

# Information, communication and culture under local management: the municipality experience in a socially vulnerable neighborhood of Montevideo

Paulina Szafran

*Received:*  
July 29, 2014.

*Accepted:*  
February 24, 2015.

## ABSTRACT

The paper describes an experience in a neighborhood known for its social vulnerability in the City of Montevideo, Uruguay. The recent establishment of municipalities as a third level of government prompted this research into how information, communication and culture operate under the local management of Municipality F, and how these activities are viewed by local actors. Within this scenario, the role of the public library is described, stressing the specifics of services delivered locally. The research methodology entailed interviews with persons connected to municipal management of the area under study and analysis of documentation produced and disseminated by that body.

\* Universidad de la República (UdelaR-Uruguay), Montevideo, Uruguay.  
paulina.szafran@fic.edu.uy

Keywords: Municipal Management, Local Policies; Public Libraries; Information, Communication and Culture

## RESUMEN

Información, comunicación y cultura en la gestión local: la experiencia municipal en un territorio de vulnerabilidad de la ciudad de Montevideo

*Paulina Szafran*

El artículo describe una experiencia desarrollada en un territorio de la ciudad de Montevideo, Uruguay, caracterizado por su vulnerabilidad social. A partir de la reciente conformación en el país de los municipios como un tercer nivel de gobierno, indaga cómo funcionan en la gestión local del Municipio F la información, comunicación y cultura y de qué modo son concebidas por los actores municipales. Aborda en este contexto la percepción sobre la biblioteca pública en tanto servicio local. La metodología se sustentó en entrevistas a personas vinculadas a la gestión municipal de la zona de referencia y en el análisis de la documentación generada y difundida por dicho órgano.

Palabras clave: Gestión Municipal; Políticas Locales; Bibliotecas Públicas; Información, Comunicación y Cultura.

## UNIVERSITY RESEARCH IN LIBRARY SCIENCE ORIENTED TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

From the diverse fields of actions available to the library science researcher working in any given area, approaches that examine daily reality, accompanying historical processes that contribute to disciplinary development with a social vision while helping improve the quality of life of citizens take on special significance.

Despite the fact that “Latin American library science literature published across the twentieth century shows the notorious relationship between

‘public libraries and vulnerable communities,’ this was never one of the main focuses of theoretical and empirical research, despite these social groups being visible to practically all of society.”<sup>1</sup> It is possible to have valuable antecedents from the context of the university, linking library science teaching in Uruguay, regarding the study and action in the field, including development of experiences in information services that have not been promoted by natural agents in charge, such as local and national governments.

This conception is enriched from the process that allows the recent creation of the Faculty of Information and Communication (FIC) of the Universidad de la República, a new university center where information and communication sciences converge and where the Research Group in Information and Communication for Social Integration and Inclusion (GIISUR) is constituted.<sup>2</sup> This group is oriented toward consolidating a multi-interdisciplinary line of research, taking as its guiding axis that information and communications are devoted to vulnerable sectors, which emphasizes research based on the reality that needs to be transformed, conceived as a supply for promoting information policies directed at citizens. Likewise, it seeks feedback from the technical body of the domains involved, generating interdisciplinary knowledge in theory of information and communication. Considering the previous development in the Zonal 9 territory of the City of Montevideo<sup>3</sup> on the part of the Department of Information and Society of the ex EUBCA (Escuela Universitaria de Bibliotecología y Ciencias Afines), currently called the Instituto de Información, targeting adolescents and young people of a vulnerable context, GIISUR performed a study during the period of 2010-2012, in the same zone, referring to the process of information-communication of the public health policies centered on adolescents.

This approach was framed by recent public policies that are being implemented in Uruguay, especially the National Integrated Health System and those issuing from the AGESIC (Agencia de Gobierno Electrónico y Sociedad de la Información) and Digital Agenda. The current climate of the country is ripe for the university to promote the generation of knowledge, supported by the medium, inducing feedback with the parties responsible for setting and executing policies. From this standpoint, it is important to

- 1 Felipe Meneses Tello, “Bibliotecas y sociedad: el paradigma social de la biblioteca pública”, 167.
- 2 The research group in charge the project “Las estrategias de información y la comunicación centradas en los jóvenes y adolescentes en el ámbito de la salud: análisis y propuestas (RAP-ASSE, Zona 9 de Montevideo)” Performed from 2010 to 2012, coordinated by professors Martha Sabelli, Jorge Rasner and Raúl Ruggia; referent international professor Juan José Calva González.
- 3 Martha Sabelli y Verónica Rodríguez Lopater, La información y las jóvenes en contextos desfavorables: construyendo puentes para la inclusión social desde la investigación.

redouble research efforts in the discipline that promote professionalization in the appropriation of the possibilities the new policies offer to the inhabitants.

Starting from this configuration, a contextualized contribution is presented within the broad and varied field of the relationship between information and citizen, which is based on the idea that citizens “are also a deciders; they take decisions with regard to multiple problems that they must face in their jobs, within the community and with regard to family”;<sup>4</sup> and that, in accord with the author’s idea, it is conceived as a member of groups, in this case located in local spheres and not as an isolated individual; therefore, a member of a community of practice in the access and use of information. From the standpoint of Library Science, this approach to the communitarian niches has had a transcendental value in the construction of object of study.

Currently, the incorporation of the concept of community engagement (CE) to the development and evaluation of the programs erected to contribute a perspective aimed at the function of the library science professional in social inclusion, promotion of democracy and the contribution to social/human/cultural capital.<sup>5</sup> In this way a line of research aimed at analyzing library science and its role with respect to CE, addressing the dissemination of communitarian information and the use of its space to take decisions.

During 2013, an experience of GIISUR unfolded that allows for the broadening of the actors with which it had worked in the Zonal 9 territory of the City of Montevideo, currently municipality F; youths and adolescents in vulnerable circumstances and mediators of local services, including librarians.<sup>6</sup> Faced with possibility of deepening the inquiry in the aforementioned territory, they opted to add a vision of the politicians and technicians linked to municipal management.

To speak of citizens and information in the local context necessarily entails the correspondence of the organization that historically focuses on these referents, the public library. Near the end of the paper, the political dimension of public library is reaffirmed,<sup>7</sup> as is its decisive role in the training of the citizen,<sup>8</sup> addressing the role of information and knowledge as an

4 Martha Sabelli, *La información y el ciudadano en el entorno de la Sociedad de la Información: percepción de los actores políticos y sociales en el Uruguay*, 58.

5 Hui-Yun Sung, Mark Hepworth y Gillian Ragsdell, “Investigating essential elements of community engagement in public libraries: an exploratory qualitative study”.

6 Martha Sabelli y Jorge Rasner, Informe final. Las estrategias de información y comunicación centradas en Los jóvenes y adolescentes en el ámbito de la salud: análisis y propuestas (RAP-ASSE, Zona 9 de Montevideo); Martha Sabelli, “Investigaciones sobre el comportamiento informativo de adolescentes y jóvenes en situación vulnerable: hacia una información inclusiva en Uruguay”.

7 Orlanda Jaramillo, “La biblioteca pública, un lugar para la formación ciudadana: referentes metodológicos para el proceso de investigación”.

8 Orlanda Jaramillo, *Biblioteca pública, ciudadanía y educación social*.

instrument of the exercise of citizenship,<sup>9</sup> while conceptualizing information as an object of study that facilitates an integral, interdisciplinary perspective.<sup>10</sup> It also requires contextualization of the participating actors as members of the process of information transfer. Let us remember the

“human beings are by nature information users, because they both generate information and use it, and as users of information they belong to diverse social sectors. As such one may arrive at a typology of the same in accord with the social sector to which they belong.”<sup>11</sup>

In this sense, it is interesting to quote Jaramillo insofar

as he posits the public library from the dimension of the citizen implies adopting a definition that goes beyond the simple conception of facilitating access to information and knowledge, and that also posits and boosts actions and links that make training of the subject, the citizen, possible with the capacities of demanding and exercising their rights, but also in order to fulfill their duties that arise from these in the pretension of training the citizen, which is not only a consumer of information but also producer, transmitter and communicator of information and knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

This aspect becomes transcendent when examining the Uruguayan context insofar as it has a new situation in terms of decentralization promoted under Law 18.567 “Political decentralization and citizen participation” in February 2010, which created the municipalities as the third level of government, granting a special emphasis to the local scene, a relevant platform for the analysis of the library services to the citizens.

### *Decentralization and the “local” as a scenario of action of public libraries.*

The establishment of municipalities in Uruguay accompanies a tendency observed in other countries in Latin America that has local politics depend less on national authority. The institutional authority establishes the exis-

9 Orlanda Jaramillo, “La formación ciudadana, dinamizadora de procesos de transformación social desde la biblioteca pública”.

10 Sabelli, “Investigaciones...”.

11 Juan José Calva González, “Información y adolescencia: búsqueda de información por los adolescentes”, 73.

12 Orlanda Jaramillo, Biblioteca pública..., 127.

tence of the municipalities with authorities elected by the citizens and the instrumentation of actions that lead to local development, for example, participative budget.

Since the arrival of the leftist party, Frente Amplio (Broad Front), the government of the department of Montevideo in the year 1990 begins to implement a decentralization process that divided the capital of Uruguay into 18 districts. Each of these districts has a Communal Center Zone for administrative matters; a local junta comprised of the political administration and the neighborhood board that brings together neighbors and social organizations. This reorganization does not imply the constitution of a third level of government, a fact that materializes after the aforementioned law that created the municipalities. In these, the heretofore unknown figures in the country stand out: the mayor and the municipal council, which constitute local governments elected by the citizens.

To speak of the municipalities, places us in a new context of decentralization, understood (and differentiated from de-concentration) as “the transfer of functions, attributions, responsibilities and resources from the central organ of the State to a lesser organ.”<sup>13</sup> According to Veneziano it is “an instrument to shift demands from central state organ to the periphery.”<sup>14</sup> This author also presents diverse contradictory angles that entail the linking of “the living forces of the market” (with a redactor role of the State) to the “popular sectors” as well as the necessary articulation between poles that are “false dichotomies”: State/Society; global/local; public/private.

The context proposed for the research, though focused on an specific territory, allows for the introduction of reflections on the role of the public library, proving the existence, like in other realities,

of “the very insufficient integration of the public library in state and governmental public policy; policies that effectively articulate the plans, programs, projects and other actions directed at developing the public library and insert it into the political life of people.”<sup>15</sup>

Among the various types of decentralization,<sup>16</sup> it is interesting describe the territorial character (entailing functional and political decentralization),

13 Antonio Cardarello, “Muchas dudas, algunas certezas y escaso entusiasmo. Las elecciones municipales 2010 en Uruguay”, 65.

14 Alicia Veneziano, *Sustentabilidad política, reforma de Estado y participación ciudadana en la Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo*, 2.

15 Orlanda Jaramillo, Didier Álvarez Zapata y Daniel Moncada P., “Políticas públicas para bibliotecas públicas: una propuesta de soluciones locales a problemas globales”, 16.

16 Arocena citado por Cardarello, “Muchas dudas...”.

which brings a transfer of duties of the first levels of management, the allocation of resources and the involvement of the civil society. It is a space that is riper for participation of citizens, not only from the electoral standpoint, but also through individual and group participation in politics in the sense of contribution to the development of public policies. In this same line, Veneziano contributes a conceptualization of the municipality “as a network linking the State, in its political territorial sense; the government, in the peripheral instance; and the political and socio-economic actors of the local society.”<sup>17</sup> This idea of the municipalities as networks is shared by other authors and it serves to facilitate the understanding of the diversity of the protagonists and links that act at the local level, and aspect that is particularly important to examine with regard to the public library in terms of social and cultural service. In this framework, the outlook granted to the public library, its “essential ethos,” become especially relevant in terms of the “social utility of the public library,”<sup>18</sup> as this relates to three substantial relationships: Library-community; library-town; library-society. Likewise, the location of the library as a space of political socialization<sup>19</sup> allows for an understanding of the role granted with regard to political identity, an instrument of the presence of the citizen in the public sphere.

Regarding recent practice (it must be noted that the first term, starting in July 2010, of the municipal administrations has not yet concluded) in Montevideo, the public libraries were still administrative dependencies of the departmental government, a second level bureaucracy. This fact, has not meant that the public libraries are relieved of the need to work jointly with the local municipality, therein finding diverse experiences for interrelating in diverse areas of the city.

#### METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY

The framework described orients research questions applied to the municipality F of Montevideo. Taking the emphasis on information and communication as an axis, this research attempts to examine the whether the local contexts favor the articulation of policies in diverse areas and how local

17 Alicia Veneziano, *Sustentabilidad política...*, 2.

18 Felipe Meneses Tello, “Bibliotecas y sociedad...”, 164.

19 Yicel Nayrobis Giraldo Giraldo, Gloria Elena Román Bentancur y Ruth Elena Quiroz Posada, “La biblioteca pública como ambiente educativo para el encuentro ciudadano: un estudio de la Comuna I de Medellín”.

policies interact with departmental and national policies, as well as whether it is possible to identify public library policy within the municipality.

The methodology applied employs the benchmarks developed by GISUR in the original project. This point of the inquiry entailed interviews with relevant persons in the municipal administration of Municipality F and the analysis of documentation and information disseminated by this organ.

Considering the areas of competence in municipal work and attending to the aims of the study, the interviews were directed at figures linked to social, cultural and communication tasks. Likewise, a special accent was granted to the political vision entailed in local work, with the interview of the mayor being an important element in the analysis.

On the basis of the aforementioned areas, seven interviews were conducted, breaking down as follows: two interviews with political actors; one with an actor in the cultural sphere; three with actors in the social sphere, and one with a person working in communication. The interview employed open question, allowing for extended dialogues.

Despite using an identical script in all of the interviews, at the time applied it was adapted to the job profile of the person interviewed. The thirty-four questions were organized in six blocks as follows: identification of interviewee; data referring to the workplace; the description of Municipality F; interviewee's description of job functions and activities of Municipality F; university activity in the zone; and interviewee's appreciation of the local administrations. In the latter point includes an inquiry into the interviewee's perception of the public library policies and other policies associated with information and cultural matters. The interview delved into those answers addressing information and communication in the Municipality and with regard to the citizen.

The documental analysis examined the municipal communication media, with an emphasis on the weekly news bulletin which gathers all of the information linked to the municipality. This bulletin offers subscriptions and is delivered via email, which contains news headlines linked to the Municipality F website. The newsletter includes a section with news from other municipality. The subscription to the news bulletins allows one to see the amount of activities promoted by the local organ. In the period of September 2013-February 2014 this research examines 26 news bulletins.

#### THE COMPLEX WEB OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The experience deepened the knowledge of the zone characterized as extensive, diverse and with many vulnerabilities. The data gathered shows an

infantilized population, high incidence of poverty and lack of services. With this macro identification it is possible to understand the perspectives presented by the diverse sectors of the municipal administration and how beyond the benchmarks each specific region claims its particularities and need to strengthen strategies to get closer to neighbors.

In light of the description above, it is important to understand the selection criteria for the topics addressed. The Municipal Plan for the Development of the Municipality<sup>20</sup> expresses the purposes, objectives, strategies and actions to be implemented. It cites four lines of action aimed at the great themes: infrastructure, environment, social integration and economic production. Following the specificities of this type of agency, this documents shows the multiplicity of the axes of action, covering diverse items of the territory. The first proposals in the 2011 annual operational planning guide include roads. For the aims of this research purposes, we focus on the following three operations carried out by the head of Communications: “To develop information socialization strategies in the Municipality”; and “To generate and strengthen communication channels”; Create and implement a municipal communications area.” Even though the Communications area proposes for itself the task of “Promoting the development of cultural enterprises and citizens’ centers,” the description of activities cites many services without any mention of public libraries. It is worth noting that in the Municipal Development Plan names many participating organizations linked to the territory, without making any mention of libraries. This suggests that the plan was developed without taking libraries into account in anyway whatsoever.

Doubtless we live in a time in which localness is promoted from diverse areas, increasing the competencies and duties of local governments, often without providing the instruments local governments will need to fulfill their functions and, as such, limiting their possibilities despite the expectation they generate. According to De Barbieri,<sup>21</sup> localness assume there is a territory with a sense of shares identity and meanings among the inhabitants. As such the territory allows for the coexistence of multiple rationales and entails a permanent effort of negotiations among the diverse logics of action. This requires participants in the local government to take on a role beyond simple administrators and the citizenry to transcend its habitual attitude of simply demanding services.

20 Municipio F, Plan Municipal de Desarrollo.

21 María de Barbieri, Ioanna Grotiuz, Alejandra Marzuca and Graciela Viera, Estrategias de descentralización en Uruguay: sobre los gobiernos locales y la importancia de la dimensión política, de gestión y socio-política para la gobernanza territorial.

This panorama is reflected in the daily practices of the territory. The members of the municipality under study assert that the creation of the municipality is an important step, because before this event they worked only as administrators of the policies handed down from higher levels of government. In this new situation, the local administration makes decisions and enjoys larger, but insufficient, budgets. Likewise, this recent scenario has provoked some tension, because of the rapid implementation of the flaming system and because of the lack of preparation of the main political actors charged with implementing the tools of administration. One of the interviewees pointed to the difficulty of not being able to achieve “a nearby government” insofar as it is assumed that the new municipal model would be closer to the people than the earlier model; that is, despite recognizing greater contact with the population, it is not enough.

With regard to a topic that directly affects the management of public libraries, both in terms of their administrative dependency and their potential role in local information services, this study examines the articulation of national, departmental and local policies in the territory under study. On this point, there is agreement about the need for more integration, a fact illustrated by numerous examples of programs promoted from the departmental level that do not address what the local population has point to, about which one respondent said: “that tension between decentralization and centralization is palpable.” Another affirmation reveals the fragmentations that an identical space can provoke: “you have three or four programs running at the same time, totally uncoordinated, it is a duplication of efforts and waste of money.” Moreover, with regard to a recent experience, one can see that the relationship with the executive branch exists through the intendancies, and not yet through the municipal governments. We see, then, an aspect reframed in the topic under examination: the incidence of the personal features of those involved, in this opportunity with reference to the links of the mayor with the intendant.

With respect to Municipality F, the team assumes as an axis for its internal work the complementarity and articulation of the areas of action, since the concrete action in the territory is ongoing entails the coexistence of diverse programs without adequate coordination.

Taking an inside look at the dynamics of the practice in the territory, we take a description made by the cultural sector. The cultural administrator works with the neighborhood commissions and the cultural centers under a mixed management format that is not systematically set because there are dissimilar models. In conjunction with the neighborhood commissions, it works to strengthen these places, something which demands a lot of work.

“The success of the efforts depends more on the neighborhood commissions, on the willingness, on the participation, on the militancy of neighbors than on the efforts of the State. They are the agents of action, they open, close, clean up, etc.” At the same time, the interviewee describes other complexities of contact with citizens: “After meeting with neighbors, they say what the rest of the neighbors feels, here to the neighbors, culture is not important.” The representativeness is a complex topic. Sometimes there are opinions that are not held collectively, but are nonetheless proffered by those who lead the commissions.

### THE EXPERIENCE WITH REGARD TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Despite the vastness of the territory under study, library services are quite scarce and this can explain why they are not even considered in the Municipal Plan described. There are three public libraries in the zone, two managed by the department of the Intendancy of Montevideo (la Biblioteca Pública Francisco Espínola and la Biblioteca Pública Francisco Schinca, which also belong to another municipality) and one that is a dependency of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Biblioteca José Batlle y Ordoñez). There are also several popular libraries, but as is commonly the case in Uruguay it is impossible to determine just how many operate within the precinct.

By linking the municipal topic with information policy, interviewees were queried about the role of public libraries as local information centers and the situation in the zone. The actors in Municipality F perceive the libraries and posit diverse functional modalities stressing the ongoing difficulties of limited hours of operations offered in these libraries. In one specific neighborhood, the interviewees from the social area said that they have discussed with neighbors the role of the library, because these neighbors had said that it is significant the library be invited to participate: “It is a benchmark space and it must be.” In this specific case, the public library in the zone had over the course of several years developed a work experience with the community, especially with regard to the management with neighborhood organizations. This was something promoted by the professional in charge of the library, and an experience that remains in the memory of its members.

The interviewees singled out the Biblioteca Francisco Schinca, which thanks to its new head<sup>22</sup> has been especially active in the neighborhood,

22 Since December 2012 the library is led by a professional hired by means of a job notice posted by the Intendancy of Montevideo targeting Library Science degree holders.

incorporating other elements such as recreation and education. Once again we see that the attitude of the head librarian is key to the library's function, to which we can add professional commitment. Referring to the importance granted in Latin America to local governance, Revesz claims in this context an attitude in agreement with the librarian: "More than at any other time, a lot of what is possible and the results expected depends on the capacity of the librarian to be more than another functionary, technician between four walls or administrator of resources, but also to be an advocate and an ambassador of their institution before the world."<sup>23</sup>

The worker linked to cultural management in the territory understands that it is feasible to recognize library policies not only from the standpoint of finding materials or the renewal of the library, and opining that the book can no longer be the basis of its mission: "we must seek new methods [...] we must generate activities such as those developed by Schinca, which have to do with the book, which have to do with reading but that not is going to look for a book, that is what is going to make the library function, that has enormous potential." The interviewee describes a panorama more critical with regard to popular libraries, in light of the presence of users and the need to modify the forms of administration: "it has to do with the management and with handing over management of the public library to the neighborhood junta."

On the basis of the vision of one of the political actors, the lack of resources is posited as a limiter on development of libraries in the zone, which has repercussions on a feature of the territory: the lack of space. An anecdote can serve to illustrate this idea: A child in a neighborhood of the zone announced his intention on Facebook to start up a library in the neighborhood. In this way, he was able to collect quite a large number of books, but his mother called the municipality because she had no place to keep so many books in her house. The municipality came by and picked up the books but was only able to take them to another house. Faced with the lack of locales, they endeavored to acquire a library bus and they were successful, but no one was hired to work on the bus and no diligences were made to hire anyone. The end product is a bus filled with books but because of lack of budget without the personnel needed to actually provide services.

Regarding the matter of citizen access to information, the mayor himself stated that perhaps there are conditions to favor it that they have not known how to develop. In the course of the interview he comments that it might be

23 Bruno Revesz, "Políticas de información, bibliotecas públicas y desarrollo local y regional", 58.

possible to incorporate computers in the municipality for the neighbors to use. The fact allows one to assume that the recognition of the value granted to information for the citizen is not understood a priori linked to the public library, but moreover, there is an open position to being able to materialize actions that do not imply an important deployment of resources, a scenario in which is it crucial to have the initiative of the professional librarian. Reiterating Jaramillo's<sup>24</sup> line of thought, there is no doubt participation as a citizen practice requires certain condition of the both the citizen and the library.

From the standpoint analyzed it is interesting to posit the challenge posed to public library by this new institutional condition, highlighting its role with regard to political education, presented by Ríos Ortega: "The elections of representatives, and in general participation in public life built around the State and a system of government, implies appropriation of public knowledge and information. Therefore, it is essential to underline that the citizenry also requires political education."<sup>25</sup> However, it is hard to discern this admission in this outlook of reality insofar as, despite the potentialities of public libraries, the scant incidence of library services for the citizens of Zona 9 has already been established.<sup>26</sup> This especially true for adolescents and youth people.<sup>27</sup>

#### COMMUNICATION APPLIED TO MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

The communications axis is revealed exhaustively in the interviews, in the understanding that this is a transversal issue that cuts across diverse areas of work. The competence of the sector is vast, with a greater emphasis on the use of TIC. The area of communication generates contents of the institutional webpage and its social networks (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), and it edits and sends the weekly news bulletin via email (to subscribers). It also publishes a free, online journal released on average five times each year and distributed by the members. Other points are centered on participation in community radio programming in the zone and making posters which they post for the public in Municipal F and the Zonal Communal

24 Orlanda Jaramillo, "La formación ciudadana...".

25 Jaime Ríos Ortega, "El acceso abierto a la información y la formación ciudadana", 142.

26 Paulina Szafran Maiche, "Recursos de información para la ciudadanía: documentos, servicios de información y comunicación".

27 Jimena Núñez Ansuas, "Servicios de información en la Zona 9 y las políticas de información en salud destinadas al público joven".

Center.<sup>28</sup> It also develops a joint process involving university personnel and the *Bien de cerca* (Quite close) radio show of the Communication Institute of the FIC, a municipal promotion program. No less important is the attention to varied requests that they receive, insofar as the possibilities, often without having the resources needed to resolve them; a common example is the request for poster to advertise diverse actions.

Most of the instrument reviewed were analyzed from the standpoint of the purpose of the study, especially the news bulletin. This examination lines up with the findings of the interviews. News items on the activities of the Municipality F are presented as these relate to local politics, including reports on traffic, roads, lighting and pruning. Moreover, the bulletin disseminates diverse information on local cultural groups, which places cultural matters as the subject of much promotion.

Addressing the thematic areas, some are identified with defined themes, for example, social, culture; others, as it is desirable in the execution of tasks, involve various themes, so it is not possible to group them in a determined category. One type is of singular interest because of the context of application, are the activities performed in the Biblioteca Francisco Schinca, as the program called the *La Infancia es Capital* (Childhood is capital).

The analysis confirms the assertions made in the interviews regarding the coverage of activities. Some cases only report on realization, while other disseminate it after carrying them out by interviewing participants, comments, etc. Some news is announced once, while others news is repeated for several weeks. This fact obeys the importance of the matter, such as the election of neighborhood councils and information on the participative budget that are aspects that they do to the local government. The time of year in which it is disseminated also exerts an influence; for example, in the month of January news is often repeated, no doubt because of the scant number of activities scheduled in the month.

The period of coverage reveals that the type of information disseminated. In this way, during the month of December a lot of news is disseminated regarding closings and workshop shows held in the zone, while in the month of February the carnival is held and therefore information on parades in districts of the zone are repeatedly announced.

Because it is a point of particular interest, the Biblioteca Francisco Espínola is not mentioned even once in the bulletins examined, while the Biblioteca José Batlle y Ordoñez is cited only once and the Biblioteca Francisco

28 During the development of the project “Hacia la construcción de Servicios de Información a la Comunidad: estudio del acceso y uso de información por las mujeres de contextos desfavorables (Zona 9 de Montevideo)”, the posters had already been identified by the service mediators of the zone as an important medium for disseminating information to citizens.

Schinca (which shares territory with another municipality) is mentioned repeatedly, confirming the diversity of actions performed by this institution, a fact highlighted by the interviewees in every sphere. Communication is not exempt from doubts that are generated in the interviewees regarding municipal functions associated with approaching the neighbor, specifically referring to means employed and the dissemination media. In diverse section the information largely disseminated electronically is questioned, which means that it is received by persons with access, but not always in the places they wish. As such, it is a modality that needs to be improved. From the cultural area, its value in terms of how communication activities can determine the success or failure of the same is stressed. Besides these cited media, megaphones have also been used to announce cultural events.

The information-communication is presented in another example associated with municipal management, stressing the need to inform the populace about the third level of government, since the population's lack of knowledge about the new institution is faced every day, and it is something that is not entirely embraced by the work teams of functionaries, they understand that they are learning about it in the course of daily work.

## CONCLUSIONS

The first approximation allows us to assert that the nascent context offered on the basis of the implementation of the municipalities as a third level of government, in view of the features of the territory, promises to favor greater degree of contact with the population of the zone, promoting their participation and granting more autonomy to local government. However, despite most interviewees view that the situation has improved, they have the feeling that more can be done. On one hand, as it occurs in all initial experiences, there are elements that are known about the course of events and that await refinement in the next administrative term. Likewise, there are situations that worry the benchmarks associated with the possibility of materializing in the events which embody the instrumentation of the municipalities. In this sense, having more resources becomes one of the main needs in order to correct and broaden many actions. This aspect, previously mentioned as relevant for decentralization, does not always correspond with what happens in practice and with the emphasis granted to current local management.

It is worth reiterating the conviction that it is not only an economic matter; it is also linked to two items that are posited repeatedly: the scant

knowledge that exists regarding the implications of municipal government and the conviction that it is the characteristics of the leaders of initiatives and organization located in the territory that determine many of the particularities of the services and action performed therein.

Despite these problems associated with duplication of programs and resources, it is understood that the local context can serve as an articulator supporting the application of diverse policies, attending to the diverse matters involved and the levels of the organs in charge. The participating actors trust that the processes of implementation of the municipalities, especially the knowledge of what they imply, will be able to regulate these aspects and improve, even though it is not seen as an easy task.

Taking the example of the public libraries of Montevideo, it is possible to prove that the institutional structure itself moves in this direction, the erection of the municipalities has not altered their dependence on the Intendancy of Montevideo. As such, the link with local governments (in some cases such as the aforementioned Biblioteca Schinca, which serves territories belonging to more than one municipality) obeys other conditions, often limited by good or bad relationships between persons.

On the basis of the methodology developed, we did not find elements suggesting identifying library policies in the territory. However, it is interesting to stress that the interviewees recognize the importance of libraries and their particular range of local services, while granting them a role that goes beyond their traditional functions and conceiving them as social and cultural spaces that benefit the territory, even as the person heading up the same are largely responsible for the features of the services provided regard less of any policies that might be designed. At the same time, this is a point that ratifies the lack of resources, which is to say the lack of personnel, which entails the greatest criticisms, the reduced hours of operation and all of the consequences entailed by this. The question expressed by many interviewees of whether the idea of the library as a local service has anything to do with recent hiring of a professional librarian for the library in the zone, particularly whether it is considered that the cited plan was drafted prior to this change in the library. This situation proves the expression of Meneses Tello: "what is done through the public library services and how it is done, in the web of diverse social groups, attains a high degree of importance."<sup>29</sup>

Information and communication as transcendent supplies in coming in closer contact with the population, valuable instruments for achieving effective participation that makes the essence of local administration and is con-

ceived as something difficult to materialize. Even though said recognition is not directly linked to a library. The reiterated need for dissemination of the local government and the importance of the municipalities is not visualized with the presence of the library, i.e., there is no contrary position to this; therefore, any proposal in this sense would be appreciated. From this framework and in line with Ríos Ortega, it would be possible to delve into the role, not because it is the library's job to generate information derived from administration of the government, but rather with regard to ensuring access to the public information: "as well as an expert guide that the citizen needs for its de-codification."<sup>30</sup> The conception posited of the citizen as a decider and member of a community entails for the effective materialization of instruments and the space of the public library as a favorable space to meet the neighbor: "From this perspective, this type of library must continue contributing around the world to develop more and better capacities and abilities among the members of the civil society for the exercise of their actions as citizens to carry out within their communities"<sup>31</sup>

According to the objectives proposed for this instance, the extension of the dialogue with the actors in the zone is worthy of note. The antecedents of the research stressed the high level of insertion achieved, something that was proven in this opportunity. Despite the connection with new interlocutors, knowledge of group work and actions performed in the territory does exist, which confirms the conviction that joint dialogue allows for intervention in reality for the purpose of transforming it because of the contribution of diverse outlooks that contribute know how.

30 Jaime Ríos Ortega, "El acceso abierto...", 143.

31 Felipe Meneses Tello, "Bibliotecas y sociedad..." 170.

## REFERENCES

- Calva González, Juan José. “Información y adolescencia: búsqueda de información por los adolescentes”, en *Memoria del Tercer Seminario Hispano-Mexicano de Investigación en Bibliotecología y Documentación. Tendencias de la Investigación en Bibliotecología y Documentación*, Filiberto Felipe Martínez Arrellano y Juan José Calva González (comp.), 73-89. México: IIBI, 2006. Fecha de consulta: 14 de julio de 2014, <http://cuib.unam.mx/libros.html>
- Cardarello, Antonio. “Muchas dudas, algunas certezas y escaso entusiasmo. Las elecciones municipales 2010 en Uruguay”. *Revista Uruguaya de Ciencia Política* 20 (1) (2011): 63-94. Fecha de consulta: 10 de junio de 2014, <http://www.scielo.edu.uy/pdf/rucp/v20n1/v20n1a04.pdf>
- Carrillo, E. “La nacionalización de la política local”. *Política y Sociedad* 3 (1989): 29-46. Fecha de consulta: 15 de junio de 2014, <http://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/POSO/article/download/POSO8989230029A/30654>
- De Barbieri, María, Ioanna Grotiuz, Alejandra Marzuca y Graciela Viera. *Estrategias de descentralización en Uruguay: sobre los gobiernos locales y la importancia de la dimensión política, de gestión y socio-política para la gobernanza territorial*, Montevideo: Flacso Uruguay, 2010.
- Giraldo Giraldo, Yicel Nayrobis, Gloria Elena Román Bentancur y Ruth Elena Quiroz Posada. “La biblioteca pública como ambiente educativo para el encuentro ciudadano: un estudio de la Comuna I de Medellín”. *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología* 32 (1) (2009): 47-84. Fecha de consulta: 17 de noviembre de 2014, <http://aprendeenlinea.udea.edu.co/revistas/index.php/RIB/article/view/2749>
- Herzer, H., P. Pérez. “Municipio y participación popular en América Latina”. *Desarrollo Económico* 29 (114) (1989): 187-205. Fecha de consulta: 19 de junio de 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3466961>
- Jaramillo, Orlanda. *Biblioteca pública, ciudadanía y educación social*, Buenos Aires: Alfagrama, 2013.
- “La formación ciudadana, dinamizadora de procesos de transformación social desde la biblioteca pública”. *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología* 35 (1) (2012): 73-82. Fecha de consulta: 17 de noviembre de 2014, <http://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=179024991007>
- “La biblioteca pública, un lugar para la formación ciudadana: referentes metodológicos para el proceso de investigación”. *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología* 33 (2) (julio/diciembre 2010): 287-313. Fecha de consulta: 7 de julio de 2014, <http://aprendeenlinea.udea.edu.co/revistas/index.php/RIB/article/view/7644/7069>
- Jaramillo, Orlanda, Didier Álvarez Zapata y Daniel Moncada P. “Políticas públicas para bibliotecas públicas: una propuesta de soluciones locales a problemas globales”. *Investigación Bibliotecológica* 19 (39) (julio/diciembre 2005): 13-27. Fecha de consulta: 7 de julio de 2014, [http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?pid=S0187-358X2005000200002&script=sci\\_arttext](http://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?pid=S0187-358X2005000200002&script=sci_arttext)
- Ley N°18.567. Descentralización política y participación ciudadana*. Fecha de consulta: 25 de junio de 2014, <http://www.parlamento.gub.uy/leyes/AccesoTextoLeyasp?Ley=18567&Anchor=>

- Meneses Tello, Felipe. "Bibliotecas y sociedad: el paradigma social de la biblioteca pública". *Investigación Bibliotecológica* 27 (61) (septiembre/diciembre 2013): 157-173. Fecha de consulta: 21 de junio de 2014, <http://www.revistas.unam.mx/index.php/ibi/article/download/42818/38893>
- Municipio F. *Plan Municipal de Desarrollo*, 2010. Fecha de consulta: 21 de junio de 2014, <http://municipiof.montevideo.gub.uy/system/files/pmd.pdf>
- Núñez Ansuas, Jimena. "Servicios de información en la Zona 9 y las políticas de información en salud destinadas al público joven", en *Estrategias de información y comunicación en salud centradas en adolescentes*, M. Sabelli y J. Rasner (comp.), Montevideo: PRODIC (en prensa), 2013.
- Revesz, Bruno. "Políticas de información, bibliotecas públicas y desarrollo local y regional". *Revista Interamericana de Bibliotecología* 24 (2) (julio/diciembre 2001): 45-63. Fecha de consulta: 7 de julio de 2014, <http://aprendeenlinea.udea.edu.co/revistas/index.php/RIB/article/viewFile/3198/2963>
- Ríos Ortega, Jaime. "El acceso abierto a la información y la formación ciudadana", en *Regulaciones que impactan la infodiversidad y el acceso abierto a la información en la sociedad global y multicultural*, Estela Morales Campos (comp.), 135-148. México: IIBI, 2013. Fecha de consulta: 21 de junio de 2014, <http://132.248.242.6/~publica/conmutarl.php?arch=4&idx=1157>
- Sabelli, Martha. "Investigaciones sobre el comportamiento informativo de adolescentes y jóvenes en situación vulnerable: hacia una información inclusiva en Uruguay", en *Usuarios de la información en diferentes comunidades académicas y sociales: investigaciones*, Juan José Calva González (comp.), 77-104. México: IIBI, 2013. Fecha de consulta: 4 de julio de 2014, <http://132.248.242.6/~publica/conmutarl.php?arch=4&idx=1089>
- y Jorge Rasner. *Informe final. Las estrategias de información y comunicación centradas en los jóvenes y adolescentes en el ámbito de la salud: análisis y propuestas (RAP-ASSE, Zona 9 de Montevideo)*, Montevideo: Prodic, 2012.
- y Verónica Rodríguez Lopater (comp.). *La información y las jóvenes en contextos desfavorables: construyendo puentes para la inclusión social desde la investigación*, Montevideo: CSIC, 2012.
- Sabelli, Martha. *La información y el ciudadano en el entorno de la Sociedad de la Información: percepción de los actores políticos y sociales en el Uruguay*, Montevideo: Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 2008.
- Sung, Hui-Yun, Mark Hepworth y Gillian Ragsdell. "Investigating essential elements of community engagement in public libraries: an exploratory qualitative study", *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 45 (3) (2013): 206-218. Fecha de consulta: 19 de noviembre de 2014, <http://lis.sagepub.com/content/45/3/206>
- Szafran Maiche, Paulina. "Recursos de información para la ciudadanía: documentos, servicios de información y comunicación", en *La información y las jóvenes en contextos desfavorables: construyendo puentes para la inclusión social desde la investigación*, Martha Sabelli y Verónica Rodríguez Lopater (comp.), 161-178. Montevideo: CSIC, 2012.
- Veneziano Esperón, Alicia. *La participación en el diseño e implementación de políticas públicas en la descentralización del gobierno municipal de Montevideo (1990-2000)*, trabajo presentado al V Congreso del CLAD, 2000. Fecha de consulta: 20

- de junio de 2014, <http://siare.clad.org/fulltext/0039229.pdf>
- Sustentabilidad política, reforma de Estado y participación ciudadana en la Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo*, trabajo presentado en el V Congreso Nacional de Ciencia Política-Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político, 2001. Fecha de consulta: 20 de junio de 2014, <http://www.saap.org.ar/esp/docs-congresos/congresos-saap/V/docs/diaz/alicia-veneziano.pdf>
- “Izquierda y descentralización en Montevideo”, *Ecuador Debate* 61 (2004). Fecha de consulta: 10 de junio de 2014, [www.plataforamademocratica.org/Publicacoes/5303.pdf](http://www.plataforamademocratica.org/Publicacoes/5303.pdf)
- Gobernanza en la descentralización: una mirada desde América Latina*, trabajo presentado en VII Congreso Español de Ciencia Política y de la Administración: Democracia y Buen Gobierno, 2005. Fecha de consulta: 20 de junio de 2014. [http://www.aecpa.es/uploads/files/congresos/congreso\\_07/area03/GT10/VENEZIANO-Alicia.pdf](http://www.aecpa.es/uploads/files/congresos/congreso_07/area03/GT10/VENEZIANO-Alicia.pdf)
- “La participación ciudadana en la descentralización de Montevideo: aprendizajes y reflexiones desde los noventa”, *Revista Uruguaya de Ciencia Política* 17 (1) (2008): 203-227. Fecha de consulta: 20 de junio de 2014, [http://www.scielo.edu.uy/scielo.php?script=sci\\_pdf&pid=S0797-97892008000100009&lng=es&rm=iso&tlng=es](http://www.scielo.edu.uy/scielo.php?script=sci_pdf&pid=S0797-97892008000100009&lng=es&rm=iso&tlng=es)
- Relaciones intergubernamentales, intragubernamentales y socio-gubernamentales en el decreto de descentralización de Montevideo*, trabajo presentado en X Jornadas de Investigación de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, 2011. Fecha de consulta: 20 de junio de 2014, <http://www.fcs.edu.uy/archivos/Veneziano.pdf>

*Para citar este artículo:*

Szafran, Paulina. 2016. “Información, comunicación y cultura en la gestión local: la experiencia municipal en un territorio de vulnerabilidad de la ciudad de Montevideo.” *Investigación Bibliotecológica: Archivonomía, Bibliotecología e Información* 70: 19-38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ibbai.2016.10.002>