Notes for Historicizing the Disintegrated Internationalization of Communication Studies in Latin America

Raúl Fuentes Navarro

Universidad de Guadalajara, raul@iteso.mx

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Abstract

This essay characterizes a "disintegrated internationalization" as the main trend in the development of communication studies in Latin America. This hypothetical approach is based on critical readings of multiple bibliographical sources generated in the most recent decades and published in Spanish, Portuguese, or English, both in the form of essays and empirical studies, somewhat supporting a historical sociology. The systematic and rigorously analyzed and interpreted documentation, following the methodological example of Luis Ramiro Beltrán, allows us to advance in the recognition of some factors that separate national "academic fields" from their integration in broader scales—Latin American or global. The conclusion proposes what the elaboration of a historical narrative needs to recognize to be more useful: the complexity and multiplicity of the historical-social processes that have been interwoven and interdetermined in each of the spatiotemporal stages that it is pertinent to define as Latin America's own.

Introduction

These "notes" emerge from a decades-long trajectory researching the processes of institutionalization of the study of communication and the constitution of a correlative *academic field*,[1] situated first in Mexico, and which in some aspects and occasions has been extended towards broader scales, as "Latin America,"[2] eventually as "Ibero-America," or even as an "Inter-American" macro-region that includes Canada, the United States (of America), and the other countries of origins and languages other than Spanish and Portuguese in the continent.[3] Although these denominations are just convenient heuristics and therefore contingent, they are never innocuous, since they refer to a complex, challenging, and "enigmatic" spatiotemporal multidimensionality.[4]

As noted elsewhere,[5] "the term 'Latin America' was probably invented by the French in their attempts in the nineteenth century to colonize the Americas to the south of the Rio Grande."[6] It has been used at times as a kind of counterpart to the term "manifest destiny," coined by US journalists and politicians to justify as "God's will" the annexation of territories and the military interventions abroad, but above all as a common identity mark for the more than 650 million inhabitants[7] of twenty modern countries on the continent. "Ibero-America," in turn, refers to another regional composition, more historical-cultural than geographical, as it includes Spain and Portugal, the imperial "mother countries" of Latin America, together with the countries that were once their overseas colonies, which increases the current reference population to more than seven hundred million people, that is, almost 9 percent of the world's total.

The intellectual dimension of this work takes a cue from the thesis of Mexican historian and philosopher Edmundo O'Gorman (1906–1995), originally published in 1958, where he writes that "America was not discovered, but invented." Therefore, the key to understanding America lies not in its identity but in its *historical sense*, that is, not in the past but in the future. O'Gorman pointed out that "America, in effect, was invented under the physical species of 'continent' and under the historical species of 'the new world.' It emerged, then, as a given physical entity, already made and unalterable, and as a moral entity endowed with the possibility of realizing itself in the order of historical being."[8] Discarding the idea that the world was an island with three parts (Europe, Asia, and Africa) was an Iberian contribution, and rejecting that the European model was the pinnacle of civilization was an Anglo-Saxon one. Together, these are the two "liberations" in which "the greatness of the invention of America,

[1] Pierre Bourdieu, "La specificité du champ scientifique et les conditions sociales du progrès de la raison," *Sociologie et Societés* 7, no. 1 (1975); Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

[2] Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, *La emergencia de un campo académico: Continuidad utópica y estructuración científica de la investigación de la comunicación en México* (Guadalajara: ITESO / Universidad de Guadalajara, 1998); Fuentes-Navarro, *Un campo cargado de futuro: El estudio de la comunicación en América Latina* (Mexico City: FELAFACS, 1992); Fuentes-Navarro "La investigación de la comunicación en América Latina: Condiciones y perspectivas para el siglo XXI," *Comunicación y Sociedad*, no. 36 (1999).

[3] During the most recent decade, this trajectory has found great stimulus and impulse in the context of the international academic community developed on the initiative of Park, Pooley, and Simonson—most significantly, through the Communication History Division of the International Communication Association (ICA) (https://www.icahdq.org/), the "History of Media Studies" working group of the Consortium for History of Science, Technology, and Medicine (CHSTM) (https://www.chstm.org/media-studies), and the journal *History of Media Studies* (https://hms.mediastudies.press/); and, more specifically, through the July 2022 virtual roundtable they organized on the "History of Communication Studies in the Americas," at which an earlier draft of this essay was presented. It is important for the author to acknowledge the highly qualified and careful reviewers who read the essay at that stage and offered thoughtful recommendations with deep implications for the work, particularly in terms of its theoretical framework; most of these recommendations, for that reason, can only be appropriately addressed at a future occasion.

[4] Octavio Ianni, *Enigmas da modernidade-mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2000).

the double step, decisive and irreversible, in the fulfillment of the ecumenical program of the Culture of the West" can be understood.[9] Seen from this perspective, in sum, colonial conservatism, and not "the Western," was and is the main enemy of the "historical realization" of America,[10] a polemical position that, although it has never been predominant in historical-philosophical debates, retains a high heuristic value in sociocultural terms and is worth pondering as a contextual background for the institutionalization of academic fields such as that of communication studies.[11] In addition to the imperative of escaping this "colonial conservatism," it can be argued that even without specialized training in the historical disciplines, as professionals in higher education in communication we understand the need to strengthen knowledge platforms that facilitate the historicization of our objects of research and learning,[12] through a dense contextualization, in time and space, of sociocultural processes that are obviously anything but simple and straightforward, one-dimensional or constant.

Although it might seem obvious that the processes of constitution of scientific, cultural, and educational institutions recognizable as "academic fields" have been diversely related to each other throughout their history, the transnational factors of influence and inter-determination between such unequal entities as the American nation-states, their development, or their culture, are scarcely recognized. Consequently, this paper proposes to heuristically identify some of the most relevant institutionalization trends of the field on the American continental scale, analyzable as differential structuring processes and their mutual constants and influences, that is, their "internationalization," in different spaces and times, as academic proposals that have been articulated in a very special way by academic associations, and thus have counteracted the disarticulating influences of other factors.[13]

This idea is proposed as part of a line of work that has been developed within the frameworks of a critical, sociocultural, processual, and historical-structural sociology of science, based on contributions from several authors,[14] all read from a Latin American perspective, and sustains some points of coincidence with better known analyses in the international literature that refer to other countries and regions.[15]

The reflective and critical contributions of particular individuals and academic communities are at the same time indispensable references for the historical reconstruction of the field in the Latin American region and require us to recognize that both the field itself and its study are complex and heterogeneous, and that therefore simultaneous tendencies of convergence and fragmentation are man-

[5] Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "Institutionalization and Internationalization of the Field of Communication Studies in Mexico and Latin America," in *The International History of Communication Study*, ed. Peter Simonson and David W. Park (New York: Routledge, 2016), 338.

[6] Francisco Salzano and Maria C. Bortolini, *The Evolution and Genetics of Latin American Populations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 328.

[7] Updated as of July 2023.

[8] Edmundo O'Gorman, *La invención de América: Investigación acerca de la estructura histórica del nuevo mundo y del sentido de su devenir*, 2nd ed. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1977), 152.

[9] O'Gorman, *La invención de América*, 159.

[10] Julimar del Carmen Mora Silva, "Utopias and Dystopias of Our History: Historiographical Approximation to 'The Latin American' in the Mexican Social Thought of the 20th Century (Edmundo O'Gorman, Guillermo Bonfil Batalla and Leopoldo Zea)," *História da Historiografia* 11, no. 28 (2018): 209.

[11] Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "Apresentação: Comunicação e fronteiras; Geografias e espaços simbólicos das práticas comunicativas na América Latina," in *Fronteiras culturais e práticas comunicativas,* ed. Daniela Cristiane Ota and Marcus Paulo da Silva (Campo Grande, Brazil: Editora UFMS, 2023).

[12] Benedict Anderson, *Comunidades imaginadas: Reflexiones sobre el origen y la difusión del nacionalismo* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993); Immanuel Wallerstein, "From Sociology to Historical Social Science: Prospects and Obstacles," *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (2000).

[13] Associations, as well as publications and university educational programs, are a concrete product of the interactions between projects and the sociocultural dynamics of the academic fields to which they belong and of the groups of subjects they represent. As such, they are *objective referents* of the processes of institutionalization. Beyond their utility as objects of critical reflection, these processes are also a reflection of the objectives that motivate university formative interventions. As these processes are communicatively mediated, they can therefore be interpreted—from

ifested in academic production and in its meta-research.[16] In this sense, the hypothetical characterization of communication research in Latin America as subject to a "disintegrated internationalization," and the aim to promote a collective reflection based on systematic and rigorously analyzed documentation, "in the manner of Luis Ramiro Beltrán (1974),"[17] incorporate, among others, contributions by Jesús Martín-Barbero, José Marques de Melo, Carlos Gómez-Palacio, Guillermo Orozco, Gustavo Adolfo León, and Erick Torrico,[18] as well as those contained in several empirical studies of scientific production in the field.[19]

Convergences, Divergences, and Fragmentations: Disintegrated Internationalization

While allusions to the relations between national entities often refer to the past—a point in time before it became commonplace to speculate that the very idea of the nation-state, a category of Western modernity, was "on the verge of extinction" and that attention should be paid to the processes of transition from the "transnational" to the "post-national"—the geopolitics of the most recent decades requires a more critical reconsideration.[20] It can be argued from this point of view that the existence in Latin America of diverse and changing national (not all "nationalist") patterns of development[21] has not substantially modified the relations between states, which are for the most part peaceful despite multiple ongoing conflicts.[22] However, the general conditions and rhetoric of "integration," a subject and term that frequently appears in Latin American communication research of the 1970s and 1980s,[23] as well as in much of the intergovernmental discourse of the time, have substantially changed.

Within this general historical context, communication teaching and research that can be properly called "Latin American" have been supported by institutions created precisely for that purpose, especially CIESPAL (International Center for Higher Studies in Journalism [later, Communication] for Latin America), an international organization operating since 1959 with headquarters in Quito; ALAIC (Latin American Association of Communication Researchers), established in 1977; and FELAFACS (Latin American Federation of Social Communication Schools and Faculties), established in 1981. More than others, these three institutions have been assumed as fundamental referents for articulating reflection with action, attention to national processes with the construction of continental links, and the formulation of critical proposals of broad coverage—all on a regional scale. Many of these proposals have been adopted as common challenges by academic communities as disparate as those that have developed

a praxeological model of institutionalized collective agency (consisting of the exercise of "the social production of meaning on the social production of meaning")—as key factors in the generation of the dynamics of the field. Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "La producción social de sentido sobre la producción social de sentido: De un marco epistemológico a un modelo metodológico mediado por la metainvestigación," in *Experiências metodológicas na comunicação*, ed. Laura Wottrich and Nísia M. do Rosário (São Paulo: Pimenta Cultural, 2022).

[14] Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*; Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Andrew Abbott, *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004); Abbott, *Processual Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Immanuel Wallerstein, *Impensar las ciencias sociales: Límites de los paradigmas decimonónicos* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI / CIICH UNAM, 1998); Wallerstein, "From Sociology to Historical Social Science"; Wallerstein, *The Uncertainties of Knowledge* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); Enrique E. Sánchez-Ruiz, *Medios de difusión y sociedad: Notas críticas y metodológicas* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1992); Sánchez-Ruiz, "Recuperar la crítica: Algunas reflexiones personales en torno al estudio de las industrias culturales en Iberoamérica en los últimos decenios," in *Qué pasa con el estudio de los medios: Diálogo con las ciencias sociales en Iberoamérica*, ed. Sánchez-Ruiz (Sevilla, Spain: Comunicación Social ediciones y publicaciones, 2011); Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1969).

[15] Manuel Parés i Maicas, ed., "La recerca europea em Comunicació Social," *Anàlisi, quaderns de comunicació i cultura*, no. 27 (1997); Robert T. Craig, "Communication Theory as a Field," *Communication Theory* 9, no. 2 (1999); Craig, "Communication as a Field and Discipline," in vol. 2 of *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach (New York: Blackwell, 2008); Timothy Glander, *Origins of Mass Communication Research during the Cold War: Educational Efforts and Contemporary Implications* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000); Juha Koivisto and Peter D. Thomas, eds., *Mapping*

over the last half century in Latin America, in a context that has been characterized as one of "multiple disarticulation" and "triple marginality" of communication studies with respect to the social sciences, to scientific research in general, and to the priorities of national development.[24]

According to a summary of diverse sources, modern reflection on "the social" began in Latin America between the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries, in the form of scholarly studies of a philosophical, legal, and historical nature.[25] The first studies on communication, referring to journalism, followed this general pattern.[26] Later, Latin America received as part of the "modernization" process in the 1950s and 1960s the dominant theories and methods of the North American social sciences (empiricism, functionalism, diffusionism, and developmentalism).[27] In the field of communication studies, research on effects, audiences, public opinion, and the like then spread, along with the expansion of mass media, advertising, and the commercial model of mass communication, all imported as well from the United States.

In particular, the "diffusion of innovations" approach, first assessed in the US Midwest, was extensively employed in the rural areas of several Latin American countries, notably Colombia, Brazil, and Mexico, to investigate the effects of small-scale social transformation projects.[28] The research thus conducted was often characterized as "dependent" because Latin American scholars pursuing graduate studies in the United States, upon returning to their countries, served as mere field agents in large US-led projects.[29] In fact, although most of the academic communication research in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s was conducted or directed by—or under the influence of—American researchers,[30] there were also notable examples of critical contributions to theory and methodology by some Latin Americans, such as Beltrán and Díaz-Bordenave, contributions that were clearly recognized by their US colleagues.[31]

The eventual emergence of "hybrid perspectives" in Latin America from the "empirical and critical schools,"[32] could be imagined based on the revitalizing movement of Latin American social sciences, especially originating in Santiago de Chile, where several important international research, teaching, and planning institutions, such as FLACSO (Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences) and CEPAL (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), were operating. The triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959 was key to promoting critical thinking in the academy and in societies, since it showed that there was an option for socialist development within reach, which was viewed with much optimism at first, given the multiple injustices, imbalances, and contradictions evident in Latin

Communication and Media Research: Paradigms, Institutions, Challenges (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Communication Research Center, 2008); Maria Löblich and Andreas Matthias Scheu, "Writing the History of Communication Studies: A Sociology of Science Approach," *Communication Theory* 21, no. 1 (2011); José Luis Piñuel-Raigada, *La docencia y la investigación universitarias en torno a la comunicación como objeto de estudio en Europa y América Latina*, Colección Cuadernos Artesanos de Latina 15 (La Laguna, Spain: Sociedad Latina de Comunicación Social, 2011); Silvio Waisbord, "Communication Studies without Frontiers? Translation and Cosmopolitanism across Academic Cultures," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016); Waisbord, *Communication: A Post-Discipline* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2019); Jefferson D. Pooley, "The Four Cultures: Media Studies at the Crossroads," *Social Media and Society* 2, no. 1 (2016); Pooley, "Die abnehmende Bedeutung des disziplinären Gedächtnisses: Der Fall der Kommunikationsforschung," in *Handbuch kommunikationswissenschaftliche Erinnerungsforschung*, ed. Christian Pentzold and Christine Lohmeier (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023); Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz, "Communication Studies Beyond the National: Connections and Disconnections Between Research Communities and How to Study Them," *Global Media Journal: German Edition* 2, no. 2 (2012); Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz and Sarah Cordonnier, "French and German Theories of Communication: Comparative Perspectives with Regard to the Social and the Epistemological Body of Science," in *The Handbook of Global Interventions in Communication Theory*, ed. Yoshitaka Miike and Jing Yin (New York: Routledge, 2022); Marton Demeter, Dina Vozab, and Francisco José Segado-Boj, "From Westernization to Internationalization: Research Collaboration Networks of Communication Scholars from Central and Eastern Europe," *International Journal of Communication* 17 (2023).

[16] Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "Investigación y meta-investigación sobre comunicación en América Latina," *MATRIZes* 13, no. 1 (2019).

[17] Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "La investigación de la comunicación en América Latina: una internacionalización desintegrada," *Oficios Terrestres*, no. 31 (2014); Fuentes-Navarro, "Tendencias regionales y transnacionales de la investigación de la comunicación en América Latina," in *Tejiendo nuestra historia: investigación de la comunicación en América Latina*, ed. Delia Crovi Druetta and Raúl Trejo Delarbre (Mexico City: UNAM, 2018).

American countries. At the same time, both in communication studies and in the rest of the social sciences, the search for pertinence of the analysis to the complex Latin American realities made some scholars think that it was possible to generate totally original and "autochthonous" theory, methodology, and even epistemology, independent or even opposed to "Western scientific colonialism," a position that paradoxically, with European or American support, continues to have an important presence today. But there is also still present the conviction that the best Latin American contributions to the social sciences have been the product of "creative syntheses" of elements of diverse origins with locally generated elements and facts pertinent to the concrete social reality, its processes, and transformations.[33] The theory or approach of dependency, and the innovative approach of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, strongly associated with Liberation Theology, are two good examples of this.[34]

On the bases of these and other antecedents—which it should be emphasized were mostly "external" to the universities—the institutionalization of communication research in Latin America and the constitution of the corresponding academic field were clearly manifested from the 1970s onwards. In documents from those years, in which for the first time the diagnoses and strategic programs for the development of "Latin American communication research" were formulated, analyses can be found that, updating the data, could very well refer to the present day, although they undoubtedly also evidence the radical changes that the decades have generated in the referents, contexts, and premises adopted to guide this articulated development. Among such "foundational" documents are the final report of the Seminar on Communication Research in Latin America organized by CIESPAL in La Catalina, Costa Rica in September 1973[35]; and the paper presented by Luis Ramiro Beltrán at the IAMCR International Scientific Conference in Leipzig a year later. Beltrán's text, entitled "Communication Research in Latin America: The Blindfolded Inquiry?"[36] was based on the documentation presented at the CIESPAL seminar and similarly emphasized the scientific and social foundations that should be developed for the area. The La Catalina seminar assumed a clearly and forcefully normative tone in its report:

> The main objective of research should be the critical analysis of the role of communication at all levels of functioning, without omitting its relations with internal domination and external dependence and the study of new channels, media, messages, communication situations, etc., which contribute to the process of social transformation.[37]

Undoubtedly, the drafters of this text were aware of the conditions necessary to advance this objective. Particularly striking is their

[18] Jesús Martín-Barbero, "Retos a la investigación de comunicación en América Latina," *Comunicación y Cultura*, no. 9 (1982); Martín-Barbero, "Pensar la comunicación en Latinoamérica," *Redes: Revista do Desenvolvimento Regional*, no. 10 (2014); José Marques de Melo, "La investigación latinoamericana en Comunicación," *Chasqui*, no. 11 (1984); Marques de Melo, *Entre el saber y el poder: Pensamiento comunicacional latinoamericano* (Monterrey, Mexico: Comité Regional Norte de Cooperación con la UNESCO, 2007); Carlos Gómez-Palacio y Campos, "The Origins and Growth of Mass Communication Research in Latin America" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1989); Guillermo Orozco, *La investigación de la comunicación dentro y fuera de América Latina: Tendencias, perspectivas y desafíos del estudio de los medios* (La Plata, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1997); Gustavo Adolfo León Duarte, *La nueva hegemonía en el pensamiento latinoamericano de la comunicación: Un acercamiento a la producción científica de la escuela latinoamericana de la comunicación* (Hermosillo, Mexico: Universidad de Sonora, 2007); Erick Torrico Villanueva, *La comunicación pensada desde América Latina (1960–2009)* (Salamanca, Spain: Comunicación Social, ediciones y publicaciones, 2016).

[19] Steven H Chaffee, Carlos Gómez-Palacio, and Everett M. Rogers, "Mass Communication Research in Latin America: Views from Here and There," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (1990); Robert Huesca and Brenda Dervin, "Theory and Practice in Latin American Alternative Communication Research," *Journal of Communication* 44, no. 4 (1994); Sarah Anne Ganter and Félix Ortega, "The Invisibility of Latin American Scholarship in European Media and Communication Studies: Challenges and Opportunities of De-Westernization and Academic Cosmopolitanism," *International Journal of Communication* 13 (2019); Martín Becerra and Florencia Enghel, "Pluralismo agonista en la internacionalización de los estudios latinoamericanos de la comunicación: Reflexiones a partir de la práctica," *Comunicación y Medios* 30, no. 43 (2021); Santiago Gándara and Yamila Heram, "Los estudios Latinoamericanos de comunicación (2000–2018): Consolidación académica, estancamiento burocrático o dispersión temática?"

warning that "up to now, Latin America does not have a sufficient number of specialists in research, since there is not even an institution specialized in the training of high-level experts in this field."[38] This lack would obviously be a determining factor in attending to the three areas of research that should be considered a priority: the formulation, refinement, and testing of theories and methods on the various aspects of "the communication process and its relationship with the process of social transformation; the role of communication in education; and the role of communication in popular organization and mobilization."[39]

Context cannot be ignored here: amid the world oil supply crisis of the 1970s, Latin American countries were subject to the internal and external contradictions of the Cold War and the ideological, political, and economic polarization associated with that world order. Thus was the incipient and precariously institutionalized field of Latin American communication research marked by all the contradictions that—sometimes with extreme violence—characterized the social dynamics in which communication tended to be instrumentalized rather than researched. And in this context, Luis Ramiro Beltrán, with greater clarity despite his subtlety than the speakers at the La Catalina seminar, formulated what can be considered the *essential tension* of communication research in Latin America throughout its very intense and complex history: the relationship between scientific rigor and dogmatic thinking. This "tension," which is much more than a mere epistemological problem, is an eloquent synthesis of the various dimensions of "disintegrated internationalization." Beltrán's work, in fact, ended with critical comments on "the mythology of a science free of values" and on "the risk of dogmatism," whether in the form of the postulates of classical liberalism or Marxism. In particular, the opposition between the rigor of science and the political commitment to the transformation of reality—referring directly to the polemic that had just begun between the groups of researchers led by Armand Mattelart in Chile and Eliseo Verón in Argentina—gave rise to a final crucial question:

> Could this mean that Latin American communication research will one day run into danger of substituting ideologically conservative and methodologically rigorous functionalism with unrigorous radicalism? May the patient reader of this already too lengthy report kindly provide an answer. And may that answer give us lucid clues as whether Latin American's communication research will cease to be the blind-folded search which it appears at times to have been . . . be that blindfold of any color.[40]

Despite the fact that this "essential tension" that can be identified in the "blindfolded research" tends easily to be reduced to a Manichean

Astrolabio, no. 27 (2021); Francisco Segado-Boj, Juan José Prieto-Gutiérrez, and Jesús Díaz-Campo, "Redes de coautorías de la investigación Española y Latinoamericana en comunicación (2000–2019): Cohesión interna y aislamiento transcontinental," *Profesional de la información* 30, no. 3 (2021); Jesús Arroyave Cabrera and Rafael González Pardo, "Bibliometric Research on Communication in Scientific Journals in Latin America (2009–2018)," *Comunicar* 30, no. 70 (2022); María Elena Rodríguez-Benito, María Esther Pérez-Peláez, and Teresa Martín-García, "Investigación en comunicación: Diferencias entre Península Ibérica y América Latina," *Cuadernos.info*, no. 54 (2023).

[20] Arie Kacowitz, "América Latina en el mundo: Globalización, regionalización y fragmentación," *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 124 (2008); Andrés Serbin, ed., *América Latina y El Caribe Frente a un nuevo orden mundial: Poder, globalización y respuestas regionales* (Buenos Aires: Icaria Editorial / Ediciones CRIES, 2018).

[21] Anderson, *Comunidades imaginadas*, 99–101.

[22] A 2022 BBC report (https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-59579795) mentions seven ongoing territorial disputes, five of which have required intervention from the International Court of Justice at The Hague: Guyana vs. Venezuela over Essequibo; the border between Belize and Guatemala; Colombia vs. Nicaragua over the archipelago of San Andres, Providencia, and Santa Catalina; Chile vs. Bolivia over the Silala River; Honduras and Nicaragua vs. El Salvador over the Gulf of Fonseca; Argentina vs. Chile over the Drake Passage; and, of course, Argentina vs. the United Kingdom over the Falklands/Malvinas Islands and Antarctica.

[23] Peter Schenkel, "La importancia del consenso latinoamericano," *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 15 (1974); Schenkel, *La integración latinoamericana y el desarrollo* (Quito: CIESPAL, 1984); Fuentes-Navarro, *Un campo cargado de futuro*; Luis Núñez and Beatriz Solís, eds., *Comunicación, identidad e integración Latinoamericana* (Mexico City: FELAFACS / CONEICC / Universidad Iberoamericana, 1994); Néstor García-Canclini, ed., *Culturas en globalización: América Latina-Europa-Estados Unidos; Libre comercio e integración* (Caracas: Nueva Sociedad /

opposition, to an authoritarian "all or nothing," the very evolution of Beltrán's thought and discourse, as well as his continued influence as an interlocutor or mediator between the academic communities and the national and international public agencies of the communications sector, maintained for decades a "critical openness" that was not the most common attitude in the field, but which, due to his recognized intellectual authority, provided opportunities for dialogue and mutual respect among many of the agents of the nascent specialty, not yet clearly differentiated from journalism. Two anthologies of his texts and interventions attest to this ability finely cultivated by Beltrán.[41] But finally, it is unquestionable that both at the epistemological or methodological level and at the (axiological) level of the transforming action of social communication systems and practices, processes of fragmentation or multiple divergence have replaced in Latin America the typical polarizations of other times, unfortunately without reducing the risks of dogmatism.

The Disjointed Development of "Latin American Communicational Thought"

In the academic spaces opened in several Latin American universities in the 1970s, within journalism schools or outside them, including the first postgraduate programs in communication, there was a proliferation of theoretical-methodological perspectives imported and appropriated in some way in each place. Within a few years, other European currents of thought on the social—together with the influence of the "Frankfurt School," spread by pioneering authors such as Antonio Pasquali,[42] and the classical Marxism already present in Latin America—were incorporated into the academic field of communication studies, which was already incipiently configured. These European influences included structuralism[43] with linguistic roots and its developments in semiology, psychoanalysis, and sociology, as well as the influential "structuralist" Marxism of Louis Althusser and his followers.

Then came the "rediscovery" of Antonio Gramsci's thought, particularly in relation to popular culture studies, and the French school of discourse analysis, among other contributions. But this constant flow of analytical frameworks, which very often became nothing more than intellectual fads, hindered the development of rational debates that would focus the critical discussion of such frameworks to support their relevance. However, on other occasions and in other places, these and other analytical frameworks have been critically adopted, incorporated into the intellectual heritage, and made relevant to the understanding of Latin American realities through articulated empir-

Seminario de Estudios de la Cultura / CLACSO, 1996); Franz Portugal Bernedo, ed., *La investigación en comunicación social en América Latina 1970–2000* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2000); Carlos Véjar Pérez-Rulfo, ed., *Globalización, Comunicación e integración Latinoamericana* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés / CIICH UNAM / UACM, 2006).

[24] Enrique E. Sánchez-Ruiz and Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, *Algunas condiciones para la investigación científica de la comunicación en México*, Cuadernos Huella 17 (Guadalajara: ITESO, 1989), 12–13.

[25] Guillermo Boils Morales and Antonio Murga Frassinetti, eds., *Las ciencias sociales en América Latina* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1979).

[26] Marques de Melo, "La investigación Latinoamericana."

[27] Raúl Trejo-Delarbre, "Seis décadas de investigación Latinoamericana sobre comunicación: Una propuesta de periodización," in *Tejiendo nuestra historia: Investigación de la comunicación en América Latina*, ed. Delia Crovi Druetta and Raúl Trejo Delarbre (Mexico City: UNAM, 2018), 322.

[28] Everett M. Rogers, "Communication and Development: The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm," in *Communication and Development: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Everett M. Rogers (Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE, 1976); Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "Everett M. Rogers (1931–2004) y la investigación Latinoamericana de la comunicación," *Comunicación y Sociedad* 4 (2005).

[29] Pablo González Casanova, *Las categorías del desarrollo económico y la investigación en ciencias sociales* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1977).

[30] Luis Ramiro Beltrán, "Alien Premises, Objects, and Methods in Latin American Communication Research," in *Communication and Development: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Everett M. Rogers (Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE, 1976).

[31] Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "Latin American Interventions to the Practice and Theory of Communication and Social Development: On the Legacy of Juan Díaz Bordenave," in *The Handbook of Global Interventions in Communication Theory*, ed. Yoshitaka Miike and Jing Yin (New York: Routledge, 2022).

[32] Everett M. Rogers, "The Empirical and the Critical Schools of Communication Research," *ICA Communication Yearbook* 5 (1982).

ical research and practical action—central formative tasks of graduate programs and fundamental objectives of research centers such as ININCO (Institute for Communication Research, Central University of Venezuela) or ILET (Latin American Institute for Transnational Studies), which promoted the strong and vital presence of the "Latin American critical current" in UNESCO's programs that led in 1980 to the well-known *MacBride Report*.[44]

However, the focus of global attention and concern on "communication" amid the major world economic, political, and ideological-cultural crises of the 1980s and onward, as well as the growth and institutional consolidation of the academic field and the proliferation of multi-, inter-, trans- and even "post-disciplinary" perspectives, generated in Latin America a growing series of tensions that, in their most positive aspect, were manifested in valuable contributions from Jesús Martín-Barbero, Eliseo Verón, Renato Ortiz, and Néstor García Canclini,[45] among others, whose work brought together the social sciences and culture and society studies and would come to be identified (although not by them) as "Latin American communicational thought." This label itself merits some additional reflection.

One of the most elaborate and internationally appreciated formulations of the label "communicational thought" is that of Bernard Miège, clearly located in the French debate for the academic legitimization of the Information and Communication Sciences, and sustained in the face of the double tension between "discipline" and "interdiscipline" on the one hand, and intellectual consistency and its instrumental uses on the other. But "the condition of this communicational thought is still profoundly undecided," since it is at the same time an organizer of scientific, reflexive, or professional practices and a response to the demands of states and large organizations and an inspiration for changes in them. "In one word," Miège writes, "[communicational thought] can be at the origin of or accompany changes in cultural practices or modes of dissemination or acquisition of knowledge."[46] This "profound indecision" is also implicit in the version of the label formulated in Brazil by José Marques de Melo[47] about Latin American "communicational thought," although it refers more emphatically to an explicit socio-political project, based on a highly debatable but influential diagnosis:

> The affirmation of the Latin American gaze, vindicating the socio-cultural identity of studies and research that for half a century have been in the process of development in our mega-region, corresponds to the purpose of confronting the traditional complex of the colonized. Reflecting a type of congenital dependence, this distortion of personality supports the production of theoretical frameworks generated in ecologies that are distanced from our ways of being, thinking and acting. Faced with challenges of this nature, the academic segment

[33] Sánchez-Ruiz, *Medios de difusión y sociedad*.

[34] Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependencia y desarrollo en América Latina* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1969); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogía del oprimido* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1970).

[35] CIESPAL, "Seminario sobre la investigación de la comunicación en América Latina: Informe provisional," *Chasqui*, no. 4 (1973).

[36] Luis Ramiro Beltrán, "Communication Research in Latin America: The Blindfolded Inquiry?" (paper presented at International Association for Media and Communication Research, Leipzig, East Germany, 1974).

[37] CIESPAL, "Seminario sobre la investigación de la comunicación," 15.

[38] CIESPAL, "Seminario sobre la investigación de la comunicación," 25.

[39] CIESPAL, "Seminario sobre la investigación de la comunicación," 18.

[40] Beltrán, "Communication Research in Latin America," 40.

[41] Luis Ramiro Beltrán, *Investigación sobre comunicación en Latinoamérica: Inicio, trascendencia y proyección* (La Paz: Plural Editores / Universidad Católica Boliviana, 2000); Beltrán, *Comunicación, política y desarrollo: Selección de textos publicados en la revista Chasqui entre 1982 y 2009* (Quito: CIESPAL, 2014).

[42] Antonio Pasquali, *Comunicación y cultura de masas* (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1972); Pasquali, *Comprender la comunicación* (Caracas: Monte Avila, 1978).

[43] Eliseo Verón, *Conducta, estructura y comunicación*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Tiempo Contemporáneo, 1972).

[44] Sean MacBride et al., *Un solo mundo, voces múltiples: Comunicación e información en nuestro tiempo* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980).

[45] Jesús Martín-Barbero, *De los medios a las mediaciones: Comunicación, cultura y hegemonía* (Mexico City: Gustavo Gili, 1987); Eliseo Verón, *La semiosis social: Fragmentos de la una teoría de la discursividad* (Buenos Aires: Gedisa, 1988); Renato Ortiz, *Cultura Brasileira e identidade nacional* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985); Ortiz, *A moderna tradição brasileira* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1988); Néstor García-Canclini, *Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1989).

[46] Bernard Miège, *El pensamiento comunicacional* (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, Cátedra UNESCO de Comunicación, 1996), 9–10.

> of communication in Latin America does not always react positively, adopting a defensive behavior instead of occupying its rightful space at the forefront of the world scientific community.[48]

Although it could be mistaken as a re-edition of "the blindfolded inquiry," this Manichean formulation may have had more of a "provocative" intention, as part of a polemical and strategic disposition of the leadership exercised by Marques de Melo to rescue the "Latin American School" in the face of the "great fascination for digital technologies and for the relations of sociability cultivated through global computer networks" of the new generation of students and scholars of communication, and to the "compulsory connection" to the process of scientific and technological globalization, towards which we would be being led, "in tune with the heralds of cultural globalization, but without awareness of its effects, especially by the gradual erosion of our regional/national identities."[49] Although the Latin American School "has not yet conquered hegemony" in the study of communication in Latin America, its future "depends basically on the generational transition that is now in process," Marques de Melo[50] affirmed. On this conviction, perhaps, he dedicated a great effort throughout his life to the creation and institutional strengthening of academic associations of different scales of coverage (Brazilian, Lusophone, Latin American, Ibero-American).

Even earlier, in the context of the turn of the century, Latin America had to "accept that the times are not for synthesis," as Martín-Barbero formulated it, and that it would be necessary to "advance gropingly, without a map or with only a nocturnal map . . . a map not for escape but for the recognition of the situation from the mediations and the subjects,"[51] a position that apparently coincided with the change of perspective pointed out in the journal *Comunicación y Cultura* by Héctor Schmucler, one of its editors, although the differences between them were later emphasized. Schmucler proposed in 1984 that "communication is not everything, but it must be spoken from everywhere; it must cease to be a constituted object, to be an objective to be achieved. From culture . . . communication will have a meaning transferable to everyday life."[52]

Few of the texts that appeared in those years with self-critical reviews of the past and prefigurations of the future of the field, written by several of the most influential Latin American researchers, were optimistic or inspired enthusiastic action. Martín-Barbero himself came, a few years later, to promote with others a very radical criticism of the academic field, and more precisely of the tendencies he perceived in universities, related to "the slowness, and even stagnation, of a critical thinking that, entangled in the internal discussions of the academy and ideological inertia, is unable to closely accom-

[47] José Marques de Melo, "Communication Research: New Challenges of the Latin American School," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993); Marques de Melo, *Entre el saber y el poder*.

[48] Marques de Melo, *Entre el saber y el poder,* 16–17.

[49] Marques de Melo, *Entre el saber y el poder,* 383.

[50] Marques de Melo, *Entre el saber y el poder,* 380, 382.

[51] Martín-Barbero, *De los medios a las mediaciones*, 229.

[52] Héctor Schmucler, "Un proyecto de comunicación/cultura," *Comunicación y cultura*, no. 12 (1984): 8.

pany the transformations of the social and cultural real."[53] In view of this, Martín-Barbero and others argued, research should be better linked to a "country agenda." Despite the growth and institutional consolidation of "training" programs in communication in all Latin American countries, and some progress in research, "linkage," and internationalization, inertia and dissatisfaction have been constant, at the same time as changes in communication systems, technologies, policies, habits, and applications have proliferated.

It is then evident that the use of terms such as "communicational thought" or "country agenda" is usually associated with a position in a debate, in a struggle for domination (and denomination) of the field, and that is why they serve to reconstruct a history in which certain contributions are considered more valuable or significant than others: to justify the perspectives adopted in the present, and from there to draw lines of development and future action. Something similar can be said to be proposed, albeit in different and divergent ways, by two books of great erudition and critical acuity that appeared in the last decade of the twentieth century outside the Latin American region, but also of relevance there, since both display a history of the main sources of influence exerted over the Latin American academic field and communicational thought: from a French angle, *The Invention of Communication* by Armand Mattelart,[54] and from an American perspective, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* by John Durham Peters.[55] The two books have been translated to Spanish and Mattelart's also to Portuguese. By way of contrast, Beltrán and co-authors published *La Comunicación antes de Colón: Tipos y formas en Mesoamérica y Los Andes* (2008), a wonderful historical reconstruction of ancient communication practices held by several civilizations before the fifteenth century European arrival to "America."[56] Not surprisingly, this book has not been translated to other languages, and even the Spanish edition is difficult to get outside Bolivia since there is no digital edition.

However, the predominant tension in the Latin American academic field since the 1990s centers not on "historicization" but rather on diverging debates on the "abandonment of critical premises"[57]; the adoption of the "inevitable validity" of the laws of the market in the field of research[58]; the dispersion of approaches to the multiple cultural "mediations" of social practices and "mediatizations" in society[59]; or in other directions, among which "technologization" has an important place.[60] In its most general lines, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, this *fragmentation* could very well continue to describe Latin American communication research, which has nevertheless advanced considerably in extension and recognition, following very diverse and even divergent patterns of academic insti-

[53] Jesús Martín-Barbero, ed., *Entre saberes desechables y saberes indispensables: Agendas de país desde la Comunicación* (Bogotá: Centro de Competencia en Comunicación para América Latina, 2009), 6.

[54] Armand Mattelart, *La invención de la comunicación* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1995).

[55] John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[56] Luis Ramiro Beltrán et al., *La comunicación antes de Colón: Tipos y formas en Mesoamérica y los Andes* (La Paz: Centro Interdisciplinario Boliviano de Estudios de la Comunicación, 2008).

[57] Carlos Ossandón, Claudio Salinas, and Hans Stange, *La impostura crítica: Desventuras de la investigación en comunicación* (Salamanca, Spain: Comunicación Social, ediciones y publicaciones / ICEI Universidad de Chile, 2019).

[58] Carlos Hoevel, *La industria académica: La universidad bajo el imperio de la tecnocracia global* (Buenos Aires: Teseo, 2021).

[59] Mario Carlón, *Circulación del sentido y construcción de colectivos: En una sociedad hipermediatizada* (San Luis, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de San Luis, 2020).

tutionalization depending on the country in question, and showing complex and opaque structural features that "foster asymmetrical pluralism throughout the region, such that certain Latin American scholars are overrepresented in the most prestigious international publications while others barely figure."[61]

Faced with the accumulation of complaints and data about the scarce participation of Latin American production in the most globally recognized academic journals, Florencia Enghel and Martín Becerra[62] coordinated a special edition of *Communication Theory* and produced an interesting critical reflection on the matter that was subsequently published in Spanish in Chile. In their journal article, the authors recognize that inequity exists and should not be ignored by those who promote it or benefit directly or indirectly from it. "But paying attention to the structural dimension means also taking into account the limitations coming from Latin America itself."[63] The three "structural" factors they point out as determinants are, first, the general context in which communication studies are produced in Latin America, characterized "by the scarcity of non-commercial public service media systems" and by "the hyper-concentration of private media ownership"; second, in relation to academic systems, the "absence of public policies and resources—material and symbolic—aimed at fostering the wide dissemination of knowledge produced at national, regional and international levels"; and third, that institutional pressure "for Latin American communication and media studies to adopt thematic concerns and publication formats typical of academic work in the North erodes plurality and diversity for South and North alike."[64]

This last sentence by Becerra and Enghel, although they do not make it explicit, can also be interpreted with regard to the development of graduate programs (master's and doctorates) in communication in Latin America, their remarkable growth since the 1990s, and the structural conditions that characterize them differentially. Coordinated by Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes in 2011 as part of the Ibero-American Forums organized by Confibercom,[65] the study identified 249 master's and thirty-eight doctoral programs in communication operating under very different conditions and university regimes in nineteen Latin American countries. Despite this large number, most were less than ten years old and had few provisions for their "internationalization." The Forum sought to cooperatively meet the following *initial* objectives:

> 1) To draw up a descriptive inventory of the postgraduate programs in Communication operating in the Ibero-American region, understanding as such the study programs aimed at obtaining doctoral and/or master's degrees, officially recognized by national higher education regulations.

[60] Luciano Sanguinetti, *Las revoluciones de la comunicación: Información, conocimiento y cultura; resistencia y hegemonía* (La Plata, Argentina: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Facultad de Periodismo, 2021).

[61] Becerra and Enghel, "Pluralismo agonista en la internacionalización," 31.

[62] Florencia Enghel and Martín Becerra, "Here and There: (Re)Situating Latin America in International Communication Theory," *Communication Theory* 28, no. 2 (2018).

[63] Becerra and Enghel, "Pluralismo agonista en la internacionalización," 31.

[64] Becerra and Enghel, "Pluralismo agonista en la internacionalización," 30–31.

[65] Ibero-American Confederation of Scientific and Academic Communication Associations (Confederación Iberoamericana de Asociaciones Científicas y Académicas en Comunicación).

> 2) To identify national trends in the development of postgraduate systems in Communication during the last decade, within the framework of the educational legislation of each country, including especially the evaluation and accreditation systems in force.
>
> 3) To explore the institutional frameworks of academic cooperation and exchange and of the national mechanisms in force and susceptible to being used for the internationalization of the programs.[66]

Unfortunately, this Ibero-American project would not be renewed or updated on an ongoing basis, nor was the project taken up by other associations. The other two academic projects would suffer the same abandonment, as did the international teams formed to develop the "Forums" of "Public Policies of Communication" and of "Scientific Journals of Communication Sciences," which together with that of "Graduate Studies," were designed by a group of researchers led by José Marques de Melo.[67] Although the purpose was to build an entity that would bring together the national and regional associations already existing in Ibero-America, and the format designed for it seemed very appropriate to strengthen internationalization, its institutionalization lost continuity and viability in a brief time, coinciding with Marques de Melo's illness and death in 2018.

[66] Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, ed., *Posgrados en comunicación en Iberoamérica: Políticas nacionales e internacionales* (São Paulo: Confibercom, 2012), 8.

[67] Margarida Maria Krohling-Kunsch, ed., *La comunicación en Iberoamérica: Políticas científicas y tecnológicas, posgrado y difusión del conocimiento* (Quito: CIESPAL / Confibercom, 2013).

Latin American Academic Organizations and the Internationalization of the Field

Over five decades, ALAIC and FELAFACS have alternately gone through periods of growth and stability and periods of precarity, as has CIESPAL, but with differences due to the latter's character as an international organization which is subject to different structural factors. At their best these associations have strengthened and expanded the "field" through their contributions to the consolidation of trends of institutional development and regional integration of academic studies on communication; while, at their worst, they have failed to close evident "gaps." The associations' different compositions and priority areas of intervention were conceived from the outset as complementary, and on several occasions their leaders have prioritized collaboration over the division of tasks, and many of their members have been simultaneously or successively members or officials of both. However, there have also been episodes of estrangement, mutual discredit, or even political confrontation, such as when the Latin American support for the IAMCR presidential candidate was divided in 1996.

As for other regions of the world, IAMCR has been an academic organization of significant importance for the development of the academic field of communication in Ibero-America.[68] Since its foun-

[68] Jörg Becker and Robin Mansell, eds., *Reflections on the International Association for Media and Communication Research: Many Voices, One Forum* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

dation in 1957, due to direct promotion by UNESCO, IAMCR has included members from Ibero-America, both individual and institutional, and although it has never been notably intense, this participation has been constant and has remained a factor that has "modeled" the functions of international associations of regional scale. According to Kaarle Nordenstreng, there is no doubt that the initiative to create IAMCR was dominated by Europeans, particularly the French, "but colleagues from countries such as Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Egypt, Israel, India, Indonesia, Japan, Australia, the United States and Canada also intervened."[69] Since 1968, when IAMCR met in Pamplona, its conferences have been hosted by an Ibero-American city eleven times: four in Spain, two in Brazil, two in Mexico, and one each in Argentina, Venezuela, and Colombia—which constitutes 25 percent of the venues in that period.

Simonson and Park assert that transnational academic associations "have been major forces in facilitating the flow of ideas and people, solidifying hegemonic and counter-hegemonic paradigms and political orientations to communication research and social networks of scholars"[70]; and Miquel de Moragas emphasizes the importance of academic cooperation in countering the competitiveness that "the logics of current science policy tend to prioritize" and urges that globalization be understood not as unification but as "interconnection of nodes of influence."[71] By following these and other confluent leads, it becomes increasingly clear that the focus of attention on tensions and counter-positions is much more illuminating of international institutionalization processes than unidirectional flows of influences or resources, or the defense of national historical "exceptionalisms." On the other hand, it also confirms that it is methodologically convenient to define both spatial and temporal scales to adequately and diversely contextualize transnationalization processes.[72]

It has already been pointed out that ALAIC was founded and developed in its early years as a forum for "counter-hegemonic action," and at the same time "intra-regional cooperation," in a socio-political context of resistance to authoritarianism (particularly to the military governments of the Southern Cone) and to what was then referred to as "cultural imperialism."[73] Given the scarcity and fragility of university institutions and academic centers for communication research in Latin America during the sixties, seventies, and eighties, the research and "militant theory" that characterized the region were strongly international, or even transnational, but were far removed from the more orthodox *canons* of scientific-academic institutionalization and university teaching. Regarding communication and culture in Latin America until at least the 1990s, Luiz Gonzaga Motta writes that

[69] Kaarle Nordenstreng, "Institutional Networking: The Story of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR)," in *The History of Media and Communication Research: Contested Memories*, ed. David W. Park and Jefferson D. Pooley (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 229.

[70] Peter Simonson and David W. Park, eds., *The International History of Communication Study* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 69–70.

[71] Miquel de Moragas, "Las asociaciones de investigación de la comunicación: Funciones y retos" (paper presented at the Encuentro Internacional de Asociaciones Académicas de Comunicación, Bilbao, Spain, 2014): 6.

[72] Maria Löblich and Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz, "The Transnational Flow of Ideas and *Histoire Croisée* with Attention to the Cases of France and Germany," in *The International History of Communication Study*, ed. Peter Simonson and David W. Park (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[73] Martin Carnoy, *La educación como imperialismo cultural* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1977); Ariel Dorfman, *Reader's nuestro que estás en la tierra: Ensayos sobre el imperialismo cultural* (Mexico City: Nueva Imagen, 1980).

> . . . the Weberian institutionalization of science (consecration of behaviors of the "scientific community" through the assimilation of social roles proper to science, such as political disinterest, rationality, and emotional neutrality) has not taken place, at least not in the North American molds. Scientific activity in communication during the last three decades (perhaps excepting Brazil), has not been institutionalized even in terms of the installation of a proper and accepted place for research. In fact, the most significant scientific production in this area took place, and still takes place, outside the mechanisms of the state (universities, techno-bureaucracy, etc.)[74]

[74] Luiz Gonzaga Motta, "Las revistas de comunicación en América Latina: Creación de la teoría militante," *Telos*, no. 19 (1989): 150–51.

In this line, ALAIC was constituted in response to a growing interest in socio-political processes related to the "media" yet not oriented toward "academization." As such, ALAIC promoted the articulation of intellectual positions and research projects developed from thematically specialized centers and institutes, with a focus on "opposing" social movements, even as it also promoted the realization and publication of bibliographic accounts of "research in social communication" and the formation or incorporation of national associations of researchers. Nonetheless, and for many reasons, ALAIC's activities decreased in intensity and scope from the mid-1980s on, to the extent that a process of "reconstitution" had to be initiated in 1988 on new bases and impulses—precisely those typical of an international academic organization, with not only socio-political but also scientific and professional references. This institutional "transformation" has endured such trials as the periodical renewal of its leadership, the strengthening and expansion of joint projects with other regional and global associations in the field, the biennial organization of international congresses and seminars, and the maintenance of two scientific journals: *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias de la Comunicación*, with forty-two issues edited in Portuguese and Spanish since 2004; and *Journal of Latin American Communication Research*, in English and Spanish, with eleven issues published since 2011. Despite the growing disproportion between Brazil and the rest of the Latin American countries in the number of qualified participants and the degrees of institutionalization of the field,[75] ALAIC has managed to consolidate itself as a "Latin American space," open both to the very diverse national and local realities of the region and to contact and collaboration with academic bodies from other regions of the planet.

[75] Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes and Richard Romancini, "History of Communication Study in Brazil: The Institutionalization of an Interdisciplinary Field," in *The International History of Communication Study*, ed. Peter Simonson and David W. Park (New York: Routledge, 2016).

Although its scope of action is not primarily research, FELAFACS has also been a major driving force for academic support and dissemination of Latin American research ever since its formation in October 1981. Its work in bringing together university training programs, especially undergraduate, and their national associations, and articulating them through joint projects on a regional scale, had a determining influence on the institutionalization of the academic field.

The activities of FELAFACS have been widely varied and influential, and have covered the twenty countries of the region, although these activities have decreased in recent years. Of note are the Latin American *Encuentros* (meetings) which FELAFACS convenes every two or three years, the countless workshops and training seminars it organizes for teachers and scholars across many different universities, cities, and countries, and its publication of the journal *Diá-logos de la Comunicación*.[76] Together these resources have made it possible to articulate and address the problems of teaching and, to a lesser extent, of communication research around concrete, complex, and often rapidly changing social situations. In an unpublished, internal "evaluative report" from 1997, Wolfgang Donsbach described three basic functions, "manifest and latent," fulfilled by the Federation:

> First, the organization is a forum and a communicational network for Latin American faculties of social communication. In this function, the organization creates something like a common identity of Latin American faculties of social communication.
>
> Secondly, FELAFACS is an educational institution, dedicated to the "training of trainers." In this sense, the organization creates quality. This quality refers on the one hand to the teaching and research work and on the other hand to the level of graduates of the careers represented in FELAFACS.
>
> Thirdly, FELAFACS fulfills the function of an institution that promotes research. In this capacity, FELAFACS can contribute to obtaining more knowledge about specific Latin American phenomena and problems in the field of public communication.[77]

It is instructive to weigh this evaluation against FELAFACS's original objectives. As Donsbach's description here suggests, the organization was "overtaken" by the growth in the number of schools and students of communication and the modification of national support policies in several countries, but also by the generalized predominance of professional training projects different from the "humanistic" ones that motivated its constitution and by the very transformation of social communication systems in local, national, and transnational contexts. It remains to be seen, twenty-five years later, whether the efforts of the current directors of the Federation will lead to renewed perspectives of action and reflection as influential as those achieved in the past. The "alliance" with CIESPAL to jointly organize the First Congress of Latin American Communication CIESPAL/FELAFACS in October 2023 will have to have that renewing effect for both institutions and for the field. Many agents of Latin American "communication fields" other than the strictly academic or scientific ones were invited to join panels and seminars set up for reflecting upon the "Millennium Goals" and to participate in dialogues among diverse communities of "communicators."

[76] In its print version, fifty-seven issues published from 1987 to 2007 (after sixteen issues of *Bulletin*), and then in digital format until issue ninety-two in 2016. Unfortunately, the collection is not currently available on the internet.

[77] Wolfgang Donsbach, "Proyecto Federación Latinoamericana de Facultades de Comunicación Social (FELAFACS), Informe Evaluativo" (unpublished report, Fundación Konrad Adenauer, Buenos Aires, 1997), 76, photocopy of a letter addressed to FELAFACS's president.

For more than four decades, ALAIC and FELAFACS have been responsible for facilitating the participation of researchers, professors, students, and professionals in Latin American meetings that can be considered "massive" by bringing together hundreds or even thousands of registered participants in both formal and informal academic activities. Amid travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the two institutions were able to replace face-to-face gatherings with "online" activities while ensuring a return to in-person formats as soon as possible. It will soon be necessary to evaluate which of these formats ought to be replicated, but surely "live personal communication" will have to be preserved and strengthened in the field of "communication."

For now, it should be noted that, during the last thirty years, Latin America has regularly held one or two of these meetings per year, either an ALAIC Congress or a FELAFACS *Encuentro*, or both. There have been a total of thirty-five Latin American meetings, held in fourteen different countries: seven in Colombia; five in Peru, Mexico, and Brazil; two in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay; one in Panama, Venezuela, Bolivia, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Costa Rica, and Ecuador. In all these meetings, a Latin American community of agents of different generations and specialties has been consolidated and strengthened, and a predictable yet ambivalent result of this consolidation has been the fragmentation and dispersion of the academic field, given that these newly formed communities are tendentially specialized and have less and less in common.

Obviously, this situation is perfectly common—in the disciplines and in the specialties of research or action—and the way out may be the same as was suggested by sociologist Craig Calhoun in the context of an ICA conference some years ago:

> In this heterogeneous field what is needed is not pressure towards conformity but the production of more and better connections between different lines of work. . . . [Theory] has a special role to play in this, but asking the big questions that connect different lines of work is something that goes far beyond the domain of theory.[78]

[78] Craig Calhoun, "Communication as Social Science (and More)," *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011).

Towards an Integrative Internationalization of the Latin American Academic Field

The hypothetical characterization in recent decades of communication research as subject to a "disintegrated internationalization," and the aim to promote a collective historical reflection based on systematic and rigorously analyzed documentation recovered in this work, were also the central axes of the inaugural keynote speech which this author delivered under the title "Memory and Historicity of Commu-

nication Research in Latin America" at the Fortieth Congress of the Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação (INTERCOM), thanks to a generous invitation aimed at "internationalizing" the conference.[79] Both arguments imply the conviction and the consequent recognition that the academic field of communication is diverse and heterogeneous in Latin America, and therefore simultaneous trends of convergence and fragmentation in academic production are frequently and clearly manifested. What the main Latin American academic associations have managed to consolidate in more than four decades is still open to an undetermined future in terms of regional "integration," but inescapably also to the "international" dynamics of the field in the broadest sense—that is, on the "global" scale, or at least on the scale of Western academia. One critical movement, which has had its own international correspondences, has been the recognition of women in the histories of national and Latin American communication fields. Several books on this subject have been edited recently, mainly following the initiative of Omar Rincón from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, whose anthology *Mujeres de la Comunicación*[80] offers a collection of valuable yet stylistically heterogeneous profiles of women researchers.

While some scholars "remain convinced that the field primarily reflects external paradigms and concerns," Latin American development cannot be reduced to a projection of foreign contributions.[81] Over a decade ago, Miquel de Moragas pointed out that communication research in Latin America "is not homogeneous," and yet it responds to a particular, common imperative: "sharing diversity and deconstructing theoretical apparatuses on communication based on the foreign experience of the great metropolises of the developed Western world."[82] It does not seem viable or convenient to insist on a mere "epistemological" reconstruction of the evolution of ideas. Nor would it suffice to merely acknowledge individual contributions, however extraordinary they may be, or to rely solely on a deterministic explanation—wherein macroeconomic and geopolitical factors are offered as an explanation for specific modalities of cultural or even ideological reproduction of reductionist notions of communication. Instead, the elaboration of a consistent and guiding historical narrative needs to recognize the complexity and multiplicity of the social-historical processes that have been interwoven and interdetermined at each of the spatiotemporal scales that it is relevant to define as one's own. As part of the social world, "which is continually being made, un-made, re-made," the social-scientific discourse implies a perpetual self-revision of its premises and its proposals, its methods and its articulations with the other practices and social

[79] Raúl Fuentes-Navarro, "Memoria e historicidad de la Investigación en Comunicación en América Latina" (Opening Conference at the Congresso de la Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação [INTERCOM], Curitiba, Brazil, September 6, 2017).

[80] Clemencia Rodríguez et al., eds., *Mujeres de la comunicación* (Bogotá: FES Comunicación, 2020); Vania Sandoval Arenas et al., eds., *Mujeres de la comunicación: Bolivia* (La Paz, Bolivia: FES Comunicación, 2022); Claudia Magallanes Blanco and Paola Ricaurte Quijano, eds., *Mujeres de la comunicación: México* (Mexico City: FES Comunicación, 2022); Alejandra García Vargas, Nancy Díaz Larrañaga, and Larisa Kejval, eds., vol. 1, *Mujeres de la comunicación: Argentina* (Buenos Aires, FES Comunicación, 2022); Clemencia Rodríguez, Amparo Marroquín Parducci, and Omar Rincón, eds., *Mujeres de la comunicación 2: América Latina y el Caribe* (Bogotá: FES Comunicación, 2023). In 2021, *Pioneras en los estudios latinoamericanos de comunicación*, edited by Yamila Heram and Santiago Gándara, appeared in Argentina. Among the six books, all of them with digital open circulation, 128 profiles of outstanding Latin American women in the field, were published.

[81] Waisbord, "Communication Studies without Frontiers?," 876.

[82] Miquel de Moragas, *Interpretar la comunicación: Estudios sobre medios en América y Europa* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2011), 302.

structures it takes as its object.[83] And thus, reflexively and critically, through communication and not in some other way, will the international integration Latin American communication scholarship be strengthened and advanced.

[83] Abbott, *Processual Sociology*.

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