African and Latin American Cultural Studies: Global-South Perspectives

Estudos Culturais Africanos e Latino-Americanos: Perspectivas do Sul-Global

ABSTRACT
This text aims to discuss the so-called internationalization of cultural studies from two versions: the Latin American and the African ones. The originality of the contribution is in the presentation of the African current, little discussed in Brazilian and Latin American literature. We describe the political situation in which Latin American and African cultural studies develop, the institutional context, and present the main points that characterize these versions. We end by investing our considerations drawing approaches between them.

Keywords: Cultural studies, Latin America, Africa, South epistemology

RESUMO
Este texto tem como objetivo discutir a chamada internacionalização dos estudos culturais a partir de duas versões: a latino-americana e a africana. A originalidade da contribuição está na apresentação da corrente africana, pouco abordada na literatura brasileira e da América Latina. Descrevemos a conjuntura política em que os estudos culturais latino-americanos e africanos se desenvolvem, o contexto institucional, e apresentamos os principais pontos que caracterizam estas versões. Finalizamos nossas considerações tecendo aproximações entre ambas.

Palavras-chave: Estudos culturais, América Latina, África, Epistemologia do sul

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.11606/issn.1982-8160.v16i1p161-180
THE OBJECTIVE OF this article is to trace an overview of cultural studies (CS) in their Latin American and African currents by a bibliographic review. From a brief recovery of the path taken by authors who tried to identify their origins, we began to observe the specificities of each tradition. To this end, we elaborated a rescue of their trajectories in each geopolitical context, describing their main themes and how they are approached theoretically and methodologically. Whereas the narrative of British and Latin American ECs has been retold in numerous publications, here and in other quarters (Escosteguy, 2001; Follari, 2002; Mattelart & Neveu, 2004; Repoll, 2010), our main contribution is presenting African CSs. We can say that this version is scarcely present in the genealogies published on our continent. Our intention, therefore, is above all else to observe the continuities and oppositions between Latin American and African cultural studies, with the British as a panorama.

DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL STUDIES: MULTITER TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

Between the 1990s and the early 2000s, many cultural studies researchers began to publish articles, readers, and collections retelling the history of its consolidation – whose origin refers to England – and dedicating at least one section to the discussion of the whys and the effects of its internationalization between the 1980s and 1990s. What is agreed among them is precisely the reaffirmation of this expansion process. However, another narrative discusses the origin of CS in other territories.

In the first case, one of the first texts to critically reflect on this global shift is the work by Valda Blundell, John Shepherd, and Ian Taylor, three researchers from different educational institutions, called Relocating Cultural Studies, from 1993. The sentence that begins the work could not be more accurate: “This collection constitutes a salutary demonstration that Britain no longer serves as the center for cultural studies” (Blundell et al., 1993, p. i). A year later, Schwarz (1994) asks himself, in the title of his article: “Where Is Cultural Studies?”. In it, the English historian claims that this question has many answers, listing a series of geographical spaces in which the paradigm existed with vitality. He cites, for example, regions such as South Africa, countries of Oceania and Latin America, and the United States is the place where CS success could be best evidenced. The relevance of the U.S. as the main importer of the paradigm is also recurring when its expansion is contextualized. Mattelart and Neveu (2004) point out that in the Thatcher era (1979–1990), many older teachers...
were unhappy with the precarious conditions of intellectual work, which
motivated them to seek opportunities in the United States, carrying the CS
in their luggage. This exchange between the two countries was also facilitated
by sharing the same language.

Still in the 1990s, in the collection organized by Storey (1997), What Is
cultural Studies?, Grossberg, one of the main actors in the perspective in the
United States, participates with an article that highlights losses observed in
this spread of the CS to the four corners of the globe, which would also be the
subject of criticism from many other scholars in the field (Escosteguy, 2001;
Giroux, 2000; Silva, 1999). For Grossberg (1997), the CSs were going through a
process of commodification and, like every commodity, “it has little identity of its
own and is celebrated only for its mobility and its capacity to generate further
surplus capital” (p. 178). Note that, in the early days, the British CS were based on
the political premises of the English New Left and that, therefore, their concern
has always been to investigate the world of the lived and popular culture to
describe the modes of operation and reproduction of power in everyday life,
whether by practices or texts.

In addition to this, there is another less known perspective, based on
the conception that the CS have several origins. Maxwell (2020) identifies three
simultaneous geneses, between the 1950s and 1960s: the British, the French and
Italian, and the African. Wright (1998) emphatically attest that the latter would
have been the true first version of the CS, taking place in the 1970s, more precisely
in the Community of Kamiriithu (Kenya). The author bases himself on the –
sometimes forgotten – presupposition that this field of study, in addition to
social criticism, has as political project of progressive transformation of society.
Thus, “While the Birmingham Centre represented an origin of cultural studies
as a named field of academic study, Kamiriithu represented an origin of cultural
studies as a community-based, production-oriented, popular education form of
study” (Wright, 1998, p. 34). Wright recognizes the importance of the Centre
for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) for the politicization of academia
and for the legitimation of CSs in the spaces of knowledge, but assesses that,
in this process, the political project of intellectual enterprise is lost.

Many analysts agree with the problems related to the institutionalization
of CS as responsible for a consequent depoliticization of the field of studies.
Also, there is a mistrust of the immense volume of published articles that
are said to be of cultural studies. What Schwarz (1994) observes is that
they are often predictable studies that only use all the post-colonial and
deconstructionist theoretical contribution, which does not necessarily make
them CS. Regardless of the criticism, the “planetary expansion” (Mattelart &
Neveu, 2004) is, more than a path of no return, a reality already consolidated. The authors emphasize that such success reflects how culture has gained importance for explaining social dynamics, assuming a place of relevance even in economic activities. It is worth remembering the title of the article “The Centrality of Culture” by Stuart Hall (1997). In this scenario, the CS offer almost all academic communities in the world interested in *ordinary culture* the theoretical and methodological tools to analyze it.

Just to name a few countries in which the CS penetrated, in Spain, according to Balibrea (2010), the paradigm lies in academic marginality, given the little legitimacy that popular culture has in the Spanish university environment. Also, with less expression, France, a country with a very impenetrable intellectual academic community as pointed out by Mattelart and Neveu (2004) and Maigret (2005). Despite this, some research communities recognize themselves as practicing CS. An example is the creation of the journal *French Cultural Studies*, in 1990, in whose first issue opening, editor-in-chief Michael Kelly (1990) refers to the contribution of Hoggart, Hall, and Williams and emphasizes the commitment (at the time) to raise pertinent discussions around the processes of construction of the French national identity.

According to some analysts, CS are an unexplored field of research virtually non-existent in the Eastern European region. Belarusian researcher Almira Ousmanova (2003), for example, reports that the investigation of *culture* in the region is occupied by Culturology. This, however, does not contemplate the culture of ordinary life, throwing lights exclusively to *spiritual culture*, supposedly free of structuring conditionings: “‘spirituality’ does not have gender or class, it does not depend on economic conditions, it is not bound by historical circumstances” (p. 40). Interestingly, gender studies absorbed the theoretical assumptions of the British CS: “I argue that Gender Studies promotes the methods and stakes of the Cultural Studies project in the region despite the general suspicion towards Marxism as such” (p. 40).

More successfully, as Frow and Morris (1997) indicate, in Australia, CS have greater influence on the teaching of media careers, such as journalism and advertising, helping to understand the logics of circulation of culture. At the continental level, Asia has been consolidating strongly, since the implementation of the journal *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* in 2000, according to Taiwanese Kuan-Hsing Chen, editor-in-chief of the journal, and Singaporean Beng Hut Chua (Chen & Chua, 2007). In North America, as stated before, CS have successfully taken root in the United States, especially due to them serving as a radical alternative to the classic functionalist model prevailing in the country’s communication research (O’Connor, 1997). The CS are also present
in Canada, where they contribute to problematize the category of nation, stressing the role of the State in the country’s cultural policies, as Berland (1995) explains. In Latin America, we can cite Colombia as an example of a place where, according to Humar Forero (2008), CS articulated to mediate the political debate on the ethnic and cultural plurality of the country, that is, they had an intervening role.

This trip to some corners of the globe sought to demonstrate panoramically the different gradients of success achieved by CS over the last three decades, and some of its uses. Our text will follow, from here, entering the specificities of CS from the Latin American and African geopolitical clippings, scanning the two versions in greater detail, according to the objectives already presented.

AFRICAN CULTURAL STUDIES: FROM THEORETICAL DEPENDENCE TO AN AFROCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE

African cultural studies (ACS) are a floating signifier since their meaning can vary and is in fact being established (Wright & Xiao, 2020). Lewis (2017) gave a clear indication that the ACS are still in the forge when he stated that:

Apart from the narration of life stories of cultural studies, I don’t believe there’s been much attention to historicising it in relation to the politics of institutional and interdisciplinary affiliations, North-South encounters, how, why and when certain engagements with race, sexuality and gender have occurred, global cultural and economic trajectories with reference to national ones, and the ways in which canonization has functioned. (p. 2)

Exemplifying that the ACS are under construction, Wright and Xiao (2020) claim that, geographically, they can be considered as studies developed on the African continent with contributions of Africans in the diaspora. Note that this field appears in a context of the narratives of Africanization, in which intellectual reorientation and historical perspective of the CS in terms of the trajectory of the African culture is needed. This perspective begins within the Kamiriithu Community Education and Cultural Centre, in Kenya (East Africa), in 1970, under the guidance of Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Wright, 2015). This was a community-based institution, with production oriented to popular education as a form of learning, where ACS took their first steps on the continent, until the deregistration and ban of their activities on March 11, 1982. Later, its name is changed to Kamiriithu Polytechnic and Adult Literacy Center by the Kenyan government (Mbingu, 1991), exiling its members, towards Zimbabwe (Tomaselli, 2016).
Pointing out the work developed by the connection of the University of Zimbabwe and the University of Oslo (UZ-UO) in a project called “Media and Democracy – Cultural Change in Southern Africa,” funded by the Norwegian Research Council from the State and Society, Democracy and Political Change program for developing countries, is also possible. This connection ended when Zimbabwe entered an economic crisis (Tomaselli, 2016) and some of its researchers had to look for opportunities elsewhere. According to Tomaselli (2016), funds from Norway were drained to Rhodes University and University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal. The author points out that the graduates of the UZ-UO program went to work in South Africa. Thus, this perspective, despite taking its first steps in Kenya, flourished in South Africa starting from the 1980s, which justifies our concentration in the Anglo-Saxon line of CS.

A mapping of the instruments for the dissemination of CS in Africa indicates that, in the South African context, we have at the University of Natal, Durban, the biannual journal Critical Arts: A Journal for Cultural Studies. It starts as an anti-apartheid publication. According to Tomaselli (1998), this journal served to problematize the studies of culture and the media, in terms of resistance. From 1994, Critical Arts systematically expanded its interests to include Africa in relations with the Indian ocean, south-south, and north-south border of the African continent. Thus, the editions from 1994 onwards were dedicated to cultural issues studied in Africa, whose starting points were derived from an African perspective.

Another magazine that stood out is the three-yearly Africa Media Review, published in Nairobi, Kenya, which, from 1992, began to deal with subjects such as the oral method and native communication, discussed under the framework of cultural Marxism, inspired by British CS, to frame them in the third world, especially from the African perspective. In this journal, the researchers re-examined the thinking of Paulo Freire, Amilcar Cabral, and Frantz Fanon, in the context of the post-cold war and new media technologies, with the aim of improving a perspective of participatory development of communication for development.

According to Tomaselli and Wright (2011), the ACS were also spread by the Media Development magazine (World Association for Christian Communication, London), which provides short articles on Third World issues and space for important discussions on media and democracy in Africa. In addition, Readings in African Popular Culture journal provides an encyclopedic compilation of particular forms of African popular culture: from orality to television, music and singing, slogans, theater, etc. (Tomaselli & Wright, 2011). Finally, the Journal of Cultural Studies published by the African Cultural Institute (Nigeria) focuses on

\*For a discussion on the adoption and abandonment of this nomenclature, see Prysthon (2002).
the African context and has as general concerns ethnicity, development, politics, leadership, gender, literacy, the African renaissance and its relationship with the evolution of African cultures and CS (Tomaselli & Wright, 2011). Regarding the South African context, feminists present as a dissemination instrument the journal *Agenda*, introduced in 1987 with the objective of questioning and challenging understandings and practices about gender relations, to contribute to its development and transformation.

All the thought disseminated by the magazines described above is, according to Wright and Xiao (2020), grounded in the ideological tensions between pan-Africanism and Afropolitism; Afropessimism and Afrofuturism; African feminism and African sexualities. The contradiction between pan-Africanism and Afropolitism is based on the idea that pan-Africanism fits into a movement that claims political and cultural identities unique to Black people. Kalua (2009) states that these movements call for a need to endorse and value African black individuality and personality and use race as a signifier of continental unity. From a sociolinguistic perspective of *ubuntu*, pan-Africanism pitches a sense of connection, in which there is an “inseparable flux between continental and diasporic African-ness” (Wright & Xiao, 2020, p. 3), while Afropolitism has as its principles the reinvigoration of cosmopolitanism, African hybridism with Europeanity, Asiatism, and other diversities in the world and a reconceptualization of universality as global openness (Eze, 2016). In short, the debate around pan-Africanism/Afropolism can be said to consist mainly of disputes around who and what to prioritize in the new continental-diasporic flow of Africanism: pan-Africanism prioritizes the continued relevance of the anticolonial, the class struggles, and the anti-racist struggle; whereas Afropolitism has some global commercial popularity and self-definition affirmative power (Wright & Xiao, 2020).

Regarding Afropessimism and Afrofuturism, Wright and Xiao (2020) point out that the first is a classification system that functions as a developmental discourse that always operates under the naturalized guise that represents Africanity in negativity, producing the meaning that something is wrong with Africans. The authors stress that this discourse derives from the fact that Africans are not fulfilling a set of criteria generated by Westerners and that they wish to develop in Africa. That is, Europeans and Americans want Africa to function socially and economically so that the continent integrates seamlessly into the globalized economy they built over the past two centuries. This results in narratives that Africa has no hope and cannot be fixed, which point out that hope for Africa depends on the will, assistance, directions, conditions of the global powers (Wright & Xiao, 2020).

Those who advocate Afrofuturism reject the perspective of Afropessimism. Afrofuturists, according to Wright and Xiao (2020), worry about whether or not...
there would be any future for people of color. It is within this scenario that the category “the race will continue to matter to individuals and entire civilizations” (Yaszek, 2006, p. 47), thus situating “Afrofuturism in the field of Black cultural studies, with its theories and scholarship heavily influenced with particularities in science fiction, speculative fiction, new media, digital technology, the arts, and Black aesthetics all situated and focused on the continent of Africa, the Diaspora” (Dean & Andrews, 2016, p. 2). Afrofuturism is a locus of art and political work and operates as tool to examine the meanings of Black life as expressed in the complex intersections of religion, race, gender, and sexuality – by exploring methods and ideologies of Afrofuturism situated in mysticism, technology, new age spirituality, human and post-human identity, and the futurity of race, sexuality and gender roles in Black religion and the Black Church. (Wright & Xiao, 2020, p. 8)

Finally, the ideological tensions between African feminism and African sexuality. African feminism rejects the correlations of gender and gender roles imposed by the colonial system since it argues that, in the African context, such as pre-colonial Nigeria, this correlation was fluid and flexible, with, for example, women who were husbands, given their protagonism in commercial activities (Wright & Xiao, 2020). Also, the authors argue that African feminism arises from a political praxis that emanated from the conditions that structure the lives of African women. Taking recurrent military conflicts in Africa as an example, the authors, citing Mama and Okazawa-Rey (2012), explore how women are affected by this situation.

Speaking of African sexuality, Wright and Xiao (2020) argue it has tensions and similarities with African feminism. Regarding similarity, the global movements of queer theorization and research, for example, remain marginal and uncomfortably represented. As for sexuality policy issues, three tensions appear: homophobia, which is a political tool used by conservative politicians to promote selfish agendas; ahistorical representation from the Western media on African heterosexuality; and the distorted representation of African history by dictatorships on the African continent.

The ACS featured figures Handel Kashope Wright and Keyan Gray Tomaselli. Wright is a Sierra Leonean who has taught in the United States and currently teaches CS and education in Canada. In addition, Tomaselli, a South African, teaches media and CS in South Africa. The researcher is central to the development of South African media studies and studies of the cultures of African indigenous peoples. Other voices that contribute to this field within

---

6 Although “indigenous” in Brazil mainly alludes to the local indigenous peoples; we prefer to maintain this expression, because in South Africa the term is used to refer to the indigenous people of sub-Saharan Africa, the Khoi-Khoi and San.
the continent are: Lize van Robbroeck and Natasha Distiller (South Africa); Fibian Kavulani Lukalo (Kenya); and Sunday Enessi Ododo (Nigeria). Abroad, we have: Boulou Ebanda de B’beri (Canada); Awad Ibrahim (USA); and Ali Abdi (Canada).

In the African context, the CS developed no endogenous model to understand the relationship between the audience and the media. This perspective uses foreign models with greater emphasis on the British. In this regard, Tomaselli (2000) points out that studies developed in the apartheid period were within the contours of British CS. It points out that the British perspective, and the coding/decoding model, was very useful in the actual practice of resistance. Tomaselli (2016) states that, whereas the use of imported theories constituted fertile ground for debate, decentralizing Birmingham, that is, africanising imported theories in terms of African philosophies and non-Cartesian forms of interpretation, was necessary. As a strategy, in the 1990s, a period in which South Africa moves towards a democratic state, the academy began to incorporate into the student body Africans from all over the continent.

Within this battle, the fighting arenas included broadcasting, media and cultural policy research, communication for development, public health in response to AIDS denial. For example, the Durban Centre, established in January 1985, includes a social justice at work approach alongside and through civil society and religious organizations (Tomaselli, 2016). In the 1990s, the Center changed and started to include communication and studies of media, politics, development, public health, and communication for development. Thus, action-research and the application of critical indigenous methodologies offered a solution-oriented praxis for a newly democratized society (Tomaselli, 2016).

LATIN AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES: FROM CULTURAL MATRICES TO THEORETICAL MATRICES

In Latin America, or in some of its parts, as much as in Africa, or in some of its parts, the CS found fertile ground for political and theoretical reasons. From the political point of view, at first, according to Grimson and Varela (1999), “the field was crossed by political logics, intellectual diasporas, and exiles, which implied a weaker constitution”7 (p. 15), which, on the other hand, circulated the debate and the joint work between national and exiled researchers, in a new circuit of exchanges.

Subsequently, the changes that occurred with the processes of re-democratization in most countries of the region – as a consequence of strong pressures from social and intellectual sectors (Escosteguy, 2001) during

7 In the original: “el campo estuvo atravesado por lógicas políticas, diásporas intelectuales y exílios, lo cual implicó una constitución más débil”.
the years of lead of authoritarian regimes (Mattelart & Neveu, 2004) – were also factors to question the theoretical scenario of the time and open the debate to new approaches (Rizo García, 2020). Among the areas of interest at the time, result of a balance by Goméz Vargas (2008), three areas, which make room for dialogue with the CS, are identified: popular culture, alternative communication, and new information technologies. The reframing of a deterministic Marxism to one of a Gramscian cut gave way to this scenario, which Mattelart and Neveu (2004) identify as under construction as early as the 1970s.

Regarding the theoretical scenario of cultural analysis, CS found a long tradition of studies when they arrived here. Jesús Martín-Barbero (JMB) said he did not start talking about culture because things came from outside. It was by reading Martí, Arguedas, that I discovered it and, with it, the communication processes I had to understand… We [definitely] had done cultural studies long before this label appeared⁸. (Martín-Barbero, 1996, as cited in Repoll, 2010, p. 157)

This statement is disputed by Follari (2002), who wrote a harsh critique of the CS produced in Latin America, saying that supporting “the idea that they had been self-generated in toto from the intellectual practice made in our own countries”¹⁰ (p. 52) is impossible, on the grounds that the studies on culture produced here did not escape outside influence¹¹.

Renato Ortiz (2006), in turn, highlights a situation similar to that of JMB: “The first time I became aware that I would be a practitioner of Cultural Studies was in Berlin, at a conference organized by Hermann Herlinghaus in 1995” (p. 173), which was repeated the following year in Stirling (Scotland), in a seminar of which Stuart Hall was one of the participants: “this feeling was reinforced, since, alongside my friends Néstor García Canclini and Jesús Martín-Barbero, I found myself there as a representative of something that had never occurred to me”¹² (p. 173). He comments he was not seen this way in Brazil; he is taken simply, in his words, as an anthropologist and sociologist¹³. He adds that there is interest in what is produced by the British in this area, but that the terms of the discussion are different here, agreeing with several analysts on the non-universality of the CS: “they follow the pace of the changes that have occurred in North American universities, but hardly express the Brazilian, and I would add Latin American, reality” (p. 174). In Brazil and, by extension, in Latin America, according to Ortiz, “the penetration of Cultural Studies is done by the edges, that is, to use an expression of Bourdieu, on the periphery of the hierarchical field of the social sciences, particularly in communication schools” (p. 175).

---


⁹ In the original: “a hablar de cultura porque me llegaron cosas de afuera. Fue leyendo a Martí, a Arguedas que yo la descubrí y con ella los procesos de comunicación que había que comprender… Nosotros, habíamos hecho estudios culturales mucho antes de que esa etiqueta apareciera”.

¹⁰ In the original: “la idea de que hubieran sido autogenerados in toto desde la práctica intelectual hecha en nuestros propios países”.

¹¹ Mattelart and Neveau (2004), on the other hand, recognize specificities of Latin American CS.

¹² Renato Ortiz, Fernández (2011, cited in Rizo García, 2020) adds Carlos Altamirano and Beatriz Sarlo, among others, who do not consider themselves representatives of the CS, but of the culture studies in their various contributions.

¹³ Escosteguy (2001) points out that, “Faced with a certain resistance to defining themselves as practitioners of cultural studies, it is only in the 1990s, and still quite timidly, that a few Latin American researchers begin to identify themselves – or be identified by foreign researchers who take Latin America as an object of study – with this perspective” (p. 40).
In the wake of previous authors, Néstor García Canclini (NGC) (1991) calls “cultural studies” the trends in the analysis of Latin American culture in the field of anthropology and sociology and, in the text, only refers to British studies in a footnote, to mention similarities with what had been developed here between the years 1980 and 1990; still in the area of communication, as Ortiz (2006) also pointed out, despite mentioning literary studies¹⁴, to which one could add those in the area of education.

Thus, for many other authors (de la Roche, 2005; Escosteguy, 2001; Grimson & Varela, 1999; Rizo García, 2020) British contributions were not simply imported or extended, nor even strictly affiliated, but dialogued from what was already done here from the perspective of various disciplines¹⁵: anthropology, sociology, history, literature, communication, etc. In this regard, Pardo (2005) stresses that “there is no clear genealogical connection in what we can now recognize as Latin American CS and the Anglo-Saxon CS”.

In the interface between culture studies and communication studies, the issue of popular cultures was the key to open the debate with the British CS, since it started to permeate the discussions in congresses and seminars attended by researchers from all over the continent, such as the 2nd Seminar of the Communication Commission of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) held in Buenos Aires in 1983. The texts presented were published in the book Comunicación y Culturas Populares en Latinoamérica (FELAFACS/GG, 1987), which inaugurated an editorial series called Federação Latino-Americana de Faculdades de Comunicação Social (Latin American Federation of Faculties of Social Communication) and Associação Latino-Americana de Investigadores da Comunicação (Latin American Association of Communication Researchers) (FELAFACS-ALAIC).

For Grimson and Varela (1999, p. 69), this seminar condensed the debate that had been held by many researchers, and JMB and NGC were the main speakers¹⁶. The first developed the discussion under the title “Comunicação, Povo e Cultura no Tempo das Transnacionais” (Communication, People and Culture in the Time of Transnationals) and the second, “Do que Estamos Falando Quando Falamos do Popular?” (What Are We Talking About When We Speak of the Popular?) (FELAFACS/GG, 1987). Both bring unnamed reflections and authors that permeated the debate initiated by the British CS, such as Bourdieu and Gramsci, and JMB references E. P. Thompson regarding the incorporation of history in the discussion about the popular.

Field analysts (Goméz Vargas, 2008; Huergo & Morawicki, 2018; Martín-Barbero & Herlinghaus, 2000; Mattelart & Neveu, 2004; Repoll, 2010; ¹⁴Cevasco (2003) also identifies cultural studies in the Brazilian literary field prior to the arrival of the CS and presents a birth certificate for them: 1998, the year in which the Brazilian Association of Comparative Literature brings together researchers from the area in a congress with the theme “Literatura Comparada = Estudos Culturais?” (Comparative Literature = Cultural Studies?).
¹⁵Szurmuk and Mckee (2009, cited in Rizo García, 2020) say that the interdisciplinary enterprise of cultural studies in the Latin American region arises “from the 19th century essay, it is informed by the theoretical and methodological developments of the Frankfurt School and British cultural studies and crystallizes in the Latin American diasporas, mainly in the United States, but also in Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia during the eighties and nineties of the last century” (p. 168). [In the original: “del ensayo del siglo XIX, se informa de los desarrollos teóricos y metodológicos de la Escuela de Frankfurt y los estudios culturales británicos y se cristaliza en las diásporas latinoamericanas, principalmente en Estados Unidos, pero también en México, Venezuela y Colombia durante las décadas de los ochenta y noventa del siglo pasado.”]
¹⁶A special edition, that of n. 27, from Revista Versión. Estudios de Comunicación y Política (2017) was coordinated by André Dorcé and Omar Rincón to theme the contributions of JMB and NGC beyond mediations and hybridizations.
Santagada, 2000) unanimously point interest in popular culture out as the inflection point of the Latin American CS, from which the studies of reception and cultural identity, two other important themes developed on the continent, derive directly or indirectly.

Escosteguy (2001) highlights the political dimension of his approach, pointing out three aspects that were overcome by the perspective of the CS, especially from Gramsci: association with folklore, mass culture, and populism. Addressing the issue of the popular, the Latin American CS faced a complex situation, as Herlinghaus (2000) emphasized, pointing out the role of mediation broker that it acquired, especially in the works of JMB and NGC, as a hermeneutic matrix for thinking about symbolic consumption.

In a similar and complementary direction, Santagada (2000) indicates that Latin American popular culture was taken by JMB and NGC as a key to understand identities, modernity, and globalization from the sociocultural point of view, that is, from the point of view of the subjects. At the heart of this process emerged the interest in reception studies, pointed out as a prominent contribution of the Latin American CS, which led Repoll (2010) to call them *audience cultural studies*.

In this context, Grimson and Varela (1999) contextualize the emergence of reception studies from the moment JMB proposes several displacements ranging from popular to massive, from massive to popular, and popular uses of the massive. Similarly, they identify in NGC the impetus to think about cultural and media consumption when they consider that the appropriation and use of symbolic and material goods gain meaning when reaching consumers.

Very imbricated with the reception studies, the issue of identities was taken as a constitutive mediation of the interaction between audiences and media (Repoll, 2010), but was not restricted to them. Escosteguy (2001) places the issue in the media context, in studies to consider its role in the discussion on national identity and in the proliferation of new cultural identities. García Canclini (1994), in turn, suggests treating it as a sociocommunicational approach to identity, shaped by the notion of hybridization, also portrayed in the *Barberian* notion of miscegenation.

These discussions had as a scenario and angular factor the analysis of modernity and postmodernity established on the continent, formalized already in 1983 in JMB’s lecture commented above, which contextualized it “in the time of transnationals,” and that of García Canclini, which focused on three factors for the emergence of the popular in the Latin American scenario: (1) socioeconomic, as a consequence of industrialization and urbanization expanding the consumer
market; (2) political, via the State interested in knowing the emerging segments and via social movements in the face of the failure of revolutionary processes based on the proletariat idea; (3) scientific, operated by the social sciences crisis visualized by the collapse of the economicist paradigm that generated an ideological-cultural change.

Analysts of the Latin American CS (Escosteguy, 2001; Mantecón, 2019; Yúdice, 2019) point this process out as one of the factors of internal changes in the field, to rethink the theory and, consequently, the methodology and themes for communication studies. JMB calls it another modernity, embedded in the notion of destiempos, and which Herlinghaus (1998) identified as having “begun to speak to us from somewhere we would never have expected”\(^{19}\) (p. 11) to highlight the historical analysis made by him, identifying the specificities of the incomplete modernity lived here, in which the modern and the traditional, the rural and the urban, the popular and the massive, among many other contrasts coexist (Repoll, 2010). García Canclini (1990) speaks of the Latin American situation, “where traditions are not yet gone and modernity has not fully arrived”\(^{20}\) (p. 13), which some authors identify as modernity without modernization.

**FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this article, we look at two versions of CS that inhabit the southern hemisphere: Latin American and African. Some analysts call into check the origin of his birth, via two points of view. One of them concerns the anteriority of culture studies, as advocated by Martín-Barbero (1996). For him, this type of research was done in Latin American territory even before the CS were recognized as such. Another version disorganizes the canonical history of perspective, postulating that its origin was in Africa, at the Kamiriithu Center, in the 1970s (Wright, 1998). Regardless of their origin and legitimacy, the initial influence of the British CS for the institutional development of the versions dealt with here is undeniable.

We observed that both had as practice the dialogue with the British conceptual framework to legitimize themselves in the academic field of each territory. In the Latin American approach, this dialogue was established more vigorously in the late 1980s, with the publication of *De los Medios a las Mediaciones* (Martín-Barbero, 1987), based on its theoretical-methodological proposal of mediations, focusing on reception practices (Jacks, 1996, 2014) and *Culturas Híbridas* (García Canclini, 1990), focusing on cultural and media consumption.

\(^{19}\)In the original: “La modernidad ha comenzado a hablarans desde donde jamás lo esperábamos”.

\(^{20}\)In the original: “donde las tradiciones aún no se han ido y la modernidad no acaba de llegar”. 
The African version, despite its origin identified in Kenya in the late 1970s, as some authors claim (Tomaselli, 2016; Wright, 1998), emerges late in communication studies, at least in South Africa, since a faculty-student committee realized that resistance in South Africa was falling, partly, because two crucial sites of mobilization were absent domestically: media and culture. These sites had been so effectively colonized in the service of Apartheid that even liberal anthropologist was wary of teaching cultural anthropology. (Tomaselli, 2000, p. 375)

Supposedly, this time lag generated some initial dependence on the British model of cultural analysis. However, with the subsequent development of communication studies, it calls for an important revision of the conceptual framework based on the Africanized updating of some issues, by teaching Afrofuturism, Afropolitism etc.

Trying to bring together the Latin American and African versions, we observed some specificities in terms of agenda, of political and conceptual projects. Regarding the problems addressed, Latin America addresses themes such as cultural homogenization in the face of globalization and the articulations between communication, culture, and power (Rizo García, 2020), with special attention to reception studies. Africans, on the other hand, treat communication from the perspective of development in the context of what they prioritize, that is, studies oriented towards a recovery of the recently re-democratized Africa in multiple aspects: literacy, public health, leadership formation, etc. The African agenda has a more interventionist approach as its guideline.

In all cases, the debate on the past, present, and future of the CS has clearly raised heated discussions, many questions, and different answers for at least 20 years. In the face of the inconclusive debate, in progress, we consider best to explore issues such as those proposed by the Latin American author de la Roche (2005), which are very provocative and certainly also serve to think the African CS.

1. Can we do cultural research in our countries without enrolling in the CS?
2. How can we articulate the influences of the growing interest in the CS, not only the British, but also of the subaltern and postcolonial studies developed by Asian, North American, and Latin American intellectuals working in North American universities, with the local traditions of culture studies?
3. How can we put into dialogue the national experiences in progress in different countries, that is, from the places of enunciation, from the different and specific realities where they develop?

4. How to approach the CS vocation of political and social intervention and the possibility of politicization of social and humanistic disciplines?

5. In methodological terms, how to articulate qualitative and quantitative research, define thematic limits (if any), and reflect on disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity?

On the other hand, and in the opposite direction, we could add the concern of Prysthon (2002), who, thinking about the scale of postmodernity and its relationship with cosmopolitanism and the periphery, believes that CS reveal more deeply the degree of cultural globalization and the way the penetration of peripheral cultural goods and of postcolonial theories in the metropolis evolves.

Other questions were brought by the event Whatever Happened to Cultural Studies?, promoted by the School of Humanities of the University of Brighton, in April 2021. Among them, the institutional structures required to design a future for the CS, or provocatively, to promote their funeral were questioned. Jeremy Gilbert, one of the conductors of the event, pointed out that since 1960 CS had been present in universities without its practitioners having the luxury of occupying an institutionalized CS space. In the wake of this perception, Gilbert concluded that, in reality, more important than an institutionalization, is the work done in other disciplines, such as political science, literary studies, and media studies, with the CS approach, due to being the one that will allow a political confrontation of conjunctural issues such as global warming and citizenship.

The CS are certainly not dead, quite the contrary. Given their expansion on a global scale, they remain pulsing throughout the four corners of the world. In each territory, they faced different problems and theoretical traditions, which required reconfigurations, maintaining a certain dialogue with its British version to a greater or lesser degree.

In this context, David Morley points out the importance of legitimizing other CS versions beyond that conceived in the CCCS, that is, not taking the British as a form of academic imperialism (Escosteguy, 2001). Nick Couldry (as cited in Escosteguy, 2001), in turn, also points out the need to establish an identity for the CS: “if we are using the term cultural studies, if there is something in common to be treated, this must be because there is a list that can be identified as common values that animate our questions” (p. 295). The author points out that the common basis would be a materialistic understanding of the articulations between culture and power. In a more recent article,
Couldry (2020) discusses the role of CS in the face of the triple crisis that plagues contemporary society: institutional (collapse of political parties), cultural (cultural wars and disputes over representation regimes) and socio-technical (datatification of the social world and its long-term implications). Couldry sees, as a backdrop of these problems, a crisis in the democratic order. Therefore, the CS would work “by bringing the issue of today’s democratic deficit into the clearest possible focus, drawing on as many other disciplines and aspects of the crisis as possible, to build a larger view of trends, underlying dangers, and geographical variations” (p. 5).

The points raised by Couldry (2020) may make up the general aspects of an agenda for Latin American and African CSs, provided that the historical, political, economic, and cultural specificities that constitute each of these geopolitical spaces are considered. This would respect the CS prerogative that defends the singularity of all forms and cultural experiences as an object of study, putting into practice the premises of decolonial thought, which postulates in favor of appropriating the intellectual production of the Global South.

REFERENCES


Contemporaneidad latinoamericana y análisis cultural: Conversaciones al encuentro de Walter Benjamin (pp. 105-122). Vervuert Verlagsgesellschaft.

Article received on May 5 and approved on November 10, 2021.