he wants to know a place where he can get further information from reliable sources. Similarly, the user Mabelly Jeronimo Lorenzo writes asking about how she can get music from a particular State of the Republic. The Direction did not reply to the messages.

One of the singularities of Facebook is the possibility to tag people or pages in photography. By tagging, users can relate, engage, create and share content. The tagging feature serves to create links between users-generate content, as in the case of Conny Isaak, a user who wanted to share his portrait of

an Indigenous lady with the Direction, and by tagging it, it made it available for every visitor.

Figure 9. Screenshot of the image tagged by Conny Isaak sharing a portrait of an indigenous woman with her traditional clothing. 2012

Conny Isaak is not the only case, but it illustrates perfectly how Facebook as media, serves to create a participatory culture that has in common, the interest to share the cultural expressions of the indigenous peoples from Mexico. In contrast, the institution is more concerned in the promotion of their activities so to get higher attendance, which is their measure of participation. Users want to share their vision of indigenous, to make them noticing its uniqueness in a society that generalize their manifestations under the name of indigenous, and does not recognize the heterogeneity of the minorities labeled "indigenous".

4.3   YouTube Channel

The General Direction of Popular Cultures has an account on YouTube for sharing videos of cultural manifestations related to indigenous cultures. YouTube is one of the most know social websites in the whole Internet, although many users may not regard it as such, but merely as a sharing video website. It was launched in 2005 and nowadays they operate under the slogan "Broadcast yourself" offering four key features: video recommendations, video sharing, comments and embeddable video player. The innovation of YouTube was that you did not need to install or download any application to play and share videos. Although not intended as such, YouTube has become a public sphere, an accidental archive and a place of participatory culture where user-generated content (Burgess & Green, 2009).

The DGCP opened an account or channel on YouTube in December 2011 under the name Culturas Populares. In their profile information, they write the objective, mission and vision of the General Direction of Popular Cultures. They are available in http://www.youtube.com/user/DGCPI?feature=mhee and by March 2012 they had 2 subscriptions, 49 videos and 663 reproductions.

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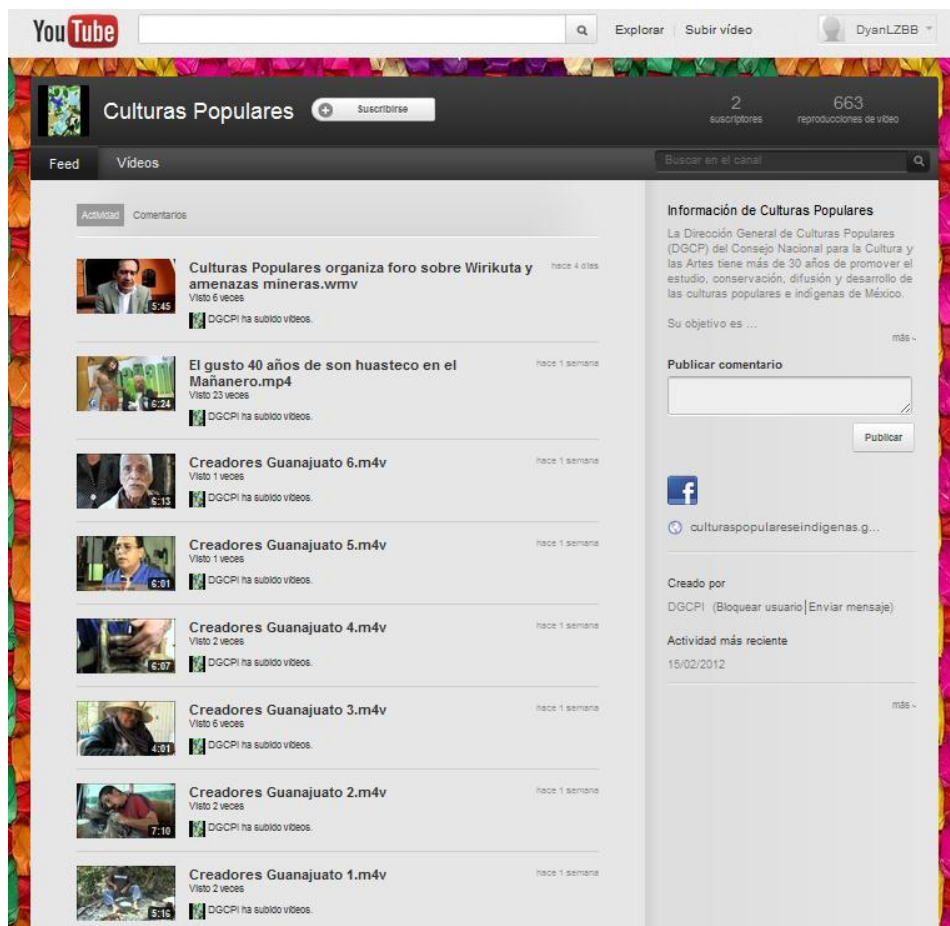Cultures and Building a Participatory Culture.

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Figure 10. Screenshot from the YouTube channel of the General Direction of Popular
Cultures. 2012

The day the channel was inaugurated, 17 videos were uploaded. The 17

videos are part of a project called *Ventana a mi Comunidad* (Window to my

Community) that aims to serve as material for the basic education. It consists of

a series of videos featuring children who retell the story of their everyday lives,

their celebrations, their environment, their food, their school activities and their

legends. Each video features the life of an indigenous community or a group

with a particular identity. The format is closely related to documentary, with shots

of the activities, off voices and interviews. They all start by locating spatially the different indigenous communities within the Mexican Republic. The videos last between 2 and 6 minutes and are spoken in Spanish mostly, although they state their abilities in the indigenous language of their community. The videos from *Ventana a mi Comunidad* are grouped in a playlist, but apart from the playlist's description, there is not a description for each video and most of them have no likes/dislikes. As well, none of the videos has any comment, and the reproductions are scarce; there are videos that have 0 reproductions and the most reproduced has 129 reproductions.

On the other hand, there is another channel with 21 videos, 110 subscriptions and 186727 reproductions and the videos from the older version of the website[40] named Culturas Populares. The videos portrayed in this channel correspond to casual footage taken with low quality recorders, but portrays music from different genres played by indigenous groups. The account dates from 2009 and contains the videos that at some point were embedded into the main website[41]. There is more active participation in this account; videos have more plays and likes. It also exist a more active participation of users in the comments, usually to express their fondness and pride regarding the expressions of popular culture, and how close do people feel about the indigenous.

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[40] The profile is available in http://www.youtube.com/user/culturaspopulares/videos, the last activity registered from this account is may 2009

[41]By main website I refer to the government webiste of Popular and Indigenous Cultures htpp://www.culturaspopulareseindigenas.gob.mx
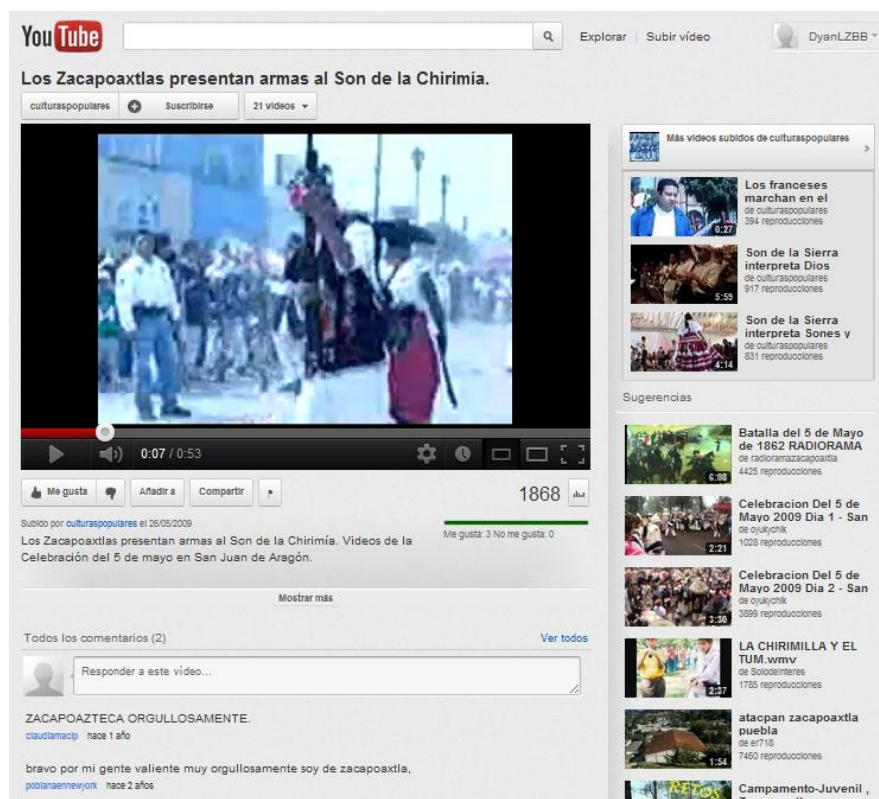
Figure 11. Screenshot of the YouTube video uploaded by the Direction of Popular Cultures about the Zacapoaxtlas and their ceremony of presenting arms. 2012

The most viewed video from Popular Cultures is the one corresponding to the cultural diversity. It is also the most commented with 9 pages of comments (84 comments), and the community has engage in a discussion about the indigenous languages, the cultural diversity and the races. There are messages about the indigenous legacy, the mestizo and the discrimination practices towards indigenous and people in general. There are also signs of trolling practices but the comments that fueled the discussion about what is to be truly Mexican received so many negative votes, that have been deleted and cannot be accessed, but the replies to the discussion remain there. Most of the replies

are angry messages trying to diminish the opinions of the ones who call the representations of indigenous as part of a lower status[42]; discussion about issues of discrimination, or over technical language usage of terms such as "Latin-American", "Hispanic" or "indigenous"[43], but all of them are written in Spanish. Not all comments are negative, for instance there are also comments calling for the unity of those people from Latin-American as part of a shared history or recognizing how important is for people to acknowledge its inheritance and how proud people is to say that they are descendant of indigenous people, as well as regretting that they have no further knowledge of the inheritance they are willing to embrace, at least to pay lip service. Nonetheless, there is not a clear position from the Direction towards the controversy generated in their videos, as they have not reply any comment.

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[42] There is plenty of literature about the division of high culture and low culture, for further reading I would advise to read Larry Shiner, The Apotheosis of Art. A cultural History, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001. And Morag Shiach, *Discourse on Popular Culture. Class, Gender and History in Cultural Analysis, 1730 to the present*. Oxford: Polity Press, 1989.

[43] Most of the people engaged in the discussion are replying to the same user by the name *rosestrec*, whose comment is not available anymore due to the amount of negative voting, apparently the message was offensive.

Figure 12. Screenshot of the YouTube video about the cultural diversity of Mexico showing the top comment, calling for the unity and understanding among all Latin-American people. 2012

YouTube has proven to be the ideal media to share accurate portrays of popular cultures, as any given word is backed up with moving images. It allows a different connection between audiences and the minorities represented in there because it allows certain immediacy with the subjects represented. The videos are recorded from their everyday life; in there, there are no actors trying to make people believe what popular cultures are, but members of the communities are giving a tour, showing their culture, food, music and habits.

YouTube has also proven to be an open arena for debate, as there is the opportunity to post messages that are available for everyone to see and reply. However YouTube is a place in which the, so called, haters and opinionated people love to discuss, precisely for the openness to comments of any kind. Most of the times, the debates on YouTube are encounters of he-said-then-I-said that do not provide arguments supported by facts, but are merely opinions, sometimes polite, sometimes offensive.

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5   Conclusion

The General Direction of Popular Cultures is the administrative unit from Mexican government that has been in charge of the study, conservation and dissemination of Mexican popular cultures for over more than 30 years. Since 2005-2006 they have been present in the Internet with their own website, that has served as a showcase for the cultural manifestations of Popular and Indigenous cultures from Mexico, as well as for the activities organized by the Direction of Popular Cultures that help them achieve their goals.

At a first instance, the website was created for the Direction to inform citizens about their activities in a globalized context where digital existence is determined through the participation on the Internet. The creation and maintenance of the website also responds to the necessity of fulfill the agreements contracted in the Acuerdos de San Andres Larrainzar. The Acuerdos de San Andres Larrainzar, in theory, vindicate the status of indigenous peoples in society, nonetheless, several authors and civilians reckon that there has been no clear observance of the agreements and therefore, indigenous cultures have not been empowered or equal to the dominant culture. So in a way, the Direction of Popular Cultures tries to show to people that there has been done work to preserve popular cultural manifestations, but it has been done in a way of showing the folklore of Mexican cultures to those who have access to the media. There is still a marked differentiation on what is considered

part of the high culture and low culture. The Direction of Popular Cultures is still working with the paradigm of folklore culture versus dominant culture. As a figure of speech, it has been told that the website is just another way to give to the people *panem et circenses*, by showing the indigenous as outsiders, a special and highly differentiated sector from society, and not in the same category as the rest of the people. It should be noted that Mexicans in general, are considered descendants from indigenous peoples, thus, all indigenous manifestations are considered shared history of Mexicans.

The vertiginous change in technology has pushed the government to embark in the endeavor of utilizing Social Media to keep up with the requirements of society, as it has been seen in the examples provided by this thesis. As a result of the growth in the use of Social Media and more specifically, the social networks Facebook, Twitter and YouTube by Mexican audiences, the General Direction of Popular Cultures has joined and created a profile in each of the social networks mentioned. The profiles are quite recent, they date from 2011, and have not been exploited in its entirely. Mainly because having someone to monitor and actively participate in the social networks implies a high investment of economic resources. But also because most of companies and institutions regard investment in Social Media as their lowest priority, due to the lack of measure tools that allow recognizing the immediate impact that Social Media have in the

stakeholders. Albeit that the general plan of the Mexican Secretary of Culture places in the book, as the hallmark media for distributing knowledge.

However good and modern are the tools that the Direction of Popular Cultures is utilizing to disseminate popular cultural manifestations, it is being done for and from the spheres outside those who are trying to portrait. The ownership of the media continues to be a key issue in the construction of a community in the Social Network Services. The websites are not administered by members of the indigenous cultures of Mexico, nor available in any of the Indigenous languages from the more than 62 indigenous cultures that remain within the territory of the Mexican Republic. They were created for those belonging to social class that has higher purchasing power and whose primary language is Spanish, and probably are unable to communicate in any of the indigenous languages that are spoken in Mexico.

One of the limitations that Indigenous and Popular cultures face to be included in the digital age, is their lack of access to up to date technology. The inequalities to which popular cultures have been object since the conquest have not been leveled by the technology, as it has been leveled the differences between users and producers. Therefore, it remains to be studied the accuracy of the representations that can be found in the website and profiles and how

the Mexican popular cultures identify themselves with the subjects there portrayed, which at no time was the intention of this thesis.

The Direction of Popular Cultures also faces the challenge of creating a true participatory culture with the social capital that they count with in this very moment. So far, the users that have been participating and interacting with the different accounts from the Direction of Popular Cultures asking for information, or tagging photographs related with Popular Cultures or events organized by users, have not done it for long time or posted many messages, in part because of the lack of response from the Direction and because the community is small. During the first days of utilization, the replies had the immediacy that the media provide. As the time passed by, the contact between the representatives of the Direction of Popular Cultures and the public, decreased to the point of being nonexistent.

Today more than ever, technology has offered in Social Media and Social Networks, the real opportunity to establish direct channels of dialogue among those who hold power and those who are governed. Moreover, it is humanly impossible for any Secretary of Government to reach every single of their governed. And with the limitedness of their economic and human resources, this task results impossible. However with the emergence of Social Networks, users have been prove more than eager to provide institutions with the fruit of their

labor, asking in exchange, nothing more than the recognition of their effort, equivalent to their photographs and comments to be visible for other users.

Some of the inquiries that users have made are related directly to indigenous cultures: languages, habits, or ways of life, however, most of the efforts of cultural institutions have been directed towards the digitalization of cultural heritage documents. Nowadays Social Network Services could be employed to answer those inquiries, but also to present many aspects of the daily life of indigenous communities, if members of those communities are invited recurrently to make use of the accounts of the Direction of Popular Cultures alongside with the current administrators. In this way, the knowledge about the Popular Cultures can be shared in a more close relationship that would benefit all stakeholders, by providing constant firsthand information about the Popular Cultures and at the same time, involving users with the activities of diffusion that are the central concern of the Direction of Popular Cultures.

If used actively, Social Networks can help the Direction of Popular Cultures to build an online community closest to their aims in 2006, when they encouraged people to submit their visual essays. Now Social Networks allows users to publish content in their own profiles and link it to Popular Cultures' profile, so the Direction's investment in web space and servers would be reduced, and at the same time, the Direction can monitor what users identify with Popular Cultures

and redesign their messages to actually meet their goals as governmental institution. An active participation will also convince users that the Direction has included digital media in their media plan and they have not joined by mere fashion, or because everyone seems to be part of Social Networks. Eventually, more participation and active use, will lead to the growth of an engaged community that is more likely to participate from the events organized by the institution, as well as to keep on building a participatory culture.

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