COMMUNICATION'S AMBIGUOUS DYNAMICS

BERNARD MIEGE

Bernard Miège
is Professor of
Communication
and Director
of GRESEC,
University Stendahl,
Grenoble.

Translated by
Alan Marshall.

Introduction

The theme of the 1995 IAMCR conference comes naturally to mind as soon as one begins to examine the various initiatives which have marked European communication over the last twenty years. Bringing with it the promise of less hierarchical social relations, communication has, indeed, had a whole series of consequences, thanks to the flexibility of its methods and the malleability of the techniques which it promotes. Few observers — apart from a small number of authors well-informed about the theories and strategies of "transnationalisation" — had hitherto imagined the extent of these consequences. For it would appear that the development of communication has not only upset established practices and out of date structures, it has also "undermined" national and cultural identities which, reinforced by two world wars, had previously seemed particularly resistant to change. The most obvious effect of the growth of communication has been to weaken the nation-state, until recently well-entrenched in its certainties. Handmaiden of liberal ideology, communication has considerably accelerated cultural and commercial exchanges in the West. And in Eastern Europe it has helped prepare the way for overturning what everyone had previously thought were well-established authoritarian political regimes.

It is worth examining the powers which we habitually associate with communication: powers, which are as often associated with the virtues of modernity as they are feared or criticised for their possibilities of manipulation when placed in certain hands. For communication is commonly considered as having the power to transgress national frontiers and identity differences and to create new horizons. A reliance on communication carries with it an implicit, **a priori** assumption that the changes thus facilitated and brought about will break down existing frameworks. Inversely, the leaders of closed or backward-looking political regimes are acutely aware of how difficult it is to control currently available, low-cost and potentially accessible techniques. The model of the

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"global city" would thus appear to be in the process of establishing itself with the result that, in Europe at least, an entire period characterised by inward-looking attitudes and centuries-old oppositions is now being called into question.

Numerous studies, which have been carried out in this field, raise many questions and provoke a certain anxiety. Above all, however, it seems to me that this subject should only be approached by way of a detour, for it is necessary, first of all, to evaluate the importance of several deep-rooted, long-term, movements which affect communication or are implied by its development. Only once we have done this, can we begin to analyse the "territorial" impact of communication: an impact which is all the more difficult to apprehend given that predictions and assertions are rather more common than hard facts in this particular field of study.

Before dealing with these movements, I would like first to make three observations.

Firstly, as we approach the end of the second millennium, world communication is on the point of entering a new stage, or at least of passing a new "threshold," which can be easily enough perceived in the actions, strategies, and policies currently being pursued by various actors. The economic and social stakes involved in the creation of new systems are at the heart of a debate, whose impact is felt well beyond the restricted milieu of communication specialists. In Europe at least, the society which is taking form will be increasingly influenced by communication and its techniques. Needless to say, utopian assertions are as omnipresent as they always have been in the past and continue to do little to clarify the debate: we know that virtual images are not about to replace "real" images and that high capacity networks are not on the point of creating a society in which communications techniques will be universally available and in which each and everyone will be able to communicate freely in real time. Over the last twenty-five years we have become accustomed to such largely promotional assertions, and we have acquired a rather more critical approach to them. (It should be remarked that not all intellectuals share such a justifiably prudent attitude: some are excessively fascinated by technological promises while others are excessively apocalyptic in their outlook.) However, our prudence should not prevent us from identifying a certain number of real changes which have taken place recently and whose exact nature it is important to analyse.

My second observation is that, in accounting for movements in the field of communication, there have been a certain number of "partial" scientific advances. The range of theories which we now have at our disposal is undoubtedly richer than that twenty years ago. It has widened and is no longer limited to the empirico-functionalist or cybernetic models which were dominant in the past. Numerous disciplines are now closely involved in analysing the media: the sociology of technology, culture and social interactions, the semiotics of sound and images, industrial economics, public policy studies, and the pragmatics of linguistics, to name only a few. These various fields often adopt a comparative methodological approach, when they are not actively co-operating in joint analyses. In addition, philosophical approaches and social theories (such as the various versions of post-modernism) are also closely involved in communication studies, in conjunction or in parallel with the above-mentioned disciplines. Though conceptual diversity encourages a more open approach to the complexity of phenomena, it has not necessarily led to a better understanding of the

directions of change. One might even say that these advances have only increased the difficulties inherent in the communication paradigm (there is, of course, no reason to be unduly surprised by such a development as this has often been the case in the scientific field). Paradoxically, information and communication sciences are less than ever in a position to make categorical pronouncements on the "effects" of the media and communications techniques. Such a relative indecision (perfectly admissible in scientific terms) contrasts with the certitudes expressed in public by intellectuals, political decision-makers, and the representatives of various large organisations. But it is clearly difficult to defend such a position publicly, especially in light of major developments which are currently taking place (the setting up of the so-called information highways; the question of the free exchange of audio-visual programs; and the deregulation of public service television and telecommunications).

My third observation concerns international scientific exchanges, including those within a regional framework, such as the European continent, which do not match up to the importance of the questions currently being raised. Strictly scientific analyses have little influence when compared with officially-authorised analyses by a wide variety of experts and the positions adopted by international organisations. There is, however, increasing scientific activity in the form of journals, conferences and seminars. Similarly, academics, especially those from richer countries, travel more. However, such exchanges are not in themselves sufficient. For their primary function is to allow researchers to discover programs which are still under development and to share ideas which are still in the process of being worked out. For the moment, research in the field of communication does not have sufficient resources to be able to adopt the necessary critical distance from currently emerging communication patterns. The difficulties and limitations involved are doubtless even more important than we presently imagine. Communication research has to come to grips with the assurance of the "single way of thinking" which goes hand in hand with the increasing power of international communications. (In East European countries this way of thinking is usually replaced by a liberal model such as existed half a century ago.) Likewise, it has to affirm its right to exist in the face of **de facto** competition by other disciplines or inter-disciplines, such as computer science and the cognitive sciences.

In such a context (which we must fully understand, if we want to "resist" it) communication is not, however, quite so elusive as its seems. For we can already identify certain fundamental social trends around which it is developing. I would like to highlight three of these trends.

The Industrialisation of Information and Culture

In major industrialised countries information and culture industries have been "in operation" for over a century, when the specificities of information- and culture-related products (the uncertain and variable nature of their use values in particular) have given rise to certain particularities, which we do not find in other fields of social activity. These particularities have held back, and in some cases limited, the incentive to invest in these industries: a feature which is apparent irrespective of the state of development of countries under review. The maintenance of an important public or para-public sector and the existence of a non- or little-industrialised market sector in

both developed and less developed countries should also be noted. This balance (if, indeed, balance is the right term!) is now called into question in various ways in both Western and Eastern Europe. The reasons often seem similar but have quite different meanings: reduction of public funding (which patronage and sponsors are unable to compensate for); privatisation of public organisations (television networks, theatres, etc.); weakening of the organisations representing civil society; external and internal pressure to take deregulation of the public sector even further (usually in the name of free communication and a diversity of opinions and artistic preferences); and supportive measures in favour of national or "European" audio-visual industries. In most cases these changes (it is essential to break them down in terms of information- and culture-related activities as well as branch by branch) were initiated or began to accelerate about twelve years ago (within the EEC, at least). They are often severely criticised by artists and intellectuals, arguing that political decision-makers have given in too easily in the face of competition from imported products (imported in most cases from the United States). The facts confirm this point of view inasmuch as the international audio-visual market is largely constituted of programs, which have already made their profit in the United States and which European industries are unable to rival (in quantitative terms, at least), given the current state of their production resources. However, it seems to me that it is not enough to simply identify the problem. A more thorough analysis has to be developed from three distinct points of view.

The destructuring of the systems (dating from just after the Second World War) through which information and artistic products were previously distributed, is currently underway. In some Western countries, such as France and Italy, it is particularly well advanced. The same can be said of Eastern European systems, even if some authors regret the insufficient renewal of personnel and professional practices since 1989 (Jakubowicz 1994). Although a series of factors have acted together to create this situation (which is likely to become even more marked over the next few years), it seems that one factor has been particularly decisive, namely, the existing close relationship between information and cultural industries, and audio-visual media and communications networks. Given the latter's insatiable appetite for programs of all sorts (films, telefilms, information services, educational products, etc.), the above mentioned industries find themselves sucked into a process of industrialisation which contributes to the overturn of the previously-existing balance in the fields of information and culture, between industrial and non-industrial production, and between the market and the non-market sectors. In other words, we are entering a new phase of industrialisation of information and culture which is a key driving force. A factor, which is underpinned by the domination of commercial audio-visual media and the emergence of communication networks, whose activities are no longer limited to the transmission of conversations and data (Miège 1989).

Initially the most active agents within this process were the mass television networks, which profited from the inability of the press to attract or maintain advertising revenue. This orientation has, however, already reached its limits. On the one hand, advertisers aim increasingly at scientific measurement of the impact of advertising campaigns with a view to improving their targeting. On the other,

audiences are no longer satisfied by a simple quantitative increase in the number of programs on offer, or by the endless repetition of successful programs. This trend has been reinforced by the increasing tendency of consumers to exercise their own preferences within the developing information and cultural markets. Distribution networks (from cable stations through videotex services and coded satellite channels, to multimedia services already available on high capacity networks) now offer the possibility of ordering a whole range of services paid for by subscription or transaction by transaction (e.g., video on demand): a range of services which the distributors are constantly enlarging. The result is a kind of "meter economy" more familiarly associated with urban services such as water, gas, electricity, or parking. The advantage of such a system is obviously a better match between supply and demand (more accurate targeting, to put it in marketing terms). The disadvantage is that it reinforces selection by financial criteria and the individualisation of social practices. The paradox inherent in this system (which up to now principally concerned products published on material substrates, incorporating artistic or intellectual labour, i.e., newspapers, books, disks, or videocassettes) is that, being based on direct payment by the consumer, appears to guarantee a greater diversification and remuneration of information- and culture-related production. At the end of the day, however, this system contributes to reinforcing information and culture industries, with networks providing both the opportunity and means of carrying it out.

Finally, international organisations and Western decision-makers are greatly preoccupied with the convergence of three major categories of technical activity which have up until now been developing separately, namely, telecommunications, computing, and audio-visual media. Much could be said about this "grand scheme"(Lacroix, Miège and Tremblay 1994), whose origins go back to the 1970s and whose ideological and promotional aspects are of particular interest. Relaunched in 1993 by the vice president of the United States, Al Gore, in the form of "information highways," and taken up again in July 1994 by the EU which saw fit to add the term "information society" — thus rejuvenating the prospective sociology of Daniel Bell! — (Bell 1976), this "grand scheme" puts us back, once again, on the terrain of technicist communication utopias. It jumps the gun, to a large extent, regarding its real chances of coming about and underestimates the possibilities of co-operation among the three sectors. However, it does at least outline the contours of a possible policy and prefigures recompositions and new alliances among the major actors in a sector currently in the grip of telecommunications operators and the major constructors of telephone and telephone-related equipment. There is every reason to wonder about the role, within this grand scheme, of those responsible for producing content. There is a major risk that they will be little more than "servants" of the networks, producing standardised, repetitive and increasingly rapidly obsolescent products.

Technical "Mediatisation"

It is difficult not to be surprised by the scope of research and analyses concerning the role of technical systems in contemporary communication. To judge by the French situation — which may be slightly special in some respects — at least half of all research activities in the fields of information and communication have been more or

less directly concerned with technical questions ("new technologies," to use the all-too familiar term). As I am far from convinced that this situation is atypical, I would like to start by questioning the primacy given to this type of communication research.

This type of approach is not new. Nor is it specific to researchers. Philosophers, social thinkers, and specialists in the art of rhetoric have regularly considered communication from the point of view of the technical substrates and systems which carry them. This has been particularly true since the Renaissance and the formidable leap forward which accompanied the introduction of printing. Since then every technical innovation has been closely followed first of all (and perfectly naturally) by engineers (consider the number of studies given over to the telephone and radio), but also by those, whose function is was to conceptualise social and cultural changes. In this latter case, however, the specifically technical component of communication was nearly always neglected, to the point of being considered virtually as black box. Technical artefacts have, nevertheless, always been a subject of particular interest for writers in the communication field — a disproportionately large interest compared with equipment used in other sectors of industrial production, in the home, or for transport. Such an interest is the result of two factors: the inherently curious nature of the transmission of messages at a distance and their conservation for later distribution; and the reproducibility of information- and culture-related creations, which already called into question the relationship between the work of art and the medium as an information carrier. More recently, as communication techniques have continued to slowly emerge, critics have become increasingly numerous and have been inspired by various different philosophical currents (critical theory, Heideggerianism, variants of post-modernism). One author, in particular, I cannot avoid mentioning, given his continuing influence, notably in the United States and among ecologists, is Jacques Ellul who as early as 1954, published *La technique ou l'enjeu du siècle* (Ellul 1954) followed in 1988 by *Le Bluff technique* (Ellul 1988). It should be noted that such criticisms were not shared by the original thinkers in modern communication who were — almost without exception — inspired by a positive, optimistic vision of technology. This was particularly the case with Norbert Wiener and the cybernetics; and one might also wonder whether Marshall McLuhan's success was not due to the fact that as a man of culture and specialist in the field of literature he was able in his own sensual, intuitive way to rehabilitate the material aspects of communication.

Most recently, and in a particularly conflictual context, numerous research projects have been undertaken with an emphasis on users and the formation of uses. Curiously, their sources of theoretical inspiration show considerable diversity. Some refer to the literary theory of reception, others to the current of thought known as "uses and gratifications." Others still refer to the ideas of Michel Foucault, as applied in this field by Michel de Certeau (1980) to cultural studies, or to the sociology of social interactions. However, all react strongly against the established idea of technical determinism. Some studies go as far as to attribute an excessive efficacy to the behaviour of consumers/users in the formation of uses. In general, however, these studies have the merit of demonstrating the complexity of the processes by which uses are formed: processes, which become all the more complex in light of increasing competition among networks, machines, and terminals. The interest of these studies is

also to have placed the practices, which these artefacts have given rise to, within what one could call "use paths," and to have sought ways of linking these to existing social practices in the workplace and in domestic life. One of the dangers — when studying the introduction of new media or communications techniques — is to take the claims of manufacturers and service companies at face value and to act as if new techniques simply replaced old ones. Thus network-based office automation cannot be considered independently of the evolution of office work and the constraints of profitability which are imposed on it. In the same way, the video tape recorder rapidly became an extension of the domestic television set, a convenient means of managing the viewer's time and regulating the conflicts which arise within a family with a single television set capable of receiving an increasing number of channels. Likewise, the hyper-text approach to multimedia products is slow to be accepted, because we are used to reasoning and arguing within linear models in which information is most often presented in a narrative form. The fact that administrative information and train times are available in easily accessed data bases does not stop us from consulting traditional counter staff or printed timetables. Each of these examples merits a fuller development, but as outlined, they demonstrate how difficult it is to think simply and unequivocally about the insertion of new information and communication techniques within society.

The insistence on the role of consumers in the shaping of new tools and machines, and the desire to explain the failure of certain products, which seemed otherwise to constitute an undoubted progress, but which met with indifference or even resistance on the part of consumers, has led to a certain number of advances in the field. In particular, they have shown up the limits and inconsistencies of the diffusion theory as expounded by Everett Rogers (1963). However, they have shed little new light on several major questions.

Firstly, the role of the consumer is not unlimited. It is circumscribed within the early years in the life of new products. Manufacturers are, indeed, well-advised during an initial period to let users express their reactions to new products and even to listen to their propositions, if they want to cope effectively with the somewhat unpredictable nature of markets. However, such responsibility cannot be devolved to the user indefinitely. Beyond a certain moment, the coherence of the product has to be fixed so that it can be put into mass production with consequent economies of scale. In addition, this reflection on the time scales involved in innovation should be further extended. By reasoning over the (very) short term, we are in danger of missing some of the most significant developments. It seems self evident that communication techniques cannot be thought of in isolation from the history of societies over the long term or from the history of long-term movements in production, consumption, and the history of technology itself. In the late 19th century, the telephone benefited from a certain number of well-known technical changes. But its emergence was also linked to changes in industrial organisation and in the business world as well as to the emergence of the nuclear family among the middle classes. Today, digital techniques and the transport of massive quantities of binary data within high capacity networks fit increasingly with large industrial and commercial groups and their need to operate in real time within an international framework. It also corresponds to the individualisation, which is currently underway, of cultural practices and social

exchanges. These trends are obviously more pronounced in economically dominant countries or regions, but can also be observed within other more circumscribed zones and within more limited populations.

From the preceding remarks it is clear that we must look in detail at relations between developments in communication and more general movements within societies, paying particular attention to changes at both, micro- and macro-social levels, and to long and short-term time scales. It is clear that a majority of researchers are currently only interested in the short term and in interactions with everyday social activity. Such a reductionist approach needs to be critically reappraised.

Secondly, technical artefacts are rarely thought of for what they are, i.e., ensembles of more or less complex component parts. Their complexity is denied, and they are reduced to a simple function, easily accessible to their users. Naturally, manufacturers spare no efforts in putting across this idea. However, a computer screen remains a screen (i.e., a complex assemblage of components) whether or not it is rendered accessible by the use of a user-friendly and ergonomic keyboard. Likewise, the use of micro-computers to exchange data within a world-wide network is not on the point of becoming an everyday activity. To put it in another way, the technicity of communication equipment implies a learning process and the mastery of a certain number of cultural codes. Accessibility inevitably raises problems. The interposition of technical systems within social and professional exchanges certainly "facilitates" matters, but they cannot be considered as a passive element, whose function is simply to guarantee the transparency of the exchange. It follows from this that the reintroduction of the true technical dimension of artefacts enriches, but renders more complex the job of understanding communication. The question is all the more difficult to approach, given that the very notion of technique is by its nature in constant evolution. In the field which concerns us here, many machines are of little interest in themselves. Their interest-value stems from the functions made available by the programs they use or which can be used with them. Where does a technique begin and where does it end? There is no longer any simple answer.

Finally, and most importantly, arguments concerning the appropriation of communication techniques should not overlook the fact that they are designed for the particular purpose of facilitating the diffusion of information and encouraging exchanges. Rather curiously, many authors treat all techniques indifferently, without taking account of what distinguishes them from one another. Such an approach follows from an idea, which is, to put it mildly, debatable. Whether in the field of information or communication, the nature of the means of communication (= the medium) is far from being without any influence on the transmitted (and received) message or on the relationship which it allows. On the contrary, the aim should be to analyse as precisely as possible the changes brought about by the regular (though not yet widespread) replacement of face to face relationships or telephone or postal exchanges by new communication techniques. Obviously, it is impossible to provide a closely-reasoned reply to such a global question, but the starting point has to be that the "mediatisation" of the structures of social and cultural mediation is underway, even if we cannot yet say much about the extent or exact nature of the mediation in one or another sector of social life, or its ultimate impact. Leaving aside the apocalyptic

and polemical claims of terrible consequences which are about to befall us, and the recurrent prophecies guaranteeing a "switched on" future for everyone, analysis of technical change has all too rarely been linked to that of social and cultural factors. There is a clear and urgent need, as well as an opportunity, for communication studies to take a stand with respect to prevailing "common sense."

The Bringing Together of Information (or Culture) and Communication

My intention is not to enter into a conceptual debate about the frontiers between information (or culture) and communications. Even less, to list the multiple semantic uses (variable from one language to another) of the terms involved and the confusion which can result. Rather, I would like simply to point out an increasingly important trend, as so-called information and communication technologies spread and as various strategies and policies are put into effect in the communication field. This trend consists in uniting previously carefully separated practices and actions.

The existence of this trend is not, however, universally accepted. Numerous authors attempt not only to maintain the separation (a position which can be justified on theoretical grounds) but, even more important, to attribute one of the concepts (communication) with all the wrongs and misuses which can be observed in the others (information or culture). This attribution can be clearly seen in the political sphere, where the excesses of political marketing are seen as being one of the causes of electoral apathy, loss of confidence in the democratic debate, and even of corruption among politicians. In the work sphere employers' communication activities are sometimes considered as being superfluous and expensive. And within the media themselves, communication networks are held responsible for misrepresenting information by rendering it spectacular, and the weakness of the press is attributed to pressure from communications specialists who, it has to be admitted, often have superior resources at their disposal. Manipulation of information, as exposed for example after the Gulf War in 1991, or resulting from competition between television channels or newspapers, which no longer takes time to check sources, is also put down to communication (in general). Similar observations have been made about culture, though they have nothing in common with the criticisms levelled at the industrialisation of artistic production. Communication is reproached for not limiting itself to the role of a technical vehicle or transmitter. To this should also be added the point of view defended by certain intellectuals, for whom information (or culture) should be regularly criticised, or at least kept at a suitable distance, because it uses a large number of images open to differing interpretations and so is less meaningful than written text. Communication, on the other hand, is essentially consensual and reassuring.

Put this way, with such diametrically opposed positions, the problem becomes insoluble, since it opposes a past in which information is supposed to have been, if not always of good quality, as least widely available, and a present or a near future in which communication is the source of all the inconsistencies and distortions of information. It should be made clear that information and communication are always related in one way or another. Information is not a stock, which is constantly available

into which one dips when necessary: rather it is produced with a view to being distributed using a given distribution system in the direction of a given target audience. Likewise, it would be absurd to claim that the means of transmission of information can have no effect on meaning as it is produced or received. During the Renaissance, for example, the impact of printing on the written word incontestably encouraged and enlarged creativity.

If we accept the existence of what might be called structural relationships between these two notions, we can no longer oppose them quite as if they were simply two contradictory terms. We can, however, highlight certain new conditions which effectively introduce changes in the way in which information and culture function. In particular:

- The increase in the speed at which source-information circulates (pushing media towards an increasing reliance on scoops) and professional information. This results in a clear increase in the quantity of information on offer but is characterised by rapid obsolescence and a certain difficulty in choosing between the ephemeral and the meaningful.
- The loss, or weakening, of a certain number of benchmarks and professional standards in journalism which then has to develop a new stance with respect to the increase in the volume of information produced to outwit the media themselves (often with greater resources). In this case, the point is to know whether the media will know how to insist on the quality of information (the need to investigate, check sources, or clear distinctions between genres, such as journalism and information campaigns carried out by large firms and administrations), rather than simply complaining about the loss of their "monopoly."
- The diversification not only of the types of media used to distribute messages, but also of forms (written text, images, sound, data) and specific modes of expression (**écritures**) which are undergoing a profound renewal. There is no point in complaining (should we be surprised that complaints are so frequent in Europe?) or behaving as if there had been a "golden age" of the printed word at some time in the past. This evolution profoundly modifies our criteria and judgements. Thus, though it is clear that Western media played a part in the downfall of East-European communist regimes from 1989 on, this was not principally the result of the actions of clandestine media. It was rather the result of the insistent action (despite reception problems) of Western television channels with their mixture of information and entertainment: a model which contributed largely to undermining the propaganda-education model prevalent in the East.
- Finally, the increasing individualisation of the reception of programs, due as much to an increase in supply and the multiplication of and means of reception as to changes taking place in social interactions within modern societies. It seems appropriate to ask whether such "communicational opulence" does not lead to an increasingly inwardly-looking self-reliance and a progressive abandonment of public debate. It will be recalled that Jürgen Habermas (1990) initially favoured such an interpretation before, more recently, qualifying his position. There is, without doubt, an urgent need to adapt his theory of the public sphere (a public sphere, which now bears little resemblance to the discursive reasoning of the Enlightenment).

Conclusions

I hope that in the course of this rather long detour — which has allowed me to highlight three types of social logic currently operating in the field of communication — I have managed to show to what extent (now more than ever?) the changes brought about by the development of the media and communication networks have become increasingly diversified and difficult to analyse. It is for this reason that I do not believe that we can give a simple answer to that regularly-asked and worrying question: what are the effects of the increasing power of the media? Not only because the same specific types of logic which I have discussed run throughout the question itself, but also because communication is part and parcel of the societal changes which it helps to accelerate and facilitate.

On this point, one might indeed consider, as do various authors, including Armand Mattelart (1993), that communication forms part of the new managerial conception which aims simultaneously at a strategy of globalisation and localisation (the "network-enterprise" has to be both global and local). Similarly, it has to be admitted that communication facilitates the transnationalisation of market exchanges (and the completion of the ascendancy of capitalism over the world economic order) as well as the current rationalisation of the productive system with its destructive effects on the planet and its reinforcement of the exploitation and exclusion of the individual.

Nevertheless, the effects of communications remain profoundly ambivalent in virtually all spheres of activity. Capable of crossing national frontiers, they can also produce a return to national identity (it is clear that all forms of fundamentalism and nationalism will take an increasing interest in communication). These same effects can considerably broaden the supply of programs and techniques while at the same time encouraging segregation by reinforcing the mercantile aspects of information and culture. While strengthening the economic and cultural power of large communications groups, they can also leave room for users/consumers "actions." And though they are an integral part of post-Taylorist rationalisation of the productive system, they encourage, and even demand a certain participation on the part of workers and employees.

In other words, despite its promises of consensus, communication continues to serve us while dominating and dividing us.

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