Introduction: Living in Media and Information Literate Cities

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Cities are large learning spaces (McKenna, 2016). Over half of the world's population—3.9 billion people—currently lives in cities. The projection is that 2.5 billion more people will live in urban spaces by 2050, meaning the world will be almost 70% urban. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Cities Platform responds to this plausible reality with eight networks and programs, drawing on its strong interdisciplinary approach to leverage city spaces for the maximum benefit for denizens (UNESCO, n.d.-b). One such initiative is Media and Information Literate Cities (UNESCO, n.d.-a).

Notwithstanding this mind-boggling phenomenon of urbanization, when we use the term "cities" in this book, we are referring to metaphors of human settlements going back to ancient times, with reference to not only the urban context of today's big cities but also the goal of reaching everyone with media and information literacy (MIL) opportunities through creative and innovative means. The etymology of the word "city" goes back to the word "civilization", derived from the Latin *civitas*, referring to citizenship or community members. Cities are fundamental social structures that have played a central role in human existence and connectivity for thousands of years. Throughout this time, conceptions of common or public spaces have been significantly reconfigured (Sennett, 2002). Contemporary cities are to a great extent driven by the collection, storage, processing, dissemination, re-processing, and re-distribution of information. Essentially, the notion of physical cities is merging with virtual information, communication, and technological ecology, creating new opportunities to inspire social learning innovation in the areas of information, digital technology, and media.

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Cities have become increasingly connected, with technology embedded in many aspects of city life. In the new "learning economy" (OECD, 2001), cities are anticipated to play a central role in promoting learning, innovation, productivity, and economic performance. In addition to economic growth, cities' learning economies have been connected to advancing the inclusion of sociocultural groups, democratic participation, and intercultural dialog. Recently, the concept of "smart cities" has emerged as a way to make cities more efficient. Smart cities seek to "make better use of information and communication technology to boost efficiency and quality of life in respect to security, health, recreation, community services, and interactions between citizens and government" (UNESCO, 2019, p. 4). The UNESCO promotes the concept of smart cities to make urban lifestyles more sustainable, which is regarded as important considering that two-thirds of the world's population will conceivably live in city environments by 2050 (Cathelat, 2019).

UNESCO is also mindful of the fact that access to and use of digital technology—and even access to information—are necessary, but not sufficient, to stimulate people's full self-empowerment. Stakeholders must go a step further to ensure that everyone has the necessary MIL competencies to critically access, search, evaluate, use, and contribute to information and content in all forms (UNESCO, 2021 vis. Grizzle et al., 2021).

During the recent decade, learning processes in cities have increasingly attracted scholarly attention, stimulating research on how these different kinds of processes can be identified and advanced in city environments (Glaeser, 1997; Liu et al., 2017; Longworth, 2006) and utilized for innovative and sustainable urban development (Biao, 2019; Campbell, 2012). In this book, we ask how MIL cities can be structured, conducted, and developed in MIL ecosystems that develop in and outside of academic settings. We draw on UNESCO's (2019) *Global Framework for Media and Information Literacy Cities (MIL Cities)*.

The MIL cities initiative (UNESCO, n.d.-a) is an initiative employed by UNESCO and stakeholders for examining and developing MIL as an interplay between actors of formal learning spaces and the type of social learning that occurs in various other physical and virtual spaces. The term "MIL cities" allows us to identify and develop structures of local intersectoral governance for the benefit of MIL, encouraging cities—as designated MIL platforms—to benchmark, learn from each other's efforts, and collaborate. The MIL cities framework intends to build bridges between traditional MIL actors ranging from authorities to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), from schools to civic communities, and from companies to libraries and nontraditional actors such as municipalities, mayoral networks, election commissions, healthcare, transportation, entertainment, and urban development industries. One of the main objectives of MIL cities is the empowerment of citizens. Theoretically, it could also transpire to be a fruitful concept that allows us to address

diverging MIL activities and traditions that rarely speak to each other, namely, pedagogical, technocratic, entrepreneurial, and humanitarian discourses, under one umbrella term.

Cities as Learning Spaces

A focus of this book is to regard *cities as spaces for learning, social interaction, and dialog*. Many theorists have, rather early on, proposed so-called extramural teaching and learning activities, that is, taking learning outside of traditional classroom spaces (see, e.g., Dewey, 1938; Gee, 2004; Illich, 1970; McLuhan et al., 1977). What began as radical criticism toward traditional school settings has now become the central idea in informal education that unfolds outside the physical environments of formal schooling, including city environments (Werquin, 2010). Further, Oldenburg and Brissett (1982) differentiated public spaces of learning as "third places"—the home being the first and the workplace being the second. Oldenburg and Brissett suggested that public libraries, cafés, places of worship, community centers, youth centers, and other freely accessible places could establish feelings of belonging to a community, thriving on emotional expressiveness and social roles in which formal qualifications are irrelevant, thus becoming crucial for socializing and civic engagement. At present, physical spaces increasingly converge and blend with virtual communities of learning (Drotner et al., 2008), becoming hybrid spaces in which people are physically detached but have a strong sense of community. While the concept of "space" has become more complex and less tangible, opportunities for learning and education, along with our perceptions of these learning processes, have diversified.

There are increased opportunities for educators and various city actors, including authorities, NGOs, entrepreneurs, and multistakeholder networks, to meet, as places that were earlier regarded as private or semi-public, namely, separate from the public life—such as the home (Chan et al., 2009), family (Christensen, 2009), school (Clark & Barbour, 2015), higher education (Bennett & Kent, 2017), workplace (Ifenthaler, 2018), business (Beaumont, 2020; Markman, 2016), eldercare (Frennert & Östlund, 2018), and community life (Ohler, 2010)—are now increasingly becoming more public and connected to other areas of life. Participatory processes, particularly in urban environments (Cabannes, 2004; Nared & Bole, 2020; Nunez Silva, 2013), constitute inclusive processes, opening up spheres that people previously had limited access to and contributing to a more interconnected city life. The increased use of information and communication technology establishes favorable conditions for

enhanced connectivity while creating an increased need for enhanced education and training in MIL.

The recent reconfigurations of the MIL concept have more or less been connected to a conception of space, placing spatial, embodied, sensory, emotional, transmedia, and multimodal experiences on the agenda (Mills, 2016). Literacy theories in the digital age have paved the way for a number of reconstructed approaches, such as transliteracies (Frau-Meigs, 2012), multiliteracies (The New London Group, 1996), "new" or "digital" literacies and related practices (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; Moje & Ellison, 2016), and Media and Information Literacy Expansion (MIL^x) (Grizzle & Hamada, 2019), which have all proposed new approaches to the situated reception of messages in the increasingly complex landscapes of media, organizations, and communities, thereby contributing to a better understanding of MIL cities—and the MIL citizens who live in them.

Educational initiatives in MIL cities typically require intersectoral cooperation and interdisciplinary academic approaches to be properly advanced and understood. Academic criticism has identified that implementation of e-governance does not automatically translate into enhanced democratic participation, and educational interventions, such as MIL, are needed (Grizzle & Pérez Tornero, 2018/2019). In this book, we explore the possibilities and challenges related to the MIL cities vision from an educational perspective. One clear need is to maintain a common understanding of MIL and its application to the vision of MIL cities.

Policies for MIL Cities

UNESCO, together with its partners, proposed the Media and Information Literate Cities framework in connection with the Global Media and Information Literacy Week in 2018, which was organized in Latvia and Lithuania (UNESCO, 2018). The concept of "Media and Information Literacy" has undergone development during the last decades—a progression that Bonami and Le Voci Sayad trace in their chapter in this book—and the suggestion of MIL cities is expected to add another layer of significance. It is proposed that media and information literate (MIL) cities could become an instrument for identifying, governing, and developing media and information literacy competencies at the municipal level.

MIL cities can dovetail with the recent outlines of theories of social change, such as the aforementioned Media and Information Literacy Expansion (MIL^x). MIL expansion intends to extend the notion of MIL from an individual-based concept toward simultaneously including groups, communities, institutions, and organizations. A central aim in these policy frameworks is to outline the role of cities and

regions in the new “learning economies” (OECD, 2001), where the mediatization and digitalization of local cultures have become prevalent. The concept of MIL cities may prove to be more relevant than previously expected in societies that have undergone major digital development during the pandemic. In post-COVID-19 societies, digital communication and exchange have become more quotidian and normalized than before the global virus outbreak, and changes that occurred at an accelerated rate may continue to exist in societies long—or even permanently—after the pandemic. How can tools for learning about MIL, digital innovation, and the development of MIL cities respond to the changes that will endure in societies even after the COVID-19 pandemic subsides?

Can MIL cities strengthen the existing and future smart cities, enabling new types of learning and entrepreneurial opportunities? Are there sociocultural concerns? Is there a symmetry between MIL cities and citizens? The chapters in this book seek to answer these questions—and many more.

Structure and Outline of the Book

Drawing on experiences from the global UNESCO-UNAOC Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialog University Network (UNESCO/UNAOC-MILID Network), the objective of the MILID Yearbooks, which have been published since 2013, is to bring academics and practitioners together to discuss topical MIL issues. The activities between the member universities are aimed at facilitating exchanges between the academic world, civil society, local communities, and policymaking. MILID Yearbooks are an outcome of UNESCO’s vision and convening leadership, academic collaboration, and network activities. Accordingly, the spirit of the MILID Yearbooks is to enable a fruitful cross-fertilization of theoretical and practical perspectives by encouraging the reflections of scholars and practitioners working in different parts of the world on MIL with relevance to MIL cities. The objective is theoretical and practical as well as analytical and visionary: to add to the existing knowledge and evidence of notions identified in global policy frameworks and to determine alternatives and cultivate a common understanding of the relevance of what is on the shared transnational policy agenda.

The first section of this book concerns the innovative endeavors attached to the notion of MIL cities and citizens. In the chapter “Dispositions, Sensitivities, and Inclinations: The Importance of the Smart-City Citizen,” Michelle Ciccone gives an in-depth view of how, as we see the rise of more effective and efficient smart cities, we also pay less attention to the effects, reach, and other outcomes that the strengthening of this kind of city introduces. Ciccone asserts this lack of attention

is due to the invisibilization, or naturalization, of these changes, which can easily lead to "abuse and disempowerment of smart-city citizens." Bearing this in mind, Ciccone suggests that MIL ("infrastructure literacy," in her words) should be at the center of the regulation of smart cities, where different stakeholders must ensure the development of awareness in all citizens on technological developments, information infrastructures, data collection, and other issues that can embed ethical dilemmas. The only path for doing so is to support MIL citizens who become involved in, understand, and actively seek the development of regulation, as "MIL cities have the responsibility to help prepare and foster the active and equal participation of smart-city citizens."

In the chapter titled Theorizing Media and Information Literacy: Emotional Communication through Art for Young People during Unusual Life Experiences, Masatoshi Hamada and Alton Grizzle build on previous work. Starting with the theory of change and MIL expansion, Hamada and Grizzle propose that we cannot reach optimal social value proposition, value enhancement, and value expansion if MIL interventions focus on individuals only. Hamada and Grizzle also explore the likely positive changes in outcomes when MIL expansion is united with emotional competencies as another variable in the model. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the interaction that occurs in the selected target group through MIL expansion operating upon children and youth, their families, their friends, and institutions they engage with while incorporating "emotional literacy." Hamada and Grizzle offer a practical design of MIL expansion, demonstrating MIL can correspond with efforts to counter disinformation and misinformation with deeper changes in mindset. The authors theorize how emotional communication through artistic practices synergizes with MIL expansion.

Leo Van Audenhove, Ilse Mariën, Rob Heyman, Nils Walravens, Wendy Van den Broeck, and Pieter Ballon reflect upon the role of data literacy in their chapter "Data Literacy in the Smart City: Why Should Smart Cities Be Populated by MIL Citizens?" The chapter discusses the concept of smart cities, putting the concept into dialog with the more recent concept of MIL cities. These scholars argue that smart cities are not automatically and necessarily MIL cities. The creation of a MIL city requires developing open data, civil society participation, and the inclusion of citizens. In this respect, Van Audenhove and colleagues identify data literacy as a key term in bridging the policies and practices related to MIL cities. To achieve this goal, these authors present a data literacy competence model that may contribute to developing an active and open data city policy. According to Van Audenhove et al., an effective data literacy competence model balances the competences of using and understanding data, and these competences should be taught at all academic levels to make MIL cities a reality.

Harry Browne and Deborah Brennan give strong evidence for the need to foster critical MIL to broaden the understanding of the computational processes that configure the production, distribution, and consumption of media and information. In their chapter, "The Elusiveness of the Algorithm: The Case for Computation in Media and Information Literacy," Browne and Brennan highlight that such a program does not necessarily rely on teaching computation but on "a process of dialog that enables computation's logics, emergent properties, and lacunae to be better understood." Based on an example in Dublin—the home of numerous high-tech and social media companies—these authors advocate for the critical understanding of cities' corporate and data-processing infrastructures and are confident that the same can be fully explained, understood, and incorporated into citizens' lives through the planning and delivery of public talks, workshops, and conferences aimed at demystifying these complex matters.

The second section of the book focuses on the citizenship of MIL. In their chapter "Media and Information Literacy among Children on Three Continents: Insights into the Measurement and Mediation of Well-Being," Sonia Livingstone, Patrick Burton, Patricio Cabello, Ellen Helsper, Petar Kanchev, Daniel Kardefelt-Winther, Jelena Perovic, Mariya Stoilova, and Ssu-Han Yu draw on the scientific output of the Global Kids Online project that aims at developing population-focused approaches for measuring MIL. Livingstone et al. show that measuring digital skills may reveal some important differences in population with regard to Internet access and digital skills and that the outcome of these measures could be useful for piloting and developing MIL cities. For example, the identification of impoverished regions with children having weak digital skills may facilitate MIL city developers to focus on areas where collaboration with local authorities can be developed to decrease poverty.

Beatrice Bonami and Alexandre Le Voci Sayad embed the discussion of the concept of MIL cities into the overall development of the MIL policy discourse that took place during the last decades. In their chapter, "Adaption of the Media and Information Literacy Concept to Spanish and Portuguese: Mapping Public Policies in the Latin America and Caribbean Region," Bonami and Le Voci Sayad inquire into the Hispanic language community and examine the uses of vocabulary in public policy documents. The linguistic terms used to refer to MIL—the so-called core concepts (Jaakkola, 2020)—are essential, as these terms concretely inform and guide the implementation of policies as well as pertinent pedagogies and practices. Linguistic variation in different geographical areas (see, e.g., Jaakkola, 2020) is not only embedded in local traditions but also builds on the international exchange that has, above all, been fostered by UNESCO's MIL policy guidelines (Grizzle & Torras Calvo, 2013) and a new resource, *Media and Information Literate Citizens: Think Critically, Click Wisely (Second Edition of the UNESCO Model Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Educators and Learners)*. Bonami and Le Voci

Sayad identify different dimensions that have been emphasized in the international policy discourse and translated into Portuguese and Spanish: human rights, media, information literacy, education, digital literacy, and MIL. In the Hispanic language area, there are a number of competing terms in use, with the analysis showing that different local areas are using different terms and that MIL does not function as a common term in practice. Hence, when tracing local discussions and MIL communities, we must remain sensitive to the local linguistic variations instead of adhering to international policy discourse terminology.

In the chapter called "Digital Falsehoods and their Analog Consequences: The 'Fake News' Strategy and its Mitigation," Lisa Jane de Gara focuses on the importance of deepening the understanding of the concept of "fake news." De Gara describes fake news in a holistic manner, which includes deliberated strategies to put fake news in the media. MIL cities are places where different stakeholders, the government, and organizations provide citizens with the tools to halt the dissemination of false information; some actors encourage the same by identifying their motivations (political and economic). De Gara pinpoints fake news as being easily disseminated through more vulnerable groups, where certain information or media have influence.

Michele Filippo Fontefrancesco provides an in-depth reflection on the consequences of hate speech among youngsters. In his chapter, "Words are Stones: Countering Hate Speech among Young Generations in Europe," Fontefrancesco draws several insights and conclusions from this phenomenon. His research identifies "the low level of digital awareness and scarce digital empathy that characterizes the use of the digital media among young adults," which triggers "fertile ground for hate speech." Fontefrancesco advocates promoting MIL among digital natives as a means to understand that online and offline spaces are interconnected, raise attention to hate speech, and broaden the understanding of the role that MIL stakeholders can play to contest this phenomenon.

The third thematic section in this book, focusing on practical implications, is introduced with a case study of crowdsourcing data in India by ElsaMarie D'Silva. In the chapter "Digital Citizenship through the Use of Crowdsourced Data: Mapping Sexual Violence in Public Places," D'Silva examines how using the crowdsourced data of women who have experienced sexual violence can help prevent other women from experiencing such violence. According to D'Silva, the collected data also shows patterns that can help enhance digital citizenship and provide local solutions to engage communities and public institutions in defending and planning organized actions against sexual violence. She concludes that asserting crowdmapping as a multifaceted tool, "can allow women to be aware of potentially dangerous locales, [empower] them to report incidents to help keep others safe, and [provide] a source of data to advise on best practices for navigating street harassment and assault in public spaces." D'Silva provides an extraordinary example of how MIL cities can

become safer by aggregating, understanding, and using critical data in a shrewd and advanced manner.

In their chapter, "Reading the Word and the World: Empowering Mozambican Health Teachers through Video Production," Agnaldo Arroio and Clara Cacilda Mauaie present an experience on teachers' professional development. This program seeks to "support the improvement of teachers' skills in the use of different media in classrooms." The outcomes demonstrated that producing digital video for teaching material was an important achievement and that introducing media literacy helped teachers recognize the importance of context for instructional materials. For the part of the Mozambican population who could not speak Portuguese, "the videos produced can disseminate basic health information to improve the lives of these people who speak other languages."

Another teachers' development project is addressed by Tomás Durán-Becerra and Gerardo Machuca-Téllez, who present a case study of implementing MIL in higher education in Colombia in their chapter, "Self-Development at the Campus: A Case Study on MIL Development in Teachers' Education in Colombia." Exploring the challenges of implementing MIL in the curriculum for aspiring educators, these authors call for the promotion of spaces that allow us to become aware of the social importance acquired by new literacies to achieve experiences of empowerment. Here, they identify the coherence of the curriculum as a key component.

In his chapter, "Addressing Cyberbullying in Nigeria: A Case Study for the Media and Information Literacy City," Ayodeji Olonode reflects on the problems that an unconsidered use of media tools can cause. In concrete terms, Olonode focuses on cyberbullying, which affects not only Nigeria but also the world in general. Olonode gives a nuanced literature review and defines a solution for the need to act, which goes beyond asking for governmental action and the collaboration of industry, organizations, and stakeholders. For Olonode, to achieve citizens' empowerment, it is imperative to "include media and information literacy education as part of the deliverables of the national communication policy […] for the benefit of society"; to make media education part of the curricula at all levels, not only in mass communication or media studies courses; and to make parents take part in MIL learning.

Estrella Luna Muñoz gives an approximation on methodologies to generate learning, social integration, and MIL among young people in low-income communities with little access to technology in her chapter "The Self and the Other: Social Integration through Art and Communication in a Multicultural Context." The uses of art and communication activities, combined with a participatory action research methodology, are used to define principles and generate alternative and attractive forms of learning and digital inclusion and to generate the skills that are needed in a socially integrated society during the 21st century—or in a MIL city.

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