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Emergent Voices and Evolving Agendas: Writing Realities in Cuba's New Media Landscape

Mariela Morales-Suárez
University of Pennsylvania

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Emergent Voices and Evolving Agendas: Writing Realities in Cuba's New Media Landscape

Description

Drawn from Morales-Suárez's Penn Honors Thesis about the evolution of the Cuban media landscape, and developed during her CARGC Undergraduate Fellowship, CARGC Paper 6 presented findings from an empirical study of Cuban journalists, their decision-making practices, the motivations that drive them, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they crave. Morales-Suárez conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a group of independent Cuban journalists recruited from twenty non-governmental publications during the spring of 2017.

Disciplines

Communication

Comments

CARGC Paper 6

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CARGC PAPER 6
2017

Emergent Voices and Evolving Agendas: Writing Realities in Cuba's New Media Landscape

CARGC

CENTER FOR
ADVANCED RESEARCH IN
GLOBAL COMMUNICATION

 **Annenberg**
SCHOOL FOR COMMUNICATION
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA





It is a great pleasure to introduce CARGC Paper 6, “Emergent Voices and Evolving Agendas: Writing Realities in Cuba’s New Media Landscape,” by Mariela Morales-Suárez, the inaugural Undergraduate Fellow at the Center for Advanced Research in Global Communication (CARGC) at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, who earlier delivered it as the first CARGC Undergraduate Fellow Colloquium.

As CARGC enters its fifth year (counting the years when it was PARGC), it has incorporated undergraduate research as a core activity, entailing individual colloquia, participation in working groups, and mentoring by CARGC staff, Doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellows, in addition to Annenberg colleagues—in Mariela’s case, Susan Haas and Kimberly Woolf—to produce top notch scholarship about important global communication topics.

Cuban media have had a distinct trajectory, with early commercial broadcasting in the Batista years, followed by a state run socialist-revolutionary system under Fidel Castro, leading to accelerated changes thereafter. The Cuban communication education system is changing in tandem. An Annenberg delegation witnessed these changes first-hand during a visit to Cuba last year. Consisting of Dean Michael X. Delli Carpini, Assistant to the Dean Kelly Fernández, professors Sandra Gonzalez-Bailón and Jessa Lingel, and myself, the group participated in two concurrent conferences upon the invitation of Raúl Garces, Dean of the Faculty of Communication at the University of Havana, and made connections with Cuban colleagues. In line with our interest in Latin American media and communication, CARGC aims to host a Cuban delegation in the coming year, with the help of a Penn Global Engagement Fund grant.

In fact, Cuba has been undergoing momentous changes ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The country is experiencing a continuous media transformation as it deals with acute economic challenges, an uncertain political transition, and the twists and turns of the island’s relationship with the United States, which in recent years have shifted from a kind of détente under the Obama administration to renewed tensions with the advent of the Trump administration. Cuban journalists juggle a variety of internal and external pressures as they forge ahead in shaping a fascinating news media sector. Few people are able to understand and explain these changes better than CARGC Undergraduate Fellow Mariela Morales-Suárez.

Born in Cuba in 1989 as the Berlin Wall was falling, Mariela Morales-Suárez grew up in a Cuba that was increasingly isolated from the rest of the world yet was experiencing many social and economic changes. Unlike her parents, Mariela experienced a Cuba where US dollars, foreign magazines and American music were no longer persecuted and prosecuted by the Cuban government. She was also one of the four students in her province chosen to attend the School of Communication at the University of Havana. In 2009, at the beginning of her 3rd year of Journalism School, she immigrated to Miami with her family. Mariela attended Miami Dade College and transferred to The University of Pennsylvania in 2014, where she recently completed a Bachelor’s Degree in Global Communication. This paper is drawn from her Penn Honors Thesis about the evolution of the media landscape in Cuba.

Mariela Morales-Suárez presents findings from an empirical study of Cuban journalists, their decision-making practices, the motivations that drive them, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they crave.

She researched a group of media workers who in many ways form the vanguard of Cuba's emerging media landscape. She conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with journalists recruited from twenty non-governmental publications. Participants described their motivations and the missions of their publications. Morales-Suárez investigates the challenges of operating media in a legal gray zone, and how marginal legality influences decisions about management, agenda setting, news coverage, and the vision of new media producers. Overall, in this CARGC Paper, Mariela Morales-Suárez embodies CARGC's core values: linguistic know-how,

on the ground research, deep expertise coupled with an accounting of broader contextual issues that affect the life and work of Cuban journalists.

We hope you find CARGC Paper 6 insightful and informative. Please follow us at @AnnenbergCARGC for updates on future events, publications and developments, and share this paper widely.



Marwan M. Kraidy

Professor of Communication

The Anthony Shadid Chair in Global Media,
Politics & Culture

Director, Center for Advanced Research in
Global Communication (CARGC)

2016 Andrew Carnegie Fellow

@MKraidy



Emergent Voices and Evolving Agendas: Writing Realities in Cuba's New Media Landscape

INTRODUCTION

For Cuba, the revolution led by Fidel Castro that ousted the government of Dictator Fulgencio Batista in January of 1959 meant the establishment of Communism on the island. For the media landscape, the result was that by 1965 the entire media system became socially administered, publicly owned, and regulated and controlled by the state apparatus. This government-controlled system of media has continued to the present day. The penetration of new technologies, including the Internet, Web and other content circulation practices like *el paquete*, a bundle of content delivered to subscribers through USB keys, as well as a key speech by Raúl Castro in 2010, however, have sparked change. Since 2012 more than twenty media outlets that are outside of government ownership, operation, or affiliation are producing news about Cuba for Cubans. This paper explores Cuba's newly emerging independent media, the conceptions of early innovators and producers of these media, and, more broadly, an evolving Cuban media landscape. Thus, it aims to understand how producers of new and independent media conceive of their missions and intentions as news producers, and make decisions about style and content. In doing so, this research includes interviews with journalists and other producers drawn from the wider group of new and independent media. Results from the study reveal diversity among news outlets in Cuba in terms of organizational models, reporting agendas and reporting styles, as well as significant efforts made by independent media producers in trying to establish new paradigms of journalism, beyond the tradition of state media. This paper explores a dynamic in Cuba – the emergence of independent journalism – that is only five years old; it is therefore foundational and limited. Future analyses might consider some of the findings of this research when trying to understand the emerging ecosystem of Cuban media.

The domestic and collective narration of Cuba's own destiny has not only forged Cuban national identity during the second half of the twentieth century but it has also significantly influenced the individual identities of its citizens (Venegas 2010). Such influence is closely tied to the ideological evolution of the Cuban Revolution. When Fidel and his group of bearded rebels entered Havana in a caravan of tanks on January 8, 1959, much of what would be the new Cuban state was still yet to be defined. Until that moment, the most organized and shared ideological program of the Revolution was Fidel Castro's manifesto, *History Will Absolve Me*, an edited version of his defense at his earlier trial for attacking the Moncada military barracks on July 26, 1953 (Dominguez 1978, 197).

But the political program outlined in *History Will Absolve Me* changed when Fidel took power and Cuba's international sphere of influence shifted. The extensive nationalization of properties owned by Americans on the island escalated tensions between the United States, Cuba's most

MARIELA MORALES-SUÁREZ

Undergraduate Fellow,
Center for Advanced
Research in Global
Communication,
Annenberg School for
Communication at the
University of Pennsylvania

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important business partner, and the new government in Havana. Meanwhile, the USSR sent ambassadors to Havana as early as 1959. The Soviets move proved to be effective: by 1961 Fidel had declared the “socialist character of the revolution” (Castro 1961; Lockwood 1990, 3). For the Cuban media landscape this meant that the entire system of the press would be socially administrated and publicly owned (Lockwood 1990, 115). By 1965, all newspapers and radio and television stations were owned and regulated by the state, but it wasn't until 1976 when the socialist constitution was established that freedom of the press was finally legally spelled out in an official document. Only state and socially owned media were allowed in the country. In the penal code, slander, defamation or insult against high-ranking officials were subject to prosecution and a sentence of three years (Committee to Protect Journalists 2016).

This government-controlled system of media has been maintained to the present day. All accredited local publications and broadcasters on the island are government-owned (*Periodismo de Barrio* 2016; Committee to Protect Journalists 2016). However, with Fidel Castro's retirement from politics in 2006 and the ascension of his brother Raúl to power in 2008, the media landscape in Cuba is shifting, despite the unwillingness of the government to change the policies that govern media (Fernández-Pérez 2016). In 2010, Raúl Castro delivered a speech to the National Assembly of the People's Power, Cuba's legislative body, wherein he called for an end to secretiveness as a government policy and criticized the official press of the island as being too complacent in the face of the Cuba's challenges (Castro 2010). This speech motivated several entrepreneurs and young professionals to found news organizations not affiliated with or owned by the government (Marsh 2016; Committee to Protect Journalists 2016). In 2012, *OnCuba*, the first of these new and independent media, was created by Hugo Cancio, a businessman with ties both to Miami's Cuban émigré community and to Cuba itself (Anderson 2015).

In the five years since the founding of *OnCuba*, more than fifteen media outlets that are not owned or operated by, nor affiliated with, the government are producing news in Cuba about Cuba (Committee to Protect Journalists 2016). Since publication of the Committee to Protect Journalists report last year, it is estimated by professionals in the field in Cuba that the current number of outlets is most likely closer to twenty. This evolution of the Cuban media landscape has yet to be examined closely by any researcher on the island or internationally. Neither have the conceptions of mission or journalistic intentions of the producers of new media, as agenda-setters, storytellers, opinion-makers and narrators of Cuba's national identity in the new century, been addressed. This CARGC paper aims to remedy the gap in the literature about Cuba's newly emerging independent media, and more broadly, the evolving Cuban media landscape, by offering a limited but foundational view of new media and media producers in Cuba. In order to do so, this paper aims to understand how media producers of the new and independent media perceive their missions and make decisions about their news styles and coverage.

This CARGC paper aims to remedy the gap in the literature about Cuba's newly emerging independent media, and more broadly, the evolving Cuban media landscape, by offering a limited but foundational view of new media and media producers in Cuba.

This paper aims to understand the motivations, decision-making processes, and missions of the producers of new Cuban media using interviews with journalists recruited from the wider group of twenty non-governmental publications.

METHODOLOGY

This paper aims to understand the motivations, decision-making processes, and missions of the producers of new Cuban media using interviews with journalists recruited from the wider group of twenty non-governmental publications. In ten semi-structured interviews, participants described their personal and professional motivations and their understandings of the missions of their publications. Through conversations with participants, I also investigated the problem of operating media on the margins of legality in Cuba, and how this influences decisions about management, agenda setting and news coverage. Ultimately, the visions of new media producers about what they are doing and why they are doing it sometimes overlap, and at other times, contradict one another. However, to understand Cuba's emerging new media landscape, it is important to understand the plurality of visions among the risk-taking innovators who produce new media content for Cuban citizens. I interviewed ten individual producers working for independent new media publications in the spring of 2017. I define independent new media producers as those editors or journalists who work or collaborate with a news organization that covers news about Cuba, for Cubans, and is not affiliated, funded or sponsored by the Cuban government.

Interviewees' personal identifiers are omitted in order to preserve anonymity. I conducted more than half of the interviews in the capital city of Havana, Cuba. For security purposes, and to mitigate risks of government repression related to border crossings and digital devices, the only records of Havana interviews are my handwritten personal notes (no digital recordings). I conducted the remaining of the interviews online, via Skype, from Philadelphia. In this research, I recorded Skype conversations using iPhone voice memos, which were deleted immediately after transcription. In order to further protect anonymity, the exact dates of individual interviews do not appear in in-text citations. It should also be noted that all quotations from interviews included in this section belong to independent media producers. All interviews were conducted in Spanish, the native language of all of the media producers, and then translated by me. After completing the interviews, I analyzed interview transcripts in order to identify themes. I then used participant responses to write this narrative description of the missions, motivations, and decision-making of new media producers. Because of the emergent nature of new media in Cuba, and the small number of new media currently in operation, as well as the small sample of participants, it was also important not to overlook or exclude reporting outliers or unique perceptions or experiences, as these may themselves represent the leading edge, or future trends, in emerging media.

THE GAP BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL MEDIA AGENDA, THE PUBLIC'S AGENDA, AND AUDIENCE PREFERENCES

All participants interviewed for this study mentioned the gap between the official state media agenda and the public agenda as a key motivation for creating or collaborating with independent media. However, there were differences of opinion as to what causes this gap. For example, one participant questioned the official newspapers' degree of authenticity: "Are newspapers in Cuba working as a press organization if they mainly function as a table of content that informs you about what bus route has changed? Our national press is not making reportages." Others cited the official media's financial scheme (government subsidies) as a disincentive for understanding audiences. In the opinion of independent journalists, when media are not dependent on audience consumption of content for their funding, a gap of priorities grows between the public and official media: "There are no concerns about the consumption of the information. Only from the side of the production, which creates an enormous imbalance. There is no feedback from the audiences. They only concern themselves with saying and saying."

Furthermore, one participant who works for an independent outlet that funds operations partly on an advertising model noted that the need to generate resources is a major advantage of independent media over official media when creating content, because they are forced to constantly be creative:

I think not having a budget of 50 million pesos like *Granma*, for example, has prevented us from getting to our desks every morning and asking: 'Ok, what is there for today? Maybe this factory opened or Raúl [Castro] said something' We, in contrast, are hungry for news, because if at the end of the day, I make my calculations and if I don't have enough money, I have to fire people. It is that hunger motivated by operating this media as a business that forces us to be constantly on top.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that some independent media do not fund themselves through a traditional for-profit business model that relies on advertising to fund production, and many new media journalists work without pay, or their work is funded through outside grants that vary in amount from year to year. A steady salary is rare for many of those working in Cuba's independent new media. For other media whose readership, views, and clicks are not yet monetized, aiming to reduce the gap between what is published in the official media and what people are talking about in the streets is a vehicle for owning and enjoying their jobs: "It wasn't only a monetary choice, but also a choice for the journalism. Our [professional] capacities are underutilized in the official media."

For the journalists I interviewed, the lack of high-quality investigative reporting in the nation's official media is at the center of their motivations to risk working on the margins, outside the only legal media apparatus of the country. In the view of some media producers, this lack of long-form investigative journalism in the national press limits the depth of reporting that is happening on the island. Other interviewees added that this lack of in-depth reporting limits the personal

...some independent media do not fund themselves through a traditional for-profit business model that relies on advertising to fund production, and many new media journalists work without pay...

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connections that the journalists are able to establish professionally, including with journalists in official media workplaces. The gap between the national media agenda and the potential agenda of audiences seems to also to reflect a gap between the national media and some members of its real or prospective workforce.

Independent media journalists cited that beyond conflicts over content, they also had conflicts with work policies and routines:

The first day that I arrived at this national radio station to report to work as part of my [mandatory] social service, they asked me to write a news piece about an endemic breed of Cuban hens, and to answer the phone. Every 15 minutes, someone will call to ask for the time -- to a radio station that tells the time on the air after every minute! I reaffirmed that the national news system was Kafkaesque, but I [also] discovered that it was Dantesque.

Other journalists echoed this lack of professional satisfaction with the way the official media system covers news and establishes their agenda:

I started to work for independent media because I wanted to do journalism in Cuba, but I was almost embarrassed about my career choice. I felt that I was part of the problem and working for the independent media gave me a chance to redeem my profession in the eyes of the people. It's like a doctor who studies medicine and afterwards does not tend the sick. How can a journalist work and not tell the truth?

Cuban media producers varied in their understanding of this gap between the state media agenda and practices and the kinds of journalistic work that might better inform people while also satisfying their professional desires. Some perceive an expanding gap between coverage available in state media and what the public speaks about in the street, with national media misrepresentations of Cuban realities that become equivalent to lying to the citizenry. Others believe that even if the official media do not intentionally lie, their direct association with political and governmental groups harms audience's chances to obtain unbiased information from a variety of sources: "If the media belong to the institutions, they cannot go after those institutions." Adding to that thought, another argued that even a term used by government to define the national media speaks to the mission and intentions of official media:

Until recently, media groups in Cuba were not considered to be an ecosystem of communicational media but 'diffusion' media. That was the term used by the government when referring to the media, which I always imagine as canons wrapped in newspapers shooting information at people. They [the official media] are meant for the symbolic production of a societal project.

That the government understood the national media as "diffusion media" for many years is further evidence that national media institutions focus too heavily on the production of content regardless of audiences' preferences or consumption patterns. The gap between the national media agenda and the public agenda is not publicly debated in the national press or any other government owned mass media in Cuba. Research by investigators in national public universities of Cuba confirm this (Gallego and Rosabal 2012; Elizalde 2014). However, media producers interviewed for this study say that closing this gap has now become an issue

of concern among many Cuban journalists, including those who work for both national and independent media. For independent media producers interviewed here, the solution cannot come from the government, since the centralization of the media system itself produces the gap, but working to close it is at the core of their personal motivations for producing journalism at the legal margins. The next section will explore further these motivations and how producers go about closing this gap.

JOURNALISM AS MEANS TO ITS OWN ENDS

For more than fifty years – since 1965 – journalism about Cuba produced by Cubans in Cuba has served the political interests of the Cuban government. As stated above, the Cuban Revolution does not believe in journalism that is not committed to the building and maintaining of the socialist project of the Cuban nation (Bamrud 1987). Relatedly, for more than thirty years the Cuban exile community of Miami, with funding from the United States government, has offered a counter-narrative to that of Cuban state media, through the work of media like Radio and TV Marti that have championed the dissenting political voices of Cubans inside the island (*Martí Noticias* 2016). It is not the intention of this paper to criticize or to celebrate the media mentioned above. Nor is this research focused on analyses of coverage by the official media of Cuba or that operated by the exiled community. Rather, this study acknowledges that their presence in the Cuban media landscape – and their editorial lines and agenda-setting practices – influence the conceptions, motivations, and work of Cuba's new and independent media producers.

It becomes important then to understand that for more than fifty years Cuban journalists have needed in some way or other to choose, or militate against, an ideology in order to do their work with honesty. For those who firmly agree with the political missions of state-funded (by Cuba or the US) media, this should not represent a problem. However, my research has found that among the young producers who make up the new and independent media, this political polarization within the media landscape was a direct motivator for the creation of alternative narrations of Cuban reality:

Normally, Cuban media are understood as instruments or means to some end, which almost always is political. The media is not always seen as the means to its own end, which is what they really ought to be. A [press] has to have the right to question any public figure, whether that public figure is the president of the country or of a dictatorship, or a political dissident or the instruments with which they confront that dictatorship.

Attempting to remove themselves from any particular political ideology is important to producers of independent media in Cuba, but this does not prevent them from making political commentaries or narrating stories that openly criticize the management of the Cuban

government or the political opposition. All interviewees for this study were adamant that they publish information for the sake of informing audiences, but without a defined political agenda about what audiences should do with those narratives.

I have written things for an independent media what some other journalists have covered in the same outlet, while giving it a totally different perspective [...] More or less the principle governing these media is the principle of quality. If the work is good, if it is well written and fact-checked, the work will be published. It does not matter that the editor might not personally agree with you. Those subjectivities belong to the background. Quality is what prevails.

Once most media producers reached the conclusion that they had to find alternative platforms to cover the kinds of news that they wanted to report, and in order to narrate the stories that they wanted to write, the question of why gave way to questions of where and how. In 2012, the where question began to be answered with the founding of *OnCuba*. The expansion of new technologies and the Internet in the years since has slowly but steadily offered the means of working out answers to some of the remaining questions. The collision of all those aspects: more Internet penetration, the creation of *OnCuba* and the expansion of digital publications as a worldwide trend, guided independent journalists to fulfilling their aspirations of creating content outside of government owned media.

THE INTERNET AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES AS ENABLERS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA IN CUBA

With the founding of the magazine *OnCuba* in 2012, the media landscape inside Cuba started to change. Until that point, graduates of journalism programs could work only for state-owned media or media published by the exiled community. *El Toque (The Knock)* was also founded in 2012, but was first created as a magazine that covered issues about youth in all of Latin America; it evolved later to be the project that it is today, a magazine solely focused on youth in Cuba. In this regard, 2012 was a definitive year not only for journalists, but also for journalism as it was known in Cuba. *OnCuba* offered, through employment or by example, a new template that young journalists were quick to notice. *OnCuba's* success meant that alternative narratives about Cuba could be written, and that audiences would welcome and embrace such news.

OnCuba's demonstration that a deep well of news could be published digitally also galvanized in the minds of young media producers that digital was the way to go: "A digital [news publication] was the only way possible. In Cuba, we were the generation of the digital transition. Printing requires costs, government approvals, but anyone can publish online; you just need Internet access." Awareness of being in the right place at the right time during this exploitation of digital channels in the country was echoed by other participants. Wanting to create content outside of official media was not a new aspiration for media professionals on the island, but the recent context made it newly possible:

Although the array of independent media in Cuba has continued to expand steadily since 2012, finding audiences on the island through those same digital channels is something that media producers are still struggling with, due to the difficulties of accessing the Internet in Cuba

There were journalists before who also yearned for the possibility of having their own media where they could dictate the editorial line, but in practice, there weren't any created conditions. There wasn't a minimum of infrastructure that could allow for that to happen. So what is happening right now is not given by the fact that we are more brave, or clever, or smarter but simply because the circumstances are allowing it:

Although the array of independent media in Cuba has continued to expand steadily since 2012, finding audiences on the island through those same digital channels is something that media producers are still struggling with, due to the difficulties of accessing the Internet in Cuba:

There are broader opportunities, and people are having more Internet access, but in Cuba only 15 to 20 percent of the population have an irregular access to the Internet, so people mostly use Internet connections for more practical purposes, like talking to their family members living outside of the country - not to read independent media. This has caused Cubans to believe that information is a luxury, not the necessity that it is.

Though most recent reports cite Internet penetration at 32.4 percent, for most Cubans, Internet access represents a scarce resource available at a premium price (Internet Live Stats 2016). The most common way to access the Internet is by buying pre-paid Internet cards at a cost of 1.5 CUC (1.35 USD) per hour, in a country where the median monthly salary equates to 25 USD (Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información 2016; ETECSA 2017). Pre-paid Internet cards can be used in Internet cafes and WiFi hotspots in some cities, but in-home private service remains outside the range of possibilities for Cuban citizens (ETECSA 2017). For independent media, this means that their largest online audiences come from outside the country, not inside: "We cannot say that the independent media of Cuba are opinion leaders. Our audience inside Cuba is very small and it is highly segmented, mostly made up by people that know us from the guild [of journalists]."

...for independent media operating through an advertising business model, low access to Internet by Cuban audiences does not necessarily harm their ability to sustain their livelihood as media producers, even at times when websites are banned inside the country...

However, for independent media operating through an advertising business model, low access to Internet by Cuban audiences does not necessarily harm their ability to sustain their livelihood as media producers, even at times when websites are banned inside the country: "[At one time], this website was receiving a lot of traffic in Cuba, it was one of the most visited sites, but that caught a lot of attention so the website got banned. They of course lost a lot of traffic It did not affect them because the traffic that monetizes them comes from outside of the country, mostly from the United States." In general, whether or not they profit from international audiences, all interviewees affirmed that audiences outside of the country are essential for independent media, since accessing information published on the Internet in Cuba remains a challenge:

Many Cubans read us, but they are Cubans that migrated or are living in exile. We have readers from Cuba, but that amount of readership is minuscule [...]. To think that the average reader of news in Cuba reads us would not be realistic. However, we knew that from the start, that people cannot read us because there is no sufficient access to Internet. There are not many ways to get to us [...] So in a sense I don't

believe that we have a huge impact [on public opinion]. However, I justify it [creating an independent media] to myself as something that you cannot wait until the moment comes [for a political opening] to start working.

As this section has shown, broader digital access and the media management examples of early innovators like *OnCuba* brought to a generation of young Cuban journalists opportunities to create media where they could determine their own agendas. However, starting independent media outlets in a country where all precedents for media models and practice in living memory are state-owned and publicly funded brought its own set of challenges. The next section describes why and how independent media producers make decisions about agenda setting and media management.

MEDIA MANAGEMENT MODELS, PRACTICE, AND COVERAGE ON THE LEGAL MARGINS

During interviews with independent media producers of Cuba, the lack of available alternative media management models in the country that could be used for guidance emerged as a theme. One of the most common claims was that journalists in the country did not have any experience managing independent media. Generations of journalists in Cuba have worked only within the managed media system of a planned economy, which means that each outlet is assigned a budget that is usually administered by top-down directives without allowing much input from journalists. Participants explained, for example, that when they worked for official media they and their colleagues did not know how much gas they used to produce coverage each month. It would be unjust to blame this shortage of knowledge on journalists' lack of curiosity about management and expenditures. The system is not set up so that journalists deal in their everyday work with issues of cost. "If you ask any journalist that works for the official media how much it cost to fund his or her work, he or she will have no clue."

That independent media producers are much more aware of revenue and expenses is also due to the nature of the economic system in post-Revolution Cuba, where private small businesses in general have only begun to emerge. This has meant that in order to have the editorial freedom that they desired, journalists first had to worry about how to fund outlets where they can publish the stories they want to write. They also needed to worry about finding ways of building audiences inside Cuba, a challenge considering low levels of Internet penetration. In spite of this context, independent journalists have moved to open new media outlets, often relying on intuition and familiar journalistic practices: "I remember the first meeting that we had together, it was all very intuitive. There is a lack of professionalism in the country. There is ignorance about how [independent] media can be managed in Cuba, and not having legal recognition doesn't help."

In October 2016, journalists of Neighborhood Journalism were arrested for interviewing victims of Hurricane Matthew. The arrests were made under the charge that the journalists were operating without the required accreditation, in an area declared an emergency zone.

The lack of a legal framework for media operations aggravates the issue. Independent producers interviewed for this study concur that the government has not moved to legalize their work, and do not expect that it will do so in the future: "It is not convenient for them; it is easier to control us this way, because by not recognizing us, they don't acknowledge us. They don't even mention us publicly." In the opinion of media producers, the control that the government exerts by not legalizing independent media is mostly the preemptive control of an authoritarian government. The government cannot control how and what independent media decide to write about, but it can influence the quality of that coverage and the ability of producers to function as a media organization by limiting their movements, access to official sources, and rights to rent an office or establish official headquarters. By making accreditation impossible, the state can even limit their right to exist: "What they question in Cuba is our right to exist [as an independent media entity] and to be defending your right to exist is tiresome. I will like not to have to work in a context where the right of journalism to exist is being questioned. Especially not for doing something that I know is the right thing to do."

Preemptive government control has practical consequences. This extra "fighting" (or, *la lucha*) for legitimacy within the system and the country occupies independent journalists in their daily work. In October 2016, journalists of *Neighborhood Journalism* were arrested for interviewing victims of Hurricane Matthew. The arrests were made under the charge that the journalists were operating without the required accreditation, in an area declared an emergency zone (*Periodismo de Barrio* 2016). In an editorial, *Neighborhood Journalism* rebutted the legal claims of not allowing journalists to work under a declared state of emergency, and called into question when and how this state of emergency was declared (*Periodismo de Barrio* 2016). In addition, for *Neighborhood Journalism* and other new media, obtaining official accreditation for coverage is not possible. However important and unprecedented the journalists' unyielding efforts, the preemptive work by the police, intelligence services, and legal system of the country were effective. The journalists' news coverage was interrupted and they were forced to leave the province of Guantanamo.

Despite these challenging contexts, Cuba's new media producers have managed to offer relevant, truthful and appealing content, all while positioning themselves as pioneers in the field.

Despite these challenging contexts, Cuba's new media producers have managed to offer relevant, truthful and appealing content, all while positioning themselves as pioneers in the field. Some new media have done this by offering a wide range of news about Cuba. For the creators of this type of content, it is important that readers find a variety of news related to Cuba in one place, regardless of reader ideology or political leanings: "Our main editorial policy is to be impartial. We aim for a tone as neutral as possible in our news because we believe that is the basis for reaching the biggest possible audience. We don't want to position ourselves among any radical positions. We hope everyone reads us, from Fidel's [Castro] followers to Trump's."

Other new media have made aesthetics their brand, by using fresh and appealing images while venturing into coverage of show business, pop music, and artists. In addition differentiating themselves by their content focus, new media also are breaking the mold of "pre-established agenda setting routines" and journalistic traditions by focusing on specific journalistic formats.

Being independent of government management means not only independence from state media priorities and agenda setting, but also autonomy in making decisions about genre, formatting and framing practices:

We decided to create [this medium] not only because we wanted to say something and there was nowhere where we could say it how we wanted to say it. We also wanted to create a medium that would add something to the [journalistic] scenario that was not already there. There was no point in creating a medium that would be a replica of the existing ones. So our publication tries to fill a space that no traditional media have covered, which is the journalism that allows itself [longer] texts. We always thought that even though we would be open to all journalistic genres, we also wanted to focus on that [form of reportage]. And we knew that if we were faithful to what that genre demands by force, in order to do it with quality, we would not have to worry about anything else. Because this genre encompasses everything.

The continued use of chronicles and reportages – two journalistic genres widely used in all of Latin America – by independent media when reporting about Cuba has granted journalists more space for professional creativity while making facts appealing to their audiences. In addition, independent media journalists affirmed that the evocative and descriptive language of chronicles and chronicle-reportages, as well as the digital format as platform choice, means that they are choosing “using a language closer to our generation.” These genre choices entailing longer forms of reporting and first account evocative descriptions denote not only a divergence from the formats and content of state media and the incursion of formats and languages different from those of official media, but also changes in the ways that news is produced. Chronicles and chronicles-reportages are filled with the emotions and the personal voices of reporters. Journalists writing these forms of reportages can also work for months on a single investigation. Interviewees asserted that such practices are unprecedented. Many journalists were used to shorter deadlines while working for official media, most of the time, by the closing edition of the following day: “Independent journalism has allowed us to do a more calm journalism, a journalism that worries about investigations and narratives and not so much on breaking news. We don't cover breaking news, we investigate in-depth.”

Being an innovator also means confronting pushback and misconceptions. Innovation in a context where independent media must exist in opposition to the established national order means that some energy is diverted toward negotiating fear and risk. Current independent media production is therefore not as efficient as it could be, and journalists cannot cover or investigate all topics as fully as desired. Limitations are among the general complaints of media organizations everywhere, but in Cuba, these limitations (in addition to the pre-emptive power of the state) include the absence of the right to access information by citizens, making the independent journalist's corroborations of facts difficult, if not impossible. Combined with the absence of a legal framework legitimizing the work and the existence of the media organizations themselves, Cuba's independent journalists are, at all times, working outside the law.

Having to deal with the practical, emotional and philosophical consequences of operating without legal legitimacy is always present in the minds of these independent journalists. They view their coverage as part of the building of a more pluralistic media landscape:

I think that all these new independent and alternative media are a preamble. They are not even all that the competent that media of this kind can be. They are a sort of forerunner. We do what we can. I am very aware that in our own [publication] we don't do all that we would like simply because we can't. This [type of media] gets made against the grain because everyone that works for us makes a living working somewhere else, we don't have enough resources, etc. In that sense, I believe that these media are setting the guidelines, leading the way, but I hope for the good of journalism in Cuba, that they don't end up being all that we can be. I hope for something better yet to come. Professionally speaking I hope that the [independent] media become more efficient, more potent. Media that can check the government better. If these media have any merit, it is of driving a wedge that hopefully keeps growing; there is still much left.

The creation of new media in Cuba has been a relatively slow and quiet process. It is difficult to establish a specific turning point that sparked the migration of professional journalists from state media.

BEING FIRST, THE FUTURE, AND INSPIRATIONS

The creation of new media in Cuba has been a relatively slow and quiet process. It is difficult to establish a specific turning point that sparked the migration of professional journalists from state media. Important dates include the creation of *OnCuba* in 2012, and 2015, when the first media created, edited, and directed entirely by professionally trained Cuban independent journalists started to appear. The emergence of independent media in Cuba has been incremental and experimental. This does not mean that they have not been a noted as a disruptive development for the official media of the island, but they are far from challenging the monopolistic media apparatus in terms of volume of reporting, organizational size, or audience.

What they represent, however, is inconvenience to the state apparatus and its media, who until now were accustomed to having total control over the public's access to information. New media producers acknowledge that the existence of independent publications on the island, and the development of expanding Internet services, have demonstrated for young Cubans that non-governmental media and alternative sources of information are possible. Wide consumption has yet to be established, but citizens with access to a computer and flash memory can create and publish content. Despite this, there was consensus among independent media journalists that in the short term, change in Cuba's media ecosystem may be limited: "A significant change within the media landscape is closely related to the country's future. It is very difficult to say what will happen after Raúl [Castro] leaves power in 2018. If things don't change, the independent media will continue with these guerrilla-tactic-like operations. As long as this legal limbo continues, things won't change much." Nonetheless, the process of change itself may be irreversible:

I think it will all depend of the political changes that will happen after 2018 [Raúl's retirement]. For example, once the people that will be assuming power after his retirement become more visible, and we are able to learn who they are, what they

think and what role the press will play in all that [their governing]. For a long time, the journalists in Cuba have been debating about a press law, but I don't know if that will help us or will end up restricting us more. But on the other hand, there is no way to halt [the existence of] independent media because our advantage, even though it is a practical disadvantage, is that by being only digital and not having offices, we can always subsist. We are porous and diffused, we have no nucleus, so what can they do to prohibit us? We publish on the Internet, we exist in the cloud that is here or there. Maybe they can jail the journalists but there isn't a physical space that they can close or a printing space to confiscate.

Other independent media producers stated that one of their highest aspirations as journalists is the establishment of a press law. As stated above, media regulations in the country have been established mostly through speeches, declarations, and party decrees, but no formal laws regulating the practice of journalism, mass media, or citizens' rights to information exist. In the opinion of some independent media producers, such a law would give stability to the practice of the profession on the island: "I hope that a regulatory bank can be established where the norms will be set legally. This will allow for the coexistence of all types of media in the country. I just don't believe that all media that is not official is called to subvert the political order of the country."

Nevertheless, the coexistence of various types of media and the possibility of positive effects from such a press law for independent media was not a unanimous concept among participants: "I believe that all that scaffolding [Cuba's system of the press] is only going to change if there is some sort of political change in the country. But I don't believe that any change is going to come from inside [the media system], meaning the change that people are debating is needed in the Cuban press. It is not going to come from within because [the media] are controlled from above [by government]." For one independent producer, the state-owned nature of official media and the politics that govern them make it impossible for the coexistence of different political and social agendas in media:

If the government decides to regulate us, that will imply legalization, and to legalize independent media in the country will imply freedom of the press, and freedom of the press implies freedom of expression. Allowing freedom of the press is equivalent to a political aperture. So our work is immersed in an unequal power conflict. We, as independent journalists are not disputing power with official journalists, we are disputing power with the Communist Party, because they have lost control of the narration of the country.

Venturing to predict precisely what the near future will look like for independent journalists in Cuba is not the aim of this research. However, it is fair to say they are bound to make further progress as access to the Internet becomes more widely available in Cuba, if the government continues to allow it and people improve their purchasing power thanks to the small yet expanding private market. However, these journalists may encounter setbacks, including further arrests, intimidation, or migration of personnel that may tire of working in these challenging contexts, but it is unlikely that these new media initiatives will disappear completely, even under more dire circumstances. Yes, new media innovation has been made possible thanks

to new technologies, penetration of the Internet, continued disconnection of official media with its potential workforce as well as the agenda of its audience, and the absence of legal prohibition of digital news publishing. Nevertheless, although this combination of factors has made possible a flowering of independent media, these are not the factors that will guarantee its continued existence or its expansion. The driving force that motivates the independent media producers interviewed for this study and guarantee the existence of independent media on the island are not practical matters of the everyday work lives of journalists but rather the chance to be a source of good for Cuban society and their profession.

All of the young media producers interviewed in the spring of 2017 described personal inspiration by and commitment to Cuba and its overall civic and social improvement, which will continue to fuel their work, even if they are not paid adequately (if at all). Conversely, in editorials published in Cuban new media, producers have let readers know that their inspiration is not a guarantee against failure. Many of these independent initiatives have been on the brink of closure many times (Alvarez-Rodriguez 2017), but what may sustain independent media initiatives on the island is the growing desire in the country for knowing and informing. As information from outside the nation presses in, and information produced by Cubans inside the nation becomes more representative of Cuban realities and the people themselves, the political elite of the country (the members of the Communist Party of Cuba) may find it harder to justify and enforce a closed information system. There will continue to be journalists and non-journalist professionals that will have simple, yet disruptive aspirations: "What I will like the most for my country is if we could right now leave this café and walk to the nearest newsstand, to buy any Cuban newspaper, from *Granma* to *14ymedio* [Media founded by political dissident and blogger Yoani Sanchez]. To have diversity, you know? Because that is what journalism is."

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The interviews conducted for this paper during the spring of 2017 revealed that while there is a significant variety of opinions among independent media producers over their motivations and decision-making processes, in general they have a clear sense of self and mission that is separate from that of the state media. More importantly, the interviewees seem to agree that the future of media in Cuba cannot and should not come only from the established centralized system of information. By reporting issues not covered by official media, developing an independent and personal voice or longer forms of reportages not present in the official press, or by aiming at monitoring the political power in the nation instead of assuming the preservationist position of the official media, independent media producers show that they are willing to offer practical solutions to address the limitations of the national press system that have been noted by foreign and Cuban researchers alike, as well as in this research.

...the Cuban media system was not conceived to invite influence from the findings of communication scholarship, since this could have weakened the standing of the Revolution as primary guidance...

Their motivations are varied, from wanting to improve the practice of journalism in Cuba, to desiring more freedom to introduce more dynamic genre forms, to even wanting to make a more comfortable living. In many instances, all of those motivations could be present in a single individual, which allows us to think that young media producers on the island have long separated themselves and their journalistic practices from the militant-style mission that *Granma's* editor Lázaro Barredo Medina outlined in 1987 as a core value of journalistic practice in the country (Bamrud, 1987). It is important to note that there is not a sense of cohesion around all the independent media of the island. The different outlets publishing either from inside or outside Cuba are mostly starting to experiment with more diverse journalistic models and practices, but they have yet to become an established and cohesive paradigm in Cuba's media ecosystem.

Projecting what the future media landscape of Cuba will be, given the current social and political context is thus, a puzzling task. Critical research on Cuban media and journalism are lacking, for the most part because of the political function of the media in Cuban society (García Luis, 2013). Investigating invariably means questioning and perhaps exploring alternative options; the Cuban media system was not conceived to invite influence from the findings of communication scholarship, since this could have weakened the standing of the Revolution as primary guidance, a Revolution that in the words of its leader, was already under attack by foreign interests (Walters 1977). This lack of empirical questioning around the role of media in society beyond its function as a propaganda arm of the Revolution has created its own problems, evident today in the official media's disconnection with its audiences, among the problems acknowledged by official media professionals (Elizalde 2014).

...in Cuba, it is not only the system of media that needs a "reactualization"; rather, the entire government system is engaged in a reflective process of "reactualization."

Borrowing the words of current president Raúl Castro (2010), in Cuba, it is not only the system of media that needs a "reactualization"; rather, the entire government system is engaged in a reflective process of "reactualization." For Cuban media researchers like Julio García Luis (2013), in the field of media, this would suppose an improvement in the reproduction and creation of the expressions of the societal system. That a socialist country can benefit from the positive effects of a media system in the creation and the reproduction of a societal system is beyond question. However, the static, preservationist position that the system of the press has assumed for a half century has, coincidentally, endangered that very position. For example, Julio García Luis' research was published ten years after it was finished, just as the first non-state new media publication was established in Cuba. More importantly, as suggested here, a few years later, this inherent problem has helped to spark private initiatives outside the national media system. For some independent media producers, the creation of independent media was the sole alternative, since the ability of the national press to reform itself is doubtful. Moreover, the development of a sense of self-determination removed from the political and social agenda of the country explored by Venegas (2010) in the beginning of this paper, corroborated by the findings of personal motivations found here, suggest that even reforms in the system of the press that continue to be under the government control might not be a definitive solution for the establishment of more inclusive journalistic practices in the country.

As shown in the report from the Committee to Protect Journalists (2016) and this study, an increasing number of young journalists have developed hopes and plans for the practice of journalism and the creation of media content in the island that are distinct and separate from the historical role of the media designated by the leaders and institutions of the country. Even when the practice of journalism is limited by having to operate in the margins, and precisely because of it, many journalists have established working routines that have grown to be completely removed from the tutelage of the government. Assimilating agenda-setting practices, choices of coverage and aesthetic preferences revealed here into the national system of the press seems unlikely.

At such a crossroads in the history of Cuba, how can a new and functional system of the press be established that will effectively regulate and respond to the challenges, plurality, diversity of styles and editorial lines that are currently altering the Cuban media landscape? More importantly, in what interest should the established media system and the political body that regulates it, The Communist Party of Cuba, expect to share the presence and influence of the national press with the Cuban people? In the opinion of García Luis (2013), although it is indispensable to establish a rationale that will validate the work of government-sponsored media beyond its immediate political function, it is also necessary that that same rationale demystify the ideological discourse around freedom of speech and freedom of the press in capitalist nations. Cuban researcher Rosa Miriam Elizalde (2014), echoed these sentiments. For independent media producers who work outside the governmental umbrella, and who believe in an independent press system, such conclusions by investigators in national universities can be discouraging, and further confirmation that people within the national media system are not looking to include independent initiatives in any possible upcoming national press law. It will most likely rest with the body of the Communist Party to understand the advantages of regulating an emerging pluralistic Cuban media landscape, and to push for reform that will include private initiatives.

At the current moment, it is improbable that the Communist Party of Cuba perceives any urgency in pushing for changes to the national media system. For starters, independent media initiatives are fairly young, non-cohesive with one another and scattered across the country and the world. In addition, new media readership among Cuban citizens is low and unstable, as suggested here. New media are not opinion leaders inside the country. All of this guides me to suggest that in the short term there won't be any drastic changes in the regulatory aspects of the media system of Cuba. The advantages of having a more diverse media ecosystem do not yet outweigh the advantages of having a unified and controlled media system for the ideological body of the country, The Communist Party of Cuba. Because the party also controls and regulates the channels by which audiences access media, like radio and television, printing presses and all other forms of telecommunications, it is also in the Party's power to slow the development and diversification of new media, as well as citizen access to the Internet, although this is not an absolute control in the absence of a media law. It is in the small fissures

Because the party also controls and regulates the channels by which audiences access media, like radio and television, printing presses and all other forms of telecommunications, it is also in the Party's power to slow the development and diversification of new media, as well as citizen access to the Internet, although this is not an absolute control in the absence of a media law. It is in the small fissures of the controlled system that challenges to the Party begin. It is also in the nature of the state-controlled media system that the contradictions that could eventually question its existence are born.

of the controlled system that challenges to the Party begin. It is also in the nature of the state-controlled media system that the contradictions that could eventually question its existence are born.

Granted, there are still many inconveniences in working outside the official media system; for example, the possibility of being prosecuted. Many independent journalists do not have an official or legal integration to the country's labor force. In the past, Cuba has prosecuted people in such cases under the Law 1231, also known as the "Law on Loafing," approved in 1971 to increase productivity in the country. However, Law 1231 has not been enforced in many years, and it is perhaps unlikely that will be enforced now. But the lack of enforcement of Law 1231 does not leave the Cuban government without legal tools to take up against independent journalists. Article 76 of the Penal Code of the Republic of Cuba established "The Danger State and Security Measures" (Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular 1978). This pre-criminal law, also known as the Law on Social Danger, declares that the state of dangerousness "is considered as the special proclivity in which some people are likely to commit crimes, proven by the individual's shown conduct in manifested contradiction to socialist norms and morality" (Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular 1979).

...the security of independent media as of now rests in the relatively small attention that they can get from audiences inside the country or in some other cases the choice of editorial lines removed from political commentary.

No members of the independent media studied in this research have been prosecuted under this law since Raúl's 2010 speech, which is perceived as a sign of openness in the country compared to the past, although other political activists and journalists working for or collaborating with historically opposition media of Miami have, and in general all independent journalists continue to face brutal suppression. Nevertheless, and although the continued creation of independent media in the island does point to a slight relaxation of the regulation of freedom of expression, active political dissidence is not allowed in the country and continues to be forcefully silenced. This might suggest that the security of independent media as of now rests in the relatively small attention that they can get from audiences inside the country or in some other cases the choice of editorial lines removed from political commentary. It is accurate to assert that the new independent media producers are participating in a media landscape that is more plural and diverse than it has been in more than fifty years. But the current scenario is not necessarily very favorable for those producers trying to do investigative journalism or political commentary, since they are the ones that are actively monitoring power.

In addition, it is notable that the making of this study faced several limitations. As mentioned earlier, the field of Cuban communications still lacks a substantive body of research, past and present. The gaps in research are even greater for investigators living outside the country. Causes for this gap include access to information and travel restrictions; however, in the field of communications, foreign researchers and particularly Americans have yet to become more interested in the canons of Latin America communications. In Cuba, researchers are far from developing theories of communication that will suit the challenges and realities of Cuban media. The current scenario will afford a great opportunity for developing multidisciplinary research that will better inform the formal and informal communicative principles that govern the Cuban people, their media system, and the State.

Limitations particular to me as the researcher included some potential personal biases, but also advantages, given that I grew up in Cuba. An insider's view of the journalism curriculum at the University of Havana and an internship at the state publication *Granma* were both sources of potential bias and advantages in this research. In this investigation, however, my own curiosities about media development in this newly accessible Cuba, and the thoughts and experiences of the journalists doing the innovating, as well as an overarching belief in factual and truthful journalism, inclusive of all voices, guided this study. Time was also a limitation for the development of this study. Since this research was conducted as a graduation thesis for a Bachelor of Arts in Communications at the University of Pennsylvania, the data gathering and analyses had to be conducted in the space of a few months, which did not allow me to pursue larger samples or all possible strings and nuances of the new media landscape of Cuba. It is my hope that this research will serve as inspiration and supplement for other researchers interested in Cuban journalism and media ecology.

Additionally, in the course of my interviews, many important points for possible regulations of the Cuban media landscape were brought up by some of the nation's young journalists. The views of scholars about the subject, nationals or foreign, were also included. Because this research includes them and puts them in context, future research about possible regulations for media in Cuba might use the challenges mentioned in this research to better advise the drafting of a fair and inclusive media law for the country. Moreover, future research about Cuba, particularly further in-depth studies of journalistic coverage in both independent and state media, might contribute to an increased understanding of the many factors, actors and policies influencing the ecosystem of media in Cuba, especially in terms of what serves the needs of the people of the nation. For this purpose, future research could also include studies of audience engagement, surveys, and analyses of current Cuban state media operations. Importantly, ethnographic and comparative studies of media coverage and practices over time can reveal how new and independent media and the choices made by their producers are impacting state media practices and coverage and the development of Cuban journalism.

Finally, far from being a limited topic, this paper recognizes the many opportunities for further research about media in Cuba. Research that is being developed by media professionals and researchers on the island should also be explored by other media professionals abroad, particularly by those of Cuban origin who have cultural and emotional proximity to the island. As we close this brief research narrative, the narrative of Cuba itself is being developed, ever more so, by a plurality of voices at the center and the margins, as well as outside of the media system. The Colombian mountains and Ethiopian grasslands are no longer the main foreign scenarios for Cuba's narration, and with the aid of fair and truthful investigation and reporting, that narration will resonate back to Cubans, the ones that will continue to build an identity and a nation of it. Now, let us go.

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Endnotes

- ⁱ The Union of Cuban Journalists (UPEC) is the national institution in charge of approving and regulating the production and creation of journalism in the island. All national newspapers and journalists need to be members of the UPEC in order to be recognized as journalist by the Cuban government and be allowed to receive press accreditation and recognition.



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 2017**

JANUARY 23, 2017

CARGC JIHADI NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURES (JINCS) WORKSHOP

The Mongols and the Khmer Rouge: Daesh's Conceptual Forerunners

John Vilanova, CARGC Doctoral Fellow

MARCH 2, 2017

CARGC PANEL

Teaching and Learning Global Media Studies

Christopher Ali, University of Virginia's Department of Media Studies; CARGC Fellow
 Fabienne Darling-Wolf, Temple University's School of Media and Communication
 Marwan M. Kraidy, University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication
 Toby Miller, University of California Riverside's Department of Media and Cultural Studies (Emeritus)
 Nancy Morris, Temple University's School of Media and Communication
 Patrick Murphy, Temple University's School of Media and Communication

MARCH 20, 2017

CARGC UNDERGRADUATE COLLOQUIUM

Emergent Voices and Evolving Agendas: Writing Realities in Cuba's New Media Landscape

Mariela Morales-Suárez, CARGC Undergraduate Fellow

MARCH 27, 2017

CARGC BOOK TALK

Media Localism: The Policies of Place

Christopher Ali, CARGC Fellow, Assistant Professor, University of Virginia

MARCH 30, 2017

CARGC COLLOQUIUM

Sexual Mobilities: Selling Cosmopolitanism with Same-Sex Materials in Korean, UK, and US Sex Museums

Katherine Sender, Professor, University of Michigan

APRIL 24, 2017

CARGC COLLOQUIUM

From Kale to Broadband: Localism in the Digital Age

Christopher Ali, CARGC Fellow, Assistant Professor, University of Virginia

MAY 4, 2017

CARGC JIHADI NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION AND CULTURES (JINCS) WORKSHOP

Emerging Work on Communicative Dimensions of Islamic State

Much of the research on Islamic State's communication and media operations has emerged from a counter-terrorism framework. The Center for Advanced Research in Global Communication seeks to encourage original scholarly contributions that grasp Islamic State and other radical groups from a broad multi-disciplinary perspective, encompassing the humanities and social sciences. Consistent with CARGC's mission to mentor early-career scholars, this small, by-invitation only, workshop is a non-public event featuring emerging work by graduate students from JINCS/CARGC and around the world.