Communication in pandemic. Technological and symbolic implications in the experience of young university students

Comunicación en pandemia. Implicaciones tecnológicas y simbólicas en la experiencia de jóvenes universitarios

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Abstract

Communication, its technological structures, and its symbolic values have been dislocated by the digitization of everyday life as a consequence of the pandemic. This context impacted the university youth experience, so it is important to analyze the sociocultural changes regarding the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) of a group of university students, the connection time, the device used and their relationship with the domestic space during the pandemic in Mexico. For this, a theoretical framework is articulated from Cultural Studies for analyzing the youth-technology relationship during the pandemic and identify its relevance within the contemporary youth experience. The methodology used has a mixed approach with a group of Mexican university students of the Communication bachelor (N=29), where a form and a focus group were used to recover their experiences.

The results show that the pandemic abolished the borders between the intimate and the public, generating negotiation processes between family members on the use of devices and domestic spaces. In addition, university, family and social activities increased the connection time of students, but also resignified domestic spaces due to the overlapping of activities. Finally, it is recognized that the bedroom of the participants becomes the strategic space for the youth experience in the pandemic because the university, family and socialization activities took place in the same space.

Keywords

Internet, ICT, mobile communication, cultural studies, youth, domestication, youth experience, everyday life.

Resumen

La comunicación, sus estructuras tecnológicas y sus valores simbólicos se dislocaron por la digitalización de la vida cotidiana como consecuencia de la pandemia. Este contexto impactó la experiencia juvenil universitaria, por lo que resulta importante analizar los cambios socioculturales en cuanto al uso de las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TIC) de un grupo de universitarios, el tiempo de conexión, el dispositivo utilizado y su relación con el espacio doméstico durante la pandemia en México.

Para ello se articula un marco teórico desde los Estudios Culturales para analizar la relación jóvenes-tecnología durante la pandemia e identificar su relevancia dentro de la experiencia juvenil contemporánea. La metodología utilizada tiene un enfoque mixto con un grupo de estudiantes universitarios mexicanos de la licenciatura en Comunicación (N=29), donde se empleó un formulario y un grupo focal para recuperar sus experiencias.

Los resultados muestran que la pandemia suprimió las fronteras entre lo íntimo y público, generando procesos de negociación entre los miembros de la familia sobre el uso de dispositivos y los espacios domésticos. Además, las actividades educativas, familiares y sociales incrementaron el tiempo de conexión de jóvenes universitarios, pero además resignificaron los espacios domésticos por el solapamiento de actividades. Finalmente, se reconoce que la habitación de los participantes se vuelve el espacio estratégico para la experiencia juvenil en la pandemia porque las actividades universitarias, familiares y de socialización se desarrollaron en un mismo lugar.

Palabras clave

Internet, TIC, comunicación móvil, estudios culturales, jóvenes, domesticación, experiencia juvenil, vida cotidiana.

Introduction

The youth experience of university students changed during the pandemic. In Mexico, it is estimated that 89 940 students of higher education did not complete the 2019-2020 school year and that 44.6% said because it was directly or indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic (INEGI, 2020).

Online classes, the restriction of activities in public spaces, the digital gap in Internet coverage and access, as well as the heterogeneous availability of devices in households were factors that disrupted the youth experience in the pandemic. Therefore, the research question that guides this work is how the pandemic affected the relationship of university students with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the Internet?

To answer this, a theoretical framework is conducted from Cultural Studies and its focus on the use of technological devices by young university students (Winocur, 2006, 2009; Lemus-Pool, 2019). Then, the methodological strategy used to recover, systematize and analyze the impact of the pandemic on the experience of a group of university students of the Communication career at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) is presented.

Finally, the results show the qualitative and quantitative effects on the experience of young people during the pandemic.

Theoretical framework

The perspective of Cultural Studies or Communication and Culture[1] Studies offers a conceptual-methodological framework to analyze and interpret the double articulation (social uses and symbolic values) of media as they are integrated into everyday life. From this perspective, the relationship between young people and technology begins with mass media, however, since the eighties of the twentieth century their presence in the youth experience makes them an object of study (Medina, 2010); as ICTs are created and innovated, young people show greater techno-operational skill and attribute greater cultural meanings to them than adults, so they become characteristic elements and at the same time distinctive of the new generations.

By expanding the contributions of Cultural Studies on the Internet and ICT, it is possible to affirm that these are elements that integrate to culture and simultaneously (re)produce it because they represent socialization spaces and produce collective imaginaries (Lemus-Pool, 2019; Martín-Barbero, 2017; Morduchowicz, 2008; Kellner, 1995). Thus, ICT and the Internet are inseparable elements to the material-structural condition of each young person and are at the same time indissoluble components of the contemporary youth experience (Becerra, 2015; Lemus-Pool, 2019). The symbolic burden that technologies acquire for young people derives from their role as main agents in the construction of youth identity and their support to make them visible in public space (Becerra, 2015).

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1   According to Crespo and Parra (2017) and Martín-Barbero (2017) the notion of Cultural Studies had some resistance in its institutionalization process in Latin America, since authors such as García Canclini and Martín-Barbero had already conducted research in this field and because the western essence of this current left aside the ontological particularities of Latin America.

Since Cultural Studies, ICT and the Internet do not have a consensual name or definition (Morley 2008; Silverstone, 1996; Williams, 2011). Therefore, it is proposed to see these elements as technological devices, i.e., technological objects designed under a communicative function and that are appropriate according to the needs, possibilities and realities of the subject; therefore, their use is heterogeneous and determined both by the material and historical conditions of those who decide to use them. From Cultural Studies, the notion of technological device can be related with the process of technological domestication (Silverstone and Haddon, 1996; Silverstone, 1996, 2004) and mobile privatization (Williams, 2011). This conceptual articulation becomes empirically relevant in the pandemic: the lockdown to avoid contagion gave a new symbolic burden to the home and transformed it into the daily-life operation center. This process not only blurred the boundaries between the public and private spheres, but the spatial and techno-operational overlap of the activities of the family members reconfigured the individual and collective dynamics around the technological devices fully integrated into the domestic. In other words, the pandemic not only redefined the home, but simultaneously reconfigured the subject-technology relationship and recalibrated the use and meaning of technological devices.

In general terms, the model of technology domestication recognizes three particular processes: objectification (spatial reconfiguration of the home so that technological devices can 'take their place'), incorporation (symbolic dislocation of individual/family rituals to integrate technological devices and use them) and conversion (legitimization of family members in public space through the uses of devices as a symbol of cultural integration); all these dynamics are closely linked and derive from technological[2] appropriation, i.e., the transition of a device from public space to the private sphere that represents the home (Silverstone and Haddon, 1996; Silverstone, Silverstone, 2004). Thus, domesticating technology describes the process that reduces the uncertainty of a new technological device and alien to the individual through its progressive integration into specific practices and common spaces such as the home. Despite this, the domestication of technology and its respective theoretical-methodological model have been the subject of criticism for the

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2   This definition does not contradict to Latin American studies on technological appropriation, on the contrary, this current is heir to these contributions made from Cultural Studies, although it has been very little visible in its genealogy (Sandoval and Cabello, 2019; Sandoval, 2022).

importance given to the home and its apparent conceptual linearity (Sandoval and Cabello, 2019).

The importance of the home in the domestication process rests is because the first encounter of the contemporary subject with a technological-communicative object takes place in the domestic space (Olmedo-Neri, 2022). This means that technological devices are not isolated to family and social dynamics, on the contrary, they are spatially articulated and according to the meaning of each space or the practice that develops there individually/collectively. Silverstone and Haddon (1996) define these processes as objectification and incorporation, respectively.

Historically, the domestication of technology began in the 20th century as media, and later technological devices, became progressively structural elements of the home (Helles, 2014). In this way, each technological device not only relates to space, but together articulate a system of meanings and symbols derived from their incorporation into the communicative practices that are experienced *inside* and *outside* the home (Olmedo-Neri, 2022). Thus, any space is built not only by the objects that make it up, but by the symbols and processes that derive from the simultaneous use of its material and spatial components at the individual and/or collective level.

In most contemporary homes, technological devices are spatially distributed according to socialization dynamics or the functions to which they are articulated; in addition to this spatial-functional assembly, each device is operationally interconnected with the others to form a technological-digital environment (Olmedo-Neri, 2022). Although each device changes place according to family practices and their rules of (co)experience, they all promote a differentiated internal consumption, as well as a unified exterior look through their screens and the resulting communication itself (Baudrillard, 1988). From this presence, media and technological devices acquire an empirical ubiquity that functionally and symbolically combines them with everyday life (Silverstone, 2004).

However, in the face of abrupt digitalization, the heterogeneous technological-communicative infrastructure and the spatial overlap of labor, educational, family and social activities caused by the pandemic, domestic spaces underwent an adjustment both in their meaning and in their use.

In other words, during the pandemic, the home acquired a strategic role for the reproduction of daily life, undergoing spatial and symbolic transformations.

In this context, the home acquired an 'intelligent' character as it "offers not so much an image of mobility, but a 'sensitive space' that, as is often said, goes deeply beyond the interior/exterior and work/home divisions, in the sense that it really makes it unnecessary to move anywhere" (Morley, 2008, p. 122). In this transformation, technological devices were contingently articulated through those internal and external social practices that were developed simultaneously in the home, however, this did not prevent people from developing strategies to maintain the difference between the public and the private, although they had varied results. Thus, the conceptual and empirical preponderance of the home rests on the fact that it is there where the double articulation is manifested (Silverstone, 1996), since the means and technological devices operate simultaneously as a machine that is operated and a medium that has an ambivalent window function by which one looks and is looked at.

Regarding the analytical linearity of domestication, it is worth saying that this term has a nominative sense to refer to a set of heterogeneous processes not for its essence, but for the elements involved: the subject and the device. Thus, domestication recognizes the empirical heterogeneity in the process of technological appropriation: social class, gender, spatial location, lifestyle, experience with other technological objects, techno-operative design, advertising rhetoric and the objectives that the subject hopes to achieve with the partial or complete integration of these in their daily life, evidencing that not everyone can/want to appropriate technology and that not everyone appropriates them in the same way (Silverstone, 1996; Silverstone and Haddon, 1996).

Thus, the domestication degree is determined by the interests and willingness of the subject, by his/her socio-historical condition and by the operative resistances of the device. The latter is important because technological means and devices are not neutral (Sandoval, 2022; Silverstone and Haddon, 1996), on the contrary, they have a distinctive material and symbolic stamp that gives them a relative autonomy product of their commercial production; only with domestication the independence of the device is reduced to meet the designs of the subject who submits it. In other words, the domestication of technology allows us to recognize the levels of technological appropriation, as well as the tensions between the device and the subjective power of the subject. This allows us to think of domestication as a continuum where exclusion/resistance and integration/appropriation are its extreme poles, so that subjects move permanently always from their possibilities, interests, and realities.

For its part, the notion of mobile privatization (Williams, 2011) makes sense in the media and those devices that are gradually incorporated into daily practices to the extent that "the home, the workplace, leisure and transportation become dependent on a range of technological services that impose a continuous connection" (Moraes, 2007, p. 24). Mobile privatization is seen in the pandemic context by the high demand for technological devices for individual use to carry out digitized labor, educational and social activities.

While technological devices such as radio, television and PC were anchored to the home space, the cellular and laptop are devices that move with the user and his/her practices. These devices are relevant for university students; for example, the cell phone not only represents "the total personalization of the technology, but many users consider it as a part of their body, like a wristwatch" (Morley, 2008, p. 129). For young people, the mobile phone has become an extension of their socialization capacity, as well as a space for (re)designing their identity, memory, and autonomy in the face of the spatial dynamics and social hierarchies that develop inside and outside the home. Thus, "cell phones accompany their owners in the different contexts that constitute daily life" (Helles, 2014, p. 536).

The laptop, on the other hand, acquires a disruptive sense because its incorporation into family dynamics was promoted from the outside (the school), as part of the incorporation of technology in the teaching-learning process (Becerra, 2015; Sánchez, 2020, Winocur, 2006; Winocur and Sánchez, 2018), generating a process of strangeness in the family derived from the different domestication degrees by its members (Winocur, 2009). This leads to two parallel processes: the extension of children's autonomy from their parents' authority, and the increase in adults' uncertainty about their children's safety in the face of the decrease in their exercise of power on the Internet (Morduchowicz, 2008; Olmedo-Neri, 2022).

Thus, the cell phone and the laptop have become the most relevant articulating devices for contemporary youth, but at the same time have dislocated the production of sense and coexistence in the home (Winocur and Sánchez, 2018; Sánchez, 2020). This happens by the individuality that promotes the personalization of technology, as well as by the possibility of access to the Internet offered by these devices, which modifies family dynamics and their knowledge/power structures (Winocur, 2009; Lemus-Pool, 2019).

In the pandemic, the use of these technological devices deepened in the home and in the youth experience. The confinement and digitization of daily

life modified the behaviors historically constructed by young people to contain the uncertainty of this context. Thus, the use of the Internet and technological devices in the home accounts for the transformation of the house as the main way to connect and interact during confinement.

Based on the above, Cultural Studies serve as a perspective to analyze: 1) the role that each device plays within the biographical experience of individuals, 2) the function that technology has in the framework of everyday activities and 3) the relationship built with the place where social and communicative practices are developed. Therefore, it is useful to recognize the relevance of the device and its use in relation to the reconfiguration of practices that materialize in a home where the private, the public and the intimate overlapped (Morduchowicz, 2008; Martín-Barbero, 2017). However, not only is it enough to analyze the transition from a technological device alien and foreign to a common and intimate one, but it is necessary to approach its assembly with the space-times and the operational function they play within the communicative, cultural and social practices that the subject develops on a daily basis.

Methodology

The research has a mixed character applied to a group of 29 university students (12 men and 17 women), whose ages range between 20 and 26 years. The participants study the career of Communication Sciences, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, UNAM. The delimitation criteria of the study are: 1) the period studied, 2) the techniques used, 3) the units of analysis and 4) scope of the research.

For the first point, this was carried out from April 1st to May 31, 2021. Time delimitation is important because in those months the semester was in the middle of its development. Thus, Internet use for educational activities was neither at its lowest level (at the beginning of the semester) nor at its highest (at the end).

The techniques were used in two stages: in the quantitative part, a questionnaire was applied in Google Forms to characterize the use of technological devices, this implied that each participant recorded the activities carried out on a weekday and those carried out during Saturday or Sunday. The second stage had a qualitative character because a focus group was carried out

after the systematization of the data. This technique has an interactive character to deal with a specific topic with the subjects investigated, so the focus group not only recovers the role of the participants, but contextualizes the information obtained, identifying those nuances and logics that the data do not show (Arboleda, 2008).

The units of analysis in the questionnaire were: the time of connection, the device used, the place at home where the device was used, the purpose of the connection and whether the parents performed any surveillance action.

Finally, since the research question is articulated with the use of ICT and Internet by the participants; the work does not address the economic context of these young people, nor the results transcend their urban territorial location. These delimitations are important because socioeconomic status was not manifested in the experience of the participants during the pandemic. In addition, the urban territory in which they live is characterized by greater connectivity than rural areas (Asociación de Internet MX, 2020; Olmedo-Neri, 2022).

Results and discussion

Studies on university youth during the pandemic have focused on the educational field (Ortiz, 2020; Reimers and Marmolejo, 2020), on psychological effects (Lugo-González *et al.,* 2021; González, 2020) and to a lesser extent on the youth experience derived from the abrupt digitalization of their activities (Banderas, 2020; Lemus, 2017; Olmedo-Neri, 2021). Therefore, the findings contribute to a perspective that assumes the role of individual experience in a context that dislocates the (re)production of everyday life.

As the pandemic forced the digitization of university student activities, the technological infrastructure of the home takes on a pivotal role. Figure 1 shows the technological and digital landscape of the participants' homes.

The heterogeneous presence of technological devices generated tensions between the members of the family and led to (re)negotiation processes regarding the use of devices, the time of use and the domestic space enabled for non-domestic activities such as education, socialization or work. These are dislocations in the process of objectification and incorporation of technological devices within the home and the sociocultural matrices of the family. The following experience shows this overlap of activities.

Figure 1

Technological and communicative infrastructure in households
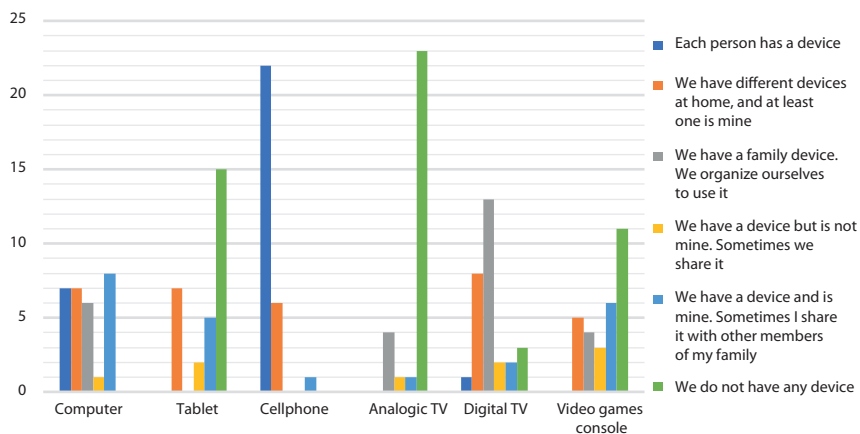
Note. Own elaboration with data from forms.

> Another chaotic aspect of this [pandemic] situation was that all family members were taking classes at about the same time (my siblings were students and my parents were teachers); then, sometimes you could hear everyone talking at the same time. (female student, 20 years old)

These tensions were dissipated as the members of the family conditioned common spaces for the digitized activity or as the pandemic context became perceptively common.

Regarding the connection time, its record allows observing the digitization of social, educational and communicative practices of young people, particularly in the pandemic context. Table 1 shows the connection time, its average and its distribution according to gender.

These data exceed the figures recorded in Mexico before the pandemic (Asociación de Internet MX, 2020; Espinosa, 2019). The increase in connection time derives from the saturation of school activities, their overlap with household chores and the (restricted) experience of youth experience through technological devices. The following experience exemplifies this:

The most frustrating thing was that all teachers felt they owned our time, or at least they did. The routine was wake up, three classes, eat, homework. Repeat. One task after another and even seeing the cell phone to consume other content was tiring. (female student, 21 years old)

Table 1

Hours on the Internet

Day	Hours on the Internet		Overall average	Total
	Average Usage (Men)	**Average Usage (Females)**		
Weekdays	13.3	12.3	12.7	368.5
Weekend	11.5	7.6	9.2	267

Note. Own elaboration with data from forms.

The fatigue of consuming digital content, even if it was not educational, is a transformation sign of the subjectivity of young people regarding the digital space. Increasing the connection time, but restricting its purposes contributed to the crisis in the youth experience to the degree of changing the perception of the Internet: from a place of entertainment and socialization for girls and young people became a space for training, education and work. This is a dislocation in the conversion process, as the adult gaze was imposed on the defined and legitimized uses of the Internet by young people.

Regarding gender, it should be noted that women decreased their internet activity by 38.2% over the weekend and men by only 13.5%. In the focus group, some young women attributed this reduction in connection time to the performance of domestic activities. This difference reinforces findings in other research on the division of family labor and the (over)burden of domestic activities on women (Avendaño *et al*., 2020). The pandemic did not involve a renegotiation of domestic activities even though all family members were there longer, on the contrary, the division of domestic work based on gender was maintained, deepening the experiential difference of lockdown between girls and young people and reinforcing the myth of technology as a predominantly male field.

During the pandemic, the use of the Internet by young people not only increased by educational activities, but this reduced the time spent on other biographically constructed practices in the digital space such as peer interac-

tion, entertainment, or family activities. In other words, there was more time, but very little of it was destined for the activities of the youth. Some participants indicated that this derived from the imposition of the adult-centrist view on the digital space, modifying the Internet-youth relationship (Becerra, 2015). The following reflection illustrates this change.

> ... many teachers still "took advantage" that we were at home to leave much more homework with the excuse of "so that they were distracted or have something to do", when many of us still had homework, we still needed a break from technology. (female student, 21 years old)

Teachers exaggerated the skills and interests of young people about the digital space, which arbitrarily increased the number of school activities and contributed to the redistribution of time on the Internet and its purpose. What for young people meant as positive and innovative vindicate the myth of digital natives and all the differential implications with adults (Vázquez, 2015), under the pandemic context this myth affected their youth experience: young people began to reflect and, in some cases, to question their 'innate' skills around the Internet and devices, particularly their use, perception and domestication.

Therefore, for the participants in this study, online education not only represented an emerging activity, but also took a greater amount of time, modifying the uses and purposes of the Internet established before the pandemic, particularly those related to socialization and youth cultural consumption.

In addition to time, technological devices are pivotal means for access to and use of the Internet; they are a precondition for connection, so their recognition and diversification allows to define the technological environment of young people within the home (Olmedo-Neri, 2022). Table 2 shows the connection time and the type of device used by the participants.

The cell phone and the computer are the most used devices for their weekend connection. These findings reinforce studies that indicate that 78.9% of Mexican youth used the cell phone to connect to the digital space and carry out activities during the pandemic (INEGI, 2020). The main use of the cell phone is because it is an essential device for the contemporary youth experience, but it is also the result of negotiations on the use of devices during confinement; its private ownership guaranteed a means to follow its educational process and (re)produce its youth experience. Then, the pandemic forced

the redomestication of the cell phone to exploit its operational multifunctionality (Olmedo-Neri, 2022).

Table 2

Percentage of hours by device

Device	Percentage of hours (%)	
	Weekdays	Weekend
Cellular	34.1	57.3
Computer	31.5	18.7
Tablet	4.6	1.5
TV	3.8	7.9
Game Console	1.9	3.4
Simultaneous use of two or more devices	23.9	11.2

Note. Own elaboration with data from forms.

Although young people used mobile phones for educational, social or work activities, during the pandemic some of these uses were imposed on previous domestication in these devices. Taking online classes, reading texts or performing tasks on the mobile phone forced to start, expand or deepen the domestication of the mobile phone. These emerging uses transformed the perception of the cell phone to the degree of recognizing its limitations to manage the entire youthful experience on a single screen. For this reason, a process of disenchantment with the Internet and technological devices is hapenning; the demand for 'rest from technology' is a radical change in the perception of young people, especially because in the first studies on this relationship the perception was oriented to explore and inhabit these devices and spaces, rather than move away from them (Winocur, 2006, 2009).

The case of the tablet is different. Its usefulness and meaning still does not satisfy the requirements of young people to move mobile phones in their social and communicative practices, nor to compete with computers and the privileged space they have in their educational formation. As for the simultaneous use of two or more devices, the cellular-computer pair stands out with the highest percentage at both times of the week. Although multitasking

is perceived as an 'innate', positive and characteristic skill of young people, the saturation of activities led, in the words of one student, to dysfunctional multitasking because "he performed many activities at the same time, but poorly done" (male student, 21 years old).

On the other hand, the connection time and the place where it was made is important because although the technological device is a precondition for the connection, the location from which the participant accesses the Internet also responds to its purpose and to a certain extent to the individual-family dynamics that represents this domestic space. Table 3 shows the spaces at home with the highest preference for young participants to use the Internet.

Table 3
Time and location distribution

Home Space	Percentage of hours (%)	
	Weekdays	Weekend
Bedroom	63.5	52.8
Living Room	21.7	19.9
Dining Room	6.0	4.9
Kitchen	2.8	0.7
Outdoor spaces	2.7	8.2
Studio	1.6	11.6

Note. Own elaboration with data from forms.

According to the report of the Internet Association MX (2020) "45% of Internet users in Mexico had to increase their technological use due to the contingency" (p. 6). During the confinement, public spaces, cultural consumption and youth socialization reduced their daily relevance.

The bedroom of the participants seems to be the preferred place from which they control, design and materialize the youth experience during the pandemic. In addition, the home becomes the place where people have the longest Internet connection time (Asociación de Internet MX, 2020). This is consistent with Morduchowicz (2008), since "the worldwide trend is for the family to move from the dining room to the room" (p. 52). The following

reflection shows the perceptual transformation of the domestic space and its effects on the youth experience.

> ... the downside [of the pandemic] lies in the invasion of private space and the resignification of it. The place where you arrived after school to rest and spend your free time became a place of stress and work. (male student, 23 years old)

The symbolic transformation of the room in particular, but of the home in general, such as a classroom or office, results from the overlapping of activities in the same physical space. Thus, the pandemic suppressed the notion of free time under the idea of investing the 'excess' of time for everything that normally was not attended to for lack of it. Leisure and rest were activities that reduced in the face of the adult-centrist impulse to "take advantage" of youth instead of enjoying/experiencing it in the pandemic. In this way, "this 'idea' of free time was eliminated since (thanks to the cell phone) people had to answer and be available 24/7" (female student, 20 years).

The overlap of activities in the room not only transformed its use as a place for the management and experience of the youth experience, but also perceptively displaced the appropriation of this space. So "it was frustrating and sad that my room was my living room" (male student, 22). This disruptive sense goes hand in hand with the loss of the subject's control over its nearest space: the room. Feixa (2005) argues that the room is the first and closest space that a young person appropriates to establish their relational autonomy and thus delimit the intimate of the family and the public/external. With the pandemic, the room stopped being that place of its own, safe, and independent from the young person to live and be part of the youth experience (Silverstone, 2004). In other words, the transgression of educational, labor and social practices on the room contributed to its resignification, not necessarily positive.

Despite the young man's strangeness about his room, this did not stop him from carrying out actions of resistance that became digital communicative practices. Not turning on the camera, not using the microphone, using animated backgrounds or just participating in a textual way in classes or in a 'zoomparty' with other university students were communicative practices supported by technological devices that aimed to establish a border between the public (of the action) and the intimate (of the room).

Despite these transformations, the possibilities of using and relating technological devices questioned the myth of isolation of young people by tech-

nology (Becerra, 2015). The pandemic showed that young people combined technological devices and the Internet into their daily life in such a way that socialization, education, family and personal constitute a world in permanent articulation by the domestication of technology, generating an experience of contemporary youth. Therefore, rather than thinking of technological devices as supports of everyday life (Lemus, 2017), it is necessary to conceptualize them as articulators of the individual-collective experience within everyday life. Positioning technological devices as articulators of individual and collective experiences allows recognizing the relations of the individual with the devices at his/her reach to (re)produce the social reality in which he/she participates.

On the other hand, while the connection time, the device by which the young person connects and the space where they connect are important to articulate a digital communicative practice, it is also necessary to highlight the purpose of the connection in order to frame both the place and the device used to access the Internet. Table 4 shows the percentage of connection hours and their purpose.

Table 4

Percentage distribution according to connection purpose

Purpose	Percent hours (%)	
	Weekdays	Weekend
Education	52.6	20.5
Socialization	36.9	53.1
Cultural consumption	9.6	23.3
Work	0.9	3.1

Note. Own elaboration with form data.

As seen, the educational practice is shown as the activity that demands more time during the week; after it the purpose of socialization is established through socio-digital platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok), in third place is the cultural consumption through various platforms (Spotify, Netflix, Disney+, Starz, Deezer, Prime Video) and, finally, for some participants the use of platforms to perform work activities (Office package, Canva and Zencaster). During the weekend, the platforms used did not change

substantially, but the time allocated to each purpose changed: socialization and cultural consumption acquire more use, positioning educational activities in third place.

The time of connection, the device used, the place of practice and the purpose allow observing quantitatively and qualitatively how the youth experience was disrupted by the pandemic. All these variables intervene in the construction of being young, but also directly affect the youth experience, which was altered by the adult-centrist view on the youth-technology relationship (Becerra, 2015).

The legitimacy of this myth caused teachers to contribute arbitrarily to increase and redistribute the connection time according to the emerging demands in the pandemic context and changing the meaning of the Internet accordingly. At the same time, the increase in time generated a negative perception of their children. The following reflection shows this contradiction: "my family did not fully understand that I was taking classes and they considered that I did not do things for the house" (female student, 20 years). These constraints on the young person have effects on his/her self-perception and on his/her participation in family dynamics; all of them caused by the fading of the borders between the different activities that converged spatially and temporarily in the home and particularly in the room of the young person.

Finally, not only did the young people try to relate their activities with family practices, but parents, faced with the perceptive change over the connection time of their children and the longer permanence in their respective rooms, performed passive surveillance actions. 62% of participants acknowledged *soft* surveillance actions: looking at the computer screen, asking about what they do on it, seeing content on their child's cell phone together, as well as saying sarcastic phrases about their children's ability on the Internet as ways in which parents try to reduce the uncertainty that digital space still causes them, especially during a lockdown that digitized much of their children's daily lives.

Whether due to the degree of technological domestication or the increase in the use of the Internet by their sons and daughters, the interventions are multidirectional, diffuse and are linked to the knowledge-power relationship between young people and adults. These *soft* surveillance actions are anchored to the individual-collective practices of (with)experience in the home, so future research could contribute on how the digitalization of some social, educational and labor activities implied more domestication of technology by adults.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to identify the change in the use of the Internet by a group of Mexican university students during the pandemic. From Cultural Studies it was possible to identify that the quantitative change in connection time has had qualitative effects on the relationship between technology, youth and the domestic spaces that constitute the contemporary home.

It is observed that school activities have increased the connection to the digital space and at the same time reduced the use of technological devices and the Internet for entertainment, socialization or cultural consumption. The redistribution of time in the activities that young people develop on the Internet is subtle, but it has implications on the perception of the digital and domestic space in the youth experience. Thus, the Internet, technological devices and the domestic space are chained within everyday life to give materiality to the experience of youth at the individual and collective level. The pandemic disrupted the double articulation of media and technological devices, but it also forced the subject to deepen technological domestication in order to fulfill the new individual/family rites and social imaginaries generated during confinement.

The home became the first space of connection, but for young people the bedroom seems to be the place from which everyday life occurs in times of pandemic. The bedroom is not isolated from the home, on the contrary, there coexist the intimate (of the subject), the private (of the family) and the public (of the school, the friendships and the work), so it is important to emphasize that this space becomes the articulating node of the youthful everyday during confinement.

Finally, while the pandemic is reducing their presence in everyday life and Mexican youth are (re)adapting to the new context, it is clear that more than a generation has been scarred. Therefore, the study of the impact of the pandemic on young people and its relationship with technology should not only be sought in the recent past, but also in the near future. The unfolding of everyday practices through the gradual reappropriation of public and common spaces is an emerging object of study. The new knowledge acquired, as well as the experiences of young people during the pandemic, are factors that will intervene in the present and future youth experience.

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