
RESEARCH TRADITIONS IN DIALOGUE

COMMUNICATION
STUDIES IN LATIN
AMERICA AND EUROPE



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INTRODUCTION

A Transatlantic Dialogue for Future Communication

Fernando Oliveira Paulino¹
Gabriel Kaplún²

This book has a long story. More than we expected, for sure. However, we believe it was worth it.

The book originated from the encounters which, within the context of the annual conferences of IAMCR³, have taken place between Latin Americans and Europeans, in which we include our respective communication researchers' associations: Latin American Communication Association Researchers Association (ALAIIC) and European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA). A workgroup was formed to boost joint actions and cooperation between both associations. Among the most noticeable results of such cooperation are the joint panels in several international encounters, the boost for the ALAIIC's Summer School from the European experience, and this book.

The idea came from one of those joint panels, where a "map" of the main traditions or currents of thought was presented alongside with an action that has crossed the communication area in Latin America⁴. It was a possible, open-to-discussion map, that also showed ties to currents originated in other places of the world. Hence, for instance, and in general, functionalist traditions have had a greater development in North America, critical traditions in Europe and post-colonials in Asia, and in the meantime alternative currents are strong in Latin America, and the culturalists find roots in Europe and Latin America. Most recently, feminisms, firstly with a greater presence in Europe and North America, have strengthened in Latin America in what concerns social sciences in general and communication specifically. However, all of

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3 The International Association for Media and Communication Research <https://iamcr.org/> has hosted at its annual conference, since 2011, a panel proposed and developed by ALAIIC with the participation of Latin American researchers, as well as from other regions.

4 Kaplún, Gabriel (2013) Viejas y nuevas tradiciones en la comunicación latinoamericana (=Old and new traditions in Latin American communication (free translation). In Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias de la Comunicación, number 18, ALAIIC, Sao Paulo.

these currents were present everywhere, with different developmental states which aren't necessarily known outside of its original place, partly for the lack of translation and especially due to lacking better conditions for a dialogue between them. In other cases, communication was more fluent, however often reproducing practices of intellectual dependence or cultural predation. For instance, Latin Americans that are forced to quote European authors or Europeans that appropriate Latin American authors. These are binding ways that are far from a horizontal dialogue more interesting to be generated and stimulated.

In 2015 we decided to invite European and Latin American authors to propose articles describing and discussing the development of one of these traditions in their continent, to establish a dialogue between them mediated by someone from the editorial team. We've received more than 70 proposals, and it wasn't easy to select twelve authors – in some cases duets or trios – of the six European chapters and six Latin American ones that would be included in the book. To these, we added six more chapters, resulting from those transatlantic dialogues, an aspect that has been one of the greatest achievements of the process and, who knows, of the final product.

It was a long process because the initial texts had to be reviewed and rewritten. We've insisted that the authors should focus on their region, developing the role that has launched that paradigm in one of these two continents and specifically in the field of communication and media studies. We made sure a historical perspective was included, a detailed analysis of current debates and proposals on future perspectives, as it is with theoretical and methodological proposals. It took time to establish a dialogue between European and Latin American authors – face-to-face and/or from a distance – and finally have these texts-dialogue or texts-nexus which resume each chapter/current/tradition.

Chapter 1 approaches functionalist currents. Having an initial development in the United States, the influence of this tradition is present in academic activities, professional practices and communication systems in several places of the world. Tanius Karam, in Mexico, and Antonio Castillo and Alejandro Alvarez, in Spain, report the presence of functionalism in Latin America and Europe and their interactions – conflicting or consensual – with other approaches. Pedro Russi, from Brazil, mediates a dialogue between perspectives.

Chapter 2 refers to currents considered critical. Critics that turn to functionalism though it transcends it. From the Frankfurt School to communication political economy studies, first, in Europe, then in Latin America, there was developed a great variety of perspectives' analysis with a critical approach to discursive and economic power frames. Also from Spain, Ruth de Frutos and the Argentinian Javier Torres Molina study the history of these perspectives in each region, their connections, its current presence in the investigation on communication and their interactions with other perspectives. César Bolaño, from Brazil, offers a view on both sides of the Atlantic and establishes a dialogue with those.

Chapter 3 approaches culturalist currents, which came upon as a critique of the critical currents. Cultural studies in Europe and Latin America have focused their attention on the representations, on the social mediations that reconstruct the meaning of the media messages and on the cultural features in which they're inserted and produced. In Spain, Leonarda García-Jiménez, Manuel Hernández in the United Kingdom and Filipa Subtil in Portugal, are working on this perspective on the European tradition. In Mexico, Marta Rizo is doing the same under the Latin American perspective, studying its contemporary continuance in both continents. Miguel Vicente and Leonardo Custódio reflect about the two contributions to the cultural studies debate.

Chapter 4 focuses on alternative currents. Coming from outside the academy and with a greater presence in Latin America, several intellectuals and activists have tried to build specific alternatives to the hegemonic media and the dominant communication processes. Alejandro Barraquero, Spanish, and the Italian Emiliano Treré have made a critical evaluation of the evolution of this perspective and its interactions with other perspectives in Europe, and the Cuban Lázaro Bacallao made the same for Latin America. Even though Lázaro Bacallao wasn't able to participate in the dialogue following, his proposals were visited by Barraquero and Treré as well as the Uruguayan Gabriel Kaplún, from the editorial team, upon a reflexion that transcends the mere sum of all views and generates possibilities to rethink old problems and better faces new ones.

Chapter 5 refers to post-colonial currents. These currents suggest an alternative reading of history, emphasizing and recovering voices that were silenced by the colonial power and influence and questioning models of the development of the global modernity. In Latin America,

though in Europe as well, some of the proposals adopted this approach, hence opening a dialogue within the field of social sciences and joining other voices from the southern hemisphere. The German Sarah Ganter and Spanish Félix Ortega study the impact of such current in the field of communication in Europe, and Bolivian Erick Torrico does the same from Latin America. The Belgian Nico Carpentier, from the advisory board, facilitates the dialogue between them, concluding this chapter.

Feminist currents and the gender vision have encouraged, from a long time, thought stronger and stronger, profound reforms in practices and social sciences. In chapter 6, Spanish Juana Gallego and Portuguese Maria Silveirinha study the theoretic roots and practical implications to the field of communication in Europe. Brazilian Claudia Lago, Mónica Martínez and Mara Lago do the same for Latin America. Leonardo Custódio joins the final dialogue.

Even being a long way, it was worth it, because each initial text has implicated an effort to review and reflect upon a current and a specific context – European and Latin American –, an effort which was unprecedented for many of the cases. Because of the horizontal dialogue between authors enriches this vision and breaks away from colonial arrangements and/or isolations that dictate the academic world. And because the conjuncture makes possible a comparative and relational reading that may provide new thoughts on the field of communication and its current and future, local and global developments. We hope it also opens new dialogues in each place and within the vast world of communication.

01

FUNCTIONALISM

The “Functionalist” Currents: From Misunderstanding to Second Reading of their Contributions

Tanius Karam Cárdenas⁵

“Functionalism” is recognised as one of the traditions of thought in academic communication, sometimes referred as “functionalism in communication” or “functional perspective in communication”, or it is recognised as an “administrative current” or, at best, for its denotative component in English ‘mass communication research’. We may also recognise it as one of the “classic” currents within the communication or better described as “media communication” or “mass communication”.

“Functionalism” was frequently a sort of cast in which one pours components, ideological features or interpretations of other matters, which as has resulted in a system not often clear, or integrated for that matter, and frequently would give room to confusion which would join together aspects that hadn’t a straight connection between them, or a theoretical structure that would contest other considerations.

We will proceed with four tasks: firstly, we problematize some aspects of functionalist currents. For this, we will review some conventional handbooks about communication theory so that we can compare them with the fundamentals of the functionalist paradigm in humanities and social fields. Also, to refer to some “classics” within the so-called “functionalism in communication”. Finally, we intend to pose a series of specifications on the presence of such paradigm within communication, as well as approach some notes to think about its update in our world of ideas about the media and new technologies nowadays. Even though social functionalism is no longer a fundamental reference, it doesn’t mean it doesn’t need contributions that might be useful covers from an empirical and psycho-social perspective on collective communication effects, what we consider as the central object in contributions for the “functional perspective” in studies on collective communication, or as it was once known “mass communication”.

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Presentation: what is functional and “functionalism in communication” in theory books.

The first group of researchers of collective communication in the U.S. organized themselves as something known as *Mass Communication Research* (MCR) which would define what they were: researchers of the social and political psychology concerned with this new emergent object within the context of the industrial society, especially since the first world war (1914-1918).

To get to know the history of “functionalism in communication,” we must make a brief review on Mexican theory books (even though we might believe this characterization appears in books on analogue goals at the time). In the seventies, there were two books in circulation that were highly used, from professor Florence Toussaint, in 1975, and Antonio Paoli (1990/1977). They have entitled their chapters “functionalism in communication” and have disseminated, in this decade, a tricotomic vision of communication: functionalism, Marxism, structuralism as clearly distinct currents, distinguished to explain communication and focus on different contexts of the so-called “communication process”. We must say, on another problem ahead, that we don’t know any updates these authors might have done on the first edition.

We must say that this kind of books provided a disadvantage and a virtue. The first refers to its extensive generalization and schematization, not giving enough attention to details or explanation; thus, not binding the authors’ contexts, terms and goals. Some might defend that these books are undergraduate and, therefore, the educational commitment might explain the lack of precision, explanation or detail. As for virtue, it was the first organization principal of an object that still seemed limited (mass communication and mass media). Sometimes one wants to bind with other dimensions of communication (interpersonal, institutional, intercultural); offer a list of fundamental references, homogenize in some way the education on communication theories in some schools.

In the eighties, there is an interesting version of an important disseminator of theories within the Ibero-american field, the Catalan Miquel de Moragas (1981), probably the first European author to give attention to the academic knowledge in Latin America, as well as having pursued with regional and historical criteria that allowed to organize theories not from rigid conceptual differences however from wider social and historical procedures. In what refers to mass communication

studies in the U.S., Moragas (41) involves Harold Lasswell, who favours the demarcation of the object and its components (resumed in the unequivocal "Lasswell paradigm" from the late forties), virtues of those we now point out its defaults: having only focused on the effects and from "an interpersonal communication model". Nonetheless, the previous name "functionalism" appears in one of the subtitles, linked to Roberto K. Merton – who, becomes the bridge between the social theory and collective communication –, and the best expert in communication, as said by Moragas, must be integrated in the "functionalist current of North American sociology" from the forties. In the paragraph dedicated to Merton, Moragas mentions the guidelines of "functionalism of the media", synthesized in two "classic" functions: to grant prestige or status, impose social norms; and a dysfunction: the narcotization, or dormancy that mass media might suffer from. Here we wore about one of the "contributions" that we might recognize in this current, precisely the establishment of such functions (and dysfunctions) as a means to recognize more than what the media are, what they do.

In the nineties, at least in the Mexican case, we must mention José Carlos Lozano's (1996) book. It is the most quoted author on Mexican bibliographies of theories (CF. Galindo, 2008c: 94). He says the same about positive focused and "functional analysis". Lozano elaborates a sociological perspective of communication, and he starts with a very common educational question which puts the positivist before the critique and the quantitative before qualitative. Lozano uses the word "Functionalist" to refer to the communication theory in the U.S.. However the difference to books in the decade before is that he includes more layers, he makes an overview more socially focused, and looks to bind the basis of functionalism with its applications in communication, concluding in a basic operation: to identify functions-dysfunctions in institutions in general and in mass communication in particular.

We also must mention that the term "functionalism in communication", or these researches' phase (between the thirties and the sixties), is frequently used to identify communication "models". For instance, in her book, Claudia Benassini (20-24) – which in reality is an anthology of key texts introduced and anthologized by her – establishes in each chapter a particular and specific model, has it was one of the explanatory goals and an anchor in comprehending the specificity of each author. The problem is that these chapters were very brief and constrained; there is not a proper reading with sources, nor do we see the author's evolution. Unfortunately, this is a constant with the Mexican books.

Neither Benassini nor Lozano, in the quoted books, make references to Lasswell or Wright, nor do they a critical and contextualized reading of them. However, they generally refer them from other authors, Anglo-Saxon disseminators – whose role is not lesser – Dennis McQuail and Melvin DeFleur, which they tend to refer to as the central authors of the supposed functionalism, and it wasn't supposed to relate to the work of McQuail and DeFleur. Once again, we must consider the educational and pedagogical intent of Benassini and Lozano's texts. However, it is important to highlight that certain discursive strategies in these texts might result in conceptual and epistemological impressions.

Late in the past century, there is another book that will be highly quoted (Mattelart and Mattelart, 1997), in which the famous Belgium couple, who have a great historical presence in Latin America, make a decomposition of positivism and functionalism in the book's first chapters: they highlight the biological conception of the world in the nineteenth century, as well as talk about their ties with the capitalist entrepreneurial spirit at the time, and of the development of the rail network, and a strong lineal vision of progress as a total. From the 20th century, they explain what is considered by the “new world's empiricism”, including the famous Chicago School and the MCR, thankfully not called “functionalism”. The Mattelarts point the origin of MCR in Lasswell and his text of 1927, *Propaganda Techniques in Word War*, where we see the famous image of a hypodermic needle, the first contemporary “theory of mass communication”.

Of this century, it is interesting to mention Juan José Igartua and María Luisa Humanes' (2004) text. This book, certainly one of the most complete, dedicated to the study of the media and with a clear psycho-social perspective (more than social). This book is divided into four sections, of which the most important is the second, dedicated to the study of social communication effects, firstly from a general perspective and secondly from applying the psycho-social to the network of effects of the media and the distinct consequences that might happen at an individual level as well as in group. Within the theoretical reviews of the first section, the authors entitle a subchapter (2004: 112) «functionalist sociology of the mass communication». These authors from Salamanca elaborate a useful synthesis:

First, it's recognized that the functionalist sociology of collective communication, besides being a theory in general, is sociology and MCR is, in fact, an aspect of the functionalist analysis of the social structure. To this “sociology” is granted an instrumental vision, in the sense that it's intended to solve problems of the groups in power. Mass media are

«procedures according to which groups of specialists resource to technical fabrications to disseminate a symbolic content to a vast, heterogeneous audience and geographically disperse audience» (Janowitz and Scholze quoted by Iguarta and Humanes, 112). They consider the main object to be the effects, and those further elements of the communication process are thought as to how they may better the impact of communication. The methodologies used are empirical to know most objectively and systemically about how media are an influence.

To close this chapter, we now analyze two of the most famous books, both written by English speakers: British professor Dennis McQuail (1997/1985), author of a prolific repertory in English even though his bibliography in Spanish is comparatively smaller⁶. Without a doubt, the most known in the Latin American academic field is the theory text we're observing. On the other hand, the North American Melvin DeFleur together with Canadian Sandra Ball-Rokeach have written *Theories of Mass Communication* (2001/1983) and have made this one of the most important books on communication theory⁷. But we certainly cannot take the importance and presence of these authors' texts in our knowledge of media communication.

When one read the indexes of both books, we see the term "structural-functionalism" appear in McQuail text and are quoted by Robert K. Merton and Charles Wright. When presenting the approach on "structural functionalist"⁸ (McQuail, 98-101), one recognizes the bind with the functionalist sociological vision that is wider in terms of explaining the recurrent and institutionalized activities using social necessities. The media needs are related to social needs in terms of continuity, order, integration, etc. the importance of media lies on the contribution they make to these wider and general goals for social

6 According to the database *Infoamérica* (<http://www.infoamerica.org/teoria/mcquail1.htm>) there was edited in Spanish, within an extensive bibliography in English, the following: *Sociología de los medios masivos de comunicación*, Paidós, Buenos Aires, 1969; *Modelos para el estudio de la comunicación de masas*, Paidós, Barcelona, 1991; *La acción de los medios. Los medios de comunicación y el interés público*, Amorrortu, Buenos Aires, 1998.

7 Once again, according to *Infoamérica* (<http://www.infoamerica.org/teoria/defleur1.htm>), it was elected in 1999, at a query of AEJMC (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication), the most influent text of the author 'Milestones in Mass Communication Research', and one of the ten most influent books of the twentieth century on communication. However, DeFleur is better known for other books. According to *Infoamérica*, this is the only book of the *Canadian author that has been translated into Spanish*.

8 *In theory it is important to make precise* and be careful to not call in the same way similar words, terms or concepts. Such is the case with "functionalism" and "structural functionalism". Ritzer (2002: 116) clarifies that usually, structural and functionalist appear together. In the case of communication theory, we don't know any case of using the expression "communicative structural functionalism", perhaps, among other reasons, because structuralism is considered a tradition with certain characteristics.

Meanwhile, Ritzer's comment allows us to see how the expression "functionalism" and "structuralism functionalism" require an explanation and adjustments, for instance, one can study the social structures without considering the functions for other structures. Likewise,

stability, which is the main focus. The structural-functionalist theory, according to the British author, doesn't have to count on the ideological orientation of the media; the media, as said by McQuail, are described as self-managed and self-corrective, with some negotiated politically institutionalized rules. He also highlights some of the problems with the focus on the concept of "function" itself, sometimes associated with purpose, consequence, requirement or expectation. Hence the expression "function of information" may refer to different things. On the other hand, at the end of the text written by the North American authors is also mentioned the structural-functionalism (McQuail, 409) to compare with the "paradigm of the conflict". The axis of collective communication theory seems to move between the "magical bullet" and theories from the "selective influence" (McQuail, chapters 7 and 8), concepts which gather some of the theories we know as "Cultivation theory". Uses and gratification and *Agenda Setting*, to which we'll dedicate some lines at the end of the text. When we refer to the analysis functional-structural by the authors (McQuail, 407), they point to an organic vision of the social, because media are a necessary product of the mass society, of a complex society that can no longer manage its interactions from the interpersonal communication, as it happened, for instance, in pre-industrial societies or less developed and less specialized in its productive efforts.

Until now, we can say that there is a connection between English and Latin American books. We haven't visited detailed references to the original authors. In a general way, the books from the seventies are certainly able to reconstruct a stage in the investigation and the theory that there wasn't an academic community that would allow to establish agreements or bind the knowledge under well-defined lines. Also, frequently the difficulty on establishing agreements or consensus has been strengthened by this immense effect, referred by Galindo (2008c) as a structural imbalance of knowledge between the production of academic knowledge, what is produced by researchers, what teachers read and then teach so that we can finally conclude the process in which the student community may identify, recognize and use⁹.

A network of professors of communication theory (Cf. Galindo, coord. 2008) has synthesized knowledges or traditions within the history of thought, as well as problematized basic aspects in each scientific and academic thinking source within the history of communication

one can examine the functions of several social processes that might not adopt a structural form. Structural functionalism presents Ritzer many ways societal functionalism (italics in Ritzer's original) worry with the study of great structures and social institutions of society, its interrelations and influence on the actors.

⁹ Even though this is another matter, we must mention that the education-dissemination-

ideas. This group postulated one of the hypotheses for the reading of functionalist sociology in communication, in which we intend to resume and fundament the idea of the misunderstanding or confusion between "functionalism" and what has been called "functionalism in communication", especially in some of the theory books¹⁰.

One of this confusion's main components has a strong ideological context, which for two or three decades has promoted an interpretation of knowledge, social sciences, its methods and applications within the Latin American field of communication. From the consequences of this phenomenon, in reality, during this time there have been little reading, and often in a distorted way, of the North American authors, especially the functionalist tradition of the U.S., in which to meet the pertinence of its ideas, these were considered through its critique and reaction against its illustrative place, in which was intended to find a relationship between what was ideologically represented in the U.S. and the content of these and other theories.

On the other hand, there were other theories or currents (Marxism in Latin America, for instance) that were given greater recognition during the sixties and seventies. They've been more disseminated and worked as a filter or an interpretive frame to evaluate any academic or scientific production of knowledge with a paragon sometimes almost exclusive of Marxism or materialism dialectical-historical. One of the effects of these misunderstandings, which were partly being solved, was to concede synonymy to concepts that didn't have it. Or form wide clusters where was mediated diversity and heterogeneity, for instance, see in the 'Agenda Setting' theory a functionalist expression, or constrict the *Spiral of Silence* by Neuman (which is not even a theory from the U.S.), frequently without mediating clarifications on what is proposed. Another extreme example of what we want to say was the case of some lethargic professor (of theories) that didn't hesitate in locating, for lack of better location within the famous triparty division that was made for communication theory in the seventies, the famous

reception of theories as part a more complex system, for instance: first, the curricular subsystem: the placement of theories and how we engineer plans and programs, as well as the conditions to create these programs. Second, an institutional subsystem where we could problematize institutions with certain characteristics that value this kind of subjects and value its profile of outflow. One more subsystem of distribution that sometimes explains it, not by academic criteria as we find in every other book, even though some publishers have greater prestige or are more successful in putting their books in the main university bookshops or the city.

10 We may mention, for instance, two very important books of the seventies: Toussaint, Florence, *Crítica a la información de masas*, 2nd ed., Mexico: Trillas, 1^a ed., 1975; 2^a ed., 1981; and Paoli, Antonio, *Comunicación e información. Perspectivas teóricas*, Mexico, Trillas; the first three editions are respectively of 1977, 1979, 1983. Which correspond with the once classic triparty division of the communication theories ("functionalism", "structuralism", "Marxism"). One can find both book covers and indexes in the Mexican data base for communication studies by professor Raúl Fuentes Navarro: <http://ccdoci.iteso.mx/>

Marshal McLuhan in “functionalism”. Why? Because he would write in English, speak of technology and had a particularly distinct speech, to be considered necessary in Latin America.

Furthermore, his famous aphorisms were an easy target for any speech against what knowledge had to be in this region in these critical years of the Cold War. Once not being possible to bind with “Marxism in communication” or with “structuralism in communication”, the only location left for McLuhan was this hotchpotch which was sometimes revealed as “functionalism in communication” where was located the undesirable from the north and the imperialist country. It was part of a story in which we want to believe. Some part of it has restored these excesses, generalizations and bigotries.

On the functionalist paradigm in humanities and social sciences

Beyond communication or the specific context of MRC, “functionalism” is a “paradigm” in the classic sense of the term which crosses several sciences as it is anthropology, sociology or linguistics, and that one might share some premises, many times its differences in usage are strong and noticeable, for instance, between what we know as “anthropological functionalism”, “social functionalism” and “linguistic functionalism”, even though all functionalisms are debtors of the development of biology in the nineteenth century, its explosion in social sciences was given in the thirties and forties. One must revise what is a paradigm under Kuhn’s (1971) vision: a reference and an allusion to the establishment of a criteria on what is understood as knowledge, and which is endorsed by specific communities, which recognize as best principal for adaptation for the gathered premises in this “paradigm”, and which has a historical, social and cultural component, since it can be replaced by a better one. This paradigm is a conundrum and a way to organize it and has implications to whom decides to move towards or away from this convention.

The first setting established in functionalism is the same foundation of sociology and its trajectory in the nineteenth century, in authors as of classics like Augusto Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim, who refer and develop the idea of society as an organism. Comte is more than a sociologist. He is a social philosopher who concerns about the negative consequences of social exchanges and transformations drawn from the industrialization. Spencer, as the biologist he was,

highlights the idea of necessities and its way of satisfaction, which seem like a principle of biological functionalism. He was also concerned with the difference between structure and function, which might help to understand social behaviour. Durkheim also worried about the negative consequences and will be looking to overcome the tension between the conservatives of his time, who proposed to return to more primitive ways of organization, and the radicals, who revindicated as the only way of a total revolution able to introduce a new system.

In The *Division of Labor in Society* (1893), Durkheim already presents an idea that can be considered as "functionalist" to establishing a difference between societies of 'mechanical solidarity', cohesion by the participation of individuals and societies of 'organic solidarity', of a higher complexity, higher specificity, for each individual has to develop a more specific task. Furthermore, this book defines the social division of labour according to the level of specialization (Cf. Ritzer, 201: 228-9). Changes in labour have had heavy implications for the social structure and where it is most felt is in the types of solidarity mentioned before.

In the case of anthropology, the names associated with functionalism and also to the relationship with structural-functionalism are those of Bronislaw Malinowsky (1884-1942) from Poland and the British A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. Malinowsky is considered the "founder" of Functionalism as well as the developer of Ethnography as a science *per se*. He has contributed with the idea that anthropologists would go to the "place" of origin of the societies studied. He has developed, in his anthropological work, an approach to try to bind the most quantity of features, as at the same time highlighted that the immediate features of observation had to be connected to other structural data as kinship systems. He also associated his work with psychoanalysis, particularly with the Freudian Oedipus Complex, of which he claims that one can't define it in general and had to object of its interpretation in specific cultural contexts, as he mentions in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1992).

On the other hand, anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown is considered to be the creator of Structural-Functionalism. Influenced by Durkheim's work, he has generated several concepts having in mind to establish some scientific status to Ethnography. In his work, he has dedicated to particularly to the establishment of generalities within the social order, in an analogue way, as the organs of our body work in all for the functioning of the organism. The Structure is seen as an organized disposition of parts or components, a sort of people considered not only as an individual organism but also, and above all, as someone who

occupies a place in social organization.

A central concept of this paradigm is that of “social function” because it allows articulating the organicist vision upon the origin, with its applications to social sciences. Additionally, Melvin DeFleur, the disseminator of communication theory, explains about the implications of the term “social function” (DeFleur, Ball-Rokeach, 2001:175), this association between wider general aspects and more abstract, with conducts and “action guidelines” able to be observed and empirically studied.

Radcliffe-Brown developed the concept of institution and its function to the development of social life (necessary conditions for existence). From these approaches are drawn terms as “social morphology” or “social structure’s class”. The study of morphology consists of the definition, comparison and classification of the different structural systems. Hence, it concerns to functionalism a sort of “social physiology” when studying how societies function and how social structures can progress. This concept of societies’ movements, its changes and transformations was, at a time, a strong point for a discussion with critical and materialistic approach which criticized a certain statism of functionalism or a perspective which didn’t intended to reach the dimension of the complexity of the historical adjustment, which for the critical approaches was and is fundamental.

The term “functionalist” doesn’t belong to sociology or anthropology. We can find the presence of the paradigm “functionalist” in other areas. Meanwhile, its genealogy is different as well as its scientific and academic tradition. For instance, it is known in linguistics as the theory of “linguistic functionalism”, which is fundamental for the relationship between language and communication and the formal entry of linguistics in communication studies. We find the genealogy of the term in the isomorphic thesis between language and its use, or communication. And we find its origin in Saussure’s thesis concerning the role of language as an instrument of communication and the fact that language cannot be separated from its use.

The unequivocal model of this theme that will be one of the most famous in communication theory is that of communicative functions, of the great Russian linguistic Roman Jakobson. This theme is important the linguistics’ enunciation theory by Emile Benveniste, who dedicates a chapter, in the second volume of *Problems in General Linguistics*, to the reflection on communication defined as a formal apparatus of enunciation where the communicative situation is part of the reflection object of language due to its imprints in the participants

usage. The idea is to study a language from its functions to its classes and mechanisms. The immanentist criteria of language are broken, the linguistic structuralism from Saussure becomes flexible and is born another study as in Benveniste's book or in the English pragmalinguistic which will become as important in what matters to theories as to one of Speech Acts. We can see here how "functionalist" forwards a perspective on the use of language, which will allow the development of a study area between communication and linguistics with great pertinence: pragmatics.

Therefore, we acknowledge how some terms, as the names of paradigms, cannot standardize or be used in a broad sense without the details that allow us to recognize the substance or abandon the complex organized vision of the levels and contexts of communicative practices. There isn't only one functionalism; in the meanwhile, we can recognize some common principles and subjects which extend to the origin of this paradigm. Despite this, these communication theories haven't shown much interest in reflecting on these intersections, and, in general, the term "functionalist" places itself in the center of the sociological perspective, and the particular translation I had in the United States, where communication theories arrived in widely to many schools and communication faculties.

From Talcott Parsons' sociology to the impressions in the academic field of communication

When one alludes to functionalism in communication, it is frequent to unequivocally place it and underline the characteristics of the United States' society after the First World War, where it acquires a quality particularly distinct from that which had resonated in France and England. As Jesús Galindo (2008:7) says, this sociological functionalism quavered analogue to aspirations, interests and myths within the United States' society, which in a way was reflected in this reference and important sociologists in the U.S., having Talcott Parsons leading, knew how to develop and adjust it. Concepts of the social deviation – such as order, social solidarity, conflict management – were good for a different sector of the country clarify on what they felt, desired and perceived.

In the social theory, the term "functionalism" is associated with the significant work of Talcott Parsons, perhaps the first great social theorist in the U.S., who didn't mention much, or almost nothing, about communication and media, for he is only referred to in some theory

books and of media communication¹¹. In the first part of Parson's (Cf. Ritzer, 2001) work we find the attempts for a theory on social action, to the level of thought and individual actions, to analyze how the subject makes decisions, what is the course of his/her actions or what are the patterns, their setting rules. Action is not the same as conduct, but a creative and active process. In *The Structure of Social Action* (1st ed. In 1937 and 2nd ed. in 1947), Parsons reviewed the components.

The following work by this author, published in 1951 (*The Social System*) makes an overview of a wider and systemic perspective, where he defines the characteristics of the social system. It is a Parsons who will, later on, facilitate the dialogue with Niklas Luhmann, his disciple and this other systemic perspective also present in the work of the U.S. sociologist. To the author of *The Social System*, the social order is possible thanks to the assimilation of values the individual incorporates to act socially. The axis of this structural functionalism is social integration as well as the maintenance of the equilibrium with its functionality between parties. Parsons suggests three action systems – of personality, social and cultural – which are guided from the complementarity of the expectation of the other. It is not the place to reinterpret Parsons or try a more comprising rereading from a communicological epistemology, which, at a theoretical level, can disaggregate and be built.

This “systemic” dimension that is mentioned mainly at the final part of Parsons is little studied in communication, it is the bridge to perspectives, like that of Luhmann, where we observe a higher level of abstraction. The social system –as explains DeFleur¹² and Ball-Rokeach (2001: 175)– is:

“a stable, repetitive and guided complex, which, in part, is a manifestation of a culture shared with its actors, and, a manifestation of the psychological guidelines of the actors. The cultural system, social system and the personality systems (of the individual

11 This doesn't mean that we can't extract more than a media perspective, one that is communicational or communicological (at least on the acceptance of Galindo of this term, see 2005). Parsons speaks of mediated symbolic exchanges, though not considering the media, nor communication *per se*, but the money and economy. Money is not the only mean – and here is necessary to have a broad vision that doesn't lessen the term “media” to a channel or instrument. Parsons suggests a theory of the media that approaches these questions. (Cf. Ritzer, 2002: 132)

12 And could for sure reproach when we quote a disseminator and not the source, but our reading shows precisely that the academic field of communication in these years (the sixties, seventies and eighties) haven't read nor was interested in doing it formally, with Parsons and if it generated interpretations from what these disseminators have pointed out. We don't mean to say that this reading of DeFleur is biased, but that in reality, that was a great distance in communication to what concerns the original approaches of the sociological functionalism.

actors) are, therefore, different kinds of abstraction, made through the same basic data, that is, with the explicit and symbolic conducts of the individual human beings. They're equally legitim abstractions, and each of them carries a basis for different types of explanations and predictions." (Free translation)

Surely this language, which only seems to be separated from real, concrete and specific situations, doesn't help much to be interpreted within its context, though there is a basis for an upgrade till Luhmann and gives rise to communicative concepts as those this famous German sociologist, author of a particular language of great complexity and abstraction, for the same reason alienates many, though he is debtor of this matrix. The Latin American field can have problems with Parsons; however, it may be the connection with Luhmann is different because it was a different context and time of diffusion.

Within the sociological functionalism and its application of communication, Robert K. Merton demands a special mention of Durkheim, given that he doesn't recognize Parsons as his main influence, but Durkheim. Merton has a greater interest in the sociology of sciences; acquires fame of being a functionalist though that is not his main preoccupation. Merton keeps his distance from Parsons, for instance, by not considering the functional unit of the society as one, which is only possible in primitive and less complex societies. Therefore there is no system of universal functioning. There are "positive functions", but also "negative", which critics *a priori* the hypothesis of the functional societies or a certain natural tendency to its functioning. To Merton, social problems start when there is a discrepancy between social promises (culture) and social structure (real life).

In this sense, to Galindo (2008: 13), the criticism on functionalism oriented towards Parsons than to Merton and are more oriented towards a general and simple vision of functionalism than towards a complete one. Furthermore, unlike his influencer, Merton defended middle-range theories as not as many macro-theory systems as that of his influencer and classic sociologists.

Among the several critics that, during 20-30 years, have been made to the United States' sociological functionalism there were some pointed to its thinning of the historic perspective, the limitations on naming the change or the social conflict and the conservative tendency or, perhaps, the theoretical character associated to Parsons in the sense that his claims could perhaps be applied outside of the United

States' society. "Functionalism" was deepened in the media "functions", though avoided the social characteristics that are very diverse and there was any nuance saying it wasn't possible to transfer theoretical assumptions about social functions of the media without integrating the societies these belong to. He has certainly created a distance problem associated with this matter, which not having it as universal, he didn't always – at least in a primary moment – include nuances concerning its presumed universality.

In Galindo (2008) we underline the idea of the equivocal and the distorted way the emergent academic communication (especially in Latin America) wanted to see a series of images about a "functionalism" – which, doesn't look to similarities or differences of the functionalist paradigm in the humanities and social sciences –, under an easy ideologization stage, of oppositions of the political type where the place for enunciation (in this case, the U.S.) was enough to judge or evaluate a theory, a methodology or an author, apart from its possible contributions to social sciences. Therefore, we don't intend to exempt any critic to functionalism as a paradigm or social theory, however, to point out the "over" or under-interpretations of critics on functionalism of the United States on the rising diffusion and dissemination of communication theory in classes in Latin America, where little times or never these authors were read, when generally they are known through interpretations or books' abstracts.

Surely these misunderstandings and confusions are natural, especially when disseminators of Parsons' thought or any other author on this subject adapts or interprets it to other realities. In the case of the U.S., not discarding his approaches, it was Wilbur Schramm – who had little or nothing to do with "functionalism", at least in the sense this term has to Parsons – who was more than a scientific disseminator, he was an important field organizer of its history, its concepts, a great diffuser and someone concerned with the expansion of communication schools as a necessary element for its legitimization.

Schramm is a representative of the media occupation in North American field, and he facilitates another of the most important misunderstandings which are that of associating "functionalist and North American" –at least, clearly in Latin America –, and to a certain representation of media bound to aspects certainly not seen in Parsons'. There is an interesting debate between Schramm and Bernard Berelson, to whom communication as a field was dying, contrary to what Schramm supported (Cf. Vidales, 2010: 12). These are two lines of thought that have prevailed: those who advocated science, consistency

and higher rigour of communication as a study object; and, on the other hand, those who strongly support dissemination, schools, and the public, social and political presence. It is, in communication we see a clear idea of the field, schools, students and professors, however, it wasn't built an organized thinking system and counting on some consensus, which has remained under, specific and practical observations upon wide or general pretensions.

Schramm tries to contribute with some notes to the academic field in his country; he identifies founding fathers and establishes fundamental anthologies. To Fuentes and Vidales (2011: 6) one of his contributions was “to generate the illusion of an origin, with foundation myths and founding fathers” (Free translation) as pointed out in 1963 (The Science of Human Communication). This attitude has been highly criticized by many, since given the dispersion, the centrifugal character of communication, this is frequently one more place for the arrival of different social or anthropological concerns, is a place of departure from which one can unify knowledge: communication feeds from other fields. However it hardly influences other academic and scientific places' agenda. The myth of the “founding fathers” entails that of organized genealogies more or less identified, which, as brought up by Craig (2008), Peters (2008), among others, does not proceed in a system of thought – that of communication – originally disperse, and that has been continued this way, while its presence as a study field is marginal, unlike its field or social presence, the number of graduates or professionals revindicating a place within communication in professional places of a more diverse action¹³. The stages and principles for a rising history of theory and investigation in his country were also established. For instance, Iguarta and Humanes (2004: 111) refer Schramm to have established two stages within the emerging investigation on communication: the first, of a theoretical nature, focused on the analysis of the media functions; second, a more practical guiding where to apply the outcomes of the investigation on the planning of propaganda and advertising campaigns. From this we take that from within the various aliases given to “functionalism in communication” we notice another of the many names, not always clear, for communicative functionalism such as “administrative

¹³ For instance, in the Mexican case, according to recent statistics, communication is between number 9 and 13 in preference. Much the same way, in a query made by Maria Antonieta Rebeil, in 2009 there were 1006 curricular units in communication, with more than 1000 graduates solely that year (see chapter V dedicated to the Mexican case in: Various Authors, *Mapa de los centros y programas de formación de comunicadores y periodistas en América Latina y el Caribe*. Lima UNESCO-FELAFACS, 2009 http://www.felafacs.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/mapeo_com.pdf

investigation” (v.b. Pineda 2010; Lozano 1996). When one reads the work of Schramm¹⁴, whom the academic universe wouldn’t hesitate in calling him a “functionalist”, we see, in fact, concerns about the effect of the collective communication that doesn’t follow Parsons’ method, nor do they necessarily follow up with a “functional” program. Hence, perhaps Schramm has been responsible for helping to disseminate an imaginarium of a thought on communication in the United States through anthologies, articles, etc.. This doesn’t mean Schramm didn’t know functionalism, but that it is imprecise the way one calls him this epithet merely because he is from the United States, wrote in English or because he mentioned a descriptive vision of the media.

Another component of the misunderstanding “functionalist in communication” is when one intends to qualify it as a synonym of mass communication in the U.S. we see how easy it is (especially in the sixties and eighties) to extrapolate or do bias readings bound to the production in English and/or from the U.S. with ideologies, attitudes and mainly in opposition to production in the region and objectives, supposedly, found between the U.S. and the region’s necessities. Here we must point out – quickly remembering the linguistic and narrative structuralism – that the signification is a logical operation focused on the opposition, which for this case can be represented as <left–right>, <capitalist–socialist>, <bourgeois–proletariat>, <North American sociology– Latin American sociology>. Once again, to Galindo (2008: 17-18), the Latin American Field hasn’t dialogued with sociological functionalism, but with a series of images and over-representation, at a level that was never understood what the functionalist proposal was and was, or by chance, disqualified. “Functionalism” – in its broader sense – as worked as a lure, a reference to speak of other things and matters, a way to build not from an existing proposal, but the opposite of an existing one. There wasn’t any interest – at least by communication of the sixties and seventies – by a systemic construction to analytically build a study program, because an also comfortable and clear opposition, though highly imprecise, was replicated. Many scholars in the region wanted, particularly by these decades, to see in communication an element to perfectly oppose to what was interpreted in the representation of “functionalism in communication”. There wasn’t a formal dialogue with

¹⁴We’ve synthesised a part of the sheet from the Infoamerica site that is dedicated to the author: “Analyses, for instance, the effects of violence in media (Television in the Lives of Our Children, 1961), the ethical dimension of the journalistic communication in practice (Responsibility in Mass Communication, 1957) and participates in the current of thinkers that includes Rogers, Lerner, etc., which formulates the basis for theories disseminators of development, that are the embryonic state of theory of the Latin American thought on communication for development (Mass Media and National Development, 1964”. (Free translation)

Parsons, Merton, nor with some functional reverberations of authors who have had dialogued with the matrix of thought as happens with Habermas, who equivocally is called of "critic" just because he studied with the parents of the Frankfurtian thought and let's not forget his revision on Parsons in the first volume of his very interesting *The Theory of Communicative Action*; or as happens with Luhmann, unprecedented and unique though also a debtor of Parsons line of thought.

We cannot deny the importance of Parsons in communication, though not media communication bound to the idea of mass communication research, but the broader theory, as happens with these two German philosophers who place the action in the center of the reflection. Communicative action, or communication systems and what they do is not to observe the effects or the uses and gratifications of media, but it offers us a much more complex and open theory than the perspective of those social theories on media communication.

The concept of media we take from Luhmann, has a very distinct configuration and a very particular conceptual framework: for instance, Luhmann establishes a difference between 'society' and social system, somewhat broader and holds other features as is 'organization' and 'interaction'. Society is a specific type of social system; the social system comprises internally all communications; there is no communication outside the city, which demarks the limits of this complexity. (Cf. Corsi, Esposito and Baraldi, 1996:152 and ss.). To Luhmann, society is pure communication, in this sense, he has a more communicological vision, not reduced to a sociological vision of the media. Luhmann doesn't think it is possible to keep on permanently bargaining (as Habermas ants), nor does he believe in the theories coming from society as a contract or an agreement between human beings, because these theories don't realize the social complexity. Human beings don't depend on each other (as in a pre-industrial society), but they depend on a "superior order" which is precisely the communication system called society. It concedes it a certain appeal that might be considered "cynicism", a set of operations looking to self-reproduce. What matters is the system, that flux of information, beyond the personal decision of individuals. Communication is not just a matter of "intention" or moral compass (good communication *versus* bad communication), but configurations, positions and relationships within the system. It is inevitable to detect a parsonian influence in Luhmann, though not functionalist nor as a sociologist of communication, thought derives from this area. Thus, we believe that one of the consequences of the reduced "relative" visions – as Vidales relentlessly calls them –, which intends to be

highly “educational”, is that they lose these nuances and allow, at a theoretical level at least, a less differentiated comprehension of the phenomena bound to communication. It is down to the discussion to understand if part of what we can criticize about the academic thought can be explained within this pretension that narrows it down and in which to obtain an immediate knowledge of something that one needs to present as “practical”, it’s deprived of its density and context, of its contradictions and its specific internal dynamics, as in the case of functionalism.

On some “classic” authors. Reinterpretation on the communication perspective in the U.S.

The “functionalist” current, or more precisely the social and psychological tradition in the study of the effects of media, is considered as a historical tradition. More than a beam of Communication Theory, its context is more restrained and specific: at the level of communication (the social), of a more specific object (the media) and a type of study (the effects). Within these directions, not those of Communication in general, one must bring upon unique authors who afterwards, in the official report, disseminated by authors such as Wilbur Schramm (1980), rise under the status of “founding fathers”. We do not detract from whoever we mention. We intend to always place them within the most specific study area, rather than the general one.

Harold Lasswell certainly has his merit in so to be called as a “founding father”. He proposes his famous “paradigm” in his famous text of 1948, and with it, he brings upon the first contemporary “program” for the study of communications: complete, succinct and visionary, according to perspectives at the time and with great potential for development. This author, more than a “functionalist author”, is a social analyst of some phenomena new at the time, as that he made on propaganda, in 1927. Being born in Illinois, he hadn’t followed the dominant tradition of Chicago School, though it represents the empirical investigation of the social and begins to emerge from the sociological functionalism since it is more structural, theoretical and abstract. It is what disseminators of the seventies, like Paoli Bolio or Toussaint would equivocally call “functionalism in communication” and in reality is the beginning of the empirical tradition on the effect of media, not intending to form general theories, but theories validated by the empirical analysis. Lasswell begins developing theories based on data to describe the way

the media functions but under a psychological or sociological concern. Here the main study object is not the media per se, but the public opinion which, though related to the effect of media, is not a synonym.

It's important to notice that the recognition of the structural-functionalist theory presumes the implication of social media as sociological and political actors within the public sphere, though subjected to the descriptive and not to the processes intervening in the capitalist logic of creation of the media and the entry barriers that presume media to be exposers of social elite as control instruments and, so, must be controlled. This aspect will become important and reprehensible from the Latin American end, which clouds its advantages and contributions to a perspective also important of the social knowledge on the media.

Another author of undeniable merit on his contribution is Paul Lazarsfeld. He takes part in the project that, in some way, origins the investigation of collective communication in the U.S., the *Princeton Project* in 1939, where radio audiences are known through empirical methods. Its pretension is not theoretical, though it generates theories based on data. His contribution is also methodological. Lazarsfeld immigrated into the U.S. already baring a very strong education which included maths and physics (which do not reflect much on his reading of communication). The largest part of his academic work was made when he was a professor in the University of Columbia (1940-1970) when he kept a strict collaboration with Robert K. Merton, with whom he wrote joint articles on communication. Thus, not being called a "founding father" he would certainly fit the parameters, is one of them. From his several types of research, the most quoted on books are *The People's Choice*¹⁵, where he studies the electoral conduct during the seven months previous to the Presidential commissions. In his research, the authors (given the research is pursued alongside Berelson and Gaudet) used very extensive and stratified panels on public opinion for successive consultation. In this study, they associate the voters' personality, their education, criteria and the influence of the media to their decision.

This author has everything to be canonized and justifies the appliance of the functionalist label since among his contributions he establishes characteristics of the functions and dysfunctions of media, which we see in every book on communication. The name Lazarsfeld

¹⁵ There was a translated version of this book in Spanish (*El pueblo elige. Cómo decide el pueblo en una campaña electoral*, 1962, Buenos Aires. Ediciones 3), which unfortunately wasn't published again in Spanish. The book is a "focal study" on the decision making process during a Presidential campaign in the U.S.. in this book the authors look to find empirical support to study the direct influence of media in voters' intention of the vote.

is also associated to one of the classic theories on communication, the famous ‘*two-step flow of communications*’ or ‘double-flow’, about the process of influence, which derives from his book, written in 1955, together with Katz, *Personal Influence: The part played by people in the flow of man communications*. This book is also a product of empirical research where the mechanisms of analysis of the influence of media on opinion leaders and the assembly of public opinion are reasserted and perfected. These authors break with some precedents and limit the value of the media influence, which gives it an unorthodox perspective on a vision that is optimistic typical of “functionalist” thinkers.

We depart from an assumption that the expression “functionalism in communication” has tried to gather under the same term different phenomena. On one hand, the development and academic success of functionalism (which doesn’t imply either communication or media). On the other hand, the development of a tradition on collective communication research, which hadn’t formally dialogued with functionalism (neither sociological nor anthropological). At last, a “field”, or better said, a few universities that make a considerable effort to justify, legitimize, substantiate, make visible or give it a higher consistency than that of an object of knowledge, to the development of mass media after the Second World War, as happens with Schramm. Communication researchers in the U.S., have known “functionalism” without a doubt, though as an atmosphere or environment, but not as a “communication school”. The term “functionalism” was a way to name what came “from the outside” to justify a field or, as in the case of Latin America, to generate a principle of identity of something that didn’t exist, though it was thought this was the academic field of communication, or the Communication Theory, as the title of the book we quote from Schramm (*The Science of Human Communication*) which has a greater pretension than that it offers: a vision towards the comprehension of one of the levels of human communication (the social) and a set of phenomena, certainly scientific, though based on very specific scientific subjects as it is sociology and psychology.

Wilbur Schramm (1982: 6-8) considers Kurt Lewin and Carl Hovland – who, unlike those mentioned before, are psychologists – to be also founding fathers. These authors didn’t mention the media, nor claimed a functional theory of media. Lewin made considerable approaches to the process of influence within the groups. Instead of seeing in his objects as contexts of the appliance, he wants to see them from the media. On the other hand, Hovland was interested mainly in persuasion phenomena in small groups, the processes of forming individual

opinion within interactions. His work has, among other purposes, that of knowing what makes one change opinions and its conduct. The author realized the method limitations which forced him into making research on more or less homogenous groups (soldiers, men, women, youngsters, in cantonment) and was aware of these slants in his measurements. We owe him the 'sleeper effect': the effects of a message can be more persuasive or weaker in its reception and after a certain time.

One of the most important to these classic references is a text originally in the prestigious *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Nº 24), in 1960, where the author, Charles Wright (1985/1960) makes one of the clearest and expectable contributions of the "functional perspective" in collective communications, as it was an inventory of such functions-dysfunctions in different plans and levels. It is perhaps the most emblematic text for collective communication. In the 1960 text, he mentions Merton and uses a more precise referent to speak of functional analysis. Furthermore, there is a theoretical and methodological intend in the text which articulates wider levels of the reflection with specific aspects. This text does not only intends to make a theoretical contribution as it also questions about the possibility to empirically validate the basic question that presents (1985:77): "What are the functions and dysfunctions, manifested and latent of mass communication, vigilance (news), correlation (publishing activity) between society and sub-groups, transmission of culture and entertainment to the individual and cultural systems?"

We've said here that what some disseminators called "functionalism in communication" is, in fact, a non-systemic gathering by who wanted to see similarities or proximity to authors to whom the only thing in common was that they were from the U.S. and wrote originally in English. We can understand the educational intention – especially in Mexican books, which gave little attention to details and minutiae and thought of audiences of undergraduates or introducing to who wanted to share the knowledge of the most important in communication. However, as we've also understood, it is not possible to find similarities between functionalist sociologists and anthropologists already mentioned, the so-called "founding fathers" and other authors such as Everett Rogers and Maxwell McCombs, Jay G. Blumer and Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch or George Gerbner and his "Pennsylvania School". For instance, the famous chain of uses and gratifications, as says Galindo (2008:21) "is closer to the individual functionalism of Anthropology, and in more than one sense to psychology than to functionalist sociology. But

in anyhow they all fit under the same label: it is functionalist". (Free translation)

And the problem is not just in labelling in general, but in misunderstandings and inaccuracies within groups of functionalists. We highlight two: first, the case of professor Everett M. Rogers (1931-2004), creator of diffusionism, gives the example of the tension between the academic speech on what was politically incorrect and what is not. Rogers doesn't speak of "functionalism in communication", some disseminators include it. Diffusionism would give elements to a critique on a certain "functional", "administrative" perspective of communication, because it was of interest to associate it to an idea of "development", though it was bound to capacitation, cultural imperialism, etc. In this situation, contextual or cultural questions were not very much considered, as it was thought of a homogenous success which could by itself bring upon the myth of development and economic growth.

Even though there could be reasons to criticize diffusionism, the emblematic Luis Ramiro Beltrán¹⁶ (an equivalent founder of this line of thought in Latin America), one of its most important disciples, had, within time, to make some revendications and adjustments in favour of his master not to be tossed in the old idealizing conception of technology, and advocate that Rodgers had a broader idea of development and technology not strange to the idea of social change. Beltrán dedicated some texts towards these nuances and recognized, perhaps for the first time, the importance and pertinence of Rogers' objective. One year after Raúl Fuentes Navarro's (2005) perishing, a sort of non-official chronicler in the academic field of the Mexican communication also dedicates a text to nuances and reservations to this paradigm on development, and what at a time was anathematized (neutrality, objectivism, empirical data) is now recognized.

Perhaps the most extreme case of misunderstandings and overinterpretations "in favour of" or "against" a "functional" vision, where for instance one would encapsulate everything technological, was that we gathered against Marshall MacLuhan. Some lethargic professor of the eighties (whose name, for obvious reasons, we've omitted), who by the lack of qualifications and a frame, and since spoke of technology and wrote in English, had no problem in putting the author of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* in the discursive pool of functionalism.

¹⁶ We try to synthesize a review on the contributions and readings of this important author in "Variantes en la comunicación para el Desarrollo. A propósito de Luis Ramiro Beltrán". In *Metacomunicación*, Year 3, N° 5, July-December 2013. Puebla. Mexico: BUAP, pp. 36-64. <http://revistametacomunicacion.files.wordpress.com/2011/12/revista-metacomunicacion3b3nnc2b042.pdf>

It is an extreme case where it is necessary for the component of precision, history revision and the analysis of processes of the ideas' (editorial, curricula, congress, etc.) circulation and diffusion as a necessary component under a conceptual light.

Beyond the equivocal and an example on the pertinence

Once the equivocal theme is resolved, it is important to place the meanings not only of "functionalism in communication", but also of specific traditions for the study of collective communication which may be integrated within a paradigm that is more than "functionalist" which can be associated to an epistemology (a positive one), (empirical) methods and particular subjects that contribute with a solid knowledge to the study of some objects within the collective communication. The sociological functionalism and the structural functionalism as focal subjects begin to lose strength in the seventies and there is a significant ascension of qualitative methodologies, which will become a great study current towards more economical and political, or cultural aspects of communication.

To close our work we want to propose one of the focal subjects of "the second generation", that is the tradition on studies that developed a more complex vision of the effects of media, though surely one of the most important in its dissemination and development, where we see a way to upgrade the movement of a classic theory in sociology of collective communication, which explains some other aspects associated to social communication as it is public opinion.

The theory of *Agenda Setting* embeds within "functionalism in communication" on empirical studies for the study of the effects of media. This theory is "based" on the known research made by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw on the role of media in the elections of 1968 in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where they've studied what voters better knew or better located. It came, in 1972, in the prestigious *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Vol. 36, 1972). In that same year, Shaw and McCombs developed the study methodologies according to modifications to the sample and the type of information treatment.

The original aim of this theory consisted in analyzing the cognitive effects of the electoral campaign on public opinion. Hence, they studied a dimension of the analysis of the effects, the cognitive dimension. In its approach, the theory explained the correlation between the range of media coverage, and if people see history as being important or not.

This research was based on a query to indecisive voters. Since then, this theory has been the basis for the development of hundreds of studies to prove this “agenda effect” which consists precisely, as mentioned in theory, not in telling what to do, but what to think and talk about.

We can exemplify the contribution of studies about the effects with what happened with the theory of *Agenda Setting*, which turns out to be not only a theory on collective communication, as it is, above all, one of the effects or environment that is Public Opinion (another of the most important terms within these focal subjects), to which is also associated other components of information production, as it is the processes of news selection. It is to say that with development, there have been integrated several focal aspects and accentuations to this theory, that demonstrates a degree of effectiveness in the collective communication theory. There are several levels in this theory, from the strict study of the cognitive effects (about what one must “think”) to more valued and affective situations oriented within the characteristics of an object or matter. The famous key-definition of this theory has been equally paraphrased in different ways, as this version suggested by McCombs and Estrada in 1997 (quoted by Kiousis, S. and M. McCombs, 38): “perhaps the media don’t just tell us what to think, but also about how and what to think about something, including what to do about it”. (Free translation)

Since the theory emerged, there have been protocols, designs that put to the test theories or axioms that origin it, one of the most emblematic experiences within the psycho-social tradition for the study of the media effects. Iyengar and Kinder (quoted by Iguarta and Humanes, 253), for instance, have done different experiments in the eighties to find that the cognitive effects in political campaigns could be transferred to the media, or more specifically speaking, to the theme of credibility of the information on news programs on TV.

The theory has gained a certain theoretical flexibility, as Cecilia (1999) assays in her reading, not only oriented to questions of the public’s perception but also to the possibility to bind it with the sociology of news production and seeing the effect of agenda, not only in audiences, as well as in the news producers. Also, to different readings that highlight some variables (*Cf.* Stefaan Walgravel and Peter Van Aelst, 2006). Or still yet to applications beyond the specific study of media, like that of Rodríguez Díaz (2004), with a prologue of McCombs and in which is suited the transference or prominence of a type of agenda or another.

We don’t want to conclude here the complex and the details of

the Agenda Setting which complete the mention references, but to demonstrate from where we want to see a distance between the simple expression "functionalism" or a detailed proximity shown by these studies of empirical nature which, generally, reveal a massive work and approach particular and specific aspects of the message or effects of the media. It is what we see in theories such as the *Agenda Setting*, an example not only of continuance, but also of a necessary presence anchored to the tradition of the empirical study of the effects of psycho-social or sociological nature and that keeps some relationship with "functionalism", but to merge them would mean a confusion which doesn't bring justice to neither of them.

We believe that the tradition here commented takes satisfaction on keeping up with its continuous appreciation, adjusting variables that explain the different processes (social, psychological, cognitive, behavioural, etc.) to see what happens to people, relationships, groups, interactions associated to the technological mediation. For instance, in the case of new media, the presence of the tradition of effects continues to be necessary, however, perhaps due to these misunderstandings, frequently, instead of finding the latest advances in communication journals, one finds them in academic journals like *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *International Journal of Cyber Behavior, CyberPsychology & Behavior* or *Psychology and Learning*, among others.

No area "owns" the concepts. The studies on communication offer, as mentioned by Inmanuel Wallerstein (ed.) (1995) in his famous report more than 20 years ago, where he answers at once in a complex way to these new realities, which we believe can be theoretically considered whenever some conditions are observed like those mentioned throughout this text. Surely not all that was disclosed was imprecise, though frequently the dominant speech to simplify theories was full of imprecisions and, in our own experience, for instance, we listened to these restrictions in classes so that we would contrast them with our reading experience which we intended to share in these lines.

Finally, we recognize that though there was an advance in the organization of knowledge, not reversing completely the dispersion, we have more historical tools and analytical to make more precise groups, specify concepts, locate and draw traditions, identify the evolution of the research's goals and based on that disseminate knowledge about media in particular and communication in general, in a clearer way, where we can also recognize such advances, never forgetting about the limitation or the challenges ahead. It is possible to understand that to the media user, the specialized analyst of the processes, the marketer,

these nuances, between philosophy of science and communication, idea history and communication epistemology might not interest them. Though to universities (and we have to narrow down our vision since, perhaps, history has another tone in other countries or regions), to the researchers' community and professors it seemed less relevant to do these specifications, it looks, to us, surely a particular responsibility. Surely not a total responsibility, but more precisely of some books, speeches and, perhaps, one or two distracted professors who by not paying due attention and detail ends up reproducing misunderstanding and indirectly (or directly) contributes to those critics made frequently to the communicative knowledge and which unrest can be recognized in some texts (see, for instance, Vizer and Vidales, 2016). Overall, more than specific critics, one must acknowledge the discursive behaviour of an academic field of communication frequently little attentive when to formulate its theoretical references and reinterpret its history, also allowing us to remember that famous saying that who doesn't know its history is condemned to repeat it.

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Functionalism in communication studies in Europe: its founding role to the critic and its attempts for continuity.

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Introduction: functionalism in communication studies in Europe

The *International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication* (AMEC), was established in 2010, in Barcelona (Spain), at the *2nd European Summit on Measurement*, seven “Principles for Measurement and Evaluation in Communication”. There were hundreds of academics and professionals subscribed, mainly from Europe and bound to the sector. The first of these principles: “Importance of Goal Setting and Measurement” focused on the fundamental in communication that means to establish goals and measure them, set milestones that quantify the effects on different audiences (who, what, when and how much); measure the representations in traditional and social media considering changes in mind, comprehension, attitudes and behaviours in stakeholders and the effect on the organizational outcomes.

Eighty years later – considering the English claims in the thirties on its leap and uprising in the United States –, it seems that there are still traces of functionalism within several perspectives, models and interventions of the communication field in Europe, especially to what concerns its influence in organizations and the effects of mass media communication, now also, social. Such as it is this theoretical current born in the heart of Social Sciences (with inputs of Durkheim, Parsons, Spenser and Merton, among others) which has been studied in full (and criticized) within the field of communication, it has influenced for a long time and prevails in academic activities and the many different professional practices. Its origin is due to the technological development of media in the United States, which has motivated the appearance of studies on “Mass Communication Research” (Lasswell; Lazarsfeld and Merton; McCombs, among others) about the effects of the influence of media, where has converged many models and perspectives.

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Under the *empirical, analytical* perspective or *positivism*, one of the main standpoints of science (Habermas, 1983), this paradigm has largely confined the investigation on communication in Europe and the studies on the media, with a strong predisposition and productivity towards pragmatic studies and of effective nature, giving place to objecting *critic-interpretative* developments, many of them better generated in Latin America, which has been shown as “capital sin” and by “North American” influence, the excessive prevalence of the trade in the media and communicational processes. Counting on several influences, manifestations and experiences in Europe, the focal points of functionalists (mechanistic, psychological, systemic and those of contingency) have paid special attention to the analysis of communication and its influence in productivity or effectiveness of actions (mainly of organizations) according to its association to the individuals motivations implicit in it. Their ontological statements assume society as being a complete and interconnected organism, where when a part of it is affected, the all is affected. Therefore, media always have the intention to generate an effect on the receiver who, in turn, has some necessities the media must meet.

Of the four focal points mentioned, the mechanistic, in particular, has struggled with the transmission/reception processes of messaging in a linear and transitive way, with little interest on the feedback, to extend precise information to achieve the necessary organizational efficiency. This perspective has deepened the inquiry on the descending vertical fluxes and the role of communication management (administration), putting aside the complex (human) relations which comprise a process to be conceived fractioned. In turn, the psychological approach prioritizes the influence of the characteristics of the individuals on the communication processes, to whom is assigned an active role on the selection of the messages, interpreted according to their personality (set of knowledge, attitudes and perceptions they possess). It supports the existence of a linear correlation between the cognitions and behaviour and appeals to persuasion. The systemic approach has stated the importance of communication in the functioning and support of the organization in the interconnection with the subsystems containing it and the environment. This perspective has been for many, the opening to criticism towards functionalism in its lineal conceptions and/or mechanistic. Finally, the contingency approach emerges from the theory of open systems and supports that the efficiency follows the level of adaptation of organizations (structure, politics, etc.) to

the situation dynamic determined by technological, environmental, human, cultural, etc. variables.

Considering these approaches, the functionalist currents have played a leading role in Europe in the field of studies on communication and media, with clear exponents from a historical perspective, though as mentioned before, with updated debates and with clear future perspectives. Among the common premises that articulate these debates, we find the communicative stimuli looking for actual answers; conducts aligned with organizational points of view; informational mechanisms of control and regulation of the dysfunctional; persuasive communicative processes with a unidirectional and asymmetrical propose; communication for the organizational efficiency, the positioning in the market as a mechanism for adaptation, as a stabilizer and legitimizer of power.

Likewise, the methodological designs, consistent with its orientation have made special use of the quantitative paradigm, of the investigation procedures under the logic of the experimentation, where fieldwork is the primary instrument and is highlighted the objective measure of the social facts, opinions and individual attitudes. They are systemic and structured when dealing with information in such a way that it allows the statistic analysis to quantify social reality, and the results may lead to formulating general assertions on behaviour.

Even though a lot has been written about the reductionisms of functionalism, despite its systemic approach and the multiple applications within the professional context, its existence and validity have given rise to many other currents, some of which need precisely this same reductionist self-critic. In this context, we propose to discuss and promote a reflection on the presence of functionalist studies in researches in communication made in Europe addressing its relations, being conflicting or consensual, with other theoretical approaches and currents.

The theoretical-empirical matrix of functionalism *The media influence*

Among the thirties and seventies, it started to see the communicative process in a more complex way and not as much simplistic. There emerges a multifactor theorization of the dynamic of influences from the media, which must be profoundly studied to establish how to produce the communicative process.

Since a limitation scheme of the communicative dynamic has been set, researchers began a series of works to address a greater conceptual

richness. Hence, this period sees the emergence of new concepts (public predisposition, self-selection and selective perception) alongside with the assignment of potential values in the participant subjects (emitter not as powerful nor unidirectional and a more active and singular public). The great theoretical richness of the period, which gives way to a new stage of the communicative research, have been highlighted by Schramm (1978: 243):

This evolution of the *Magic Bullet Theory* to the study of the *Stubborn Public* and since then to the concept of Active Public constitutes one of the most interesting and important chapters of modern science.

Furthermore, the showcase of new analytical techniques, associated with applied social investigation, give way to the perception of studies that reveal the existence of mediating entities placed between the communicator and the receptor: social groups, intersubjective influence, the leadership of opinion, the singular attitude of the receptor. These entities gather the information issued, acting as primary receptors constituting communication. Later on, at an emitting function, the gathered information is emitted. This new situation allows to establish that the information follows an active process which reaches social entities possessing a double feature: they act as receptors and emitters at the same time.

To Klapper (1974: 9-10), the stage limiting the effects of the media has a series of features:

a) The communicative consequences depend on multiple factors and social interconnections, not merely as a singular cause that achieves, with certain normality, a predictable eschatology on the public.

b) These factors emerging between communication and the receptors limit significantly the retribution since communication is converted into an adjuvant factor to preestablished pretensions.

c) The communicative theology is limited by aspects related to the media, the individuals either through the communicative channel or way, by the intensity or frequency and other factors. These variables make efficiency hardly quantifiable since they can be prioritized or damaged by multiple conditionings, which no participant subject has the power to control it. The variables intervening in communication have been grouped by Wolf (1987: 38 and ss) in two groups:

1.- Factors affecting the messages' receivers. The media are no longer a necessary or sufficient cause within communication when individual

intervene actively. This way, the vital experience of each social subject stands out, since it will participate in the election of the media one desires to consume. The individual factor manifests in two versions:

- the public's interest for the communication that rises singular motivations since, as Klapper (1974: 19) mentions, individuals tend to expose to that kind of communication, which synchronizes with their interests and attitudes. A person, conscient of it or not, avoids communication that goes against one's thoughts or perceptions. Though, when it is not possible to avoid the message, there is a kind of selective memory which gathers, modifies or eliminates the information, according to the synchronization of their one perception.

- to change an individual's opinion is necessary to call for its attention in light of the multiplicity of messages of all kinds of characteristics. People keep a selective exposure¹⁹ which allows to choose or select that information assumed to Triandis (1974: 157):

a) increase of comprehension and which helps individuals to organize the complex entrance of communication.

b) no attack to self-esteem or that presumes the revelation of unpleasant truths.

c) give help to emerge in a complex world.

d) an opportunity to express individual values in a more persuasive way to our peers.

2.- The nature of communication, factors such as the type of message or the credibility of what is released limits the exegesis made by the receiver of what is communicated.

The communicator's credibility depends significantly on the image the receiver has of the entity generating and creating the message. One must have present that the premises the receiver demands to accept the communication of the emitter are the competence the emitter possesses over the issue, the information's veracity and the accuracy of the data transmitted. Without these conditions, the receiver will hardly concede reliability to the emitter.

As for the message, one must analyze the style, the structure and the content as main characteristics of all kind of communication. The style concerns all matter of ornaments embellishing, in a certain way,

¹⁹ The selective exposure has interested psychology, though D.O. Sears and J.L. Freedman ("Selective Exposure to Information: A critical review", in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1967, n° 31: 194-213), have analyzed how this is very close to 'information-seeking', focusing in two aspects:

a) the selective exposure happens only under certain conditions, that is when information is taken as necessary to support an important decision.

b) when information is understood to reduce cognitive dissonance.

Sears and Freedman claim that these researches should study deeper the voluntary exposure to information and not as much the exposure through unconscious predispositions.

the content. It connotes the affinity between the communicator and the receiver by motivating action, passiveness, adverting to situations.

Under this limitation vision of the media, that are framed within the network of social intersubjective relationships, it is attributed value and dominance to the many social groups that are now part of the hermeneutical factor of the individual. Through the group, individuals socialize norms and values, understand better the exegesis of the reality that involves them and create connections between ideas and common feelings.

These social groups act as protectors of the communicative messages filtering and reducing the possible effects of the media. Hence is eliminated a direct, unilateral and all-powerful process of the media of a previous era, becoming a two-layered communication or with a communicative double flow, explained by the 'Two-step flow of communication' theory. This minimizing theory of the influence of media was an approach from the bottom, especially considering the researches made by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet²⁰, by realizing the individual participates in many groups, informal or formal, interacting with different individuals and establishing reciprocal influences.

In these intersubjective deductions, there is a certain individual categorization of the so-called opinion leaders, who develop a role as intermediaries between the media and people. This affinity creates a communicative double-flow: media→ opinion leaders→ individual subjects. As claimed by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944: 151), ideas "usually go from the radio and press to opinion leaders and, from these to the less active sectors of the population".

To be classified as opinion leader does not imply an *a priori* individual connotation since there are only a few suggestions to be one, such as they should be people trying to convince others about their thoughts, or those people to whom one asks for their opinion about certain topics. His/her effectiveness depends on four factors: the competence on the issue, the trust from others, the degree and type of personal contact and the possibility to immediately reward people who meet his/her appreciations and suggestions.

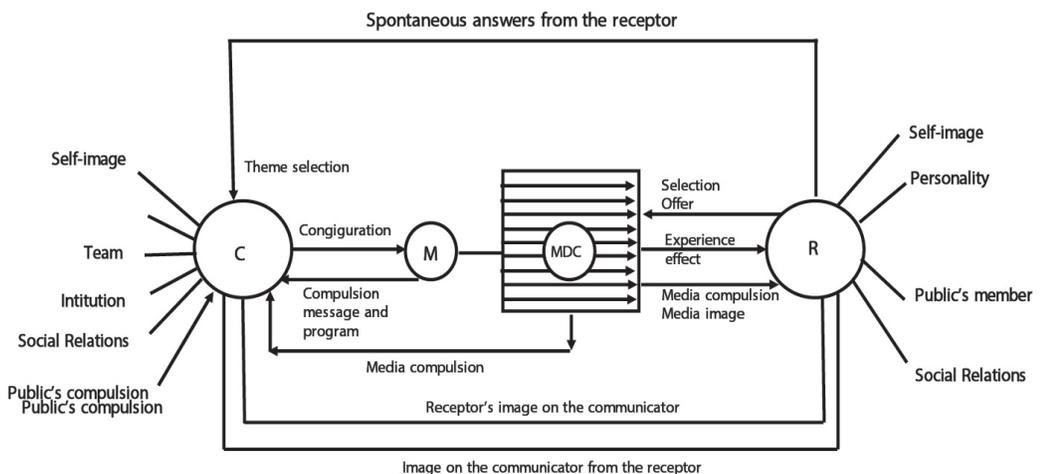
In a minimizing environment of the communicative effects, the communicative flow is transferred from the media→ individuals of the past situation, to a present one of individuals→ media, hence concentrating the studies on people instead of the media.

²⁰ Research that studied the motivations and ways to form political attitudes known to the public through the book *The People's Choice, Voting. A study of Opinion Formation in a presidential campaign*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1948. Later on, it was published *Public Opinion*, in 1953 n° 53, reproduced by Moragas Spa, M: *Sociología de la Comunicación de Masas*, Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1979: 303-318, a synthesis that explained the main claims.

The unexpected activity at the moment of consumption on the communicative products allows us to realize that it is the receiver which selects, nominates the product to be consumed.

This idea is included in the selective exposure, that is that all people distinguish the media they wish to consume. Furthermore, the complexity of the communicative process is explicit, in which there are multiple interacting variables that might change the communicative act. Among the participating actors is manifested the communicator and the recipient (limited by the used media).

In respect to this multifactor complexity of communication, Maletzke (Rodrigo 1989: 71) builds a communicative model that tries to establish affinities within a dynamic process characterized by dependencies and interdependencies of competing factors among participants of communication. Such model (see picture) emphasizes that either the emitter as the receiver are interwoven through exogenous and endogenous constraints that confine and structure one's participation in the communicative act.



To this Polish researcher, the intervening actors in the process keep *a priori* certain positions that confine ways to manifest and interconnect. The reasoning of a communicative direct relation between the emitter and some disperse and disaggregated members of the receiving audience becomes obsolete, since it gives way to a highly active and selective audience, so one must “correct, complement and enhance the unilateral, passive conception through a functional way of thinking” (Maletzke 1976: 185), that allows scrutinizing those realities containing

a significance for the individual, that is, that have a function.

Furthermore, this active individual doesn't manifest isolated, but it appears as a complex entity socially interacting keeping opinions, images, attitudes, personalities that influence decisively in its election. These generic influences come true with the interconnections between communicator and receiver, depending on the image or role of the recipient has of the communicator towards the prestige of the communicator. The mutation of some factors that confine this affinity might presume a variability when establishing its actions.

All these individual constraints aren't merely intrinsic as they've settled for multiple exogenous influences, like the type of and degree of pertinence in social groups, personal situation, imperative norms in its ecosystem. Furthermore, the entity creating, setting and transmitting the messages – the communicator – is also constricted by a series of individual elements (personality, norms, values, behaviour guidelines) and collective ones (degree and type of situation in social relations, the flow with other communicators, social image). Finally, the two participating actors are constricted by the very own media used in communication since the type of channel influences over the way to generate and receive the message.

The uncertainty about the effects of media

In the light of the emergence, at the first stage of functionalism, of the powerful effects of media and the consequent reaction of the minimal effects of media, by the sixties, there is a conception of moderated effects, which sits on an equidistant point of the quoted extremist and polarized taxonomies.

In this new stage of researching about the effects, it is intended to overcome the approaches exclusively focused on the effects, to deepen and insist on other issues and actions of the media, such as the cognitive aspects of communication which affects culture, traditions, guidelines and values, behaviour.

The perception that the media produces several types of effects is supported by the creation of studies on new investigation centers specialized in communication, which begin to appear in the late fifties and early sixties. These innovating centers step back from the administrative goals proposed by the departments of applied psychology, financially aided by dominant social institutions, to compose interdisciplinary studies fed by the assemble of social sciences.

Under these emergent and new centers of investigation, the study of social psychology and the analysis of the individual effects in the short term, are substituted for studies that highlight the potential influence of the media during the medium and long term maturation of the cognitive effects (influence on the environment of the social opinion, of the cultural values or politics).

The studies ensued by Philip Converse (1962, 1964) suppress the psychological perspective of persuasive effects, individual in the short term, by an accentuation of those generic, persistent, cognitive effects, and in the long term of the general process of making the public opinion. These investigation guidelines give way to new and more complex studies on communication.

The different investigations have in common the study of several situations and attitudes maintained by individuals when consuming communicative products. Hence, some studies emphasize the social differences of individuals that restrict the effect, while others emphasize the individual activity when searching for media that will be able to satisfy certain necessities:

a) An amplifying vision on the two-step-flow, which allows to add or take elements from the communicative process. From this point of view, Kraus and Davis (1976: 116-131) note that it is possible to increment the communication stages affecting, in the beginning, a few influent individuals, later on, the most integrated into relevant social circles and, finally, affecting the most isolated and less integrated. On the other hand, they also assume the influence of the media might be direct; in other words, with no intermediates.

b) A position *a priori* of the consumer that constricts the effect of communication on him based on the many levels of individual knowledge. Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970: 159) claim that the more intellectually capacitated individuals have greater and better comprehension:

When the mass media information dissemination increases within the social context, the population segments with higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire this information faster than the segments of lower status, for the *knowledge gap* among them tends to increase instead of decrease.

Under the same perspective, DeFleur (1970) adds that all messages resonate in different ways in each individual, according to his/hersingular

and specific psychological, cultural, cognitive, etc. characteristics. The different usage of information hence produces a detachment between social groups adjuvated by a series of constrictions associated to the social structure, the structure and configuration of power, the use of technology, the cultural habits or the receivers' interests²¹. Among the most significant and important factors that drive this detachment, Monzón (1992: 290) states the following:

- socioeconomic status, since the lower layers of society, manifests a reduced level in acquiring knowledge, mainly political.

- educational level: the higher the educational level, the higher the implication in the intention to increment knowledge. In this sense, the personal level of education establishes a differentiating line between individuals when it is time to use information.

- personal motivation as a factor that, when informed, allows a better cognitive acquisition.

- a personal sequence that allows the least motivated actors to have higher possibilities to know a subject, the longer the exposing time to the media.

In light of this situation, McHale (1981:51) has established a taxonomical criterion between those who have and those who don't have information. The characteristics of those detaining information is their belonging to centers of social power, high social mobility, the progressive acquisition of more knowledge in an easier way and a higher capacity to organize. Those not detaining information, act as if they don't know how to use the information, show very little social and labour mobility, less capacity to confront changes in society, a certain tendency to self-resignation and hostility towards those detaining information.

c) The predominance of characteristics intrinsic to the individual over the characteristics of messages, which is noticed in the communicative influence on the way to use and consume the media.

The genesis of this thought is the article of Katz (1959) which highlighted the way of using and of selecting communications and, consequently, investigations must dedicate less attention to what the media do with the people and more about what individuals do with the media. This current demarks the public's activity and the selection it makes of the means to reach certain goals. The person chooses the

21 To Tichenor, Donohue and Olien (1970) we are before a social situation in which the communicative flow increments itself more and more allowing to infer that the population in an all is more and better informed. Though, it is produced relative privatization of information since there is a minority possessing a great amount of information in detriment to a majority not having it or not knowing how to use it. This situation causes the increase of information to increment cognitive distances among people instead of bringing the individuals closer.

mean and the message more adequate to its interests, according to his/her necessities, then retributing gratification or satisfaction to the necessity.

d) Powerful effects of the media over structural aspects of society.

Since the sixties, communicative theories enhance the extent of effects, more than the individuals, of the society's ensemble. The change has been adjuvated by the convergence of three different fields in analysis, though interconnected: the analysis of the role and of the effects of media, the analysis of the journalistic function and the analysis of the mechanisms of forming and development of public opinion.

All these changes allow amplifying knowledge and contexts of communication effects in a world characterized by its increasing complexity. This investigative congregation allows the making of numerous studies on several topics:

- Individual connotations about the usage made and received gratifications by the receptors of media (Blumler and McQuail, 1968).
- Group actions explaining the detachment produced by media within the groups (Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1970).
- Construction of reality, as do studies about the establishment of the social agenda (McCombs and Shaw, 1972).
- Making of an environment of opinion within the society's ensemble, intergroup or intragroup (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).
- Specific studies on certain media, as it is with influence and importance detained by television in the making of a societal public place (Lang and Lang, 1984).

Under this multiplicity of investigations emerges the feedback on the strength of media, eliminating the old Law of Minimal Effects, explained by Noelle-Neumann (1978: 67):

After three decades of continuous rejection of the idea of the power of mass media, the Conference received a series of reports insisting that there should be a return to the idea of the powerful action of media, though not under the previous conventional conception of influences and effects of a direct nature. There is a tendency to focus on the analysis of the indirect and subtle way the media confront our reception of the context.

The factors confining this perceptive change can be endogenous and exogenous to the investigations on communication made by

theorists. Among the first, Saperas (1987: 29-48) places the emergence of the hegemonic role of television and the adequacy of the political speeches to the characteristics of the media, to better reach, and in an easier way, to the citizens. Among the second, the passage between an investigative perspective focused on persuasive effects and one focused on cognitive effects, the extent of the field of studies to the society's ensemble and the consideration of cognitive effects, indirect and accumulative, in the medium and long term, that condition the social distribution of public knowledge.

In this situation, the communicative investigations have a study object the knowledge obtained by the audience on its exposure before the media. It is no longer a matter of studying persuasion processes, but cognitive processes that determine the way the media represent and construct reality.

The sociological prevalence of functionalism in communication

The functionalist approach, which some say comes originally from France, in 1919, in the context of the First World War, is distinctive of anthropology and the organicist-positivist sociology. Among the most significant displays developed in Europe one must highlight the "absolute functionalism" of Malinowski, who considered each society as a closed and coherent system; the "relativized functionalism" of Merton; and the "structural functionalism" through which Durkheim, its greater proponent constitutes a foundational perspective as much to sociology as to anthropology.

The structural-functionalism emphasizes the relationship between functions and the parts of a whole that develops them. Their main statements which intend to explain the development of social life establish an organic analogy of life; a specialization of the functions made by social groups; and social mobility and function caused by conscious and unconscious actions of individuals, which consent a series of functions that make an individual within a society.

In the light of this, the contributions of the American sociologist Parsons, a doctorate in England, were the key to the dissemination, in 1937, of the concept of "Social Action" (or Action Theory). Together with Merton, they were the most influential in sociological functionalism and responsible for formulating the systemic theory of human behaviour; the deepening of the comparative analysis of social structures of

Durkheim and Malinowsky; the method to the comparative study of social institutions of Weber; and the contributions of other European authors such as Pareto, Marshall, Durkheim.

The development of functionalism in the field of communication in Europe is a consequence of the search for an explanation, according to doctrine, of the norms and roles, the interactions and consequences of these in institutions and of an empirical strategy to study the phenomena of social systems.

Hence, functionalism attributes to communication the premise of adaptation, primarily developed by social sciences, by Spencer, and inspired in the classification of the organs concerning the functions performed by them. Therefore, each “component” of the communication process will abide and be defined by its function: emitters, receivers, social functions, media. As a consequence, the communication model of functionalists “neither takes, nor uses, nor confirms informational postulations” (Piñuel and Gaitán, 1993: 47). Its concept of a message comes from a function of adjustment and readjustment between social actors of communication. It is a system of action and reaction with constant feedback between the “social action system” and the “values system”, both subsystems within the “social system” as context.

Sociologies of knowledge and mass media

From the American perspective, Merton, in his text “Social Theory and Social Structure” (1965) fundamentals the “*communicative functionalism*” by confronting it with the “*Wissenssoziologie*” or the European “Sociology of Knowledge”. Both ways of investigation, as Merton (1965: 79) says, have become an essential reference when describing not only the type of topic as, mainly, the different methodology used in each:

The mass media open way to a new stage between knowledge and society, but only now is possible to study new models and ways of interconnection between collective knowledge and technological means of dissemination of the masses.

Ultimately, the European Knowledge Sociology proposes as a central problem the analysis of the role of the “media” and its culture from the cognoscitive and symbolic classifications provided to the social groups. From the intellectual and theoretical Hegelian-Marxist postulations

is sustained that the social being conditions the conscience, which is understood in the interconnection between knowledge and society; through which the ways of knowledge are then studied as historical worldviews (vision influenced by the German historicism).

Fertile field to the instrumental and mercantile vision of communication

Without a doubt, beyond the mass media, organizations and the role of communication, from conception for adaptation and order (Egidos, 2000), have been very fruitful to the European functionalism. In the beginning, the scheme is presented as unidirectional, and when one considers the feedback, it is done as a control mechanism of the source. When analyzing contributions from authors as Bartoli, Costa, Cees van Riel, Eldin, Kreps, among others, concerning the components of communication models (emitter, message, media and recipient), and to their propositions to identify the same basic formula and common to all, we can characterize this instrumental and mercantile vision of communication listing some premises common to the conceptions (Egidos, 2000: 7):

- Communicative stimuli in search of functional answers.
- Emitters are acting functionally in the sense that they express the organizational points of view.
- Informative and communicational control and regulation mechanisms of the dysfunctional.
- Persuasive aim for unidirectional communicative procedures.
- Dissemination of messages to the making of an image.
- Communication at the service of corporate efficiency and market positioning.
- Communication as an adaptation mechanism for the members of organizations and themselves.
- Communication with a role in establishing stability and facilitating adaptive changes to the organization.

In the light of this perspective, in reality, there are no conceptual definitions, no more than those presenting communication as the other face of the organization, in the sense that communication facilitates the “order” the organization requires. The attention to achieving the institutional goals as in functional aspects, infuse these postures of a utilitarian, economist and administrative nuance of communication.

Communication has a function in organizations, from several aspects, components and characteristics and rule such processes in different manners: organizational communication, public relations, corporate communication, among others.

The process reveals (Egidios, 2000:4):

The relationship between the environment and the organization considering how components of the processes to the organization as an emitter, towards the external and internal environment where we find the receivers, with messages related to the image intended to agree with both publics. From the information coming from the exterior and according to the organization's objectives, it is traced communicative strategies which include programs and plans focused on the image and the organizational culture.

Communication is part of the organic structure (direction, area, department) to conceive it as a function within the organization that must optimize its informative flows within the organization and between this and its environment: people or groups with which they're bound to. One tries to maintain an optimum equilibrium between systems and subsystems, neutralize problems and avoid the fragmentation of messages according to adaptive actions such as politics, communication products, etc., intending to achieve a total coherence with the institution's goals.

This systemic perspective has allowed enhancing conceptual possibilities for the analysis of social phenomena surpassing those lineal approaches through processing visions. A system that works to achieve a common goal and needs communication, as a subsystem, to establish relations, organize them, order them, coordinate and facilitate efficient and effective actions allowing the institution to attend its purposes.

Communication in organizations and the different functionalist approaches

Under a wider vision over the functionalist developments, within what is called empirical-analytical positions, we notice four

approaches: the mechanical, the psychological, the systemic and that of contingency.

The functionalist filiation, in general, come from the analysis of the function that, within the organization, performs communication, which is seen, with more or less layers, as one more variable that influences the productivity or effectiveness of the organization (social system) according to the relationships with the motivations from the individuals implicit in it. From the methodological point of view, the employed procedures have been contextualized within the logics of experimentation. Europe, its theorists and scholars, have had a very important role in these developments, with founding influences, or contributing with perspectives, theories and models in each approach (Saladrigas Medina, 2000):

- Mechanical: focuses on the transmission and active reception of the message through the channel that connects the emitter to the receiver, usually considered as passive. The process is linear, transitive, with no interest in feedback and has the function of providing the precise information to achieve the necessary organizational efficiency, however with downwards vertical flows reinforcing authority. It is not considered variables as the organizational environment, nor other elements of human relations within a context where communication is developed, staying at the margin of complex relations between different elements that constitute the process that is conceived fractioned.

This approach is conceived from the influence of the “Mathematical Theory of Communication” (Shannon and Weaver, 1948), the “Classical Organization Theory” (Taylor, 1911; Fayol, 1929 and Weber, 1947) and the “Behavioral Psychology” (Watson and Skinner, 1900-1950).

- Psychological: as a critic to the mechanistic approach, it sustains that the existence of a linear correlation between cognitions and human behaviour focuses its attention in the influence of characteristics of the individuals (and their personality) in communication processes. Persuasion is a key element which operates on the denominated conceptual filters (Jablin and Putman, 1997): the ensemble of knowledge, attitudes and perceptions the subjects have.

This approach is conceived from the influence of the “Theory of Organizational Humanism” (Mayo, 19933; McGregor, 1960; Likert, 1961), the “Functionalist Theory” (Radcliffe-Brown, 1955; Malnowski, 1942; Lazarsfeld, 1945; Robert Merton, 1949) and the “Cognitive Psychology” (1960).

- Systemic: it postulates the importance of communication in the functioning of the organization, now taken as a system because it “withstands the organization and interconnects the subsystems that constitute it since it maintains it is bounding with the environment” (Lucas Marín, 1997: 61). The model “Dialectical Mediation of Communication” (Martín Serrano, 1981), further developed epistemologically by Piñuel (1989) and employed to the organizations.

This approach finds a fertile niche in the area of Administrative Sciences and combines postulations of the “General Theory of Systems” (Von Bertalanffy, 1950), of the “Mathematical Theory of Information” (Shannon and Weaver; 1948) and the “Social Psychology of Organization” (Katz and Kahn, 1966).

- Contingency: Finally, this last approach (Burns and Stalker, 1961); Woodward, 1965; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967) develops from the principals of open systems theory and the corporate efficiency as a result of the level of adaptation of structure and politics to the organization of the distinct situational variables such as technology, the environment, the people and culture.

Referents, production conditions and processes of institutionalization of the communicative functionalism in Europe

The Catalan Miquel de Moragas published in 1979, the first edition from which there would come many more until reaching four volumes, of the text “Sociology of mass communication”. In the first one, he makes a compilation of basic articles on mass communication research alongside basic articles on the European and Latin American investigation. A situation that would be pursued until the final edition in 1985. Among the chapters, it stands out contributions and discussions between the renown European authors or critics of the currents: Bassets, Bustamante, Cesareo, Eco, Garnham, Greimas, Grossi, Gubern, Martín Serrano, Mattelart, Moles, Moagas, Murciano, Nordenstreng, Prado, Richeri, Saperas, Statera, Tchakhotine, among others.

In its turn, from the methodological point of view, functionalism in Europe doesn't disagree with the American perspective. When we think about the organization, it appeals to a simplistic conception of itself, here we use the efficiency and efficacy concept as dominant values. The notion of conflict is taken as an “abnormality” (normal of

the structural-functionalism), and the dynamics must be interpreted from the observable or what it manifests. The predominance of the quantitative paradigm and the experimentation don't allow an analysis of what is latent. The quantitative paradigm will always intend to find the causes for the phenomena in the study here, without share interest for the subjective states of individuals, since there is greater interest for the objective.

Furthermore, there is an outer vision, oriented towards the results according to which is supposed to formulate laws or conclusions of a general character, based on reliable and repeated data. In fact, to what concerns field work and data analysis, these go in separate and consist of a linear process. Reality assumes a conception as stable, which allows a generalization intrinsic to the explanation.

From the educational point of view, within the varied span of theoretical models which address the communicative phenomena and are studied in Europe, functionalism proclaims a place between other currents such as Behaviorism, Constructivism, Structuralism, Phenomenology, Informationalism, Systems Theory, critical models. In an investigation about "*university education on the Theories of Communication in Europe*" (Ascencio and Vicente, 2010), Functionalism only occupied 6.9% among the variety of models thought. There is doubt these results happen within the context of the dichotomy of the consolidation process of the subject within the university realm on the one hand, and on the other, the lack of an objective analysis of ontological and epistemological stands from which the professorial plan the courses on Communication theories.

The Neofunctionalism

The vast development of North American functionalism will cloud the European version in some way, giving place to a critic stand that will become the origin of the sociological analysis of Mass Culture, before Communication Sociology. However, the critic can't be considered as a constant of Functionalism and much less of the following Neofunctionalism, but the experimental communicology, has largely varied its academic goals and layered in between the empirical studies and the elaboration of models in which the role of the emitter, receiver, message, channel and effects are composed, decomposed and recomposed as a jigsaw and in which are evaluated its variations and consequences (Muñoz, 2009). Such are studies inspired in the "Theory

of Consistency” (Heider), the “Principal of the effort towards symmetry” (Newcomb), the “Principal of Congruence” (Osgood and Tannenbaum) or the “Theory of Cognitive Dissonance” (Festinger).

In the organizational context, the neo-functionalism sociologist Niklas Luhmann imprints his influence in communication by sustain that it is a subsystem which the main goal is to legitimize organizations within the society (Moreno et al., 2010), therefore must explain how social systems interact and develop. This approach connects with the European reflexive model of management of communication (Van Ruler and Verčič, 2004) and is based on the reflexive theory of public relations conceptualized by Holmström (1998, 2004, 2005, 2008, 2009).

Luhmann studied sociology under the influence of Parsons, and his line of thought extends from culture to the media to the point where he substitutes the action from the theoretical core of sociology for communication which in his vision acquires a central value, defining and self-regenerating of systems functionality.

He builds, from a revised structural-functionalism under the light of the systems' theory, a neo-functionalism with phenomenological traces by Husserls and cybernetic ones by Wiener, and a second-order cybernetics and the radical constructivism by Von Foerster, not forgetting the definite influence the refinement of his theory on systems acquires within the 'autopoiesis' of the Chilean Maturana and Varela.

In the complex society, the social system, subdivided in automat specialised systems provides communication defining and reducing functions of insecurity and uncertainty born from the complexity. Communication is what makes systems and differentiates them, not individuals, represented in Luhmann plans in contexts or environments of such systems.

In general, neo-functionalists have granted a decisive impulse, despite its considerable modification and substitution of part of its ideas, besides from resort to one or two elements of the old structural functional theory by Parsons. However, there are cases as that of Habermas, who not always join neo-functionalists, and has much in common with Parsons, with his evolutionary theory of social communication and his attempt to achieve a utopic consensus with no restrictions in society. It certainly tries to combine the Parsonian legacy with the linguistic analysis, sociological phenomenology and the political theory.

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A necessary challenge to Communication: Think Functionalism and functionalists

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The following chapter intends to articulate three interpretative spheres; on one hand, the articles «Functionalism in communication studies in Europe: its foundational role to the critic and its intents for continuity», «“Functionalist” currents: from misunderstandings to a reinterpretation of its contributions» and, on the other hand, contributions of the interpretative synthesis itself. That is, this text proposes to proceed inferentially and not just be an occasional synthesis, it must consider the mentioned text as provocative to the thought of Functionalism and also understand it as an epistemic and political movement which crosses the interpretative history of communication until these days.

If we consider every argument as a logic relation, then this text is a conceptual resume on functionalism/functionalist, seen from today as a mediatized scenery. In this sense, we walk over the proposed ideas of the authors, not in a sense of systematize, but of accepting the challenge proposed in the texts before this. This way we look to push forward analyzing in a theoretical way of the referential with the two chapters, which allows us to revisit the concepts of functionalism, knowing they keep characteristics of theories before and after in constant resignation.

We know that to think is to look in movement conceptual relations, in this case, of thinkers and a certain theoretical movement. To take an intellectual stand, in this sense, is also to question and understand what we are saying when discussing «cultural industry», «the message as a mean», «diffusionism», «hypodermic», etc. because it is not just what we say, but what the theories, as conceptual dynamics, propose. When passing through this type of questions, we make a chain of words until there is a relation between concepts, where the main goal is to problematize the functionalist theories. It is the reason why we must ask: what are we and what are we doing while we think the theories?

Thinking on the current communication processes demands to «make a memory» and to know the previous epistemological dynamics which have been the basis for what we know now as more contemporary or complex theories on Communication. When we say «make a memory»

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we don't mean to make historiography, but to understand the marks, the imprints of meaning that allowed to give new meaning to analytical operators and also politicians related to communication.

In this sense, to reflect on functionalism, functionalists and mass communication research, as well as on the different moments and reinterpretations made, is to recognize oneself, from an area in the origin of the investigations on the several mediatic communicational phenomena in these days. This situation of a highlighted centrality – called mediatization – might seem obvious in our twenty-first century, but it wasn't so to those who began their designs on analytical paths (19th and 20th centuries) about this new form of cultural reorganization in which the media were the protagonists. It was necessary to understand what was happening to establish different levels of action, from the political to the economic, educational, propaganda and more.

A comprehension also demanded by the society in the broad sense. We can foresee the question: And now what do we do with all this that seems to progress unspeakably? The books, formulas and models were the first way to or attempts to establish parameters of action and interpretation as a way to visualize and organize, put an order to functions. Society as a gear, a body that must be read from these relations and defend it from the aberrations or noise not allowing the free passage or, better yet, clean so that information transit with no deviations. It is one of the core operators, to eliminate not only deviations but also the possibilities of them. For this, the transit channel is unique, unidirectional, and one might say step-by-step. The deviating strategies have no place than that of being conceptualized as anomalies in functions or functionality of the communicational processes. It is important to understand the media or communicative processes (something that came later within the functionalist theories) are understood under such optic, a chain of functions to the well-being of the organization. Well-Being consistent with the establishment, the guardian of the good functioning.

Rationalizing from this perspective allows us to proceed and understand that the theoretical and methodological processes are not automatic nor automate, but valuative selections of those investigating and acting (individuals, collectives, institutions, States), for this one, must understand the intellectual scenery where we find the options made related to the media, in this case, when thinking about functionalism, as a knowledge and a dynamic from interpretative theories and action proposals.

When one model is transferred into another, there are periods

of reflection, adjustments in which there are supplementary and complementary realizations (transverse thoughts) that intervene in the relation between models. During this period, there are advantages and disadvantages (misadventures) intervening when it is time to conceptualize communicational processes (media). What once is understood as a model as necessary operators, then it is not permitted the desired strength. It's at this moment when decisions must be understood as contextual results. Communication theories must be understood as dynamics to comprehend reality, which also means to discuss and reflect upon communication and its epistemic models. Therefore, we realize there is a necessity to systemize and explore, deepen and understand concepts, propositions, arrays and ideas of the reasoning configure in the respective communicational theories, to disappoint clichés.

In the light of this, to transfer and employ the epistemic and methodological logics of functionalism to our times (the 21st century) is not realizing totally that the historicity of knowledge and actions is not detached from the respective socio-political environments. The North-South hegemony doesn't follow the same parameters; they can be similar in some aspects, however not the same as in the initial circumstances of the functionalist models. Though the hegemony intends for the contrary, much water has passed and will pass under the bridges of resistance, and this cannot go unknown when one must understand the functionalist typologies of politic and interpretative action.

Understanding the transition between theories is more than to know the schemes or models, it is to know that more than one theory surpassing a previous one, that one does not disappear for it has left imprints that allow comprehensive progress. A theoretic understanding that is more refines that a previous one doesn't eliminate the last. This point interlocks with a methodological provocation related to the communication theories that go beyond functionalism itself, and these cannot be treated as models but as actions deliberately conceptual. We would pass by innocents if the functionalist formulations would be understood as simple contacts of letters and lines deprived of a political sense proposed as «place of speech» to build relations.

When we propose to go beyond the two texts that allow this synthesis, we realize the previous one allows for sharpening a more activist reading. This previous knowledge allows us to switch places epistemically, that is, resume to the discussions that put on tension on the diffusionist processes that are the functionalist basis of

communication. Design strategies and read between the lines of the analytical diffusionist models of intervention. The functionalist way to understand communication is through the intervening matrix. It appeals to several epistemic aspects so that the device and its gear of the hegemonic power function in an accepted way. We must mention that in Latin America for some time (the latter half of the 20th century) it was optioned, as an answer to the hegemony, to use the same tactics, manual and models of the functionalist proposals. Though afterwards, through other more critical currents (called alternatives) from, for instance, the educational spheres (edu-communication), the use of the same epistemic arrays were reviewed and resignified. From this, other lines of action to contrast with the North-South array began to form.

It's important to remember, as an illustration, the book by Paulo Freire «Extensão ou Comunicação?» written in 1979. Freire sees in the extension the transmission without any barrier of sense by the subjects – just as the hypodermic theory, the magical bullet –, where information is completely absorbed, and the reflection or counterpoint of ideas are absent. Freire opposes extension to communication as an exchange of knowledge among the counterparts; to be with others, potentiate the come and going of the communicative processes, that is, not functionality but the potentiality of interpretative possibilities. The polysemy of relations and not their gear. Therefore, communication is understood as an educational character (dialogical) and not diffusionist or of welfare (extension), hence liberation is being drawn within the dialogical in the resistance to the intervention of the supremacy in the superior-inferior axis, North-South.

With this epistemological and methodological option in the education of theories and the theoretical, there is a conceptual construction on the processes of 'conceding' a certain culture of investigation related to what is understood as theoretical thought. It is important to comprehend that this dynamic provides the principals to understand the communicational phenomena to learn with the theories.

From these readings, we can propose to think of a triad: epistemological and methodological theory, that potentiates a profound comprehension of the knowledge (dynamic of concepts) on communication. As a way to answer and leave the restriction proposed by the models (moulds) very present within the academic scenery in relation to the communication theories, where there is an excess of reasoning tied to the dichotomy 0/1.

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02 CRITICAL THEORY

Critical Theory: The Bridge between the Political Economy of Communication and Cultural Studies

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This chapter analyzes the bridges between Political Economy of Communication (PEC) and Cultural Studies (CS), according to the critical theory perspective. The following pages do not intend to establish a mere state of art from the beginning of the currents' path until now, but to mark the theoretical diatribes concerning their main characteristics, to later synthesize that allows to understand in which epistemological context the main European, American and Latin American lines of investigation are developed.

The critical social theory got interested in a mass culture very late, though it is clear the attempt to study the connection between mass culture and the social structure, aiming to understand the processes included in the current social dynamics (Méndez Rubio, 2004). In this sense, the argumentative approach used in this theoretical context went beyond the theoretical-practical discussion of the thinking currents faced and related, ultimately, to the critical theory, that is, the PEC and cultural studies.

The theoretical context presented in these pages is based on two key premises. The first is the open consideration of the object in study, in the sense that, for instance, the different media are not segmented for its analysis, but, paraphrasing Méndez Rubio (2004: 13): «It's given priority to the sociocultural framework that these materials, genres or technologies constitute from the point of view of the social and institutional dynamics these days» (free translation). And, in second, the premise that a wide context of functionalist studies and the critical theory from which sets the theoretical basis can be highly interesting to later works.

Therefore, the situation presented next looks to find intersections of these theories, conceiving the PEC as a broad theoretical structure containing cultural politics and of communication, without neglecting the economic-political conditioning.

The second pillar of the theoretical frame is presented in the cultural studies, where we're focusing special attention to the division between critical cultural studies (Birmingham School) and its emergent

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American post-modern derivative. In this sense, cultural studies allow confronting an important part of the investigation on communication, that are associated to the interaction of the audience and, therefore, the concepts of active reception and the relative autonomy of the economic infrastructure culture of the media will be particularly significant. However, this coming closer to the cultural studies, mustn't neglect the economic conditions of the media systems, namely those affected by the economic-financial crisis.

From the traditional functionalist theory to the radical critic of the late capitalist society

In the history of communication theories, there are great scientific traditions that focus on different study objects. Among this crucible of epistemological perspectives we find some that focus on the preponderance of the texts and the media, «in virtue of the logic of centralization and productive organization of the cultural industry» (Sierra, 2013a: 12), to which belongs PEC, and others, like cultural studies, that postulate the «mediation as a distributive process centred in the audiences as the axis of articulation and structure of the agent of the communicational system» (*ibidem*) (free translation). However, the urge to examine the processes of commercialization has made PEC evaluate the media content, the socio-labour situations of their workers and, namely, their audiences (Compton, 2004; Terranova, 2000; Lebowitz, 1986; Murdock, 1978; Smythe, 1977), which would establish a first bridge between cultural studies and this current of thought.

We must mention that some doctrines have studied the cultural development of the different societies according to instruments that are merely static and functionalist as, for example, those presented by the International Union of Telecommunications (IUT) and that refer to questions merely economic, industrial, etc. (IUT 2004). However, the nature of the changes and the usage and the cultural expressions together with the progressive global integration and the convergence of the CIT forces to take conscience of the role performed by information and cultural industry nowadays. It is exactly due to this complex situation that a certain context of a theoretical perspective prevents the observation of reality as a whole.

In this scenario, the controversy is in that thought in general, and the critical theory, in particular, can be articulated, at a time of

globalization and diverse cultural uses, «a speech that contributes to a diagnosis and a radical transformation of the universe of communication» (Sierra, 2013a: 15), creating the basis for a new critical vision within the general context of the development of the CIT and sharpening of global inequalities. Having as a reference the term given by the German philosopher and writer Max Horkheimer to critic the traditional theory, as some authors referred to the American functionalism, the critical theory is based on the radical theory of the late capitalist society and the system of domain developed by it. The domain or control refers specifically to the intern organization of the members of a social group and the process of adaptation to the change. In this interpretation of the critical theory, the processes of control or domain are political dynamics, in general terms, since they constitute the social organization within a community while some authors, as Mosco (2006: 59), claim that there is also processes of survival in social life, namely economic because they concern to processes of production and reproduction.

The work of reference by Horkheimer *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (2009), written along with Theodor W. Adorno, is classic of the critical theory of Frankfurt's School and, from the perspective of communication studies, an essential piece to the comprehension of the negative dialectic of media, in which is said they manipulate, alienate and objectify citizenship. Both these authors and Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas were the most important representatives of the critical-negative thought of the 20th century, in which we find three basic features according to Méndez Rubio (2004).

First, Frankfurtian theorists define reality in a systemic way, with no boundaries between society and communication, hence the traditional place of the study object is questioned, as an entity separated from the investigator. Hence, the search cannot be an uncritical and determinist process, but it must invest in a connection between theory and practice.

Ultimately, this theoretical-practical correlation, which some call social practice, is the second feature and allows the scientific work to stay away from the margin of economic and political conditionings of real life, of from the conflict of interests these might cause. Hence, in the study of the media reality nowadays, it is essential to know the nature of the entities participating in it, as well as their financing. In this sense, it is fundamental the clarification Payne makes on the critical theory:

An easy and tempting way out of these perennial questions is to put them in parenthesis and put them on the side, alleging that a certain investigation project is not planned to approach ethical and/or political consequences of its results. No matter how uncertain or tempting its achievements are, the critical theory gives the greatest importance to self-criticism: the designation of an ethical-political position from which one does his/her job, aiming to open to analysis such position by the critical readers or other reflecting public; to the recognition that knowledge is power; and to the conviction that the supposedly amoral and apolitical position is also one requiring a critical reflection (Payne, 2002: 614).

The third and last feature of the Frankfurtian studies is the postulation that the truth exceeds the empirical, understood as a critic to those theories ignoring the social mediations and focusing its attention in simple technical employment of a method, hence reinforcing the functionalist perspective. In this sense, studies on communication should go further than a methodological design (Díaz Nosty, 2012) to go deeper in the critical analysis of media, its incidence in society and the context endorsed by the communication politics.

Due to the role of the treatment of relations between communication and society in terms of the cultural industry for both currents influenced by the critical theory, we will analyze. Next, we'll insist on such a concept, indispensable to the definition of the bridge between PEC and CS.

The expression implies a negative reconsideration of the modern concept of culture as context to the symbolic makings of society and that had been associated with the creative capacity, collective liberty and human progress. However, the concept of cultural industry is «over understood as a subordination of culture to the dominant market interests in the era of late capitalism» (free translation) (Méndez Rubio, 2004: 71).

Hence, Horkheimer and

Adorno recognizes the importance of monopoly in which is produced and reproduced mass culture in economic conditions of concentration, which is hard to receive by society, except when an institutional

speech legitimizing it is produced.

All mass culture under the monopoly is identical, and its inner structure – the conceptual frame made by it – begins to be drawn. Leaders are not yet interested in hiding such frame. Its power increases, the more is revealed. Cinema and radio don't need any more to be understood as art. The truth that they are nothing but business is an ideology for them that legitimizes the garbage they produce deliberately. They call themselves industries and the numbers corresponding to their CEOs take down all doubts about the social need for their products (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2009: 166).

Even though it is clear that the critical theory produced by this school must be understood under a certain political and social context «suffered by Europe since the twenties until the seventies» (Saperas 1992: 210), it is certain that as claims Méndez Rubio:

In the way these last fifty years settled the structural bases of modern society, the reflections on the critical theory continue to suppose an original challenge for the comprehension of this world and its typical sociocultural dynamics (Méndez Rubio, 2004: 58)

Such particularities of the critical theory answer to a constant effort to update the possibilities of non-economist heterodox currents, though concerned with the economic conditionings of the ideological dynamics that can be observed in the political economy of communication. However, among the many intellectual changes that have happened, cultural studies question the emphasis of PEC within the study of communication business and the strength of multinationals of information (Mattelart, 2001; Mosco, 2006).

Considering the Frankfurtian School as much as the PEC and CS, Rodrigo Alsina (2001: 152) presents these currents with complementary terms: «The critical methodology is a rational reflection that looks to unveil the distortion that the ideology, understood as a false conscience, produces within the conception of peoples' reality» (free translation).

The original contribution by this reflection is precisely its commitment in establishing a productive dialogue between the critical

school of PET and the interaction problems among active audiences that have been approached by cultural studies and must settle the basis for Communication studies.

Finally, to rethink the dialogue between the PEC and cultural studies, paying special attention to public communication policies also emphasizes the necessity for a social change in which the processes and social relations have a fundamental role, also the traditional tendency of the political economy in the study of social and institutional structures.

Political Economy of Communication, the border-subject

The Political Economy of Communication is a «border-subject» (Marques de Melo 2011: 54) or a theoretical-methodological structure developed from Marx's formulations and that as settled academically in late 20th century under the environment of the studies on media as a structural hub of the critical thought in communication (*ibidem*: Simis and Sardinha, 2010). On his turn, Vicent Mosco defines the PEC as «the study of social relations, especially of power relations that those producing, distributing and consuming media keep» (Mosco, 2006: 17) (free translation). Such formulation has practical significance, as said by the author himself (*idem* 2006: 59), since it emphasizes the importance of how communication business works before the producing, distributing and consuming actors.

Communication and culture are more pertinent than ever since through them are possible to analyze the complex logics of hegemonic and counterhegemonic organization of communication. According to Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner (1997), politics and economy are the starting point for the communication study which means that cultural production and distribution have a place in a particular economic system, within a specific way of production and reproduction. Precisely this is one of the original hypotheses that brings the study object closer to such theory since, to analyze a certain media ecosystem, we must analyze the social production and reproduction made, as well as the role of media as producers and distributors of culture.

The media are related to the material conditions that bring to light the production and reproduction of society's imaginarium and can only be conceived, as explained by Bolaño and Britos, within the internal and structural dynamics of capitalism, society and State, and

the constrictions of those symbolic goods (Jambeiro, Bolaño and Britos, 2004: 13). The study of economy-related to communication, information and culture detain a strategic function associated to development processes and economic growth, such as the current situation of «economy-world» globalization, where large media companies have a fundamental role.

Using the didactical resource propose by Marques de Melo (2011: 54 and ss.), one can identify two tendencies of the PEC: one pragmatismal one, catalyzing the approaches related to the preservation of the hegemonic economic system in society and another one, more critical, concerned in making critical analysis of prevailing structures, associated to, according to the critical theory, the first cultural studies, much more compromised with the economic and political constrictions of communication. The approach of the author, though merely pedagogical, doesn't allow to see the layers of PEC within the mould of the critical, Marxist or heterodox thinking.

As explained by Bolaño, Mastrini and Sierra (2005: 150), the political economy of communication comes from the «necessity to find an answer in the functionalist orientations predominant in communication studies of the fifties» (free translation). In this sense, the matter of democracy and its relation to the media isn't resolved with the «liberal appearance» they had before (Dantas, 2013: 24). Nowadays, debates can't be limited to if the internet must be free or not, but, for instance, it must look to understand what is the role of the providers of access to the network of networks and the guarantees of rights to the citizens within the digital context. In other words, the main goal of the examination must reflect the asymmetries of political, economic and symbolic capital possessed by each individual or group (Mattelart and Vitali, 2016; Ramonet, 2016; Mattelart, 2015a; Bolaño, 2013: 29; Sierra, 2013b).

The studies of the observed communicational processes under an economic view emerge in the seventies of the 20th century when there is a concern with the phenomena of commercialization of press. However, it is only after Dallas Smythe, within the context of the 'International Association for Media and Communication Research' (IAMCR), that the studies on Political Economy of Communication are in vogue. The critic to such research group, from the reinterpretation of the political economy of capitalism, focusing on the «symbolic goods industry, which most evident feature is its transactional profile and which defiant enigma remains as the imperialistic vocation» (Marques de Melo, 2012: 16), is fundamental to the examination of such current.

The academic relevance of the valorization of economy for the comprehension and management of communicational processes is taken over by Armand Mattelart and Herbert Schiller, among others, generating numerous studies and research groups, some of the more significant of which are those made in the nineties of the 20th century by César Bolaño in the Work Group of Political Economy of Communication within the framework of the Brazilian Society for Interdisciplinary Studies of Communication (INTERCOM). The novelty brought by Bolaño, along with other scholars, is the «emphasis on what we could call the epistemological fight for the reconstruction of the critical field of Communication» (Bolano, 2012: 28 and ss.).

We must mention the economist Harold Innis (1951, 1950) within the configuration of this perspective of the PEC, for being the first author that associates economy with communication, paying special attention to the international informational flows and how these influence politics. His line of thought has influenced his disciple Marshall McLuhan and his image is still central to the comprehension of the critical theory. Specifically, to what concerns the current approach, Innis thinks the media are the key to social change (Fernández Vicente, 2010: 86, Preston: 2001: 105).

Moragas claims that the modern PEC in Latin America, Europe and the United States «presents significant differences, though evermore convergent in their institutional positions and academic networks» and that they «coincide at a point: sign their moral commitment, as intellectuals, with the democratization of communication» (Moragas 2011: 217) (free translation). Hence, though there are important exceptions, the American, European and Latin American approaches are different «in such way as they must get a distinctive treatment» (Mosco 2006: 62 and ss.) (free translation).

The concern with the size and the increasing power of multinational communication companies constrain the American PEC, namely in works of names such as Dallas Smythe and Herbert Schiller. The two scholars, of the University of Illinois, influenced several generations of political economists, turning their work towards the social class and the imperialism of the media. Furthermore, the American stream of thought is different due to its concern related to the political activism to change the dominant media and create alternatives (Wasko 2003), which includes defending a new international economic, informational and communicational order (Mosco 2006).

According to Dantas, the great revelation by Smythe was to consider the audience as a commodity, which builds the first bridge with cultural

studies, which refers to the interaction between the audience and the media:

In the capitalist enterprise of communication, using its artists', journalists', communicators' work, it produces an audience that, in abstract quantitative terms, negotiates with announcers and their advertisers. At what price? (Dantas 2013: 26)

The Canadian sociologist Vincent Mosco (2011; 2009) claims that if in North America the concern is on the cultural industry and the increment of power and the influence of multinational communication companies all around the world, in Europe they're more concerned with defending the public communication systems before the tendencies for liberalization, commercialization and privatization programed by the conservative governments. Nonetheless, the European school has been less connected to the «specific founding figures» though it stands out for its zeal to defend the public media systems (ídem: 63), as opposed to the American school. Among the most influential works, there is those of Garnham (2000), concerning the power of the class, and those of Raymond Williams (1975), on the integration of communication institutions within the capitalist economy. The second European view could be led by Armand Mattelart (2016, 2014a, 2014b, 2012, 2004), who understands communication as one of the main resources to the resistance to power (Mosco 2006: 63). Concerning works on media industries, Bernard Miège and Peter Waterman developed several approaches deserving attention.

Finally, the research in Latin America on PEC has developed in different areas, though priority has been to theories associated with the emancipation of other world powers (Bolaño 2013; Bolaño and Mastrini 2001, 1999; Marques de Melo 1999; 1998). Before the creation of the *Unión Latina de Economía Política de la Información, la Comunicación y la Cultura* (= Latin Union for the Political Economy of Information, Communication and Culture) – ULEPICC – there was already previous movements such as groups like INTERCOM or ALAIC, the network EPTIC and its journal *EPTIC online*. The rise of this sort of research is not only a consequence of the vigour charged by ULEPICC but also of the increasing number of publications and analysis of Latin American cases.

We can't talk about this reference on the Latin American critical school without mentioning the most important figure at the time of

NOMIC, Antonio Pasquali (2011, 2002, 1991, 1978), who, along the first distinction between informing and communicating, criticizes viewing the receiver as a mere passive actor, placing him in a merely objective or instrumental position to the interests of persuasion and rentability (ideological, economic and political).

The critical studies were developed in the eighties in Latin America, led by Muraro, Portales, Arriaga or Bolaño himself. This era is marked in this region by civic-military dictatorships, the economic instability and, in the communicational field, the political defeat of NOMIC, which has caused a fundamental effect to the development of mass media and its posterior analysis in the region. In this sense, it is important to highlight the *Primer Encuentro de Economía Política de la Comunicación del MERCOSUR* (=First Encounter of Political Economy of Communication of MERCOSUR), developed in May 2001, from which emerges the Buenos Aires Letter²⁴. This manifest will be the starting point to the *III Encuentro de Economía Política de Comunicación* (= III Encounter of Political Economy of Communication) celebrated in Seville and which founded the ULEPICC two years later.

Among the most predominant Latin American authors of these days, there are the Argentinian Guillermo Mastrini and the Brazilian César Bolaño, and we still must remember the works of Valerio Britos and Rui Sardinha, who end up building, along with the work of Bolaño, the main current of the Brazilian PEC. To finish the approaching to the Political Economy of Communication, one must highlight:

Overall, studies on Political Economy of communication represent a rupture with certain a Marxist analysis which, from a non-problematic acceptance of the base/superstructure model, understand the media as instruments within the domain of those classes in power. This reductionist view of the media role in society was contested from the political economy which, though assuming the importance of the economic structure in the functioning of media and, especially the need to analyze it, insisted I am not committing the error of a mechanist transference of the media. On the other hand, studies on the economy of media maintain the distance from the theories proclaiming an excessive autonomy from the ideological or political layers, eliminating any influence of economic relations in the process of significance. (Herscovici, Bolaño and Mastrini 2010: 158).

Concerning PEC in Spain, the first studies also appeared in the eighties and among today's Spanish authors we have Enrique Bustamante (2011, 2004), Ramón Zallo (2011a, 2011b, 2010) or Francisco Sierra, author

²⁴ <http://www.ulepicc.es/recursos/46-carta-de-buenos-aires>. Retrieved el 27 de Diciembre de 2012.

of the historical-critical of educational communication (2006), who demonstrated, right in the beginning, a concern for Spanish cultural industries (1988) and afterwards continued with communication in the digital era (2002, 2003), while Marcial Murciano wrote about the structure of international communication (1999) or Quirós about the media power in the era of globalization (2006, 1998).

Having the political economy of communication as a theoretical frame were we fit different perspectives to study communication and culture; it seems obvious to think in the relationship between mass media and studies of public politics on communication to rethink such fundamentals of the PEC, according to the respective necessities of public authorities of citizenship and media in the economy-world today. What's more, these instruments must be able to combine the world communicological thought, observing the enunciated critics from peripheral countries, such as the uneven exchange of information, already announced in debates and reports of NOMIC, but also the content production of media in hegemonic power cores, able to see in national policies of communication in certain countries.

The necessity to transcend the traditional fragmentation of scientific knowledge in distinct currents places the PEC in a privileged situation that inspires sociological functionalism of Mass Communication Research, though also the social theory of information and the reinterpretation of cultural studies according to an opening to the creation of bonds with other theories. In this sense, the transversal logic of communication studies, when it is the instruments that analyze the contemporary informative processes, it promotes a new theoretical stand which breaks all frontiers between systems and brings the PEC closer to the cultural studies according to the critical theory.

Dialogue between the PEC and the CS

Cultural studies have been a fundamental source to studies in communication in general, and to the Political Economy of Communication in particular, providing diverse epistemological frameworks to understand communication and media which, unlike PEC, have supported an approach focused on subjectivity or on how people interpret the world (Mosco 2006).

Before synthesizing the characteristics standing out the most of this synergy in its whole, one must analyze diachronically the main currents of cultural studies, paying special attention, by the influence

of the European PEC, to the approaches of the CS of the old continent.

During the past century, these studies expanded. The British School of Cultural Studies reinterprets the previous postulations, through the idea that the development of capitalism and the industrial scheme of production of cultural goods has a pernicious effect on traditional ways of culture, either within the academic culture, of elite or popular. To the first cultural studies, culture didn't depend on economic relations, but it is directly influenced by political-economic relations, a reflection of the dynamics of production within the political structure. This current focus its interest in the reactions among individuals and gives them a core role, making them the study object in their works. Therefore, it examines the cultures typical of specific groups, such as young people and workers; the contents and the reception of media, to consider social structures and historical contexts as essential factors to comprehend mass media, granting great importance to the global structure and the specific circumstances of each context.

The investigation from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), will come from the works of founder and director of the center, Richard Hoggart and of the reflexive sensitivity of a world suffering of several mutations in the same moment of its description and theorization (Owen 2008). The work of Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*, steps away from the precious tradition, and it concerns the importance of culture in relation to the remaining social practices. To understand the dialogue among the PEC, one must emphasize some issues, such as the challenge presented by the study of popular cultures. Williams or Thompson knew how to give attention to the dominated cultures, without being taken away by the acritical indulgence.

From 1980 this sort of studies saw themselves expanding considerably, and notions such as «genre» and «ethnicity» began to be studied. It enhances, in theory, comes with the revalorization of the subject or individual, associated mainly to the media (Mattelart and Neveu, 2004) and ignoring the critic to structural reasons that originate processes of social inequality, which are also approached in the PEC. This concern for the opinion of individuals and its interaction with the audiences sets the basis to, years later, begin to worry about issues that until the moment were considered lesser, such as genre, race and ethnicity, as well as the relation between these factors and the social class and power relations.

In this sense, the media act upon the psychological processes in the sense that it creates images, representations and models of the social reality. This modification, in the early eighties, is the beginning of a study

field about media reception trying to make operational models like that of codification-de-codification of Hall. For him, researchers display a great motivation into the search for observation and comprehension methods of real publics, namely with ethnographic techniques. It was precisely this employment of Hall's postulations that caused the emergence of the ethnography of audiences, a new methodological current, centred in the practices of reception by spectators.

This change in the theory is inseparable from the imprint left in Great Britain by other phenomena at the time, namely the role of Margaret Thatcher in the conservative twist of politics, primarily in what concerns privatizations and deregulation, what as caused confrontations with syndicates, the modification of economic variable, etc. (Bauman 2015b; Acemoglu and Robinson 2012) and that affects studies on media systems, property, building hegemonies, etc., typical issues of the PEC directly.

Globalization and, above all, the use of new technologies causes great interrogation marks in cultural studies due to the uncertainty created by the extent of the institutional development of such studies and the way they might be affected by an intellectual movement originally controversial (Mattelart and Vitalis 2016; Ramonet, 2016; Bauman, 2015a; Días Nosty, 2012). In the nineties, there was an international diffusion of anglophone researches in matters of culture. This expansion presents differences depending on the country of origin which, through a special dialogue between the European PEC and CS, deserve attention. In France, Germany or Central Europe, joining the uneven influence of the idiom and English culture, there is a level of diffusion of cultural goods proper of these countries, as well as a structuring of the intellectual field.

As soon as this dialogue between the Political Economy of Communication and European Cultural Studies is framed, it is necessary to approach this last current from a critical perspective, to observe the controversies set associated with the PEC and that are useful to build the theoretical context in common according to the critical theory. Using the description by Méndez Rubio (2004: 143 and ss.), the main proposals of the cultural studies can be grouped considering two defining variables.

First, from a non-elitist perspective of culture, which has allowed the authors of this current to make an exhaustive analysis of popular culture. Hence, «the job of the first cultural studies was to explore the potential of the resistance and rebellion against certain domination powers» (Barker and Beezer, 1994: 15) (free translation). One of the

main criticisms made to the contemporary cultural studies is, precisely, that they've lost this critical essence (Mattelart, 2011). Second, this theoretical current is characterized by «epistemological inclusiveness», that is, by the use of multiple approaches and methods to interpret social reality.

Before we delve into this critic, it is fundamental to undertake the challenge presented by the cultural studies – that has also impregnated the Political Economy of Communication in some aspects – and that consists of the theory of the active audience. It is supported by the double premise that, on the one hand, the receiver is active in a non-trivial sense and that, on the other hand, the content of media is open and polysemic, in the sense that it depends on the interpretative and dialogical reception (Méndez Rubio, 2004). From this point of view, Ariño points out:

We can't attribute effects *a priori*, vilify the consumption of popular classes, subsume all sorts of effects in only one (it see important to distinguish between the short and long term), consider that its distribution is even within the social ensemble and deny the active role of audiences (Ariño, 1997: 177).

The double dimension of the audience is fundamental to the investigation of the media in cultural studies and also to propitiate the counter-hegemonic empowerment of the citizens in the approach of PEC. One must claim that the confrontation of the critical and dialogic attitude of cultural studies has converted them in a meeting point between different theoretical positions, which has turned them into a reference to the social movements and to the organizations that, since the civil society, have been observing the work of media.

For this reason, authors like Grüner demand a revision on social studies according to the critical theory of culture, distancing them from «a reproduction modelled from a ambiguous cultural logic of the late capitalism» (Méndez Rubio, 2004: 147) (free translation), therefore, directly associating to the spirit of the PEC.

In conclusion, the main inconvenience of cultural studies these days is the ethnographic spin that disintegrates culture, stepping apart from any systemic critical perspective, which had unified certain currents at the beginning (Mattelart, 2011). For this reason, it is relevant to establish synergies to observe the PEC and CS from the perspective of the critical theory, observing the active role of audiences in the core of

these studies, especially thanks to ICT, which revalues another series of studies within these currents about cultural industries, ideology of the media, etc. Within this context, the best solution to save the dispute between Political Economy of Communication and Cultural Studies is its redefinition from the Frankfurtian critical theory employed on the challenges typical of the 21st century.

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The Political Economy of Latin American Communication

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The core of Political economy of communication studies is in the social relations – power relations in particular –, that constitutes production, distribution and consumption of symbolic goods. This relation has a certain relevance to the new conditions presented to cultural productions either of products of industry either of the specificity implied in the cultural sector (Bolaño and Mastrini, 2002).

The main subject of analysis is the cultural industries, that must be considered from a historical structured approach and circumscribed to the dynamics of capitalism (Gómez García and Sánchez Ruiz, 2011). The transformations operated within the global economy, where these days economy services and the informational subsector have gathered a relevance only owned previously by industrial activities (Mosco, 2006), imply that industrial industries have an important place in the reconfiguration of capitalism. In the light of this, Garnham expresses (quoted by Zallo, 1988: 10) that cultural industries are conceived: “Firstly as economic entities having a role directly economic, as creators of surplus-value, through the production of goods and its exchange, as well as the indirect economic role, through publicity, in the creation of surplus values within other sectors of good’s production” (free translation).

Furthermore, this issue has implied the emergence of the field of studies which main concern “is to understand the material functioning – sometimes insisting on the political analysis, other times in the economic or in both – of culture and communication” (Mattelart and Piemme, 1982: 69). Here, the authors claim that in the several countries critical research involving cultural industries were denominated in different ways, as the analysis of mass media as a structure, or as the analysis of cultural industries, or the political economy of communication and culture.

The reformulation of the concept built originally by Adorno and Horkheimer, conjoined with the economic transformations where cultural industries have a significant presence, implied the configuration of a field of studies where information, communication and culture constitute objects of research.

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From an Iberoamerican perspective and from a critical reading of the informatization context and colonization of life places, where inequality and the international division of intellectual work intensifies, the authors César Bolaño, Guillermo Mastrini and Francisco Sierra (2005) point out that the field of studies emerges due to the necessity to find a replica of the functionalist orientations that prevailed in communication studies in the fifties.

The author makes a historical overview on the development of the field of studies, where they express that North American authors have presented the economic problem of cultural industries – instead of the autonomy of the ideological devices of the State – (Smythe) and what is more, have analyzed the international economic structure of media, insisting in the binding between the North American government, big communication companies and industrial and banking corporations (Herbert Schiller).

According to the British authors' contributions they sustain they focus on understanding how mass communications participate in the social stratification process and the reproduction of relations of class (Murdock and Golding) and in working on the media as economic entities, which purpose is to create surplus values through the production of program goods (Nicholas Garnham).

Furthermore, they point out that in France, it stands out the works led by Bernard Miège and Patrice Flichy, who have studied the work processes and valorization of cultural products and its specificities. This school has influenced Spanish authors such as Enrique Bustamante and Ramón Zallo, who have discussed and reviewed their primary concepts²⁶.

The authors we're referring to point out the field of Political Economy of Communication as having implicated in a rupture with some Marxist analysis:

From a non-problematic acceptance of the base/superstructure model, they ended up interpreting the social function of media exclusively from the control and classist structure of property which determines the information system. This reductionist vision of the role of public media in society has been contested from the political economy, since though the importance of the economic structure in the functioning of media is assumed and, especially, the necessity to analyze it, they've insisted in not falling for the mistake of making a mechanist transfer of the effects of the media (Bolaño, Mastrini and Sierra, 2005: 20).

²⁶ Zallo (2011: 18) concerning the founding authors of the study field we're analyzing – including those already mentioned and Mattelat –, expresses that they had the mission to report the communicative system and redefine paradigms.

The critic on “dependents”

Meanwhile, on the emergence of the field in Latin America, Bolaño, Narváez and Lopes (2015: 384) sustain that the same happened autonomously and in dialogue with the critical current of the thought in the communication of the region: the theories on dependence or the cultural imperialism. It was an internal critic also made to the founders of the original Marxist analysis and the incorporation of intellectual tools of the economy together with the sociological theories of imperialism or the cultural dependence. In this sense, we believe it's important to focus on the analysis made by Heriberto Muraro (1987), who sustains that in communication studies in Latin America since the origin of the subject, have been approached global economical problems, emphasizing the analysis of the media in the sector of economy controlled by private executives, besides having an interest in the formulation of proposals concerning the use of media as instruments to promote the economic and social development if in the hands of the State or under the management of entities of public welfare.

About the first of the aspects mentioned, investigations have been related to the interests of transactional monopoly groups that control big news agencies and the dealing with political information, the private communication networks, the production of electronic equipment, the circulation of film material and the advertising agencies.

This current of “dependent” authors have contributed to the communication studies their analysis on “the close ties existing between the development of the monopoly capitalism and the modern mass communication system and the transmission of information”, besides considering “that the monopolized media contribute to that conservation of the international *status quo* instead of promoting a more balanced economic development” (Muraro, 1987).

This type of analysis has insisted on “the magnitude and the repressive character of the empire of communications built by transnational corporations” explaining the development of cultural industries through what theorists have denominated “cultural invasion”, a concept that, according to Pal Freire (1981), puts these industries at the service of the conquest and oppression, where is imposed a conception of the world, its values and the “superiority” of the invader and the “inferiority” of the invaded.

Muraro considers that the cultural invasion category has had a vast acceptance due to, among other factors, the fact that investigators themselves have auto-assigned the responsibility to report this

repressive character of culture and media in the hands of the transactional power, besides the speed that television has “implanted” in the Latin American cultural body, imposing the “visibility of the dominator”, in an international context that has implied a reconfiguration of the international division of work and the relations of dependency between core and periphery, an issue that has resonated within the “mass consumption”.

Within this type of analysis made by Latin American authors, there is a relevance of the concept of manipulation: how much and how media can shape the ideology and the ways of behaviour of the individuals (Muraro, 1987).

The model presented by the “dependents” analyzed the role of the national states of Latin America arguing that the same had been unable to control the investment of transactional companies in cultural industries, an attitude corresponding to the developmental economic policy that intended to introduce foreigner capital in the region through economic and legal stimuli.

The critics made to this type of investigation were bound to two kinds of matters: the category of “cultural invasion” and the analysis of the economy of communication.

On the first issue, Muraro says that the authors on this current, by accentuating the dominion imposed by the media controlled by transnational companies, recover the old thesis that made references to the omnipotent character of media that could easily influence the masses. To the author is due to mention a convergence of interests, exemplifying through the case of the Latin American woman and that of the poor urban people in the scheme presented by the “dependents” with its limitations.

It is also analyzed the existence of a “national culture” that has remained isolated from “strange elements”, not minding, for instance, that these idealized forms of culture have been a product of relations of dependence.

Related to the “national culture”, César Bolaño (2013: 151) claims that the effectiveness of mechanisms of ideological domination through cultural industry depends on its capacity to produce national contents that guarantee its greater acceptance.

Furthermore, and as a fundamental critic to the theories of dependence, Bolaño sustains that the problem is to mistake the characteristic of any capitalist society for what is given as the particular situation of a society in the international division of work, that is, this

sort of plans puts aside that social domination happens in terms of class and not externally.

What is more, the Brazilian author claims that the dependents' plans that "transfer all discussion from the outside" can be used to hide the real contradictions present in capitalist societies, by prevailing the concept of a nation over that of class²⁷.

Concerning one of the aspects referred by Muraro – concerning the analysis of the relations between communications and economy –, critics have pointed out that the investigations have strictly explored fundamentally the relations of the property of companies in the sector and the flow of exchanges of messages to prove the asymmetry present between central and peripheral countries.

These analyses haven't considered the cultural activities to constitute an integrated industrial complex, where the capacity to control production and circulation of messages, besides the introduction of new technologies, can't be explained by analyzing only the relations of property²⁸, but these would be matters to be intervened by relations of power (Portales, 1981), (Muraro, 1987).

In the light of this, Diego Portales (1981) says that: "the sphere strictly economically appears farther. It would only provide the key to understand the hidden reality within the content of the message. It would be an economic determinism of the last resource, though not from a context requiring the incorporation of the economic analysis on the cultural phenomena".

The Chileno author claimed the imperious necessity to develop an economy of communications, since, despite the transcendence of the economy as a discipline, the study of the production and distribution of the communicative material was absent.

The agendas in the investigations

Before these analyses, Muraro provides a memorandum destined

²⁷ Here, Bolaño speaks based on statements by Ingrid Sarti and makes the following quote of the author in is critic to authors of the theory of dependence mentioned in a paper in 1979: "(...) in its simplistic interpretation, one emphasizes in such a way the character of dependence that keeps the distance from the essence of the problem, that is, its capitalist nature. As dependence becomes the essence and not the complement, one considers the entire aspect of capitalist ideology as the opposite to the interests of Latin America in a way that dependence is reinforced and opposes to the natural course of the Latin American Development" (in Bolaño, 2013: 155) (free translation).

²⁸ However, Muraro sustains that the hypothesis proposed by these authors on the constant increase of the concentration of cultural industry, and the continued shrinkage in the margin of operations led by local producers of dependent countries that has been noticed, though it is not an even and lineal process in the entire region.

to the researchers in communication aiming to stimulate the debate on the economic implications, specifying some gaps little explored by studies of communication.

The issues proposed are:

1. The analysis of the cultural industries as technically integrated complexes and following economic rules specific to this productive sector.
2. The examination of the correlations and mutual determinations present between macroeconomic processes and communicational.
3. The occurrence of the new technologies in the technical organization, financing or administrative of economic activities.
4. More generally: the role of transmission of information and other communicative activities in the day-by-day organization of economic activities.
5. The role of the mass media, or restricted circulation, in the decision making of the economic agents before government policies to promote the development or economic control of the juncture.
6. The elaboration of a broader model of rational action within which fits the processes of transmission of information and communication (Muraro, 1987:70).

Facing this program and investigation proposal, we pose the question: how was the development of this field in that region from those formulations?

Without making an exhaustive collection of the total of investigators, besides the papers by Portales and Muraro, among the approaches to the field, we can point out those of the Brazilian authors of the University of Campinas, which under the Marxism, have thought the specificities of the capitalist production manner implemented in the region. Patricia Arriaga also proposes to employ the distinction by Marx between productive and nonproductive work, and Bolaño, under other perspectives, proposes the necessity to elaborate a critic of the political economy of knowledge, within the context of a discussion on the subsumption of intellectual work and the role of technologies of information and communication (Bolaño and Mastrini, 2002).

In its turn, some of the topics addressed by the authors that discussed the theories of dependence had to do with the hegemonic and ideological character of the communication devices (Javier Esteinou), the role of the transactional companies in cultural industries of the

sub-continent (Rafael Roncagliolo), the alternative communication as a process to the social exchange (Fernando Reyes Mata), the dynamic of audiovisual industries and its relation with globalization (Enrique Sánchez Ruíz).

Already at the turn of the century, the Argentinians Luis Albornoz, Martín Becerra and Guillermo Mastrini have analyzed the impacts of global capitalism in cultural industries and of information, the economic concentration of the different multimedia groups, the revision of policies on communication and culture within the region (Gómez García and Sánchez Ruíz, 2011)²⁹.

Following Muraro's considerations and having passed more than two decades after the initial elaboration of this text, Martín Becerra and Guillermo Mastrini (2006) update that collection, where they claim that with the turn of the century we see a revival of studies from economy of communication and culture in that region: "a process that follows the necessity to produce information, knowledge, reflections and propose debates on the structure and movements of the dynamic sector of information, communication and culture" (2006: 111).

The authors present an update and an expansion of Iberoamerica of the agenda proposed by Muraro counting on the transformations in the sector of cultural industries, though always based on pioneer works of the political economy of communication.

- The correlations and mutual determinations are existing between macroeconomic processes and communicational processes. The media (mass and niche), the socialization and the behaviour of economic agents. The information and its influence in the economic-financial framework.

²⁹ Furthermore, these Mexican authors offer a program of investigation transcribed as follows: Historic structural studies on the Cultural Industries and Telecommunications; Conceptual debate on the Cultural Industries versus Creative Industries; Industry of CopyRights; the Role on Cultural Industries in local, national, regional and global economies; the role of Cultural Industries in the process of globalization (not only in its economical dimension, but also political and cultural); Pertinence and a theoretical-methodological scaffold to build a Political Economy of the Audience; Problematization of the commercialization of the cultural and informational products and their sociocultural impact; Analysis of the international flows of cultural products between central and peripheral countries, as well as regionally and interregional; a Generation of empirical investigation that copes with the organizing and labor dynamic of cultural production, especially in what happens in organizations related to cultural industries, to the idea of characterizing creative work and worn its contradictions in a Global capitalism context; Identification and characterization of distinct ways of communication and cultural production present in the margins of cultural industries (community media, independent producers, alternative media); Critical analysis of the social consequences of technological innovation, as the digital convergence process and its correlation with the processes of concentration and integration of economic groups; Analysis of the impact of marketing in the communicative and cultural systems, namely to what relates to access to consumption and cultural production; Analysis and recommendations of communication policies and cultural that are counterweights to then logic of the free market; Justification and defense of systems of public radio broadcast as democratic, cultural and identity vectors.

- The incidence of new technologies in the technical, productive, financial or administrative organization of the economic activities (including namely the labour issue).
- The incorporation of socio-economic dynamics into the cultural, as well as the socio-cultural constraints of the economic.
- The cultural industries (either economic complexes and technological integrated) beyond the analysis of property relations.
- Politics and legislation on cultural industries within the context of the technological convergence and the economic concentration (Becerra and Mastrini, 2006: 117).

The authors analyze different works and a diversity of authors that have dedicated time to problematize this, and they've concluded that there has been an advance in the production of knowledge on the relationship between economy and communication and that it has "overcome the instrumental approximation of the communication studies to the economic structure of cultural industries to infer the intentions of messages" (free translation) and that the studies "show an increasing expansion that includes the traditional study of the structure of cultural industries, the transformations in the productive system and the media policies, though also look to inquire on the incidence of the technological developments and how general tendencies of economy impact specifically culture" (2006: 124)³⁰ (free translation).

Parallel to the production by different authors individually. There are groups and associations that, articulated between them, also develop a scientific work that provides the field of studies with new productions and promotes the exchange between researchers in congresses and collective works.

Hence, we highlight the workgroup of the Latin American Association of Investigators of Communication (ALAIC=Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación) and the Brazilian Society for Interdisciplinary Studies on Communication (INTERCOM=Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares de Comunicação), which at the beginning of the nineties, in the last century, being both groups under the coordination of César Bolaño, gave away to the origin of the Political Economy of Technologies of Information and Communication (EPTIC=Economía Política de las Tecnologías de la Información y la

³⁰ They also point out that the works are referring to "socialization of economic agents, changing forms of production, dissemination and appropriation of convergent technologies, the incidence of such changes in the governmental agenda and the strategic behaviour of cultural industries and the production of knowledge from empirical and comparative studies" are scarce.

Comunicación) and the e-journal EPTIC On-Line in 1999, besides institutionalizing studies in different centers in several universities of the region.

Though there is no doubt that there was a great leap ahead with the creation, in 2002, of the Latin Union for Political Economy of Information, Communication and Culture (ULEPICC= Unión Latina de Economía Política de la Información, la Comunicación y la Cultura) which goal was to develop scientific studies on the media, culture and information and to cooperate with the organizations compromised with democracy and social transformation³¹.

A field in expansion

In this text we've already mentioned, the authors Bolaño, Mastrini and Sierra, point out within the context of the ULEPICC, that the Political Economy of Communication has as basic tasks "to recover discussions made on property of media, work on the definition of democratic politics of communication and to fight for an international framework that is more just in the distribution of information", instead of advocating the systematization of the theoretical analysis of the functioning of cultural industries, since we see "the media as systems of production, distribution and consumption of symbolic ways that require the use of scarce social resources that are distributed from the restrictions presented through the capitalist manner of production" (free translation).

Furthermore, they contemplate this field of studies "must be an intervention program that is once again bound to the academy with the practices and the organizations" (Bolaño *et al.*, 2005: 25).

In its turn, in the also quoted work of Bolaño, Narváez and Lopes (2015: 384) they claim tendencies in the investigation of the PEC in the region – which develop as part of the history of studies in communication and the Marxist thought – include a diversity of topics, that cross the analysis of the concentration of media, the organization of work processes, the production and distribution of cultural and informative products, the communication policies and numerous interfaces with studies on communication and education, popular and alternative communication, among others.

Furthermore, they mention that the field of studies constitutes a

³¹ In Bolaño, Narváez and Lopes' text they consider the different collective productions made within the frame of the studies we're analyzing, either specialized journals, books, congresses, etc., either in Spanish or Portuguese and English.

true epistemological alternative while building its object, not from the autonomy of media and technology, but its insertion within the development of capitalism. They also highlight the commitment of its researchers to the different political and social alternatives interested in questioning the communication policies or the relation between media and democracy. They also call the attention to the cultural projection the field has had through the ULEPICC as academic and cultural community within the Latin world, hence concluding that: “in this triple epistemic, political and cultural dimension, the PEC represents a genuine product of the Latin American critical tradition of communicational thought” (Bolaño, Narváez and Lopes, 2015: 396) (free translation).

In the end, this is a field of studies that has been consolidated within the past decades in the region, and that collects the discussion not only under the scientific point of view of communication studies but has also contributed with multiple tools to the social debate on the structure of media, knowledge and culture, capitalism its transformations and alternatives.

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Notes on Political Economy and Critical Thought in Communication Studies in Europe and Latin America

César Bolaño³²

This commentary aims to propose a debate with the authors of the previous texts on the “critical theories” axis of the project *Connecting Paradigms*. This project is the product of the collaboration agreement ALAIC-ECREA, initiated in early 2010, intending to contribute to the dialogue between researchers of both sides of the Atlantic.

It is interesting to mention that both texts were a product of an international solicitation and the result shows an important tendency to the unification of the field associated to the axis “critical theories” involving the paradigm of Political Economy of Communication (PEC) and the Latin American critical thought. The last, therefore, is influenced by the fact that both authors come from the Iberoamerican area where the transatlantic dialogue already has a great tradition.

The idea next presented is not that of including texts, nor it is to discuss the issues that have already been sufficiently handled here by the authors, but that of raising some complementary reflections that might feed the debate:

1. The article of Ruth de Frutos, the European representative, derives from localization of the critical thought in communication-based on the opposition between functionalism and critical theory (Frankfurt's School), to reach the PEC (and its relations with Cultural Studies), which is the core of its analysis.

There is an interesting reference to the text of Marque de Melo in which he separates the PEC in two currents, one critical and other the author defines as pragmatic, but we may call it orthodox, following the conventional classification of the economic science. The division the author makes is not without sense, for the Political Economy is the original denomination of the science that was later known as Economy. Though the sub-field of Communication that defines the PEC, in all its currents, derives more precisely from the Critic on the Political Economy, or the Critical Political Economy, as it must be called, and not the orthodox Economy that, in its turn, has influenced the development of what we know today as the Economy of Culture.

The situation of the PEC within the field of critical thought brings

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it closer to Marxism, from Frankfurt's School to the critical currents within the different Social Sciences, etc., and separates it from the functionalist and positivist perspectives, among which we find that of orthodox Economy. In the very economic science, the term Political Economy ends up defining an ensemble of currents, among them Marxism and all those defining themselves as heterodox.

In Communication, the term has been used since always among the English and North American schools and throughout all fields around the topic of Political Economy in IAMCR. Other schools, in their making, preferred other denominations, such as the case of the well-known French Culture and Communication Economy. The unification of the sub-field internationally around the concept of Political Economy only happens since the nineties of the last century, more precisely since the congress in 1992 of IAMCR in Guarujá.³³

However, one cannot forget the fact that the analytical instruments of the PEC, though they incorporate through their interdisciplinarity elements of different Social Sciences, are found among those defining economy in general, which is fundamental, from the epistemological point of view, to characterize the sub-field. It is what distinguishes, for instance, the Latin American PEC from the previous school, known as Theories of Dependence or Cultural Imperialism, with great tradition in the sub-continent, also critical, many times Marxist, though associated to Sociology and Political Science.

2. Another point of reflection is the fact that none of the texts refers directly to those theories of Dependence or all an important Latin American critical field of the sixties and seventies in the last century. However, the text by Javier Torres Molina properly shows the distinction between those theories and the PEC, relying on the critics elaborated by two authors who were in the making of the last one, before it became an organized current: Heriberto Muraro (Argentina) and Diego Portales (Chile). However, I'd include here a series of other authors, such as Sergio Capparelli (Brasil), Patricia Arriaga (México) and many others belonging to a generation in which one could not differentiate the outlines of both Latin American critical schools, but there was already a claim for the theory of Communication more directly related to the economic work of Marx and not only with the insights derived from his philosophical, political work or of other Marxists³⁴.

The course of the Theories of Dependence and the whole of the

³³ The first ALAIC congress happened at the same time, in Embu-Guaçu, which hosted the second PEC group in the region. The first was the INTERCOM in Brazil.

³⁴ Remember that Mattelart himself, who's one of the founders of the French PEC, having his

primary Latin American critical thought organized in Communication towards what would be denominated PEC, in the nineties, had a transition area in the eighties, deserving of archeology. I myself thought of advancing though hesitantly through this course in the third chapter of my best known work (Bolaño, 2000), though also in various articles, in general co-authored, including the chapter on PEC of a book of fundamental revision on ALAIC about the Communication field in Latin America (Bolaño, Crovi, Cimadevilla, 2015). Though it is still due an extensive synthesis, product of a systematic work focusing on that context.

Nevertheless, it's important to understand that the PEC emerges precisely as an internal critic of the founding school of the Latin American Communication field. The idea behind the differences in the PEC that were proposed that appeared around Latin America was that of the overcoming those studies of a sociological nature or Political Science towards an approach based on the Critic on the Political Economy. The recension by Torres Molina of the founding work of Muraro leaves no doubt about to the "dependents" the sense of this internal critic in a very elegant manner.

Also, Portales, who I'd join to Ingrid Sarti, among others, goes in the same direction. It is a generational change fundamental to the understanding of the trajectory of the Latin American critical communicational thought. The relation among the Theories of Cultural Dependence and the PEC is an exemplar case of paradigmatic change in which the old paradigm is overcome and is integrated into the new one, that is broader³⁵. Anyway, there was no PEC in Latin America in the seventies. The first papers on the specific fields are from the eighties, including mine.

3. The frame under the brief genealogy of the different currents of the PEC, only considering the influences from the different critical schools associated in some way to Marxism and putting aside other important influences, such as the North American functionalism, which had an important role in the creation of the first representatives of the Latin American communicational thought here defined as "Latin American backgrounds".

Under this expression I comprehend not only the Theories of Dependence or Cultural Imperialism but also the ensemble of critical communicational thought of the sixties and seventies of the last century, completing a complex environment of theories, among

Chileno experience, has a perspective under a Leninist basis.

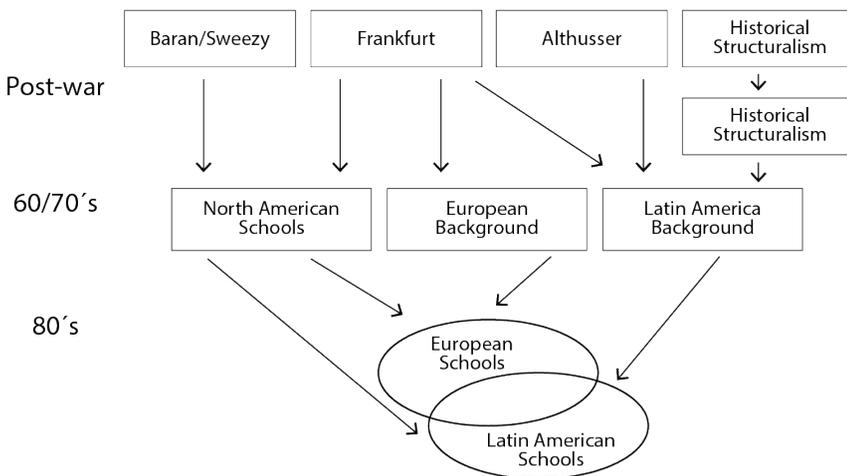
³⁵ In my book *Campo Aberto* (Bolaño, 2015b) I make an advance on this discussion.

which Communication and Education Studies, the different versions of Popular and Alternative Communication, the studies on Communication Policies, among others, and authors like Paulo Freire and many others that cannot be classified as dependents.

In the following board, I was given the privilege to the direct connection between this current and the Latin American Historic Structuralism, with the mediation of the popular Theories of Dependence, of sociological nature, some of which classified, by Octavio Rodríguez, as part of the historic-structuralist school, of the Latin American economic heterodox. However, opposite to the Theories of Dependence, the cepaline perspective didn't have a direct influence in the Latin American communicational field towards the publishing of my first contribution in 1988, which ended up, in its turn, little known out of the Brazilian territory until very recently.

Anyhow, I must recognize that the book is directly bonded to the interpretation of Marx's work by the economists of the critical school of UNICAMP and the philosophers of the USP in the previous decade, making little reference to the work of Celso Furtado, who has a conception of the Political Economy very attached to a cultural concept and a theory of dependence which hasn't been incorporated by the communicational thought and which does not suffer from the defects of the best-known theories of dependence (Bolaño, 2015a).

Board 1. Brief genealogy of the critical schools that have influenced the different currents of the political economy of communication and European and Latin American Culture



Source: Prepared by the author.

In this board there are other three important theoretical perspectives in the post-war until the sixties exposed: the Frankfurt School, the Althusserian Structuralism and the famous works by Baran and Sweezy on an advertisement. There are other influences that weren't included, even when related to the critical thought, such as theories on language, the Semiotics, etc. due to its scarce direct relation to the PEC. In the line representing the approaches in the sixties and seventies, besides the mentioned Latin American backgrounds, I considered the "European backgrounds" – which include authors such as Williams or Enzensberg, who would come to influence as much the English school as the French one of the PEC (Bolaño, 2010) – and the North American Schools (Canadian and of the United States), the oldest in the field.

An aspect which should gain relevance within the studies on the history of the field internationally, and which hasn't been contemplated in the scheme, is the influence of the Latin American Thought on the European PEC. For instance, Mariano Zarowski (2012) mentions the specific case of France, in his study on the work of Mattelart, who, when returning to Europe right after the Chileno experience, would become one of the founders of the French school, bringing with him the influence of all those years of struggle and collective intellectual production, the contacts, the networks, etc. A hypothesis that could be developed under the same guideline on the possible influence of authors like Pasquali Bordenave, Beltrán, Kaplún, etc., in the Spanish field, having in mind the dialogue that has always existed between researchers of both sides of the Atlantic.

4. In all cases, we must have it clear that a scheme of this sort is naturally very simplistic and is only useful, as an analytical artifice, to condense Hypothesis that will be questioned for the specific work of the historical analysis. Hence, for instance, we can question the supposed unit of the Latin American PEC once we verify that there is no influence by Dallas Smythe in Brazil until, at least, the year 2000, when were published the critics I made on my best-known book, while in Mexico, the author was discussed long before, in the eighties. On the other hand, the publication of the works of Baran and Sweezy was of great importance to the formulation of the Marxist communicational thought in Brazil.

In the same way, in Europe there have been built different traditions articulating different generations, intellectual environments, political and social contexts, etc. the French school, for instance, has had a

great influence over the Spanish one and that of Quebec. It is clear in the work of Ramón Zallo, who I've classified, next to Alain Herscovici and Gaëtan Tremblay, as belonging to the second generation of the gresequian tradition with which the author dialogues directly in its founding work. But if we broaden the horizons, as did Ruth de Frutos, to include the Spanish field with greater detail, we'll find other influences, such as the mentioned before. In the case of English-speaking countries, the range of the field and its influence over an ensemble much more extensive of countries throughout the world, make the question more complex.

5. Meanwhile, if we focus on the broad dialogues and confrontations which historically bind the different theoretical perspectives condensed in the board with other lines of work, which go from the Keynesianism to the heterodox microeconomy, going through Weber, Schumpeter or the American sociology itself, the French structuralism, including the School of Regulation, the different Marxism and a wide etc., we realize that the PEC, by being part of a transversal paradigm such as the historical materialism, can with effect represent a critical and holistic alternative, so to speak, to the entire field of Communication, as I've explained in other occasions.

To a non-eclectic articulation in that direction, the PEC represents a point of convergence from which one could – considering its situation in the field of Communication and assuming its affiliation to historic materialism – also look for new frontiers in knowledge, directed to, for instance, the theories of language, as suggested by, in my opinion, the possible and necessary dialogue with the approach to the homologies of Ferruccio Rossi-Landi.

Going through with an ambitious collective project as this implies two important problems, among others. First, the ongoing unification of the PEC since the nineties, as mentioned before, internationally – given the asymmetries built-in history and that make part of the scientific fields (and the complex and permanent power games towards them) –, tend to revolve around the central axis of the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The problem is that this can reduce the complexity of the ensemble, not realize contributions, forget topics and homogenize problematics favouring preoccupations which, being a critical field, assumes a hegemonic position. To contradict this tendency, which does not depend on good or bad intentions in play, is necessary to have in mind the functioning of the relations between the center and periphery and know where the great challenges and innovations come from.

The agreement ALAIC-ECREA and the project *Connecting Paradigms* are attempts to coordinate actions oriented to the common and conscient construction of the international field. Other actions developed by ALAIC between 2009 and 2014 within IAMCR, looking for an articulation between the other regional associations, very focused, though not exclusively, on the perspective of dialogue south-south, being part of this gain of conscience. Is the responsibility of PEC and the critical thought in general, in its distinct currents, to understand its part in this international dialogue and the epistemological struggle.

6. The second problem mentioned in the previous point is that of relations between the PEC and Cultural Studies that Ruth de Frutos has dealt with in her text, referring exclusively to what occurs in the European field. Here there is a central epistemological issue, related to the concept of mediation that I've dissed on different occasions, especially in the past few years. What follows is based in Bolaño (2015b). Communication is the mediation science, which is very clear in all definitions of the distinct theories of communication, from the mass communication research to the founding contribution of Martín Barbero and his disciples, in Latin America. Martín Serrano had already proposed it, in some way, in this sense and under a perspective also Marxist, though not of Political Economy.

The founding work of Barbero represents a break in the paradigm by moving the problem to the moment of reception, giving priority to the aspects of psycho-cognitive nature of the relation between the public and the mass media, according to a perspective essentially anthropological. The planning is defined, in principle, as Marxist, better yet, as a contribution to the renovation of the Marxist thought in Communication. The dialogue between Anthropology and Marxism is not new; Marx himself has taken a position in the matter, his papers on the pre-capitalist economic formations are part of the critical spectrum assumed by first-class anthropologists, such as Darcy Ribeiro. However, the tendency for Latin American Cultural Studies in the field of Communication soon departed from this perspective, adopting, especially in the nineties, a post-modern vision.

In my own most known theoretical proposal, integrated within the field of the PEC, though it is better considered as a "Marxist theory of communication", mediation emerges attached to the Marxist concept of subsumption and to the double contradiction (capital-labour; economy-culture) of capitalism. In most recent texts I've made sure I'd

point out the concept can articulate either the political-institutional determinations or those of psycho-cognitive nature, though I haven't worked I general with this second aspect of the problem, which is the core of concerns of the CS. Though, nevertheless, the issue is considered in terms that within the Marxist literature is defined as the subjective factor.

The possibilities to dialogue and exploration of this vast horizon of knowledge are obvious, though they couldn't happen within the context of bourgeois theories of post-modernity. The solution I propose, in opposition, goes in the direction of recovering the concepts of mediation and the community of the Hegelian-Marxist matrix. Nevertheless, there is nowhere here to go further with it. The purpose of this commentary, as said before, is sole to purpose these half a dozen reflections for the dialogue between the authors of the "critical theory" axis of the ALAIC-ECREA project, Connecting Paradigms.

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Debate on Critical Theory and Political Economy of Communication

Javier Torres Molina
César Bolaño
Ruth de Frutos

Javier Torres Molina (JTM): Taking into consideration the texts presented here, I undertake that it can emerge different plans to establish a dialogue /discussion. The first plan is the motive to the open invitation to the making of this collective work, and specifically to what refers to this section, in what concerns establishing a dialogue between the European and the American continents to what relates to the Political Economy of Communication. A dialogue which intends to share the same study object and the same current concerns, though, clearly, the emerging of this discipline in each region has obeyed to particular and specific circumstances under the theoretical point of view. Indeed, we can't be talking about of schools within the same specific study – the European and the American – since there are multiple approaches in different points of both continents, as we've mentioned. Though we believe that this dialogue has acquired a greater insight within the Iberoamerican countries lately through the ULEPICC. A dialogue that transforms into production of knowledge and specific practice to build another kind of communicational system.

César Bolaño (CB): Perfect. I would only add something to problematize. On one side, there is the tendency to unify the field of the PEC globally, which began, in my opinion, in 1992. Janet Wasko believes the same. It seems to me it begins with the IAMCR in Guarujá, Brazil. The same year, a few days before, the second group of PEC was organized in the region. The first one was that of INTERCOM, both coordinated by me at the time. From these two groups was created the network EPTIC in the OBSCOM/UFS and the journal EPTIC Online. These were the institutions that summed the seminars of Buenos Aires, Brasilia and Seville, which created ULEPICCc, in 2002, which I had the pleasure to preside over for the first time.

Ruth de Frutos (RdF): It's true. As mentioned by Javier, the ULEPICC has had a fundamental role but is also noteworthy the role of INTERCOM, EPTIC or that of ALAIC in the process of recognizing and making visible this epistemological current.

CB: In other words, ULEPICC represented the culmination, at that moment, of a tendency to the Iberoamerican unification (despite the pretension for a Latin organization, in order to include the French and especially the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa). The unification of the global field is slower, therefore, and occurs within the context of the Political Economy Session (PES) of IAMCR. There are two important problems to the future: (1) the necessity that unification happens symmetrically, thus avoiding hegemonic positions. An example has been the initiatives me and Janet Wasko have been coordinating, either when we coordinate a seminar in the Museum of Art of Rio de Grande del Sur, at the congress of IAMCR in Porto Alegre, or in the special number of EPTIC Online that we've organized at a time, this was the only journal on the field of the PEC worldwide, since the session on Political Economy of IAMCR only created its journal afterwards. The problem is that there is an inexorable tendency in these processes of disciplinary unification, after the primary romantic period, for different reasons, towards the hegemony of the thought produced in the global North and, more specifically, in English. (2) The other problem we must think of concerns the possible asymmetries within the Iberoamerican world and in ULEPICC itself. In both cases, we must avoid the ingenuity of not considering that there is an epistemological struggle in the different scientific fields, which also articulates with the class struggle, with the hegemonies, etc.

JTM: And the second plan of dialogue to which I was referring to is the relation between Cultural Studies and the Political Economy of Communication, a relation that immediately remits to the English debate which different relevant authors in each field have kept in previous years. Since the vision of Garnham (1997), which counters the issue of class when is time to analyze the cultural practices, to Grossberg (1997), who, besides presenting the perspective of the previous author as being deterministic and reductionist, establishes that both fields have their study object, going over Kellner (1998), who proposes the necessity to an interrelation between both theoretical perspectives including the analysis of class, sex, race, nationality and ethnicity among other types of representation to the analysis of the culture and communication. Therefore, it is not a matter of resolving this tension – if there is one – between both perspectives nor of outline, which is the study object for each other. But it is a matter of point out that both come from a questioning of the dominant ideology to capitalism, and that these are fundamentally inserted – or aspire to

– in the process of social transformation.

CB: Agreed. Indeed, I believe the debate in the Anglo/international field has gone much further, though Latin America has an interesting specificity that could contribute to the international dialogue: the debate around the concept of mediation. My point is that the PEC, when conceiving the mediation made by the mass media, or the cultural industries, should define it in terms of subsumption of the cultural, intellectual work and ask if on the other hand is another mediation possible. Besides, it is important to understand that the social mediation process goes through two stages, one political-institutional, and another cognitive one. With this is possible to articulate and generalize the concept within the context of dialectical materialism (Bolaño, 2015). I don't believe that in the Anglo/international field the debate has ever followed that path, for the impact of Barbero wasn't as great there as in Latin America.

RdF: I agree with you in the sense that we can't generalize according to Manichaeic approaches to the epistemological realities of both sides of the pond, but we must make an effort to individualize in the crucible the authors that have generated important debates in theoretical terms on the matter charged to us. In the light of this, some of the points made by my colleague, and that refer to the reflections of the nineties, have been treated in texts ten years later (Mattelart, 2011; Méndez Rubio, 2004; Mosco, 2011). The search for the intersections between the PEC and CS have been approached from distinct perspectives, in particular, which deserve to be taken into consideration. To quote an anecdote, Marque de Melo (2011: 54) himself already talked of the Political Economy of Communication as a "border discipline".

CB: I disagree in part with this idea of the PEC as a border discipline. It is surely in a crossroad, dialoguing with many of the fields and sub-fields of Social Sciences and Communication. Though, moreover, it is said that it is in the border to say that it is not part of the core of Communication. I would say the opposite: that by being part of the historical materialism (that goes beyond the Political Economy), it is presented as an alternative paradigm to the ensemble of the field, in dispute with other paradigms. I am undertaking the PEC as a critical Political Economy, or as the Critic of the Political Economy, which is the same. Marques thinks the Political Economy as more or less a synonym of *tout court* Economy.

JTM: I agree. Indeed, if we go back to the definition of PEC we've quoted from RdF in our papers – also taken from texts where CB participated –

we see that the discipline dialogues and feeds from others necessarily. It is, there is a relation with other fields that empowers it. In its turn, and reaffirming what was recently said, the emergence and consolidation of the PEC as also helped to reinforce the field of Communication in a broad sense, not only incorporating its tools and analysis – that is, its specificity – but it has also been able to establish dialogues and debates with cultural studies, for instance, about a variety of concepts that has had as a result a deeper insight in reflections.

RdF: Among the most significant synergies, the way I see it, is the analysis of commercialization of culture, the concept of the domain within the social organization and the very own critical perspective of the communication studies not alien to the asymmetries of political, economic and symbolic capital. The original contribution to this joint reflection sets precisely on the will to create a productive dialogue between the critical school of the PEC and the problems of interaction of active audiences, that have been approached by cultural studies and that must be the basis to the Communication studies.

CB: Precisely, my perspective is more in the sense of questioning the idea of “active audiences”, which has generated all kinds of errors, from the technological optimist determinism of the most naïve, to the equivocal of a Christian Fuchs, who inherits the worst of Dallas-Smythe, as it is the “work of the audience”, completely alien to the thought of Marx. The solution I propose, of thinking the mediation in terms of subsumption of the intellectual/cultural work and other possible mediation, could clear up these problems.

RdF: Finally, rethinking the dialogue between the PEC and the cultural studies, paying special attention to the public policies of communication, also emphasizes the necessity to a social change in which the process and the social relations play a fundamental part, on top of the traditional tendency of the political economy, based on the study of the social structures and institutions.

CB: Agreed. From that, we see the necessity to deepen the dialogue of the PEC with the studies on popular and alternative communication, of journalism, including labour press, communication and education, social movements, etc. That is the task ULEPICC-Brazil proposed from the beginning, for instance. Moreover, in this historical moment in particular, in which the neo-populist or neo-developmental experiences, give way, in Latin America, to a right-wing that threatens to promote setbacks related to the little advances conquered in matter of communication politics, the observation of Ruth is important, for the role of the PEC becomes fundamental in the sense that it informs the

critical evaluation that the communicational field surely will make on those experiences.

JTM: I would add matters bind attached to the cultural identity and diversity, plurality of voices and opinions, the access and the participation, all matters that constitute the democratization of communication and the right to communication that have been taken in account in these little advancements in communication politics. In this sense, the contribution of the PEC has been important when to define the media concentration and analyze the different actors that have been part of these processes, including the State. Before the current juncture that crosses the region, the contribution of the PEC is fundamental to intervene in the debates relating to the concentration, convergence and re-regulation, debates and discussions that go beyond the academic context, since we are ultimately discussing communication and also about social relations, capitalism and power.

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03
CULTURAL
STUDIES

History, Debates and Main References of Cultural Studies in Europe

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Abstract

This chapter outlines some of the main features that characterize cultural studies in Europe by providing a historical, theoretical, and bibliographical review of their main authors, debates, and texts. In particular, we start by tracing historically the origins of this current of thought situating it at two research centers: the Birmingham School at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the United Kingdom and the Centre d'Études de Communications des Masses (CECMAS) in France. To complete this European analysis, we have also considered the Italian, Portuguese and Spanish cases, which we will contrast to the British and French contexts. We then present the debates and theoretical tensions currently characterizing cultural studies in Europe. Finally, we analyze qualitatively some of the key reference texts used to analyze culture and media within Europe. Ultimately, the present text is an invitation to think of what has been carried out so far in order to plan the future challenges that a European culturalist research will have to provide answers to.

Keywords

Cultural studies, European thought, metatheory, reference texts, critical thought, sociology of knowledge, interpretative thought, Marxism, Birmingham School, CECMAS.

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1. Introduction

Cultural studies (CS) is an eclectic and heterogeneous field preoccupied mainly with the study of consumption and meanings around popular culture. This perspective argues that popular culture includes the cultural and ideological values of its age. However, this does not mean that audiences dully consume and accept any ideas promulgated by the media. This original idea initiated a revolutionary paradigmatic change in communicology in the 1970s and points out that depending on the cultural baggage of the individual, they will accept, interpret, and redefine the different proposals by the media.

Cultural studies is nowadays consolidated as one of the primary perspectives from which to analyze media industries, popular culture (also known as participative culture), and digital technologies. In this context, the analysis of the so-called hypermediations (Scolari, 2015), processes of symbolic change which go beyond mediations (J. Martín Barbero) for they also include digital communication, is seen today as one of the great challenges to be answered from the culturalist paradigm. We must bear in mind that in contrast to the descriptive character of some research studies on digital environments, cultural studies delve further because they answer to the communicative phenomena from a cultural standpoint.

This chapter outlines cultural studies in communication in Europe. First, we present the historical development in the countries that have led this discipline: the United Kingdom and France; then we complete this historical outline with the situation of CS in Italy, Portugal, and Spain. The chapter then discusses the primary debates and current directions of this field. Finally, we provide a critical review together with a qualitative analysis of the key reference works used in cultural studies in Europe. With this, we complete a state-of-the-art review, which is in turn an invitation to reflect and debate around the vibrant field that is the cultural analysis on communication and the media.

2. Historical notes: from the CECMAS to Birmingham

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, some intellectual projects born in Europe (namely France and Britain) looked for new theoretical ways and new research avenues outside the restrictions of the established disciplines. In the context of social sciences, a

theoretical revolution took off against the trends set by American empiricism (Columbia School). The academic Marxism, as developed by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, was also subject to revision, although these traditions had practically hegemonized the research carried in the inter-war and the post-war periods. It was necessary to understand the new cultural and social ways that were emerging in the most advanced societies. New technological means in the fields of communications and culture had flourished at a vertiginous pace, allowing the emergence of new modes of information and cultural manifestations. In the new European society, television, rock music and concerts, the proliferation of large-circulation publications, and popular cinema were all phenomena that awoke an interest towards social and humanistic thought. Hence, research projects such as the Centre d'Études des Communication de Masses (CECMAS) in 1960, in France, and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in 1964, in Great Britain, appeared. Despite the differences between both centers – especially concerning politics – both advocated for change. This turn was based, on the one hand, on the criticism of the academic model, where intellectual practice existed far from the complexities of social reality; and on the other hand, on the insistence of European universities on building and teaching overwhelmingly (single) disciplinary knowledge. Furthermore, both schools established their social reflection upon the concept of *culture*, reinterpreting the notion by Adorno and Horkheimer of mass culture. Culture was understood as a place for exchange and negotiation between the individual, the social class, and the competition or search for the *hegemony* between cultures.

In 1960, the CECMAS was created in France at the initiative of sociologist Georges Friedmann, in a joint endeavor by the École Pratique des Hautes Études and the Centre Nationale de Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). The CECMAS was preceded by works of anthropologist Edgar Morin, who, in the late 1950s, had published essays and books on cinema and its *stars* (1956; 1957), and of semiologist Roland Barthes, who, in 1957, published *Mythologies*. Besides these authors, Friedmann³⁹ invited personalities such as Christian Metz, Abraham Moles, Eliseo Veron, Algirdas J. Greimas, Julia Kristeva, Jean Baudrillard, Jules Gritti, Jean Cazeneuve, Tzvetan Todorov, André Glucksmann, Violette Morin, Olivier Burgelin and Claude Brémond, among others. The aim of this collective was

³⁹ The planning for the creation of the center began in 1958, from an encounter in Paris between Friedmann, Paul Lazarsfeld, Roland Barthes and Edgar Morin (Morin, V., 1978).

for French academia to take a step forward and be at the avant-garde of the research centers in western universities, making mass communication its primary subject of study (Dagenais, 2007: 179).

By uniting thinkers of intellectual stature, belonging to different research universes, the CECMAS provided academic status to research on culture and mass media, at a point in history when European academia was not very interested. As opposed to the Marxism of the Frankfurt School, the CECMAS researchers, coming from a multidisciplinary perspective, wanted to show the richness and the complexity of mass communication, while trying to understand its mechanisms and relations. To a large extent, this period can be considered in France as “the golden age of the discovery of popular culture” (Dagenais, 2007). Meanwhile, the center was not exempt from polemics and criticism among its members. A case in point is Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron’s criticism of Barthes in their text “Sociologues des mythologies et mythologies des sociologues” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1963: 998-1021). This essay dialogs critically with the analysis that Barthes proposes on *Mythologies* regarding media and mass culture. Despite his attraction for the “anti-philosophical attitude” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1963: 998) of the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss, Bordieu does not share a structuralist approach that seeks to unveil the role of language in the production of systems of meaning that frame multiple ways in which the contents/texts can be read. Not being convinced by “a priori deduction” operation, Bordieu and Passeron advocated a valorization of the social experience in a way that the systems of meaning could not be separated from the social practices. To them, the study of mass media practiced by Barthes, Morin, and others, was metaphysic – in the Kantian sense (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1963: 1007)– for it refuses to operate an analytical attitude associated with social and cultural practices.

The main means of expression of CECMAS was the journal *Communications*, founded in 1961 and first edited by Georges Friedmann. The content of the first yearly issues was of a generalist nature, until the journal was published twice a year starting in 1964 when the issues became themed. The journal aimed to become an academic reference publication in mass communication and semiological analysis in France. The first issues were devoted to semiological research, erudite culture and mass culture, songs and albums, radio, television, reflections and research, censorship, vacations and tourism, among others. This journal soon acquired international recognition as

it showcased well-known theorists from Germany (Theodor Adorno), Italy (Umberto Eco), and the United States (Paul Lazarsfeld, Robert Schulze, Morris Janowitz, Leo Bogart, George Gerbner and Herbert Gans). The CECMAS combined its sociological and anthropological concerns with the introduction of semiotics and discourse analysis as research methods. Barthes is, perhaps, the figure whose work appears as the main model of influence and causing a rich debate in other names such as Umberto Eco, among many more.

In the United Kingdom, combining empirical and multidisciplinary research, a critical vision and practice was also the goal of the intellectual project behind cultural studies. This term refers to a body of work written by British theorists, published towards the end of the 1950s, including *The Uses of Literacy. Aspects of Working-Class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (1958), by Richard Hoggart, in literature, and *Culture and Society: Coleridge to Orwell* (1958), by British sociologist Raymond Williams. Generally speaking, the works understood to be as cultural studies can be defined generically as a critical ethnography of mass culture, and of the British cultures and subcultures of the disadvantaged classes (Hall, 1992: 33).

Hoggart aimed to describe the changes taking place in the lives and practices of the working classes, in particular with reference to work, sex life, family and leisure, and how these were a step away from capitalist culture, embracing instead the traditional ways of life of working communities. On the other hand, Williams, with similar aims to those of Barthes, proposed in *Culture and Society* a genealogy of the concept of culture in the industrial society and its systems of cultural dissemination. By sharing an inclusive and non-elitist notion of culture, Hoggart and Williams abolished the cultural dualities and hierarchic dichotomies between high and popular culture⁴⁰ and contributed to the creation of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). The center was eventually founded in 1964 at the University of Birmingham by Hoggart, its first director, and Williams, who joined Edward P. Thompson and Stuart Hall – Hall would follow Hoggart in directing the CCCS.

The founders of cultural studies found much intellectual and institutional resistance. The CCCS members shared a strong inclination toward what the university mainstream considered to be somewhat eccentric, by innovating the subjects of study considered until then

40 The tradition of culturalism goes back to an emergent English current of thought by the end of the nineteenth century denominated *culture and society*, pontificated by authors such as Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, and William Morris, among others. Despite some political differences, the three share the same critical attitude of culturalist nature associated with “modern civilization” (Mattelart and Neveu, 1996: 11-16).

less deserving of academic interest. This is the reason why they started an ongoing dialog with other European research centers. Since its foundation, the CCCS developed a critical analysis, with a certain influence from French neo-Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, around the notion of *ideology*, the construction of sense and the *image of reality* through complex symbolic processes. The legacy of Antonio Gramsci must also be acknowledged, especially his concept of *hegemony*. The British culturalist approach adopted an extended definition of culture, which was considered as an open process, in permanent construction and – without being paradoxical – also in systemic deconstruction, as was clearly inferred in many of these studies. Hence, culture is not understood as a practice, nor as a simple description of the habits and costumes of society, but as something transversal to all social activities and to the sum of their interrelations (Hall, 1980).

In the 1970s, after overcoming the difficulties of integration in the university and the training/teaching of the first students, a favorable environment contributed to the increasing visibility of the center. In 1972, *working papers* started to circulate, which were later compiled in a volume and where the best production of a vast generation of young researchers can be found, including Andrew Lowe, Angela McRobbie, Charlotte Brunsdon, Cas Critcher, David Morley, Dick Hebdige, Dorothy Hobson, Paul Gilroy, Paul Willis, Phil Cohen, Simon Frith, and Tony Jefferson.

The young subcultures were one of the analyzed fields where researchers of the CCCS were more political and inventive. This is the case of the well-known work of Hebdige on *punks* and *mods* (1979). The social and identity differences, symbolized by the immigrant communities, as well as racism, also occupied a prominent place in the *The Empire Strikes Back* collection (CCCS, 1982).

The interest in social practices, without an elitist bias, led the CCCS researchers to pay attention to the cultural products consumed by the popular classes. The Birmingham group was one of the first to use social sciences in order to analyze advertising, rock music, and soccer. An interest in the audiovisual media followed, when a difference was made between informative programming and entertainment. We must also refer to a text from then that today is considered “canonic” (Gurevitch & Scannell, 2003: 231-247) in media research: “Encoding/decoding”, by Stuart Hall (1980). It is well-known that Hall developed an innovative hypothesis at that time which placed an emphasis on the production of messages, since the functioning of the media could not be limited to a mechanical transmission between the sender and the receiver.

The subjects of study implied favoring research methods capable of capturing common lives with greater precision: ethnography, oral history, and analysis of written documents (legal, industrial, and parish archives). These studies mapped cultures, learned their coherence, and showed to which extent going frequently to pubs, soccer matches, and other popular events can constitute a set of coherent practices. Gender issues was another one of the matters that was greatly developed, via the feminist sensibility of Charlotte Brunsdon, Dorothy Hobson, and Paul Willis. Ultimately, the activities of the popular classes were analyzed as a way of resisting and challenging social domination.

Historically speaking, it is worth highlighting the interaction between the English and the French culturalist approaches with the appearance, in 1975, of Pierre Bourdieu and his journal *Les Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*. This publication followed the same line as cultural studies, that is, it challenged the political implications of culture.

Furthermore, this journal published the first translations into French of texts by Hoggart, Williams, Thompson, and Willis⁴¹. At that time, Hoggart and Thompson were invited to Paris by Bourdieu, which coincided with Williams' visit in 1976. There, his book, *The Country and the City*, was presented at the École Normal, within the context of a seminar organized by Bourdieu on "Sociologie de la culture et des mondes de domination". However, cooperation among the investigation centers was rather limited.

3. The Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish cases

Besides the exchanges indicated in the previous section, the CECMAS had a great influence within the intellectual circles in Italy and Portugal and, to a lesser degree, in Spain. In Italy, one of the best-known names of the culturalist turn, Umberto Eco, had a close relation with CECMAS. He regularly attended its seminars and published in the journal *Communications*⁴². After completing his PhD in 1954 in medieval aesthetic philosophy at the University of Turin, the young Eco published articles and essays *about pastiches et postiches* in the journal *I Verri*, collaborated with the Italian national television (RAI) in cultural programs, continued his reflections about art in the *Rivista Estetica*, and

41 See issues 2-3 of 1976 and 17-18 of 1977 and 24 of 1978. In France, Passeron was the main disseminator of the works by Hoggart (1999).

42 It is important to remember that, in Italy, the reflection on mass culture goes back as far as the Nobel prize winner Luigi Pirandello, who said harsh words against Americanism and cinema products, as he accused them to be at the service of money.

edited collections of essays in philosophy, sociology, and semiotics via the Editora Bompiani publisher (Gritti, 1999: 38-40). Some of the books Eco published as a young man in the 1960s and 1970s dialogued with the work on semiotics by Barthes (Eco 1962; 1964; 1973).

Apocalypse Postponed (Apocalittici e integrati) was a collection of texts produced in the early 1960s that fired up a debate in social sciences and communication sciences in Europe. The book proposed a media research program, advocating that media had to be seriously researched and understood and for that, it was fundamental to use the different instruments of analysis from sociology, anthropology, and the new developments in semiotics. Like Barthes, Eco found in semiotics a unified method to study the mass media (Escudero-Chauvel, 1997: 256). With regard to his subjects of study, Eco focused on the issues of consumption, music, comic-books, and kitsch aesthetics. The arguments he developed were supposed to overcome the trends that had dominated the analysis of culture and communication of American liberal nature (*integrati*) and the German Marxist perspectives (*apocalittici*). Eco continued in the 1970s to research radio, television, and Chinese comic-books, and in the 1980s he devoted himself to analyze Italian porn artist and parliamentarian Cicciolina but also the movie *Ginger and Fred* by Fellini (Eco in Escudero-Chauvel, 1997: 245). A work, influenced by Eco, of great importance in communication sciences in southern European countries was *Teorie delle Comunicazioni di massa* (1985), by Mauro Wolf, a disciple of Eco.

Despite Eco's importance, cultural studies in Italy is not limited to his work. Authors such as Paolo Fabbri (who also studied with Barthes), Franco Fabbri, and Tullio de Mauro, among others, also deserve to be taken in consideration⁴³. As for the British variety of cultural studies, it would only reach Italy in the late 1970s via literary studies and of some fringe areas of cultural sociology. This perspective would definitely be adopted by communication and media studies (De Blasio & Sorice, 2007).

On the other hand, the Portuguese case was characterized by a context of dictatorship and repression in academia, particularly in the case of social sciences, at least until April 1974 with the reinstatement of democracy. Nevertheless, European culturalist tendencies (French and English) began pushing in since the early 1960s. The field of cultural studies began to take shape with the contribution of literary studies, due to the influence of culturalist French currents. University exchanges contributed to this cultural pollination, via three routes:

43 On the reception of cultural studies in Italy see Forgacs & Lumley (1996) and De Blasio & Sorice (2007: 3-28).

the Portuguese students' stays in France, where they would attend seminars with Barthes or Kristeva, among others; the translation and publishing of French authors in journals and books/collections; and the arrival of French authors to Portugal to give conferences⁴⁴. Despite the French presence being practically hegemonic, the work of Williams and Hoggart is not completely unknown in Portugal (Carmo, 1964).

Among the most prominent academic and non-academic intellectuals in the reception of French culturalism we find Eduardo Prado Coelho, Eduardo Lourenço, Vergílio Ferreira, António Ramos Rosa, Maria Alzira Seixo, José Augusto Seabra, and Arnaldo Saraiva⁴⁵. After the instauration of democracy in 1974 and the development of social sciences, the sociological study on daily life and culture was established, having the work of Bourdieu and Certeau as the main reference (Santos, 1998).

The cultural studies of Anglo-Saxon and German root were only institutionalized in the 1980s and 1990s, largely due to the impulse of communication sciences. It is in this moment when the main universities in the country began to create degrees, masters, and doctorates.

One last note on cultural studies in southern Europe relates to the development of this current in Spain. Generally speaking, Spain has been little permeable to contributions from the culturalist perspective (Palacio, 2007; Tarancón, 2014; Balibrea, 2010). There are several explanations for this. First, the plug on international communication trends research during the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) set the country back from a scientific growth perspective. Communication studies at university reached Spain in the 1970s (particularly the academic year 1970-71), that is, decades later than in countries such as Germany, the United States, or Mexico. The Frankfurt School and mass communication research were studied for the first time in Spain in the 1970s and 1980s when these currents had already lost their influence and had given way to other approaches. Second, Palacio (2007) also points out at the lack of interest in popular culture in Spain. Gender studies, the representation of minorities, or identity processes stimulated by media text consumption, so relevant in cultural studies, have occupied "a fringe position" (Palacio, 2007: 70). We could add here the Spanish research of functionalist, empirical, and quantitative perspectives against studies carried out from culturalist and critical

⁴⁴ In the early 1970s, Julia Kristeva gave conferences in Portugal (at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon and to the Portuguese Society of Writers).

⁴⁵ Maria Alzira Seixo, José Augusto Seabra, and Arnaldo Saraiva attended, in the late 1960s, the CECMAS seminars. The first two were co-supervised by Barthes in their doctoral theses.

positions. Tarancón (2014) also points out that the disciplinary rigidity, the interdepartmental restricting limitations, and the hyper-specialization of the Spanish university created an environment providing little support to tackle an eclectic, interdisciplinary, and heterogenous field such as cultural studies. Nevertheless, this incompatibility should not have been an obstacle if we consider that cultural studies emerges, among other matters, precisely as a challenge and criticism to disciplinary immobility.

Ultimately, the Spanish university has its own idiosyncrasy that makes it rather inflexible and close to the culturalist perspectives we are describing. Martín Alegre (2009: 11) claims: "In Spain, the work is based on a very intensive, very territorial specialization that makes any attempt to open to the multidisciplinary to be seen as a threat". Finally, we can also note the limited knowledge of the key foundational texts, which often have not been translated into Spanish. It is extremely significant, for instance, that out of the twenty-five works of reference of the European cultural studies that we have analyzed in section four, at least 15 of them have not been translated into Spanish, which, without a doubt, has influenced the limited knowledge and handling of this by the Spanish epistemic community.

The presence of cultural studies in Spain has been attached, mainly, to the departments of English philosophy and from there it extended to "communication sciences, sociology, and anthropology," (Martín Alegre, 2009: 3). Within academia, Palacio (2007: 71) highlights the following authors: Chantal Cornu Gentille D'Arcy, Celestino Deleyto, Luis Miguel García Mainar, and the members of the working group known as "Ciento Volando." Balibrea (2011) assessed the departments in Spain that work in cultural studies such as the department of English Philology at the University of Zaragoza, the Department of Journalism and Audiovisual Communication at the University Carlos III, the Department of Journalism at the University Rovira i Virgili, and the UNIA Art and Thought Department at the International University of Andalusia. With regard to journals, the majority of the Spanish publications specialized in communication have a generic nature, so they collect diverse perspectives and methodologies. Even so, it is possible to identify some of the journals that are paying the most attention to this analytical perspective, such as *Revista I/C. Revista Científica de Información y Comunicación* (University of Seville); *Comunicar* (University of Huelva); *Catalan Journal of Communication and Cultural Studies* (University Rovira i Virgili); *Torre del Virrey. Revista de Estudios*

Culturales (independent production); *Scripta Nova* (University of Barcelona); *Anàlisi. Quaderns de Comunicació i cultura* (Autonomous University of Barcelona), or *Redes.Com* (University of Seville).

Ultimately, as we can see, communication cultural studies in Spain is still at a very undeveloped stage, despite the fact that, generally speaking, the context of the communications research is at a high point, with more than 50 university faculties sharing these studies and more than 50 specialized journals, according to the DICE index (Dissemination and Editorial Quality of Spanish Journals on Humanities and Social and Legal Sciences). Incidentally, Balibrea (2011) points out that cultural studies in Spain is mainly present on the fringes of academy, in art and education initiatives in museums, and in cultural and political activism, but this is beyond the scope of this chapter.

4. Directions and debates of European cultural studies

In general terms, the internationalization of cultural studies must be considered as a reflection of theoretical debates and not as the simple transposition and/or translation of texts. Furthermore, to interpret that its origins are exclusively within the Birmingham group is a distorted narrative of its development (Stam & Shohat, 2005; Wright, 1998). In fact, today we find important developments within European cultural studies works with a lesser critical imprint –they are important to understand popular culture in its capacity for identity construction– but in which the most purely critical or neo-Marxists questions fall in a secondary plane: this would be the case of the so-called “fan studies,” which are more focused on the processes of identification than those of domination (Kustritz, 2015). But even if we are limited to the canonic report of the origins of cultural studies (Hall, 1990), as we saw in the first chapter, it cannot be argued that CS has always been characterized for its multiculturalism, reflected as much in the variety of its themes as in the origin of its interlocutors. Quite a different issue emerges when we discuss the influence that these international voices have had in the debate around CS in terms of the leadership role of the English hegemony. It is not accidental that one of the most enthusiastic debates about this was precisely whether it was necessary or not to gain some distance from the British core. It has been noted that, despite its radical and anti-elitist origins, CS is on its way to become a “Eurocentric way of Anglo-Americans staring at their navel” (Stam & Shohat, 2005: 481), in part due to the pressure they

exert by means of the influence of their academic institutions and the extended use of English as a scholarly language. However, despite all the above, in the history of the movement from a wider international perspective, maintaining certain ties with Birmingham seems to be a constant. In this section, therefore, we present the main debates and current directions that are currently being discussed with regard to the classic body of French and British Cultural Studies:

Marxism and its influence. Between Theory and Social Action

Either as a criticism to his determinism or by revisiting his terminology and *ethos*, Marx cast a shadow over CS. At its heart, culture is bound to *power* and *control*, the only mechanisms that can sustain the asymmetries among social groups (Williams, 1977). Once again, the narrative of CS determines the emergence of new debates. While in Europe Williams' *cultural materialism* has a strong influence, this aspect is hardly touched upon among American authors, who do not participate in the "sense of community of the working class" which William so celebrates (Martínez Guillem, 2013: 195).

Marxism is in the middle of many other (dis)agreements, such as the conflicting relation between CS and political economy. For instance, in the CCCS texts, cultural manifestations are understood as *superstructure*, also referred to as ideology, and political economy is assimilated in the concept that is the *basis* of these relationships (Castle, 2007: 72). As time passed, there has been some distancing from these postures. On the one hand, the one defended by those who support political economy to be incorporated in media studies (Garnham, 1979; 1995). On the other hand, the one defended by those who consider separation necessary to avoid the influence of economic reductionism. Ultimately, it is necessary to leave the Marxist vocabulary behind in order to safeguard the study of culture since "one can't differentiate inherited compatibility between the basis and the superstructure" (Grossberg, 1995: 79). Despite being an open discussion, more recent positions have been defending an articulation based on a materialistic vision of meaning. Away from the ontological distinction between *economy* and *culture*, we conceive "the social world as a dialectical field of the practical human activity and the materialization of such activity" (Pack, 2006: 120).

Uses of Power and Symbols

One of the requirements for a relation of power and subordination between individuals to exist is the presence of a shared system of codes

and symbols. It could be argued that all cultural elements participate in this power relationship through its political dimension since, as Bourdieu (1994: 161) points out: “the symbolic power that imposes the principles of reality construction – in particular, social reality – is the primary dimension of political power.” Cultural studies is the direct heir of this premise, exemplified, for instance, with Stuart Hall’s classic distinction between Culturalism and Structuralism (Hall, 1980: 72). This distinction supposes the articulation of influences and theoretical debates between power structures, the definition of culture and the methodologies of proximity to the text. The entire cultural process is subordinated to the status of social relations, in turn influenced by gender, race, age, and social class.

Nevertheless, social action can be considered as an expression of a social condition, for it is encrypted and endowed with meaning, culture being the ultimate manifestation of the ensemble of social actions (Hall, 1997: 208). Cultures, much as individuals, establish relations of power and subordination. Here, Gramsci’s interpretation by the British has been criticized for being considered almost exclusively structuralist (Martínez Guillem, 2013: 199), as well as being the basis for the well-known Encoding/Decoding model proposed by Stuart Hall.

To analyze the relations between the upper classes and the hegemony of cultures, Hall uses the term “regulation” (Hall, 1997: 227), and assumes that in one way or another all cultures are regulated (or “reregulated,” “deregulated,” etc.); in other words, submitted to a political power even though this power is not always exercised directly by the state but from the hegemonic position of the upper classes. Nor is it always manifested explicitly as would be the case with censorship, propaganda, or messages of protest. On the opposite side and always under the suspicion of falling into populism and banality, popular culture (its consumption, its production, its recycling by its fan audiences) is celebrated as an opposition act. One of the great questions that CS tries to answer is to define which cultural manifestations are to be considered relevant and which ones could be left outside since the classic distinction between low and high culture seems to have been completely abolished.

The concept of Identity

Culture, for the original group of cultural studies, is not self-sufficient nor a finite field of study but a stage for debate (Johnson, 1987: 39), which can lead to confrontation. In light of this, the political sphere is

determined by theories and manifested in the protests of the minority social movements. The group plays a fundamental role in the study of multiculturalism and approaches the issues related to immigration and diaspora (Castle, 2007: 75). By supporting the feminist sectors and the fight against race discrimination (CCCS, 1982; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978), CS motivates the so-called *new social currents*, which are not based on class but on another identity feature. With the passing of time, we can differentiate two very distinct groups. The first refers to *individual identity* such as sexual orientation, sexual identity (queer studies), and ethnic origin. This category also includes women's studies, which has finally developed by incorporating perspectives on masculinity and identity, also covered by gender studies. The second group constructs its discourse around the *making of collective projects* including community life, the environment, and aid to developing countries.

The relation between social action, including (or not) political corporatism, and academia in CS is an unchallenged fact, perhaps erroneously. This would be the case of the ties between the movement and the anti-capitalist left (something particularly contrasted in the case of Stuart Hall). This interpretation would not be fair to the vast political spectrum and when comparing all protest movements with an extremely specific answer within the available socialist options. Furthermore, the freedom to carry out and support a public political option should not be exclusive of CS but of the personal beliefs of the researchers (Gilbert, 2006: 185).

On the other hand, the way identities mix up, merge, or transform is a subject of study in this interdisciplinary theoretical framework. Simon During refers to this as a non-rigid way of identity, based on the concept of "hybridization" and defined as "the performative acts that build identities" (During, 2005: 150). Identity is a complex construct that can be discussed at all levels. Although the term *globalization* did not emerge with CS, the paradigm that the exploration of the concept itself means has enjoyed great popularity in CS. The term creates debate around its existence, its scope, and its historical development. Numerous other terms have emerged from this discussion such as the global/local dichotomy or the articulation with other terms of the CS lexis (diaspora, identity, and culture). The alternative formula, under the concept of "transnational flow" (Iwabuchi, 2002), entails the adaptation to the diverse nuclei of influence and exchange worldwide.

Self-definition of Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is an extremely reflective and self-critical body of work. Its history has produced several episodes of debate, including the movement's origin as an object of discussion (Stam & Shohat, 2005; Wright, 1998). This idiosyncrasy might be due not only to its recent history but also to the evolution of the institutions and the development of an increasingly connected worldwide academic community that has allowed a more fluid interaction. It is therefore difficult to talk about homogeneity either in its subjects of study, the relevant disciplines, and their theoretical approaches. If the different discourses shared a common thread, this would probably be self-defense. This justification is made by applying it to the real or *political* world, regardless of the level of theoretical abstraction and the political leaning, not necessarily to the left, which, ultimately, is an exercise of "self-criticism" (Hall, 2006: 48).

We could theorise whether it is possible to talk about CS as a well-defined dialectical community. Certainly, it seems to share the same language, and proficiency in it (e.g. command of Marxist or deconstructionist terminology), is a pre-requisite to participate in its conversations. On the other hand, the way institutions have become big managers of knowledge has not followed any other logic than that of pure evolution, in a Darwinist sense. In each country, the disciplines show a different scenario of influence and the connections with the state's power, which ultimately differentiates them in terms of the adopted interdisciplinary approaches and the existence of powerful lobbies promoted by a single academic subject. Following this metaphor, cultural studies, just as expected, has mutated by adapting to environments that differ in hostility and levels of competence. Together with communication and media studies, for instance, CS has formed attractive symbiosis with different degrees of success. Ultimately, CS arose as an answer to an academic and political environment the crisis of which had been represented by one only discipline: humanities. As years went by, the contributions of the movement have turned into the creation of new disciplines and collaborations. One should expect that some of these schools face a similar crisis to the one faced by the British humanities. Fortunately, that was not the end of humanities and this will not be the end of cultural studies; we might see, however, the mere addition of new species in the academic ecosystem.

5. Reference works within European cultural studies

In order to continue charting the reconstruction of some of the main trends of CS in Europe, it is pertinent to pay attention to the most often cited texts, that is works that have been the basis, in Europe, of the analysis of media and culture. In order to answer this question, we have carried out a bibliometric study of 249 articles published in *Media, Culture & Society*, a reference journal with one of the longest trajectories within European CS (it was published for the first time in January 1979). It was one of the first journals to publish media analysis from culturalist perspectives and it is one of the most important European journals today in the field of communication (it is ranked at number 33 out of 77 journals included in the Journal Citation Reports in 2015). The bibliometric study covers the period 1979-2013 (Hernández-Pérez and García-Jiménez, unpublished) where we have found the 25 most used references (in appendixes, see table 1. Most cited references in the journal *Media, Culture and Society*, 1979-2013).

What do these references represent? What are the disciplines that contribute the most? What are the subjects of study? What perspectives have been cited the most in Europe? To answer these and other questions, we have carried out a qualitative study on the articles and have established the following categories as starting points:

1. Title and author
2. Year publication of the original edition
3. Discipline in which the study is sited
4. The main subject of study analyzed in the article, as per the following classification (García-Jiménez, 2007):
 - a. Metatheory. Manual-like publications whose purpose is to provide a state of the art and trends within a specific area.
 - b. Message production. Works centered on the characteristics, features, and analysis of the production processes. They range from studies on professional routines, the role of media in society, characteristics of the emitters, etc.
 - c. Audience and consumption. Research centered on how the audience creates, interprets, redefines, expands, or exchanges the symbolic content of popular culture (e.g. fan studies).
 - d. Texts and messages. Articles analyzing texts and messages produced within popular culture (e.g. comics, soap operas, news, etc.).
 - e. Effect studies. What are the effects generated by media and mass culture?

f. General-holistic. Studies that do not focus on only one element of the communicative process (i.e. emitters, receivers, or effects, etc.) but tackle several, making the comprehension of the communication more difficult. In this category, we have also included those references tackling the analysis of media, culture, and society from macro-social perspectives.

5. Medium. This refers to the medium (support) analyzed: television, cinema, video games, comics, magazines, newspapers, radio, internet, music, or media in general (when the study tackles several media or discusses media with no greater specification)

6. Perspective. We were interested in distinguishing whether the research was of a critical nature, or rather descriptive, interpretative, and hermeneutical.

7. Metatheory or innovative research. This final category is connected to the first, answering the question whether the research develops a new theory or, on the contrary, it is a summary of previous works.

From the list of references and the analyzed categories proposed, the main challenges of some of the books and articles most cited in Europe are summarized in table 2 (Analysis of a selection of the most cited texts in Europe) in the appendices.

Among the results, it comes to our attention the vast spread and heterogeneity of European cultural studies. In the bibliographical sample of 249 research articles, we find that the most commonly cited text, *Imagined Communities*, is only cited 13 instances, which represents merely 4% of a sample spanning over three decades (1979-2013). According to the analyzed sample, we could say that there has been a great dissemination of knowledge, a fact, perhaps, that can be explained by the interdisciplinary nature of cultural studies, as we have seen in the previous chapters.

The most cited text, *Imagined Communities*, does not belong to any of the hardcore nuclei or theoretical lines that have been described in the first section of this chapter. The importance of Anderson's work, a text of historical nature about the origin and formation of nationalisms framed within political theory, probably addresses the open fronts of the many European debates on national identities (as is the case of Scotland, Catalonia, Sarajevo, or the Flemish community in Belgium) and to the reflection, not always peaceful, about the nature of European identity. The second place in this ranking is occupied by Pierre Bourdieu with his book *Distinction*, which attaches a certain weight to the French school of thought and his collaborations with the CECMAS.

We also find, among the texts considered as historically foundational, two works of the Frankfurt School, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, and two others from the Birmingham school, *Encoding/Decoding* and *Television, Technology and Cultural Form*. Some important Marxist absences need to be highlighted, such as Antonio Gramsci and other authors from the Frankfurt School, Birmingham, or the CECMAS. There are also no references to Karl Marx, which might be a consequence of the debate and tensions which, as we have seen in section three, the German philosopher has awakened within cultural studies. In its place, the text *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order* seems to be answering the critical analysis of the capitalist economy. A last note on the most cited foundational texts is the importance in the analyzed sample of the sociology of journalistic knowledge of Gaye Tuchman as two of the works of this American author appear: *Making News* and *Objectivity and Strategic Ritual*. This fact could be reflecting the importance that European cultural studies have also given to the routines of the emitter. Therefore, emitter, critical analysis of texts, audience studies, and culture (capitalist) would make up the elements of the communicative process that work as a reference in the European context.

Furthermore, from a historical point a view, as we have seen, the 1970s and the 1980s have been so far the most influential decades in the analysis of media culture from the cultural studies perspective, bringing a total of eight publications each (out of a total of 25 references). The referential works published in the 1990s are reduced to five, 1995 being the most recent year, that is, two decades ago. In other words, according to the sample analyzed, no theoretical reference works have been published in Europe since then.

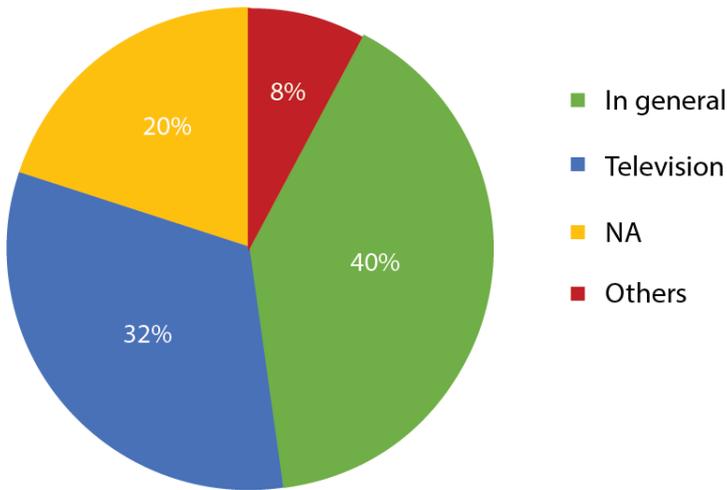
The authors within the subject of communication/media are better represented in the referencing texts. This was expected, given the nature of the journal (focused on communication and media). The second most cited discipline is sociology, considered both historically and methodologically, the most influential discipline in epistemological terms in the area of communication. The list of most cited works shows very limited presence of other social sciences such as psychology, history, or economics.

As per the subjects of study showing a greater influence, the general-holistic category shows that it acts as a reference to European cultural studies in 13 texts out of the total 25 references. This includes ambitious theoretical and empirical proposals that have addressed the analysis of media from its influence in modern cultures paying special

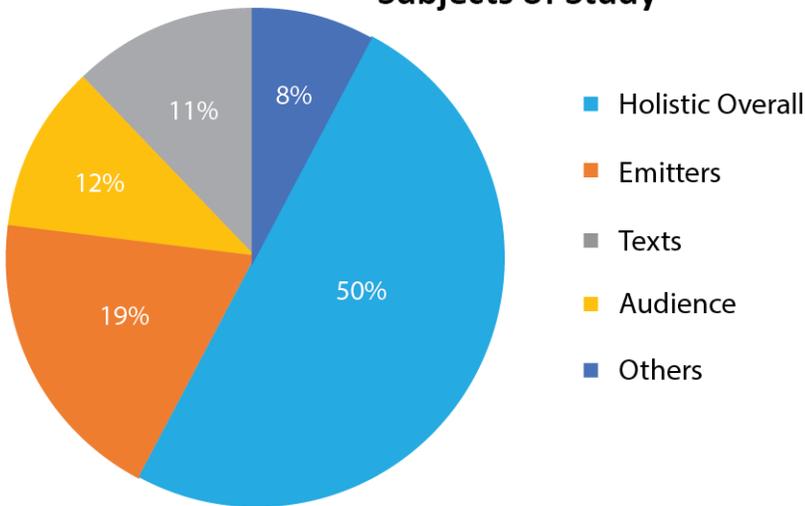
attention to topics such as public opinion, democracy, capitalism, or the construction of nationalism. The second subject of study that has functioned as a reference within the analyzed sample is the emitters (five references), in particular the analysis of professional routines, the processes of informative selection, and the role of the media in western democracies. The importance of this element of the communicative process in the analyzed sample reflects the shared interests with the political economy of communication. The analysis of the texts, together with the audience studies are also reference subjects but to a lesser degree (both with three works each). We have found no effect studies to be considered as reference works in European research, which is a clear consequence of the fact that the impact of media or popular culture is object of interest contextualized in other perspectives of analysis (behaviorists, for instance). Ultimately, the aspect of how media culture impacts audiences is answered through cultural studies not via the classic effects paradigm, but through how audiences consume, use, and identify themselves with the media. This type of research has been included in this bibliographic analysis within the category of *audience and consumption*.

As well as looking at the subject of study, we have also paid attention to the hegemonic media in epistemological terms, in other words, the media whose analysis have constituted as a basis for cultural studies in Europe. In line with the dominance of the general-holistic subject of study, the type of research that has focused the interest of reference texts is media in general (ten texts out of a total of 25) where the authors have mainly focused on analyzing several media. Following this generic approach, television has been the media that has mostly functioned as a reference (eight of the articles focus on the quintessential audiovisual media). This is due to the important push that television gave to popular and visual culture in the twentieth century. Finally, we find that five of the reference works have a non-media nature, in the sense that they are formulated around interests such as economics, nationalism, or identity. In these works, the media are addressed as a secondary role, in other words, they emerge as an element that articulates and influences the social (social, political and economic perspectives), though they are not at the core of the analysis. Ultimately, the research is not built from a communicational perspective, in the sense described by Craig (1999).

Media



Subjects of Study



Furthermore, the dominant perspective presented as the main reference is the critical one. This could not be any other way due to the history of the European communicology, philosophy, and sociology. Seventeen of the surveyed texts (over 60%) are critical. The Birmingham School, the Frankfurt School, Structuralism, Marxism and its review by Gramsci, as well as feminist studies, are the primary currents that act as a reference to the European thought. Acritical texts include historical and interactional (Erving Goffman) perspectives, those belonging to the

sociology of knowledge (Alfred Schulz or Gaye Tuchman), or in general terms, hermeneutical perspectives, the purpose of which is to explain/interpret reality as opposed to the Marxist critic whose purpose is to transform society.

Finally, as table 2 shows, all reference texts propose something innovative. It is unsurprising then that we have not found meta-theoretical or manual-like texts within the main references of the analyzed sample. Perhaps this fact manifests a certain spread in the research lines and topics of interest.

6. Conclusions

Following the historical, theoretical, and bibliographical revision of the development of cultural studies in Europe, we will briefly synthesize some of the concluding aspects of this work.

The Birmingham and the CECMAS centers were an answer, within the intellectual and academic environment, to the turbulent times of the 1960s and its numerous social challenges. Its answer was based on the adoption of a “culturalist turn” (Hall, 1980) that has marked a before and after in social thought.

Approaching cultural studies from different geographical points has revealed the unequal development and the different idiosyncrasies that CS has manifested in Europe. In contradistinction to the leadership of Britain and France, Italy, Portugal and Spain have shown smaller development yet demonstrated striking differences among the each other.

Concerning the main debates characterizing cultural studies today, *cultural materialism* seems to have replaced social analysis from an economist-Marxist reductionism or *historical materialism*. Culture, in a more inclusive sense of the individual and the collective experience, is both the subject and the main approach to theoretical problems, just as Hall (1980) had predicted. The analysis on the different identities coming from gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status, along with the rise of new social movements, the environment, and aid to developing countries are some of the other questions creating a greater debate now.

Finally, if we look at the main references cited in the European journal *Media, Culture and Society*, our attention is caught by the spread and heterogeneity of European CS. As an example, the most cited work, *Imagined Communities*, only gathers 13 quotes. Chronologically, it is the

1970s and the 1980s that are more influential, and the general-holistic approaches bring most reference studies in this context. It is equally necessary to note the balance between the critical and interpretative thought, and the presence of classic foundational texts from the Birmingham School (more precisely, by Hall and Williams), CECMAS (Bourdieu), the Frankfurt School (Adorno and Horkheimer), and the sociology of journalistic knowledge (Gaye Tuchman).

It is clear that among the biggest challenges of European cultural studies is a theoretical and methodological innovation that responds to the social changes deriving from the current sphere of the media, communication, and technology. The analysis of culture and media must come from the understanding of the technological convergence and the digital culture. Many diverse open questions come from this perspective: how is digital communication interpreted by the users considering their cultural background? Is participative communication a resistance tool in front of the media and political power? What is the underlining ideology in digital interactions? What is the role of minorities in the construction of meanings within the digital public sphere? How are the hegemonic and colonizing processes built within the new environments? What are the identification processes in social networks or the analysis of the so-called *active audiences*? The debate continues.

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Appendixes

TABLE 1. MOST CITED REFERENCES IN THE *MEDIA, CULTURE AND SOCIETY* JOURNAL (1979-2013)

Type of publication	Idiom	Reference
book	English	Anderson, B. (1991) <i>Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origins and Spread of Nationalism</i> . London: Verso.
book	English	Bourdieu P (1984) <i>Distinction</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
book	English	Adorno, T. and M. Horkheimer (1972) <i>The Dialectic of Enlightenment</i> . New York: Herder and Herder.
book	English	Gitlin, T. (1980) <i>The Whole World Is Watching</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press.
book	English	Fiske, J. (1987) <i>Television Culture</i> . London and New York: Routledge.
book	English	Habermas, J. (1989) <i>Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere</i> . Cambridge: Polity Press. (Orig. pub. 1962.)
book	English	WILLIAMS, R. (1974). <i>Television: Technology and Cultural Form</i> , New York, Schocken
book	English	Curran, J. and J. Seaton (1988) <i>Power without Responsibility</i> , 3rd edn. London: Routledge.
book	English	Ang, I. (1985) <i>Watching Dallas. Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination</i> . London: Methuen.
book	English	Morley, D. (1980) 'The Nationwide Audience', <i>Television Monograph</i> , 11, British Film Institute.
book	English	Glasgow Media Group (1976) <i>Bad News</i> . London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
book	English	Tuchman, G. (1978) <i>Making News</i> . London: Free Press.

book	English	Gans, H. (1979) <i>Deciding What's News</i> . New York: Pantheon.
book	English	Dahlgren, P. (1995) <i>Television and the Public Sphere: Citizenship, Democracy and the Media</i> . London: Sage.
book	English	Giddens, A. (1991) <i>Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age</i> . Cambridge: Polity.
chapter	English	Hall, S. (1980) 'Encoding/Decoding', pp. 128-38 in S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe and P. Willis (eds) <i>Culture, Media, Language</i> . London: Hutchinson.
book	English	BARAN P A and SWEEZY, P M (1968) <i>Monopoly Capital</i> , Harmondsworth, Pelican
book	English	Downing, J. (1984) <i>Radical Media. The Political Experience of Alternative Communication</i> . South End Press.
paper	English	Tuchman, G. (1971) 'Objectivity and Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity', <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 77(4): 660-80.
book	English	Billig, M. (1995) <i>Banal Nationalism</i> . London: Sage.
chapter	English	Garnham, N. (1986) 'The Media and the Public Sphere' in P. Golding, G. Murdock and P. Schlesinger (eds) <i>Communicating Politics</i> . Leicester: Leicester University Press.
book	English	Tracey, M. (1998) <i>The Decline and Fall of Public Service Broadcasting</i> . New York: Oxford University Press.
book	English	Williamson, J. (1978) <i>Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising</i> . London: Marion Boyars.
book	English	Thompson, J. (1995) <i>The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media</i> . Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
book	English	Herman, E. and N. Chomsky (1988) <i>Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media</i> . New York: Pantheon.

TABLE 2. ANALYSIS OF A SELECTION OF THE MOST CITED TEXTS IN EUROPE

	Publication year original edition	Author	Subjects	Study object	Media	Perspective
Comunidades Imaginadas	1983	Benedict Anderson	Political-historical Policy	Holistic-general, society: the social construction of nationalism	Nonmedia nature	Acritical-History and political theory
La Distinction	1979	Pierre Bourdieu	Sociology	Holistic-general: French culture and how the sector population with higher capital defines taste (a way of symbolic violence)	Mediatic nature	Critical-Structuralism

Dialéctica de la ilustración	1944	Theodor Adorno y Max Horkheimer	Critical-Marxist philosophy	Holistic: capitalist society and alienation processes from the use of instrumental reason	Media in general	Critical-Frankfurt School
The Whole World Is Watching. Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left, With a New Preface	1980	Todd Gitlin	Communication	Holistic: media and journalism	Media in general	Critical and interpretative. Symbolic interactionism (Goffman) and hegemony (Gramsci)
Television Culture	1987	John Fiske	Communication	Holistic: text and audience (active)	Television	Critical and semiotic
Historia y crítica de la opinión pública	1962	Jurgen Habermas	Philosophy-Theoretical policy- Communication	Holistic: building the public sphere in modern societies	Media	Critical-Frankfurt's School
Television: Technology and Cultural Form	1974	Raymond Williams	Communication	Text: compares the British and North American television contents	Television	Critical Marxist
Power without Responsibility	1981	James Curran and Jean Seaton	Communication-Media studies	Holistic- develops press, television and Internet history, in the United Kingdom. Includes the review of laws on the media (political economy)	Media (Press, television and Internet)	Noncritical- important historical aspect
Watching Dallas. Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination	1985	Ien Ang	Communication and Culture	Audience: how the audience interprets the Dallas series	Television	Critical- feminist studies
The Nationwide Audience, Television Monograph	1980	David Morley	Communication and media	Audience: How the audiences interpret the television show Nationwide	Television	Critical- Birmingham's School

History, Debates and Main References of Cultural Studies in Europe

Bad news	1976	Glasgow Media Group	Communication and media	Text: analysis of television messages, more precisely, news from BBC1, BBC2 and ITV	Television	Critical
La producción de la noticia	1978	Gaye Tuchman	Sociology	Emitters: journalistic routines and processes of news construction in newsrooms	Media (press, television and communication departments)	Noncritical-sociology of knowledge – constructionism
Deciding What's News A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time	1979	Herbert J. Gans	Sociology	Emitters: journalistic routines and constrictions in news selection processes	Media (television and weekly information magazines)	Noncritical
Television and the Public Sphere: Citizenship, Democracy and the Media	1995	Peter Dahlgren	Communication and journalism	Holistic-general: public opinion and democracy	Television	Critical
Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age- Modernidad e Identidad	1991	Anthony Giddens	Sociology	Holistic: contemporary society and the processes of building the self	Nonmedia nature	Noncritical
Encoding/Decoding	1973	Stuart Hall	Sociology	Audiences	Television	Critical-Birmingham's School
El capital monopolista: ensayo sobre el orden económico y social de Estados Unidos	1966	Paul Sweezy and Paul A. Baran	Economy	Holistic- society: on how the capitalist economy works	Nonmedia nature	Critical- Marxist

Objectivity and Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity,	1972	Gaye Tuchman	Sociology of knowledge	Emitters	Media	Noncritical: constructivism (Alfred Schutz)
Nacionalismo Banal	1995	Michael Billig	Social psychology	Economy- holistic, society and nationalism	Mediatic nature	Critical
The Media and the Public Sphere'	1986	Nicholas Garnham	Communication – Media Studies	Holistic- public opinion and public sphere. Building the public sphere and inequities in the access from economic constrictions	Media	Critical
The Decline and Fall of Public Service Broadcasting	1998	Michael Tracey	Media Studies	Emitters: role of public television in democratic societies	Television	Critical
Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising	1978	Judith Williamson	Film studies	Text-Messages: advertising from the perspective on image	Written media	Critical- Marxist
Los media y la modernidad	1995	John B. Thompson	Sociology	Holistic- society, media and culture. How the media influence modern societies, a long-term influence that includes the building of the self, the experience and the public place	Media	Noncritical
Los guardianes de la libertad	1988	Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky	Economy-media	Emitters	Media	Critical

Communication in, from and for culture. Notes on a balance of Cultural Studies (in Communication) in Latin America: Trajectory, subjects and critics.

Marta Rizo García⁴⁶

1. Presentation

The text proposes a brief overview through the trajectory of the Cultural Studies in Latin American and emphasizes the influence of them in the investigation on communication developed in the area. It is not only the exploring the way the Latin American Cultural Studies are built and developed if we can call them that way, but also establish some crucial points to understand the debate around the relation between communication and culture, that can be considered as a “distinctive mark” of the studies on communication developed in Latin America since the eighties and, with peculiarities and changes, until now.

To begin with, there will be presented some primary features of Cultural Studies in general, originated in the late fifties of the twentieth century in Great Britain. In this approach to the historical context, we give emphasis to the concept of culture that emerges from Cultural Studies on the one hand and the other within the link between the intellectual project and political project. Secondly, we expose the particularities of Cultural Studies in Latin America. We'll explore the focus of the proposals of Jesús Martín Barbero and Néstor García Canclini, considered to be the main exponents of Cultural Studies in the area. We'll provide some guidelines for discussion to understand the relation and articulation between Cultural Studies and Communication Studies. The text finishes by exposing some of the critics to Cultural Studies. Here, apart from offering elements to understand the critics better, the reach of the intellectual and political project of these studies is emphasized to complexify the analyses of the media processes, always understood as socio-cultural processes.

The transfer from media studies to social and cultural mediation studies implicated in the building of sense by the subjects; the consideration of culture as something dynamic, subjected to exchanges and permanent discontinuities; the focus or emphasis put on the processes of media reception as *places* from which and where

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individuals build up their resistance strategies to the hegemony; the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary vision which pervades the entire proposal of Cultural Studies, of British origin⁴⁷ and also Latin American; the importance given to the context and the daily life as places to build up sense; the conception of popular culture as a place of power, and the proposal of the methodological pluralism or “anti-methodological” – as some authors have called it – of Cultural Studies, are some of the topics addressed in this text.

There is a triple purpose to this text. On the one hand, it's intended to offer the reader some notions to understand the emerging of British Cultural Studies and the specificities that have characterized their arrival to Latin America. On the other hand, it is important to delve around the conception of culture proposed by Cultural Studies and its influence in the conception of communication. This goal is converted into the main focus of this text, given that allows to understand the relation communication-culture as a theoretical-epistemological axis articulating many of the empirical studies that have been made within the communication field in Latin America from the eighties until now. Finally, we retrieve some of the critics to Cultural Studies and propose interpretations that allow to understand such critics and relativize them, for the sake of Cultural Studies' goals within the region, emphasizing some of the elements or subjects mentioned in the previous paragraph.

In the background of the text, we also have the debate around disciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, which is still valid within the discussion on the specificity of communication studies. Though it is not the center or basic axis of this work, since the proposal by the Cultural Studies intends to, precisely, rupture the disciplinary parcels that characterized the social investigation in the twentieth century, it seems pertinent to recover this debate especially in what matters to relations – not always clear – between Cultural Studies and Communication Studies in the region.

Ultimately, the following pages offer some elements to answer questions such as: what are the particularities of Cultural Studies developed in Latin America? Which topics approached by the Cultural Studies allow to understand and complexify the relation between communication and culture? In what way can we talk of a cultural view over communication? To what extent has the theoretical and

47 Despite we can call into question that the center of Cultural Studies in Europe corresponds to the Center of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, in this text we assume this position – a tad orthodox if you will – given the pretension to offer a general view – and necessarily incomplete – on the particularities of Cultural Studies in Latin America, which though having its own specificities, recognize to be debtors – at least in a first moment – of the British contributions.

methodological eclecticism of Cultural Studies been transferred to Communication Studies? How have Cultural Studies in Latin America evolved in the current media-technological ecology? What challenges do Cultural Studies have ahead as an intellectual project, as an inter and transdisciplinary bet and, ultimately, as a field of knowledge building on the current cultural-communicative phenomena?

2. An overview of the Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies have their origin in Great Britain, in the sixties of the twentieth century. The common interest of the investigators who started this current was “English culture and how it excluded and disqualified popular culture” (Auza, s/f: 2). The founding fathers of Cultural Studies were Hoggart, Williams and Thompson.

Part of the stake on Cultural Studies implied opposing to the traditional university model of Great Britain at the time. Hence, they’ve created small study centers around the universities, of which one, in particular, stood out, the Center of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham. This center, known in Spain as Birmingham’s School, was defined as a “center of cultural studies on the ways, practices, and cultural institutions and their relations with society and the social change” (Mattelart, 1997: 72).

Cultural Studies proposed, from their creation, a rupture within the academic context. In a context in which there were still predominant studies of functionalist and critical nature on the mass media, Cultural Studies began to take interest on other study objects, considered to be on the cutting-edge at the time. We refer, for instance, to popular cultures, the lifestyle of new social classes, youth culture, art, media, sexuality and gender, etc. As you see, the media were only one of the study objects, not the primary one. It might be due to, among other reasons, the fact that Cultural Studies had an interdisciplinary imprint from birth, something we can observe in the influences from sociology, anthropology, linguistics, literary criticism, philosophy and art theory, among other fields of knowledge.

Restrepo (2014) claims it is important to distinguish Cultural Studies from Culture Studies: “Cultural studies are different from the studies on culture due to a combination of a series of features or characteristics that would make them a very particular intellectual and political project” (Restrepo, 2014). Here we stand out three aspects: the very own concept of culture proposed by the Cultural Studies,

always associated to power⁴⁸; the interdisciplinary nature of the investigations, we've already mentioned in the previous paragraph; and, last but not least, the political will of Cultural Studies, that is, not restricting the culturalist investigations to the academic context and the development of a "political vocation that looks to intervene on the world" (Restrepo, 2014).

Let's take a brief look upon some epistemological, theoretical and methodological particularities of the Cultural Studies. The epistemological are characterized for advocating for a radical contextualization, in other words, for conceiving that all phenomena are the result of the constituting relations. In the theoretical plan, the Cultural Studies criticize the absolute theories, and conceive a theorization as "a worldly act derived from the specific and empirically oriented investigations which establish a constant struggle and interruption of the theoretical products with those in account" (Restrepo, 2014); in other words, the theory is not a preliminary and sclerotic frame determining the sight over the social phenomena, but that it is built during the process of investigation or it results from empirical investigations. Finally, to what respects methodology, the Cultural Studies are characterized by the methodological pluralism, even though we still see a predominance of methodologies of interpretative nature, the participating observation and the analysis of texts. On the methodological, there are still voices claiming that Cultural Studies are anti-methodological. They don't have a methodology that distinguishes them. Some have characterized it as a sort of '*bricolage*': it's applied one or another methodology according to the subject of each investigation. The selection of the method depends on the questions each investigator makes according to each case study. Some prefer to talk of 'methodological practices': it is a methodology that emerges from the investigating practice when we confront the texts and the constant questions and inquiries to those submitting (Johnson et. Al., 2004: 2-4; quoted in Del Arco, 2007: 3).

In general terms, Cultural Studies focus their interest in the analysis of the contemporary cultural ways and formulate "particular answers to the insertion of cultural industries in the daily life" (Escosteguy, 2002: 37). It is important to underline that Cultural Studies see culture as something emerging, something dynamic constantly renewing and is always contextualized. Hence, the importance is given to the context in

48 In the concept of culture privileged by Cultural Studies also fit the meanings and values that emerge and spread among social classes and social groups, much like the practices through which these meanings and values are expressed. The emphasis on social classes makes it inevitable the inclusion of power throughout all discussion on culture.

which social actions take place. And without a doubt, one of the social actions and practices that come up in the center of reflections and works on Cultural Studies has to do with the role played by cultural industries, by the media within the daily life configuration.

Concerning the political will, it was previously mentioned that Nelly Richard is very clear when claiming that the first characteristic of Cultural Studies was its will to democratize knowledge and pluralize frontiers of the academic authority, favouring the entry of knowledge that the university hierarchy, according to the author, usually discriminates as impure while they rub, conflictingly, against the body of certain edges called popular culture, social movement, feminist critic, subaltern groups (Richard, 2005).

Therefore, the focus of Cultural Studies was on the margins of what then was considered academically valid. And it is in this context that, since the eighties, Cultural Studies began to work more effectively in matters related to the social identities and the reception of the media. Then, there is almost an identification between cultural studies and studies on communication, as we'll see later when addressing the particularities of Cultural Studies within the Latin American context.

Hence, in the eighties, the investigations on television products and its reception are strengthened, from the ethnographical studies and having as a background the model encoding/decoding proposed by Stuart Hall (1972). Then it starts to analyze how the receiver assimilates the messages "identifying the distinct ways of negotiation and resistance before [programs] as well as the role of cultural contexts in decoding strategies of the analyzed groups" (Sunkel, 2006: 17). Thus, we approach the media beyond the media within, something that will be central in the extension of the Cultural Studies in Latin America. With the investigations made in the eighties is then launched what is known as the ethnography of media, which implies a turn to the analysis of the consumption of media products, being these understood as cultural products.

Even though some specialists claim this focusing of the studies on the reception of the media has implied, in some way, the drop of the political drive of Cultural Studies, they can't deny the contributions this school has given to the studies on mediated communication, understood as a sociocultural process, never isolated from the socio-historical context. It wasn't quite the media that interested Cultural Studies, but the role they have as configurators of power, as detonators of cultural practices that allow the receivers to negotiate meanings on hegemony and relations of power. The triad media-culture-power will,

as we'll see, be one of the central nuclei of Cultural Studies at its pace and consolidation in Latin America.

From what was mentioned in the previous paragraph, comes a proposal for the definition of Cultural Studies that seems, even still incomplete, suggestive. Is the following: "Subject that, through the texts or any cultural manifestation, tries to penetrate the study of culture and its interaction with power and its context" (Del Arco, 2007: 4-5).

Hence, we emphasize the dynamic character and in the constant movement of the conception of culture under which they've investigated Cultural Studies. It is probably the most decisive feature of the particular nature of the Cultural Studies: the culture they see as an object of knowledge or study object is far from that from which they've created subjects such as sociology, economy or anthropology. In other words, to Cultural Studies, culture is not an "organic" ensemble of values, languages, myths and traditional beliefs ("anthropological" concept of culture), nor is it the ideological effect of the processes that occur in the material basis of society ("economist" concept of culture), and much less the objectification of the spirit of the great creators and thinkers ("humanist" concept of culture) (Castro-Gómez, 2003: 351).

In other words, the culture that interests Cultural Studies has more to do with social processes of production, distribution and reception of the cultural artefacts, even those including texts, myths, values, works of art, etc. As Castro-Gómez claims, "cultural studies take as the object of analysis the devices from which is produced, distributed and consumed a series of imaginaries which motivate the action (political, economic, scientific, social) of men" (Castro-Gómez, 2003: 351). And, without a doubt, one of these devices is the media.

This approach to culture as a scenario of conflict, as a battle camp for power, is the key to the development of Cultural Studies in Latin America, to which we dedicate the following chapter.

3. The particularities of Culture Studies in Latin America

The denomination Cultural Studies seems to have worked more as an intellectual project than as a place or project institutionally or disciplinarily delimited. This particularity is also applied to the arrival and, above all, the development of Cultural Studies in Latin America, that was marked by a very specific juncture, characterized by the permanent impulses for the democratization of society and for the

primacy given to the observation of the action of the social movements at the time.

Despite the influence of Birmingham's School in the adoption of Cultural Studies in Latin America⁴⁹, this "school" is considered to have its previous genealogy in the area. Szurmuk and McKee, for instance, claim the "interdisciplinary endeavour" of Cultural Studies in the Latin American region appears from the nineteenth-century essay, informs the theoretical and methodological developments of Frankfurt's School and the British cultural studies and is crystallized in Latin American diaspora, especially in the United States, though also in Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia during the eighties and nineties of the last century (Szurmuk and McKee, 2009: 52).

In a similar way, though focusing on authors of the twentieth century, Marti Barbero considers that the foundations of Cultural Studies are found between the thirties and fifties, with authors such as Alfonso Reyes (Mexico), Fernando Ortiz (Cuba), José Carlos Mariátegui (Peru) or Paulo Freire (Brazil), among others. Of Mariátegui, for instance, is said that he was "the first to dare to ask, not 'folklorize' socio-politically, of what common myths are Indoamericans made" (Barbero, 2010, quoted in Richard, 2010: 135). These authors, according to Barbero, begin to design a sort of guideline of what would later be called cultural investigation, realizing the Latin American realities of then with a focus on popular cultures.

This "genealogy", much older than the denomination of "Cultural Studies", is also seen in the fact that several scholars have declared themselves as part of something previous to the "official" birth of Cultural Studies in Latin America: Carlos Altamirano, Renato Ortiz, Beatriz Sarlo, among others, do not consider themselves as representatives of the Latin American Cultural Studies, thought of the Studies of Culture and Power, Study of Culture, Sociology of Culture, Cultural Analysis (Fernández, 2011).

Indeed, at the moment the Cultural Studies arrived in Latin America, the epistemological context was full of intellectual traditions close to the Marxism and structuralism. From that moment and that place of construction of knowledge, it began to analyze the media messages from a critical point of view, that emphasized the media manipulation

⁴⁹ A few pages ago we've said that the founding fathers of Cultural Studies were Hoggart, Williams and Thompson. In our opinion, in Latin America Williams is the author that had greater influence, on the one hand, because his work was soon translated into Spanish, and on the other hand because its conceptualization of culture was incorporated hard into the debates about the relation communication-culture in the field of communication in Latin America.

of the masses and the invasion of cultural industry in the societies of the moment. In some way was adopted or assumed a position close to the critical tradition of Frankfurt's School, but in turn, there were signs of interest to approach the ways of resistance of these "masses" before the media messages; in other words, it began to be noticed the relation between the media and receptors, not as much as a vertical and unidirectional relation, but as a place of construction of meanings and permanent negotiations.

The interest of Cultural Studies for popular culture – with the media in focus – comes from the consideration of one only subject – communication or sociology –, it cannot account the complexity of the *new* realities and Latin American citizenships. Hence, the inter and transdisciplinary proposal of the Cultural Studies, to which the cultural processes cannot be approached in an independent or isolated way.

There is a quite broad consensus surrounding the idea that the primary exponents of Latin American Cultural Studies were Jesús Martín Barbero and Néstor García Canclini. Both authors, as we'll see later, "see to understand the contemporary political-cultural processes at the light of cultural disorder produced by mediatic narratives and speeches" (Escosteguy, 2002: 36-37). Nevertheless, we cannot strict the production of Cultural Studies to these authors; others are, such as Germán Rey and Eduardo Restrepo, in Colombia; Jorge González, Rosana Reguillo and José Manuel Valenzuela, in Mexico; Héctor Schmucler, Beatriz Sarlo and Alejandro Grimson in Argentina; António Cândido and José Jorge de Carvalho in Brazil; Daniel Mato and Edgardo Lander in Venezuela, or Nelly Richard and Víctor Silva Echetto in Chile.

The emphasis on popular culture and everyday life are features shared by Cultural Studies as much in its origin as in its development and consolidation in the Latin American region. Just as in Great Britain, in Latin America, we connect the thought around the popular culture to the thought on power relations: culture and power form a dumbbell and cannot be understood independently. According to Fernández, who gathers the works of Daniel Mato (2001), the irruption of the denomination 'Latin American Cultural Studies' in the Latin American universities as a consequence of crosslinks between practices of scholars and intellectuals of Latin America and colleagues, universities, publishers and academic journals of the United States and Great Britain. The positive side of this would be the debilitation of disciplinary rigidity and the power of academic institutions that constitute the scientific system, hence, favouring transdisciplinary initiatives. On the negative side, there is the overvaluation of the

intellectual tendencies of the centers and the binding to them, instead of the discouraging or non-encouragement to the binding to critical practices in culture and power developed by local intellectuals within a wide diversity of social movements and other contexts beyond universities (Fernández, 2011).

Mato advocates one should not use the expression Latin America Cultural Studies and suggests adopting a more pertinent denomination: Latin America Studies on Culture and Power. This name resonates with what Silva Echeto and Browne Sartori (2007) say, they who agree that Cultural Studies in the region have their starting point in the conceptual axis of the ideology, the politics, the power and culture.

According to Quirós (2008: 7), the five most important aspects which characterize Cultural Studies in Latin America as the following:

1. Value the capacity of popular classes and the popular culture to restrict and interpret the hegemonic ideologies.
2. Interest for the potential of popular culture to achieve the democratization of communication and culture.
3. Resistance to the abandoning or ignorance of the ideological hegemony in favour of an easy interpretation of the media almost free and unpredictable.
4. In the analysis of the popular genre of media, the emphasis is in that in the Latin American region these ways have a tradition of their own isolated from the influences of the great North American factories of production.
5. They convert culture within itself as a political matter, when attributing a standing out role to the new movements when forming popular culture.

Though with different features, these five aspects are also present in British Cultural Studies. The way I see it, perhaps the second and fourth aspects are those that better describe the Cultural Studies in Latin America and distinguish them from the British. Popular Culture could also give way to different definitions and approaches, according to the context of academic production, the social context and cultural history of the Latin American region.

To the last aspect is due to a side discussion. Hence, on the political proposition of Cultural Studies in Latin America, in its origins as well as nowadays, Grimson and Caggiano (2010) claim the following:

Historically, they are a theoretical perspective that builds new objects and ways to approach. Contemporarily is a field of convergence of disciplines and theoretical perspectives, where the politics are put

into question (Grimson and Caggiano, 2010: 17).

In their reflections, the authors relate the politics with the questioning of power relations, given the way social groups organize their common life symbolically. Ways that, without a doubt, have in the media one of their main actors.

Before we step into the specific reflections on the conceptual relation between culture and communication coming from the proposals from the Cultural Studies, it seems to us pertinent to offer a brief view over the main exponents of the school in Latin America, which as we've mentioned, are Jesús Martín Barbero, with his proposal to transfer the interest of the media to mediations, and Néstor García Canclini, who approaches the relation between communication, culture and power from the contemporary ways of cultural consumption.

The interest of Cultural Studies in analyzing Latin American societies in all their complexity and with all their differences, is through a transfer in vision, in other words, instead of studying media *per se*, they study the mediations. The bridge between Cultural Studies and communication studies owes mainly to Jesús Martín Barbero. It was based on his proposal that one began to see communication from popular culture so that the interest was in investigating – theoretically and, above all, empirically – the relation between citizenships and media products. To study the communication processes – mainly mediatic – from the perspective of culture, meant abandoning the perspectives of the knowledge fields that, until then, had been interested in these processes, as in sociology, semiotics and, namely, the communication field itself, previously dominated by studies of structural-functionalist nature as well as critical-Marxist.

Hence, the proposal by Martín Barbero implied stop looking into media in themselves and start looking into mediations, which meant “move the communicative processes in the direction of the dense and ambiguous place of the subjects' experience, within particular socio-historical contexts” (Escosteguy, 2002: 42). According to Quirós, in the proposal of the author mediations are conceived as ways, constrictions and place from which media are produced and consumed and which consists in a process through which the narrative speech of media is adapted to the popular narrative tradition of the myth and melodrama in that audiences learn to resist the cultural hegemony and to recognize its collective cultural identity within the media's speech (Quirós, 2008: 6).

The full proposal by Martín Barbero, completely imbedded in his already canonical work *De los medios a las mediaciones* (1987), has implied the abandoning of the media centred view and situate the

focus of attention in mediations that characterize the communication processes, especially in what matters the reception of these. To the author, the media reception is always active; that is, the receptors don't accept nor assimilate all that is emitted by the media. Instead, first, they recognize the elements that have a certain meaning to them and only then do they appropriate these meanings through the different mediations, either individual, collective and/or institutional.

Néstor García Canclini, as we've mentioned, is another of the great representatives of Cultural Studies in Latin America. He reflected and analyzed the consumption within the context of popular cultures. Consumption is understood as a powerful channel of dissemination of the hegemony among the subordinate population, also understood as the "ensemble of sociocultural processes in which is made the appropriation and the uses of products" (García Canclini, 1993: 24), among these, mediatic products. This conception denotes the complexity of the approach to consumption, for this implies cultural practices of symbolic nature.

Later on, García Canclini defines cultural consumption as "the set of processes of appropriation and uses of products in which the symbolic value prevails over values of use and change, or where, at least, these last ones seem subordinated to the symbolic dimension" (García Canclini, 1993: 34). Seen as a practice, then, consumption allows the citizens – consumers – to build meanings and senses, so that understanding these consumption processes can help, according to García Canclini, to comprehend in a better and more complex way social realities of the time. To avoid the dichotomy between the hegemonic and the subordinate, the author says that (we must reformulate the opposition between the hegemonic and the subordinate, including other cultural interactions, especially the consumption processes and the ways of communication and organization-specific of the popular sectors" (García Canclini, 1984: 71). Here we see the emphasis on the popular culture, one of the distinctive features of Cultural Studies.

Following García Canclini, in Latin America, Cultural Studies "are organized around a triple reconceptualization: of power, of the action of subordinates and interculturality" (Silva, 2006: 107). To the author, analyzing consumption processes have implications in the way of conceiving the power of hegemonic classes and the ways of resistance and negotiation from subordinate or popular classes above all. It constitutes in itself a phenomenon of interculturality.

The author says consumption "is the place in which the conflict between classes, originates by unequal participation in the productive

structure, continue due to the distribution of goods and satisfaction of needs. It is also the key concept to explain the daily life, from what we can understand habits that organize the behaviour of different sectors its mechanisms of adherence to the hegemonic culture or group distinction, subordination or resistance” (García Canclini, 1984: 73). This approximation goes along the definition of culture proposed by Cultural Studies, as well as the mediatic reception studies made according to this current.

In an interview to Néstor García Canclini, made by Jerónimo Repoll (2010a) and published in *Andamios* journal, the author speaks of how today we're transiting from the interest on consumption to the interest on the access, and claims:

“There is a change of times at the moment I wrote *Consumidores y ciudadanos*. There has been in communicational studies and, in a way, in social and cultural studies a displacement of the studies centred in consumption to those centred on the access. We also understand consumption as a way of access, however, to territorialized places: a movie theatre, a concert, a theatre, an arena or a stadium. In change, these studies on access go beyond, the access is seen as a way of relating with messages, shows, information that circulate throughout the world in a transterritorial way” (Interview to García Canclini, by Repoll, 2010a: 142).

It denotes one of the changes that have marked the evolution in Cultural Studies in Latin America in the present mediatic-technological ecology, an issue posed in the presentation of this text.

On the other hand, on the disciplinary debate, in the same interview, the author has said the following:

“The way of making questions has changed. We've passed a stage that is more transversal, intermediate and transitional, in which no discipline can embrace the totality, cannot speak with its traditional resources instead of the global and the intimate or domestic. Is necessary to combine knowledge strategies” (Interview to García Canclini, by Repoll, 2010a: 142).

This idea makes the author criticize the disciplinary blurring distinct of Cultural Studies. Hence, we see García Canclini turn into a critic of a school which is considered one of the main promoters in the Lati American region. Let's see his words:

“I don't agree with the disciplinary knowledge blurring promoted by cultural studies, namely Cultural Studies. My opinion is that is important to be trained in one discipline, though discipline should be restructured in order to incorporate the knowledge of others in a fluid manner, depending on the topics, the scales of analysis, of what one wants to know. Mainly in the degree it is necessary a disciplinary training. The transversality, the transdisciplinarity are more productive in a post-graduation when you have a strong training in some discipline” (Interview to García Canclini, by Repoll, 2010a: 142-143).

As can be seen, the production of Cultural Studies in Latin America is heterogeneous. Hence, it is complicated –or risky – to point out which countries lead this field. Perhaps we could point to Mexico, Brazil and Argentina since they were pioneers in the institutionalization of communication (with culture in its center) as an academic field.

Despite the particularities of the authors we've presented, the common element is, without a doubt, considering communication and culture as interconnected phenomena, in other words, that can't be understood independently. We dedicate the next section to this.

a. The relation culture-communication in Cultural Studies

Even though, if we ponder on Silva we must take in account that “in the relation between Cultural Studies and communication we find some basic concepts such as identities, identifications, interculturality, market, production and consumption” (Silva, 2006: 110), we think this is not the place to offer definitions for all these terms. Rather, next, we expose some definitions and reflections around the base concepts: culture and communication.

They are both well-defined concepts within social sciences and are central either for communication studies as for Cultural Studies. To synthesize the *magma* of information that has been generated around

these concepts, next are presented some meanings of each.

From Sociology and Anthropology, many definitions of culture focus on characteristics as those following: is based on universal symbols that help us to communicate; is distributed among the different human beings; and, at last, is learnt or acquired. As we can see, in these features, communication is present under multiple forms: first, due to the existence of symbols that help to communicate among human beings they are cultural constructions; second, since culture is transmitted, then it need the media for its diffusion; finally, because the learning and the acquisition of culture also imply communicative forms of mediation between subjects, or between devices and subjects. It is assumed, then, that culture provides people with a general cognoscitive reference for comprehension of their world and the functioning in itself. It allows them to interact with other people and make predictions of expectations and events. So far, the emphasis is on the subjective dimension of culture (Triandis, 1977), according to which culture would be the answer of people to the environment created by man, or the characteristic form of a group to understand and give meaning to the social environment (Brislin, 1981). To María Jesús Buxó (1990), culture is the knowledge system with meaning from which the subject sieves and selects its comprehension of reality and interprets and regulates the facts and data of its surroundings. It is also pertinent to refer to culture as a process, concerning which is considered the classic definition by Clifford Geertz (1987): culture as a network of meanings or senses, translated in a sort of program, that works to give meaning to the daily life. As you can see, most definitions selected to focus on culture as an organizing principle of the human experience, and not as a set of material productions of a certain society.

Around communication, there are also many different conceptions. In ancient meanings, the term referred to communion, union, the relation to something, and sharing something. This definition certainly drifts apart from the almost automatic association of communication to the transmission of information through a technical vehicle: the mass media. Communication can be understood as the interaction through which most living beings connect their conducts before their surroundings. Communication is also perceived as the very own message or information transmission system, among physical or social people, or from one of these to a population, through personalized media or mass media, according to a code of signs also agreed or fixed arbitrarily. Furthermore, the concept of communication also undertakes the economic sector that agglomerates the information, advertising and general communication

services industries to a great variety of institutions. These meanings highlight that we are definitely before a polysemic term.

We consider, in general terms, that the relation between communication and culture requires, above all, the consideration of communication as a basic process for the construction of life in society, as a mechanism to activate the dialogue and harmony among social subjects. And it is undeniable that in the communication field the “cultural” is officially seen as a legacy of the British School of Cultural Studies, that we’ve explained in previous pages.

The drive of Cultural Studies is the analysis of the conditions of construction of social and symbolic life of the social actors, within which fits an infinity of subjects, some of them, naturally, refers to communication and, mainly, media, conceived as *places* of construction of meaning. From the perspective of Cultural Studies, culture is understood as an effective terrain where hegemony is built, and communication understood as a complex process usually associated to the reception of mass media and its role in the creation of social life.

As mentioned before, it’s since the eighties that Cultural Studies in Latin America take an interest in the role played by the media within the context of social and cultural identities. In this wording, Florencia Saintout (2009) explains in a very precise way that Cultural Studies allowed a new manner of approaching communication from changes as the following:

- Of communication as a matter of instruments of communication as a matter of culture, perceptions and sensibilities.
- Of communication as a matter of power to communication as pooling (the domination as a process of communication).
- Of communication as a problem of reproduction, of devices and structures, to the communication as a matter of production and subjectivities.

With the media at the center, the communicative processes are seen, above all, as processes to build meaning. It is how then it began to proliferate empirical works centred in the audiences, therefore, taking most interest in the mediatic reception within the communicative process, which was a novelty, given that previously this interest focused on the text analysis of the mediatic messages. In relation, we recall the comment by Jerónimo Repoll concerning the cultural studies of audiences or studies of reception:

The study of audiences turns into an investigation platform of the cultural processes of mass-mediated societies, in which the connection

between media, texts and audiences shows to be as one of the best-prepared terrains and most fertile to the comprehension of the structuring of daily life, of the constituent interconnection between micro and macrosocial processes found here (Repoll, 2010b: 89).

Hence, Cultural Studies highlight the active character of the audience and the consequent polysemy of the mediatic messages, that are susceptible to multiple interpretations. As Padilla (2003) explains in-depth, the studies on the audiences starting from Cultural Studies reacted to two analysis that dominated the precious academic scene: on the one hand, they assumed a reaction to the model of Marxist nature that focused in explaining the dominant mechanism of the media towards the audiences; on the other hand, a reaction was proposed to the textual analysis – away from the social structure – made from the speeches transmitted by the media.

All in all, the cultural analysis of communication, or the approach to communication from the concept of culture, promoted by Cultural Studies, suppose several ruptures. We've come from conceiving the media as vehicles of dominance to consider them places of production and negotiation of meanings – hence the emphasis given more to the reception than the content, though both dimensions cannot be completely separated –; the audiences were empirically investigated – always considered as active –to show that daily places of media consumption are created from culture; therefore it was chosen to comprehend communication beyond the media per se, advocating the concept of the communicative processes as cultural processes which importance is undeniable in popular cultures of Latin American societies at the time and now.

b. A look at the institutionalization of Cultural Studies in Latin America

As we've seen, the eighties represent an inflexion point in the development of Cultural Studies in Latin America. We can say that it is from here that they begin to institutionalize, something we can see in parallel with the institutionalization of the academic field of communication. In this section, we'll give you an overlook on this process, focusing on two basic issues: the post-graduate and the publications on Cultural Studies in Latin America.

According to Mato (2002), the arrival of Latin American Cultural Studies to the Latin American Universities was a consequence of

crosslinks between the practices of scholars and intellectuals from Latin America with colleagues, universities, publishers and academic journals from the United States and Great Britain. The author sees in this positive and negative elements: the positive side lies on the debilitation of the disciplinary rigidity and of the power of academic institutions, favouring thus transdisciplinary initiatives; the negative side lies on the overvaluation of the intellectual tendencies of the centers and the binding to these, at the same time of the demotivation or none stimulation of the binding with critical practices in culture and power developed by local intellectuals in a vast diversity of social movements and other contexts beyond universities (Fernández, 2011).

In the early twenty-first century there were already programs of Cultural Studies in many – if not almost all – countries of Latin America. It predominated Master degrees, though quite a few doctorates as well. Mónica Szurmmuk and Robert McKee Irwin (2009: 57) underline that there is little contact between the different programs of the region, including between programs of the same country. To them, “in almost all of the Latin American countries, the programs on cultural studies emerge in the nineties and the 2000, which are moments of great climax to the post-graduates, of the corporation of the university and the redraw of the State as the main financier of culture” (Szurmmuk and McKee Irwin, 2009: 59). Based on the revision by these authors, the following is a table with the main programs in the many Latin American countries:

Picture 1. Post-graduate programs in Cultural Studies in Latin America

Country	Programs
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-graduation in Cultural Studies (Area of Cultural Studies, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Buenos Aires (Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Buenos Aires)) • Magister in Cultural Studies (Universidad Nacional de la Plata, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación (University of la Plata, Faculty of Humanities and Educational Sciences)) • Master's degree in social and Cultural Studies (Universidad de Morón (University of Morón)) • Program in Sociology of Culture (Universidad Nacional de La Pampa (National University of La Pampa)) • Doctoral degree in Human Sciences with mention in Social and Cultural Studies (Universidad Nacional de Tucumán (National University of Tucumán)) • Specialization in Cultural Studies (Universidad Nacional de Catamarca (National University of Catamarca))

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Sociology of Culture and Cultural Analysis (Universidad Nacional de Santiago del Estero (National University of Santiago del Estero)) • Institute of Higher Studies (Universidad Nacional de San Martín (National University of San Martín)) • Master's degree in Cultural Studies (Universidad Nacional de Rosario (National University of Rosario))
Bolivia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program in (Inter) Cultural Studies, Post-colonial Theories and Decolonial Thought (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar (Andean University Simón Bolívar))
Brazil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postdoctoral in Cultural Studies (Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro))
Chile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magister in Cultural Studies (Universidad de Artes y Ciencias Sociales (the University of Arts and Social Sciences)) • Master's degree and doctoral degree in Latin American Studies (Centro de Estudios Culturales Latinoamericano, Universidad de Chile (Center for the Latin American Studies, University of Chile))
Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Cultural Studies (Universidad Nacional (National University)) • Master's degree in Cultural Studies (Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Pontifical University Javeriana)) • Master's degree in Cultural Studies (Universidad de los Andes (University of Andes))
Costa Rica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctoral degree in Studies of Society and Culture (Universidad de Costa Rica (University of Costa Rica))
Cuba	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Humanities with emphasis on Cultural Studies (Universidad de La Habana (University of La Habana))
Ecuador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctoral degree in Cultural Studies (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito (Andean University Simón Bolívar, Quito)) • Master's degree in Cultural Studies (Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito (Andean University Simón Bolívar, Quito))
Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Sociocultural Studies (Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Oriente, Guadalajara (Technological Institute of Superior Studies of the Orient, Guadalajara)) • Master's degree in Sociocultural Studies (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California y el Colegio de la Frontera Norte (Autonomous University of Baja California and the College of Frontera Norte)) • Master's degree and doctoral degree in Critical Theory (Instituto 17, Ciudad de México (Institute 17, City of Mexico)) • Master's degree in Cultural Studies (Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Autonomous University of Chiapas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez)) • Doctoral degree in Sociocultural Studies (Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes (Autonomous University of Aguascalientes, Aguascalientes))
Peru	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Cultural Studies (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima (Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Lima))

Venezuela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Social and Cultural Studies (Universidad de los Andes (University of Andes)) • Doctoral degree in Social Sciences with mention in Cultural Studies (Universidad de Carabobo (University of Carabobo))
Internationals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in Theory and Methodology of Social Sciences (CLACSO) • Higher Program on Cultural Studies (CLACSO)

Source: Compilation based on information from Szurmuk, Mónica and McKee Irwin, Robert (2009).

By not being a disciplinary field as it is, cultural Studies are disseminated in journals and books that are usually appointed to the field of social sciences, in general, and communication in particular. At least, this is what happens in Latin America, where communication and culture, as we've seen in pages before, are two concepts which relation has marked the development of the academic field of communication since before the eighties.

Hence, there are not many investigation centers with the Cultural Studies tag⁵⁰ in their denomination. There are some exceptions, as it is the Instituto de Investigaciones Culturales-Museo de la Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (Institute of Cultural Investigations – Museum of the Autonomous University of Baja California) in Mexicali, Mexico⁵¹, the Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (Institute of Investigations Gino Germani of the University of Buenos Aires), Argentina⁵², the Centro de Estudios Culturales Latinoamericanos de la Universidad de Chile⁵³, or the Grupo de Investigación y Estudios Culturales de América Latina (Group of Investigation and Cultural Studies of Latin America) (GIECAL) of the University of Andes, Venezuela⁵⁴. Thus, to explore the main channels of diffusion of the investigations and Cultural Studies made in Latin America it seemed more pertinent, to us, to present some of the

⁵⁰ We only refer to some investigation centers and, in this text, we are not taking in account the groups of investigation in several universities (or that are interinstitutional or articulated in associations among investigators). Other investigation centers that are still inscribed within the field of communication, and have in some way a relation with the academic context of Cultural Studies are, among others, the following: Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas em Novas Tecnologias, Comunicação e Cultura (Center of Studies and Research in New Technologies, Communication and Culture) (Brazil); Centro de Investigaciones en Estudios Culturales, Educativos y Comunicacionales (Investigation Center in Cultural, Educational and Communicational Studies) (Argentina); Centro Interdisciplinario Boliviano de Estudios de la Comunicación (Bolivian Interdisciplinary Center for Communication Studies) (Bolivia); and the Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Comunicación (International Center of Higher Studies on Communication) (Ecuador).

⁵¹ See <http://www.iic-museo.uabc.edu.mx/>

⁵² See <http://iigg.sociales.uba.ar/>

⁵³ See <http://cecla.uchile.cl/>

⁵⁴ See <http://www.saber.ula.ve/handle/123456789/3216>

academic journals which main focus – though not exclusive – was Cultural Studies. Following are some of the titles⁵⁵:

- *Afro-Ásia*. Universidad Federal de Bahía (Federal University of Bahía). Brazil. <http://www.afroasia.ufba.br/>
- *Bordes. Revista de Estudios Culturales*. Universidad de Los Andes (University of Andes). Venezuela. <http://revistas.saber.ula.ve/bordes/>
- *Caribbean Studies*. Instituto de Estudios del Caribe. (Institute of Studies of Caribe). University of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico. http://iec-ics.uprrp.edu/?page_id=1794
- *Cuadernos de la Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales*. National University of Jujuy. Argentina. <http://revista.fhycs.unju.edu.ar/index.php/cuadernos>
- *Cuadernos Interculturales*. The University of Playa Ancha. Chile. http://www.redalyc.org/revista.oa?id=552__
- *Culturales*. Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (Autonomous University of Baja California). Mexico. <http://culturales.uabc.mx/index.php/Culturales>
- *Diálogos de la Comunicación*. Federación Latinoamericana de Facultades de Comunicación Social (Latin American Federation of Faculties of Social Communication). Peru. <http://dialogosfelafacs.net/>
- *Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporáneas*. University of Colima. Mexico. <http://www.culturascontemporaneas.com/>
- *Lua Nova*. Centro de Estudos de Cultura Contemporânea (Center of Contemporary Culture Studies). Brazil. <http://www.cedec.org.br/luanova.asp>
- *Meridional. Revista Chilena de Estudios Latinoamericanos*. University of Chile. Chile. <http://www.meridional.uchile.cl/>
- *Nómadas*. Universidad Central de Colombia (Central University of Colombia). Colombia. <http://nomadas.ucentral.edu.co/>
- *Revista Mexicana del Caribe*. University of Quintana Roo. Mexico. <http://recaribe.uqroo.mx/>
- *Signo y Pensamiento*. Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Bogotá (Pontifical Javerian University of Bogota). Colombia. <http://www.javeriana.edu.co/signoyp/coleccion.htm>
- *Tabula Rasa*. University Colegio Mayor de Cundinamarca. Colombia. <http://www.revistatabularasa.org/>
- *Theomai*. Red Internacional de Estudios sobre Sociedad,

⁵⁵ Most information on the magazines has been extracted from the site of the Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, Spain and Portugal, available at <http://www.redalyc.org>.

Naturaleza y Desarrollo (International Network of Studies on Society, Nature and Development). Argentina. Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (National University of Quilmes). Argentina. <http://revista-theomai.unq.edu.ar/>

The post-graduate programs, on the one hand, and the academic journals on the other, are important parameters to explore the institutionalization of a certain field of studies. In this case, and as we've mentioned, the fact that Cultural Studies don't constitute a disciplinary scope *per se*, searches for associations, groups, institutions and academic agencies of diffusion of the investigations made in the region more complicated. As we've already mentioned, in many cases appear shaded in other fields of social sciences in general and communication sciences in particular.

4. Critical voices

All that has been exposed before allow saying that Cultural Studies as characterized by its constant redefinition. They are not, in any way, a closed subject, with prefixed theories nor with fixed methodologies. What for some as been appointed as a positive feature of Cultural Studies, this permanent redefinition and reconstruction, by others – who inclusively speak of undefinition – has been a target for critics.

It is also clear that Cultural Studies, more than a school in itself, are a conjugation of knowledge and political action. This particular condition, and above all, of a very heterogeneous nature, as implicated many obstacles to Cultural Studies to legitimize itself as a field of knowledge. It is rather considered a piece of knowledge in construction, an intellectual-political project more than institutional.

The criticism with greater importance Cultural Studies have received, the way we see it is that that considers them promoters of cultural relativity. Critics like McGuigan (1992: 2-5, quoted in Del ARCO, 2007: 16), for instance, claim that since the nineties Cultural Studies “have lost all the critical sense of popular cultures: they consider the, analyze them and including praise them, though do not submit them to the critic, placing them within a context of relations of political materials”. Similarly, Enrique Sánchez Ruiz (2005) is blunt in criticizing that Cultural Studies relativize either its ideas in cultural hybridity and the particular identities, which cause the loss of the historical and social context where these notions develop.

The previous critic is related to what is denominated *culturalism*, it has also been subjected to not very positive comments. Concerning this, it stands out the posture expressed by José Sánchez Parga (2006). The author claims that culturalism of Cultural Studies inflects towards an accomplishment of culturology when, not only s pretended to make of culture a science or scientific speech and explain the cultural facts and phenomena besides society but also when its explanatory pretensions have has as object the same facts and processes or social institutions (Sánchez, 2006: 210).

It, according to the author, results in “a deep mutation either in the way of conceiving culture as in the experience in itself, contributing, mainly, to the lost of culture as a production of senses, meanings and of symbolic functions in the events and social realities” (Sánchez, 2006: 216).

Other critics point out the absence of epistemological rigour. Roberto Follari (2002), for instance, claims that Cultural Studies are debilitated in the construction of knowledge. In a similar sense to the pointed out in the previous paragraph, the author claims that Cultural Studies contribute to the fetishization of culture, in the sense that consider that the social can be replaced by the cultural, and put apart key issues such as structures of power. Follari says that Cultural Studies “proclaim themselves as the answer to economic, sociological or political questions, protected under the (insufficient) shadow of culture” (Follari, 2002).

The criticism epistemological in nature also pretends to achieve a transdisciplinarity of Cultural Studies, which some authors see as a danger. Fernández (2011) brings back the voice of Grimson and Caggiano and claims that these authors “reiterate that the risk detected in what seems to be the elaboration of projects pretending to be transdisciplinary is that is possible they do not know the bibliographical traditions, the ways to formulate problems and practice resolutions by the disciplines in their respective histories” (Fernández, 2011).

Similarly, Carlos Reynoso, another critic of the Cultural Studies, does not doubt claiming that these intend to approach particular topics from a perspective that exceeds and overreaches the disciplinary frames. To the author, Cultural Studies are the bearers of a “childish attitude of antidisciplinarity unfounded in any substantial disciplinary critic, or based in a conception mechanically determinist of academic practices” (Reynoso, 2000: 304).

Finally, Cultural Studies have also received criticisms for its lack of empirical evidence construction in their investigations. In the words

of Mattelart and Neveu, this implies “an abusive generalization of impressions” (Mattelart and Neveu, 2004:84).

It is clear then that Cultural Studies are one more interdisciplinary possibility than a “sectarian place” (De Carvalho, 2010:234). According to this same author, “they are not one single subject, don’t have one solely theory, neither a singled focus, nor a basic method, nor a unique lineage, and not even a precise canon” (De Carvalho, 2010: 234). These distinctive features of Cultural Studies can be seen simultaneously as a possibility and as an obstacle. In Latin America, if we measure the works made, the visibility of their base authors and, above all, the contributions they’ve made to the greater and better comprehension of popular cultures in the region – with their particularities and differences in times and geographical areas –, we can dare to say that is undeniable the contributions of Cultural Studies to what we see as an intellectual project open to the construction of knowledge not girded to the academic, with a vocation explanatory and, mostly, comprehensive of current societies.

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The International Nature of Cultural Studies

Leonardo Custódio⁵⁶
Miguel Vicente Mariño⁵⁷
Leonarda García-Jiménez
Manuel Hernández Pérez
Filipa Subtil
Marta Rizo

Cultural studies is one of the most contested themes in this book in historical, epistemological and sociopolitical ways. Its history is contested. Most authors tend to pinpoint the birthplace of cultural studies at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) after the 1950s in Birmingham. However, some scholars have challenged this “distorted narrative”, as the European chapter in this section describes it. Different voices (e.g. Ang, 1992; Chen, 1992; Wright, 1998; Shome, 2009) have called for the challenging of the narrative of British origins and the decentralization of the Anglo-American cultural studies so that a plural, transnational epistemological process can take place.

Its epistemological validity is also contested. For example, in Ferguson and Golding (1997), multiple scholars – mostly sympathetic to the field – reflect on internal and external criticism to cultural studies and its ‘textualism’ (focus on cultural production rather than on the social, political and economic structures and dynamics surrounding them), theoreticism (built on linguistic affectation) and methodological eclecticism (as if cultural studies, as the saying goes, is a jack of all trades, but master of none).

Finally, critics of cultural studies have questioned its societal and political value. In resemblance to the criticism to how identity politics is fragmenting the chances of building a healthy democratic environment, some identify and worry about the over-emphasis on identity-related social phenomena too specific to contemporary subcultural groups, as tackled in the Latin American chapter. One example to reactions to these claims is Pepo Leistyna’s edited volume (2005) in which contributing authors make a deliberate joint effort to build new cultural studies approaches that bring multiple identities and social justice concerns together in a unified epistemological and political unity.

In these contesting circumstances, the two preceding chapters make an important contribution to the historicization of cultural studies as

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an epistemological field. While acknowledging the importance of the British cultural studies, the chapters provide an overview of cultural studies in Europe and Latin America that displays the diversity and plurality that has characterized its international establishment across the world. In fact, perhaps the best way to appreciate the importance of the two chapters is by reading them as complementary to one another. Together, they characterize a critical overview that opens different paths for present and future transnational collaborative efforts between Latin America, Europe and other world regions.

From a Latin American perspective, Marta Rizo starts from the British activities and then contrasts them to how cultural studies rose along with other existing intellectual efforts from the region focused on understanding the interplay between social nuances, culture, media, politics and resistance in Latin America. Rizo proceeds to make an important analysis of the relationship between culture and communication. She also presents an overview of the institutional status of cultural studies as an academic discipline in Latin America before ending with a review of some critical voices to the field.

Leonarda García-Jiménez, Manuel Hernández-Pérez and Filipa Subtil, authors of the European chapter, started their text by bringing French and British research centers together as places that simultaneously contributed to the formation of cultural studies. After that, they made an overview of cultural studies in Southern Europe (Italy, Spain and Portugal). They followed with some of the themes that shaped the development of cultural studies in Europe – from Marxism to theories of power and identity – to conclude with the results of a bibliometric survey to evaluate the reference publications in the field.

In this synthesis chapter, we look at some of the issues similarly raised in both chapters, some of their differences and some insights that could fuel joint efforts to make cultural studies a truly international epistemological field.

Multiple contexts, multiple origins

One important aspect shared by the chapters is the acknowledgement and highlight of the contextual embeddedness of cultural studies despite the predominant narratives of origins. In Latin America, as Rizo points out, the colonial histories and postcolonial contemporaneity, the indigenous heritage and the popular culture have led to different currents of inter- and multi-disciplinary cultural investigations in the

region since the early decades of the 20th century.

Other authors also find peculiarities of cultural studies in Latin America especially in contrast with other contexts. In the introduction to the edited volume “Contemporary Latin American Cultural Studies” (2003, p. 1–10), editors Stephen Hart and Richard Young corroborate Rizo’s remarks. One reason for the difference, they argue, is that cultural studies arise from the region as efforts to grasp the regional historical dilemmas, social contestations and recurring crises. Some scholars from the region refuse to use the term “cultural studies” as a form of resistance to the imperialist character of the Anglo-American academic expansion. For the authors, Latin American cultural studies also covers other research activities and methodologies including feminist cultural criticism, studies of popular culture, subaltern studies and even Latin American investigations of modernity. In short, Latin American cultural studies are organized around the notions of power, subaltern action and interculturality, as Rizo describes following García Canclini’s definition.

In García-Jiménez, Hernández-Peréz and Subtil’s chapter, the regional diversity also contributes to challenging that the potential automatic treatment of the British as the primary European context for cultural studies. For many readers, it might come as a surprise that not only the Centre d’Etudes de Communications des Masses (CECMAS) existed in France, but also that it maintained regular communication and exchanges with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the United Kingdom. Actually, even the academic community lacks narratives about the history and the state of cultural studies in French despite the involvement of so many celebrated scholars, as the European chapter demonstrates.

As a possible explanation, the French scholar Anne Chalard-Fillaudeau (2009) argues that despite having cultural studies sensibility in investigating the combination of human and social, these investigations were not conventionally labelled cultural studies. This happens, according to her, for three reasons: academic parochialism, scientific protectionism and the claims of “the ‘epistemo-political’ illegitimacy of Cultural Studies approaches” (p.834). Chalard-Fillaudeau is optimistic that this situation will change and further international academic exchanges will follow. However, the European chapter in this volume already describes how French studies of culture had an earlier influence in Southern Europe than the British cultural studies.

Perhaps the remainder of both chapters in what concerns the history of cultural studies is that the field’s development in different contexts – independently of whether they were homegrown or influenced by

foreign traditions – can provide us with more nuanced histories and contemporary descriptions. After all, cultural studies have come to be in consequence of the academic urges to grasp the intersections between culture, communication and social changes. Much of the problems of the mid-1900s remain or, in many cases, have increased: exacerbated media consumption, social inequalities, resistance for the survival of traditions and the formation of identity-based communities are few examples. Therefore, cultural studies are still relevant and the more we know about transnational nuances, the better equipped the field will be to grasp contemporaneity and its complexities.

Cultural Studies Counter-Flow: From Latin America to Europe

This dialogue between Latin America and Europe creates another opportunity: to reflect upon how scholarship from one of the regions has influenced cultural studies in the other. In general, discussions most often happen about how the British cultural studies spread to other regions. Raising this issue is not necessarily an acritical reproduction of the distorted narrative. In the Latin American chapter, Rizo takes this “rather orthodox approach”, as she describes, to the history of cultural studies, but she also displays how Latin American scholars have been critical to how the field has been historicized. These local contestations are important. However, they do not often contemplate processes in which Latin American cultural studies influenced debated in Europe.

The European chapter briefly mentions one example of these processes of epistemological dialogue. In the very beginning of the chapter, García-Jiménez, Hernández-Pérez and Subtil briefly describe the relevance of the concept of *hypermediations* by Spain-based, Argentinian scholar Carlos Alberto Scolari. This concept, as the authors describe, is a step forward from the concept of *mediations*, by Colombia-based, Spanish scholar Jesus Martin-Barbero. This example indicates an existing actual dialogue between the regions that happens not only in international exchange processes of individual scholars, but also institutionally. The existence of the Iberian-American Communication Association (ASSIBERCOM) shows that for decades there has been room for joint, transatlantic epistemological developments.

What has historically been missing – albeit recent remedying efforts like the ALAIC-ECREA initiatives including this book – is a wider recognition of Latin American epistemology in the dominant English-

speaking sphere of international scholarly knowledge. From a cultural studies perspective, the debate about the importance of Jesus Martin-Barbero's groundbreaking book "From Media to Mediations" illustrates how the dominant canon in English can silence and appropriate relevant voices from the margins. As Scolari (2017) describes, Martin-Barbero published his book in 1987. Six years later, it was translated into English, but it did not get the recognition as an important contribution it had within Latin America. It was only recently, however, when Western and Northern European scholars have developed the concept of *mediatization* (Lundby, 2009; Couldry and Hepp, 2013) that Martin-Barbero's work gained some recognition outside Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula. To this, British scholar Nick Couldry (2017, p.113-114) admits and argues:

"Sin embargo, hasta ahora su influencia no ha sido tan fuerte como debiera. La causa principal es clara: la desigualdad provocada por el mundo de las editoriales en el que sigue dominador el pensamiento que se publique en inglés, o al menos en francés. Pero ahora contribuye también otra causa: el hecho imprescindible de que todas las investigaciones de hoy sobre los medios de comunicación ya asumen, como su punto de orientación, exactamente un interés en los procesos de mediaciones. ¿Cómo se pueden comprender de modo alternativo las complejidades de nuestras vidas a través de redes sociales y digitales? Como ya insistía Martín Barbero en el año 1987, anticipando nuestras necesidades de hoy – cuando todos los investigadores están buscando nuevos recursos para analizar una realidad extrañamente cambiante – ya tres décadas antes del hecho: *'no se trata de 'carnavalizar' la teoría...Sino de aceptar que los tiempos no están para la síntesis, que la razón apenas nos da para sentir...Que hay zonas en la realidad más cercana que están todavía sin explorar'*". (Emphasis in the original.)

Cultural Studies, Communication and Contemporary Political Transformations

Nick Couldry's words provide a suitable transition to our last point in this chapter – cultural studies can and must contribute to the

understanding of our contemporary world. Recently, we have seen three major sociopolitical phenomena: the global (re)turn of reactionary national projects, the political polarization and extremism in everyday life, and the increased relevance of communication to social life, culture and politics on digital platforms and environments.

In the first two decades of the 20th century, an increasing number of societies around the world have seen the rise of populist rhetoric – on the Left and now predominantly the Right – shaping local political landscapes into a growing global mosaic of (resembling or de facto) authoritarian national leaderships. In many ways, this is a known phenomenon in Latin America, Africa and Asia, regions in which countries have historically had charismatic and/or violent leaders centralizing federal governments around themselves. Currently, the surprise in international debates seems to be on how similar political movements have almost simultaneously reached different levels of political power in the Northern Hemisphere. From Brexit to the Southern European nationalist movements, from the rise of Donald Trump to the xenophobic parties in the Nordics as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, a baffled world has seen these changes and asked: what is happening? How culture and communication are shaping the current construction of social meanings?

The same questions arise among observers or insiders in processes of political polarization in everyday life that fuel the rise of populist movements. The narratives about how long-term friendships and family ties have been broken for politics have crossed the boundaries of national states. Take the US and Brazil as an example. Even though the demagogue businessman Donald Trump and newly elected demagogue former-military Jair Bolsonaro represent different types of populism, what is happening around them is a comparable, if not similar, social phenomenon. Both cases saw the uses of digital technologies (Facebook in the US, WhatsApp in Brazil) to disseminate right-wing propaganda constructed on false information and fear mongering. Both countries also saw the voluntary engagement of millions of people in support of xenophobic, racist, sexist and homophobic values openly expressed in the politicians' rhetoric. Moreover, both Trump and Bolsonaro enjoy high popularity among supporters despite their contradictions and their dismissal of science and reason. Consequently, despite their borderline extremist and fundamentalist worldviews, Trump and Bolsonaro enjoy great attention by media corporations and enjoy strong centrality in public debates.

In these circumstances, how can cultural studies contribute to a

more in-depth and nuanced understanding of these contemporary political changes around the world? Both chapters in this section hint at the strengths cultural studies retain as epistemological lenses to a complex and changing world. As mentioned earlier, the chapters are complementary to one another in terms of displaying the strengths of cultural studies. By looking and problematizing between communication and culture, cultural studies has a lot to offer in terms of explanations of the reasons, contradictions and characteristics of populist and retrograde ideas in the information age.

The chapters also highlight some historical debates in cultural studies that would be suitable and necessary frameworks to understand today's world. García-Jiménez, Hernández-Peréz and Subtil, for example, dedicate a whole section to discussing the influence of Marxism, the relationship between culture and political and symbolic power, and how the concept of identity plays a role in the original foundations of cultural studies as an epistemological field. What the world shows us today is that the interplay of these three theoretical constructs – Marxism, power and identity – remain relevant to explain the world. The questions that prove the contemporary relevance of cultural studies can be endless. How do social class hierarchies relate to identity-based struggles? How do these identity-based struggles constitute or fragment political action in socially unequal contexts? How do demagogue politicians thrive in politically fragmented and polarized societies? How does communication play a role in the symbolic and material construction of power structures in party politics and everyday life? Such multi-dimensional questions demand interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and creative methods to produce answers. As a field, cultural studies is equipped to face this challenge.

In a critical review of the field, Néstor García Canclini (2003) reflects on how cultural studies relate to the changes in a post-Cold War world. He described how cultural studies originated as “transdisciplinary readings on the hidden connections between culture, economy and power” (p. 12) and wondered if these features remain and how they relate to a time of globally shared cultural phenomena despite societal differences. In response to these questions, he argued:

“Placing ourselves at this new stage requires returning to a key historical feature of cultural studies: the development of empirically based socio-cultural theory in order to understand the evolution of capitalism critically; not the assertion of politically

correct positions, but *the tense relationship between a utopian imaginary, that is only partially political, and an intellectual and empirical exploration that sometimes goes along with it and sometimes contradicts it.*"
(Emphasis on the original)

In other words, just like in its origins, cultural studies can and must constantly be (re-)constructed as a field via the intensive connection between epistemological production grounded on in-depth empirical evidence and praxis. In this sense, transnational dialogues like the one in this book are crucial to maintain the diverse, refreshing and thought-provoking approaches to social life and culture that has historically characterized the field.

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04

ALTERNATIVISM

A Historical and Comparative Perspective on the Studies on Alternative and Community Communication in Europe

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Emiliano Treré⁵⁹

1. Introduction⁶⁰

The following lines present a historical and comparative review of the studies on alternative communication in the European context. To this end, an assessment is intended on the main contributions and strengths of a field that is, as a matter of fact, characterized by its extreme diversity and by a strict attachment to practice, which, ultimately, determines its theory. We are therefore referring to an immense and ambitious task that we do not intend to completely develop in this chapter. On the contrary, the intention is to describe predominant objects and lines of research from the beginning of the theoretical reflection delimiting with it the history of the field, its current state, and future challenges. Our starting premise is that the relationship between communication, alternativity, and social change has been approached from very diverse theoretical traditions. Moreover, these traditions have not always established dialogues amongst them, thus the body of knowledge is until today excessively scattered and fragmented, as we will demonstrate below.

This article proposes a tour through four periods presented in sequence. Firstly, we confirm the validity of the singularities of the field as well as identify a set of stages in its evolution. Secondly, we approach a series of highlighted historical and theoretical references, especially in those countries that have a more extensive tradition of research in the field: France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Thirdly, we present the work of a group of leading thinkers who are contributing today to the renovation of the field and whose works can help identify future research trends. Finally, in the conclusion section, some connections are made between the European academia and other communities—especially in Latin America—aiming toward a necessary interregional and transdisciplinary dialogue.

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⁶⁰ Our gratitude goes to Ángela Forero for having translated and reworked the original text in such a professional way and at such short notice under challenging circumstances.

2. An approximation to a complex and multiform field of research

The studies on alternative media and community communication in Europe have an extensive tradition in which the earliest references can be traced back to the early twentieth century, which appeared parallel to the emergence of the first scientific research on communication. However, these cannot be seen as a continuous flow of works until the late nineties, with a remarkable increase of works in the first decades of the twenty-first century. In fact, over the last few years a “third wave” of research centered in potentially participatory technologies such as the Web 2.0 has started, and it differentiates from the “first” and “second” waves as they were dedicated respectively, to the press since the twenties, and the electronic media—radio, video, television, etc.—since the late sixties (Jankowski, 2006).

Citizen media has not been a permanent line of research in Europe, especially if compared with other geographical contexts—mostly in Latin America—and, in particular, with fields with a more abundant and homogenous corpus as corporative communication, journalism studies or political marketing. On the contrary, this field still occupies a peripheral and marginal place in research as much as in the teaching of journalism and communication, which throughout their history, have given special attention to the duo of public media and private-commercial media, underestimating that the “struggle of different groups and historically marginalized collectivities to be heard and seen is not a peripheral aspect of modernity” (Sáez Baeza, 2009).

In fact, throughout history, different manifestations of alternative communication have advanced parallel to the very creation of official and commercial systems of media, and it has been that way even since before the emergence of the printing press in the fifteenth-century: calendars, ballads, fliers, festivities such as Corpus Christi or carnivals, etc. Nevertheless, this phenomenon has been emphasized in modern times with milestones as diverse as the pirate press since the sixteenth-century, the labor and popular press of the nineteenth-century, the free and community radio of the sixties and seventies, and other countercultural expressions in the world of journalism, literature or art: fanzines, graffiti, comics, theatre, etc.

Alongside the difficulty to systematize its extensive history, the field suffers as well from a set of epistemological weaknesses (Howley, 2010;

Rennie, 2006), which may also constitute strengths to a certain extent. We refer mainly to the *empirical* origin of the perspective, in which the theories emerge in the background of the practical experiences on the field, when they are not completely surpassed or made obsolete by the extreme variety and richness of those experiences. In this regard, the field is, therefore, characterized for its extreme diversity and dynamism, since different means and strategies coexist in it, especially citizen technological appropriations of diverse contours: popular press, free and community radio, participatory video, cyberactivism, performances, etc. Finally, the field has always been defined by its *situated* character, in time as well as in space, considering that in different regions and temporal contexts very dissimilar experiences and approaches can be observed. Because of it, it is difficult to draw comparisons and lines of continuity.

On the one hand, there is the Anglo–Saxon tradition that dominates today’s research and which barely holds dialogues with other academic communities, especially with those of South Europe and Latin America. On the other hand, in countries such as France, Italy or Spain, autonomous perspectives characterized by the frequent reference to local authors have been established, which confirms the articulation of a field that presents as its main common feature its enormous theoretical dispersion. A good example of this is the over 50 terms that have been introduced throughout history (Ferron, 2012): *alternative media*, *popular communication*, *community communication*, *radical communication*, *citizen media*, *participatory communication*, *tactical media*, *autonomous media*, *communication for social change*, etc.

This lack of conceptual precision is the trigger of a creative research in the midst of a constant recycling process. However, this ambiguity is also a source of theoretical conflicts and perhaps one of the reasons for the estrangement between the different epistemic communities. The labels themselves vary in each geographical community, as well as its nuances and understanding. It is not the same, for instance, to speak of popular communication in Northern Europe as it is in the Eastern countries where the concept tends to be associated with the forms of communist or socialist propaganda predominant during the Cold War.

In general terms, in the English–speaking context, it is common today to use the concepts of *alternative media* (Atton, 2001), *radical media* (Downing, 1984/2000), *citizen media* (Rodríguez, 2001), and *community media* (Gordon, 2008), clearly referring to the theoretical

debate taking place in countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia or the United States⁶¹. In the French-speaking context, it is also normal to find the terms *associative media* (Cheval, 1997) or *free media* (Lefebvre, 2011), which are shared with francophone regions like Quebec (Gusse, 2006) or the old African colonies (Tudesq, 2002). The term *free radio* has been vastly explored in Italy (Dark, 2009), where, additionally, other notions such as those of *counterinformation* (Baldelli, 2006), *media activism* (Berardi, 2006; Pasquinelli, 2002) or *street television* (Ardizzoni, 2009; Berardi, Jaquemet and Vitali, 2003) have been further explored.

Detached from the previous concepts is, for instance, the research in Germany or Spain. Within the German-speaking context—Germany, Austria, Switzerland, etc.—the labels of *free media* (Pilsener, 2008) or *alternative media* (Hüttner, Leidingner and Oy, 2009) are favored, whereas in Spain, the theoretical landscape is diversified around objects like *communication for social change* (Chaparro, 2015; Marí Sáez, 2011), *community media* (Meda, 2012; García García, 2013), *educational communication* (García Matilla, 2003; Sierra, 2000) or, more recently, the works on *cyberactivism* and *techno-politics* (Candón Mena, 2013; Sampedro, 2014; Toret et al., 2015). Conversely, Spain usually acts as a hinge between the Anglo-Saxon tradition and the Latin American Studies, with frequent exchanges with Latin America—for reasons of cultural and linguistic proximity—since the beginning of the transition to democracy (Vidal Beneyto, 1979; De Fontcuberta and Gómez Mompert, 1983). These dialogues are much less frequent within the English-speaking tradition, which has formed an autonomous research that usually derives from local authors and which, in the most extreme cases, lacks historical or theoretical referents from other latitudes.

3. A historical and comparative review of the European reflection and research

Research surrounding alternative and community communication emerged in Europe from different schools and epistemological

⁶¹ The concept of community media dominates as well within the context of audiovisual legislation and in the large organizations of the field: World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), with its European branch (www.amarceurope.eu), and the Community Media Forum of Europe, CMFE (<http://cmfe.eu>). Community communication has also been the name of one of the most dynamic sections of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR): Community Communication (ComCom) that in 2016 added the complement “Alternative Media” (<http://iamcr.org/s-wg/section/community-communication>).

traditions. Its most distant referents can be seen in works such as those of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht (1927), who dedicated some essays to exploring the bidirectional and emancipatory potential of the radio⁶². Likewise, the studies of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, etc.) were pioneers in the field, and beyond a critique of the reproductive role of the cultural industries, we can observe, in works such as those of Walter Benjamin (1934), the vindication of leaving behind the traditional roles of author and reader to subvert the dominant culture.

It was necessary to wait until the late fifties to witness the emergence of another central school to the theory of the field that began with the foundation of the Center for Contemporary Studies in 1963, at the University of Birmingham, in Great Britain. The Cultural Studies have contributed enormously to the legitimization of issues previously neglected by media studies: popular culture and the appropriation of mass media by subordinate groups. In this regard, the works of Edward P. Thompson (1963) and Richard Hoggart (1957) on the cultural expressions of the working class in England were the predecessors of this field; much like the theories on democratic communication by Raymond Williams (1958, 1962); or the works of Stuart Hall on hegemonic, oppositional and negotiated readings (Hall, 1973)⁶³. In addition, the Cultural Studies have contributed to rediscovering the intrinsically historical and political character of culture and its potential for replication or social change, revitalizing authors like the Italian Antonio Gramsci (1947), who wrote a vital work for the comprehension of the counter-hegemonic and agency capacity of the subordinate classes.

Detached from Cultural Studies, the French critical theory reaches its zenith in the surrounding circumstances of the revolutionary events of May '68. Before and after this date—and with precedents such as those of Dadaism or Surrealism—the reflections of the Situationist International emerged, in which there were also reflections related to the media (e.g., Debord, 1967). On the other hand, and from the perspective that is close to (post)structuralism, the books of Roland Barthes (1967) or Michel Foucault (1969) vindicate the autonomy of the subjects and the meanings beyond the dominant mass structures. A few

⁶² In the bibliography, there is a reference to the first edition of the works in the original language.

⁶³ The tradition is much more extensive, and in it, we can find works like those of Dick Hebdige on youth subcultures (Hebdige, 1979) or the approaches on the feminine audiences (Radway, 1984).

years later, the French Michel de Certeau (1980) proposes a distinction that would become highly successful in the field: the “strategies” of power of the cultural industries and the counter-cultural “tactics” or responses of the subordinate sectors.

In Germany, in 1962, a decisive text for the theory on the alternative expressions to the absolutist culture of the Middle Ages is published: *History and Critique of Public Opinion*. In this text, the second-generation philosopher from the Frankfurt School Jürgen Habermas presents a historical account of the beginning of the “bourgeois public sphere” as a central and defining aspect of Modernity (Habermas, 1962). These reflections precede its model of “communicative reason,” in which the discursive conditions for a free, balanced and reasonable dialogue are explored as the engine of deliberative democracy and social change (Habermas, 1981). Nevertheless, the approximation of Habermas to the public sphere is contested by authors like the Frankfurters Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt (1972), who criticize its neglect of the “proletarian public sphere”—and its traditional opposition to the bourgeois sphere—in line with the vindications of the popular manifestations of the Russian scholar Bakhtin during the Middle Ages (1965)⁶⁴. From a different perspective, Han Magnus Enzensberger is also recognized for his pioneer writings on the bidirectional and “emancipatory” potential of the audiovisual media as opposed to its more usual “repressive” uses (Enzensberger, 1970).

In the seventies, the first analyses were made on a phenomenon that would reach its peak at the end of May ‘68 in countries like Italy or France: the commonly named *free or pirate radios* see the light. This phenomenon is crucial because it initiates a very prolific reflection upon the necessity to free up the space radio system to incorporate a third sector of communication, in a scenario dominated by public media such as BBC (not always attentive to the interests of the citizens) and, above all, by private media of a progressively monopolistic character. Even though the tradition of free and alternative media is subsequent to the first Latin American experiences—e.g. mining union radio stations (late forties)—founded in a context of vindications of “postmaterial” nature (Inglehart, 1977)⁶⁵, it contributed to the strengthening of a line

64 Likewise, there are critics to the bourgeois and patriarchal conception of the “Habermasian” public sphere that exceed the purposes of the study, as is the case of those presented by the North American Nancy Fraser or the Turkish Seyla Benhabib. The critics make Habermas rethink his initial thesis and include spheres at the margin of the bourgeois one in the reeditions of his text since 1990.

65 We refer to values such as quality of life or to questions related to identity, self-esteem and

of work around “The Right to communicate”—concept coined by the French Jean D’Arcy (1969), and incorporated into the debate of the NWICO—which has had followers continuing this work, such as the Dutch researcher Cees Hamelink, who detail the concrete rights and implications of the expansion of a more limited freedom of expression (Hamelink and Hoffman, 2008).

Within the Italian works, it is important to highlight, for instance, the writings by the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, who, after participating in pioneer experiences such as the one with the Radio Alice in Italy—and later on in France—demonstrates how the free media are a place of conflict concerning the production of subjectivity (Guattari, 1978a, 1978b). Likewise, in Italy, the texts by Deleuze and Guattari (1972) or the situationist writings inspired some of the best known texts by Franco ‘Berardi’ Bifo, who, after the forced closure of Radio Alice, takes refuge in France with Guattari, and undertakes an extensive production of essays that has an impact in the subversive potential of the alternative media (Berardi, 2004, 2006) or, more recently, concerning the experiences with “street television” (Orfeo TV/ Telestreet), which started with another founder of this broadcast: Giancarlo Vitali Ámbrogio (Berardi, Jaquemet and Vitali, 2004; Blisset, 2004). The Italian scene is completed by the influential contribution of Umberto Eco (1974) concerning the possibility of changing the dominant signs, or “semiotic guerilla,” which has inspired another line of work within the field: the studies on counterpropaganda, informative sabotage, culture jamming and subverting. Though well represented by experiences such as those of Luther Blissett, in Italy, or *Consume hasta Morir* (Consume until you Die), in Spain, this perspective is not directly related to the creation or appropriation of media, but with strategies of audiovisual literacy based on the recodification and subversion of the dominant advertising and cultural products⁶⁶.

Alongside these considerations, in the last few years, studies on (new) social movements have come to realize the importance of the media and information technologies, either as repertoires of collective

the participation in public life, factors that explain the success of the denominated “new social movements”: ecology, feminism, pacifism, etc.

66 A complete review is difficult to reach, and there are numerous authors working on perspectives as diverse as the financing of the community media (Janey Gordon), the relation between community practices, power and political commitment (Natalie Fenton, Peter Dahlgren), alternative media, territory and new technologies (Per Jauert), politics and regulations (Nuria Reguero, Salvatore Scifo, Stefania Milan, Arne Hintz, etc.), the social networks in anti-austerity movements and in public squares since 2011 (Anastasia Kavada, Paolo Gerbaudo, Alice Mattoni, José Candón Mena, etc.).

action or as a place to build political identities and objectives. In the seventies, works such as those of the British authors Halloran, Murdoch and Elliot (1970) focus on the relation between the media and the social protests; followed by the works of Alberto Melucci, who considers that social movements are media in themselves because they try to subvert the prevailing codes (Melucci, 1996). Other works focus on the potential of such media practices to form the identity, leverage resources, or the interaction with external groups (Van de Donk, Loader, Nixon and Rucht, 2004; Della Porta and Mattoni, 2014). Even though we still see a divorce between social movements studies and alternative communication studies (Downing, 2008; Mattoni and Treré, 2014), there is a higher number of works that approach the media and digital spaces promoted by the organized civil society. Such is the case of the Italian researchers Marco Diani, Donatella Della Porta, Alice Mattoni, or the already mentioned Alberto Melucci; the French Alain Touraine; the German Dieter Rucht; or the Spanish Manuel Castells.

An additional theoretical reference in the field is the contribution of communication studies for development and social change, which traditionally focuses on countries South of the equator and within the institutional frame of the cooperating agencies and the NGOs. Nevertheless, over the years, the field has been opening to less institutional perspectives, to and from the North, as those vindicating the writings of the Belgian researcher Jan Servaes (1999) or those of the Danish researcher Thomas Tufte (Tufte and Mefalopoulos, 2009), co-editor with Alfonso Gumucio of the first anthology of classic and contemporary *readings* of the subdiscipline (Gumucio and Tufte, 2006).

In this regard, and in order to close this compendium of pioneering references, it is necessary to mention the first anthologies and readers on theories and historical experiences in alternative communication. We refer, for instance, to the compilation work of theories on communication and battle of classes by Siegelau and Mattelart (1983); or the reports on case studies such as those commissioned by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) to Bruce Girard (1992), or by the UNESCO to Frances J. Berrigan (1977) or to Peter Lewis (1984, 1993), who, years later would publish their research about the radio as an “invisible media” (Lewis and Booth, 1989)⁶⁷.

⁶⁷ We still need to add to this picture the pioneering survey on local European experiences of the eighties by Jankowski, Prehn and Stappers (1992), in which there are many cases of community radio and television. A more contemporary work is the *Handbook* on experiences

The North American John D. H. Downing has a more ambitious perspective, and from the mid-eighties tries to reconstruct the research on the alternative and radical media in different parts of the world. Based on theoretical fundamentals originated in anarchism, his “Radical Media,” published for the first time in 1984 and reedited in 2001, explores community experiences from *culture jamming* to the Italian *free radio* or the *samizdat* in the former Soviet Union (Downing, 1984/2001). In late 2000, Downing edits what would be the most ambitious attempt to systematize the relation between social movements and communication: the “Encyclopedia of Social Movement Media” (Downing, 2010), with the collaboration of researchers from all over the world. A more recent milestone in the theory of the field is the international volume coordinated by Chris Atton (2015), who contributes to examining philosophies and practices of alternative and community communication in different places of the world. The last few texts are an excellent starting point to the task of generating the interregional and interdisciplinary dialogue that we propose and that we will explore in greater depth in the last section.

4. Contemporary referents and debates in the European scene

Following the review of the pioneering works, the work of a set of authors who we consider to be representative of the topics and approaches that dominate today’s research is presented. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that this review does not intend, in any way, to capture all the richness of the studies that are today in a constant process of expansion and change, but on the contrary, it is an invitation to read thinkers that are helping to complexify this perspective. Similarly, there are references made to scholars—such as Milan, Fuchs, Hintz, Gerbaudo, Tréré, or Barassi—who, despite their youth, have contributed to broadening the horizons of the study by building bridges to conceptual frameworks that will undoubtedly advance in the coming years: social movements and political sociology, big data research, technopolitical uses of the Web 2.0, artistic practices, etc.

Currently, the British Chris Atton is one of the most relevant theorists in the research of alternative media in Europe. Inspired by

and applied perspectives written by Kate Coyer, Tony Dowmunt and Alan Fountain (2007).

the North American John Downing, the author has provided one of the most refined and complete definitions of “alternative media,” seen them on one hand, in light of the sociocultural context—understanding them as “practices”—and on the other hand, according to their nature as “texts” and content (Atton, 2002). To Atton, the simple matter of content is not sufficient to define this complex universe, considering that the alternative media is a generator of social change, especially, due to the activation of some organization dynamics—horizontal and organizational—which expand the participation of citizens in comparison to the unidirectional logic of the massive media. Furthermore, he distinguishes between “products” and “processes.” Among the products, he includes content, forms, and thematic adaptations as well as the innovations of alternative media. Amidst the processes, he approaches questions such as their distributive use, the different roles and responsibilities that take place in those processes, and finally, the mutation of the communication processes themselves from the creation of horizontal networks that transform social relations (Atton, 1999). Ultimately, these “processes” are the engine of the generation of nonconventional content (or “products”) that provide visibility to the phenomena and debates barely represented in the mainstream universe, proposing, in turn, specific and differentiated agendas and approaches (Atton, 2002).

Inspired by Cultural Studies but also in dialogue with other perspectives, the British researcher Nick Couldry argues that the most important task of the alternative media is to defy the highly concentrated and monopolistic system of the mass media and, more importantly, to challenge its symbolic power by overcoming its “entrenched division of labor (producer of stories versus consumer of stories)” (Couldry, 2003, p. 45). To Couldry, the emancipatory potential of the alternative media lies in its ability to open the access of media production to a wide and pluralistic audience, which provides new versions of reality that contrast the stereotyped narratives and the ways of “naming” the world that characterize the media of a neoliberal nature. Furthermore, the author makes two fundamental contributions to the understanding of the social role of alternative media. First, he analyzes them as “media practices” (Couldry, 2004; 2012), inviting us to overcome the functionalist approaches that consider these media as simple tools or texts. This perspective has significantly influenced a new generation of researchers of digital media and social movements (Barassi, 2015; Cammaerts, Mattoni and McCurdy, 2010; García García and Treré, 2014;

Uldam and Askanius, 2013; Treré, 2012), who, based on his approach, began to explore what people “do” when they appropriate technologies, as well as the set of beliefs that guide the action of the media activists. In his research, Couldry defies the dominant instrumental approaches from his own concept of technological “mediations,” inspired by the notion given by Jesús Martín Barbero (1987) that contributes to the building of bridges between alternative communication and literature on social movements and digital culture.

Secondly, the scholar answers to the financial crisis of 2008 through his considerations about the concept of “voice,” which he perceives as a true agent of change, for it is a process that includes the ability to “give an account of oneself, and the immediate conditions and qualities of that process” (Couldry, 2010: 3). To this author, the principal inequality in the media system has to do with “who actually has the ability to speak,” and especially, of “being heard” (Couldry, 2010: 192). Therefore, he perceives the voice as a “process”—or the ability that some social groups have to speak and find proper means of expression—but at the same time as a “value,” that implies the quality of being appreciated, recognized, accepted and heard, a perspective from which he vindicates personal and private stories arising from the citizens as narrative beings (Couldry, 2010: 7, 13). According to Judith Butler, the author argues that it is necessary to rediscover the meanings of the concept of *voice* as a way to facilitate processes of accountability, considering that it establishes ways of self-representation that question the unbending meanings derived from the neoliberal structure.

Related to Couldry, the Norwegian Hilde Stephansen has achieved in recent years to combine her theory on “practices” with the reflections on “citizen media” (Stephansen, 2013, 2016; Mahony & Stephansen, 2016). Her work tries to overcome the historical fixation of many scholars with the message to explore the vast scope of socially situated experiences and proposes a radical change of approach: from “citizen media” to “practices related to citizen media” (Stephansen, 2016). This new perspective allows her to study, in turn, three distinctive dimensions: first, a wider spectrum of alternative practices beyond those directly related to media content; second, the different forms of agency they introduce; and finally, the social structure they contribute to generate according to the interrelation with the social movements and organized citizenship. Conclusively, this point of view helps to rethink the concept of *counterpublics* within the field of alternative media, considering that

alternative practices are understood not only under the perspective of the power to “make public” what is not covered by the mainstream, but also and, above all, as an articulation of “new audiences” different from the traditional ones.

To reinforce the idea that alternative media has a role of connectivity and networking in civil society, the Belgium professor Nico Carpentier suggests the use of the metaphor of the “rhizome” by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) as a new typology. In fact, the nonlinear, anarchic, and nomad nature of the rhizome is used to symbolize the role they have in promoting flexible networks of organizations and of people. Furthermore, this role blends with its capacity to deterritorialize its counterpart: the traditional media, that are defined from a “tree model” that represents the State’s traditional philosophy and the conventional powers. The rhizomatic approach understands alternative media as essential nodes of the civil society network, which help to maintain social links as well as create new interactions between these identities, the social movements, and the citizens. Ultimately, this metaphor allows theorists to emphasize the numerous interactions that the alternative media interweave with the State and the market actors since these identities do not act in a vacuum, but instead create problematic links to the previous ones trying not to lose their own identity (Carpentier, Lie and Servaes, 2003; Bailey, Carpentier and Cammaerts, 2008; Carpentier, 2015; Santana and Carpentier, 2010)⁶⁸. Recently, the author has added his thoughts on alternative media to the conceptual broader frame of “participation.” The author evaluates the use of this elusive term that, despite its extensive tradition in the field, has tended to be co-opted by politicians and media corporations until they have emptied it of its political and potentially emancipatory meaning. In this respect, he discusses the structural factors that limit real changes of the participant practices suggesting that in democratic States the idea of participation is found in tension concerning the extended ideology of “representation.” It is from this point of view that participation is often mistaken with the uncritical vision of citizen journalism that is celebrated and “sold” by conventional media as participation when in reality it is hardly so (Carpentier, 2011).

68 Consequently, in their analysis of the Belgium radios Panik and Aire Libre, Santana and Carpentier (2010) show that, in addition to the many bindings with the civil society’s organization, these radio broadcasters often interact with the State – for instance, from the petition for help and programs– and from here begins a problematic process for the sustainability of the autonomy and social mission before the possible political and economic pressures.

Meanwhile, the Austrian researcher Christian Fuchs, in collaboration with Marisol Sandoval, argues that alternative media should be considered from the perspective or concept of “critical media.” Establishing a criticism of the conceptual disarray in the field around the idea of the alternative—a similar critique to that of Hadl (2009) or the ones found in different Latin American works—Sandoval and Fuchs consider these media as instruments that must protect the “human” dimension of the being, advocating for a radical humanism and opposing all types of domination (Fuchs, 2010; Sandoval and Fuchs, 2009). From a radical Marxist vision, their concept of “critical media” emphasizes the necessity of interrogating at each stage the current state of the society along with describing the opportunities for change. The authors argue that a large number of resources are needed to obtain visibility in the public sphere within a capitalist system causing many alternative media to rely on their own “financial resources to produce and distribute their products” (Sandoval, 2009: 6). It does not mean that radical projects of small scale are not as important, but that they should abandon the naïve notion of autonomy at all costs and rather resource to production techniques and media outreach specific to the neoliberal system, which might sometimes be useful to reach progressive goals within an pervasive capitalist conceptual framework that leaves almost no space for the counter-hegemonic.

The authors criticize those perspectives that see participation as an emancipatory instrument “in itself,” demonstrating how in many of those cases certain participatory techniques (especially in the digital world) are used to consolidate the oppression and exploitation within the structure of the system. To Fuchs and Sandoval, the minimum requirements to speak of alternative media reside again in the presence of critical content and, in that sense, some commercial and non-participatory media can even be perceived as critical, provided that they produce and distribute radical and emancipatory content. It is the case, for example, of publications, fanzines, websites, or magazines that use mainstream distribution channels, although it does not mean they stop being critical, such as the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the Canadian magazine *Adbusters* or the bi-monthly magazine *Mother Jones*. Within the same line of the Marxist tradition, critical content is then defined as that which challenges the traditional forms of oppression and domination and which promotes a reasonable and self-determined, humanized vision of society that is possible to

achieve from social and class struggle.

On another note, in 1997, a group of European and North American activists and theorists of the source media—in particular the Dutch theorist Geert Lovink, and other authors such as David García and Joanne Richardson—published a widely publicized book in the artistic and alternative media circles: *The ABC of Tactical Media*⁶⁹. The authors argue, from a more technological perspective, that the tactical media is the product of a “revolution in consumer electronics and expanded ways of distribution (from public access cable to the internet) [and its consequent exploitation] by groups and individuals who feel aggrieved by or excluded from the wider culture.” On the contrary, the tactical media are perceived as a “politicized interdisciplinary practice” that has been adopted simultaneously by several collectives around the world considering that these do not only provide with alternative information, but rather delve into an ideal of partiality and commitment which differentiates them from the conventional media fluxes. The tactical media privilege fast interventions and refuse the permanent, long, and “ideological” creations of the conventional media. This situation has, therefore, led the authors to criticize the classic dichotomies in this context between the alternative and the popular, the private and the public, the amateur and the professional, and rather refer to works such as those of Michel de Certeau and his *The Practice of Everyday Life (L’Invention du Quotidien)* (De Certeau, 1984) to create a new vocabulary of “tactics” as well as artistic and activist interventions, among which stand out collectives such as *RTMark*, *the Yes Men*, *the Electronic Disturbance Theatre*, *the Institute for Applied Autonomy*, *Critical Art Ensemble*, *0100101110101101.ORG*, *the Bureau of Inverse Technology*, *I/O/D*, among others. Even though at first, the concept was related essentially to activism in the field of video and television, in the last few years, some creators have employed it to describe the role of the media in the new insurrections since 2011 (Kluitenberg, 2011).

To complete this review, it is important to mention the recent works of the Italian researcher Stefania Milan. In her book *Social Movements and their Technologies*, Milan (2013) explores the interactions between protest movements and their liberating and “liberated” technologies, focusing on the irruption of radical projects on the Internet. The researcher analyzes how technological groups such as hacktivists have been creating, for years, alternative formulas both autonomous and clandestine in opposition to ordinary communication systems,

69 <http://aleph-arts.org/pens/abc.html>

until they have been able to shape and impact the ways of interacting of many collectives. Thus, Milan contributes to the extension of the alternative communication spectrum according to two fundamental contributions. Firstly, she adds *media activism* to the sociological literature on social movements and collective action, narrowing the gap between both fields. Secondly, the author places organizations, activists, and alternative collectives within the most extended field of the transnational movement for the right to communication, from where she invites to study the perspective on media policies and the struggles around the regulatory conceptual frameworks of the web and of the digital platforms.

In the past few years, the researcher has also explored the interactions between activism and academia (Hintz and Milan, 2010) as well as the practices related to what she calls *data activism* that emerges when the “citizens take advantage of the possibilities offered by big data infrastructure for advocacy and social change” (Milan and Gutiérrez, 2015). In the context of a crescent and ubiquitous “datafication” of the daily practices and interactions, Milan explores how some citizens and organizations appropriate data technologies to react to the pervasive vigilance and the violation of civil rights caused by the governmental and corporate intrusion (which is called “reactive data activism”). This way, the civil society is moving forward to the construction of a “proactive data activism” which places the data at the service of civic engagement and social change, connecting it back in a way to the reflections on the notion of “citizen media” by Clemencia Rodríguez (2001). According to Milan, data activism represents a new way of citizen media considering that it places at its center a critical approximation to the big data and, especially, because it defies the institutional conception that reduces citizenship to the moment of casting a vote according to technological appropriations that extend the political spaces beyond the institutional space. Nevertheless, data activism distances itself from the reflection around citizen media given the fact that it anticipates a large variety of individual practices, and brings to light a new tension between the individual and the collective dimension of the organized action, which “threatens to drive into a corner the terms of reference of the community that are central to the definition of *citizen media*, *community media* and *alternative media*” (Milan and Gutiérrez, 2015: 20).

Finally, “media ecology” is a promising conceptual perspective

that has emerged in recent years to overcome certain reductionism observed in the study of relations between social movements, information technologies and alternative practices of communication. This approach uses the metaphor and conceptual frameworks of the “media ecology” to explore the richness and understand the complexity of the formation of contemporary alternatives (Mercea, Iannelli and Loader, 2015; Treré and Mattoni, 2016). Therefore, in their literature review, Treré and Mattoni (2016) derive four fundamental contributions from the ecological metaphor for the study of social media and social movements: first, the ability to overcome old dichotomies such as online/ offline, old/new, global/local, and organizational/cultural. Second, the acknowledgement of the complexity, the multiplicity and the interconnectivity between communicative forms and practices, and the richness of the repertoires of actions of social movements and activist collectives. Third, the invitation to conduct “diachronic” analyses of media practices related to the activist media to overcome the short-sightedness of many current studies, whose approach focuses only on the latest technological appropriations. Ultimately, the ecological approach highlights the importance of recognizing the political and critical nature of the media ecologies, acknowledging the limitations and the risks of the corporate and mainstream incursions, and sharpening the tools to achieve real social change through communication⁷⁰.

5. Conclusions

In general, the research tradition in alternative and community communication in Europe has expanded throughout time and has been inspired by diverse theoretical and methodological sources and trajectories. Therefore, it becomes complex to reach a unifying proposal, especially because the universe of alternative practices is multiform, difficult to apprehend, and varies in each context. Contrarily, and besides the fact that there are some common characteristics in the European territory—e.g. the integration of supranational entities (European Union)—the cultural and linguistic differences have tended to isolate the different academic communities from each other, and

⁷⁰ From these publications, we have also attempted to relate the different perspectives that make up the ecological field and that, to a large extent, remain fragmented and weakly anchored in classic theorizations. We refer, for instance, to the *media ecology* developed by authors such as McLuhan and Postman, and other more recent approaches such as *information ecology*, by Nardi and O’Day, the approach of *communicative ecologies*, (Tacchi et al.), and Fuller’s *media ecologies*, indebted with the theoretical tools of Guattari (Treré and Mattoni, 2016).

have strengthened in many situations, around local and academic referents that are determined by the research policies of their different States or historical regions.

All things considered, we are facing a tradition of excessively localized studies, which in their most extreme contemporary versions come to ignore the extensive history accumulated by professionals and activists of the field in other latitudes. A good example is the plethora of works that, in their techno-fascination, have analyzed technologies such as the Web 2.0 from an evident lack of historical and comparative perspective and, moreover, disregard the broad tradition of studies on alternative communication, especially, in the midst of the organic crisis of the system such as the one we are currently suffering. In relation to the above, another common feature of the European research is the absence of dialogue with critical approaches in *popular* and *educational communication* or with the *communication for social change* of Latin American origin, which is also evident in the Anglo-Saxon perspective and in which there are very few countries acting as a bridge or hinge for its overseas neighbors: Portugal with Brazil and, especially, Spain with Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the process of disregarding happens both ways, given that the Latin American research does not always see nor incorporate what their peers of the North produce.

In summary, if we understand that the field continues to have a peripheral role in comparison to more explored areas of study, its future consolidation will lie on strengthening bridges between academic communities that, to date, seem excessively self-centered and are characterized by the pretension and self-proclamation of being the founders of the field. This perspective would contribute to “de-westernize” the communication studies (Curran and Park, 2000) and to understand that beyond the nuances, there are common features between classic and contemporary media activism, or between the media activism that characterizes the communities North and South of the equator.

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Complexities of the Alternativism: Theory and Practice of the Alternative Currents in Communication in Latin America

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Introduction

The alternative currents in communication are formed in Latin America in the seventies, with particular relevance in the following decade, as part of an effort to assume communication as an articulating dimension of alternative power experiences. These currents present a particular analytical complexity when they are born from non-academic spaces and are bound significantly to specific communication experiences. Concerning this, the text proposes a historical-critical perspective on the alternative theoretical currents in communication in Latin America.

The comprehension of the Latin American alternative communication must be understood in the specific context of religion, as in the global scenery of the moment. In the first case, we must consider the one hand events as the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and its influence in the region, expressed through the proliferation of guerrilla movements throughout the continent, from Colombia to Bolivia. The communicative dimension was a relevant aspect of the Cuban deed, as shows the creation of a guerrilla broadcaster – *Radio Rebelde*, founded in February 24th, 1958 by Che Guevara– and the newspaper *El Cubano Libre*– also founded by Guevara during the armed conflict–, as well as the foundation of a news agency, after a triumph– *Prensa Latina*, created in June 16th, 1959– and an international broadcaster of short wave – *Radio Habana Cuba*, which went on air for the first time in February 24th, 1961.

Second, in the intellectual Latin American context of the moment, there are important theoretical currents that are also relevant in the contextualization of Latin American alternative currents. First, the theory formulated in the fifties and seventies on the dependence proposes answer from Latin America to the theory of development and the situation of socio-economic stagnation of the regions throughout the twentieth century, based on the duality center-periphery within the comprehension of the global economic dynamics (Cardoso and Faletto,

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1969; Dos Santos, 1970). In the same way, the Liberation Theology, born in the late sixties, presents to us a reading of the bible texts characterized by choice of preference by the poor and that resources to human and social sciences to conceptualize this choice (Gutiérrez, 1982; Dussel, 1995).

Third, during the eighties, there are two socio-political processes of particular relevance in Latin America. On the one hand, there are transitions from the hard military dictatorships to a representative democratic regime that are correlated to the implementation of a neoliberal economic project– which basis had already been installed in some cases during the dictatorships. This project of representative democracy and its neoliberal correlation will be questioned, since its configuration, for some new emergent Latin American political subjects– the social movements– who will be characterized as a new communicational perspective, as well as for the bindings between culture, communication and politics (Martín-Barbero, 1987). In this scenario, marked by the processes of democratization, agreement and rearticulating of the civil society in several countries of the area, there is a tendency to redefine the ties traditionally established between communication studies and political processes, that have in the alternative currents one of its fundamental dimensions.

The alternative in communication: complexity and diversity

In the bibliography on the communication experiences developed at the apart from the hegemonic communicational systems in Latin America, there are a series of terms and notions to name such places. We're talking of: alternative communication, alternatives in communication, alternative media, participant communication, alternative uses of communication, horizontal communication, popular communication, different media or communication, alternative press, non-commercial media, ideological or basic communication, subversive communication, counterinformation, counter communication. This diversity of denominations shows the complexity to reach the conceptual consensus around the practices that are characterized precisely for its diversity.

There are several relations of inclusion/exclusion between one and other and other terms. To some (Reyes Matta in Gómez Cuevas, 1995: 21), the alternative includes the rest of denominations, hence avoiding

certain restrictions, as it can occur with the “popular” if coming from a strict concept of it. Other authors consider that popular communication would overcome the “important and critical” position of alternative communication (Núñez Hurtado, 1996: 53), though this last one is identified in claims and several proposals, with popular communication one would maintain a reactive, defensive and mimetic position in respect to the dominant communicative system; while the popular would adopt an active and purposeful position, hence transcending the alternative to formulate and operate true communication alternatives.

This wordmark plurality is the result and reflection of the multiplicity of practices and positions concerning the theme, which has characterized these experiences, from their origin – generally situated in the sixties, with some precedents such as the feminist journalism in the early twentieth century, Brecht’s presentations around the possibilities of the radio, or the Latin American popular journalism of the forties and fifties. This birth was synchronized with the genesis of new propositions and new sensibilities that appeared in other fields and also denominated under the sign of “alternative”, such as alternative technology, alternative medicine, the social participation through traditional ways like neighbourhood associations, self-managing groups and cooperatives (Hernández, 1985: 15).

Globally, the alternative communication experiences are framed within a process of diversification of media that was already in action since several decades before, resulting from multiple causes, according to Timoteo Álvarez (1987). These causes include, on one hand, a cultural and ideological dimension expressed through phenomena and tendencies like the configuration and maturation of a climate of nonconformity and disagreement among the youngest generations relating to the contemporary society, or the moral and ideological agitation of the second half of the twentieth century– counting on events as the Vietnam War, the Second Vatican Council, the thriving birth of a vindicating thought on the Third World, with an important expression in Latin America precisely. At the same time, we also consider as one of the causes of this process the technological dimension, with events such as the development of very cheap techniques of printing and reproduction and easy to use, just as the off-set, that have opened the way to new possibilities to access media from the emitter’s position.

Even though it is usual to mention other examples based on other regions, of pioneer experiences of the alternative communication– like the North American so-called underground newspapers– Latin America is the scenario considered worldwide to be the forefront of

this movement (Gumucion Dragón, 2001; José I. López Vigil in Lamas, 1997: 77) with the creation of the Colombian radio broadcaster *Radio Sutatenza*, in 1947, in a remote Colombian community, by the priest Joaquín Salcedo and, right after, the organization of the first community radios by the Bolivian miners, the first in the Latin American history expressing the power of the working class to the popular movement. Also, then, emerge some clandestine guerrilla broadcasters, like the already mentioned *Radio Rebelde*, in Cuba. The majority of the stations constituting the Mexican university radio – also seen from within the interior of the classification of alternative communicative practices (Berlín Villafaña, 2000)– were founded since the sixties and until the early eighties. All these experiences had a broad repercussion in the Latin American context and the majority of the countries from there were multiple radical broadcasters of the kind, within a movement that extended to other media.

There has been a variety of practices and different theoretical approaches, including antagonistic, that have been included in within the notion of alternative communication– or similar–, since its origin. These were experiences of different characteristics and formats– of union nature, student, religious, feminist, ecological, pacifist, popular nature; either in radio, television, newspapers, magazines and newsletters–; and under many signs, corresponding to the context– social, political, mediatic–, the historical moment, the social actors that lead them– a community, NGOs, the church, a political party–, the level of development of technologies, etc. (Prado Rico, 1985:184). There is, finally, a multiplicity of relations of strength in each alternative practice of specific communication, as well as a great variety of interests in play.

This diversity has consequences to the Latin American perspectives about alternative communication. On one side it's been assumed different positionings concerning the limits– concerning the hegemonic system of communication– of the communicational experiences of this nature, as well as the real levels of questioning these propose. In this sense, on the one hand, the places for alternative communication have been considered, by some authors, as a gap, a setback that leads to the abandonment of the efforts to democratize the mass media, in a sort of return to the marginality of the basic struggles and old left-wing strategies; though, on the other hand, they've also been presented as the great hope, the best battlefield against the established power, especially in cases of societies like those Latin American (Hernández, 1985: 12).

Amidst a diversity of expressions– which go from community radio broadcasters, photography, popular video, murals and independent

theatre, to paintings, billboards, decals, graffiti, the sit-ins and pacific manifestations, as well as songs and dances –, the concept of *alternativity* ends up being the most often used in the reviewed bibliography, while denominating these communicative processes. This notion appears in the seventies and is bound to the university context, more theoretical and, most of all left-winged (López Vigil in Lamas, 1997: 81).

However, the very notion of *alternativity* and the simple alternative condition, in general, can dissolve in a dangerous ambiguity and be limited to only account “the other” or “the different”. This ambiguity has been used, in occasions, as a wildcard, in such way that all that the people did was “alternative”. This way, it was understood simplistically, then only for the absolute refusal of what the other, the hegemonic communicative system, does. Then, *alternativity* can become a confrontation almost childish: it wears itself out by conspiring with no clear reasons, the “being against”, only for the sake of opposing, without being certain why. In fact, the alternative has turned marginal, or even worst: self-marginal (López Vigil, in Lamas, 1997). In this sense, an analysis of the theorizations and the practice of the Latin American alternative currents shows several tendencies that lead to two of the most frequent distortions in which one has incurred into comprehending the communicative practices from Latin America: on the one hand, to focus on the extremes of the content or in other that we can designate a media in itself (associated to a certain technological determinism).

The alternative media is the alternative message (and vice versa)

In occasions, alternative communication has been focused in aspects related with the message: contents, the type of values transmitted; in a novelty- above all of the theme- of the speech, facing the hegemonic communication. Some authors point out that most of the self-designated alternative practices are limited to the change in the message without a subversion more or less profound of the communicative process, in a way that the most noticeable change only happens concerning the language in the dominant media: in these practices, it's used the language of the streets, informal, plain, accessible, spontaneous (Prado Rico, 1985: 191). From this perspective, the alternative communication experiences end up being solely an answer to the disinformation or the sub-information associated to

the hegemonic communicative system; in other words, to practices of counterinformation. Counterinformation usually uses contents as its axis, so alternative places are solely disseminators of subjects, approaches or dimensions of reality silenced by the hegemonic media, though without paying attention to the communication process. For this approach, “with no alternative speech, there isn’t an alternative media” and one considers that “the heart of alternativity isn’t in the physical nature of the media but in its capacity to emit with possible feedback, a message of collective interest and that contributes to social wellbeing. Content is the touchstone of alternativity” (Máximo Simpson in Espinosa Mondragón, 1999: 6).

From this perspective, is usually made a critical interpretation of the messages of the dominant commercial media; while the alternative discursive counterproposal becomes too direct, simple and uninteresting, as much so that the critical interpretation doesn’t reach anyone. According to López Vigil (in Lamas, 1997: 82, 83), the mediatic culture’s problematic is put aside, the necessary element of competence is forgotten, is that competence is seen as the basis of the specific characteristics of the media, not reaching the commercial extremes.

Only after the emphasis on contents– to speak in terms of Mario Kaplún–, is referred to the aspect of the form– horizontal flux, the articulation and organization that must come from the process, though is frequently forgotten. There are plenty of practices made into examples, conscious or unconsciously, they’ve become vertical and paternalist places, turning into conceptions that perceive communication solely as the act of communicating, inform, transmit, emit (Kaplún, 1985), as in the case of some Latin American popular video programs (Hirschmann, 1984:25).

The overcoming of these tendencies would undergo the overcoming of simple comprehension. As Kaplún (1985) demonstrates, changing contents is important; however “IS NOT ENOUGH. To our media to be effective from a popular perspective, besides changing contents, one must change the entire style, the entire sense of communication”. The speech within places of alternative communication must come from an alternative process of communication, in which one “practices original ways of social relations, frees a renovated and renovating culture, assumes the historical challenge of opposing to a cultural resistance evermore organic before the project of transactional dimensions” (Rey, 1985: 10).

Also associated with the contents is the question of genre, as a unit of the content of mass media, that directs the program of the media

and the decoding by the individual. These belong to the structural mediation referred by Martín Serrano (1993: 135) and that works on the supports of the media providing the audiences with models of communication production. The genre becomes a “constitutive model of representation and interpretation, as well as the paradigm of the functioning of ‘mass culture’ [that] (...) defines our *believing*, so it determines an attitude toward mass communication” and, therefore, “in it one must focus a fundamental attention when predicting alternatives” (Lozano and Abril, 1979: 104). From this, there are Latin American authors, such as Martín Barbero (1991: 17), referring to the necessity to extend the voices within the alternative experiences, but also the genres.

Facing this positioning, which emphasizes contents, there is another tendency for the conceptualization of the alternative in communication which relates the alternative quality to the media itself, under a social-electronic approach. The alternative condition, according to this proposition, would lie on the media, it would be a quality *per se* of certain technological communication channels, an attempt to charge the supposed purity of a new media with alternativity, before the government or the private sector are added to it and incorporate the dominant communicative system. Starting from a differentiation between “information mass media” and a new simplified “microtechnology”, we reach a trust in the potential liberator of these technological advances, under the technological determinism, to the point that we conclude that the greatest hope to increment the access to the social media, and with it extend the public control over them, lies precisely in the development of these new communication technologies.

This perspective is found in some publications on the issue in Latin America. Hence, for instance, a text by Stangelaar (1985: 59), considers that the sixties coincided in time with the launching to the market of the first recorded in black and white by Sony. They saw this new multinational product as a solution to the development of an authentic and democratic counter communication. This same author shows us that, in this way, the Portapack has gained an acceptance almost in general and has tied to banners like “the guerrilla television” or “the alternative community television” and had a broad reception in the educational field.

However, the same text recognizes that, in mid-eighties, there was a general realization in the (geographical) area that the specific applications of the video showed a reality under a sign contrary to

the original dreams, as its interactive potentialities had disappeared (Stangelaar, 1985: 59). In this sense, it's pointed out that the dimension of communication as technicity mustn't be exaggerated neither minimized, but as a perceptive organizer, as "competence in language" (Piscitelli in Martín Barbero, 1991: 9) which invokes the design of new practices. Facing such tendency, Martín Serrano (1991: 9-10) underlines that "mistaking communication for technics or the media is as deforming as thinking they are external and auxiliary to the (truth of) communication, which ultimately is to disregard the historical materialism of cultural and discursive mediations in which it reproduces".

In the mind of Eleazar Díaz-Rangel (in Gómez: 1995, 17), this is neither about restricting the alternative communication places to those channels of group communication, oral, traditional and denying the technological advances in itself, but the dominant rationality that explains them and in that they are incorporated. This way is proposed that the subject reaches a critical reflection in two levels (Gerace Larufa, 1973: 55-56): the communicative products are the result of a selection and collation process made by people like him; and the valuing of the self, its thought, its ideas, in such way it feels the urge to express himself, for it realizes that (its vision of) its world is important.

Therefore, alternative communication neither is reduced to making the media accessible to the people nor merely teach the technique and the traditional languages, to "demystify" the media. Facing this other tendency, under the perspective of other authors of the region the idea that "the essence of these practices transcends this pragmatic event, and looks to provide new relations between subjects and popular organizations, become a place to build speech and the popular protagonism" (Rosa María Alfaro in Gómez, 1995: 16-17) repeats itself.

The alternative communication beyond communication

In general, the alternative communication – or similar terminologies – are characterized by the horizontality and participation as a perspective, the democratization, the decentralization, the bidirectional flow, solidarity, all this from the transformation of the communicative scheme and the production structure and the articulation of an emancipating communicative practice (Martín Barbero, 1991: 17; Prado Rico, 1985: 185-186; Juan Somavía in Mogollón and Palacios, 1989: 14). Often is also considered a quality of its non-commercial character.

In Latin America, alternative communication is understood as the communicating before the characteristic communication to the hegemonic communicative system: a democratic communication, creative, with a variety of languages, at the service of the majorities, dialogic, around a community; in opposition to a dominating, vertical, unidirectional, monopolized, focused on minorities communication, at the service of the power, becoming a monologue (Kaplún, 1985). From the perspective of certain proposals that consider the dominant media as means of diffusion of information and no communication, and of the relation between these opposites over that where is found the alternative communication practices, some authors such as Rey (1985: 11) even these experiences with “the communication”, denying this way a “positive” denial of the “alternative” condition, under his postulates these have corresponded to concepts of communication, in general, such as those of Antonio Pasquali (in Kaplún, 1985), this is the “community human relation that consists in the emission/reception of messages between interlocutors in a total reciprocity state”. In his turn, Luis Ramiro Beltrán (in Kaplún, 1985) defines it as “the social-democratic interaction process, based in the signs’ exchange, through which human beings share experiences voluntarily under free and egalitarian access, dialogue and participation conditions”.

A complex perspective on communication that overcomes the focus on the mean or the respective message is considered to be a guarantee to overcome certain debates that, around the definition of “the alternative”, have been produced in the last decades. For instance: the fact that a certain experience is included or not under this classification, ceases going through territorial criteria– only the short-range media can propose a different communication–, depending on the media properties, the way of production (professional or amateur). Even though these aspects are considered, the axis of the alternativity would be precisely in the change of the meaning of communication, under the basis of the dimensions or described qualities– changes in content, the horizontality, the participation, etc.– which launches different uses of communication: uses the media to share information and knowledge as social goods; pooling the expressions of the cultural diversity through a critical and analytical speech (Espinosa Mondragón, 1999: 6). In the Latin American bibliography on the matter, we see that there are many challenges to overcome through the experiences of “another” communication in the contemporary world. First, there’s an idea that as become recurrent: turning places of a harsh alternativity (Braudillard in Martín Barbero, 1994: 74) facing the simplified and

decomplexifying diversity of the other proposed by the dominant media, identified by a system of differences functional to the system. As the expression of the matter of pluralism in communication, the alternative must transcend the “expression” problems– in other words, of a little bit more of space to the media to the minorities or radicals– ;to convert into a basic issue, of greater calibre and density, either from the philosophical perspective as from the political one (Martín Barbero, 1994: 73).

Furthermore, this approach implies the overcoming of other tendencies that different Latin American analyses point out that have affected the alternative experiences. It is the case of, for instance, the excessive depoliticizing, a certain irregularity of its apparition, the “centralized” character at a local level of the elaboration of messages and the debilitating of “emitting” organizations (Hernández, 1985: 18), as well as the comprehension of the communicative as instrumental or to another dimension, either the political, economic, or developmental (Alfaro, 2000). Other distortions in history of these experiences have been its use as a place to be interlocutors of themselves and other groups– in an internal communicative gloat–, thinking them as alienated from “the massive”, and thus discarding a characteristic– and possibility– of these media: its massiveness (López Vigil in Lamas, 1997: 80-81).

Though one of the most significant errors pointed out in the analysis of some of these practices in Latin America is to have enclosed themselves in an imaginary circle, without caring for a macro vision of the society and its destiny, nor making a serious and creative proposal on the general democratization of society. Communication converts into the preferential intervention dimension in the search for the communicative change, though without establishing enough relations with society and its innovative ways, so that the “democratization and participation should occur within the communicative action, almost as in a happy island” (Alfaro, 2000: 15).

Before this, the social condition of the alternative communication is usually summed up postulating that the event of the altercation suggests an *alter ego*, that is, the other, though also, and inclusively most of all, to alter it (Reyes Matta in Mogollón and Palacios, 1989: V-VI, 12). Hence, from an initial alteration to the inside of the communicative process, in that where conceptions and roles of the implicated subjects change, it’s intended to transcend to real participation and democracy. In the I Encuentro Internacional de Prensa Comunitaria (First International Encounter of Community Press) in Havana, Cuba, in

October 1996, this idea was summed up as: “Being alternative in terms of content and shape, though alternative in terms of goals”.

All in all, from a complex approach, the alternative is shown as the communicational dimension of diverse social practices, bound between them by their vocation creator of new forms of relating and social exchange (Hernández, 1984: 22), as part of a process and an attitude towards participant and solidary social relations for a democratic reality (Reyes Matta in Gómez, 1995: 21). It is not a simple informant, but ways of interconnection and action, part of a social transformation project which transcends the simple communication, to achieve the foundation of new social relations: an alternative society (Rey, 1985: 9-10). He explains that some authors prefer to talk when referring to these practices, in terms of participant communication for social change (Gumucio Fagón, 2001).

From this perspective, alternative communication transcends the simple conversion into an emitter to the traditional receptors and chooses the establishment of new communicative relations. The alternative describes a principle of action, ruled by a series of qualities like its popular, anti-authoritarian and anti-discrimination character, etc., so the problem of the dialogical relation emitter-receptor of the opposition between mass media and alternative media mustn't be taken in an orthodox manner, but according to the necessities, interest and possibilities of the collectives that manage each experience.

In this sense, it is proposed that instead of “emitters” and “receptors”, in this dialogical conception– which would correspond to an alternative communication– it is preferable to speak of interlocutors, from an “ambivalence of roles between emitters and receptors” (Máximo Simpson in Kaplún, 2001: 10), in which both are, at the same time, emitter and receptor, putting the subjects at the beginning of the communication model, according to what Kaplún (1985) calls “preferring”. It would be the starting point for the comprehension of the alternative communication as a significant practice (Hernández, 1984: 22), which suppose, as mentioned before, a change in the direction of communication proposed by the dominant system, to launch a new one from the change, the re-meaning and re-elaboration of the production process itself, together with the subversion of contents and the relation with the context– reality.

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Alternative Communication in Europe and Latin America: So Far Away, Yet So Close

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The attentive reader of both previous texts must have certainly understood that under the label of alternative communication, there is much in common and much diversity in both sides of the Atlantic. Next, we propose some possible comparative lines of the communicational alternativism– or the alternativisms– in Europe and Latin America.

The vindication of a third sector of the media, differentiated from the public-State and the private-commercial, shows as a convergence point in both regions. In both cases, this is a key actor to counteract the dominant tendency for the mediatic concentration and the cultural standardization. And it incorporates great battles in the social and collective movements organized in each side of the Atlantic, with landmarks such as the McBride Report of 1980 or the Convention on Cultural Diversity in 2005, approved by UNESCO.

Nevertheless, we also observe some differences in the assertive plane. In Latin America, due to the debility of the public media in many countries, alternative media have tried to supply some of the roles played by the media, for the struggles for the democratization of communication included not only a setting of legality to the communal but also assertions to the strengthening of the public-State sector and the inclusion of ideals of public service in the private-commercial (Segura, 2014; Mauesberger, 2016; Waisbord and Segura, 2016).

Meanwhile, in Europe, the resistance of the public media to the threatening factors to their survival took on by the scholars and activists for a long time (e.g. Bustamante, 2006, 2012), though until the late nineties the alternative media weren't a permanent area in the communicational investigation. On the other hand, the alternative media in Europe tended to be conceived, from an early stage, as a way

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73 We also wanted to write this text alongside with Lázaro Bacallao, though his health didn't allow it. It has also prevented him from writing a second version of his text from the dialogue between the four, which took place at a certain point of this collective process. In this text, we include some attempts to compliment his in some aspects that came from that first dialogue, and that came from a final work between the three, at a distance and in person.

for the expression of cultural diversities national or local, even though there were also some explorations of their educational agendas, their political assertions, or their work in critical vigilance of the rest of the mediatic sectors, just as happened in Latin America.

A common discussion to both regions is that of the scale and characteristics of the alternative media: since those that conceive them as necessarily marginal, small and artisanal– *nano-media*, as proposed by Downing and Painik (2006)– to those vindicating the necessity to fight as equals with the hegemonic mass media, betting on the institution of other massiveness, build communicative citizenships (Mata, 2006), or integrate in regional or multinational networks to favour the strengthening of the different local initiatives (Roncagliolo, 1999; Villamayor, 2008; Barranquero and Meda, 2015).

Rupture of the mediacentrism. In both cases, there was a transition of a centred conception of the media and alternative messages to include in the reflection and communicational action the multiple non-mediated social places: from the squares and markets to the social organizations, from the family to the informal meeting points of young people, etc.

In these spaces, there is a key role played by the media, which is only understood by analysing their specific uses in people's daily life. The understanding of mediations (Martín Barbero, 1987) of mediatic practices (Couldry, 2004) or the tactics the popular sectors deploy facing the strategies by those in power (De Certeau, 1980), was incorporated since the eighties in the alternativisms in both regions, greatly influenced by the culturalist perspectives addressed in other chapters of this book.

On the other hand, in the articulation of other insights, the idea of hegemony by Antonio Gramsci (1970) played a great role, which helped to think of power as a cultural build, determined by structural conditionings though open to the subordinated sectors agency. These same fundamentals enriched the way of thinking and making alternative media, incorporating the idea that part of the popular is expressed in the massive (García Canclini, 1991) or proposing the alternative media as plural places of expression of subjectivities (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972; Berardi, 2004).

The articulation between media and non-mediated social spaces as motivated the search for more horizontal and dialogical communicational models, overcoming the initial verticality of many media and incorporating the participation in the management and production and the relation with citizens.

Political, social and national battles. One of the fundamental determinants of the origin of the alternative media in Latin America is inscribed within the battle movements against dependence and anti-imperialists, in an emancipating perspective of social transformation that as crossed along the second half of the twentieth century, as Lázaro Bacallao so well describes in his text.

Alternatively, in the same period, Europe had gotten under a phase most related with postmaterial struggles (Inglehart, 1977, 1997), with greater emphasis in the identity and culture, and with a great development in movements such as feminism, the environmentalism, pacifism or assertions around cultural and gender diversity. It is from this that the question of cultural and linguistic identities of certain historical nations subsumed within the states has constituted a crucial determinant to the development of the European alternative media since the seventies, an agenda that as also began in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Thus, and in parallel, by resurfacing the indigenous movements, it began to proliferate in many countries media of the original towns, which emit in their languages and watch for their protection dissemination of knowledge traditionally silenced by modernity.

On another note, it is also interesting to observe on what are the alternative media built, the social places emerging from it, and their ties to the social movements around. In this sense, it seems to predominate in Latin America a more communitarian approach, and in the European continent predominates one more individualist, even though the different contexts and practices usually differ very much from the very own models that sustain their speeches. Hence, certain anarchist traditions seem to have more vigour in Europe (Downing, 1984), though they've always been latent in Latin America and today find echoes in proposals like those of "well-living", which question the old paradigm of the development and its mechanistic, economic and colonial connotations (Contreras, 2014)⁷⁴.

In Latin America, there were many efforts by the alternative communication, and in part, they maintain a strong bond with the social movements which they look to legitimize, amplify, interconnect or communicate internally within the frame of their struggles for recognition (Peruzzo 1998, Kaplún 2007). On the other hand, the communitarian has a strong presence in the discourse of many alternative media, though it is not always clear to which community they are referring to, if one "behind" the media and which the media

⁷⁴ Which ties with the post-colonial proposals (or de-colonial) addressed in another chapter of this book.

look to represent, or one “in front” of them, in an utopic horizon of reconstruction of lost social ties or of the articulation of “new ways of being together”, this according to Martín-Barbero (2000) (Kaplún, 2015).

In Europe, the last years have been the scenario of movements that can be considered from network logics and personalized exchanges as those proposed by the theories of *connective action* which, facing the old *collective action* (Subirats, 2015), turn into “protests of great scale with little central organization, few formal leaders, and a very short journey as negotiated coalitions and some contexts of action that are included and individualized” (Bennett and Segerberg, 2014). From the *Occupy Wall Street* to the Spanish *15-M*, this type of protests have been extremely bound to the interactions that facilitate the social networks, a question that have reactivated the academic debate, in this case, concerned (sometimes in excess) with the new potentialities that offer social media like Facebook or Twitter for the alternativity. Nevertheless, all these outbreaks have been accompanied by a new emergence of alternative and community media, which, alongside with the traditional formats (radio, press and television), today one begins to think of them from a distributive, converging and reticular logic offered by the network.

The alternative digital. It is precisely the role of the social networks, digital media and Internet in a broad sense that sit on a central place in the European investigation on alternative communication, as Latin America still seems to be focused in the “traditional” media, such as the radio and community television. Maybe this is a vindication of such places against the frequent digital gaps felt in that region in relation to age segregations (youth vs. old age), geographic segregation (rural areas against urban ones) or segregations related to social class (rich against poor). This difference also seems to relate to the important social role still played by these media in some regions and, most of all, we insist, with the difference in access to the network in one and other reality and with digital gaps which are not merely technical but also, and most of all, socio-cultural (Escuder, 2016).

All in all, the networks of indignation and hope, mentioned by Castells (2012) seem to have found greater possibilities of existence and incidence within the European context. However, we must not forget that the new digital media are playing a key role in the emergence of social and political movements of a new sort in Latin America, from the Zapatistas in Mexico, in the nineties, to the Mexican student movements (YoSoy132) or the Chilean ones, in the current

decade, for this issue as gained position in the investigation agendas of the area (Martínez, 2011; Cabalín, 2014). Finally, the movements for the democratization of communication in Latin America or Europe have established a certain bond with the efforts for the democratization of the access to the Internet and ICT, even though we must specialize these relations much more in the following years. We mean, for instance, recent programs of socio-educational integration in Latin America (*Conectar Igualdad* in Argentina, *Plan Ceibal* in Uruguay, etc.), labs of digital experimentation in Europe (e.g. *MediaLab Prado* in Madrid) or the very own movement for free software and copyleft, which keep increasing in popularity in both regions.

The role of education and investigation. The binding with the educational also had different accents on both sides. In Europe, a good part of these efforts has developed around the program like that of media literacy (Aguaded, 1999, García Matilla, 2010), which, in some cases, have generated public policies of national reach and international standards (Frau-Meigs and Torrent, 2009).

And even though this approach hasn't been absent of Latin America (Hermosilla and Kaplún, 1987; Orozco, 1996, Soares, 2000, Fuenzalida, 2005), the greatest development had to do with the so-called popular education, which transcend the school contexts and is thought as the pedagogical dimension of the organizing processes and the social and political movement of the popular sectors (Nuñez, 1985). Furthermore, the influence of the critical pedagogy by Paulo Freire has been central in this last case, as we must remember that it is also the starting point to rethink the transmissive and vertical communicational models of mass communication and for the very own proposal of more dialogical and horizontal communication models from Latin America (Kaplún, 1998).

In a sense, one can say that the European movement around alternative communication as emphasized education in the first place and "making" media only then, while in Latin America the tradition seems to be much more "praxis" and consists of "educating making" and in educating in parallel with the action. Hence, and as Beltrán (1993) shows, the theoretical thought, as well as the investigation and the academic work as to reach Latin America late, given that before theory there were the social, political and alternative communicational practices and it was on these practices that the concepts were built. Indeed, it was from the mid-eighties that the first systematic efforts for theorization around alternative communication appeared (Máximo Simpson, María Cristina

Matta, etc.) and in the nineties, when the matter reaches substantial places in the academic investigation and in the academic world, with pioneer exceptions such as those of Antonio Pasquali (1985), Luis Ramiro Beltrán (1981) or Juan Díaz Bordenave (1983).

In Europe, it seems that the presence of the academic world in this field came earlier, concerning the pioneers when considering the proposals by Bertold Brecht or by Walter Benjamin in the first half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, and especially in Latin America, the intellectual form occupied the place for reflection, bound to, more than the academy, the intellectual and essayistic reflection. And it has been in the last years when Europe (and Latin America in Tow) began to see a progressive predominance of the empirical investigation against the essay, which has advantages but also risks. The new academic productive logics in magazines of importance have motivated the contributions to alternative communication towards the general debate on communication. However, these dynamics can also domesticate the urges for the social transformation of early stages, much more spontaneous and “praxis” than those today.

Some made a connection between both continents, like Armand and Michèle Mattelart (Belgium and French respectively), who, though are better framed within the critical tradition which is addressed in another chapter of this book, left a mark and were strongly included by the Chilean social experience in the early seventies (Kaplún, 1998). There was also the possibility the matching of the processes of the international discussion on the communication and information systems, as those expressed in the proposals for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) in the seventies and eighties or the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2000.

The dialogues between European and Latin American alternativists have been scarce, though within the theoretical plane. In the available literature, there are little mutual references, even though they bind has been substantially deeper among the activists themselves from the articulation of alternative places like the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) or the efforts by Indy media in the first decade of the twentieth century. The Latin Americans have greatly contemplated theorists of the Frankfurt's School and its critical perspective on cultural industries, as well as the proposals from the British Cultural Studies. As mentioned before, it was crucial for this region to recover the thought of Antonio Gramsci and his reflections on the building of hegemony. However, the contemporary references

to works of key authors on the European alternative communication– like Nick Couldry or Chris Atton– are scarce. In reverse, the only Latin American often mentioned in the European literature is Paulo Freire, who does not proceed specifically from the communicational field but from the pedagogic, though his influence in the territory has been crucial. In a smaller extent, there are also references to translated texts into English like those of Jesús Martín Barbero, who has been foundational on the culturalist feature and that has had a certain critical impact in Spain, even though it is strange to find works that contextualize the different authors concerning the historical and cultural provenance which has determined its thinking (Barranquero and Sáez Baeza, 2012).

The impact by Freire among the alternativists on both regions is due, surely, to the quality and the instituting capacity of his work, especially his proposal to rethink communication as dialogical on the process of communicating and not as a mere transmission of messages/communications (Freire, 1973). However, to the field of communication, this has been developed more in works like those of Beltrán, Díaz Bordenave and Kaplún in Latin America, or those of Atton and Couldry in Europe. Though even that Freire focuses his contribution on the educational field much more than on the communicational, his work has been translated to multiple European languages– furthermore, than the first editions in Portuguese and Spanish kept being republished–, which almost didn't happen within the field of communication.

The lack of translations might be one of the causes for this mutual ignorance between Europe and Latin America, though it might also be its consequence. For this, Spain is, to some extent, the exception and is possible to find references to Latin Americans like Mario Kaplún or Luis Ramiro Beltrán, being this last one associated with the communication field for development. In their turn, Latin Americans themselves developed ties with those who in a pioneer way have worked under the axis communication-education in Spain (Aguaded, Aparici, García Matilla, etc.), a respite taken by young authors who reinvigorated today these traditions in Europe or Latin America like Barraquero or Treré, co-authors of these texts.

There are also some joint works between Europeans and Latin Americans, like that of the Bolivian Alfonso Gumucio and the Danish Thomas Tufte (2009), or Barranquero together with Latin American authors like the Chilean Chiara Sáez (Barranquero and Sáez, 2012) or the Colombian Angel (Barranquero and Angel, 2015). In the first case we must quote the first panoramic work– and also encyclopaedic, we

could say– on the matter under the form of *Communication for Social Change Anthology* (Gumucio and Tufte, 2006, 2008), published in English and Spanish, which allows an approximation to texts of all over the world. In the second case, there are also efforts to refresh theoretically the field establishing transatlantic dialogues, like those proposed in the classical text by John Downing (1984) on the radical media, or his *Encyclopaedia of Social Movement Media* (Downing, 2011), being this last only published in English.

This scenery either confirms and contradicts the logic of coloniality of knowledge (Lander, 2000) and perceives Europe as a producer of theory and Latin America as an employer of the produced theory in other parts. On the one hand, there is a certain acknowledgement among Europeans that Latin America is the “cradle” of alternativism as communicational practices, though there is also a major disregard for its theoretical work in this field. In its turn, the Latin Americans have benefited from the theories produced in Europe, though most ignore that new specifically alternativist, perhaps for its relatively marginal character in its environment, but, most of all, for the absence of translations to Spanish or Portuguese of reference texts published in English.

It is a good motive to inspire a more profound and active dialogue, like that we try to create with this work. As the Uruguayan poet Liber Falco (1994) once said: “what a big world, and how small/how far are friends, and how close” (free translation). It is about building closeness to imagine other possible worlds.

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05

POSTCOLONIALISM

Post-colonial Currents in the European Communication Studies. A Chance for Renewal?

Sarah Anne Ganter⁷⁵

Félix Ortega⁷⁶

1. Introduction

Post-colonialism as a strand of theoretical thought and criticism of existing socio-political and historical conditions has been a hesitantly welcomed stream in European communication studies. Post-colonial theories generally elaborate on distinctiveness or “otherness” and are used for explaining the situation in former colonies as these develop their own cultural identity, what is some “otherness” or distinctiveness from the colonizer. As Adriaensen (1999) rightly points out, the post-colonial role of Latin America is different from countries like India and some Caribbean countries. Marginality, or “otherness”, in the relationship between Latin American and European countries is more complex to explain, but when looking at communication scholarship the different forms and dimensions where post-colonialism is manifested throughout this relationship become clear. Broadly spoken, in this chapter, on a macro level, the term is related to the observation which refers to some nations presenting themselves and being thought of as “more advanced” or developed, a state which is rooted in the historical battles around economic-resources, territorial expansion and social influence⁷⁷. On the micro-level, post-colonialism is, in the wider sense used to describe differences in between how different groups – might they be ethnic, religious, geographic, gender-related differences - are situated within society. This macro-micro distinction underlines the imbalances created through structural preconditions that shape the state of most modern societies. This differentiation often analysed in the literature makes it clear that presumed and experienced inequality takes an important stake in post-colonial considerations.

In this chapter, we review post-colonialism as a theory considering and reflecting upon developments that are shaped by the notion of inequality. As such, we argue that post-colonialism is not only present as

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⁷⁷ Scholars like Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1998) in the US American context or Eduardo Galeano (1971) and Brigitte Adriaensen (1999) in and about the Latin American context contribute with their work to what we understand here as the macro side. Scholars like Homi K. Bhabha (1994) and Stuart Hall (1992) speak to the micro perspective of post-colonial studies.

an object of communication studies, but it also is part of the structural conditions in which communication studies are being exercised and developed as a field. In scholarly work, this inequality refers to a broad range of topics which are not limited to the study of former colonies, but also include the study of forms of marginalization which are based on ethnical, gender or sexual orientation (Bhabha 1994, Hall, 1992). In this chapter, we will discuss how post-colonialism has been developed in European Communication Studies as a theoretical stream.

2. The Relevance of post-colonialism as school of thought in European Communication Studies

At first glance, post-colonialism as a school of thought has had a contested history in European communication studies. Scholars looking at “differences” or “otherness” in communication studies many times do not clearly show their intellectual link to post-colonialist thought but apply concepts that are also often used in post-colonialist theories, such as resistance, dominance or identity (Ganter, 2017). It is probably a sign of how narrowly the term post-colonial theory is frequently applied, even though its meaning might be relevant for the study of a diverse set of subjects in which such differences reflect.

Post-colonialism as a school of thought derives, like many other theoretical streams, from an interdisciplinary background. Thinkers like Edward Said (1978, 1993), Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1987, 1990, 1999) and Jaques Derrida (1978) have described the representation of the other, sub-alternity and the consequent hybridization of cultures (Hall, 1992; Kraidy, 2006, Morley, 2006) as the outcome or reflection of the deconstruction of ethnocentrism and the emergence of new cultural understandings, identities and practices. From the perspective of communication, Stuart Hall’s work is at the forefront of post-colonial studies in European communication studies. In his work, Hall underlines the ambiguity of the term “post-colonial” (1996) by a warning to avoid universal use of the term through pointing out particularities of each context referred to as post-colonial.

As a theoretical field, post-colonial studies in Europe are located in cultural studies and characterised by their emancipatory propositions (Downing, 1983; Hall, 1992). As such, post-colonial theory does not only describe drawbacks but also aims at deconstructing reasons for marginalization, inequality and the evolvement of otherness, thus

showing ways towards improvement. As Shome & Hedge (2002) summarize, post-colonial studies confront institutionalized knowledge and offer a more democratic re-reading not only of own scholarly realities but also of the problems studied by communication scholars. This elasticity of the post-colonial thought is linked to and can be found in Marxist, queer and postmodern theory that all work with frameworks of dominance and resistance. The post-colonial perspective questions traditional methods and perspectives and thus deconstructs the *routine of knowing*. The post-colonial perspective can thus be a deliberating one that not only deciphers power relations but also triggers methodological innovation. The European – Anglo colonialism is at this moment foremost in the centre of considerations (Downing, 1983; Downing et al. 1996; Hall, 1992; Thussu, 2009).

European communication studies have picked up on this stream slowly and were mainly represented by UK based scholars at its beginning. It was only in 2002 when *Communication Theory* set the scene for connecting actively and self-consciousness communication studies and post-colonial studies, by publishing a special issue on the topic (reference). Despite this initial attempt to consciously insert post-colonial theories into communication studies, as Torrez (2006) has rightly observed, the analytical unfolding of these emerging and transforming images has been mainly tackled by anthropologists and sociologists. Shome and Hedge (2002) co conclude that communication scholars rarely try to unravel the logical construct behind the post-colonial thought by presenting powerful case studies which actively apply post-colonial theories to grasp and explain their subject of study. It accounts for European Communication Studies as much as for US American scholarly work from the field. Nevertheless, post-colonialism, as a school of thought, has found its reflection in communication studies in Europe.

The connection between post-colonial studies and communication studies is grounded in approaches to transnationalism in communication studies and the awareness that this poses new challenges for research (reference on the relationship between transnationalism and postcolonialism), but also establishes new subjects to be studied. These subjects include for example the examination of local and global dynamics and their historical development throughout the diverse subject areas of the field (see for example Ashtana 2013 for an account in media policy studies). Drawing from different conceptualizations of power dynamics that underlie post-colonial theoretical thinking, Shome and Hedge (2002) detect conceptual

overlaps, suggesting that agency, representation, hybridity and identity are at the centre of both post-colonial theories and cultural studies. These power dynamics also reflect in the circulation of the representations of the other. At the centre of communication, studies are the understanding and explanation of the mechanisms that shape the reproduction of knowledge about representations of the other (Hall, 1992). Therefore, post-colonial thought becomes apparent in scholarly work, for example, in popular culture or cinema studies which examine representations of the other (Ponzanesi and Waller, 2012). Representations and expressions of diversity in social media platforms and interpersonal communication (de Ridder, 2013; Hedod, 1999) can also be subsumed to this tradition.

Hybridity, as an expression of converging identities, has been strongly rooted in post-colonial thought. Communication scholars in Europe (Hall, 1992; Kraidy, 2006, Morley, 2006) have defined hybridity in opposition to cultural imperialism theory, thus manifesting the element of resistance which also characterises post-colonial theoretical thinking (a reference to the element of resistance in post-colonialism).⁷⁸ The latter, however, has been developed in the US-based literature and then been adapted into European writings (Downing, 2006; Hamelink, 1983; Thussu, 2009). Thus, post-colonial theories have been inserted into European Communication Studies, particularly via the British and French Cultural Studies Schools and thus also developed in a rather dispersed manner across the field (Forsdick and Murphy, 2009).

3. Post-colonialism pathways and future perspectives in European Communication Studies

The existence of EU associations, such as ECREA, gives the European academic landscape with its diversity some visibility. Besides this institutional *Europeanness*, European communication studies are, of course, difficult to define. The academic perspectives are diverse, complex, linguistically and geographically fragmented. It also affects the use of post-colonialism as a theoretical strand in this context. The migration of academics between Anglo-Saxon and continental Europe, as well as the influence of migrated and now in the US-based academics, born in Asia and Africa, has been the main influence in the rise of post-colonialism in the discipline in Europe.

The arising question is how this post-colonial relationship is dealt

⁷⁸ Néstor García Canclini (1998) is a representative of this stream in the Latin American context.

with in the former colonial powers. The answer is complex and in different regions and countries closely associated with their historical and geographical chronology which goes as far back to medieval all “Latin” Universities.⁷⁹ Our perspective on these tendencies refers to the XX and XXIst century and includes a historical-cultural-geographical context explanation. In the XXIst century, post-colonial research in Europe has been shaped by the emergence of the free flow of labour inside the EU, although today in danger at the almost excited-UK, to be able to recapture, and capture talent to its Universities, research groups and institution across the continent from different origins, America, the old commonwealth countries and in some specific cases from Asia. This diversity is the result of the need, which allows primarily Anglo-Saxon Universities to attract talent worldwide to enrich their perspectives and “hire” academics, and it also affects the development of post-colonial research in Europe. The appearance of post-colonial currents in Easter Europe and Central Europe is more German-centric, and certainly northern-Scandinavian Europe more Anglo-centric it has developed in parallel terms to the historical development of migration flows of academics associated to historical events such as the two world wars and the fall of the iron curtain. (Mahroum, 2000, Ackers, 2005, Morales, 2011, UN 2015).

The history of post-colonialism as a theoretical field has been emerging progressively but remained a contested or even side passed realm in Europe, particularly in countries where other perspectives have grown more dominant since the late 90s. Nowadays, the representation and/or research lead or orientated to multiculturalism and ethnical diversity in Europe exists increasingly from the perspective of media effects and is focused on immigration and xenophobic framed news (e.g. Arendt, Steindl and Vitouch, 2014). This line of work importantly and empirically unravels consequences of structural consequences which are however treated as conditions; explanations are mainly looked for and found on the micro-level. The rise of mediatization research particularly in the Germanic, Nordic and British contexts (Coudry and Hepp, 2013; Strömbäck, 2008) provided another competing perspective for studying questions of representation and marginalization from within Europe. Mediatization scholars claim to look at the interrelations between media, culture and society from a media-centred perspective (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby, 2015). Both perspectives have been developed as immanently euro-centric and focusing on the role of the consumers and the media. The post-colonial perspective as it can be

⁷⁹ In this chapter, the task is however to focus on the European context.

found in the Anglo-Saxon and French context allows for the inclusion of a detailed analysis and critique of underlying structural conditions with the focus on showing and explaining existing power relations and their representation throughout different genres (Downing, 2006; Hamelink, 1983; Thussu, 2009). Post-colonial perspectives have, however been far less spread in Europe since the 90s, as they do not prevail compared to media effects and mediatization research which study questions of marginalization and representation separated from post-colonial considerations.

The development of the flows of ideas and academic perspectives is complex and may only be tracked down by the individual and in some cases the collective history of the academics which migrated from old Europe to the Americas. The European diversity has enabled post-colonial research in Europe to be influenced, primarily from the 1990s onwards by a flux of individuals and currents which came from the Americas. In some European academic communities, this flux fostered a dialogue that enables some post-colonial hybridity. This hybridity has, to some extent, appeared in the UK, North and Central Europe associated with academia working in the lingua franca English. The French academia has been influenced by the communities using the lingua franca French in Europe and Canadian institutions. Language is certainly a main driver or obstacle of this hybridity (Gordin, 2015), as well as the rise of the internet and the related new possibilities to access and circulate texts from different contexts in the 90s created new possibilities. The impact of the dialogues and the real place of new hybridity in academic work remains, however, to be explored.

It is a must to foster research with data on the representation of post-colonialism in cultural studies in the UK, France, Central-Europe and Germany, Nordic-Countries and Spain, but this could be a matter of a state-nation or case centric book, specifically associated to each academic region and idiosyncrasy. The problem of representation, inequality, academic gatekeeping networks, post-colonial free flow of researches globally must be addressed in our field and others. The quantification of data which may arise from the study of publishing big data from under construction “post-colonialist publishing indexes” drained from scientific journals and publishers may help, together with some qualitative approximations diagnose the state of the art of these academic flows. This way, it is possible to address strategies and reflections of the barely present post-colonial currents, researchers and projects in the mainstream dominant scientific arenas represented in the relevant JCR and SJR-Scopus indexes. The notions of post-colonial

and trans-national representation and relevance in these areas is certainly an interesting object of research still unexplored, and maybe diluting itself in the mainstream scientific arenas of science globally.

4. Methodological considerations in post-colonial school of thought

The question of what conducting communication studies from a post-colonial perspective means for knowledge-making is also in the spirit of works stemming from this tradition (Hall, 1980; 1996). Stuart Hall, for example, argues in his work that post-colonial realities are never the same and strongly dependent on the context. Arguing so, Hall explores limits and chances of post-colonial theories for knowledge-making as self-reflective practice (Hall, 1999). Regardless of this positioning of this theoretical current into wider epistemic considerations, post-colonialist scholarship has missed out on developing this stream of work further for quite some time. More recently, European communication scholars recognize that studying objects from outside or the interaction with the outside bears methodological questions and chances. Otherness in this context is explored in a multi-faceted way as being different regarding, gender, ethnicity, nationality and educational background (Ganter, 2017). In this vein, the rise of international comparative research and the exploration of diverse geographical perspectives affects the application of post-colonial thought towards the rise of a cosmopolitan scholarship (Ganter, 2017; Jentsch, 20014; Livingstone, 2007; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2009).

Researchers increasingly investigate topics in diverse cultural contexts (Jentsch, 2004; Livingstone, 2007). While many scholars study foreign contexts, for example when developing comparative research (see for example Hallin and Mancini, 2002) recent calls claim that studying other contexts also means to broaden theoretical and empirical perspectives (Ganter & Ortega, 2019). This cosmopolitan approach to communication studies is based on Ulrich Beck's call for "methodological cosmopolitanism" (Beck, 2006, Livingstone, 2007) and increasingly expands to calls for theoretical (Waisbord, 2013) and 'academic cosmopolitanism' (Ganter 2017; Ganter & Ortega, 2019), issued beyond the European context. By considering and naming the related particularities, European scholars start to explore the tensions between an emic and etic perspective on conducting research beyond their cultural contexts (Ganter, 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2009).

Not all the scholars mentioned above, however, would understand themselves as a post-colonial theorist. The point here is that the call for cosmopolitanism per se adheres to this perspective, as it recognises the value of the outsider researcher in this particular case, for the process of knowledge-making (Ganter & Ortega, 2019).

In times in which international perspectives and professional careers are not only *en vogue* but also often necessary, post-colonialism as theoretical construct experiences a chance for renewal. Considering the value of studying objects located in a context different from the researcher means to recognise the value of a diverse scholarship. Understanding and studying post-colonialism as scholarly thought is therefore increasingly important for the development of a cosmopolitan and diverse communications scholarship.

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De-Westernizing Communication

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Introduction

The emergence of new critical thought in Latin America has occurred since the 1990s. Without a doubt, it has been inspired by the perspectives, themes and terminology from Marxism, the Frankfurt critique, the cultural studies, the subaltern studies and the postcolonial studies. However, it has also been inspired by the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist tradition of the region. This reinterpretation of the regional history and the definition of its future has characterized a particular turn to the social, political, economic and cultural processes of the subcontinent, having the epistemological decolonization as a basis. This is what primarily defines the *decolonial thinking*⁸¹.

Later on, there will be a better definition of decoloniality to review its current manifestations in the Latin American communication field. Now, however, it is necessary to present a short reflection about its differences from post-colonialism.

First of all, post-colonial is understood as the historical period started in Asia and Africa after the Independence of India (1947) in addition to, thirty years later, to the thought that questioned the patrons of the hegemonic discourse from the perspective of the subjects who suffered the colonial regime of Europe in these geographical spaces⁸². The Portuguese-Spanish colonial experience and the independence of the Latin American countries is substantially prior and distinct. So is its contemporary experience of external subordination. That is why its critical action is also different in its meaning and its origins.

Latin American thinkers developed the central category of *dependency* (the expropriation of the excess that generate peripheral countries by the powers of the center) rather than that of *colonialism* (the direct political-military domination of a territory and its people) for the analysis of the regional historical reality in its problematic and

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81 Walter D. Mignolo, following the conceptual proposal of Anibal Quijano, refers to this purpose as *detachment* (*desprendimiento*), which is the freeing strategy to reach the "epistemic turn" that denaturalizes the western cosmology that keeps the "epistemological privilege" of establishing both the universal principles of knowledge and understanding, and "(...) the magical effect of making us believe that the world is what this cosmology says it is" (2014: 21).

82 Miguel Mellino reminds us that "in this context, the debate about the post-colonial refers essentially to the social, political and economic situations of the recently decolonized states" (2008:33).

asymmetric relation with the United States of North America, which started already in the 19th century. In the course of the last 25 years, the other category they proposed is that of *coloniality*. It relates to the pattern of power originated in the colonial ages whose principle is the establishment and the “(...) naturalization of territorial, racial, cultural and epistemological hierarchies” (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010: 15) that enable the maintenance of domination relations.

Consequently, with some exceptions⁸³, there was not the mere mechanical transference or application of the analytical tools or of the post-colonial language to the Latin American circumstance, but the prevalence of a process of meta-reflection that led to the pertinent recovery of the Latin American historicity and of the regional critical thought to establish its own parameters of interpretation, which represent one of the most relevant points of disagreement between de-coloniality and post-colonialism. In this sense, in 2006 Fernando Coronil sustained that “there is no set of works in Latin America which can be considered post-colonial” (cited in Goujat 2007:1), while Eduardo Restrepo and Axel Rojas emphatically affirm that “one cannot mistake the de-colonial inflexion with the post-colonial theory” (2010:23).⁸⁴

However, it is possible to find positions like the one of Estela Fernández (2004) who, from a Marxist perspective, pointed at the Latin American studies of culture as “post-colonial” and put them in question because they talk of “subaltern” rather than of “class” and because its locus of enunciation, in her perception, would exclusively be of the Latino migrant in the United States of North America. She considers that the migrant cannot comprehend and reveal Latin America’s reality, arguments that lose validity if one warns that the de-colonial thought has overcome the classicist reductionism, problematized the comprehension of domination, made evident Karl Marx’s “blindness” about serious problems such as the coloniality and has reached important developments at the region’s heart and not simply “outside” it.

One can, therefore, indicate that if there was any meaningful debate about the differences between post-colonialism and de-coloniality, it was those who internally revealed the members of the *conversation*

83 Peris (2010) talks about two methodological options in the Latin American studies of culture: the ahistorical use of the concepts developed by post-colonialism and the critical reflection about the colonial historical experiences and their interpretation. Decoloniality is a clear expression of the second.

84 For these authors, there are three main aspects that set the difference: 1) the space of problematization, the coloniality on the one hand and the colonialism on the other; 2) the historical context: the first modernity (15th century) for decoloniality and the second modernity (18th century) for post-colonialism; and 3) its genealogy: the history of subordination in the first case and the French post-structuralism in the second (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010:23-24).

community (Restrepo & Rojas, 2010) to avoid and overcome any conceptual de-historization⁸⁵.

And it was recently, in the second half of the 2000 decade, that Latin American communication scholars started to be interested in this new critical perspective, even though the influx of the cultural studies had already been present at least since the mid-1980s. Today, the challenge is to think communication in a de-colonial manner and contest its westernization.

To Overcome the “Western” Communication

As it happens in practically all fields of knowledge, the assumptions, objectives and criteria that predominate in Communication⁸⁶ are those of the science of the “modern” and “western” world. That is, those established under the racialized hierarchization and the dualist reason⁸⁷ that became a norm after Europe converted itself into the economic and political center of the planet after controlling the Atlantic since the end of the 15th century and conquering the “New World”⁸⁸, a territory that it soon proceeded to colonize.

The tangible result of this situation is a European-North American (USA) conception of the communicational process. The “dominant paradigm” sees communication primarily as an instrumental resource supporting power interests (of senders and/or their sponsors). That gives its investigation an immediately practical function instead of the capacity to generate autonomous social knowledge that can be both scientifically and socially relevant.

As a consequence, Communication emerged in the West during the first third of the 20th century with the mark of empirical, measurable and applicable knowledge. Since its beginnings, the Communication was tied to the political and economic interests of capitalism as their initial developments happened under liberal investigative initiatives by the government and some business foundations or private corporations

85 This appears, for example, in the body-politics [*corpo-politica*] and the geopolitics of knowledge (Mignolo 2003; 2004) that talk about epistemic materialization. That is, of its embodiment in concrete subjects and their historical insertion, respectively.

86 The capital letter (Communication) will be used to refer to the field and the small letter (communication) will be used to refer to the object of study of the field, that is, the observable process.

87 On the one hand, the racialization refers to the adoption of the idea of *race* to biologically and culturally differ the “superior” from the “inferior” peoples. On the other hand, *dualist reason* is the one that operates with this kind of binary classifications and is also connected to the emergency of the so-called “two cultures”. That is, the separation and specialization between the search for the truthful (science) and the good (philosophy).

88 Also known as “West Indies”, the geographic space found by the expedition of Cristopher Columbus in 1492 and named America in 1507.

from the United States of America.⁸⁹

In addition to referring to the west geographically, the West is a historical metaphor in terms of knowledge that emphasizes the founding condition and the supposedly superior capacities of imperial Europe and its North-American extension in the “New World”. It is also the ideological metaphor of some cultures (the European and the Europeanized) that self-identify as the universal civilizing standard marked by the ideals of individual freedom, economic accumulation, and the endless material progress.

Consequently, all the knowledge elaborated in and by the West adopted the assumptions of the modern science and inserted in the limits of its self-referential linear look centred on the profiles, developments, problems and teleology of the societies with capitalist and industrial development. That led them to treat with a subordinating and even despising tone the other peoples and their ways of conceiving, knowing and interpreting the world.

This way, with a frame, constituted first of all by the positivist epistemology, the empirical-quantitative investigative strategies and the functionalist sociological theory, the Communication structured its scientific profile according to the modern procedural demands as well as the objectives for expansion of the civilizing model in which it was born. From this comes its “westernism”, that is, its correspondence with nature, the characteristics and the ends of the Western science, but with both the purposes of the supremacy of the “western culture” and its global capitalist design (cf. Mignolo, 2003).

This western-centric⁹⁰ look at the phenomenon of communication (the communication) and its study (the Communication) is inscribed in the epistemological space of Modernity. Both its scope (what it permits thinking) and its conditioning (the way it directs what is thinkable) are those installed in the general social theories or the theoretical matrices that serve as its reference⁹¹.

Despite the prolonged “western” predominance and the custom of epistemological, theoretical and methodological “loan”, from the 1960s Latin America generated a critical-utopic vision in Communication that, without being homogeneous or coordinated, has demarcated an alternative analytical route that today faces the challenge of de-westernization and, consequently, of its emancipation.

It is a new option given that it arises for the first time, within the “de-colonial turn” started at the end of the 1990s (Castro-Gómez y

⁸⁹ See Pooley (2008).

⁹⁰ *Westcentric* in the original version of Gunaratne (2011:475).

⁹¹ About the characteristics of these matrices, see Torrico (2010:25-59).

Grosfoguel, 2007), the possibility of reinterpreting the world history and of dismantling with it the eurocentric logics with which the explanation of this trajectory had been written. It also implies that an opportunity arises to overcome the constraints of the scientific paradigms that established the West to guarantee its oligopolistic advantages of power.

It is neither a matter of replacing all the existing knowledge nor of dreaming of autochthonous illusions, but of critically re-evaluating what is known and channel another understanding of communication that is more human, social, communitarian, inclusive, humanizing and democratizing than one of the “dominant paradigms”.

De-westernizing, therefore, implies stopping seeing communication and its field with the eyes of technocracy, the free trade, the blind faith and the political domination to recover the liberating content of its meaning and praxis. And this is the goal of which the debates are starting in the Latin American space.

Western communication thinking

Throughout almost nine decades, an accumulation of knowledge was formed around communication. It can be identified as the *communication thinking*, obviously, of western grounds⁹², that constitutes the previously referred predominant conception.

It consists of a group of concepts, approaches and theoretical models about the communication fact developed specially by authors from the USA and Europe, first and foremost related to the so-called “mass communication” and recently also to the “information society”, which has also led to the existence of an *academic culture*⁹³. That is, to a “group of premises which most of the members of the scientific community unconsciously share and that are rarely up for debate” (Wallerstein, 1999:14).

This thinking – and despite its fragmentation and the evident disagreements related to the nature and the definition of the object of communication studies – consequently works as a *de facto* doctrine in the processes of university education, in the tasks of specialized research and, of course, in the strategic definitions of the area. The unidirectionality, the technical mediation, the instrumental purpose and the generation of effects are, as it is known, the distinctive features of the predominant western way of understanding and making

92 See Torrico (2014).

93 See Torrico (2007).

communication which is translated in the approaches of a group of North American-European authors considered references⁹⁴.

The postulates of the so-called *Mass Communication Research* are the ones which mainly sustain and express the core of this “dominant paradigm”.

Feasible of being articulated in four great theoretical approaches (pragmatic, critical, socio-technical and political-cultural)⁹⁵, the concerns of the communication thinking are intimately connected since their origins to the objectives and the implications of modernization that lead to a dynamic and to a teleological route of economic growth, commercial expansion, deployment and intensive incorporation of technologies, urbanization, and formal democratization of societies.

This thinking is, finally, tributary of the modern instrumental rationality. That is, of the identification, the calculation and the usage of the most efficient means to reach certain goals because, in this understanding, communication becomes a resource subject to these types of operations.

From the cultural industry to the Latin American utopic critique

Despite the preeminence it has reached since its birth, the western theoretical and practical instrumentalization of communication was put into question in different scenarios and various ways, although with repeated emphasis on the technologically mediated processes.

In this sense, the famous article “The Cultural Industry”, by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno⁹⁶, written in the middle of the 1940s, reached both great diffusion and repercussion about a decade later, disqualified from the Frankfurt School the fabrication and the massive sales of standardized cultural products, defended the traditional works of art and literature, in addition to the harsh criticism to the mediated entertainment (*amusement*) for its alienating consequences. This way, mass communication was seen as an industry at the service of the reproduction of capital and its social domination.

Since the end of the 1950s another important critical perspective – the cultural studies – appeared with Richard Hoggart and his analysis of the changes of the traditional values in the British working class

94 In this respect, see Peters and Simonson (2004), Pooley (2008), Katz et al (2008) and Torrico (2015).

95 cf. Torrico (2010).

96 cf. Bell et al (1985:177-230).

resulting from the interaction between the urban workers with the “mass media”⁹⁷, particularly the “popular press”, considered by the author to be a fundamental factor for the construction of modern culture, a “culture without class”. Hoggart himself came to find the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the University of Birmingham from where the influence of other relevant thinkers such as Raymond Williams, Edward Thompson and Stuart Hall irradiates.

The *Political Economy of Communication* emerged in the north of America with Dallas Smythe in 1960 to put in evidence the cultural control exerted by monopolist capitalism, to denounce the commodification not only of cultural products but also of the media audiences and to raise the need to understand the economically productive role of the communication as well as its consequent contributions to the reproduction of capital⁹⁸. From this line of reflection also rose the studies about cultural imperialism.

In Latin America, during the “rebel decades” (1960 and 1970), the *critical-utopic current* was formed. It put the predominant technical concept of communication under scrutiny, denounced the situation of theoretical and cultural dependency of the region, demanded the democratization in a framework of rights and proposed alternative forms of conceiving and executing the communication process to reach “another development”⁹⁹.

The paths by which the criticism transited show that the common interest centred especially in mass communication and above all wereput to question both the instrumental and commodifying view of communication and the character of the capitalist logic and reproduction. Nevertheless, there was nor a display of preoccupation for the nature of Eurocentric modernity neither for its implications in the configuration of the communicational structures and the corresponding field.

To the de-coloniality

Although Marxism generated tools for the criticism of domination within capitalism, it did not demonstrate how to confront itself with its intra-modern nature. Neither did it manage to use its scalpel to account for colonialism. Then, it was only with the impulse of the *subaltern studies* originated in India at the end of the 1970s that the

⁹⁷ It concerns his book *The Uses of Literacy*. Cf. Hoggart ([1957]1990).

⁹⁸ For these aspects and others, see the doctoral thesis of Bolaños (2000).

⁹⁹ Cf. Pasquali (1977), Martín-Barbero (1987) and Beltrán (2000).

critical thinkers started to perceive another cognitive horizon, the one who set the bases for a general revision of the historical processes lived by colonized peoples and of the established stories about them.

This initial approach focused on the cultural history of that Asian country subject to colonization to re-examine it at the same time that it observed the recurring representation of the subaltern – that is, the subjugated and marginalized – in the nationalist and colonial versions of the Indian history. It dealt, therefore, as a political and intellectual project, with reestablishing the condition of subjects of history for these subaltern groups which had also been confined by the official narrative to a situation of “primitivism” and “pre-politics”¹⁰⁰.

The consequences of the colonizing imperial action over the culture of the colonized and the stereotyped construction of the otherness of the West were later analyzed by the postcolonial *studies*. The starting point is in the book *Orientalism*, by Edward Said ([1978] 2010), that explains the discursive operations developed by travellers, writers, philosophers, politicians and intellectuals from the West to build the image of the “eastern” Other and thus define the European identity¹⁰¹. Orientalism, therefore, creates a mode of relationship, a game of representations, and a type of “knowledge” that institutionalizes itself, a classifying and figurative modality that has equally been applied to the subaltern of other latitudes¹⁰².

With this general background and inspiration, in the beginning of the 1990s, it was formed the *Latin American Group for Subaltern Studies* (*Grupo Latinoamericano de Estudios Subalternos*) consisting of intellectuals from Latin America affiliated with elite universities in the United States of America which proposed to study the structural presence of the Latin American subaltern as a subject in and against hegemonic practices¹⁰³.

A little later the group converted into the *Grupo Modernidad/Colonialidad* because its debates identified this last category – related to the internalization of the subordination by the colonized peoples – as an inseparable component of the configuration of modern history, whose beginning happened amid the European colonial expansion in the “New World” in the 15th century rather than at the occasion of the

100 See “*Una pequeña historia de los Estudios Subalternos*” by Dipesh Chakrabarty in Saavedra (2009:319-343).

101 About it, Said said: “(...) the European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self”. (22).

102 Extending the reach of this assertion, Fernando Coronil argues that “the Europeans need the Mesoamericans to discover who they are. Consequently, the discovery and the conquest of America is fundamentally the discover and the invention of ‘Europe’ and of the western ‘I’”. Cf. Castro-Gómez y Mendieta (1998: 137).

103 See the “*Manifiesto Inaugural*” of the group in Castro-Gómez y Mendieta (op. cit.).

rise of illustrated rationalism, that more adequately corresponds to the notion sustained by the classic Western historiography. However, perhaps more important than that is the fact that the *Grupo* considers Modernity and coloniality to be constitutive elements of the world standard of capitalist power; the former is its visible face, and the latter is its “hidden face” (Mignolo, 2007: 18).

The coloniality, which survives in the subjectivities and the institutional devices of control and political management of politics in Latin America, is consequently different from colonialism, that is, from the local government in charge of foreign agents, and manifests itself in three levels: the power, the knowledge and the being.¹⁰⁴ This triple phenomenon suggests the persistence of structures of domination, exploitation and discrimination inherited from the colonial period. That maintains the secundarization (*secundarización*), the folklorization, and the invisibilization of all knowledge that does not fit to the western pattern of intellectual production. At last, it remains as vital everyday life experience the de-humanizing belittling of important peoples – the indigenous and those of African origin – that do not adjust themselves to the “western-centric” model of a human being (cf. Restrepo & Rojas, 2010).

The coloniality appears, therefore, in political, epistemological and ontological dimensions. The struggle against it does not refer to the search for the de-colonization since it was reached during the independence period which culminated in the creation of the Latin American republics at the beginning of the 19th century; rather, consequently, the confrontation of coloniality demands a *decolonizing* intervention¹⁰⁵. That is, a multileveled actionable to dismantle the complex scaffolding on which the contemporary subordination sustains itself. This belief led to the update of the Group’s denomination dedicated to those studies. It became known as *Grupo Modernidad/Colonialidad/Decolonialidad*.

The de-colonial thinking adopts, therefore, the perspective of subalternity to question the plot of domination established by the capitalist Modernity and to propose a multidimensional liberation. Nevertheless, it does not appear as a new paradigm in sequence to existing ones, but rather as “another paradigm” or “of disruption” (Mignolo, 2003:22) that has risen from the modern limitations and aims to surpass them away from violent reason.

¹⁰⁴Cf. Lander (2000) and Castro-Gómez & Grosfoguel (2007).

¹⁰⁵ The concept of “decolonial” was proposed by Catherine Walsh in a forum at the University of Duke in 2004 (cf. Walsh, 2005:26).

The (pre) Latin American Sources

Authors that make up the “community of conversation” about de-coloniality recognize a series of sources that fed the anti-hegemonic criticism in Latin America and consider them as necessary antecedents of their elaborations. These sources are of two types: the ones that correspond to the colonial period and the ones that belong to the stage of structuration and projection of the Latin American anti-imperialism (*latinoamericanismo antiimperialista*).

The first case takes as reference Bartolomé de Las Casas, a Dominican monk that in 1552 (1991) denounced the atrocities of the *conquistadores* against the native peoples of America to Prince Felipe, who was in charge of the affairs concerning the Indies; and especially to the Inca descendent chronicler Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, who in 1615 wrote a long letter – that was never delivered – to the king Felipe IV of Spain denouncing the arbitrary actions committed by the Spanish in Peru and also made proposals to create a “good government with differentiated territories and authorities for the Spanish and the indigenous peoples.”¹⁰⁶ In any case, these defenders of the rights of the colonized in the times of the Spanish colony were not equal. One was a Catholic devout interested not only in giving human treatment to natives but also primarily in evangelizing them, is, therefore, part of the strategy of colonial power. The other expressed, in conciliatory terms, the direct point of view of the subalterns. However, he did not propose decolonization either.

In the second case, the sources refer to a constellation of creators of the social and political thinking of Latin America since the second half of the 19th century, including for example José Martí, José Enrique Rodó, Manuel González Prada, José Vasconcelos or José Carlos Mariátegui, but first of all, recover the concerns and the influence of the Latin American critical intellectual production of the mid-1900s. They are included in this more contemporary period the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Paulo Freire, 1970), the Theology of Liberation (Gustavo Gutiérrez, 1970), the Philosophy of Liberation (Enrique Dussel, 1979) and the Dependency Theory (Fernando Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, 1988). Even though each of these currents had a thematic particularity, it is possible to say that they have in common the diagnosis of the Latin American subjugation as well as the ideal of the individual, social and regional emancipation.

The de-colonial thinking collects these founding ideas together with the need of the subaltern to express themselves, to be heard,

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Carrillo (1992).

and that they reconstitute themselves as agents of history. At the same time, it proposes the overcoming of coloniality and thus, as indicated, the liberation at different levels.

Latin American criticism and the Communicology of Liberation

Although the members of the *Grupo Modernidad/Colonialidad/Decolonialidad* have not yet gotten involved with the field of Communication – the main among them come from and work in sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and semiology – it is indispensable to highlight that it is possible to find significant antecedents of the de-colonial perspective in some of the representatives of the Latin American critical-utopian current. Here only three of the most renowned as well as the only regional activity that marked the history of the specialized thinking.

An initial approach to the criticism of the imposed constraints to sociological research in Latin America – these criteria were also applied to Communication Research that was then perceived under the same structural and functionalist approaches – was conducted in 1968 by Eliseo Verón, who defended the scientific autonomy and deplored that in this region, on the contrary, heteronomy was predominant in the field, so to say, a “cultural dependency regarding the imperialists centres” (Maldonado, 2001: 73).

In September 2013, the International Centre of Journalism Superior Studies for Latin America (*Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Periodismo para América Latina*, CIESPAL) carried out a workshop in Costa Rica about “Communication Research in Latin America”, turning into the first meeting oriented towards defining own criteria for Latin American Communication Research production. Criticizing the dependency was the central argument, and its final report stated that:

The communication theory and research methodology developed in the metropolitan centres is not always related to the reality and the research necessities of the underdeveloped and dependent countries, although they are applied, without any criticism, to the situation of the region, with obviously inadequate, and sometimes distorting, results. Its use has been inducted by the assumption that social theory is universal, and its validity falls beyond the frame of cultural spaces and historical processes (CIESPAL, 1973:13).

In 1976 Luis Ramiro Beltrán drew attention towards the fact that “research about communication in Latin America has been, and still is, considerably dominated by foreign conceptual models, mainly coming from the United States of America” (Beltrán, 2000:90). He questioned the reach and purpose of techniques like survey and content analysis, and also the “glorification of facts and figures”, he complained because the studies forgot about the total society as a matrix of comprehension and concluded that the Communicology raised in the US field was not an exception to the general characterization of Social Sciences of that origin as “sciences for social adjustment” (Beltrán, 2000:97-113). This author, lastly, pointed to the advent of a Communicology of Liberation rooted upon the critical sociology and the psychology of disconformity that maybe acquire “a programmatic and free of dogma conciliation between the lucid intuition and the valid measurement” with concepts and procedures genuinely adequate to the Latin American region (Beltrán, 2000:116).

And Jesús Martín-Barbero, talking about cultural and scholarly dependence, claimed ten years after that, more than the simple assumption of an alien theory, “the dependency is the conception of science, of scientific work and its function in society” (Martín-Barbero, 1987:20). Moreover, he underlined that dependence is also assumed and interiorize that there is an international division of labour, leading to some countries making science and others simply applying science. He also exhorted researchers to recognize the historical project behind theories, objects and methods before uncritically select any of them (Martín-Barbero, 1987:20-22).

In 2008 Beltrán retook his critique towards the Latin American intellectual dependence when he published a seminal study about pre-Columbian communication with Karina Herrera, Esperanza Pinto and Erick Torrico (Beltrán et al. 2008). This book was developed following two main premises: 1) that pre-Columbian people developed different types and modes of communication, including some written ones, before the arrival of the Spanish conquerors, and 2) that it was unavoidable starting to face the Eurocentric conception of communication history that always find the beginning of everything in the exclusive combination of alphabetic scripture and print of mobile types.

Following the above mentioned, one can state that critical communication scholars of Latin American did problematize since long time ago the intellectual dependence of the area -so to say, as de-colonialism theories, the coloniality of knowledge, that assumes the coloniality of power-, but it also should be noted the limited reach

of these reflections, that were never able to defy the boundaries of Modernity effectively. Anyway, and without any doubt, due to its integrity and foreseen potentiality, the proposal of the Communicology of Liberation by Beltrán should pertinently be included among the sources of de-colonial thinking¹⁰⁷, besides to be taken in consideration as an active platform for de-colonize the field of communication in its cognitive and practical levels.

In this direction, it should be pointed out that there is an ongoing -event it is very recent- dialogue between Communicology and de-coloniality as a result of seeing Latin America as a geocultural reference and as a *locus* for enunciation, assuming in a wide sense that de-colonize is liberating the in-communicated (Dussel, 2008:10).

Four ongoing proposals

The topic of epistemic and practical liberation in the field of communication is, thus, still new in the Latin American scholarly field. Nevertheless, it is possible to refer up to four proposals formulated on this regard until today, synthetically exposed following a chronological order of appearance:

At the 2nd International Conference of Social Communication for Peace hosted by the Universidad Santo Tomás in Bogotá in September 2009, the author of this chapter, Erick Torrico, after having synthesizing the new Latin American critical intellectual project (de-coloniality), proposed exploring the link between Communication and de-colonial thinking: "(...) communication has to participate nowadays in the re-elaboration of critical thought actively and develop all its potential as a horizon for knowledge and social transformation" (Torrico, 2010b:188). The following year he grounded in an article the feasibility of using the Communicology of Liberation launched by Luis Ramiro Beltrán as a basis for developing de-coloniality from this specialized field (Torrico, 2010b). And between 2012 and 2015, he defined the epistemological, ontological, theoretical, methodological and practical dimensions comprised by this possible de-colonization (cfr. Torrico 2013, 2015a).

More specifically, the de-colonization challenges articulated in a Communicology of Liberation would imply the following: restitution of the social and anthropological sense of communication process, de-mediatization of the concept of communication, recovery of the circularity and integrity of the process, establishment of a field of

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. Torrico (2010b, 2013).

knowledge for Communication as a specialized insight about the social world, and the actualization of the links between communication and emancipation, both personal and collective¹⁰⁸.

40 years after the above-mentioned workshop in Costa Rica, the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (*Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación*, ALAIC), committed during the last years in relaunching the regional critical thought with the brand of Political Economy of Communication and Culture, included some indirect mentions to de-coloniality in the “Letter of La Paz”, signed in September 2013 by the Forum of Presidents of Latin American Communication Research Associations, hosted in Bolivia.

This document deals with the challenges to the “old epistemological and theoretical basis, shaped after the experience of a Eurocentric world” (point 2), to the “Communication Sciences’ paradigms still accepted by dominant sectors within Academia, still in debt of the functionalist and instrumental partiality” (point 4), about Latin American intellectuals that “from a situated thinking, liberated of foreigner paradigms and colonial anchorages, [we] should tell our history” (point 6) and that the *episteme* of the Latin American communication thinking “is standing nowadays as a real alternative to the traditional ways of learning, allegedly universal, reinforced by the dominant project of colonial modernity” (point 7)¹⁰⁹.

The third line of reflexion, rooted on the proposal of South Epistemologies (de Sousa Santos, 2011)¹¹⁰, is formulated by Eliana Herrera, Francisco Sierra and Carlos del Valle, who consider possible the development of a “new Latin American Communicology” able to understand communication as a social mediation and to reinforce a critical theory based both on the theoretical-methodological hybrid of the so-called “Latin American School of Communication” and on the contributions by the Political Economy of Communication and Culture. But even before that, it should learn from the “insurgent experience of the indigenous movements”, it should take the “Amerindian paradigm as a matrix better connected with our contemporary times”, far beyond a functional use of interculturality, and complemented with a “scientific policy of self-empowerment” (Herrera et al., 2013). A specific point about communicational de-coloniality made by these authors expresses that:

108 These elements were exposed in the First International Conference about Communication, Decolonization and the Good Life, hosted by CIESPAL in Quito in September 2015.

109 Cfr. Bolaño et al. (2015:493-495).

110 This trend basically argues that there should be an “ecology of knowledges” and an “intercultural translation” of them in order to gain visibility, in dialogue with the science, the “ancestral wisdom” of “ancient peoples”, acknowledging the eco-systemic relation between mankind and the diversity of living beings that inhabit the planet (de Sousa Santos, 2011:1).

Decolonizing the field of communication implies (...) rebuilding and making more transparent the history and the memory of Latin America to generate processes of production and evaluation of social, practical, ancient and popular knowledge that were underestimated and subsumed by universal and generalizing knowledge of Social Sciences (...). (Herrera et al., 2013:8)

Lastly, Adalid Contreras connects communication with the notion of “living good” or “good life” included in the constitutional rules of Bolivia and Ecuador, respectively. Governments of these countries are struggling to integrate them in the field of public policies replacing the concept and alignments of conventional development, as part of what would be official projects of decolonization.

This author steps further in the definition and subsequent characterization of what, consequently, calls “communication for living well” and includes in this process components of spirituality, participation, interculturality and communitarianism that could make a plentiful life possible in the framework of plural systems ruled by the Right to Communicate (Contreras, 2014:81). He grounds his proposal in some elements extracted from indigenous cultures like the Aymara, the Quechua, and the Guaraní, but also in others coming from the Latin American critical thought. The “communication for living well”, says Contreras, is composed by four main features: know how to listen, know how to share, know how to live in harmony and complementarity, and know how to dream (Contreras, 2014:110 and next).

Not only de-westernize...

There are some differences, but not antagonist, ways to communicational de-coloniality that are being walked in Latin America.

On the one hand, the distinctions between analytical and propositive levels are visible; on the other, there is dissimilitude in the degree of ideas’ formulation and in the sources cementing them, apart from the disparities identified in the reach and purposes of the proposals that are being registered.

It is clear, however, that a *new Latin American critical and communication thought* is shaping up without renouncing either to the modern contesting tradition or to the regional desire for liberation. It appears determined to achieve an enriched epistemological-theoretical synthesis that helps to overcome the limits of Modernity and to subvert reason and order that hold the sub-alternization and injustice.

If Westernization can be understood as political or discursive action by which Western countries control historically (by elimination, absorption or marginalization) to the non-Western world, the intellectual and political challenge that encourages de-coloniality logically consists in de-westernize to take some steps towards the post-Westernization (Fernandez, 1978) that de-structure definitively the colonial power matrix. And communication, as a field and practice, is a central space in this contest.

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A Debate on Post-colonialism and De-coloniality: Latin American and European Perspectives on Change and Hope

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Sarah Anne Ganter
Félix Ortega
Erick Torrico Villanueva

Nico: Thank you for agreeing to engage in a dialogue about the postcolonial paradigm in media and communication studies, based on the two chapters you contributed to this book. These chapters have many differences, but it also struck me that both chapters refer to Edward Said. It is where I want to start: How important would you see his work for communication studies in Latin America and Europe? How to trace his influence?

Erick: Edward Said's sharp analysis of the imaginary construction of the East by the intellectual, literary, and artistic discourse of the West is not only the principle of postcolonial criticism but also a basis on which it is indispensable to settle the examination of the "Western subaltern", the Latin American, because what the "old" Europe did in terms of discursive representation, and political and economic control with the Arab and Asian peoples was reproduced in practice in the process of conquest and colonization of America. In this sense, the critical studies of communication also find a source of inspiration in the work of Said, since it provides—by analogy—consistent elements to rethink the accepted ways of conceiving and materialising communicational relations. However, the influence of this author in Latin America's Communication Studies has been rather indirect; it came partly through Cultural Studies and, in fact, is just starting to find some specific applications.

Sarah: Many thanks for the introductions and the interesting starting point for this dialogue. Edward Said is one of the leading thinkers when it comes to analysing and understanding postcolonial perspectives and practices. His main work, *Orientalism* (Said, 1978), was controversial, widely discussed and is considered one of the founding documents

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of postcolonial thinking. Hence, Edward Said needs to be mentioned in both the Latin American and the European Communication Studies' context. Turning to the second part of your question, how to trace the influence of one single thinker within a certain cultural, academic context is an intriguing question. Today, we would probably turn to google scholar or similar metrical measures we have, but the work we are talking about dates back from before the times of highly quantified academia. It allows for a more complex definition of "influence". Said belongs to the row of academics that are deeply linked to Literature Studies. I am thinking here for an example of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak or Jacques Derrida who are each important contributors to analytical perspectives in postcolonial schools of thought. Edward Said developed, with his conceptual approach towards otherness, one of the central anchor points in postcolonial studies. I refer here to the concept of orientalism. Born in Jerusalem, his academic home was in the USA, and his work was translated into over 20 languages, so my guess is, his work would be mentioned as influential by scholars from other geographical contexts, too. Much of his thinking is based on Foucault and his analysis of power relations through studying discourses. I think, what makes Said's work so relevant for communication scholars is its universality and own embedding into a global scholarly perspective, as well as a common line of thought concerning the question of representation in communicative practices and their consequences for everyday realities.

Félix: I agree with the description indicated by Sarah on Said's universality and with her perspective on the role of representation in communicative practices. I would also like to point out that there is still a need for Latin American Communicational Studies to work on a more scientific methodological "theoretical framework" of analysis. References associated in the mainstream approach to de-colonialisation in Latin America, which go as far back as the XVth or XVIth century (originating from the Dominican Order) do provide a historical context for our analyses, but they do not provide paradigmatic support for the key issues at stake.

As Erick wrote in his chapter in this book: "There are some differences, but not antagonist, ways to communicational de-coloniality that are being walked in Latin America" (Torrico Villanueva's chapter in this book, p. 267).

These new pathways may consist of new analytical scenarios and new global communicational perspectives. Currently, the work cementing

some of the analyses still lack a grounding in contexts, in-depth research and divergence from the mainstream hypothesis.

The new “Latin American critical and communication thought is shaping up without renouncing either to the modern contesting tradition or to the regional desire for liberation” (Torrico Villanueva’s chapter in this book, p. 267, emphasis removed).

However, Latin American thought lacks direct access to the global traditions and schools of thought that use the language of Shakespeare – the mainstream – in order to further contextualise their analyses. The still isolated schools of thought in Latin America Communication – keeping some exceptions in Chile, Brazil and Mexico in mind – must be integrated into the mainstream scientific community.

We should also be careful which concepts to use. For instance, liberation is certainly a term which does not explain the de-colonialization process of the former colonies, since liberation is no longer on-going, on the contrary. There are also other terms which I consider problematic: Erick wrote the following in this book chapter: “If Westernization can be understood as political or discursive action by which Western countries control historically (by elimination, absorption or marginalization) to the non-Western world, the intellectual and political challenge that encourages de-coloniality logically consists in de-westernize to take some steps towards the post-Westernization (Fernandez, 1978) that de-structure definitively the colonial power matrix.” (Torrico Villanueva’s chapter in this book, p. 268).

If I may respectfully disagree: Maybe this analytical framework may work to analyse the XXth century, but if we use the new Communicational Paradigm of Analysis of the XXIst Century, it is partially outdated, or it just no longer exists. I would agree that “communication, as a field and practice, is a central space in this contest” (Torrico Villanueva’s chapter in this book, p. 268) as Erick indicated. However, this context is paradigmatically “out of frequency” with the research reality outside the Latin American (and even Spanish) schools of thought.

Allow me to explain this more clearly: There has been a strong change in the Paradigmatic Discourse and Method of Communicational Studies which no longer applies to “the research reality” still under discussion in the mainstream Latin American schools. Changes in authors and references may come with the progressive increase of the relevance of a series of “new” XXIst century scholars from both sides of the Atlantic. A new generation of “modern communicational researchers” awaits, and they are renovating the discourses, methods

and analyses of our field. We now find ourselves in a situation where the Western countries no longer control the non-western world, as Erick wrote in his chapter (Torrico Villanueva's chapter in this book, p. 255), and we need to analyse and scientifically investigate the communicational processes in our worlds, using a global perspective. Unfortunately, the Latin American political and communicational discourse on the "liberation from the power matrix" has to come to terms with the paradigmatic change that took place in the late XXth century. "Liberation" has prevailed in Latin America, which implies that there is a need for a discursive renewal, to describe the new situations, and research them with updated scientific methodologies.

Nico: This then raises the question of whether communication and media studies has one only paradigm? Is there such a thing as a "Communicational Paradigm of Analysis of the XXIst Century"? Would we be able to agree on that? Or is our field characterized by a multi-paradigm logic, similar to George Ritzer's (1975) analysis of sociology?

Félix: No, there is not only one paradigm but many in construction. And there is a continuous renewal of existing paradigms. Is there such a thing as a "Communicational Paradigm of Analysis of the XXIst Century"? There is not one, but there is a need to (re)construct new paradigms with maybe regional peculiarities and to build on the novel foundations of the digital and interconnected world, where all markets and individuals are or will be, connected in continuous interactions. Big data, neural networks, advanced economic analysis, media psychology, audience research are fields where Communication Studies must intensely engage with. Are we able to agree on that? We may or not agree..., this is not relevant, but we must push forward and do not base our analyses primarily in outdated, or no longer fundamental, postulate pre-digital proposals. It is the trajectory and the scenario for all schools of thought in Communicational Studies, and in particular for those that are primarily working in key scientific languages like Spanish.

Is our field characterized by a multi-paradigm logic, similar to George Ritzer's analysis of sociology? Yes, since all fields in science and in particular in communication studies must breed from a multi-paradigm logic, and, of course, these logics must push frontier studies into maturity. Let's stand on the shoulders of the gigantic academies of science. Let's build a new and respected communicational paradigm

that is, of course, adapted to regional peculiarities, if needed, and that is also based on science, data and debate. Let's build bridges and open those regional academies to the new paradigmatic era of a renewed communicational research academia where, in particular in the case of the Spanish-speaking academia. They should rise, meet other academies, and exchange knowledge and methods in fair and equal ways, no longer complying to the only English-speaking "colonial science" scenario¹¹². The objective is possible. However, all academies must have reasons to meet and to exchange knowledge in an equal, mutual, beneficial "intercourse", if I may use a provocative term ... Possible ... yes ... but maybe not yet feasible. The job is harder on the Cervantian side, but our Latin American colleagues in the USA – given some time – may put the "intercourse" between academies (and the construction of new paradigms) into practice. Let's work on this utopian scenario.

Erick: There cannot be a single paradigm and less something that comes to be considered "the paradigm of the twenty-first century". In communication studies, as in other areas of social knowledge, there has always been and will be more than one way of approaching social phenomena.

However, assuming the concept of paradigm in the broadest sense of conceiving science, research and social reality as objects of study, the number of paradigmatic options decreases. And it is there, precisely, where emerges what can be called the "modern Eurocentric paradigm", which is the one that Félix seems to reproduce with remarkable enthusiasm.

When he says that Latin American communicational thought lacks scientificity, that it is anchored in a past that has been overcome, that it is not connected to the mainstream of knowledge and that it does not understand the digital world, besides using a secondary language (this means Spanish), Félix is simply expressing an old mentality that Latin America is questioning for decades.

It is in this kind of rhetoric that differences between the postmodernist technocratic fashion and the current Latin American de-colonial proposal become more evident. Latin America does not want to formulate a new

¹¹² See the JCR and Scopus Indexes, and the importance they attach to publications from the different regions of the world, as illustration of the differences between the Academies in the world.

paradigm but rather wishes to leave the sequence of (post)modern ethnocentric paradigms based on the logic of Western thought. The new technocentrism is only a variant of twentieth-century media-centrism. The utopia for Latin America does not consist in joining the illusion of the digitally interconnected world without social, economic and political structural changes. That must be clear.

Félix: My thoughts and opinions are based upon the content and methodological analysis which has been undertaken in the last decade at the Spanish communication association AEIC, in particular in the Methods section, and to a certain extent at ECREA, ... in particular within the Mapcom.es project and others. If you consult the results and conclusions, if you revise the impact and scientific quality of the Spanish speaking academia in terms of methods and of the professional management of journals, funding for research or presence in the global International fora,... it is emerging but resources, methods, quality global journals, ... are still lacking. My thoughts are broadly not based upon feelings or emotions but on hypothesis-driven science. Like a surgeon detecting cancer: Yes, we have a problem and we must first detect and then act, ... It is not spread everywhere,... it is not present in all research groups, or PhD programmes, master programmes, etc.... but we certainly need new genes... Unfortunately, science impacts factor ratings, JCR, Scopus, Google Scholar, research impact analysis with its H-indexes and similar tell us this. They are no absolute truths but the tendencies of these scientific scans tell us where we are. Apologies for being maybe a little too politically incorrect, ... but facts and analysis reveal the diagnostic. We may still not agree, and this is again not relevant.

Sarah: We all agree on the diversity of paradigms, I guess. But this is not about several paradigms, it is about what Jensen and Neuman (2013) have described as “paradigmatic aspirations” and how these are being shaped and how they are taking into account the different perspectives of the different regions, countries and localities in the world. Digitalization and globalization are challenging us as researchers every day, the world is becoming more complex, precisely because we can see and study cases from within different cultural, socio-political and economic contexts. And this is a huge opportunity and a huge responsibility at the same time.

Some paradigms have been more dominant than others, a circumstance given by the structural foundations of academia. It also

means that some concepts are better understood than others, some regions and countries better studied. I would argue that many European scholars do not even consider that elsewhere there might be a different dominant paradigm- even when they study the particular region or country context attached. I am surprised by how many colleagues that compare different country contexts are not familiar with the literature available from these contexts.

This disequilibrium is a problem. We need to be able to consider different perspectives – country-wise, method-wise, theory-wise – and we need to be able to study concepts from different paradigms. Speaking from my perspective, being European, I would like to have better access to a more diverse scholarship. I think when (de)fin(d)ing paradigmatic aspirations. We can only make them accountable, reliable and effective by constructing them through a dialogue with colleagues representing different perspectives. To illustrate my argument, let me borrow Jensen and Neuman’s metaphor of a paradigm as a set of puzzles. We all carry our puzzle set, the shape of each particle is determined by our concepts, questions, a hypothesis that underlies our research. Once the puzzle is put together, the question is how to make sense of what we see, as even if we carry similarly shaped particles, the overall image might differ. And we can only make sense of the image that the puzzle shows to us by looking at other puzzles to determine commonalities and differences and to start dialoguing about possibilities of interpretation and further questions that arise. I need access to a diversity of puzzles to understand my own results and to give them credibility. If I always look at similar images, my understanding will remain limited.

Félix: I fully subscribe to Sarah’s analysis and thoughts. My understanding will remain isolated, limited, and in the “cavern” if I do not explore at the frontiers of knowledge to construct those puzzles of knowledge, in between academies.

Nico: Erick, your text tends to see Western communication studies as homogeneous, while Sarah’s and Félix’s text emphasizes the heterogeneity of European communication studies? Would you agree with my analysis? And if so, which strategy works? Homogenization or heterogenization? Or both?

Sarah: I would guess that the three of us share the understanding that the future lies in a more diverse scholarship. I agree with Erick in the sense that European communication studies could need more

diversity when it comes to integrating more perspectives, as I outlined above. I am not sure, however, whether we can say that it is Eurocentric per se, as US American scholarship has been very influential in the construction and further development of European scholarship – and the different paradigms that we can find in Europe. The question is, however, how we can set incentives for academia as an industry in different world regions to engage more in the active intellectual exchange that triggers cooperation and openness. Therefore, we need to understand which aspects hinder this development and why.

Félix: Setting incentives for academia as an industry in different world regions to engage is not an easy task but is a needed scenario. If we have a look at how the Scandinavian Academia and German Academia and others have penetrated the Shakespearian-English Lingua Franca for science in the last 20 years or so, we may find some paths to follow, also in the communication studies field. At the times of Antonio de Nebrija, Latin represented the exchange and scientific language in Europe. Today, English prevailed as the Lingua Franca for academic and scientific exchange and production.

Bilingual work in all Academies, also in the Spanish-speaking Academia is a must. We need financial resources for research that allows for bilingual work and the consolidation of a professionalised editorial management at universities and editorial fora. We need a renewal of the genes, where the new academic professionals of the communication studies fields in Latin America, all of Europe (including Spain of course) and maybe also the Brexited UK, all publish their research in English, and where needed in a second or third scientifically relevant language. In other words, the “mobilization reasons” are resources, human capital, long-term, high-quality publishing strategies, mobility funding between academies, international funding opportunities between socio-cultural and economic forums, ... As said before, reasonable, ... difficult, partially feasible and utopian-like desirable. I always wanted Latin America to take the same decisions as the Scandinavian and German Academies, and some other regions in Europe took some 20 years ago. Let’s adapt to our idiosyncrasies but let start the change and interaction from within.

Erick: Several interesting topics have been raised both in Nico’s question and in the last interventions by Sarah and Félix. I am only going to refer to the most urgent of them.

I think that there are two fundamental aspects that we should consider in our discussion: one, the historical conditions in which communicational thought arises and develops, and, therefore, the field of study of communication; two, the notion of “paradigm” to which each one refers in this dialogue.

In the first case, the new Latin American critique is not limited to trying to understand the “new historical conditions” (Jensen & Neuman, 2013) that are combined with globalization and digitalization. On the contrary, what is under consideration are the historical conditions that produced the foundation to Western knowledge in general and the dominant communicational thought in particular. It is there that there is a homogenous epistemological base that has not been modified, which is not pluralistic and is rather qualified as the only one of universal validity. That is what the “modern paradigmatic Eurocentrism” refers to, which, in more precise terms, becomes a “western-centrism”. On the second matter, if the concept of “paradigm” is understood only as how an academic community approaches its object of study, it is clear that one must speak of diversity and pluralism, which is also what happens in the communication field which, according to the dominant thought, has “media”, old or new, and its functioning in society as its object.

Then, we can say that in our field, the homogeneity of the foundations coexists with the heterogeneity of the procedures and interpretations. And Latin America is proposing a reconsideration of that which, without doubt, must also affect the nature and characteristics of the last. Thus, it is true that in communication, we need an openness to diversity, reciprocal knowledge, exchange and comparison between perspectives, as argued by Sarah and Félix. And from there on, especially for Latin America, other requirements are derived. These were also pointed out by them: The institutionalization of research, with the consequent publication resources, in the framework of multilingualism.

Félix: There is not “a homogenous epistemological base that has not been modified” in European Academia; it is pluralistic and is not qualified as the only one of universal validity; it is multilingual and International; it is not Eurocentric or colonial in its paradigmatic structure of thought and dialogue. The “modern paradigmatic Eurocentrism” or “western-centrism” no longer primes or exist as you, Erick, indicate. Its validity lies in the scientific confrontation of hypotheses, ... Modern science is plural and global. Again, I do not agree, but this is not relevant.

Erick: I feel that there is some “noise” in our conversation because I am trying to differentiate between two levels of understanding of the concept of “paradigm”. I think I did not manage to clarify this enough. At the most abstract and encompassing level, it is precisely the notion of “modern science”, with all that it implies of epistemological assumptions and methodological procedures, which de-colonial thinking calls into question. This level presents the homogeneity and the pretensions of universality to which I alluded before. On the other hand, at the most concrete level of the approaches to reality that are studied—as, for example, the different ways that exist in the communication field, which includes all the “administrative” and “critical” variants – it is feasible to find diversity, internationalism, etc. So, it seems important to me that we do not agree because it helps to enrich our exchange.

Sarah: I agree that it is important to distinguish and define the terms and concepts we are discussing here. Halloran (1998) had argued that there is “research imperialism”, referring to a supposed dependency of emerging countries on the West. What we see at this moment is, however, not dependency, but invisibility and a major disconnect of two academic environments which hardly take each other into account on an intellectual level. Being European, I do not feel entitled to speak about how Latin American scholars should develop their work, where they should try to publish or with whom they should cooperate. I think, however, that the dialogue between the continents, between the different paradigms, should be open. It is striking to me; how invisible Latin American scholarship is in European communication studies. And I do not mean scholarship coming from Latin Americans working in the US or Europe; I mean scholarship coming from people who carry affiliations with Latin American institutions. This invisibility makes it difficult even to start dialoguing across continents and paradigms. We should start thinking about how to foster and actively engage into a dialogue in which of course we can not – and we should not – always agree. Speaking, for example, about the post-colonial tradition of thought on both ends, this is a concept studied on both continents. To me, it seems that the objects studied using post-colonial theories, and the perspectives are taken, vary between Latin American and European communication studies, because of the different positions of the researchers. Would you share this observation, Erick? I also observed that you prefer the term decolonization. Could you speak to what are differences between de-colonial and post-colonial and how this

influences your research activities and objects you would be interested in studying from where you are standing? I would be interested in hearing more from you in that regard.

Nico: Let me inquire a bit further, because this also brings out – at least for me ;), but also for Sarah – the (need to clarify) the differences between post-colonialism and post-coloniality, post-coloniality and de-coloniality. Would you agree with the differentiation between post-colonialism and post-coloniality that Pramod Nayar (2015) makes in the *Postcolonial Studies Dictionary*? And between post-coloniality and de-coloniality? How are these differences thematised in Latin America and Europe? Do they matter?

Erick: Concerning Sarah's question about the differences between the concepts of "postcolonial" and "de-colonial" I want to say that in the first case it means the critical thinking developed from the former British colonies and examining the effects that colonization had on local cultures, while in the second we have the criticism made from the subaltern Latin American perspective not only to the inheritance that colony left in the institutions and the discriminatory social hierarchy into the countries of this region, but also to the ethnocentric condition of Western knowledge. I have already explained other elements about this in my contribution to the chapter that gave rise to this dialogue.

Regarding Nico's question, I cannot answer it because I do not know the dictionary to which he refers. [In response, Nico sent Erick, Sarah and Félix the dictionary]

Sarah: This is very interesting because it explains how and why we might sometimes approach what we study, using different puzzles sets. The reason because of which we chose to speak of post-colonialism in our chapter is naturally inclined towards our position as Europeans. It is why I was asking about how the inclination to de-colonialism as a school of thought might be informing research activities in concrete cases in Latin America. Maybe one could argue that the nuances between de-colonial and postcolonial thinking might be informed by a different understanding and also experience of what is the state of the art. And this is something that might also differ between different scholars in Latin America or in Europe, as well, depending on their everyday realities. In our chapter, we voice the perception of

a disconnect between European and Latin American academia, as a result of thinking which emphasises the differences and of practices which foster disconnection. We think that opening up will not hurt European communication studies and that we need to ask more what we can learn from Latin American perspectives.

To answer the concerns for definitions: I am not sure whether there is a real difference between post-colonialism and post-coloniality in the sense that I would argue that post-colonialism (as school of thought) is a necessary condition informing post-coloniality (as estate of resistance or negotiation) so there is no exclusivity and I think this is what the reference Nico mentioned here also is inclined to, but writing from a very different perspective than Félix or myself are enabled to, because of our particular geographical and cultural belongings.

Félix: I totally and literally subscribe to Sarah's opinion on the issue. Still, if we were to analyse the nodes and connections between the different set of academies in Latin America and their regional puzzles represented in their journals, thesis and academic books, we are bound to find that the discourse on the main issues of colonialism and others is – to a certain extent – diametrically opposed in communication studies and other scientific areas. Again, if I may provoke, in European Academia, the post-Roman Empire influence, the Napoleonic influence, the German dominance and influence, the British Dominance and influence, or even the Spanish Dominance and influence in Europe, etc. are not issues within post-colonialism or postcolonial thought in Europe anymore, since (although historically relevant in explaining the origins and connections...) the new paradigms are integrated more in the internal diversity, in the different sets and puzzles, in the global perspective of moving forward in the scientific analysis of understanding, analysing and explaining our digitally connected global Society from the numerous set of Research,... We need to be clear that post-colonialism in Europe is certainly not a central issue, rather a post-historic analysis... Maybe in Latin America, some academic sets are bound to make headway in developing communicational studies in the XXIst century from a more future-oriented perspective.

Erick: In a general way, I agree with Pramod Nayar's definitions of "post-colonialism" and "post-coloniality" as a way of understanding the process of conquest, domination and exploitation of colonized countries by Europe and as the material conditions in which the ex-colonies live after their independence, respectively. Nayar also says

that “post-colonialism” is a cultural act of resistance to domination and that “post-coloniality” constitutes a different version of the colony, that is, its present continuation with other forms.

From the Latin American de-colonial perspective, “post-colonialism” is a critical current of thought that does not exceed the epistemological limits of European modernity, since it does not call into question the foundations of knowledge itself, nor does it take into account the particular historical conditions in which such foundations were established and converted into “universals”. And here is a central difference that is worth remarking: “post-colonialism” denounces and resists, de-colonial thinking does that as well but also proposes another horizon of knowledgeability. In Latin America, the category of “coloniality” is used instead of “post-coloniality” to indicate the institutional legacy and racist prejudices left by the colony and that continue to inform the life of the societies of the region. This coloniality permeates the realms of knowledge, power and being, from which comes the need to propose actions of liberation.

On decolonization, Nayar says that this concept refers to overcoming European economic control and achieving political-cultural independence. It seeks to revive native cultural forms, which, in any case, is damaged as a project because of globalization’s imposition of a set of First world’s standards. There are other differences to note: “decolonization” (in its epistemological, theoretical and cultural forms) in Latin America is different from “des-colonization” -with “s”- (the political and economic forms). The formal independence in the latter level was achieved between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but liberation remains, as a pending task, a condition that is ratified by processes of techno-economic and political-cultural globalization.

In this sense, as Sarah wrote, it can be said that there are different conceptual understandings based on particular historical experiences – past and present – for which we must agree that we need a more fluid and permanent interregional dialogue to open ourselves to reciprocal knowledge. Only in this way, it will be possible to stop thinking about the world from ethnocentrism and fashions that today insist on adopting homogenizing criteria with the argument of being (more) scientific or futuristic.

Félix: I do agree with some of Erick’s core analyses, but I deeply

disagree with his last sentence “Only...”, since it reduces the academic debate to a frontier debate between good and bad, with the European, North American and Asian academies at the centre ... Mainstreams vs marginalities, to a certain extent – not in all cases, I do not generalise – with the latter, marginalised and marginal academies, located south of the Río Bravo, with poor access to research funding, poor access to the frontier research in communication studies that are written in English, ... The resulting scientific production is then also seen as a by-product and symptom of a precariously funded, largely pre-data and pre-science academia, ... It is a discourse associated with baddies and goodies, with white and black... There is certainly greyer than a so bi-polarised world, ... In Spain, we find ourselves in a situation where we are trying to strengthen our field, inspired by what the German academia and other non-English research groups did 15 years ago, ... closing the gap and moving forward from our own marginal – to a certain extent – misery.

Nico: Thank you all for these clarifications. I find the contextualization very helpful and constructive. Still, I'm not sure if I agree with the idea that post-colonial thought excludes the construction of new horizons of intelligibility, though.

My reading of your interventions, and both theoretical traditions, is that there are different projects of hope at work. I would claim that post-colonial theory argues that these new horizons of intelligibility will always incorporate the nightmares (and dreams) from the past, but that re-articulation, re-workings, and re-constructions into novel ways of thinking remain perfectly possible. De-colonial theory seems to be more hopeful in believing that a clearer rupture with the past is possible. Does this reading make sense to you? And are you (we) simply working within different projects of hope, that at the same time contain a shared vision on the need for social change, grounded in more social justice, etc. ...

Félix: I fully share your arguments and projects of hope, Nico, since otherwise, I would find myself, as an empirical scientist, in a primarily irrational position. I am only debating on methods, science and facts concerning the fundamental differences between academic realities ... sometimes reality and facts bite.

Sarah: This is a very important observation, Nico. Obviously, utopian

hope has had a stance in post-colonial thinking. I am thinking here of “The Quest for Postcolonial Utopia” by Pordzik (2001), for example. Post-colonial thinkers emphasise the relevance of the past – the memory for the present and for some post-colonial thinkers this new present is set up to be an improved past. However, it is important to recognize that re-evaluations of what has become of the utopian dreams are equally important. In literature, this evaluation is expressed in terms like “social dreaming” (Sargent, 2000) and the recognition of a new pragmatic worldview as criticized by Jameson (1971). I would say that whatever these frustrated utopias might have been, or whatever they are, they form part of the post-colonial and we need to consider them in our analysis. Therefore, I also think we should have more thick descriptions of contemporary communicative post-colonial practices, contexts and situations to bring to the fore the frustrations and the new (or repeated) conceptualizations.

Erick: Latin American thought had at least four utopian horizons: anti-colonialism (against Spain and Portugal), anti-imperialism and the socialist revolution (against the United States), development and democracy. All this happened between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Decolonial thinking brings a new and different utopia: epistemological liberation, which can then give rise to other liberations in the economic, political and socio-cultural areas. In this scenario, full connectivity, electronic democracy or global citizenship, for example, are not the most important part of the Latin American utopia. So, I think the project of hope of de-colonialism is different. And if we return to the field that interests us, the communication field, we must see that re-humanization is the horizon for Latin America. In other words, it is the change of the dominant techno-centric paradigm that began with the mass media and now appeared with a new face: new information and communication technologies.

Nico: I think this brings me to my last question, and I want to return to one of Sarah’s earlier comments, when she wrote: “I think, however, that the dialogue between the continents, between the different paradigms, should be open.” How should this dialogue be enabled and facilitated? I must confess that I think that this conversation, with all of us locked in our conceptual and paradigmatic trenches, arguing for the uniqueness of our own concepts and paradigms, does not give that much cause for optimism. So, how would an intellectual project that looks for both commonalities and differences – what I have called a

sqrige elsewhere (Carpentier, 2014) – look like in actual academic practice?

Erick: Dear Nico, your final question seems to go back to an old debate in the field of communication, which Paul Lazarsfeld (2004) mapped in 1941, distinguishing between “critical” and “administrative” research, which in the 1980s reappeared in some way in the confrontation described by Umberto Eco (1988) between “apocalyptic” and “integrated”. In the early 2000s, Armand Mattelart (2006) reflected on the contrast between “technophobics” and “technophiles”. In a way, this has also been expressed in some of the criteria we have exchanged in this dialogue, considering the current situation of communication studies from the Latin American and European perspectives.

However, I want to point out two central differences concerning this conflicted past: The first is that the new Latin American critique, based on de-colonial thinking, does not only question the theoretical nucleus from which communication is studied, that is, the traditional “paradigms” and their pertinence. Instead, it proposes a revision of the epistemological bases of knowledge, established in the understanding that science is the product of a historical moment when was imposed the domination of the point of view of colonial empires and its civilizing project of modernity. So, we are talking about two different levels in the application of criticism. It is not only a question of opposing the “theoretical revolution” (what Karl Marx did, according to Louis Althusser (1965)) to the functional establishment, but of moving towards “epistemological independence” which opens another horizon of understanding of historical reality itself.

The second is that, in spite of what has been said, it is not about throwing it all away, but of recovering the elements already existing in the different fronts of research and theory that can contribute to the development of a new knowledge, based on plural, guided by purposes of re-humanization and community building. A key component in this sense is the search and legitimation of the common aspects that, for example, are found in the general theoretical propositions that share the different visions about communication and that make up the “academic culture” of our field (see my article on this topic - Torrico Villanueva, 2007).

It is not only necessary that “dialogue be open” but also that we

have an “openness to dialogue” so that the agonistic management in the academic world can become a reality. Lazarsfeld had already suggested the possibility of collaboration between “critics” and “administrative”, but today it is necessary to go further and exercise “epistemological reflexivity” that distances us from prejudices and ethnocentrism. It is here that Nico’s proposed metaphor (the sgridge) perfectly fits, as it combines the meeting represented by the bridge with the open space of the square. I want to thank Nico, Sarah and Félix for this conversation, which has been a piece of evidence that it is possible to get results from these interchanges.

Félix: The dialogue in science should and may always be open of course, ... Optimism will come with resources, the free flow of researchers between Academies, proper funding for avant-garde research, ... We have no interest, on our side, to remain on the marginal and peripheral side of methods in science, ... English, professional scientific journals, technology and scientific software, stable funding for RD in communication studies and stable grants for pre- and post-PhD researchers are part of the recipe for change, ... A new generation of researchers awaits a much-needed renewal of the Spanish academia in communication research, in both sides of the Atlantic ... they will provide a proper flexible osmosis between academic concepts and puzzles, ... I hope. We have to inspire our hopes in copying what the Danes and Swedish have undertaken in the last 30 years, or so, in their academic projects within universities and research institutions, ... Otherwise Winter ... Science will not be coming to the Latino-academic world, or it will arrive later in time, through the “spanification” of North American universities and research institutions ... Hopefully, Summer and Science may prevail and flow into our diverse and varied academic scenarios, ... I remain positive. Changes are already taking place in Spain and also on the other side of the Atlantic ... Let’s move forward and not sideways or alongside the same old narratives. Have a nice Summer.

Sarah: Thanks Nico, Erick and Félix. Scholars from different disciplines have called in the past for a cosmopolitan approach to research. I think here, of course, of Ulrich Beck whose idea of cosmopolitanism has been reflected over the past decade in writings by Sonja Livingstone, Silvio Waisbord, also by Kathrin Wahl-Jorgensen and Pablo Boczkowski. Each of these communication scholars actively includes notions of cosmopolitan thinking and practice into their disciplines within

communication studies. Having said that, striving for open dialogues is not new, and academic cosmopolitanism is not a naïve way of seeing research. Cosmopolitan researchers look across and share disciplinary, cultural, geographical, linguistic and structural borders, accepting the challenges that this imposes. Of course, dialogue can only be open, if we ask questions beyond definitory issues, looking into the implications of our paradigmatic belongings—in cases when we strongly identify with a particular paradigm. Academic cosmopolitanism firstly starts with the little things we can do such as reading, thinking about and quoting scholars from outside Europe and the US, for example (Ganter & Ortega, 2019). Again, I am surprised to see how many colleagues write about countries or regional territories without including work from scholars from those countries and territories. So, inclusion is an important point here. Again, this does not mean to “homogenize” or to debate away conflicting perspectives and approaches.

On the contrary, inclusion also means recognizing differences and to ask what we can learn from those differences and where they provide us with points of connection. Academic cosmopolitanism, secondly, depends on structural conditions. Facilitating academic cosmopolitanism means sensitizing funders, editors, publishers and administrators about the importance of cosmopolitan approaches to research. As mentioned above, access to diversity of contents is pivotal to improve the contextualization and interpretation of results and to trigger further questions, in short: to keep vitality inside our subject. As Erick said, openness to dialogue and an open dialogue are critical to achieve this exchange. It is in line with the calls for cosmopolitan approaches issued by Ulrich Beck and others. I think this book is a great starting point of how to pursue this in a more formalized way and I hope many more initiatives will follow.

Nico: My warm thank you to all three of you, for this investment, which probably needs much more time and energy. I look forward to its continuation.

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06 FEMINISM

Gender and Communication: Advances and SetBacks in an Iberian Peninsula in Crisis

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1. Introduction

Gender in communication and the media is a consolidated field of study, with numerous publications on different national realities, from Margaret Gallagher's first studies for UNESCO (1979, 1981, 1987) to name one of the pioneers in the field, to numerous other studies since these earlier works. At a transnational level, the work by Carolyn M. Byerly (2011), in collaboration with the International Women's Media Foundation contained important data on the situation of European women in news organizations, and this research was completed in 2013 in the *The Palgrave International Handbook of Women and Journalism*. Likewise, the updated version of *Journalism, Gender and Power* (Carter et al., 2019) deals with enduring issues on gender and the news. Also to be mentioned at the European level, Padovani and Ross (2016) provide key analysis and complement particular projects on important aspects of feminist media production by European women (Zobl and Drüeke, 2012) or key indicators on gender equality and women in decision-making decisions in European media (EIGE, 2013). These studies gave us useful and important information on empirical aspects concerning gender in European media. The research by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2013) for example, presented comparable data on the levels of gender inequality in the European media landscape, including issues of employment, representation and institutional policies. However, the EU has rarely addressed global gender equality commitments or produced measures on women and the media, nor was the media referred to as a priority in the Commission's Strategic Engagement for Equality gender 2016-2019 or in the documents of the EU Council for equality between women and men 2011-2020. Nevertheless, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive of 2018 marked some development in updating the EU legal framework on media, calling on Member States to eliminate discrimination based on sex in audiovisual commercial communications (EIGE, 2020).

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The studies that we mention here and the numerous ones that have been produced since we wrote this chapter are key to a view on the global empirical landscape of the gender dimension of European communication practices, including what generically unites them. In the words of Claudia Padovani, Karen Ross and Margaret Gallagher: “Our findings demonstrate that significant barriers continue to hold women back, continue to prevent their career ambitions from being realised, that glass walls as well as ceilings are still very much in place in the European media sector” (Padovani et. al, 2016: 233).

It is however at a national level that we understand the cultural specificities of the different countries as they help us explain those very same differences and similarities. In Portugal and Spain, the two countries that will be our focus in this chapter there are many cultural differences, as well as many aspects which unite them. This article seeks to balance these divergence and convergence points in what relates to our fields of study on women and the media in our two neighboring countries.

By putting ourselves on the study field of communication and gender in these two countries we want to, on one hand, complement the vast number of publications that account for the reality of other European countries on this matter; and, on the other hand, offer a wide (though necessarily brief) historical and cultural context of the field of studies on women and the media in the Iberian Peninsula. The comparative dimension with Europe lies outside of the frame of this work and our chapter offers an insight of what these countries have historically been and are today and how this reflects on their academic production, hoping to contribute to the field of gender and media studies in Europe.

2. The present and past of the Iberian countries: the slow emergence of awareness about discrimination

Many things have changed in Spain and Portugal since the instauration of democracy (1976 and 1974, respectively), but without a doubt one of them is the state of awareness of how women were traditionally subjected to deep inequalities. The awareness of their profound discrimination during the dictatorships of Franco in Spain (1939-1975) and Salazar, and Caetano in Portugal (1928-1974) finally touched a large number of women (and quite a few men) in the last 40 years, leading to a most needed change that came about

with the young democracies in both countries. This change occurred in numerous contexts including education, health, politics, economy, family, sexuality and affective relationships (Gallego, 2010; Castaño, 2015; Ferreira, 2002).

The change in women's awareness about their own realities was largely brought about by the action of numerous feminist groups who contributed to the change after democracy was in place. During the previous dictatorships in Spain and Portugal the feminist movement could not, under each respective dictatorships, structure and manifest itself as in other countries. Yet, this did not mean that a feminist awareness wasn't developing through the actions of some brave women and emerging groups of women. Indeed, even under strong political censorship and repression, individual feminists began questioning the patriarchal norms in the late sixties in a struggle that intensified in the late seventies and eighties, already in democratic times, reflecting what was happening in other countries at the time. Deprived from the freedom to organize national feminist movements for many decades, we still owe to the international feminist movement the slow and yet pertinent extension of those issues considered "personal" until Kate Millet (1970) alerted that they were also political.

An important aspect for Iberian countries leaving large periods of dictatorship behind is the fact that with their democratization in the late seventies, and their political integration in the European Union, women were able to benefit from the importance key issues had acquired within international policies – particularly in Europe. That resulted in the 'glocalization' of equality politics.

Another important change in these last four decades has been the irruption of information technologies, its extension all over the world and the impact of media communication on contemporary societies.

These two phenomena (the change in the status of women and their awareness of inequality and the enthronement of the communicative context as a neuralgic center of society) couldn't but converge in multiple crossroads to offer a varied, rich and diverse field of research on gender and communication removed the very limited scenario in Spain and Portugal until the late nineties. Here, we offer a brief review of the evolution of this study area, that has evolved from the deserted field of the eighties to today's hopeful spring of inspiration of Gender and Communication studies in our two countries.

3. From women studies to gender studies

One of the most important changes in this academic field was its name. For a long time, most of research on the subject was labelled Woman/women and the Media (Balaguer, 1985) which says a lot about the conceptual leap that was happening. Gallego (1993) wrote a brief status of the issue and the European Commission published a report on the research made in the European Union within this field of study (Kivikuru et al., 1997).

In Portugal, the work of Madalena Barbosa (1998) on “the representation of gender” in national politics was a milestone in media and communication studies in the late nineties.

In the seventies there were groups under the label of Women’s Studies, sometimes called Feminist Studies, in some University departments, mainly in the United States, with the same core objective: to approach, from different disciplines’ perspectives, the inequality between women and men in society. As such, the problematization of “woman” or “women”, seemed to leave aside of the problem the other half of humankind, men. In a way, by approaching “women” as a problem, not only were men excluded, but also this field of study was almost always made solely of women researchers, while men didn’t seem to be bothered by the subject. Indeed, looking at most of the published studies in the seventies and eighties we see that the authors are almost always women and that men’s contributions shine by their absence.

This begun to change as the concept of “gender” became more popular. Having been used by many in the sixties, its acceptance by the scientific community and its extension in general only happens in the nineties. Furthermore, in Latin countries such as Portugal and Spain the word “género” had, for a long time, a single connotation with grammar. Compared to “women” as an issue, the approach based on the gender problematized the relation between the sexes, the assumptions of identity and the mechanisms through which it is acquired. Through this, the study field amplified and became more complex. It also provoked several critiques in that the concept of “gender” had displaced, if not obliterated, the inequality between men and women (Tubert, 2003) mostly citing one of the most important theories of the queer theory and the approaches that question sex, as gender, as a social construction (Butler, 1993).

As mentioned by Teresa Joaquim on the study of women in Portugal, the analytical category of gender would also be established in the nineties, having been converted in a “*pass-partout*” word, especially in

its migration and translation into institutional environments often with an inadequate use (...) as it hides the critique contained in this analytical category in a way that 'de-politicizes' women's struggle" (2004:89).

Thus, the research framework focusing on woman/women changed from the nineties into the multifaceted field of the Gender Studies, and from then onwards it registered more contributions by scholars, both women or men, until it became today's fertile research area (Buonanno, 2014). One consequence of this conversion of Women's Studies into Gender Studies was the incorporation, if not massive than at least significant, of male authors who included gender in their academic journeys.

If this has represented an advance or a setback when it comes to analyzing and tackling social inequality between men and women is still a matter of dispute, as recent controversies in the public sphere have shown. Likewise, it is not always easy to interlock or harmonize different conceptual axis in play: women, men, feminism, sex and gender identity or recognition are terms that have generated some debate among feminists, from different approaches and perspectives. Even though there are broad agreements, obvious discrepancies can also be found.

4. The institutionalization of inequality

Isolated initiatives and personal character are some of the characteristics of the first studies on these issues in Spain. Female professors, researchers and scholars highly concerned with inequality invested their time and sometimes money in publishing isolated studies or analyses on some specific aspect, at the most helped by few scholarships or isolated grants (Roig Castellanos, 1977, Perinar and Marrades, 1980).

In Portugal, the situation wasn't any different. In the seventies, actions around equality are sporadic, although there are also only a few biographical works aiming to give women the visibility history had denied them (Tavares, 2008). For Virginia Ferreira (2002) the area of studies on women, as a collective project, gained some visibility especially since 1985. That year, the two conferences held in the Universities of Coimbra and Lisbon dedicated to women's situation, would later be accompanied by the development of research projects in this field and the progressive extension of the study areas, initially highly concentrated in history.

However, Ferreira (2002:34) also points out that both conferences “would be the result of individual volunteers, without any real increase in research activities or teachings in women’s studies”.

The democratic change in both countries and the impulse of the new State’s policies did produce some impact in this area, though in the Portuguese case the background dates before the democratic revolution of 1974. This differs from other south European countries (Spain and Italy), where the mechanisms of State Feminism appeared around a decade later than in other countries. In Portugal, a Work Group for the Definition of a National Global Policy on Women, headed by Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo, was created in 1970. It would be followed by the Comissão para a Política Social Relativa à Mulher (Commission for Women’s Social policy) in 1973, finally to be replaced after the democratic revolution by Comissão da Condição Feminina, and institutionalized two years later with the first constitutional government (Monteiro, 2011). These will be the first steps into what, in the eighties, will be denominated Feminism Institutionalism or even State Feminism (Valiente, 1994, Monteiro, 2011).

In Spain, this process became visible essentially since 1982, with the victory of the Socialist Party and the creation of the Institute of Women (1983) – which corresponds in Portugal to what is today the Commission for Citizenship and Gender equality (CIG) , to gradually create different Institutes for Women or similar institutions in each one of the seventeen autonomous communities in Spain. The promotion of research on issues of equality, as well as the publishing of journals and books on those issues, are some of the outputs of such institutes.

Also in the case of Spain, because of the funding provided by these institutions, numerous research groups within universities began producing work on the matter enlarging the almost non-existing research landscape of previous years.

The thrust by these institutions, plus the increasing social awareness of the sexism in language, crystalized in institutions and associations through the production of books on good practices, essentially focused on the use of non-sexist language. This is a trend followed by most small groups, associations, parties or unions leading to publications of Guides for a non-sexist use of language, or recommendations on how to approach issues of gender (Bach et al., 2000). Also, in Portugal the Commission for Equality was published a *Guia para uma Linguagem Promotora da Igualdade entre Mulheres e Homens na Administração Pública* (Guide for the Promotion of Equality of Language between Women and Men in the Public Administration). However, the country

still lacks consistent financing lines for research on gender issues.

The proliferation of books on good practices gave rise to a debate in Spain when the full professor Ignacio Bosque published a report titled *Sexismo Lingüístico y Visibilidad de la Mujer* (Linguistic Sexism and Women Visibility) (El País, 4/03/2012) signed by the majority of scholars of the Royal Spanish Academy, which analyzed and questioned if these guidelines were made without the supervision or counselling of linguists and experts, wondering if they mostly represented a setback of the language which did not help the overcoming inequality, which is not denied in the report.

This controversy reflects the state of institutional concern, though also social, for the lack of visibility of women, as for the discriminatory use of language, all of which creates a growing unrest among large portions of the population. The new legal frame created by the Integral Law against Gender Violence (2004) has contributed to this situation, as did the Law for Equality (2007), both created during the governing mandates of the socialist party. A more recent approach on the issue, and also coming from a specialist, Eulàlia Lledó, is *Cambio lingüístico y prensa* (2013).

It is also worth mentioning the attention by Universities to this field of studies. In Spain, though there is a legal context for universities to incorporate a gender perspective of in all their degrees, this is far from happening, and not all Centers or degrees have done so. Some master's degrees and specific post-graduation courses have been established, though mostly not in the specific framework of communication. The Autonomous University of Barcelona implemented the first master's degree in Gender and Communication, aiming to become a reference in these studies in Spain and Latin America. There are other specialized master's degrees, though not focused on communication.

In Portugal, the development of women's studies is mostly due to the influence of associations such as APEM (Portuguese Association of Women's Studies) (1991) and the APHIM (Associação Portuguesa de História e Investigação sobre as Mulheres - Portuguese Association of Historical Research about Women) (1997) and thanks to Journals such as *Ex Aequo* and *Faces de Eva* (Joaquim, 2004; see also Amâncio, 2003, 2005). A landmark in its institutionalization, at a higher education level, was the master's degree on Women Studies in 1995, at the Open University, by the foundation of the Interdisciplinary Center of Gender Studies in 2012 and today by the PhD in Feminist Studies at the University of Coimbra.

To Maria do Mar Pereira (2016: 103), "There is in the contemporary

Portuguese academy an increase and public recognition of the epistemic status and the relevance of feminist research”, though “the general public mood of higher acceptance of the WGFS coexists with the non-official regular devaluation of the feminist academic career and its scholars: often (...) are assertions are made in an informal and humoristic manner that WGFS cannot be ‘adequate’ knowledge” (Idem). Hence, the general position of Gender Studies in Portugal is still marginal and precarious (Pereira, 2016). Augusto et. al (2018: 124) also agree: “although important changes have occurred, the field still suffers from a scientific underestimation (...) understood as a matter of women or minorities which can influence the current vision of this field as less effective, less competitive and less important”. Furthermore, in the field of communication, which has seen a clear growth in publications in Portugal, gender issues still have little presence in the curricula of communication and media studies, despite the evident growing interest in the issue.

5. Main research focus

Bearing in mind the previous background and the idea that neither Spain nor Portugal has yet won the battle of academic prestige of Gender Studies, the specific context of communication has been one of the most researched fields. Thus, much work on gender in the news media, for example, has been done in Spain since the early works of Fagoaga and Secanella (1984), Bueno Abad (1996), Bach et. al. (2000) or Moreno et. Al (2007) or the Portuguese research by Silveirinha (2004), Peça (2010), Cerqueira (2012) or Simões (2014). Another field that received some *attention* were women magazines, with contributions by Spanish authors such as Gallego (1990), Menéndez (2006) or Garrido (2012), and Portuguese researchers such as Marques (2004) or Alvarez (2012).

Television has also been of interest to researchers, as seen in the work on Portuguese news television by Lobo and Cabecinhas (2010), the State’s Portuguese television (Alvares, 2014) or its memory by female audiences (Carvalho, 2014). Radio has been the least studied media outlet, though in Spain López Díez (2005) for example has included it in several reports and studies.

The issue of gender representations and stereotypes is possibly the most thoroughly studied issue in both countries, although often lacking a perspective that allows an understanding of how gender differences are created and produced and how they relate not only to

media economy and culture but also to employment policies, namely in decision making (Subtil and Silveirinha, 2017a).

An emerging field (Kivikuriu, 1997) is that of new digital media, where early contributions such as those of Mateos de Cabo et al. (2007), Cerqueira e Cabecinhas (2009), Ganito (2012), and more recently Álvares (2018), Silveirinha (2017), Silveirinha et. al (2020), Puente et. al (2019) as some relevant contributions.

In terms of communicative modalities, advertising has been one of the most analyzed, namely because the field has presented the most flagrant reoccurrence of stereotyped representations of women: Peña-Marin (1990) or Martín Serrano (1995) in Spain were the two pioneers to whom as been jointed most recently the works of Sánchez Aranda (2002) and Mota-Ribeiro (2002) or Pinto-Coelho and Silvana Mota-Ribeiro (2012).

Other key work has been made in Spain by the different Observatorios de la Publicidad (Advertising Observatories) sponsored by the Institutes of Women and other institutions that make annual reports on citizen's complaints on commercials and ad's campaigns. In Spain, the reports by the Women's Institute has made since 2000 until 2014 show an evolution line of these complaints. In Portugal, only Entidade Reguladora para a Comunicação Social (Regulatory Authority for Communication) (ERC) produces policy advice within the field.

Fiction in cinema or television has given to the field some very significant titles in Spain, like those of Aguilar (1998), Arranz (2010), Sangro and Plaza (2010), Gallego (2012), or Tous and Aran-Ramspott (2017).

Other work addressing gender and communication in general in Spain are those of Plaza et al. (2007), Gallego (2013), or Bernárdez (2015), and in Portugal special issues of journals such as *Media & Jornalismo, Comunicação e Sociedade* and *Ex Aequo*. Also to be mentioned is the work on media, women and politics in Portugal (Martins, 2015) and on media policies (Álvares and Veríssimo, 2016; Álvares, 2019; Cerqueira and Cabecinhas, 2012; Subtil and Silveirinha, 2017b).

6. Approaches and recurrent issues

One of the first communication models by Lasswell (1948) is summed up in five questions: Who, Says what, In which Channel, To Whom, With what effect? These would revolve around elements that have been being analyzed since then: a) production; b) contents; and c) reception.

Even though this is a limited and problematic model, it allows us to see in the references we mentioned previously, that most studies had been centred on contents – namely the gender representation in the daily press, magazines, television programs, TV shows or the movies, as well as advertising. Indeed, in her early mapping of feminist studies of the media Van Zoonen (1994) soon identified the representation of women as a core field of research.

Perhaps it was media content's accessibility and visibility that have led researchers to take it as a study object as “the what”, and much less “the who” and lesser still, the “what effects”. Given the public funding system, which in both countries is not all generous in terms of number of grants for social sciences, the submitted projects are usually prudent when asking for funds they know they are not going to get. It is not within the reach of most to make population survey to analyze the possible effects of media content, or study professional routines in situ, but it is more feasible to establish a representative sample of contents and proceed to its analysis. Since quantitative methods have to gained more credibility among the scientific community than qualitative ones, most studies have opted for the former methods, even though in recent years the qualitative methods such as focus groups, interviews or participant observation became more popular. Ethnography of media organizations, though not many in number have also provided some good results, giving relevance to inequalities in gender and the media. Yet, research in Spain focused on news producers and professional routines are scarce: those of Gallego and Del Rio (1994) and that of CIS (2000) are focused on who produces information in Catalonia and Spain, respectively, and Gallego (2002) analyzed the professional routines of the general information daily newspapers through a direct observation of the media, in a detailed ethnographic analysis of a complex organization such as daily newspapers. In Portugal, the specific work on women journalists is also quite scarce, with a few exceptions such as the quantitative analysis of women journalists by Subtil (2009) and Miranda (2014), as well as the qualitative analysis of the gender experience in Portuguese press rooms by Lobo et. al. (2017).

Other research on reception through to focus groups is that by Garmendia (1998) and Bernárdez (2007) in Spain (introducing intersectionality through the variables of gender and immigration), and Lobo and Cabecinhas (2010) or Carvalheiro and Silveirinha (2015) in Portugal.

Among the issues that have captured most attention is the news media representation of violence against women, in particular since the

Law against Violence of Gender in Spain (2004) as there was a priority line of research for public organisms. Among a large number of titles, there are relevant contributions on this issue such as those of Fagoaga (1999), Fernández (2003) and García González (2008). The Association of Women Journalists in Catalonia (ADPC) began a monitorization of news media on gender violence aiming to find if the recommendations proposed by different institutions have any effect in the media. Annual reports have been published since 2009 up to 2014, coming to general conclusions that although there is a decrease in inadequate coverage, there is an increase of violence 2.0, on the Internet, by aggressive groups towards women's gains (Carrasco et. al, 2015). One of the most recent contribution in this field is the collective work *Gender and Violence in Spanish Culture. From Vulnerability to Accountability* (2018) deriving from the theoretical notion of 'ethical *witnessing*' by Kelly Oliver (2004). These references are obviously not exhaustive, for there has been much research in the last years in the form of contributions to conferences, journal articles or other publications in collective volumes, that we were unable to include in this brief review.

7. The relationship between gender/feminist studies and social movements

The relationship between feminist/gender studies and social movements gave visibility to the work produced in both countries analyzing the development of those movements, including feminist and gender activism in the Peninsula. As many have observed, this was at least in part a result of the changing communications environment, including not only the changes in the information distribution, but also in mobilizations and most of all, the articulation with multinational movements and the "transnationalization of the public sphere" (Fraser, 2007). Social movements in Portugal and Spain weren't immune to these processes, namely in their connection with transnational feminist networks (Moghadam, 2005).

Despite this observable connection, for instance in how websites of feminist networks of both countries transnationalize their issues, they don't seem to make full use of the internet for activist's purposes. In Spain, Sonia Núñez Puente et. al. (2017) show how both institutional websites and virtual feminist communities on violence against women do not go much beyond debates and governmental policies, providing little participation or interaction by the victims.

Portugal, on the other hand, has a considerably lower level of activism than that of its neighboring Spain, reflecting on the use of networks. Hence, the conclusions by Portuguese researchers on the analysis of social networks of Portuguese feminist groups: despite the significant number of websites promoting the dissemination of ideas and the public discussion around women's rights, its popularity is low as are the numbers of followers and their participation (Marôpo et al., 2017).

In previous sections we mentioned historical aspects that have shaped our two countries. However, cultural issues also need to be considered when we analyze the issues at hand.

One such aspect is the conservative view in both countries that, following the roman catholic church, establishes the dangers of the so-called "gender ideology" which a Portuguese church document describes as not "a simple intellectual hype. Rather, it refers to a cultural movement reflecting on the understanding of family, in the political and legislative public sphere, in education, in the media and in current language itself" (Carta dos Bispos Portugueses) (Letter of the Portuguese Bishops, 2013). In Spain, the catholic church also insists that "the human person exists as man and woman, which means that it was created to live in a community. Sexual diversity leads to complementarity that allows a solid married and family life, permanent in time, composed by father, mother and some children" (Asamblea de los Obispos del Sur de España) (Assembly of Bishops of South Spain, 2018).

The background of conservatism in both countries is even more exacerbated when the far right-wing uses this idea. It is what happened in Spain in March 2017, when a bus carrying the ultra-catholic group Hazte Oír went through Madrid carrying the transphobic message: "Boys have penises, girls have vulvas. Don't let them fool you. If you're born a man, you're a man. If you're a woman, you will continue to be so". It was precisely to confront these attacks articulated as popular misogyny and as a moment to hide and devalue feminisms, that Spanish activist got together not only through huge street demonstrations but through important actions in social media (Puente & Gamez, 2017).

Besides the striking differences in the levels of activism, there are other differences between Portugal and Spain. First, we must stress that in 2019 Portugal ranked 16th in the 28 European countries Gender Equality Index developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), while Spain was above the European average, in the 9th position. This difference in the levels of gender equality is also felt in the way both countries live their very own perception of the meaning of equality.

In Portugal, despite the actions of activists, the country seems to live in a generalized apathy in what concerns the issues of gender, which coexists in an apparently pacific way with the daily misogyny of the Portuguese society. This doesn't mean that there aren't obvious efforts of calling out such misogyny, though it seems the latter has to adopt a flagrant form to mobilize some voices. Thus, the way sexism is disseminated throughout the Portuguese society is visible in its judicial system, which has produced flagrant cases of sexism. For instance, in June 2017, a panel of judges wrote a judgment to present to an Appeal Court in order to corroborate the suspension of the sentences of two men convicted of serious attacks to a woman. The judgment read that "a woman committing adultery is a false, hypocritical, dishonest, disloyal, futile, immoral person. In short, she lacks moral probity. It is not surprising that she resorts to deception, farce, lies to hide her disloyalty". The prosecutor had argued the sentence was too lenient and asked an appeals court for prison time but the appeal judges rejected his request. In their written ruling, the judges expressed "some understanding" for the attacker, saying a woman's adultery is "a very serious offense against a man's honor and dignity. They noted the Bible says an adulterous woman should be punished by death and also cited a 1886 Portuguese law that gave only symbolic sentences to men who killed their wives for suspected adultery. Also in 2017 Portugal was condemned by the European Court of Human Rights due to a controversial sentence in the case of a woman who pursued a compensation claim for medical malpractice after an operation left her in pain when walking, sitting and certainly when having sex. The judges decided that the awarded compensation should be reduced as she was over 50, and sex for the over 50s woman "is not so important."

In Spain, misogyny and devaluation of women also projected one of its most visible facets in judicial cases, though in this country, feminist movements are better organized with more voices for its expression and protests. Such was the case of the controversial sentence of a group sexual assault of a young woman in Sanferminas de Pamplona in 2016 (known as *La Manada* – the wolf pack). The ruling by a panel of judges finding the five men guilty of the lesser charge of "sexual abuse", not sexual assault (rape), caused an uprising of the feminist movement and triggered deep outrage and protests visible in almost all Spanish cities in March 8th 2018. In June 2019, Spain's Supreme Court overruled the 'La Manada' case's verdict, charging the five men with rape, not sexual abuse, and increasing their prison sentences from

9 to 15 years, correcting a flagrant injustice understood as such by the entire society.

The reaction and denunciation of such cases can be better understood in a context of global feminist actions, such as #metoo and #timesup which have centred the public debate on women's inequality, power and sex, echoing in all western countries. The transnational element of these movements is the violence against women, which does not know frontiers and is articulated with local cultures. In Portugal, cultural life is quite complacent with this sort of violence (Câncio, 2018) and the movements contesting it have limited capacity of social mobilization. In Spain, even though the feminist mobilization capacity is considerably higher, there is also a degree of hegemonic resistance.

The convergence of the Spanish feminist movement with gender studies will possibly strengthen after the last events we've mentioned in the previous paragraphs, to which we must add the arrival to the Spanish Government of the Socialist Party (2018) after the triumph of the motion of censure against Mariano Rajoy, of the *Partido Popular* (Popular Party), a consequence of the corruption scandals related to the Gürtel case. The nomination of eleven women ministers out of a total of seventeen Ministries (including that of presidency) and the reestablishment of the Ministry for Equality made the issues of inequality between men and women surface again in the political and media agenda.

8. Future perspectives in a peninsula in crisis

While the area of study of Gender and Communication consolidates and steadily attracts more research interest, the specific funds for these issues have stalled or receded, namely due to the cutbacks since the financial crisis back in 2008. The most important institutions which still make research calls are, in Spain, the Institutes for Women (its central office and those of the different autonomous communities) and in Portugal the *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia* (Foundation for Science and Technology) (FCT) as well as the funding programmes and tenders managed by the European Commission and other EU bodies.

In Spain, the 2012 Call for Research had a total of funded projects on gender issues across disciplines (with a total of 597.208 euros) but only two were related to gender violence and popular culture. Also to be mentioned, the Equal Opportunities Strategic Plan 2014-2016, estimated

in over 3.000 million euros, tackled seven axes (employment; work-life balance; violence, political, economic and social participation and education), though it is more theoretical than real, as the Plan is implemented yet unnoticed by society. One of the goals of this Plan is to reinforce studies and research with a gender-perspective, especially in the State Plan of Scientific and Technical Research and Innovation, that has funded some research projects. One must wait a few years until we can evaluate the reach of the research currently in progress.

In Portugal, despite the fact that the media was mentioned across the Plans for Equality that the country has known, there were no references to the need to develop research in this field, and the vague policies on communication and gender are developed mostly by mimicking international policies as there are no specific measures for the field (Subtil and Silveirinha, 2017b).

The main research funding institution is often criticized for its disregard of Social Sciences and Humanities in general and communication sciences in particular, with obvious consequences for gender studies. In general terms, the policies of austerity have produced a clear gendering of the recession (Negra and Tasker, 2014), hindering the advances in gender equality of the past 40 years of democracy (Silveirinha et. al, 2016).

As scholars of gender inequality in media and communication we must locate ourselves within specific realities. Certainly, the political history, tradition and culture of a nation lie heavy on how individuals socially build gender. Our chapter has highlighted the Portuguese and Spanish cultural specificities – including their history, their respective dictatorships, the strong influence of the catholic church, the culture of sexism and certain degrees of impunity, but also how Spanish and Portuguese women organize and fight for their rights, often with the support of other European and global women movements. These specificities must extend to cultural dimensions that are broader around gender issues. In the words of Aboim and Vasconcelos (2012:3): “The principles of gender equality, and overall equality between all individuals, are very rarely openly questioned in the Portuguese public sphere, even by conservative organizations, such as the Roman Catholic Church. The trauma of dictatorship and its strongly traditionalistic agenda is still well alive”.

In Spain, there have been periods when gender issues had a prime position in the political agenda and also in the media, especially during the socialist governments when the laws against the violence of gender (2004) or equality between men and women (2007) were put

in place. However, conservative governments and the crisis after 2008 not only did not improve gender inequality as this has been reduced. Much the same way, gender issues seemed to have vanished from the media agenda. A socialist government and the renewed Ministry for Equality invigorated the situation, and the feminist demonstrations of 2018-2019 have put gender back in the political and media agendas, hopefully resonating in gender studies across different academic disciplines.

The analysis of the cultural differences between our two Iberian nations and other European countries or how those differences might emerge in the media construction of gender were beyond the scope of this chapter, but we believe it offers potentially fruitful avenues for future research: understanding how gender, as a process, is made and performed in different ways, and how local culture, economy and politics may impact gender according to contexts and the particular idiosyncrasy of the different European countries may be a daunting and yet important task for research and collective action.

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Gender Studies within the Communication Field in Latin America: A Brazilian Perspective

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Introduction¹¹⁸

Since the late nineteenth century, women gradually initiated one of the great revolutions in the West, starting to be participating in society evermore actively. With this we positioned only a few in the public space, transcending the private sphere which until then was traditionally reserved to them. The change in social action is visible in the working environment and, consequently, in the extension of the possibility for a career– and the fundamental economic independence–, the emergence of community leadership, in research and education, including, though to a lesser extent, the representation in governmental and political systems (Miguel; Biroli, 2011).

This movement also occurs in Latin America. Here women's struggle develops supported by a great number of public spaces of academic discussion and exchange of experiences. We highlight the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encounters (EFLAC¹¹⁹), that have been taking place since 1981, which has an important position within the configuration of the region's feminists, in the articulation and conflicts in the feminist movement and also in their relationship with broader social movements.

This set of spaces constitute transnational spheres for dialogue which are organized outside the renowned public arenas, as the conferences

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118 This chapter takes more in-depth reflections from the authors in an article published in the Revista Famecos, vol. 23 n°2, cited in the bibliography.

119 The first EFLAC, placed in Bogota, in Colombia, gathered 189 women from 19 countries, aiming to gather feminists to exchange experiences, opinions and identify problems and allow a joint action towards these problems. These encounters then began to happen every two years, in several countries until 1990, when they became triennial. The last encounter (the event's thirteenth edition) happened in 2014 in Lima (Peru) and gathered about 1500 women, gathered around the theme "*Encuentros en la Diversidad: rebeldias, creaciones y transformaciones*" (Encounters in Diversity: rebellions, creations and transformations). The fourteenth EFLAC took place in November 2017, in Montevideo (Uruguay). We can find a History of the encounters, as well as a panorama of the discussions and activities of the thirteenth EFLAC in <http://www.13eflac.org>. The address on Facebook for the fourteenth EFLAC is <https://www.facebook.com/14EFLACUruguay/>. We can also find a reflection on the role and the promoters of the Encounters in Alvares, Sonia E., Friedman, Elisabeth J., Beckman, Ericka et al. (2003) referenced in this text's bibliography.

of the United Nations (UN¹²⁰). Considering these encounters “extra-official”, Alvarez, Friedman, Beckman, Ericka et al. (2003) discuss how to reinforce alternative ties and, by putting in contact women from several countries in different moments of their struggles, they help to build solidarities, changing the dynamics of movements on their local and national levels. Besides those, there are several national encounters organized in many countries of the continent, with a more militant character or mixing militancy in the academic discussion. It is the case of Brazil¹²¹ with its encounter *Fazendo Gênero*¹²² (Making Gender) among others, an event organized since 1990 by an interdisciplinary group of gender studies from the *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* (Federal University of Santa Catarina) (UFSC) and that in its eleventh edition, in 2017, houses the 13th Women’s Worlds (WW) Conference, national encounter of that study area and militancy, which takes place for the first time in South America.

Women’s struggles, the Latin American feminism (Alvarez, Friedman, Beckman, Ericka et al, 2003; Femenias, 2007; Gargallo, 2007) is full of controversies, differences and distinct aspects among the several groups which are organized around it, since it is articulated from the women’s struggle which brings very diverse social and cultural impressions, composing specific agendas and sometimes even little compatible.

One of the aspects that characterizes the Latin American feminism is the binding and articulation to and of autonomous militance spaces as well as institutional with spaces within the universities (Machado, 1992). Since the eighties, these have become important loci to discuss either issue related to gender and sexuality, as feminist issues, since they contemplate the struggle for equality of rights electing, according to the place – the nation or university – some privilege matters. It was developed and are still studied in universities that emphasize the trajectory of women in the public world, the feminine work, marked by double or triple journeys in work and unequal incomes for the same

120 The UN has organized numerous conferences and encounters in which the issues on women’s inequality is central. It organized four World Conferences on Women (in Mexico in 1975, in Copenhagen in 1980, in Nairobi in 1985 and the fourth conference in Beijing). The conference in Beijing changes things when it switches the concept of Woman for that of Gender, adopting the Action Platform of Beijing, which addresses 12 critical situations as obstacles, as well as identifies specific measures to achieve equality. From Beijing, other meetings took place that pondered the difficulties to implement the Platform: Beijing+5, Beijing+10 and Beijing+15, in 2010 when it was formed the UN Women <http://www.unwomen.org/es/about-us/about-un-women>.

121 Since a very early stage, Brazil has featured as an important scene in the context of Latin America in women’s battles, but it wasn’t the only country showing the strength of this movement. On the other hand, its continental dimension has guaranteed the presence of an always significant number of activists in the transnational encounters, besides the organization of national spaces of exchanges and struggles which also gather hundreds of women.

122 *Fazendo Gênero*: <http://www.fazendogenero.ufsc.br/>

task, the unbalanced division of domestic responsibilities and with their children in the private world, the legal guardianship of women, of control of their sexuality, among other matters.

It is within this context that we place, later in the academy, the gender studies, to speak of the relationship between life in reality and theory, between daily life and knowledge. The field of gender studies, multi and interdisciplinary, conceived in the previous relationship between academy and feminism, is fundamentally positioned in researches bound to humanities. What's more, the content of this chapter intertwines with studies that think the constituent role of media in the discursive representations about the feminine/masculine, sexuality and gender, among other facets.

The strength of the field of gender studies and its intermingling with the media, however, seems not to be reflected upon the researches in communication in the Latin American space, at least when we look into studies anchored in the field of Communication. Hence, researches devoting a good part of their efforts to the analysis of narrative and discursive processes operated by journalism (Veiga, 2014), and by representations built by the media, besides the analysis of media production processes, which involve workspaces evermore feminine in many Latin American countries, come from other areas more than from the Communication Field¹²³.

1. Latin American Feminisms

We don't intend with this work to have a historical and contextual discussion on the emergence and existence of Latin American feminisms. However, since its constitution will reflect upon the studies on women/gender, it is important to present them and, especially, identify the differences and positionings that differentiate them concerning conceptions and developments of the feminist studies produced mainly in the United States and Europe, which have influenced them initially hegemonically. According to authors such as the Australians Connel and Pearce (2015), these hegemonic views over the field of feminist and gender studies fail to account the specificities of the issue in other parts of the world and Latin America, with its

¹²³ the constitution of Communication as a study field has been an object of intense reflection among Latin American investigators, especially Brazilians. We can see some of the discussion terms in Lopes (2006) and Braga (2011). What is important to this work specifically is to understand that the strength of the gender studies is not translated in terms of presence within the field of communication studies which, on the other hand, already has a consolidated disciplinary trajectory.

multiple racial and ethno-cultural crossings¹²⁴.

In the beginning of the Latin American emancipating feminine movements there bourgeois women fighting for vindications considered bourgeois, such as the right to education, the access to professions (as long as they're "respectable") to which, in early twentieth century, were added vindications to the right to vote (Küppers, 2001:17). To these pioneers of the twentieth century there were more to add, according to the country and its social and economic conditions, such as workers and an urban middle class in movements organized dialectically, and in the case of Latin America also in the fight against dictatorships which raged in the second half of the century.

By then, Alvarez (2014:17) points out the heterogeneity in the position of several protagonists of numerous movements that, gathered in forums like the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Encounters, debated on who would be a feminist and who would be a militant organized in general fights and who wouldn't have the complete perception of the feminist struggle. To amplify even more the heterogeneity of this moment, there were an early presence and inflexion of "other" women: poor, black, indigenous and migrants who broke the uniformity of the movement.

Later, along with the political overtures and the gradual end of military dictatorships in the continent, Alvarez (2014) points to the *NGOzation*, a moment characterized by the process from which feminism is incorporated and become absorbed by non-governmental organizations, usually supported by national and international governmental funding, aside from organisms like the UN which, in exchange, become to privilege a certain type of work and action, resulting in a paradox effect:

In Brazil, as in many other countries of Latin America, we can say that those sectors most "NGOgized" of feminism have consolidated and became dominant, if not hegemonic, within the feminist field– benefiting in a privileged access to a public microphone and to many economic and cultural resources, hence exacerbating inequalities already inscribed in the feminism field and generating some new ones. (Alvarez, 2014 p.32)

However, what Alvarez identifies has "hegemonic feminism" sets over a political and conceptual heterogeneity that is the basis for the

¹²⁴ Iso check Hemmings, 2009.

Latin American feminism and that, in the sight of Francesca Gargallo (2007), is related to colonialism and ethnical divisions that have always marked its constitution:

The ideology supporting the Latin American feminism is the result, as all ideas of anti-hegemonic policies, of a process of identification of political vindications and practices which has varied throughout history. The participation of community leaders, indigenous creoles¹²⁵ in the fight against colonialism had a large scale, though not recognized, and the liberal's triumph, in the majority of the continent, did not result in the equality for women. The legacy of the colonial racism didn't allow women to be recognized as such, having relegated them to categories related either to class of origin as to their ethnicity: white, interracial, indigenous and black didn't share world insights neither social spaces, only the masculine mistreat which, in the case of the last, was added to violence of gender and violence of race (Gargallo, 2007, n.p., free translation)¹²⁶.

A feminism built differently from the hegemonic, given that the struggles of Latin American women were pierced, from the beginning, by the anticolonialism fights and, later, in the twentieth century, by fights against dictatorships in the continent. According to Gargallo:

[...] the feminist ideas in Latin America are tied to the success of capitalism in the destruction of local cultures (called globalization), and to the continental reactive environment of a profound critique to the westernization of America, and to the sequels of

125 In Brazil and Portugal, creole means an afro-descendant. In some Latin American countries, however, the term means descendant of Europeans born in America. In Brazil, the derivative of the term "creole" is pejorative.

126 From the original: El ideario que sostiene al feminismo latinoamericano es fruto, como todas las ideas políticas antihegemónicas, de un proceso de identificación de reclamos y de prácticas políticas que han variado durante su historia. La participación de comuneras, criollas e indígenas en la lucha contra el colonialismo fue amplia, pero no reconocida, y el triunfo de los liberales en la mayoría del continente no redundó en el reconocimiento de la igualdad de las mujeres. El racismo heredado de la Colonia no permitió que las mujeres se reconocieran como tales, sino las relegó a categorías ligadas tanto a la clase de procedencia como a la pertenencia étnica: blancas, mestizas, indias y negras no compartían cosmovisiones ni espacios sociales, sólo el maltrato masculino que, en el caso de las últimas, sumaba la violencia machista y la violencia racista.

racism and colonialism which aim to reorganize the political ideas and practices of neoliberalism” (Gargallo, 2007, n.p., free translation)¹²⁷.

A feminism that questions the idea of the universal, that looks in part to de-westernize and decolonize¹²⁸ in order to rescue and build its own identity and a history reflecting life and culture of local populations decimated by the European colonialism, which in its most critique side fights the idea of liberal democracy as being empty, patriarchal and bound to heteronormativity.

Gargallo’s analysis also points to fundamental differences between the European and the Latin American feminism:

To get rid of the attribution of gender with its compulsory characteristics, women begin to be recognized in their history. They’ve suffered from exclusion and death, violence and denial of their word, belittlement and lack of rights since always. However, this is not the same as be recognized in the millions of witches murdered as a tribute to a modernity that wanted to exclude them from their economic power and their knowledge, as did the Europeans in the seventies, who recognized themselves in the massacre of the Latin American women, converting their body into an instrument for the subjection and reproduction of individuals against their culture, in a time *continuum* not detained in the sixteenth century, though reaches present times. (Gargallo, 2007, n.p., free translation)¹²⁹.

In the light of this, the explicit analysis which, in the Latin America

127 From the original: “[...]las ideas feministas latinoamericanas se vinculan al éxito del capitalismo en la destrucción de las culturas locales (la llamada globalización), y al clima continental reactivo de profunda crítica a la occidentalización de América, y a sus secuelas de racismo y colonialismo que intentan reorganizarse en las ideas y las prácticas políticas del neoliberalismo.” (Gargallo, 2007, n.p.).

128 See Cláudia Lima Costa (2014) on the concept of decolonization.

129 From the original: “Para deshacerse de la asignación del género con sus características impositivas, las mujeres empiezan a reconocerse en su historia. Exclusión y muerte, violencia y negación de su palabra, inferiorización y falta de derechos las han acompañado siempre. No obstante, no es lo mismo reconocerse en los millones de brujas asesinadas como tributo a una modernidad que quería excluir las de su poder económico y sus conocimientos, como hicieron las europeas, en la década de 1970, que reconocerse en la masacre de las americanas, la conversión de su cuerpo en el instrumento para la sujeción y la reproducción de individuos contrarios a su cultura, en una continuidad de tiempo que no se ha detenido en el siglo XVI sino que alcanza el presente.”(GARGALLO, 2007, n.p.)

case, there's still the aggravating factor of the massacre of ethnical/ racial differences, which resulted in the lack of defining models. An example in Brazil is the lack of defining models to the afro-descendants and native ethnicities since they have been historically silenced/subsumed under the false idea of racial harmony. The Indians and afro-descendants, learn in schools versions of the history of white winners, with their heroes, both men and women. They were denied the cult to their traditions, to their heroes. With the change of paradigms of analysis, multiculturalism, the respect to differences, the strength to new social movements, have reversed this picture. It is where interdisciplinary gender studies come in, intersecting class markers, race/ethnicity, generations and other differences.

2. From Feminist Studies to Gender Studies¹³⁰

It was within this heterogeneous and extremely complex ensemble that were developed the academic feminist and gender studies in Latin America in a beginning stage, reflecting about feminist issues, the "feminism of equality" (Pedro, 2006).

An interesting aspect is that the feminist studies were elaborated mainly by women in academies who, engaged or not in certain feminist movements, began to reflect upon feminine issues, on the movements themselves and on sciences from which they were educated and with which they worked: History, Anthropology, Letters, Sociology, Psychology, Health Sciences, Politics, Justice, Engineering, among other subjects. The same way they questioned their places in social life, they also questioned the knowledge that was excluding them or, in some cases, belittling them. For that, they started to question the very theories that explained the social world, their organizations and their subjects. By questioning them, it became natural to develop studies and propose new concepts.

Also, we saw that in Latin America, development of studies on women since the sixties of the past century, motivated by feminist movements¹³¹. At first, studies about the *feminine condition*, fighting for *equality between sexes*, for the nondiscrimination of women, for the

¹³⁰ The field of Gender Studies haven't substituted that of Feminist Studies. They were incorporated, opening the possibility to the unfolding of their issues, which caused, initially, a strong reaction of theorists groups and feminist militants (and not only in Latin America). Despite the resistance, the concept of gender was incorporated into the feminist field, causing to open it to new issues. Within the conception that gender is relational and the same social and historical structures that produce feminalities is also built masculinities, either homo or heteronormatives.

¹³¹ There a vast bibliography on this perspective beginning with the *Coleção Perspectivas Antropológicas da Mulher*, published by Zahar Editores, with numerous authors.

right to the participation in the public world, for equal opportunities in education, work, political participation, leading positions in companies and public service. A fight that, as shown by reality, is still in course.

In this stage, there were studies developed about the condition of women within the family and the sexual division in work, using theoretical conceptions of social sciences referent to the patriarchy and the class struggle. Que issue on the sexual division in the workplace has been fundamental to the discussion of the differences between men and women and for the debate on the persistence of inequality still today, as much in the private world, in domestic work, as in the public world, in the performance of professions which still today, in a way, tend to be sexualized as feminine– the case of those related to care–, and masculine– technical and managerial.

Then, studies in general turn to what was once called feminism of differences: women would be different from men, and those differences should be affirmed but should not be used to justify discriminations against women in a private context (e.g. in the family) or public (e.g. at school, at work).

Some of those studies did not escape the persistent tendency to naturalization, dichotomizing feminine and masculine roles, in a discourse that could be characterized as the other side of the coin: different women, though baring characteristics that made them superior to men. Parallel to this unfolding, either the concept of sexual roles as the classic theories of human and social sciences couldn't deal with¹³² the intricate issues of differences between men and women, in society in general and today. It is within this context that the categories woman, women, feminine condition, sexual roles, used in feminist studies, is substituted by the concept of gender¹³³, an important analysis tool in this field of studies.

According to Machado (1992), the incorporation of the concept of gender occurs in simultaneous with reflux in the traditional feminist militancy. From then, the academy begins to reorder its insight, by assuming as a paradigm the notion of gender which, as the author exemplifies, “points to the character implicitly relational of the feminine

132 Classic theories didn't provide Human and Social Sciences with the theoretical instruments that could deal with relevant issues in gender relations, as confirmed by Rubin (1975) and numerous feminist theorists (Many of them Marxists) like Heleith Saffioti (1992) in Brazil.

133 the category gender was initially used by the New Zealander psychologist John Money (1955), in his studies on hermaphrodites, published in the fifties in the United States. It was resumed by the North American psychoanalyst Robert Stoller (1968), in clinical studies he made about the sexuality, in which he developed the concept of gender identity. In the called second wave of the feminist movements, the category was then used by American feminist theorists (verify Rubin, 1975 and Scott, 1989, among others) in the senses to them attributed today and complexified (Butler, 1990).

and masculine. It indicates the demand for a theoretical positioning; it is not enough to choose the empirical object that is a woman. The studies do not need, nor induce into congregating exclusively women studying women” (Machado, 1992, p.9).

An insight highlighted in Brazil was the *Seminário Estudos sobre Mulher no Brasil: Avaliação e Perspectivas* (Seminar Studies about Women in Brazil: Evaluation and Perspectives), which took place in 1990 in Sao Roque (SP), and that “became a milestone in the transition from women studies to gender studies and the reflection about this field of knowledge” (Machado, 1992, p.10). To this author, the transition from the feminist studies to gender studies meant the overture into thinking the non-universality of the woman category and, consequently, the non-universality of all mentioned categories.

With the use of the gender concept, women theorists manage to emphasize the notion of the cultural building of feminine and masculine roles in the different societies, pointing out the relational aspect in the historic build of masculinities and femininities.

The conceptualization of gender as a category of analysis was significantly referred in Brazil and other Latin American countries, to the already classic text of the North American historian Joan Scott (1995) who highlighted the perception of the difference between sexes as a constitutive element of gender, first *locus* of the power relationships. The adherence to gender studies established different perspectives, first emphasizing the inexistence of a feminine identity that deals with a universal woman (white, belonging to the elite). As there isn't a universal man, there are singular women, of different generations, nationalities, social classes and ethnicities.

Gender studies are, therefore, intersectional (Brah, 2006; Piscitelli, 2008), for the gender differences are always intersected by other differences, of the race (ethnicity, of class, of age, among others. There is an infinity of differences through which subjectivities are built. Ideological, religious, political and other diversities that make the subjects live singularly their professions, creeds, social movements, political choices, sexual orientations, marriages, maternity, paternity, familiar relationships.

At last, this sort of studies refers that gender relations are not only between men and women but also between men and men, women and women, adults, children and elders, for we've always been gendered beings crossed by the gender identity building. The use of the gender category has opened conceptual possibilities for studies of masculinity, as well as it has amplified academic spaces of studies on sexuality, a

common object between academic militances and feminist, gay and lesbian movements.

In the epistemological field studies, which began with the discussions on the patriarchy under perspectives marked by these theories, Marxist theory and for the confrontation with the psychoanalyst's conceptions of subjectivity (Scott, 1995), were developing through the use of theories post-structuralist, resulting today in the so-called queer¹³⁴ studies (Preciado, 2011, 2013, 2014; Butler 2006; Miskolci, 2012) and Latin America, de-colonial studies (Costa, 2014; Lugones, 2014).

3. Gender and Communication in Latin America

The fourth *Conferência sobre a Mulher* (Conference about Women), organized by the UN, known as the Beijing Conference (1995), referred to the centrality of the relationship with the media since it is a field of production of representations and insights of the world essential in contemporary societies, perhaps the field of production of meanings— included there those of gender, race, sex, ethnicity and social identities. Therefore, thinking about the relationship between Gender and Communication is not only necessary as it is strategic.

In Latin America, an important and necessary facet linking Gender and Communication pertains to the institutionalized mapping of international organisms which gathers militants of journalism, communication companies and scholars to 1) identify the way gender issues are reflected upon the media; and 2) propose specific actions in the change of the relationship between media and issues and aspects of gender matters. There are many efforts in this sense, and one of the most notable initiatives is the *Proyecto de Monitoreo Global de Medios* (Project for Global Monitoring of Media), carried out by the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) which, from the Beijing Platform (1995), every five years registers and analyzes how news media treats and represents women around the world. The monitoring is worldwide and has been important to show the way women are represented in the media and incentives actions of transformation in the several supporting countries.

The results in Latin America are significant. According to the last

134 Despite the possible overture of the studies to the employment of the gender category, authors such as Burke and Reigada (2006) refer to damaging developments in case the concept sets apart from the feminist theory, which the authors understand as a political and theoretical base of the concept. The same happens to queer studies. Many feminists say the use of the concept de-politize the field, for it would take the focus off issues such as subordination and oppression of women. See Connell and Pearse (2015:140).

mapping released, referring to the relationship between women and media between 2010 and 2015¹³⁵, despite showing that “in the last decades, the difference of gender between people who appear in the news decreased drastically in Latin America, with an impressive 13%, going from 16% in 1995 to 29% in 2015”¹³⁶, the report shows that regional news include as sources only 27% of women, in the Caribbean region 29% and in North America 32%.

Other mentions are the unbalanced representation of men and women in news media, being that men dominate the scenario while subjects of news and as journalists¹³⁷. In general, women are in charge of the matters referent to the private: health and society, while men are usually in charge of what refers to the public, reproducing and reinforcing stereotypes of specific places or the masculine and feminine, which is also reproduced in the news about women, which in the great majority focus on “traditional” spaces and occupations of the feminine.

Analyzing the sources present in journalistic matters, the Mapping shows that men are privileged as sources in all matters considered important, as women are sources of “minor” issues, therefore of the “feminine sphere”. Furthermore, women are often referenced through their kinship (wife of, daughter of); in other words, they’re branded as non-self-sufficient nor independent people.

Another fundamental aspect relates to the research made starting from the relationship between gender and media. In this sense, there is in the region an important production about the matter, starting from other fields of knowledge, especially that of human sciences, and that are organized in workgroups and disperse studies, besides seminars and national and international encounters, like the *Seminário Internacional Gênero, Sexualidade e Mídia* (International Seminar of Gender, Sexuality and Media), which takes place in Brazil and it’s going on its fourth edition. In these spaces, the discussion on the representations of the feminine and otherness takes place and there is special care with the identification of stereotyped representations in journalism and propaganda¹³⁸.

135 Available in <http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp-2015>

136 From the original: “En los dos últimos decenios, la brecha de género entre las personas que aparecen en las noticias se redujo radicalmente en América Latina, con un impresionante 13% al pasar de 16% en 1995 a 29% en 2015.”

137 This reality has been changing in several countries and, especially in Brazil, it has been altered with the massive presence of women in the profession (63% of journalists are women). However, this quantitative increase does not reflect in promotions to leading positions and hasn’t changed the relation of subordinate either, as the study by Mick and Lima (2013) shows. 138 Aside from works for the identification of how women are understood in the media productions there is an increasing scope of works that amplifies the discussion involving all open perspectives through the discussion of gender which, however, we won’t address it

However, the perception of the media centrality in the building of gender roles, very explored by many disciplines, is not as significant in studies made within and from the Communication field¹³⁹. In Brazil's case, for instance, known in the continent for its strength and solidity either concerning the feminist movements as gender studies and research, it is a paradox that there is little relevance in these studies in the field of Communication and the initiatives that think the relationship media and gender, for instance, usually come from other fields of study, namely Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology and Letters.

In a previous work (Martinez; Lago; Lago, 2015), in an exploratory study based in data on the research in Journalism in Brazil, in ten years there were only seven works relate with women's studies and in only one of them was there the presence of the gender concept. We've opted for the data basis of journalism, for researches in journalism in Brazil go side by side with pioneering initiatives of research in journalism in Brazil. It stands out the work of Dulcília Buitoni (1981/2009), on *Mulheres de Papel* (Paper Women). The authors' intention with this work was that of making the first study on the representation of women in Brazilian feminine press and this work had become a classic in this area. By approaching the feminine press in the country, this work addresses broader issues, such as the social role of women and her political participation which has been increasing in the last decades. However, since the beginning, these study initiatives in journalism are scarce and, unlike other areas, seem not to follow the tendency of Gender studies which pervade close disciplinary fields.

In Brazil, the little insertion of gender studies from the Communication field was already perceived and pointed out; we believe this can also be so in Latin America. Despite the difference of consolidation of gender studies in many countries, we have strong indications of its evidence, which we can refer in observations in Latin American journals in the Communication field.

It is the case of the journal *Chasqui*, published by the International Center for Advanced Studies in Communications for Latin America (Ciespal). The importance of Ciespal for the consolidation of the Communication Field in the region was already documented by several authors (Berger 2001; Melo, 2009). Its publication, *Chasqui*¹⁴⁰, Latin American Magazine of Communication, since 1972 and is in its 131st

in-depth in this work.

139 As an example, we see that either the Revista de Estudos Feministas as Cadernos Pagu, published special dossiers on Gender and Media (respectively nº15, 2007 and nº 21 in 2003), dossiers that gather, in comparison to other fields, little investigators of Communication, as we'll explain later in this text.

140 Search made the publication's website: <http://www.revistachasqui.org/index.php/chasqui>

issue. In a universe of 168 articles, published from 2013 to 2016 in 21 editions (among reports, articles and essays, not counting on reviews) only ten works mention gender concerning the matter¹⁴¹, most of them only by inserting the word in the text¹⁴².

The same can be observed when related to the *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciências de la Comunicación*, published since 2004 by the *Journal of Latin American Communication Research* (ALAIc). Looking for the word “gender” in their website¹⁴³ there were found nine works, being that only in four of them the concept of gender is understood under the perspective of this text.

We point out to the sex of the authors. In total, there were six authors responsible for the four articles. Of these, four (70%) were men, which contradicts gender studies of other areas of knowledge, at least until the present moment. We must also stress out that none of the works has established profound discussion with the literature on gender studies of other areas of knowledge devoted to the matter, notably History, Anthropology or Sociology. That result is similar to that found in the universe of investigators in journalism (Martinez; Lago; Lago, 2015). Therefore, in the light of this, Communication investigators, who in some way context the gender perspectives in the Latin American magazine are exploring the matter from epistemological and methodological experiences which dominate, though they still can't extend this dialogue with their peers of other areas of knowledge. It is particularly interesting when we realize that the authors of three of the four selected texts are from Spain, a country where studies intertwining Gender and Communication follow a distinct tradition and have stronger ties.

If this webpage turned to the scientific publications from the field of communication points to the minor representativity of gender studies, then we can see the same when we look into specific publications on Gender, traditionally multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary.

This is what we see, for instance, in the production of articles for the *Revista de Estudos Feministas*, an important interdisciplinary journal devoted to the field of gender studies in Brazil. This journal, created in 1992 by renowned Brazilian women theorists of the Southeast region of the country, since 1999 based in the *Universidade Federal*

141 As in Spanish as in Portuguese, the term gender in communication either refers to issues of gender as it refers to gender studies (e.g. opinionative and informative in journalism, drama and melodrama in cinema) the term, when searched goes for works not related to what is discussed in this text.

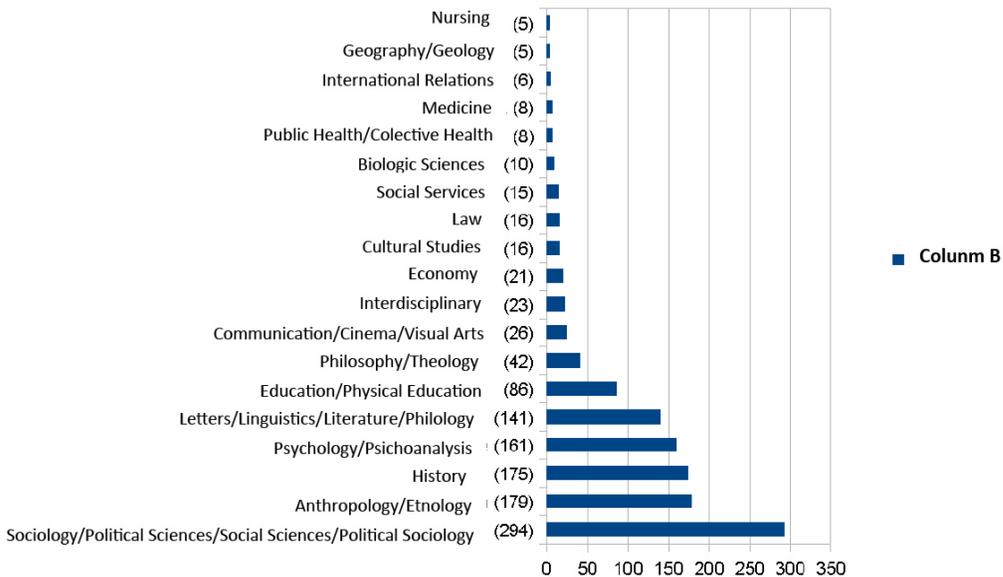
142 it is interesting mentioning that in 1994, the Magazine dedicated a special edition to the matter of Communication and Gender. However, recently it's been observed that the allusions are only passing by. Only one work is true about the problematic of Gender.

143 <http://www.alaic.net/revistaalaic/index.php/alaic>

de Santa Catarina (Federal University of Santa Catarina), South Region, constitutes, together with the *Cadernos Pagu*, edited in the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (State University of Campinas) (SP), the most important academic journals in Brazil in the field of gender studies. Has as its main objective to disseminate and promote the extensive production of knowledge in the field of gender and feminist studies, looking to subsidize theoretical debates in this area, and to the practices of feminist movements and the defence of sexual, ethnical and racial equality against all forms of discrimination. When we look upon its production between 2003 and 2016, we see that articles from the Communication area appear in a much lower number concerning other disciplines, like Sociology, History and Anthropology (Lago and Uziel, 2014).

The graphic below identifies the areas of the authors published in the journal:

Disciplinary fields by author (2003/2017)



Source: Banco de Dados da Revista de Estudos Feministas,
by Rita Maria Xavier Machado

The graphic puts in first place in the ranking the area of Social Sciences– Sociology and Politics and also shows a significant production in the area

that gathers Letters, Literature, Linguistics and Philology. However, even though the area of Communication, Cinema and Visual Arts is ahead of the others, the sum of texts produced in that area is not even 10% of the field. Besides, the number is still very incipient given the prominence of media in the building of representations of gender and sexualities, fundamental aspects in the field of gender studies. Furthermore, the studies taking media as an object, thinking of the construction of gender representations in journalistic vehicles, for instance, occur from spaces not dedicated specifically to research in Communication.

The graphic above reveals the little significance of the number of authors from the field of communication publishing back then (which is repeated in *Cadernos Pagu*, according to Lago and Longhini, n.p.).

We see a paradox when analyzing the number of texts produced on media, for instance, we see that the picture is not the same, for the articles keep on piling, including with the publishing of dossiers about this matter in issues of both journals¹⁴⁴. However, we will also verify that those articles were produced by professionals from other areas of expertise, namely Letters, History, Anthropology and Sociology.

Sure, many journals are interdisciplinary, and many investigators prefer to direct their production to qualified journals of their area of expertise and professional action. But the analysis of Brazilian publications in academic journals and congress annals of the Communication area, have revealed a very incipient production of articles and researches in the field of gender studies. These observations do not extend to the analysis of the publication of books and collections in Brazil and Latin America, where the production by researchers from communication can be more significant.

This undersizing of matters of gender/feminists/women in the communication field is not identical in all of the Latin American continent, as it couldn't be in any other way. However, some countries, like Argentina, have the tradition of regularly producing scientific knowledge about the matter from the perspective of Communication.

However, the phenomena observed in Brazil seems to repeat itself, that is, the prevalence of studies which come from other disciplines and not from the field of Communication. Although this perspective anchors in the transdisciplinary inherent to the gender concept, it is important to observe that this concept is not yet ingrained within Communication like other fields of knowledge.

144 The dossiers are in *Revista Estudos Feministas*, v.15, nº 1, 2007 and in *Cadernos Pagu*, nº 21, 2003, as quoted before.

4. Final Deliberations

Gender studies, which began tied to the feminist matrix, have extended and made visible in Latin America, no matter the regional differences or of countries. An important part of these studies, which focus on the relation between gender and communication, has been stimulated from a militant perspective, recognizing that media represents an important role in contemporary societies, by being a privileged agent in the construction of meanings either about the feminine as about the masculine, but also about sexuality and sexual normative. These constructions, however, aren't linear nor follow only one determiner. On the contrary, they are extremely complex and in need of insights also complex, able to embrace the numerous aspects related to the attribution of meaning and the construction of identities, which is also in play in this process.

This complexity hasn't been gone unnoticed in the studies that articulate gender and media in Latin America, that problematize the relation media, gender and consumption, for example. Studies that, most of them, involved investigators tied to other disciplinary fields than that of Communication. This perception is based in mappings we've been doing, mentioned before, and also in the daily life of the field, in congresses and scientific meetings, and needs to be problematized.

The first issue refers to the interdisciplinary status of the study field of gender, which mixes necessarily knowledge from several points of the universe. This condition, in a way, explains the set of significant works that, devoted to thinking in the media/gender relations, originate in other fields than that of Communication. But it doesn't explain the why of, in Communication, works and investigations devoted to that relationship were so visible, or, despite existing, they don't form a cohesive body capable of being consolidated in lines and projects of research easily identified and legitimized in academic spaces.

This little visibility of works is as important as we thinking that gender issues have occupied an ever larger space in the mediatic mainstream, and in alternative models, especially in a moment when, in Brazil's case, conquests in the struggle for the end of inequalities of gender and the acceptance of other patterns of sexuality not based in heteronormative patterns, they've been under attacks and reactions of conservative sectors of society, many linked to religious groups.

The possible consequences of this picture aren't unequivocal, for they must articulate the issue of the theme and the concern towards gender studies, which motivate investigators into embracing them,

building of the Communication field (Bourdieu, 2008) in the midst of internal disputes which classify the choices of their objects, methods, themes and theories more or less legitimate.

Is not the goal of this work to try to answer to this ascertainment, for that would demand another kind of investigation and approach. But we can point to some elements that help to redirect the posterior hypothesis. The first element relates to the constitution of the Communication field of studies as a close connection to the professions of Communication and many times reflecting on demands directly bound to these spaces. On their turn, these spaces are branded by the absence of a look over gender issues, as seen in previous work (Lago, Lago and Martinez, 2016), in which the majority of journalists men and women (in an average of 70%) questioned if the gender differences affected their work, they responded no, that gender is not something that might be perceived as a problem or a professional matter. This disregarding of the questions about gender in the professional field can be related to the yet small production of gender studies by the scholars and professionals in the field of communication, at least by those investigators who have established careers.

As an encouragement, we've perceived, namely through our daily life in classrooms, that a new crop of investigators in training, in post-graduation degrees, or even in early investigations in graduation, has brought the perspective of Gender in their multiplicities. These new investigators will certainly impact the Field of Communication, making of Gender Studies a fundamental part in this space. This is our hope.

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Nuances of Feminism and Gender Studies in European and Latin American Communication Research

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The two chapters in this section provide us with informative accounts of the historical development and current status of gender media studies in Latin America and Europe. They responded in different and positive ways to the original proposal for this section. Originally, the editors of the volume envisaged the feminist section to explore the theoretical roots and practical implications of feminist (media) research in both regions. The authors from Latin America, specifically from Brazil, framed their historical account with the relationship between feminist efforts of scholars and social movements throughout the region. The authors from Europe, specifically from Portugal and Spain, explained the development of feminist and gender studies in the Iberian Peninsula from a more institutional perspective.

From these different perspectives, the chapters make important contributions to the historicization of feminism and gender studies in both regions. Admittedly, the specificity in sub-regions in Latin America and Europe reduces the regional analysis of the chapters. Also, the focus on the development of gender studies in both regions turn the “theoretical roots” and epistemological innovations into another shortcoming. Nevertheless, the chapters compensate with detailed descriptions of the intersections between gender studies, social movements (Latin America) and policy-making institutions (Europe). It means that the authors respond to another editorial expectation to this section: that the chapters also evaluated the role of gender within the horizon of global justice and micro and macro forms of individual, collective and institutional empowerment of feminist thinking and practice inside and outside the academia.

In this synthesis chapter, our goal is to identify and explore differences and similarities between the texts. The idea is not only to compare but also to expand the discussion in ways to deepen the scope

of the texts and to identify paths for further regional collaboration and exchange. For that purpose, we divide this chapter into thematic sections derived from the reading and discussions between the authors throughout the editorial process, from text submission, to review, re-writing and dialogue. First, we reflect on how both chapters “feminism” and “gender” differs from one another in the region. Second, we discuss the different political approaches to feminist and gender media studies in the region. What explains the emphasis in scholar-social movement relationship in the Latin American chapter and the scholar-policy relationship in the European chapter? Third, we compare the different status of feminist and gender media studies in Brazil, where they are marginalized, and in the Iberian Peninsula, where they are consolidated. Fourth, we raise two issues that did not appear in the chapters: the de-colonial critique and discussions on intersectionality. Finally, we identify existing spaces, and others suggest possible routes for transatlantic collaboration in feminist and gender media studies.

Feminist struggles, gender studies

One of the similarities between the chapters is how they establish their focus by differentiating “feminism” from “gender”. In Latin American analysis, the authors explain how gender studies consist of a multi- and interdisciplinary field born within the previously existing relationship between academia and the feminist struggles in the region. They also describe how – from the dynamic relationship between the university and social movements – the notion of gender rose both to define a theoretical position of the field and to expand the object of studies beyond the men-women binary. A similar process happened in Portugal and Spain according to the European chapter. The authors describe how, until the 1990s, most of the studies about inequalities between men and women in communication used different labels, but most of these studies focused on women. In the 1990s, they explain, the concept of gender and the field of gender studies gained strength and diversity both in terms of objects and in terms of scholars and researchers.

In both cases, feminism appears as an ideological and political force propelling gender studies. This distinction possibly relates to the multifaceted conceptualization of feminism combined with the value of the specificity of the notion of gender. In very broad terms, feminism represents different sets of values, thoughts, writings and actions against or concerning various forms of abuses, inequalities and violence

women have historically experienced all over the world (Schneir, 1972; Kemp & Squires, 1997). Much of what characterizes feminism as actions preceded and to some extent go beyond the concept, whose clear-cut definition is troublesome because of its nuanced ideological, theoretical and political-pragmatic boundaries (Beasley, 1999). Some authors refer to *feminisms*, in the plural, for believing that “there is no unchanging feminist orthodoxy, no settled feminist conventions, no static feminist analysis. Feminism is diverse, and it is dynamic” (Kemp and Squires 1997, 12). In all this, feminism - as theory and practice - has been a defining and inspiring force to different contested and contesting sociopolitical movements, cultural phenomena, policy-making processes and scholarly paradigms related to the constitution and experiences of gender relations in predominantly patriarchal societies.

More specifically, the two texts reproduced, albeit inadvertently, a rather typical differentiation between “feminist media studies” and “gender media studies”. In their critical overview of feminist and gender media studies, Kaitlynn Mendes and Cynthia Carter (2008) make a distinction that essentially appears in both chapters. They argue that

“as such, feminist scholarly research is inseparable from activist forms of feminism. On the other hand, gender studies are not implicitly political in the sense of having an agenda for social change based on gender equality. Instead, the principal aim has been one of raising awareness about the ways in which gender affects individual life choices and chances, and thus women’s and men’s relative personal opportunities for personal and career success” (p. 1702).

The difference between the chapters and this quotation is that the authors demonstrated how the feminist-political force remains strong in gender media studies in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula.

Political Aspects of Gender Studies

The political aspect of gender studies in both chapters is visible in the relationship between gender studies and social movements and policy-making institutions, respectively in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula.

In the Brazilian/Latin American case, the authors describe how academic environments have been important spaces for knowledge and experience exchanges for the development of the feminist struggles in the region. They argue that it was in these spaces of exchange between the academia and social movements that studies about women, sexuality and gender developed. The authors also briefly raise the issue that the heterogeneity of class, race and decolonization in the region also contributed to the diverse character of the Latin American feminism. The authors also indicate the existence of a more recent process of NGO-ization of feminist struggles. These three aspects - the ties between the university and social movements, the diverse character of struggles and the recent NGO-ization of feminist struggles - reflect processes of change, which have affected social movements in general in the region (Alvarez, Dagnino, & Escobar, 1998; Dagnino, 2010).

In the Iberian/European case, the political aspect of gender media studies has been what the authors define as “institutionalization of equality”. It means that gender studies have found its way within the institutional spheres of policy-making in the context of the European Union. Both in the cases of Spain and Portugal, the authors argue that gender studies have become objects of governmental effort. This institutional interest relates to the investments and support, especially by socialist governments, to promote the investigations meant to support equality-related policies.

The two cases demonstrate how the post-dictatorial experiences in feminism and gender studies differed between the two regions. This situation helps explain why the status of gender media studies can be so different between Brazil/Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula/Europe.

Marginality and Development

One of the striking regional differences highlighted in the two chapters is the status of gender media studies in the Brazilian and Iberian Peninsula. While the Brazilian case indicates that gender media studies are still marginal in the Latin American field of communication research, the opposite happens in Europe, where gender media studies have begun a process of consolidation.

On the one hand, in the case of Brazil, the authors present their mapping of academic publication databases to demonstrate how

there is little research on gender among Brazilian and other Latin American communication scholars. They show that even though Brazil has journals in which feminist media studies are published, especially interdisciplinary journals, gender media studies still lacks disciplinary weight in the country. However, the authors emphasize that interdisciplinarity alone does not explain the marginality of gender media studies. For them, one reason is the fact that the Latin American field of communication research has tight professional and ideological ties with the media, communication and journalism professions. For this reason, communication research tends to focus on more professional, institutional and market-oriented aspects than to those related to gender. Younger generations have increasingly been interested in gender media studies, they remark, but its disciplinary and paradigmatic marginality remains a problem.

On the other hand, the authors of the Iberian/European case argue from the outset that the field of gender and communication studies is increasing in terms of academic interest in the region. They illustrate this claim by referring to key publications since the 1970s. They also demonstrate how approaches to the situation of women in European media organizations have been conducted. As reasons for the increase in academic interest of gender media studies in Europe, the authors indicated that the processes of democratization and the regional integration under the European Union led to what they call “globalization of equality policies”, referring to how societies adopted homogenizing EU-policies. Another factor that influenced the development of gender media studies in Europe was the development of ICTs, which also contributed to the formation of networks and encounters, leading to the development of a diverse field of research.

Decoloniality and Intersectionality

One aspect that we raised in the collective discussion for this chapter is that of de-coloniality and intersectionality. Neither of the chapters deals with how the increasing proliferation of voices of Black, Indigenous and other people from racial and ethnic groups in society and specifically in gender debates. Therefore, we reflected together on two questions: (a) How does the increasing establishment of black and indigenous feminist voices have affected the development of feminism and gender studies in the region? (b) How do you evaluate the ‘intersectional situation’ of feminism/gender in research, policy and social movements in the region?

In response, the authors of each chapter described the current situation of de-coloniality and intersectionality in the contexts they are most familiar with. Among the European colleagues, the perception is that these debates have not yet clearly entered the fields of communication and gender studies in either Portugal or Spain. However, some studies focused on the representation and visibility of Black women, on racism, on the anti-Romani attitudes and behaviours already raise these questions.

For the Brazilian colleagues, there have been an increase of Black, mixed-race and indigenous people from lower-income public education in the university system due to recent affirmative action policies. This phenomenon has led to intense interest and adherence to de-colonial theories. In practice, this means the privileging of Latin American authors like Maria Lugones, Anibal Quijano, Walter Dignolo, Viveiros de Castro. Also, authors who question white feminism have also made contributions to the intersectional feminism studies. For example, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, Ella Shohat, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Avtar Brah. Specifically, in the Brazilian relationship with Brazilian authors, there has been a renewed wave of textual production by and about different generations of Black feminist writers both in academic (e.g. Lélia Rodrigues, Luiza Barrios and Djamila Ribeiro) and in literary (e.g. Carolina Maria de Jesus and Conceição Evaristo). These authors have written about the intersections of class, race, gender and generations in Brazilian academic writings and literature.

Conclusion: Possible Routes for Transatlantic Collaboration

The two chapters discussed in this section are important first steps towards a broader discussion on gender media studies in Latin America, in Europe and most importantly in the possible exchanges and collaborations between researchers in both regions. Based on the discussions which have led to the original and the synthesis chapters, it is important to think about (at least) two questions: How to identify and explore different ways through which to deepen debates about feminist and gender media studies in the Latin American and European fields of communication research? How to build bridges of collaboration across the Atlantic to empower feminist and gender studies in both regions?

Regarding the first question, it is important to move beyond the

necessary historicizing of feminist and gender media studies and instead review and develop them in their contemporary, existing features. In this case, feminist and gender media studies need to be thought in paradigmatic, socio-historical, radical-political and cultural terms. In terms of paradigm, it is necessary to reflect on how the contributions of feminist and gender media studies can contribute and change the overarching field of communication research. Today, for example, we think of “feminism” as a theoretical and methodological paradigm which influences multiple disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Can we envisage a similar kind of influence from feminist and gender *media* studies? Both chapters have indicated areas and themes that have been explored through the gender question in communication research. However, the question about methodological and conceptual advancements remains open.

Perhaps the path to more substantial contributions to the field of communication research lies in the everlasting and interchangeable socio-historical, radical-political and cultural values of feminist and gender media research. The development of information and communication technologies has not led to the improvement of the situation of women and LGBTQ communities across the world. However, the global character of resistance movements such as the Pride Parades, Slutwalks and *#niunamenos* is evidence that the struggles against individual and structural *machismo* and patriarchal power have gained strength in the interconnectedness allowed by online and mobile technologies. As intrinsically communication phenomena, they appear as opportunities for feminist and gender media studies to search for innovations which both explain these phenomena in scholarly debates, but also contribute to those same struggles it aims at understanding. Contributions that complement each other – the one based on the social movement knowledge acquired in Latin America and the institutional one as European scholars have developed. It leads to the second question: the global situation of women and LGBTQ communities not only create the perfect condition for transatlantic collaboration but actually needs the contributions feminist and gender media scholars of Latin America and Europe can make together.

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