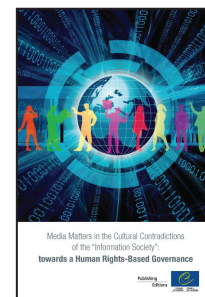Frau-Meigs, D. *Media matters in the cultural contradictions of the "information society" – Towards a human rights-based governance*. Estrasburg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2011, 390 pages.

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Human rights as indicators of the quality of information society governance

The author of this book, Divina Frau-Meigs, lecturer in media sociology at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, and experienced in international forums, associations such as IAMCR and ECREA (of which she is currently the Vice President), starts from the paradigm provided by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) promoted by the UN (2001-2005). Frau-Meigs, who took part in the WSIS, analyses the results of the 10 lines of action proposed, as well as the works produced by the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which has also been closely followed by myself, as an example of the cultural contradictions of the "information society".

This book is of interest to all those studying public communication, information policies, communication ethics and law. It can also provide an important focus for sociology and e-democracy as it tackles the issue of internet activism, so important in this decade of the 21st century.

One of the dominant questions in the current debate concerns the authorities that have to deal with this society, as well as which regulations will be established in the economy and culture. Frau-Meigs also theorises about postmodernism and how the postulates of Daniel Bell in the 1960s might be used today, or not, as catalysts for this IS (*information society*), which she places within the so-called "cyberist moment" (p. 14).

Characteristic of this moment is the change or mutation of "cultural goods" into "cultural services". In fact, the 2007 Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) certainly opts for the concept of *services* rather than *goods*. This leads to a basic change in the critical perspective of researchers into the economy of communication (such as Greffle and Sonnac), as they believe that we are seeing the emergence of a new *metasector*, not only in the classic sense of *media* or *infomedia* but rather *converging digital industries*, including both Google and entertainment content providers. These would include culture and media industries (CMI) and their transformation into information and communication industries due to the great influx from the internet sector, telecommunications and machinery production.

The book's main thesis is that ICTs provide a great opportunity to improve human rights, not only regarding the access and right to information but also education, dialogue and participation, requiring greater commitment from governments and more responsibility from the private sector and civil society. This entails widening the very concept of "governance", as this is no longer simply the administration of domains or IP names but all the rights and relations of the information society which is, by definition, international.

To achieve this aim, the author looks to articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that might support this perspective and suggests that another article should be added to the 1948 Declaration, which would be the 31st, that includes issues such as the right to the internet, the protection of identity and online memory, net neutrality, interoperability, dignity and the borderline universal nature of these rights, among other aspects.

The following are among the conclusions and proposals made by extending internet governance:
- Avoiding the techno discourse that evades personal rights
- Granting a central role to the media from a social and cognitive point of view
- Distinguishing the various content and media plans on the internet: free, open or public, so as not to confuse the principles applicable to each one
- Modulating the information society and concentrating more on media education (p. 358), including students and teachers and promoting their training as crucial to participation.

In fact, the book ends with a chapter on education and the media. Its proposal is that media literacy should be tackled from the perspective of human rights but without using them to justify one point of view or another. Challenges such as educating young immigrants in ICTs or studying how young people

Quaderns del CAC 37, vol. XIV (2) - December 2011 (131-132)

131

perceive regulation are some of its concerns.

It coins the term *u-Literacy*, referring to the ubiquitous nature of the internet and telephones. It supports measures such as the US government's *i-rate*, which is the universal service fund donated to colleges and libraries.

It finally concludes by stating that the only possible global governance model is one that includes co-regulation, where *soft law* must be included, a term already incorporated into other areas of law, which requires consensus and principles (as both UNESCO and the ICANN are already attempting to do) without getting rid of the pre-existing aspects but relying on the responsibility of all actors in civil society.

Frau-Meigs's view is highly optimistic or within the realms of "should be". For example, a more in-depth critique is missing of the effectiveness of the self-regulation agreements and pacts that have already been adopted by international bodies, such as the *Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* (UN 2002), which did not secure the approval of all member states on an issue of apparent consensus.

The book has ten chapters and an appendix with a list of recommendations and decisions by the Council of Europe regarding the issues covered by the book. There are other authors that have worked along these lines in the 1990s, when the ICANN was presented as a model of governance. Now this proposal does not seem enough because it's too technical. This point has been (and is being) studied by different stakeholders and the author is undoubtedly representing a specific sector of civil society.

Authors are not included from the North American area, such as Michael Froomkin, or from the Spanish sphere, of note being Manuel Desantes, Javier Cremades, Lorenzo Cotino and Pedro de Miguel Asensio.

132

Quaderns del CAC 37, vol. XIV (2) - December 2011