MATRIZes

DOSSIÊ:

PPGCOM USP, 50 ANOS
*Trajetórias Intelectuais
Autorreflexivas*

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Editorial

THIS ISSUE OF **MATRIZes** is a special one, dedicated to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Postgraduate Program in Communication Sciences of the Universidade de São Paulo (PPGCOM-USP), Brazil's first, founded in 1972.

We invited acclaimed Brazilian and foreign researchers for this ephemeris, proposing to each of them the elaboration of an intellectual autobiography in the form of an article for **MATRIZes**.

Our intent was to integrate what, today, is an important growth of critical-reflexive analyses about research practices and studies in the field of Communication conducted by the very authors. These self-analyses are, without a doubt, significant signs of the maturity of the field, expressing a trend of the modern epistemologies: the effort to "the objectification of subjectivity" of the subject of knowledge (the researcher) in the face of the object of knowledge (the world). Unlike traditional rationalist epistemologies, modern ones go beyond the concern with the object and raise questions about the subject who produces science. The historicity of knowledge ends up strengthened by the conditions of its production, now seen and appropriated by the researcher, who then expresses their intellectual life trajectory as a self-criticism piece, or rather, as an exercise of self-reflexivity about their intellectual trajectory.

We thus believe that this issue of **MATRIZes** creates a great opportunity to advance in the discussions about reflexivity in science by proposing a specific—and still rare—angle: the self-reflection made by authors themselves on the paths they have traveled, all from the standpoint of a Bachelardian epistemology that incites the scientific spirit to psychoanalyze intimate thought, loaded with individuality, inspiration and imagination. This proposition is in line with contemporary epistemic approaches that, in the Subject-Object relationship,

mostly question and review the character of the Subject: the intellectual *habitus* composed of practices, decisions, choices, ruptures, values and subjectivities. Such premises drove the invited authors to self-criticism and to the criticism of science, open to their production conditions, which are, at once, social, scientific and individual. The autobiographical reflection is thus included by authors themselves in their research procedures, mirroring examples that are now references for Communication researchers, such as *The formation of a diasporic intellectual*, by Stuart Hall, *Sketch for a self-analysis*, by Pierre Bourdieu, and *De la experiencia al relato: cartografías culturales y comunicativas de Latinoamérica*, by Jesús Martín-Barbero.

Thus, we decided to present the paths of the researchers featured in this issue in alphabetical order of each of their first names. They are stand out scholars in Communication studies in Brazil and abroad and whose professional or academic trajectories present fruitful links with PPGCOM-USP. By choosing this option, we did not intend to hierarchize the importance of one trajectory over another. All of them are unique and equally valuable, and we feel immense satisfaction in being able to share them, in this issue of **MATRIZes**, as examples of the theoretical and practical experiences in our field of Communication, in view of each choice.

The first of the self-reflective trajectories is presented by Alberto Efendy Maldonado Gómez de la Torre, an Ecuadorian researcher based in Brazil. He is a professor of the PPGCOM of the Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS) and a graduate from PPGCOM-USP, his research advisor was Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes (USP). His text, *An insurgent intellectual adventure,* provides a historiographical exposition of his research practice, relating the epistemological processes with crucial aspects of the sociopolitical and cultural life that constitute him as an intellectual. The reflection also presents the decisive historical contexts for the gnoseological, theoretical and methodo-logical structuring of this important researcher.

Next comes the trajectory by Ana Carolina Damboriarena Escosteguy, also a graduate from PPGCOM-USP and advised by Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes. Escosteguy is a professor whose career is greatly renowned at PPGCOM and at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS). She is currently a visiting professor at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). She presents the text *Attractions in an intellectual path: the strength of the female masters*, in which she presents her intellectual trajectory as supported, during her years studying at the School of Communications and Arts (ECA) of USP, by three masters: Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, Dulcília Buitoni and Cremilda Medina. The author's self-reflective exercise is based on recollecting

her experiences and recovering points of interest that surface in her study program, as well as on the principles that guide her research practice, based on cultural studies in our area. She is a researcher whose dialogue is continuous, having been a visiting professor at PPGCOM-USP recently, showing that the links of her research are permanent and current in the universe of reflections of our Program. She is also a member of the Scientific Editorial Committee of **MATRIZes**.

Fernando Ramón Contreras, from the Universidad de Sevilla, Spain, is the first international interlocutor to present his critical reflection with his *Intellectual irradiations: A decade of collaboration with the Postgraduate Program in Communication Sciences of the University of São Paulo*. His contribution to our Program is based on the Group of Semiotics Studies in Communication, Culture and Consumption (GESC3 CNPq-USP), headed by Clotilde Perez (USP) and Eneus Trindade (USP). The epistemic origin of this researcher's approach lies in studies on visual culture in his investigations on semiotic irradiation, publicity and the contribution of visual studies to the knowledge of the phenomenon of advertising reception. For the author, the body is the artifact of postmodernity to combine history, industry, advertising and politics through the expression of human desires in media discourses. Contreras' relations with PPGCOM-USP went through the PROCAD Capes – Communication and Mediations project, which involved USP, the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) and the Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS), and numerous National Congress of Researchers in Advertising (Propesq PP), resulting in an uninterrupted decade of partnerships, publications and academics exchanges.

Isabel Ferin Cunha, our second international interlocutor, is an Associate Professor at the Universidade de Coimbra and the Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Portugal. She is a graduate from PPGCOM, having had Johanna Wilhelmina Smit (USP) as her research advisor. Her contribution, *Paths and exchanges in communication research: A Luso-Brazilian trajectory*, is a reflection on the 30 years of a personal research trajectory that took place in Lusophone environments, in the field of the Communication Sciences. In the author's words, "the path was made of personal, professional and institutional matches and clashes, where ECA and PPGCOM-USP took on great centrality." Over the last decade, she worked hard with the Observatory of Censorship in Communication (OBCOM), in partnership with Maria Cristina Castilho Costa (USP), always in the Brazil-Portugal interface. She is a member of the Scientific Editorial Board of **MATRIZes** and is considered an important researcher in the Brazil-Portugal relations in the field of Communication.

The third international name to compose the set of interlocutors in this issue is James Lull, an American researcher at San José State University in

California, United States. His studies on television and television reception date back to dialogues with the Telenovela Studies Center (NPTN) with Professor Ana Maria Fadul (USP), then, with the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (OBITEL), as well as his work at the Center for Studies of Telenovela (CETVN), headed by Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes (USP). His collaboration with Brazilian-American communication professor Eduardo Neiva helped him transition into his most recent work: the introduction of evolutionary communication from a communication ethnography as a theoretical alternative to understand the phenomena of the field of Communication, especially in the context of television studies. James Lull is a member of the Scientific Editorial Board of **MATRIZes**.

The sixth article, which, considering the others in this dossier, is not a proper self-reflective trajectory but a theoretical essay by José Luiz Warren Jardim Gomes Braga, from PPGCOM-UNISINOS, titled *Communication as the work of diversity (perspective and methodology)* Braga is a historically frequent interlocutor of PPGCOM-USP and one of the most outstanding theorists of Communication in Brazil. Given the importance of his theoretical thought and his contributions to our field, his theoretical essay is added to the self-reflections by discussing a "perspective of knowledge in a line of evolutionary epistemology, with a scope that overcomes dispersion without detriment to the variety of problems, objects of observation and research objectives." He proposes a research methodology that provides for empirical research to test the proposed perspective, in facing the challenges of communication phenomena, and to establish connections between such a comprehensive challenge and the plurality of interactional urgencies that take place in social environments. José Luiz Braga delivered the Inaugural Lecture of PPGCOM and is a member of the Scientific Editorial Board of **MATRIZes**.

In the set of international conversations, the seventh article presents the self-reflection by Joseph Straubhaar of the University of Texas in Austin, United States. Straubhaar is a Brazilianist of Media and Communication Studies, whose relations date almost three decades back, from television studies at the now defunct NPTN, led, at the time by Ana Maria Fadul (USP), passing through CEVTN and, more recently, by digital inclusion studies in association with the Research Support Center (NAP) – School of the Future, headed by Brasilina Passarelli (USP). He has made numerous appearances as a visiting professor at PPGCOM-USP and his permanent connection with USP makes his presence in this issue indispensable. His self-reflection is entitled *Beyond media imperialism: The challenges of theorizing global TV flows*.

Among the graduates who became prominent researchers in the Brazilian context, we have the contribution of Laan Mendes de Barros, from the PPGCOM of the Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (UNESP), from Bauru, who was advised by Victor Aquino (Tupã) Gomes Corrêa (USP). His self-reflection is entitled *The "course of recognition" in communication studies* and in it Barros makes explicit, in his adoption of Jesús Martín-Barbero's Mediations Theory, a path of interlocutions for the recognition, also inspired by Paul Ricœur for identity questions, of ipseity and otherness, the understanding of "oneself as another." It is in this recognition as a scholar of Communication that the author understands the context of Communication studies in the face of the phenomena of the mediatization of society, which are connected with the binomials—communication and aesthetic experience—to socialize the sensitive and sensitize the social, relying on the reflections of Herman Parret and Muniz Sodré, respectively.

Massimo Canevacci, from the Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy, brings the fourth international contribution among the interlocutors of PPGCOM-USP in this dossier. His reflections, always up to date, located in the relationship between Anthropology and Communication, were constant in the interactions with our PPG. His first connections with USP were in research interactions with Waldenyr Caldas (USP) and, then, with Maria Immacolata Vassalo de Lopes (USP) and Clotilde Perez (USP). His piece, entitled *Epistemophilia: Slowness, fractures, self-research paresis towards a non-anthropocentric anthropology*, is as an essay that recovers the author's personal experience before entering university and after he began teaching and researching. The reader will find an author whose identity is found plural after his criticism of the dialectic and synthesis method to affirm a transitive view based on a mobile repertoire of some fundamental concepts: fetishism, syncretism, polyphony, heteronomy, diaspora, friendship, amazement, ubiquity, gender, indiscipline, Marx66. Such ethnography is presented by Canevacci "as an attempt to interweave anthropology and philosophy for being at the crossroads of the chiasmus."

This dossier could not fail to count on the valuable contribution of the self--reflection by Nilda Jacks of the PPGCOM of the School of Library Sciences and Communication (Fabico) of UFRGS. Former graduate student at PPGCOM-USP, supervised by Maria Nazereth Ferreira (USP), Nilda Jacks is a major contributor to training researchers affiliated with reception, media and audiences, and public and media consumption studies, becoming a household name in Communication research in Brazil and Latin America. She expands on Jesús Martín-Barbero's though, specially his Mediations Theory, whose advancements concern the

variety of empirical studies he conducted and the mapping of research objects on reception, media, audiences, and public throughout his trajectory. Her self--reflection, entitled *Reflections, reflexivity, refraction: Consequences of a choice!*, discusses the "indelible" mark, as stated by the author, of doing her entire training at PPGCOM-USP, the repercussions of this choice, and the regular dialogues with this PPG throughout her academic trajectory. In 2019, she was a visiting professor at PPGCOM-USP. Her ever-present discussion also integrates OBITEL's activities and CETVN's work, alongside Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes.

Another intense international contribution in the last decades at PPGCOM-USP is marked by the dialogue with Pedro Hellín from the Universidad de Murcia, Spain. In this issue of **MATRIZes**, the author presents his trajectory in the text *From advertising to consumer culture studies: The long and productive process of creating a shared theory.* This partnership, started in 2006, in the scope of GESC3 CNPq-USP, helped to construct and mature discussions that started in advertising and derived into a sophisticated understanding of communication and consumption phenomena. In the author's words, "more than fifteen years ago, when moved by mutual research curiosity , due to the shared certainty about the need to expand the field of study of the advertising discipline, a professional and human relationship was born, one that has grown during all these years," consolidating an interdisciplinary thought of the ways of understanding and approaching the advertising phenomenon and encompassing communication and consumption discussions in the contexts of culture. Pedro Hellín has been a visiting professor at PPGCOM-USP, giving lectures, carrying out joint research, and participating in Propesq PP. Results have brought innovations to the two contexts in this fruitful exchange: PPGCOM-USP and the Universidad de Murcia.

Among the self-reflections of relevant Brazilian researchers, Raquel Paiva, from the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), in this dossier, presents her text *A communitarian epistemology of communication*. In her research trajectory, Paiva became an authority in research on Communitarian Communication and Communication and Citizenship. The researcher discusses her authorial reinterpretation of the concept of community, from her early works "from her initial studies to concepts that qualify her to understanding today's social structure, such as generative community and floating minorities." She also discusses the intertwining of her research activity with her individual, social, and professional existence. Such is the context, according to the author, that promotes dialogues with colleagues from USP, with whom she was able to establish relationships and build references, such as dean José Marques de Melo. Raquel Paiva is member of the Scientific Council at **MATRIZes**.

Finally, closing this dossier is the self-reflexive contribution by Raúl Fuentes-Navarro from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores del Occidente (ITESO) of the Universidad de Guadalajara, Mexico. With more than two decades of exchanges, Fuentes-Navarro has been an important interlocutor for scientific innovations and scientific affirmative action policies that value Latin America and Ibero-American thought as potent continental contexts and developers of an autonomous and constitutive thought of communicational knowledge. Fuentes Navarro is a member of the Scientific Editorial Board at **MATRIZes** and an international guest speaker at the 2016 PROCAD Capes – Communication and Mediations seminars. In his text *50 years of Communication Studies: Crossed Academic Trajectories*, Raúl Fuentes presents a self-reflective exercise about his trajectory as a university professor and academic researcher in Communication Studies during the last five decades. His starts from the assumption "that no individual path can be isolated, since history implies recognizing the mutually determining intersections with others and with multi-scale institutional frameworks." The article recalls the historical and collective ties the author established with Latin American peers, especially those resulting from the relations between Mexico and Brazil since the 1980s, emphasizing his joint work with Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes.

Certainly, this dossier does not exhaust the variety of dialogues and scientific exchanges that have taken place over the 50 years of existence of PPGCOM-USP. Other self-reflections could be explored by other intellectuals who have been linked to our Program, but, undoubtedly, the works published here are a relevant sample of this PPG's trajectory and of personalities from the field of Communication, whose dialogues, exchanges and experiences in our Program have been remarkable throughout 50 years worthy of being celebrated! A great capacity expressed by our PPGCOM is that of knowing how to conserve and advance in face of the challenges posed by communication phenomena, which are constantly renewed—a capacity that results from the contribution of the innumerous destinations of intellectuals who graduated from it or who crossed its paths. This dossier intends to show a significant sample of these trajectories and exchanges. Ⓜ

Have a pleasant reading!

Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes
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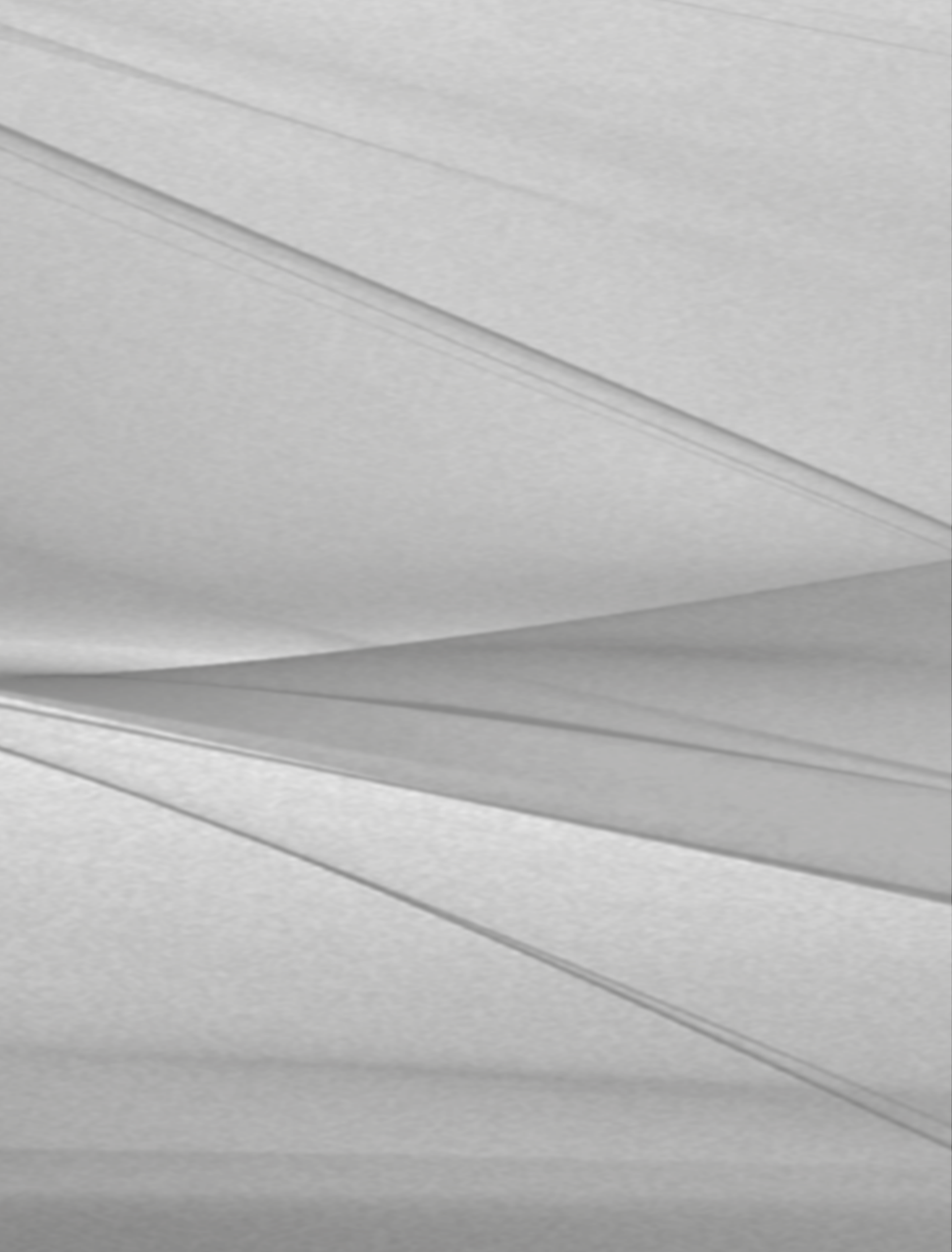
DOSSIÊ

Novas Perspectivas em Teorias da Comunicação

An insurgent intellectual adventure

Uma aventura intelectual insurgente

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ABSTRACT
This study summarizes an intellectual autobiography linked to the author's process of training, investigation, and work at the School of Communications and Arts at Universidade de São Paulo during the 1990s. The narration of this intellectual trajectory follows a historiographical exposition and relates epistemological processes with crucial aspects of the author's sociopolitical and cultural life. This study also offers decisive historical contexts for the author's gnoseological, theoretical, and methodological structuring.
Keywords: Intellectual autobiography, Efendy Maldonado, ECA-USP, history, transformation

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RESUMO
Este texto apresenta uma autobiografia intelectual sintética vinculada ao processo de formação, investigação e trabalho do autor na Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo durante a década de 1990. A narrativa dessa trajetória intelectual segue uma linha de exposição historiográfica que pretende relacionar processos epistemológicos com aspectos cruciais da vida sociopolítica e cultural do pensador. Apresentam-se, também, contextos históricos decisivos para a estruturação gnosiológica, teórica e metodológica do pesquisador.
Palavras-chave: Autobiografia intelectual, Efendy Maldonado, ECA-USP, história, transformação

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

MY FIRST EXISTENTIAL VIEWS took place near the Equator, in the Andes, and on beaches in the Pacific, offering our minds memories of collective dances, bathing, mischief, and travel. Thus, we have configured our memory, perceptions, emotions, and pleasures from the age of two and a half. In this dynamic intensity, it was mind-blowing to receive, at the age of four, a book with a drawing of a hummingbird on its cover as a gift so I could learn how to read. It marked an unforgettable literate starting dimension. In fact, it seemed that my mother had guessed I would have a lot of love for reading and a unifying intellectual life since, as she gave me the book, she performed a motivating ritual with tender narratives about the value of reading. This was a decisive and brand-new experience in my then short vital trajectory.

Reading it fascinated me. I learned how to read in just over three months, according to the reports of adults who were part of my surroundings. In this discovery, the fact is that I could mix the adventures and worlds flowing in my mind with the narratives in my first book. I then combined books and comic books, especially *Alma Grande* (Great Soul), the battle name of a Mexican revolutionary, which was manufactured by the publishing industry of that country and came to newsstands every week. I devoured it quickly because it served as a model for our children's battles/games. It was in this entertained intellectual life that the *feeling-thinking* of tropical (cumbia, gaita, vallenato, chachachá, mambo, merengue, son) and romantic music (bolero, tango, pasillo, ballads) constituted a powerful and structuring *musical semiosphere* for an adventurous, daring, subversive, and fraternal thinking/feeling.

Basic education was limiting, although it granted me the possibility of learning elementary reading and writing and proficiency in arythmetic operations. In this process, for me, it was relatively easy to respond to school demands which, in fact, left no important gnosiological, reflexive or existential marks. My memories of this period involve punishments, dull disciplinary frameworks, and confrontations with teachers about what we were taught as the official history of Ecuador. This is because I already had the opportunity to listen and learn, via *oral history*, the teachings of my paternal grandfather, Rafael Maldonado, about the history of my native country and the world. His questioning, humorous, kind, popular, adventurous, irreverent, and open to experimentation historiographic version was crucial to my reflective, questioning, and alternative training. With my grandfather, I learned to question the official history of the winners, to ask for other possibilities of carrying out these processes, and to think about the sociopolitical meaning of events.

He was a sort of alchemist, a chemical researcher, a *self-taught doctor*, a herbalist who had trained himself. In fact, his technical training as a pharmacist did not limit him to the strict field of established formulas: he built an experimental laboratory in the basement of his house in which he produced creams and remedies from his organized study of bibliographies combining phytotherapy, homeopathy, allopathy, cosmetics, and formal organic chemistry. He was an innate and fruitful experimenter. Among other historical facts, it is worth mentioning that, in addition to being loved and appreciated by his patients, at a determined juncture he was called to meet the former President of the Republic José María Velasco Ibarra. My grandfather treated him successfully and an agent offered him a PhD for meritorious knowledge, a concession he refused for not having attended the official medical course. His other scientific curiosities included his talent for producing medicinal creams. His technological competence in this field managed to keep his wife Rosa Herlinda without any wrinkles on her face until she was 93. My grandfather was a sage who taught me about the revolutions in Ecuador between the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, especially the Alfarist Revolution. My affinity with historical epistemology was first foetered in this context.

High school gradually improved the school intellectual environment. Its first two years were frustrating, conflicting, and contradictory due to its conservative Jesuit discipline, which could not frame a dynamic adolescent who did very well in tests and, at the same time, dedicated phases of the school period to meditating and dreaming of larger adventures. These daydreams and speculations joined sports until the late hours of the evening and informal and curious talks on the streets of the neighborhood with adolescents of various origins, profiles, and experiences – a practice closer to popular youth cultures. This curious, exploitative, and playful existence and conversations on the streets, in the local square, and on soccer and basketball fields were configuring problematizing perceptions about the world and society. By coincidence and convenience, my parents bought a house very close to the main public university in the country. This proximity enabled us to come into contact with the discourses and manifestations provoked by authoritarian, inefficient, and corrupt governments. In fact, these experiences decisively marked my trajectory of approaching the critical aspects of sociopolitical and cultural thinking.

It is worth noting the discovery of my mathematical intelligence during adolescence, when I was introduced to algebra by Professor Patricio Pazmiño, who, via fruitful analytical didactics, guided me to the fascination, systematization, discipline, understanding, and exposition of the mathematical

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world. Until then, my educational experience with mathematics had been boring and even torturous since, in my view, it was absurd to have to mechanically repeat operations according to the formal pedagogical rituals of the discipline in the schools at the time. The master enabled me to learn the logic of problems, which exhilarated me. From that moment on, complex abstract thinking strategically excited me. At the same time, the ability to understand, explain, and solve problems led me to discover myself as a teacher and a master since I began to teach algebra and help my colleagues struggling with mathematics after classes. Thus, I realized I had the intelligence to teach, proving that my colleagues learned challenging exercises for the reasoning of an adolescent. This experience definitely marked me for renewing and expanding my personality and intellectual praxis by strongly relating them to the educational field.

High school also offered me the opportunity to acquaint myself with *liberation theology* based on the teachings of a fraction of Jesuits linked to this philosophical-religious approach who came to the institution as teachers. Paulo Freire's perspective and his proposals for a *education for liberation* also came on the scene in my intellectual training during the last three years of high school. Christians' teachings on socialism and currents of various insurrecting and traditional lefts also emerged in this context. The circulation of books, magazines, and newspapers on these currents of thought was dynamic, economical, and thought-provoking. This context also included the existence of a good paternal library on the *art of war*, given my father's profession as a military strategist, from whom I learned discipline, strategic thinking, ethics committed to peoples, planning, the will to fight, and the passion for a challenging existence.

University consisted of a space/time of freedom and the formation of consistent, powerful, and emancipatory scientific knowledge. This phase began at the National Polytechnic School of Ecuador, which complemented my physical-mathematical training as a basic science for engineering. In this journey, it was important to strategically break with traditional, formalist, mechanistic, and repetitive learning lines. I came in contact with the scientific revolutions in physics which overcame Newton's paradigm, approached the revolution, and constituted the paradigm inaugurated by Albert Einstein. I received these teachings from one of Richard Feynman's disciples, Bruce Honaiser, and Douglas Moya's inspiring lessons. In mathematics, my conflicting, enlightening, and strengthening dive into linear algebra, differential calculus, and set theory with the great masters Bernard Chevreau and Billy Bosman stood out. Their teachings configured logical fortresses, pedagogical revolutions, and strategic developments in complex theoretical

activities which enhanced young learner Efendy's intellectual capacities, who would combine this intense and demanding training with his work as a college entrance and high school physics and mathematics teacher.

In this polytechnic space, my training in Social and Political Sciences acquired a concrete and advanced epistemological and historical importance. On the one hand, the official polytechnic curriculum included an important set of social and arts disciplines, training in scientific methodology, and the opportunity to carry out activities related to communication. My communication identity and power emerged at Cine Clube Politécnico, the newspaper of the polytechnic students' association, and the Ollantay theater group. Indeed, my affinity with literature, poetry, and narrative exercise, my fascination with cinema, and the discovery of my theatrical talents would intensely and dynamically bring me closer to a definitive historical rupture with the field of physico-mathematical activity. It was a painful, unstable, and strong transition into the field of communication sciences.

This personal history had the fight against the military dictatorship as its sociopolitical context – a combat which arose my oratory, political, organizational, and subversive capacities. The political victory achieved with the fall of the dictatorship and the establishment of a representative democratic regime were a central factor in my transformative perspective on the world. This triumph also included the establishment of the 1978 Constitution (far more advanced than those in the rest of Latin America) whose formulation and approval stemmed from a broad and democratic debate process on two sophisticated and advanced constitutional projects. These facts were decisive in building my political awareness that it was possible and concrete to transform prevailing political models and defeat authoritarianism. Theoretically and methodologically, the political training I received in the nuclei of *the new left* arising from Latin American insurgent processes was categorical. In this process, I mixed the culture of polytechnic study with a praxis and a systematic and consistent critical theoretical research in ballots, movements, and insurgent groups. This is how the various currents of Marxism, anarchism, socialism, and praxis philosophies were enthusiastically studied, debated, and operationalized.

That polytechnic intellectual and political context would also lead me to immerse yourself in Indigenous people and workers' communities in the Pichincha province. In fact, my knowledge about Indigenous wisdoms, tactics, skills, talents, worldviews, and cultures took place in a process of 14 years of learning, transformative experiences, and communication production in which it was important to have found the newspapers *Pluma Pinteña* and

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El Tambor, projects which would achieve a relevant communicative power and a renewing political presence.

In a historical retrospective, it is important to reflect on the *paraconsistent* ways of configuring wisdom and methodological knowledge based on the immersion in cultures and experiences of communicational and artistic work – in the latter field, on Brecht, Buenaventura, Boal, and Stanislavski's theater methods and on the strategies of cinematographic analysis based on Pasolini, Eisenstein, Godard, and Gutiérrez's thoughts/achievements. All this methodological richness would only be used later, when, in epistemological terms, the method became the central problem of my projects.

The shift to communication sciences resulted in the confluence of an existential crisis caused by my distancing from engineering and discovery of structuralist semiology and semantics as an option for instigating and relevant theoretical praxis. The semiotic explosion which generated this event led me to recognize that I could make consistent and valuable science in the field of communication. Then, I entered the communication course at Universidad Central del Ecuador (UCE), a formal academic context in which I built my professions and my knowledge in the field of journalism, audiovisual technologies, public relations, and communication research/ planning. In this process, the presence of the International Center of Superior Communication Studies for Latin America (CIESPAL) was decisive for my receiving qualified training with an international perspective because, in fact, the official curriculum of the university was complemented, further developed, and expanded with the courses, activities, projects, and learning enabled by this center.

The communication course at UCE was innovative and established a *research and planning training* which offered integral education with a strong foundation in social and language sciences and the various communication professions. Due to its activity, CIESPAL was crucial to enable the proposed course via its professors, researchers, courses, laboratories, library, and other facilities. Jesús Martín-Barbero's conception of communication as a process, Mattelart/Dorfman/Schmucler's critical thinking, Antonio Pasquali's Frankfurtian line of thought, Daniel Prieto Castillo's message analysis method, the investigative group from American Communication Research – CIESPAL had the best library in Latin America on its references – and Leopoldo Zea, Rodolfo Mario Agoglia, Arturo Andrés Roig, and Néstor García Canclini's conference programs were important sources of masters and guides for my intellectual structuring.

I should highlight the articulating epistemological participation of the great master Rafael Almeida Hidalgo during my time at UCE, a free thinker, historian, anthropologist, and archaeologist who deeply destabilized the formal paradigms of the time, especially Stalinism, positivism, functionalism, and practices of knowledge production, educational work, and formal, traditional, and bureaucratic political making. With his investigative praxis, this unofficial advisor showed me the relevance of articulating dense theoretical research and concrete, committed, careful, and open empirical cultural field research. His voluminous library included versions of the main chronicles on the Spanish conquest, philosophical works from the major critical currents in the world – especially leftist thinking which was unrestricted to Latin American bureaucratic cultures – books of the main anthropological, sociological, legal, economic, historical, and political schools, etc. No demanding critical intellectual would find fault with his collection. In fact, for us, this magnificent theoretical learning laboratory – the master and his library, archaeological collection, field outings, social gatherings, soirees, and Sunday lunches – was an educational environment which inspired and strengthened our intellectual perspective.

This set of knowledge, methodologies, philosophies, and praxis configured a cognitive state of challenging and destabilizing complexity. On the one hand, the convenience and certainties of the structural/functionalist paradigm were presented with its efficient, operational, and financial processes and practical, periodic, and concrete results. In fact, my immersion in the Investigative Operative Marketing (Markop) commercial research institute (which produced macro data on the national socioeconomic reality and quantitative commercial research) enabled me to learn and recognize the potentialities and limitations of commercial operational research. On the other hand, the great philosophical, epistemological, theoretical, and methodological challenges I faced made me choose to produce a strategic research which would articulate my constitution as a communication researcher.

My *Geopolítica da Difusão Internacional nos Grandes Jornais de Equador…* (Geopolitics of International Diffusion in Large Ecuadorian Newspapers…) (Maldonado, 1991) was a project which aimed to investigate the universe of journalistic production for three years, an ambition which failed by the amount of material I collected, making it impossible to work in individual terms and with the concrete resources of the time. After two years of research, I decided to make a necessary clipping, conforming a sample of international information on Central American conflicts in the 1980s in major Ecuadorian

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newspapers. I configured a quantitative-qualitative methodology combining message analysis, journalistic historical research in the main journal archives, collection and photocopying of journalistic products, statistical systematization, social economic research on the central American reality, field work via video and audio interviews in war territories, and drawing of analysis tables which included variables (major themes) and subvariables (themes). More than 20,000 units of information were processed, and an *interpretative analysis* was finally carried out and expressed in more than 1,000 pages of arguments about the strategies and journalistic productions of the alliance between transnational (news agencies) and the major oligarchic newspapers in the country.

This research mediated and connected the School of Communications and Arts at Universidade de São Paulo (ECA-USP) since I submitted a proposal to study for my master's degree in Brazil via an agreement with the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes). Several important universities accepted my request, but by consulting with Brazilian colleagues who worked in Ecuador, especially with Professor Elson Faxina — who promoted my moving to Brazil —, I chose to continue the entrance process in the Graduate Program (PPG) in Communication Sciences at ECA. I should note that, in this process, Professor Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes' decision to select me as a master's student was crucial. I think that the methodological emphasis of my proposal and its Latin American focus were important for my approval, which would soon lead to establishing a strategic, invaluable, and powerful investigative work link between us.

LIFE AT ECA-USP

My immersion in ECA was an intense, dynamic, destructuring, transformative, and inventive process. Focusing on epistemological and methodological disciplines enabled the confluence of intellectual, theoretical, existential, and institutional efforts which, in turn, provided a hard-working, painful, exciting, visualizing, and fruitful procedural adaptation. My advisor's demands to deliver weekly reports on my work enabled me to continuously reflect on my master's degree and accelerated the improvement of my proficiency in Brazilian Portuguese.

The dense, voluminous, and enlightening arguments guided by the administered disciplines opened unknown fields of study and showed a diversity of valuable, consistent, and renewing theoretical options. This process forced me to carry out a profound and broad epistemological personal transformation

so that I could already consider myself an integrated member of the ECA culture in its diversity and heterogeneity by the end of the first semester. Her advice that I should participate in classes from various departments was key, and the selection of the professors responsible for them was right and important since they combined demands and advanced theoretical training, epistemological openness, and a critical renewal of paradigms, theoretical referents, and methodological models. The productive, intense, transformative, and dynamic intellectual environment which is characteristic of the life in São Paulo fascinated me from the second semester onward. In this trajectory, my theoretical-methodological experimentation expanded to the whole of USP and I began to participate in seminars, conferences, and disciplines in various faculties, especially in philosophy and social and polytechnic sciences. The laboratories open 24 hours in the Polytechnic school at USP enabled me to make better use of my time and work at night and the early hours of the morning. The fact that lacking a personal computer was common – especially among students in the Residential Complex of the University of São Paulo (CRUSP) who depended on faculty laboratories – until, after several efforts, requests, and negotiations, we obtained a small laboratory for the residential complex.

Being a student with few financial resources forced me to formulate and articulate various activities and processes to meet the limitations to which I was conditioned and establish relationships with the Brazilian Journal of Latin American Studies (Prolam), rectory cultural projects, the union, and the Central Directory of Students (DC), leading others and I to organize the *Comitê de Estudantes Latino-Americanos da USP* (USP Committee of Latin American Students - Cela-USP). These actions enabled us to contact all areas of knowledge and we promoted cycles of conferences, debates, and studies on Latin America and Africa and important cultural dance, theater, cinema, and political articulation events at the *hives* (modules for support and culture activities at USP) and Crusp.

Our intensive and dynamic learning was also built in these existential spaces of the university; we experience USP deeply, with dedication, commitment, openness, and democratizing actions. The struggle for housing has linked me to important intellectuals, fighters from Brazil, Latin America, and Africa. Our efforts expanded the rights to housing in the university for women with children and hundreds of students from all over Brazil who were unable to study without this support. The collective love of these people welcomed us for many years, even when we had already moved to other horizons.

ECA has alluringly, vigorously, and comprehensively absorbed us in an investigative praxis; the integrated project *Ficção Seriada/Brasil na Telenovela*

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a Telenovela no Brasil (Serial Fiction/Brazil in Telenovelas Telenovela in Brazil) articulated the work of most research groups in the communication department and promoted a collective process of producing powerful and renewing knowledge. Its meetings on methodological reflection, establishment of general lines of investigative practice, and definition of problems were deeply enlightening and invigorating. We learned to work in a collective of dozens of researchers and aggregately built our particularity in *research on reception* by expanding the participating groups to other universities in São Paulo (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo e Universidade do Estado de São Paulo). Articulating, coordinating, and carrying out this project was Professor Immacolata's great success. She knew how to operationalize complex studies fruitfully, methodically, and productively with dozens of researchers. I was responsible for coordinating fieldwork at the São Remo *Favela*, a strengthening, inspiring, and renewing process of our experience of working with citizens from subaltern classes. Empirical research had a methodological theoretical basis which combined the knowledge of various groups/ universities, research cultures, and theoretical references in a committed, supportive, dialogical, and fertile way. Such investigative action functioned as the starting point of the *transmethodological* approach we later constituted.

ECA was the perfect scientific environment to develop my thesis *Pesquisa Teórica em Comunicação na América Latina…* (Theoretical Research in Communication in Latin America…) (Maldonado, 1999) due to the freedom to work on exploring, knowing, testing, and researching in combination with strategic guidelines on investigative paths. These were the academic-scientific factors which enabled me to develop an enlightening *historical documentary* research on the theoretical production in communication between the 1960s and 1990s in the region. While I drafted my thesis, digitalization was at its beginnings, so having libraries and physical materials was indispensable. Thus, the library at ECA was a privileged center for searches, together with those dedicated to the Social Sciences and Philosophy. Simultaneously, ECA was an articulating center of scientific societies, such as the Brazilian Society on Interdisciplinary Studies on Communication and the Latin American Free Trade Association, which enabled us to establish contacts, meet thinkers, take advantage of international events, and opt for the paths we considered fruitful.

My *exploratory documentary research* showed me the need to conduct in-depth *theoretical research* with the authors I considered important for the problem given the power of their arguments, the epistemological

complexity of their productions, the scientific recognition of the region, their structuring as reference thinkers/researchers, and their configuration as theorists who constituted a renewing, strategic, and critical thought in Latin America. The partnership with my advisor, her methodological vigor, clarity in understanding my research problem, and organizational capacity enabled me to conduct *field research* with the paradigmatic Eliseo Verón, Armand Mattelart, and Jesús Martín-Barbero. To this end, I drew up a plan of meetings, conversations, trips, seminars, conferences, and *intellectual life history* interviews with these great masters. This mind-blowing experience enabled us to personally know these theorists, directly receive their teachings, clarify issues which can hardly be included only in their books and articles, understand the complexity of their psychological configuration, and integrally and comprehensively visualize the factors which made them founders of critical aspects of communication theories in Latin America. The subsequent recognition I received from these great masters strategically enhanced me in my professional, intellectual, and investigative career.

At ECA, I met and learned what it is like to organize vigorous, productive, and committed research groups. I discovered and built my work capacity in international academic and scientific cooperation relationships. I structured key relationships in the field of communication in Brazil and Latin America. I renewed and enhanced my configuration as a thinker and researcher. I developed and rediscovered the methodological dimension, learned from my advisor the need to formulate multimethodological strategies for communication research, which were the basis of our subsequent *transmethodological* formulations and led me to develop lines of research which would later achieve the maximum recognition of international excellence in Brazil and Latin America.

I must highlight the partners who followed and strengthened my path at ECA, guiding and mediating the process. First, I would like to thank Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, who chose me to come to Brazil, guided me, and was a solidary, strong, and indispensable partnership on this journey; Cremilda Medina, who knew how to intelligently, affectionately, and powerfully recognize my intellectual configuration and provoked a profound epistemological crisis in my theoretical frameworks; João Aloísio Lopes, a master and friend, who quickly understood my Latin American condition, improved my academic working situation, supported me, and guided me in key decisions in my journey; Professor Maria Aparecida Baccega since the strength of her critical thinking knew how to question and

problematize formalist theoretical aspects – which I kept in my arguments – and established the necessary conditions for our research groups to be strengthened and fruitful. I also would like to thank Adilson Citelli for his support and partnership in my diving and learning process in the Brazilian Portuguese language and in the field of educommunication. Luiz Roberto Alves for opening my theoretical field to Mikhail Bakhtin's approach and to important theorists in Brazilian letters. To the great masters Octavio Ianni and Milton Santos for invading my intellectual field with the wisdom and strength of their theoretical production and showing me the quality, vigor, and importance of investigative production in Social Sciences in Brazil. To partners, comrades, and friends Jiani Adriana Bonin and Roseli Figaro, study companions at ECA, with whom I continue to develop projects, activities, networks, and transformations.

Finally, I should emphasize the richness and complexity of a school which has been the inaugural historical cradle of scientific-academic research in communication in Brazil. In fact, during the first 25 years of field history in the country, when we participated in this fruitful and strategic process, ECA cemented, established, and continued an innovative scientific field in Latin America. His research production has been central to forming a consistent, promising, productive, and critical academic field. The PhDs training at the School are in all regions of Brazil and have generated processes of structuring programs, communities, networks, and projects which are relevant and necessary to develop the scientific field in communication of the country. I am a son of this generating process; I love and recognize my history at ECA as an "intellectual space platform for the cosmic launch" to the world of producing transcendental and critical knowledge in communication. The configuration of my *transmethodological* critical epistemological conception had the School as an incubator of fruitful knowledge. For current and new generations of students, professors, and researchers who make up ECA, it is important to promote and renew historical-critical reflections on the institution itself, its brilliant and necessary pasts, and the need to enhance futures of excellence committing themselves to the peoples of Brazil, Latin America, and the world. **M**

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Attractions in an intellectual path: The strength of the female masters

As atrações em uma trajetória intelectual: A força das mestras

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ABSTRACT

This is an account of part of the author's intellectual path, especially as linked to the period of her studies at the School of Communication and Arts of the University of São Paulo. To do so, it highlights the attraction awakened by three masters: Maria Immacolata Vassalo de Lopes, Dulcília Buitoni and Cremilda Medina. The self-reflective exercise has the present as its starting point, based on the recollection of experiences. Hence, it recovers focuses of interest that are expressed in her program of studies, as well as principles that guide her practice in cultural studies. By unfolding these attractions, one can see the strength of these threads in her current intellectual production.
Keywords: Intellectual path, experience, cultural studies, methodology, research

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RESUMO

Trata-se de um relato sobre parte da trajetória intelectual da autora, sobretudo daquela vinculada ao período de sua formação na Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo. Para tal, destaca a atração despertada por três mestras: Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, Dulcília Buitoni e Cremilda Medina. O exercício autorreflexivo tem como ponto de partida o presente, amparando-se na rememoração de experiências. Sendo assim, recupera focos de interesse que se expressam no seu programa de estudos, bem como princípios que norteiam sua prática em estudos culturais. No desenovelar das atrações, percebe-se a fortaleza desses fios no seu fazer intelectual.
Palavras-chave: Trajetória intelectual, experiência, estudos culturais, metodologia, pesquisa

Attractions in an intellectual path

Contar es un gesto político encarnado en experiencias situadas que producen
saberes toda vez que se deja interpelar, cuestionar y responder a lo inesperado.
Mariana Alvarado

FACED WITH THE challenge of producing a narrative about my own intellectual path and to meet the proposed theme of identifying in what moments the connection with the Postgraduate Program in Communication (PPGCOM) of the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo (ECA-USP) was relevant in this itinerary, I chose to highlight the attraction that different focuses of interest exercised in me, motivated by female masters, linked to this postgraduate program, in my intellectual formation. I thereby intend to look in retrospect at such intersections with their trajectories in the light of my current concerns. Therefore, I recall the particular connections I established, especially with Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, but also with Dulcília Schroeder Buitoni and Cremilda Medina, retracing part of my intellectual path in which the present is the starting point and organizer of this self-reflective account.

However, before going any further, as this is an autobiographical text, I note that it was built from a place of social and cultural privilege. The landscape that marked my childhood was the countryside, where I lived until I was six. Taught to read and write in the domestic and rural space, my entry into second grade, at a public school, took place when I went to live in the border town of Santana do Livramento (RS), at the same age. That was the first of the big changes in my formation. At the age of 16, it was college in Communication, attended at a private university in Pelotas (RS). Then came the arrival in the state capital, in 1984, already graduated, when I enrolled in a specialization course at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS). Shortly thereafter, in 1986, at the age of 23, I began my teaching career at the same university, where I remained until 2017. In that position, I completed my master's and doctorate degree at ECA-USP, as well as forming and strengthening my affinity with cultural studies. Last but not least, I carry out this writing as a white woman, understanding that both in my private life and in my public work, as a professor and researcher, I exercise my engagement from a feminist practice.

Next, through the work of remembering, following the lead of Martín-Barbero (2010, p. 133)[1] that "making memory... here means *remembering* intersubjectively, that is, assuming the part of the testimony of the one who remembers ...", I bring to light some experiences woven into this ball of yarn

[1] In the original: Hacer memoria... . significa aquí *recordar* intersubjetivamente, esto es asumiendo la parte del testimonio de quien recuerda...

that make up part of my intellectual path. Thus, this telling is associated with a notion of experience that refers to the legacy of Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson, linking it to passions, feelings and perceptions, that is, "to a wide range of registers of the world anchored to a subjectivity crossed by through the relationship between past and present within the framework of an unchosen terrain, marked by historical circumstances"[2] (Valeria Fernández Hasan, 2017, p. 105). Therefore, I deliberately highlight experiences that, in turn, intertwine with the female masters already mentioned and with the period of postgraduate studies in São Paulo. A training project cherished since my time as an undergraduate student, in the early 1980s.

[2] In the original: una gama amplia de registros del mundo anclados a una subjetividad atravesada por la relación entre pasado y presente en el marco de un terreno no elegido, marcado por las circunstancias históricas.

To organize this report, first, I recapitulate points of interest that are expressed in my study program as themes and objects of study, framed by theoretical and methodological appropriations, guided by my training at ECA. In a second moment, I explain the principles that guide my practice in cultural studies, trying to relate them to the different remembered attractions. I recognize, however, that "the search for authentic reminiscence, apart from temporal corrosion, is a chimera, every memory contains relative arbitrariness in its rearrangement, the present is a dynamic factor, intrinsic to the mnemonic process" (Ortiz, 2010, p. 12). In this unfolding of crossings and attractions, I still perceive the strength of these threads in my current intellectual work.

MAKING MEMORY: THE DISCOVERY OF THE METHODOLOGY AND THE POPULAR

In the period between 1988-1993 and 1995-2000, I lived with Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, my supervisor at both postgraduate levels, Master's and Doctorate. The first period was decisive in my path. It was throughout her disciplines that I learned and developed a taste for methodology to the point of changing and rebuilding my original study proposal. This attraction and affinity with her research program is explicit in the dissertation, but it also has strong repercussions on my doctorate, reaching the present day.

In the master's degree, a period of discovery of the methodology as a crucial scope of reflection, criticism and training, I chose to use her "methodological model" which "proposes to design the research by meeting the methodological demands expressed in levels and phases that are articulated and form a network model" (Maria Immacolata V. de Lopes, 2016, p. 188), for the deconstruction of a set of studies, that is, as an analytical key for internal examination of completed investigations.

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When publishing some of the results of the dissertation, I noted that

> […] the starting point of the methodological model used is the assumption of a research theory based on the principle of relative autonomy of all research. That is, scientific discourse presupposes an *internal legitimacy* [emphasis added] that concerns internal and formal resolutions and operations which validate it as such but, at the same time, must contain an *external legitimacy* [emphasis added] that deals with its historical recognition, suitability and relevance as a socially qualified object. (Escosteguy, 1995, p. 22)

In addition to the usefulness of the *model*, what attracted me was the articulation that was implicit between scientific knowledge and historical circumstances. This idea remains in force in my research practice.

My first contact with the premises of this "model" took place in Maria Immacolata's classes. Shortly afterwards, the publication *Pesquisa em Comunicação: Formulação de um Modelo Metodológico* (Maria Immacolata V. de Lopes, 1990) became a book that was constantly handled both in that period and later, when I started to teach the discipline of Methodology at the PUC-RS. By using the model as an analytical tool, the theme that assumed centrality in the new direction of the dissertation was, therefore, the investigation itself. And, in this way, it was configured as a research about research, entitled *A Pesquisa do Popular na Comunicação: Uma Análise Metodológica* (Ana Carolina Escosteguy, 1993).

It was the late 1980s when I started my master's degree, a time of an effervescent critical theoretical movement that underpinned the development of Latin American reception studies. These, in turn, were in connection with the reflection on popular cultures, especially leveraged by Jesús Martín-Barbero (1987) and Néstor García Canclini (1989/1997). Although, upon joining ECA, I was already interested in examining popular and alternative communication practices, a theme well received in academic research in the 1980s, I was unaware of the work of these authors. My first contact with it also took place under the command of Maria Immacolata.

I remember my astonishment when reading *As Culturas Populares no Capitalismo*, in which Canclini (1983, p. 11) questioned: "what is popular culture: spontaneous creation of the people, their memory converted into merchandise or the exotic spectacle of a backwardness situation that the industry has been reducing to a tourist curiosity?"

Likewise, the position of Martín-Barbero (1978/1987, p. 221) surprised and impacted:

> Mass writing is as much writing as cultured writing, for in the former, language is also made and unmade, history and drive also works therein, in the same way as in cultured writing, whether you like it or not, the system is reproduced and the dirty trade incubates its demand.

Therefore, encouraged by these readings, I intended, in the master's degree, to examine whether there was harmony between this theoretical debate that had been expanding since the late 1970s – which was, in the late 1980s, called the "new Latin American theoretical framework" – and academic research in Communication (Ana Carolina Escosteguy, 1993). The study then took on the challenge of presenting a state of the art on the research universe in relation to the popular issue in Communication, analyzing the production of theses and dissertations from the 1970-1990 interval of the five main postgraduate programs in Communication of the country in that period: ECA-USP; Instituto Metodista de São Bernardo; Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo; Universidade de Brasília; and the School of Communication of the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

Among the most important results of this study, I identified a gap between the strength of the theoretical debate and the timidity of the practice of empirical research that addressed the problematic of the popular. If the first consisted of a revision movement of dominant theoretical models, carrying out both a critical examination of them and a new formulation, the empirical investigation was shy in incorporating this new non-essentialist look at the popular, which came to be seen as an ambivalent space, crossed by both the mass and the cultured, and composed of both resistance and submission.

This finding was exciting and, to a large extent, encouraged my return to ECA for my PhD. I was interested in deepening my study of the theoretical and methodological contributions of those two authors. This type of approach fostered the affinity process with one of the landmark objects of Maria Immacolata's study program (2016, p. 186): methodology. And, of course, the chosen authors also converged with their interests. Therefore, I applied for the doctorate, in 1994, intending to be supervised by this master again, with a proposal entitled *Estudos Culturais na América Latina: A Vertente da Comunicação*.

At the end of the studies, the work was given a new title, *Cartografia dos Estudos Culturais: Uma Versão Latino-Americana*, published in 2001, in a sold-out edition[3], outlining the line of research that I would pursue from then on. By understanding cultural studies as a research program, composed of epistemological, theoretical and problematic premises, I believe that my main

[3] In 2010, it gained an online version, in open access, although it is currently no longer part of the publisher's catalogue.

interest is in methodology, an attraction already attributed to the vigor of Maria Immacolata's thinking.

In addition, I note that the thesis gave rise to several concerns that will still accompany me for some time. In the future, I would also like to deal with the particular dynamics of academic legitimation of knowledge – cultural studies – in the academic-intellectual territory where I find myself, in Communication. In the national context, cultural studies have not been institutionalized as a field of its own. In combats and disputes with different fields of knowledge, they conquered their place, establishing particular developments in different areas, for example, in Education and Literary Theory, and forged a practice of its own, also, in Communication.

Unraveling the steps taken, I see as unequivocal the teachings of Maria Immacolata (2016, p. 185), now extracted from her self-reflection on the intellectual itinerary covered, that "the choice of research themes is hardly the researcher's exclusive responsibility, rather, it must be credited to subjective and objective factors, both micro and macro social". Therefore, I glimpse, on the one hand, my enchantment with learning in the classroom, my discovery and attraction to certain themes, through reading and making contact with the Latin American bibliography. On the other hand, I envision the emerging and circulating theoretical discussions in certain territories and periods, as well as the characteristics and conditions of existence of the field of Communication itself, mainly in Brazil, but also in its relations with Latin America.

In the next section I outline some epistemological-political principles that guide my research and teaching practice, tying them to the awakening of other attractions. I turn to memory again, trying to recover traces, erased by time and hidden at first sight, on this trail, left by two other female masters, Dulcília and Cremilda, to whom I owe a lot. This is yet another gesture that aims to retrieve experiences and ways of teaching, accompanying, intervening and building knowledge that occur in the daily work of teaching, but are underestimated in current intellectual histories.

Intellectual practice with a political vocation

Considering my affinity with cultural studies, it is inevitable to start with the power of two premises that structure this research program. The first concerns the commitment to the possibility of social transformation. The other deals with the understanding that intellectual practice takes place in close convergence with concrete political interventions. Nowadays, the latter unfold in my professional activity in three distinct threads, albeit interwoven.

The first concerns my link with an emerging movement of reparation and recognition of women's particular ways of producing knowledge, mainly those who contributed to the legitimization and, in some cases, institutionalization of the academic field of Communication. Only recently did I realize that the genealogies of the area's intellectual history have neglected the role and importance of many female teachers who actively participated – whether in the training of human resources or in the intellectual configuration of the field – and that the modes of discrimination are not always evident, which delays our own perception of the impediments we suffer.

On the one hand, my teaching activities on this path, since the beginning of the 2000s and, in particular, since 2018, have focused precisely on proposing courses and seminars, both at the Federal University of Santa Maria (UFSM)[4] and at the Federal University do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), on Feminist Cultural Studies, highlighting foreign authors-researchers[5] with little or no circulation in the national academic environment, as well as a new generation of Brazilian researchers[6] who have been related to cultural studies or their cross-cutting themes. I emphasize that these activities take place within the scope of Communication[7].

On the other hand, research and part of my intellectual production also adhere to this theme. For example, one of the axes of the research *A Prática em Estudos Culturais e Comunicação: Teoria e Pesquisa*, developed in the period 2018-2022 with CNPq funding, outlined a characterization of what I provisionally called *feminist media criticism* and fostered the preparation of a new proposal. Thus, in the project *Comunicação e Estudos Culturais Feministas: Genealogias e Trajetórias* (2022-2025), also funded, the focus was redesigned for specifically examining the role and contributions, mainly, of women researchers to the area. The main motivation is centered on the reconsideration of sources, understood as the intellectual trajectories of researchers who became famous for their respective research work within the mentioned field, aiming to strengthen the name *feminist cultural studies*.

This program completes a 20-year cycle as a Research Productivity (PQ/CNPq) fellow, which began with the investigation *Os Estudos Culturais e a Problemática da Recepção: A Categoria Gênero em Debate* (2001-2003). This research produced a survey and analysis of Brazilian reception studies from the 1990s and the use given to the concept of gender. The repercussion of the production generated in the context of this investigation did not happen immediately, but lately it has been mentioned, as it demonstrates the weak interest of these studies in the gender issue, which contrasts with the current strength (for example, Ana Carolina Escosteguy, 2002, 2004).

[4] Where I worked as a visiting professor, from 2017-2020.

[5] Among them, Charlotte Brunsdon, Janice Winship, Ann Gray, Hazel Carby, Pratibha Parmar, Valerie Amos, Joanne Hollows, Rosalind Gill, Michèle Mattelart, Silvia Elizalde, Silvia Delfino, Marta Rizo, Aimée Vega Montiel and Claudia Laudano.

[6] From the new generation, Tatiane Cruz Leal Costa, Lígia Campos Cerqueira Lana, Milena Freire de Oliveira-Cruz, Lírian Sifuentes, Fernanda Nascimento, Rayza Sarmento, Fernanda Carrera, Laura Guimarães Corrêa, Winnie Bueno, Mariana Selister Gomes, among many others.

[7] Before that, I taught scattered classes on feminist issues and communication, in undergraduate and graduate courses, at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), and I felt firsthand a certain repudiation, non-identification and distancing of the student body with this theme.

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[8] The 1998 milestone was attributed to the impact generated by reading *Learning from Experience: Cultural Studies and Feminism*, by Ann Gray (1997). In this work, the author maintained that feminist contributions to reception studies had been obliterated, due to the patriarchal character of cultural studies, practiced mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, in the English context. See Ana Carolina Escosteguy (2020a)..

[9] On this aspect, there is a connection with French semiology, especially with the notion of myth proposed by Roland Barthes, which connects his research with another pioneer in the intersections between communication studies and gender issues, Michèle Mattelart.

[10] As a record of these meetings, I found in my files a very worn photocopy with a marking of Dulcília's discipline. The text is *Talking Pictures: Field Method and Visual Mode* by Ximena Bunster (1977). With regard to my interest in the links between image and methodology, this only gained prominence during research carried out in rural areas, between 2014 and 2017. In a first stage, photography was incorporated as a record, illustration and feedback of the research and, later, as yet another instrument in the methodological strategy with the purpose of developing visual narratives about the rural properties visited and including portraits of the interviewees with their favorite means of communication. This reference was not used in these works. It was in the face of the task of remembering my years at ECA that I came across it. See Ana Carolina Escosteguy, João Vicente Ribas and Aline Bianchini (2019).

In addition, in terms of intellectual production, I have made efforts to reconstitute, in a historical key, traces of theoretical influences associated with feminisms in Brazil, but also in the North, and their impact on the national research agenda in Communication and gender (Ana Carolina Escosteguy, 2020a). Also, from a historical perspective, I experimented with a methodological path that transits between intellectual biography and the history of Latin American research in Communication, in the analysis of key moments in Michèle Mattelart's itinerary, in the 1960s and 1970s (Ana Carolina Escosteguy, 2020b).

Not long ago, I indicated as a temporal and intellectual mark of my interest in this subject the year 1998, the period of my sandwich doctorate in Birmingham[8]. Today, triggering much older memories, I place this attraction in the master's period, specifically 1988-1989, in the classes of professor Dulcília Schroeder Buitoni, a *uspiana* (USP member), of the graduation in Journalism and Law to the post-graduation in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature. Courageous, in the mid-1970s, while completing her master's degree, she shifted her attention from the Brazilian short story to the *fotonovela*. And, in her doctorate, she carried out her work that had the most repercussion, on the Brazilian women's press. Two of her texts have wide national circulation, *Imprensa Feminina* (1986) and *A Representação da Mulher pela Imprensa Feminina Brasileira* (2009), being a mandatory bibliographic source mainly in research on women's magazines.

I will not, nor would it fit here, discuss the theoretical and methodological options of this master, evidently articulated with the theories in circulation and in predominance in the area in the 1970s and 1980s. This is part of my new project within the scope of a movement to rescue, in a feminist key, the experiences of women in the history of research in communication and, in this case, the possible gender clues opened in her work[9].

When I mention Professor Dulcília here, I think more about how she stimulated my reflections, opened a horizon, awakened an attraction. I admired her classes, the affable atmosphere that was created, her way of walking through a constellation of themes: from narrative to women, from women to popular mass culture, from these to women's magazines and their particular journalistic practice, from the image to its use together with the interview technique. These are memories of a daily activity, the exposition of ideas and teachings in the classroom space and, therefore, are knowledge fundamentally constituted by oral transmission[10].

The second tangled thread in political interventions has a methodological character and expression. In this context, I aim for an active confluence with

premises of a feminist way of thinking, assuming that the knowledge produced contains a subjective and situated dimension. In this direction, the position of Margareth Rago (2019, p. 380) is taken as a guide:

> Despite the difficulties, I seek to assume a way of thinking that incorporates this subjective dimension, recognizing that, with this, from a feminist point of view, a new epistemic agent is outlined, not isolated from the world, but inserted in its heart, not exempt and impartial, but subjective and affirming its particularity.

Appropriating this idea implies giving visibility to the particularities of the speaker's voice and experience. Hence the pertinence of revealing a little bit of personal history, decisions and choices, some individual, others not so much, in a process of self-analysis of training paths and professional trajectory, highlighting key moments in the process of my location in the field of Communication.

In some ways, this is combined with a concern with the forms of narrative expression in research reports and articles. Although I do not have any special writing talent, lately I have been experimenting with the use of the first person, summoning my own experience as a way to combat a supposed neutrality of knowledge. And I have insisted, in the field of references and citations in articles, on the use of the first names of a contingent of women that remain hidden by the surname that presents itself as neutral, understanding this practice as yet another political action.

In this exercise of reviewing my itinerary, trying to locate motivations, influences and attractions, I realize that this concern with writing may also have its point of origin in the classroom, this time in the instigating and disturbing classes and interlocutions made possible by another teacher, Cremilda Medina. Graduated in 1964 in the Journalism course at UFRGS, a postgraduate and the first master of the Postgraduate Program in Communication Sciences (PPGCOM) at ECA-USP, in 1975, she taught and received friendly guests[11] who instigated us to think about, among others, themes such as interdisciplinarity, complexity, science and art relations. Eloquent, seductive and permanently enthusiastic, her classes were a whirlwind of ideas. In this case, I only found in my archives the final work of the discipline, a typed text composed more freely and in a personalized tone, in which I explored the theme of the search for cultural identity in Mario Benedetti, trying to get closer to my own origins[12].

Finally, in a third thread of understanding intellectual practice with a political vocation, I seek to assume a decolonial attitude that, without despising dialogue and exchange with Eurocentric and Anglo-American thought, is composed of a critical disposition towards the past and to the present of our research practice

[11] I vividly remember at least three guests who were with our class: José Paulo Paes, poet and translator; Milton Greco, Cremilda's partner in some works; and Sinval Medina, her life partner.

[12] Some of her books were part of my mother's library, Uruguayan like Benedetti (1920-2009).

which, to a certain extent and in certain conjunctures, was and perhaps still is tributary and dependent on foreign theoretical traditions.

From the master's to the doctorate degree, I understood Latin American cultural research in its particularities and differences, encompassing cultural heterogeneities, ethnic pluralities and political-economic diversities. However, it cannot be isolated from the rest of social thought, isolated from the ideas in circulation. Today, this type of positioning also strengthens the option for retrieving contributions from female masters who, mainly through their teaching activity and interlocution in the classroom space, marked not only my education but that of many others. The specific ways of thinking and doing research, disseminated orally and shared throughout the respective teaching journeys, should also compose a new intellectual history of the field.

The non-existence of the record of these particular modes of knowledge production that are constituted in teaching classes, orally, contributes to the erasure of the particularity of these practices. Hence the importance of recognizing the practices and role of professors Maria Immacolata, Dulcília and Cremilda (and many others), who, despite the masculinist logic of the academy and scientific work, built a remarkable intellectual, political and affective legacy both in the ECA and in the field of Communication itself.

Finally, the unwound threads are joined together in a weft. My intellectual itinerary owes – and a lot – to these intersections, sometimes momentary and creative – from the classroom, sometimes more structured and established – from the guidelines, provided by the PPGCOM at ECA-USP, where I formed my position as a researcher and feminist, engaged in the cultural studies practice. **M**

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Intellectual irradiations: A decade of collaboration with the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences of the University of São Paulo

Irradiações intelectuais: Uma década de colaboração com o Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação da Universidade de São Paulo

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ABSTRACT
In this article we present a synthesis of collaboration with the RCT over a decade in Communication research. Our contribution always had an epistemic origin in studies on visual culture, and we present our findings in an interdisciplinary format. Among the most relevant issues are the notions of semiotic irradiation, publicism, and the contribution of visual studies in the knowledge of the phenomenon of the reception of advertising. We highlight in the conclusions the importance of emotions, feelings, and sensory sensations in the current phenomena of communication. The body is the artifact of postmodernity to merge history, industry, advertising, and politics by the expression of human desires in media discourses.
Keywords: Culture, visuality, art, advertising, communication

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RESUMO
Neste artigo apresentamos uma síntese de colaboração com a Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo (ECA-USP) ao longo de uma década em pesquisa de Comunicação. Nossa contribuição sempre teve origem epistêmica em estudos sobre cultura visual, e apresentamos nossos achados em formato interdisciplinar. Entre os temas mais relevantes, há as noções de irradiação semiótica, publicismo e a contribuição de estudos visuais no conhecimento do fenômeno do acolhimento da publicidade. Destacamos nas conclusões a importância de emoções, sentimentos e sensações sensoriais nos fenômenos atuais da comunicação. O corpo é o artefato da pós-modernidade para fundir história, indústria, publicidade e política através da expressão dos desejos humanos nos discursos da mídia.
Palavras-chave: Cultura, visualidade, arte, publicidade, comunicação

A DECADE AGO, WE were invited by the Program of Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação (PPGCOM) of the University of São Paulo (USP) – to present the inaugural conference "La cultura errabunda: arte, publicidad y posmodernidad" at the IV Encontro Pró-Pesq PP – Encontro Nacional de Pesquisadores em Publicidade e Propaganda (2013). The event was organized by the Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Publicidade (ABP2), Grupo de Estudos Semióticos em Comunicação, Cultura e Consumo (GESC3), which since 2010 was constituted by professors from the PPGCOM and the Department of Public Relations, Propaganda and Tourism (CRP). Behind the institutions, in the direction of these meetings, I met my dear colleagues Dr. Clotilde Pérez and Dr. Eneus Trindade. The cast of teachers and students later expanded, to the point where it is impossible to name all here.

During all these years, the meetings occurred at USP – Escola de Comunicações e Artes of USP, except for the VII Pró-Pesq PP. Encontro Nacional de Pesquisadores em Publicidade e Propaganda in the city Rio de Janeiro, at PUC-Rio – Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, held in 2016. In 2020, with the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the collaboration with PPGCOM USP had to be carried out by videoconference for the Pró-Pesq PP meeting and with the same technological means as those for the investigations developed around the Pandemic Observatory organized by Professor Clotilde Pérez.

Since the first invitation to the PPGCOM USP we have collaborated with them consolidating thematic tables with their professors in international congresses such as The International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS-AIS), the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC), or the Associação Portuguesa de Ciências da Comunicação (SOPCOM). We have participated in publications of proceedings, articles, and books. Just to mention our latest publication, the Spanish publishing group Tirant Lo Blanc publishes this year 2022, "Visual Studies in Brazil". In this work, several professors have been translated from Portuguese to Spanish, not only from PPGCOM USP, but also from other Brazilian universities.

Collaborations have been many and fruitful during all these years. In our case, fundamentally the main contributions correspond to cultural studies and specifically to visual studies in communication and advertising creativity. In the following sections, we will present some summaries of issues addressed, discussed, and resolved in our work with the PPGCOM USP specialists.

ERRAUNDA CULTURE: A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ADVERTISING

Behind this title was hidden the purpose of presenting a unique research question. Has advertising ceased to be a professional practice of communication to become a mass ideology amid postmodernity? After the question, we seek to argue what we call "publicism."

The reasoning exposed in the USP communication forum is inspired by people who read social and political causes in advertisements. The studies on advertising, in our view, had not paid due attention to politics, and more could have been said about the consequences for popular culture, the politicization of advertising during postmodernity. Then, we affirmed: "publicism" is an added value to advertising to its original function in strategic communication in the market of exchanges of real goods and services.

In a new economy of desires, visuality is more important than the economy of exchange of real and tangible objects. The commodity is consumed in its semiotic formula, rather than in its utility. The form in the new informational capitalism feeds this lifestyle, the multiplicity of identities, and multiplies desires. Advertising will resort to traditional expressions (design, urbanism, literature, music, cinema, video), including art, as creation models for exhibiting ideas and in consolidating its own self-referential discourse.

Fragmentation of the consumer society has caused the proliferation of different cultural manifestations and lifestyles. These facts are kept in a continuous rhythm of discontinuity and rupture, which is another sign of the present. Advertising appears colonized by other revolutionary discourses against authoritarian homogeneity and the expansion of institutional culture. Actions of resistance or subversive discourses are indistinguishable from proper to capitalism and its representative discourses by the advertising simulation.

If, in postmodernity, aesthetics has become politicized and politics has been aestheticized, it is not surprising that advertising has drifted towards publicism. New extravagant, aggressive aesthetics, improvised on some occasions in a cycle of birth and disappearance with the duration of an occurrence, conquer current advertising. The experience goes from estrangement to detachment, reducing advertising creativity to mere aestheticizing practices. Politics has also been simplified to a regime representative of fragmented social realities. It has been the irradiation of identities of the self by the very politicization of the body. Art has become politicized in visible ways. Images have become independent of words, as Aby Warburg, Georges Didi-Huberman (2010), and other authors have shown, who consider the *pathosformeln* formula another narrative different from

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literature. The resistance of visuality in stagnant discourses is a consequence of the heterogeneity of a dissensual world, in which we now include fashion, consumption styles, and advertising.

Advertising is now a model of self-critical discourse, continuous deconstruction, and social innovation. The forms of consumption combat emptiness, isolation, and the distance between individualized consciousnesses. The new signs of opposition to selfishness justify a solidary, community, and corporate publicism. Publicism finds its place in the post-modern aesthetic experience of territories bordering between the common and the private, between the visible and the invisible (in the sense described by Maurice Merleau-Ponty), looking for signs of belonging destined for the recognition of our own existence in a light metaphor of appearances, detached from the modern notion of humanity.

SEMIOTICS OF IRRADIATION: THE VITALISM OF ADVERTISING SIGNS

At PPGCOM USP, Professor Pedro A. Helln and the author present a research work developed between the Spanish universities of Murcia and Seville, which is a basic research aimed to design a new theoretical perspective in analyzing the reception of advertising creation. The central thesis revolved around a symbolic composition of emotions and feelings that encompassed those exciting desires that allow us to forget the existential tragedy or what we could understand from that tragedy of culture that Nietzsche defined as the continuous state of conflict between the human being and the world.

Advertising is lucrative to the rhetorical individual by anesthetizing existential anguish (here we appropriate the words of Carlo Michelstaedter for our argumentation). Postmodernity seeks suitable remedies that grow happily in these discourses, where the thought of death seems to hide behind vital irradiations full of noisy desires for life. In the uproar of consumption triumphs the effect of multitude in a vitalist disorder of longings that are projected in the future. This visual composition of emotions and feelings can only be traversed from a semiotics of irradiation: a language that climbs around signs of longings.

But signs are endowed with geometric intentions. Consciousness installs intention on external things, including images. Husserl argued that consciousness is intentional. Human action is necessary to find the transcendence of the sign. The verb represents the essence, the entity of being, as Heidegger explained in the past. The limits of the world were stuck at the frontiers of language, that is, of logic. For Wittgenstein, the same logic put in the service of what it was

created for, to dominate the universe, has been used to construct the existence of that which once did not possess it. Things begin to have existence in modernity, as the Austrian philosopher described, due to the relationship with other things. The world is in a clash of meanings, and when language is poetic, whether pictorial, advertising, literary, it emerges from its usefulness, and, in it, we find the deep voices of consciences. Wittgenstein thought that by eliminating those specific qualities of daily languages, with greater or lesser skill, we reached the extraordinary, where the mystical or the secret that approaches the world by its imitation of the world is preserved.

To do this, language ceases to be a private issue becoming only a social activity that anthropomorphizes communication. Private languages do not mean, since meaning implies that another shares our language, that is, our world. On the other hand, a language with private meanings that is understood only by one being is illogical. Thus, language can only be an activity that unravels its meaning in a social environment. In the restoration of the community, language games are generated (as Wittgenstein called it) when we speak.

Language has been the refuge of modern man's despair relegated to the impossibility of complete realization. Semiotic impartiality articulates in its convenience the stories of eternity that it had already discarded for its absolutism and for its immobility in this last stage of modernity. Its projection into the future demanded the presence of signs without temporal expiration, so that man resorts to the reiteration of the infinite instant not only in the visual anachronism of words or art. Semiotics locates these vital irradiations (as we have called the eternal desires of infinity) in the premodern resources of our civilization: 1) in the anthropological proximity to the images of the mythical, the ritual, and the symbolic ancestral that have survived the passage of the cycles of formalisms (or formats), whose signs have not been isolated from their original meaning; 2) in the intentionality of art, that is, in the poetic or artistic language whose nature allows the continuous deconstruction without its semiosis being altered, or so it seems, to detach itself from the ideas of the Prague School: What, then, is that indeterminate reality to which the work of art points? It is the total context of so-called social phenomena such as philosophy, politics, religion, or economics. Art, as recognized by Aby Warburg, Heinrich Wölfflin, Edgar Wind, Erwin Panofsky, or Ernst Gombrich, has the quality of characterizing and representing culture in its history. For this very reason, the history of art ends up being separated from the history of culture in the broadest sense of the word; and vice versa, universal history tends to borrow, for delimitating its periods, the moments that mark an epoch in the history of art.

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Therefore, we understood in this research that the visual forms that enveloped consumerist illusionism could function as miracle mediators of desires, behaviors, axiological values, fragmentary texts of dreams, dominant fantasies of the unconscious, and collective entelechies. Trends in the visual presentation of consumption demand an experience of temporality with social memory. It is a suspended sign, an empty meaning appearing in an image capable of dominating the future from the present, avoiding visual anachronism.

In conclusion, admitting the existence of a semiotic irradiation would consist in recognizing the appearance of agreement in the meanings that reflect the inner desires in signs external to us. But the external is no longer born of the body; between us and reality remains the void whose link only lends itself to subjective interpretation. Thus, irradiation reveals the nihilism of the space between what we know (our desires) and the immeasurable of external reality. We will find the traces, the signs of disintegration, of the decay of reality, and of false flashes. Semiotics uncovers a cynical exteriority, built by culture and its production to hide the final cause of temporality. The dialectic between the life and death of things is reproduced in the dialectic of continuity and rupture, of eternal return, and of the eternal conflict between humanity and the world. And just as modern painting places the viewer in front of the work in a discreet position, as if what is exposed on the canvas wants to hide what is in front of it, advertising offers its meanings before the authentic ineluctable truth.

Modernity evaluated universalization to recreate a symbolic totality that would end dissent in human conflicts. Sharing the same values could mean the peaceful unification of humanity. Behind desires always lies politics, which is equally the desire for survival. Multiple attempts throughout history demonstrate the failure of a body politic moved by a desire. Body and utopia, intimate and political, have no relationship, since the desire is external to the body, it is in another part of the world, or as Georges Didi-Huberman affirms, it is not in the world, it is elsewhere.

In recent decades, the crisis of meaning and postmodern pessimism has spoken out in the face of the farce of hyperreality simulacra. The tendencies of the social factors only compensate for the consciousness at the cost of representing itself before itself. With his symbolic production, not so much the temporal perspective, it is as if the spatial perspective of the subject was described by things and a context of references that concretize the *idealtypen* in different periods and cultural currents (or at least at the psychological level). The subject's wishes will be articulated via ethical/religious, and then political/secular narratives. With the crisis of the great stories of Modernity

(Democracy, God, State, Freedom, Justice) the essence of the entity being also dissipates between confusing and dark signs. The observation model based on the subject-world relationship no longer satisfies the new questions about the common destiny. This void will be conveniently completed with the gesture of hope to give meaning to existence, a mission that will be carried out by the industries of desires. Thus, postmodernity recovers the ideal of romantic expressiveness, the heroic ideal of being good and holy (in the Christian Middle Ages) will be transformed into signs of consumption. Postmodern signs will offer a discourse made of easily observable elements, such as material or visual: power, plurality, appearances, mastery of space and public relations, etc. The other reasons, heroism, kindness, generosity, have disappeared due to being impersonal for individuals, even for the new divinities.

NEW INTERTEXTUALITIES: AESTHETICS, CITY, AND ADVERTISING

This research project brings together aesthetics, city, and advertising in a single category. The glows in the streets of advertising visuality impact a kind of search for the look whose sensation is extraordinary. The advertising fragments scattered around the city draw desires: they show reactions. They show what is looked at, and it is like letting the eyes intervene between the real and the imaginary. The phenomenology of advertising located in the streets is a visual work that acquires presence in the public space, from which several senses are distilled: archive, document, or artistic work. In other words, the advertising of cities acquires the category of archive when it recalls a time (even its existence is due to the celebration of an event), of document when the destination of the image is informing a generation – 'Planet Reebok', 'Pepsi Generation'[1] – or simply, artistic work when its approach is often absorbed in its own meaning.

[1] Popular names for the new generations of young consumers who are fans of specific brands.

Like art, current communication practices organize collective remembrance and memory. Advertising images divide time into periods, and public space (physical or symbolic) into places based on the social imaginary. The propositions of individuals creating meanings behind meanings are beyond the surface of the images.

Advertising creativity has a link with aesthetics when it breaks with the borders of what would correspond to it by its very nature. That is, when it is interested in the particularities of (psychic) complexity, and its essence is reduced to aesthetic experience. Subtraction from the aesthetic experience also relates to visual attention (the materialistic conception). Our perception has changed over the course of history due to the absence

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of visual continuity. Advertising is just a choice in the montage between aesthetics and experience and the narrative that the era itself forms with a story made of discontinuities.

The city is ultimately a showroom for advertising that completes the urban aesthetic when we ignore the constellations of industry and consumption. To broaden the emotion released in the advertising image, we must demystify the creation process; something that Walter Benjamin already did when he recognized the loss of the aura in the work of art. To take this step, raising the view is required, that is, the advertising object is made to be looked at, or whoever looks does so from the desire (to be needed) and the intensity (which prevents withdrawing the gaze):

In contemplation of the advertising trail, the gaze that examines it subtly accommodates itself to its intended place: advertising is embedded on its floor. In the memory of the ground, the objectuality of advertising achieves unity in the viewer's multiple visions, but, above all, it makes its product seem like something. The object is seen attached to its environment.

By carefully linking all the components of that space, the viewer incorporates the entire scene into a whole. In the city, shop windows, posters, and monuments overlap, produce a singular symbolic fusion, and that back-and-forth movement of perception (an irradiation of semiotic sense) gives the sensory flashes of the immediate, the sensitive, that which remains on the surface. Their contemplation goes beyond knowledge. Things appear with power: see as never before. Its meaning transcends the pure communicative function that led to its creation.

The exuberant baroque of the "Trevi Fountain" (Rome), the work of Nicola Salvi in the seventeenth century does not eclipse the electric lights incorporated in the British square "Piccadilly Circus" (London), giving it the visual relevance that made it equally famous for urban tourism. They are places of social polarities, of exuberance of individual singularities, and of agility in sentimental expression. They are not dead locations in the city, "they are not anyone's land," and owe their existence to their openness to the eyes. On the contrary, they are displays of popular movement, dynamism, and social conquest in the face of the urban elitism of the reserved territories, of the exclusive neighborhoods, of the fields of resistance against popular culture, of rejection of bourgeois symbolic hegemony. They are urban locations with industrial signs transfigured into popular culture. Procedural impurity and perfect visibility adhere to social fissures, not to consumption itself. Denying the post-modern transgression that images only lead to appearances of each way of being is impossible. It is about conceiving the splendors displayed by advertising as memories, slogans, or signs in our cities.

Passersby recognize in every place of the city the lightning of the fugitive beauty of urban design. Literally, the advertising object finds in its place a contaminated surface par excellence: the lifting of desire. In advertising, something similar to beauty survives, not in the usual balanced sense. Here, the beautiful thing is a montage, an assembly that invents passionate connections. The aesthetic experience is adaptive and is based on antecedents formed by proto-aesthetic elements and aesthetic preferences. The human mind and the aesthetic experience evolve in unison. In particular, aesthetic experience requires a reading mind and metacognition, and this, in turn, helps the mind to investigate the metarepresentational architecture of the world.

As a result of this action, advertising acquires a historical dimension in its narratives. Its textuality accommodates the transfiguration of the industrial symbolic into an aesthetic body prepared for the exchange (of looks, but also of being property). Transfiguration is not a purely communicative phenomenon, it is not only symbolic and does not result from media transformations, hybridizations of social habits, and even from the force of a neocolonizing semiosis of cultural capitalism. It also does end at the end of a rite of consumption, although we could consider the possibility of a fetishism based on the exaltation of *kistch*, or perhaps an effect more produced in popular culture by *camp* objects, when art elevates bad taste to good taste. No doubt, this interpretation would correspond to the perspective of an aesthetic elitism that considers art always faithful to its Kantian genetic heritage. After a more humble and relative position about the matter, we find another more opportune cultural notion, the pastiche.

Pastiche opens the visual interpretation to intertextuality. Let us think of an aesthetic that introduces several elements in the interpretation of the great discourses of the brands: 1) the interpretation the subject makes of the object/text considering other previous objects/texts; 2) the transtextuality of the grafted object of other texts of different natures, since advertising is interdiscursive and intermedial.

The transfiguration of consumerist desires into an aesthetic body is theoretically persuasive but, brought to the realm of advertising practice, this possibility has never been considered. The principle of profitability in professional activity and communicative effectiveness in its messages have rewarded this discipline, eliminating all possible speculation about it. Perhaps for this reason, currently abounding, advertising lacks reflections on its historical dimension, in which the mass is fading into the disinterest that produces everything that is useless. Shifting the gaze of the "great works" on interdiscursion, transtextuality, and the cultural transfiguration of small communication practices is necessary.

VISUAL STUDIES, ADVERTISING, AND CULTURE

In the RCT, we discussed how the knowledge of the image has deteriorated considerably in the Social Sciences and in the study of communication. The concept of image is used both to talk about the notoriety of an institution, corporation, or person, and to refer to the opinion that most of an audience has about a specific something or someone. Audits, interviews, content analysis, and ethnographic tactics end with these conclusions. Investigating advertising creativity errs in recognizing the image when it entangles its symbolic nature with planning issues. This error about the symbolic nature comes from a close paradigm. The equivocation is derived from the relations between the philosophy of dialectical materialism and art. From a materialistic perspective, art and the satisfaction of its images can be quantified: the presence of measurement symbols (numerical or graphic tables) participate in this false belief that the meanings of art are quantifiable. Kenneth Clark is categorical in this question, art cannot be measured in material terms since it is a set of singular sensations in each individual: the value of the symbol lies precisely in the impossibility of analyzing it, since it fuses an inseparable confluence of ideas, feelings, and memories.

The visual analysis not focused on the history of art extends an interdisciplinary methodology towards a deep knowledge of culture. This is apparently already valid for advertising. The proposal of a "semiotic turn" in visuality resides in operations that endow the gaze with the invention of a language: the social construction of the visual by gazing towards others and their daily practices and, at the same time, of being looked at by others (and the visual construction of the social). The semiotic turn is a postsemiotic and postlinguistic discovery of the image: a crossroads between visuality, institutions, discourse, body, and figurativism. Writing visual studies implies the conviction that gaze, contemplation, and observation, alongside the alternatives of the spectator, manage to displace the great figures of the image (always the objective of iconology) towards the backgrounds and the extras.

The debate over visual studies does not focus on the innovation of visual rhetoric. It wants to erase the distinctions between high and low culture and transform the history of art into the history of culture. In this equalization of competences, the visual culture created by advertising not only appeals to semiotic or discursive models, revealing ideological projections, but also surpasses the basic notions of "similarity or mimesis" that incorporate traditional theories of art and aesthetics. The images of advertising become part of a set of images framed in the political gesture of the gaze, since they are now further away from the positivist, empirical analysis, or the study of perception.

It is not a question of equating visual analysis with a history of images or of exalting it to an art history, but of showing the dialectical virtue of knowledge that ordinary observation prevents us from perceiving. The problem between art history and visual studies arose with Kant's attempt at pure reason to differentiate art from other cultural artifacts, instead of postulating universality in the construction of aesthetic value and not defending its discovery so much. If it had been otherwise in Western tradition, we would study aesthetics in art and advertising without making any difference. Kant marked the distinction in history between images of art and non-artistic images. But today we know that the heuristics of art teach one to look at other visual discourses such as television or advertising. However, it is about teaching people to look without limiting the visual experience to the set of concepts of this discipline. Accepting a universal epistemological basis in the face of contemporary forms of visual production is impossible.

The epistemic roots of visual research are born in the affirmation of the heterogeneity of images, in the study of the different circumstances of their genesis, and in the various functions they develop within culture and society. The new heuristic strategies in their interpretation remember to combine the different traditions of visual production. Thus, a television spot can be analyzed by adopting visual anthropology, audiovisual narration, media sociology, visual semiotics, human psychology, marketing strategies, and include political diversity.

THE QUESTION OF ADVERTISING IN VISUAL STUDIES

In later years, we continued to debate with the PPGCOM USP experts about the influence of visual studies on the knowledge of mediation, mediatization, and manipulation practices. Poststructuralism coupled with the new identity politics has prevented consensus in the community on what visual artistic quality is. The notion of art is not radically opposed to the idea of visual culture. Advertising can be admitted as a particular form circumscribed by the cultural interweaving of the community, which differs from other forms of cultural production. For this reason, visual studies are too ductile to allow comparison and contrast in the analysis of advertising with other forms of image creation with which they had no relationship in the past.

Visual culture involves combining rhetorical political strategies that are connected to history. Therefore, in analyzing visual practices, it is interesting to compare and contrast all their theoretical and methodological presuppositions, despite historians establishing differences difficult to overcome, by affirming that advertising as art itself is based on lies of a

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relatively naïve and admissible class: the only difference is the environment that enriches it, materialism or spirituality.

The particularity between the images seems to be very sharp, but there are points of connection (even if those are in the past and based on lies). Poststructuralist criticism (Derrida, Lacan) insisted on a dynamic semiotic system and the unfolding of time during semiosis. The meaning of any particular sign could not be placed in a fixed (timeless) meaning by the internal operations of a synchronous system. For poststructuralism, meaning arises exactly from the movement of one sign or signifier to the next, in a perpetual motion that prevents a starting point for semiosis from being found and a final moment in which the meanings of the signs can be considered concluded and closed from existing.

The link between semiotics and art history offers an opportunity to reflect on the origin of current images of advertising. This alliance also recovers the thesis of the existence of a possible inventory of exemplary images whose cultural heritage (*Kulturwissenschaft*) allows deciphering their meaning. Aby Warburg worked on an inventory and articulated the traditional categories of art history in the analysis of images without caring so much about the artistic or aesthetic dimension (*Bildwissenschaft*). Semiotics involves three problems that complicate the historical search: intertextuality, polysemy, and the location of meaning. These three problems arise when we use images from the past (as advertising does) in new visual compositions for creating meaning. The visual repertoire protects iconographic resources from visual anachronism. These resources are basically the reuse of previous forms, patterns, and figures from the past. Semiotic research finds these visual archaeological remains to understand current visual culture.

However, holding this idea of a visual past that explains the meaning of images would put art in an eternal passivity since the possibilities of a new creation would be reduced. Reinvesting the passivity of that perspective would consist of considering the work of the last artist as an active intervention on the transmitted material. This investment would also amount to a deconstruction of the relationship between cause and effect, since it challenges the idea of precedent as origin and thus makes the claim of historical reconstruction problematic.

Different studies show that iconographic analysis often conceals revelations of the meaning of other borrowed motifs. While a work may borrow the motif from another image, in contrast, intertextuality does not imply borrowing its meaning. The selected sign is a sign that comes with a sense. However, the image creator does not have to accept that meaning, being able to reject, dodge, or incorporate it into the new visual text. In this way, advertising visuality is an intertextual fabric

with taken signs that reuse the sense brought by them, but that also fractures their past meaning according to the synchrony of the present culture.

Visual studies offer several tactical visual analysis strategies that should be considered in advertising studies. Not only can a methodology that provides quantifiable results clarify the numerous human and cultural phenomena that occur in the production and consumption of advertising images, but can also clarify the numerous human and cultural phenomena that occur in the production and consumption of advertising images. A methodology sandwiched between different scientific territories can manage knowledge closer to communication. The interdisciplinarity between semiotics, aesthetics, art history, and communication, as we have argued, reveals different aspects in the treatment of advertising images beyond pure forms or diagrams of numerical values. Our reasoning opened a debate at PPGCOM USP on the functioning of the visual paradigm. Currently, the theory of visuality finds its strength in two fundamental ideas: 1) the change from a linguistic turn to a pictorial or visual turn; and 2) the autonomy of images as living organisms.

OBSERVATORY ON THE BEHAVIOR OF BRANDS DURING THE PANDEMIC (COVID-19)

During the pandemic, the collaboration with PPGCOM USP did not cease. The group of Spanish researchers working with USP continued their work, using new technologies: The meetings were held by videoconference. USP organized an observatory on the behavior of advertising and brands during the pandemic under the initiative of Professor Clotilde Perez.

During those debates, the use of aesthetic morality by brands was discussed. The marks showed an affective unification with great glorious themes of the spirit. The exaltation of panvitalism in expressing that every living thing suffers, and that love is the way to suffer the universal pain of "reality." Brands addressed loving messages to their audience in their advice, with their company in confinement, and above all, in recognition of the harshness of life circumstances. Aesthetic morality shows the emotion, of which Schopenhauer speaks, of compassion in the sight of the suffering of others.

The marks were contingent on pain everywhere; it was about extolling the ethical value of sharing the suffering of the pandemic experiences. Also a consequence of the times, the logic of capitalism and cultural relativism opened the way to a diffuse aesthetic.

Diffuse aesthetics are characterized by the lack of norms, rules, or canons that differentiate between beauty and ugliness, the authentic object of its

imitation, the cultured and the vulgar, and, at the discursive level, the content does not condition the internal structure of the form. Capitalism made aesthetics an element of distinction from social classes, rather than a matter of social or particular preferences. Faced with this individual spirit of consumption, corporations worry about rising "heroically" and free from it, to run towards an enthusiastic life that reaches affective unification.

In the past, the subjective component of representations of reality varied according to the characteristics of the place, the climate, and the way of being of people. The aesthetics were shaped according to the physical needs and moral habits, reflecting the design, climates, customs, ideas, tastes, and character of the people. The sensitive becomes a field on which one can no longer (or should not) judge only from the outside by means of understanding. The sensitive is rather in itself a power to establish normative differences; the distinction of right and wrong is internal to the sensitive. The feeling that arises from aesthetic judgment teaches us what it is before we even think about examining it.

The marks of the cooperation of sympathetic functions, according to the philosopher Scheler, are: a) affective unification; b) understanding the same as the other; c) love for the human beings; d) acosmistic love. With this, it is recognized that the sensitive forms emphasize the love of man as the foundation of the acosmistic love for the person and for God. The purpose of the brand during the pandemic was to accomplish the emotional realization of humanity as a narrative genre. The challenge of acosmistic love appeared in advertising messages in visual forms that represent a universal love that surpasses the love of the nation, God, or the circle of culture itself: an ideological transformation against individualism and the distinction that differentiates personal identities. That is, an opposition to the "customizing" ideology of brands.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

All open debates at PPGCOM USP had one purpose: to describe communication as a phenomenon of continuities is to err on the true meaning of networking. Technological heuristics suggest that communication is a mesh of connections, but that is just a visual analogy that makes understanding the complexity of human relationships easier. Communication is fundamentally a phenomenon of discontinuous nature in the thought, fragmented between human groups, multimodal regarding its means, and disconnected in cultural differences. The network exists only in simplistic explanations contingent on its methodological commitments. Communication invokes the sensitive, but the sensitive complicates the body. The body is the artifact between the human being and the world that

is agitated by gesture, and gestures express desires and emotions. Emotions arise from the darkness of the unconscious, from the corners of the psychic course, so that, uniting time and history, industry, advertising, and politics in a model, they vibrate in tension with the images. In these debates of the PPGCOM USP we have read these images, assuming that the space of the sensitive is in postmodernity the expression of the history of culture, linked to a more extensive project of *Kulturwissenschaft*. ◼

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Irradiaciones intelectuales: Una década de colaboración con el Posgrado en Ciencias de la Comunicación de la Universidad de São Paulo

Intellectual irradiations: A decade of collaboration with the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences of the University of São Paulo

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RESUMEN
En este artículo presentamos una síntesis de colaboración con la Escola de Comunicações e Artes de la Universidade de São Paulo (ECA-USP) durante una década en la investigación de la comunicación. Nuestra aportación siempre tuvo un origen epistémico en los estudios sobre la cultura visual y presentamos nuestros hallazgos en un formato interdisciplinar. Entre las cuestiones más relevantes destacamos las nociones de irradiación semiótica, publicismo y la contribución de los estudios visuales al conocimiento del fenómeno de la recepción de la publicidad. Destacamos en las conclusiones la importancia de las emociones, los sentimientos y las sensaciones sensoriales en los fenómenos actuales de la comunicación. El cuerpo es el artefacto de la posmodernidad para fusionar la historia, la industria, la publicidad y la política mediante la expresión de los deseos humanos en los discursos mediáticos.
Palabras clave: Cultura, visualidad, arte, publicidad, comunicación

ABSTRACT
In this article we present a synthesis of collaboration with the RCT over a decade in communication research. Our contribution always had an epistemic origin in studies on visual culture and we present our findings in an interdisciplinary format. Among the most relevant issues we present the notions of semiotic irradiation, publicism and the contribution of visual studies in the knowledge of the phenomenon of the reception of advertising. We highlight in the conclusions the importance of emotions, feelings and sensory sensations in the current phenomena of communication. The body is the artifact of postmodernity to merge history, industry, advertising and politics through the expression of human desires in media discourses.
Keywords: Culture, visuality, art, advertising, communication

Y A HACE UNA década que fuimos invitados por el Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação (PPGCOM) de la Universidade de São Paulo (USP) para impartir la conferencia inaugural "La cultura errabunda: arte, publicidad y posmodernidad" en el IV Encontro Pró-Pesq PP –Encontro Nacional de Pesquisadores em Publicidade e Propaganda (2013). El evento fue organizado por la Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Publicidade (ABP2), el Grupo de Estudos Semióticos em Comunicação, Cultura e Consumo (GESC3), que desde 2010 estuvo constituido por docentes del PPGCOM y del Departamento de Relações Públicas, Propaganda e Turismo (CRP). Detrás de las instituciones, en la dirección de estos encuentros, conocí a mis queridos colegas Dra. Clotilde Pérez y Dr. Eneus Trindade; a los que más tarde se sumaron a un apreciado elenco de profesores y alumnos.

Durante estos años, la sede de los encuentros estuvo en la Escola de Comunicações e Artes de la USP, salvo el VII Encontro Pró-Pesq PP en la ciudad de Rio de Janeiro, realizado en la Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio) en el 2016. En el año 2020 con el confinamiento causado por la pandemia del COVID-19, la colaboración con el PPGCOM-USP tuvo que realizarse por videoconferencia para el encuentro Pró-Pesq PP, y con el mismo medio tecnológico para las pesquisas desarrolladas en el Observatorio de la Pandemia que organizó la profesora Clotilde Pérez.

Desde la primera invitación hasta el momento hemos colaborado con el PPGCOM-USP consolidando con sus profesores mesas temáticas en congresos internacionales como la International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS-AIS), la International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), la Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación (ALAIC) o la Associação Portuguesa de Ciências da Comunicação (SOPCOM). Hemos participado en publicaciones de actas, artículos y libros. Solo por mencionar nuestra última publicación, el grupo español editorial Tirant Lo Blanc publica este año 2022 "Estudios Visuales en Brasil". En esta obra se han traducido del portugués al español a varios trabajos de profesores no solo del PPGCOM-USP, sino también de otras universidades brasileñas.

Las colaboraciones han sido muchas y fructíferas durante todos estos años. En nuestro caso, fundamentalmente las principales aportaciones corresponden a los estudios culturales y, concretamente, a los estudios visuales en la comunicación y la creatividad publicitaria. A continuación, expondremos algunas síntesis de las cuestiones abordadas, discutidas y resueltas conseguidas en nuestros trabajos con profesores especialistas del PPGCOM-USP.

LA CULTURA ERRABUNDA: UNA PERSPECTIVA POLÍTICA DE LA PUBLICIDAD

Tras este título se escondía el propósito de presentar una pregunta singular de investigación: ¿Ha dejado de ser la publicidad una práctica profesional de la comunicación para en plena posmodernidad transformarse en una ideología de masas? A partir de esta pregunta, buscamos argumentar lo que llamamos "publicismo".

El razonamiento expuesto en el foro de la comunicación de USP se inspira en las personas que leen en la publicidad causas sociales y políticas. Los estudios de la publicidad, a nuestro entender, no habían prestado la debida atención a la política y que podría haberse dicho más sobre las consecuencias que tuvo para la cultura popular, la politización de la publicidad durante la posmodernidad. Entonces, afirmábamos: el "publicismo" es un valor añadido a la publicidad a su función original en la comunicación estratégica en el mercado de intercambios de bienes reales y de servicios.

En una nueva economía de deseos, la visualidad es más importante que la economía de intercambio de objetos reales y tangibles. La mercancía se consume en su fórmula semiótica más que en su utilidad. La forma en el nuevo capitalismo informacional alimenta este estilo de vida, la multiplicidad de identidades, y multiplica los deseos. La publicidad recurrirá a las tradicionales expresiones (diseño, urbanismo literatura, música, cine, video), incluido el arte, como modelos de creación para la exposición de ideas y en la consolidación de su propio discurso autorreferencial.

La fragmentación de la sociedad de consumo ha desencadenado una proliferación de diferentes manifestaciones culturales y estilos de vida. Estos hechos se mantienen en un ritmo continuo de discontinuidad y ruptura. Es un signo más del presente. La publicidad aparece colonizada por otros discursos revolucionarios contra la homogeneidad autoritaria y la expansión de la cultura institucional. El simulacro publicitario no distingue entre lo que son acciones de resistencia o discursos subversivos de lo que le es propio al capitalismo y a sus discursos representativos.

Si en la posmodernidad la estética se ha politizado y la política se ha estetizado, no es de extrañar que la publicidad haya derivado hacia el publicismo. Nuevas estéticas extravagantes, agresivas, improvisadas en algunas ocasiones en un ciclo de nacimiento y desaparición con la duración de una ocurrencia conquistan la publicidad actual. La experiencia deambula entre el extrañamiento y el distanciamiento, lo que reduce a meras prácticas estetizantes la creatividad publicitaria. También la política se ha visto simplificada a un régimen representativo de lo que son realidades sociales fragmentadas como ha sido la irradiación de identidades del yo a través de la misma politización del cuerpo. El arte se ha

politizado en formas visibles. Las imágenes se han independizado de las palabras, como han mostrado Aby Warburg, Georges Didi-Huberman (2010) y otros autores que consideran la fórmula del *pathosformeln* otra narración diferente a la literatura. La resistencia de la visualidad sobre los discursos anquilosados es consecuencia de la heterogeneidad de un mundo disensual, en la que ahora incluimos la moda, los estilos de consumo y la publicidad.

La publicidad es actualmente un modelo de discurso autocrítico, de deconstrucción continua, de innovación social. Las formas del consumo combaten el vacío, el aislamiento y la distancia entre las consciencias individualizadas. Los nuevos signos de oposición a la egolatría son la justificación de un publicismo solidario, comunitario y corporativo. El publicismo encuentra su lugar en la experiencia estética posmoderna de territorios fronterizos entre lo común y lo privado, entre lo visible y lo invisible, en el sentido descrito por Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1970), buscando signos de pertenencia destinados al reconocimiento de nuestra propia existencia en una metáfora liviana de apariencias, apartada de la noción moderna de humanidad.

SEMIÓTICA DE LA IRRADIACIÓN: EL VITALISMO DE LOS SIGNOS PUBLICITARIOS

En el PPGCOM-USP, el profesor Pedro A. Hellín y este autor presentamos un trabajo de investigación desarrollado entre la Universidad de Murcia y la Universidad de Sevilla, ambas en España. La investigación de carácter básico pretendía diseñar una nueva perspectiva teórica en el análisis de recepción de la creación publicitaria. La tesis central giraba en torno de una composición sígnica de emociones y sentimientos que abarcaban aquellos deseos ilusionantes que permiten olvidar la tragedia existencial o lo que Nietzsche (1980) definió como el estado continuo de conflicto entre el ser humano y el mundo.

La publicidad es lucrativa al individuo retórico al anestesiar la angustia existencial (aquí nos apropiamos de las palabras de Carlo Michelstaedter (2009)). La posmodernidad procura remedios adecuados que crecen alegremente en estos discursos, donde parece ocultarse el pensamiento de la muerte detrás de irradiaciones vitales llenas de deseos ruidosos de vida. En el alboroto del consumo triunfa el efecto de multitud en un desorden vitalista de anhelos que se proyectan en el futuro. Esta composición visual de emociones y sentimientos solo puede atravesarse desde una semiótica de la irradiación: un lenguaje que trepa alrededor de signos de anhelos.

Pero los signos vienen dotados de una geométrica intención. La conciencia instala intención a las cosas externas, incluidas las imágenes. Husserl (2011) sostenía que la conciencia es intencional y que es necesaria la acción humana para encontrar la trascendencia del signo. El verbo representa la esencia, el ente del ser desde el

pasado según explicaba Heidegger (1998). Los límites del mundo quedaban estancados en las fronteras del lenguaje, es decir, de la lógica. Para Wittgenstein (2017), la misma lógica puesta al servicio de aquello para lo que se creó, dominar el universo, se ha empleado para la construcción de la existencia de aquello que en otro tiempo no lo poseía. Y es que las cosas comienzan a tener existencia en la modernidad, como describía el filósofo austríaco, por la relación con otras cosas. El mundo se encuentra en un entrechoques de significaciones, y cuando el lenguaje es poético, ya sea pictórico, publicitario o literario, surge su utilidad, y hallamos las voces profundas de las conciencias. Wittgenstein pensaba que, eliminando aquellas específicas cualidades de los lenguajes diarios, con mayor o menor habilidad, alcanzábamos lo extraordinario, en que se conserva lo místico o lo secreto que aproxima el mundo a través de su imitación del mundo.

Para ello, el lenguaje deja de ser una cuestión privativa, y solo es una actividad social en cuanto antropomorfiza la comunicación. Los lenguajes privados no significan, porque significar implica que otro comparte nuestro lenguaje, o sea, nuestro mundo. Por otro lado, es ilógico un lenguaje con significados privados que solo lo entienda un ser. Así que el lenguaje solo puede ser una actividad que desentrañe su sentido en un entorno social. En la restauración de la comunidad se genera los juegos del lenguaje –así lo nombró Wittgenstein– cuando hablamos.

El lenguaje ha sido el refugio de la desesperación del hombre moderno relegado a la imposibilidad de una realización completa. La imparcialidad semiótica articula en su conveniencia los relatos de la eternidad que ya había desechado por su absolutismo y por su inmovilidad esta última etapa de la modernidad. Su proyección hacia el futuro exigía la presencia de signos sin caducidad temporal, de modo que el hombre recurre a la reiteración del instante infinito en la anacronía visual de las palabras o del arte. La semiótica ubica estas irradiaciones vitales –como nosotros hemos llamado a los deseos eternos de infinitud– en los recursos premodernos de nuestra civilización: 1) en la proximidad antropológica a las imágenes de lo mítico, de lo ritual y de lo ancestral simbólico que no se han destruida en el paso de los ciclos de formalismos (o formatos); los signos no se han aislado de su original significado; 2) en la intencionalidad del arte, es decir, en el lenguaje poético o artístico cuya naturaleza permite la continua deconstrucción sin que su semiosis se vea alterada, o así parece desprenderse de las ideas de la Escuela de Praga: ¿Cuál es esa realidad indeterminada a la que apunta la obra de arte? Es el contexto total de los fenómenos llamados sociales, como la filosofía, la política, la religión o la economía. El arte, como reconocía Aby Warburg, Heinrich Wölfflin, Edgar Wind, Erwin Panofsky o Ernst Gombrich, puede caracterizar y representar la cultura en su historia. Por esta misma razón, la historia del arte se acaba desligando de la historia de la cultura en el sentido más amplio de la palabra;

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y, viceversa, la historia universal tiende a tomar en préstamo, para la delimitación de sus períodos, los momentos que marcan época en la historia del arte.

Por ende, entendimos en esta investigación que las formas visuales que envolvían el ilusionismo consumista podrían funcionar de milagros mediadores de deseos, comportamientos, valores axiológicos, textos fragmentarios de sueños, fantasías dominantes del inconsciente y entelequias colectivas. Las tendencias de la presentación visual del consumo exigen una experiencia de la temporalidad con la memoria social. Es un signo en suspensión, un significado vacío aparecido en una imagen capaz de dominar el futuro desde el presente, evitando el anacronismo visual.

En conclusión, admitir la existencia de una irradiación semiótica consistiría en reconocer la aparición de acuerdo en las significaciones que reflejan los deseos internos en signos exteriores a nosotros. Pero lo externo ya no nace del cuerpo; entre nosotros y la realidad queda el vacío cuya vinculación solo se presta a la interpretación subjetiva. De modo que la irradiación revela el nihilismo del espacio entre lo que conocemos (nuestros deseos) y lo inconmensurable de la realidad externa. Encontraremos las huellas, los indicios de la desintegración, de la decadencia de la realidad y de los falsos destellos. La semiótica destapa una exterioridad cínica, construida por la cultura y su producción para ocultar la causa final de la temporalidad. La dialéctica entre la vida y la muerte de las cosas se reproduce en la dialéctica de la continuidad y de la ruptura, del eterno retorno, del eterno conflicto entre la humanidad y el mundo. Del mismo modo que la pintura moderna coloca al espectador frente a la obra en una posición discreta, como si lo expuesto en el lienzo quisiera ocultar lo que está frente a ellos, la publicidad ofrece sus significados anteponiéndose a la auténtica verdad ineluctable.

La modernidad evaluó la universalización para la recreación de una totalidad simbólica que acabara con el disenso en los conflictos humanos. Compartir los mismos valores podría suponer la unificación pacífica de la humanidad. De los deseos siempre surge la política, que es igualmente el deseo de la supervivencia. Los múltiples intentos a lo largo de la historia demuestran el fracaso de un cuerpo político movido por un deseo. Entre cuerpo y utopía, lo íntimo y lo político, no hay relación, pues el deseo es externo al cuerpo, se encuentra en otra parte del mundo, como afirma Georges Didi-Huberman (2005), no está en el mundo, sino en otra parte.

En las últimas décadas, la crisis de sentido y el pesimismo posmoderno se pronunció frente a la farsa de los simulacros de hiperrealidad. Las tendencias de las fábricas de lo social solo compensan a la conciencia en la carestía de representarse ante sí. Con su producción sígnica, no tanto la perspectiva temporal, como si la perspectiva espacial del sujeto se describe mediante cosas y un contexto de referencias que concretan los *idealtypen* en diferentes períodos y corrientes culturales o, por lo menos, a nivel psicológico. Los deseos del sujeto se articularán mediante los relatos

éticos/religiosos y después políticos/seculares. Con la crisis de los grandes relatos de la modernidad (Democracia, Dios, Estado, Libertad, Justicia) la esencia del ente ser también se disipa entre signos confusos y oscuros. El modelo de observación basado en la relación sujeto-mundo ya no satisface a los nuevos interrogantes sobre el destino común. Este vacío será conveniente completarlo con el gesto de la esperanza para dar sentido a la existencia, misión que desempeñarán las industrias de deseos. Así la posmodernidad recupera el ideal de la expresividad romántica, el ideal heroico, del ser bueno y santo (en el medievo cristiano) será transformado en signos de consumo. Los signos posmodernos ofrecerán un discurso hecho de elementos fácilmente observables, como los materiales o los visuales: el poder, la pluralidad, las apariencias, el dominio del espacio y de las relaciones públicas, etc. Las demás razones, como el heroísmo, la bondad y la generosidad, han desaparecido porque resultan impersonales para los individuos, incluso para las nuevas divinidades.

NUEVAS INTERTEXTUALIDADES: ESTÉTICA, CIUDAD Y PUBLICIDAD

Este proyecto de investigación reúne en una sola categoría estética, ciudad y publicidad. Los resplandores en las calles de la visualidad publicitaria impactan una suerte de búsqueda de la mirada cuya sensación es extraordinaria. Los fragmentos publicitarios esparcidos por la ciudad dibujan deseos, muestran reacciones. Muestran aquello que es mirado, y es como dejar que los ojos intervengan entre lo real y lo imaginario. La fenomenología de la publicidad ubicada en las calles es una obra visual que adquiere presencia en el espacio público, de la cual se destila varios sentidos: archivo, documento u obra artística. Dicho de otro modo, la publicidad de las ciudades adquiere categoría de archivo cuando rememora un tiempo –incluso su existencia es debida a la celebración de un acontecimiento–, de documento cuando el destino de la imagen es la información de una generación (Planet Reebok, Pepsi Generation)[1] o sencillamente obra artística cuando su planteamiento en muchas ocasiones se ensimisma sobre su propio sentido.

Al igual que el arte, las prácticas actuales de la comunicación organizan el recuerdo y la memoria colectiva. Las imágenes de la publicidad dividen el tiempo en períodos y el espacio público (físico o simbólico) en lugares sobre la base del imaginario social. Más allá de la superficie de las imágenes están las proposiciones de los individuos creando significaciones detrás de significaciones.

Existe un vínculo en la creatividad publicitaria con la estética cuando rompe con las fronteras de aquello que le correspondería por su misma naturaleza. Es decir, cuando se interesa por las particularidades de la complejidad (psíquica), y su esencia se reduce a la experiencia estética. La sustracción a la experiencia estética tiene que ver también con la atención visual (la concepción materialista). Nuestra percepción ha

[1] Nombres populares para las nuevas generaciones de jóvenes consumidores partidarios de determinadas marcas.

cambiado en el transcurso de la historia debido a la inexistencia de una continuidad visual. La publicidad es solo una elección en el montaje entre estética y experiencia y la narración que la propia época forma con una historia hecha de discontinuidades.

La utilidad de la ciudad es finalmente una sala de exposición para la publicidad que completa la estética urbana cuando ignoramos las constelaciones de la industria y el consumo. Para ensanchar la emoción librada en la imagen publicitaria debemos desmitificar el proceso de creación; algo que ya hizo Walter Benjamin (2017) cuando reconoció la pérdida del aura en la obra de arte. Para dar este paso, se requiere elevar la vista, es decir, el objeto publicitario se cree mirado o quien mira lo hace desde el deseo (de ser necesitado) y la intensidad (que impide retirar la mirada).

En la contemplación del rastro publicitario, la mirada que lo examina se acomoda sutilmente a su lugar intencionado: la publicidad se incrusta sobre su suelo. En la memoria del suelo, la objetualidad publicitaria consigue la unidad en las múltiples visiones del espectador, pero, sobre todo, hace ver algo. El objeto es visto unido a su entorno.

Al vincular cuidadosamente todos los componentes de ese espacio, el espectador incorpora toda la escena a un todo. En la ciudad, escaparates, carteles y monumentos se solapan, producen una fusión singular sígnica, y ese movimiento de ida y vuelta de la percepción (una irradiación de sentido semiótico) confiere a los destellos sensoriales lo inmediato, lo sensible, aquello que permanece en la superficie. Su contemplación va más allá del conocimiento. Las cosas aparecen con potencia: ver como nunca. Su sentido traspasa la pura función comunicativa que dio origen a su creación.

El barroco exuberante de la "Fontana de Trevi" (Roma), obra de Nicola Salvi en el siglo XVII, no eclipsa los luminosos eléctricos incorporado en la plaza británica "Piccadilly Circus" (Londres), dándole esa relevancia visual que la hizo igual de famosa para el turismo urbano. Son lugares de polaridades sociales, de exuberancia de las singularidades individuales y de agilidad en la expresión sentimental. No son localizaciones muertas en la ciudad, "no son terrenos de nadie" y deben su existencia a su apertura a las miradas. Al contrario, son despliegues de movimiento popular, dinamismo y de conquista social frente al elitismo urbano de los territorios reservados, los barrios exclusivos, los campos de resistencia frente a la cultura popular, de rechazo a la hegemonía sígnica burguesa. Son ubicaciones urbanas con los signos industriales transfigurados en cultura popular. La impureza procedimental y la perfecta visibilidad adhiere las fisuras sociales, que no el mismo consumo. Es inevitable negar la transgresión posmoderna que las imágenes solo llevan a apariencias de cada forma de ser. Se trata de concebir los esplendores desplegados por la publicidad como recuerdos, consignas o señas en nuestras ciudades.

El transeúnte reconoce en cada lugar de la ciudad el relámpago de la fugitiva belleza del diseño urbano. Literalmente, el objeto publicitario encuentra en su lugar una superficie contaminada por excelencia: el alzamiento del deseo. En la publicidad sobrevive algo parecido a la belleza, no en el sentido usual, equilibrado. Aquí lo bello es un montaje, un ensamblaje que inventa conexiones pasionales. La experiencia estética es adaptativa y se basa en antecedentes formados por elementos proto-estéticos y preferencias estéticas. La mente humana y la experiencia estética evolucionan al unísono. En particular la experiencia estética requiere de una mente lectora y de la metacognición, y ésta a su vez, ayuda a la mente a investigar la arquitectura metarrepresentacional del mundo.

Consecuencia de esta acción, la publicidad adquiere una dimensión histórica a través de sus narraciones. Su textualidad acomoda la transfiguración de lo simbólico industrial en un cuerpo estético preparado para el intercambio (de miradas, pero también de ser propiedad). La transfiguración no es un fenómeno puramente comunicativo, ni solamente simbólico, tampoco resulta de transformaciones mediáticas, hibridaciones de hábitos sociales e incluso de la fuerza de una semiosis neocolonizadora del capitalismo cultural. Esto no acaba en el final de un rito de consumo, aunque podríamos considerar la posibilidad de un fetichismo basado en la exaltación del *kistch* o quizás un efecto más producido en la cultura popular por los objetos *camp*, cuando el arte eleva el mal gusto al buen gusto. Sin duda esta interpretación correspondería a la perspectiva de un elitismo estético que considera el arte siempre fiel a su herencia genética kantiana. Tras una posición más humilde y relativa del asunto, encontramos otra noción cultural más oportuna, el pastiche.

El pastiche abre la interpretación visual a la intertextualidad. Pensemos en una estética que introduce varios elementos en la interpretación de los grandes discursos de las marcas: 1) la interpretación que hace el sujeto del objeto/texto teniendo en cuenta otros objetos/textos anteriores; y 2) la transtextualidad del objeto injertado de otros textos de distintas naturalezas, ya que lo publicitario es interdiscursivo e intermedial.

La transfiguración de los deseos consumistas en un cuerpo estético es teóricamente persuasiva, pero llevada al terreno de la práctica publicitaria nunca ha sido considerada esta posibilidad. El principio de la rentabilidad en la actividad profesional y la eficacia comunicativa en sus mensajes han recompensado esta disciplina, eliminando toda posible especulación sobre ella. Quizás por este motivo, abundando en este punto, la publicidad carezca de reflexiones sobre su dimensión histórica, en la que lo masivo va desvaneciéndose en el desinterés que produce todo lo inservible. Es preciso desplazar las miradas de las "grandes obras" sobre la interdiscursividad, la transtextualidad y la transfiguración cultural de las pequeñas prácticas de la comunicación.

ESTUDIOS VISUALES, PUBLICIDAD Y CULTURA

En la ECA discutimos sobre cómo el conocimiento de la imagen se ha deteriorado considerablemente en las Ciencias Sociales y en el estudio de la Comunicación. El concepto de imagen se utiliza tanto para hablar de la notoriedad de una institución, corporación o persona como para referirnos a la opinión que la mayoría de un público tiene sobre algo o alguien concreto. Las auditorías, las entrevistas, los análisis de contenidos, las tácticas etnográficas acaban remarcando estas conclusiones. La investigación de la creatividad publicitaria yerre en la apreciación de la imagen cuando enmaraña su naturaleza simbólica con cuestiones de planificación. Este error sobre la naturaleza simbólica proviene de un cercano paradigma. El equívoco deriva de las relaciones entre la filosofía del materialismo dialéctico y el arte. Desde una perspectiva materialista, el arte y la satisfacción de sus imágenes pueden cuantificarse: la presencia de los símbolos de medición (tablas numéricas o gráficas) participan de esta falsa creencia de que las significaciones del arte son cuantificables. Kenneth Clark (1987) es tajante en esta cuestión, el arte no se puede medir, en términos materiales, un conjunto de sensaciones singulares en cada individuo: el valor del símbolo estriba precisamente en la imposibilidad de analizarlo, ya que fusiona una confluencia inseparable de ideas, sentimientos y recuerdos.

El análisis visual no centrado en la historia del arte se extiende sobre una metodología interdisciplinar hacia un conocimiento profundo de la cultura. Esto aparentemente es ya válido para la publicidad. La propuesta de un "giro semiótico" en la visualidad reside en operaciones que dotan la mirada de la invención de un lenguaje: la construcción social de lo visual a través de la mirada hacia los otros y sus prácticas cotidianas y, al tiempo, de ser mirados por otros (y la construcción visual de lo social). El giro semiótico es un descubrimiento postsemiótico y postlingüístico de la imagen: una encrucijada entre la visualidad, las instituciones, el discurso, el cuerpo y el figurativismo. Escribir los estudios visuales supone el convencimiento de que la mirada, la contemplación y la observación, junto a las alternativas del espectador, logran desplazar las grandes figuras de la imagen (objetivo siempre de la iconología) hacia los fondos y los figurantes.

El debate sobre los estudios visuales no se centra en la innovación de la retórica visual. Quiere borrar las distinciones entre la alta y la baja cultura y transformar la historia del arte en la historia de la cultura. En esta equiparación de competencias, la cultura visual creada por la publicidad no solo apela a los modelos semióticos o discursivos, reveladores de proyecciones ideológicas, sino que también supera las nociones básicas de la "semejanza o mímesis" que incorporan las teorías tradicionales del arte y la estética. Las imágenes de la publicidad entran a formar parte de un conjunto de imágenes encuadradas en el gesto político de la mirada, en cuanto ahora están más lejos del análisis positivista, empírico o del estudio de la percepción.

No se trata de equiparar el análisis visual a una historia de imágenes ni ser enaltecido a una historia del arte, sino mostrar la virtud dialéctica de un conocimiento que la observación ordinaria impide percibir. La problemática entre la historia del arte y los estudios visuales surgió con el intento de Kant en su crítica de la razón pura por diferenciar el arte de otros artefactos culturales, en vez de postular la universalidad en la construcción del valor estético y no defender tanto su descubrimiento. Si hubiese sido de otro modo en la tradición occidental, estudiaríamos la estética en el arte y en la publicidad sin establecer ninguna diferencia. Kant marcó la distinción en la historia entre las imágenes del arte y las imágenes no artísticas. Pero, hoy sabemos que la heurística del arte enseña a mirar otros discursos visuales como la televisión o la publicidad. No obstante, se trata de enseñar como mirar sin limitar la experiencia visual al conjunto de conceptos de esta disciplina. No es posible aceptar una base epistemológica universal frente a las formas contemporáneas de producción visual.

Las raíces epistémicas de la investigación visual nacen en la afirmación de la heterogeneidad de las imágenes, en el estudio de las diferentes circunstancias de su génesis y en las diversas funciones que desarrollan dentro de la cultura y la sociedad. Las nuevas estrategias heurísticas en su interpretación no se olvidan de combinar las diferentes tradiciones de producción visual. De modo que un spot televisivo pueda analizarse por los aportes de la antropología visual, la narración audiovisual, la sociología mediática, la semiótica visual, la psicología humana, las estrategias de marketing, además de la diversidad política.

LA CUESTIÓN DE LA PUBLICIDAD EN LOS ESTUDIOS VISUALES

En años posteriores seguimos debatiendo con los expertos del PPGCOM-USP sobre la influencia de los estudios visuales en el conocimiento de las prácticas de mediación, mediatización y manipulación. El posestructuralismo unido a las nuevas políticas de identidad ha impedido el consenso en la comunidad sobre la calidad artística visual. La noción de arte no se opone radicalmente a la idea de cultura visual. Es posible admitir la publicidad como una forma particular circunscrita al entretejido cultural de la comunidad, que se diferencia de otras formas de producción cultural. Por este motivo, los estudios visuales son lo sobradamente dúctiles como para permitir la comparación y el contraste en los análisis de la publicidad con otras formas de creación de imágenes con los cuales en el pasado no tenían relación.

La cultura visual supone conjugar estrategias retóricas políticas que están conectadas con la historia. Por ello, en el análisis de las prácticas visuales es interesante la comparación y el contraste de todos sus presupuestos teóricos y metodológicos, aunque los historiadores establezcan diferencias difíciles de superar al afirmar que la publicidad como el mismo arte se asienta sobre

mentiras de una clase relativamente ingenua y admisible: la única diferencia es el entorno que enriquece, el materialismo o la espiritualidad.

La particularidad entre las imágenes parece presentarse muy nítida, pero existen puntos de conexión, aunque sea en el pasado y a través de las mentiras. La crítica posestructuralista con Derrida (2012) y Lacan (2001), entre otros, insistió en un sistema semiótico dinámico y en el despliegue del tiempo durante la semiosis. El significado de cualquier signo particular no podría ubicarse en un significado fijo (atemporal) por las operaciones internas de un sistema sincrónico. Para el posestructuralismo, el significado surge exactamente del movimiento de un signo o significante al siguiente, en un movimiento perpetuo que impide encontrarse un punto de inicio para la semiosis y un momento final en el que termine y que los significados de los signos puedan considerarse conclusos y cerrados.

El vínculo entre la semiótica y la historia del arte ofrece la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre el origen de las imágenes actuales de la publicidad. Esta alianza también recupera la tesis de la existencia de un posible inventario de imágenes modélicas cuya herencia cultural (*Kulturwissenschaft*) es lo que permite descifrar su significado. Aby Warburg (2010) trabajó en un inventario y articuló las categorías tradicionales de la historia del arte en el análisis de imágenes sin importarle tanto la dimensión artística o estética (*Bildwissenschaft*). La semiótica implica tres problemas que complican la búsqueda histórica: intertextualidad, polisemia y la ubicación del significado. Estos problemas surgen cuando utilizamos las imágenes del pasado (como hace la publicidad) en las nuevas composiciones visuales para crear sentido. El repertorio visual protege los recursos iconográficos del anacronismo visual. Estos recursos consisten básicamente en la reutilización de formas anteriores, patrones y figuras del pasado. La investigación semiótica desentierra estos restos arqueológicos visuales para comprender la cultura visual actual.

Sin embargo, sostener esta idea de un pasado visual que explica el significado de las imágenes pondría al arte en una eterna pasividad, ya que las posibilidades de una creación nueva se verían reducidas. Reinvertir la pasividad de esa perspectiva consistiría en considerar el trabajo del último artista como una intervención activa sobre el material transmitido. Esta inversión también equivaldría a una deconstrucción de la relación entre causa y efecto, ya que desafía la idea del precedente como origen y, por lo tanto, hace que el reclamo de la reconstrucción histórica sea problemático.

Diferentes estudios muestran que el análisis iconográfico con frecuencia oculta revelaciones de significados de otros motivos prestados. Si bien una obra puede tomar prestado el motivo de otra imagen, por el contrario, la intertextualidad no supone el préstamo de su significado. El signo seleccionado tiene un sentido. No obstante, el creador de imágenes no tiene por qué aceptar ese

significado, pudiéndolo rechazar, esquivar o incorporarlo al nuevo texto visual. De este modo, se explica que la visualidad publicitaria es un tejido intertextual con signos tomados que reutilizan el sentido traído, pero que también fractura su significado pasado de acuerdo con la sincronía de la cultura presente.

Los estudios visuales ofrecen una serie de estrategias tácticas de análisis visual que deben considerarse en los estudios de la publicidad; no solo una metodología que aporta resultados cuantificables puede esclarecer los numerosos fenómenos humanos y culturales que suceden en la producción y en el consumo de las imágenes publicitarias. Una metodología entramada entre territorios científicos distintos puede administrar un conocimiento más cercano a la comunicación. La interdisciplinariedad entre la Semiótica, la Estética, la Historia del arte y la Comunicación, como hemos argumentado, descubre aspectos diferentes en el tratamiento de las imágenes publicitarias más allá de las puras formas o de los diagramas de valores numéricos. Nuestro razonamiento abrió un debate en el PPGCOM-USP sobre el funcionamiento del paradigma visual. Actualmente, la teoría de la visualidad encuentra su fuerza en dos ideas fundamentales: 1) el cambio de un giro lingüístico a un giro pictórico o visual; y 2) la autonomía de las imágenes como organismos vivos.

UN OBSERVATORIO SOBRE EL COMPORTAMIENTO DE LAS MARCAS DURANTE LA PANDEMIA (COVID-19)

Durante la pandemia no cesó la colaboración con el PPGCOM-USP. El grupo de investigadores españoles conectado con la USP prosiguió su trabajo, valiéndonos de las nuevas tecnologías: los encuentros se desarrollaron por videoconferencias. La USP organizó un observatorio del comportamiento de la publicidad y las marcas durante la pandemia bajo la iniciativa de la profesora Clotilde Perez.

Durante aquellos debates se discutió sobre el uso de una moralidad estética por parte de las marcas. Las marcas mostraron la unificación afectiva con grandes temas gloriosos del espíritu. La exaltación del panvitalismo expresó que todo lo viviente padece y que el amor es la vía para padecer el dolor universal de la "realidad". Las marcas dirigieron mensajes amorosos a su público en sus consejos, con su compañía en el confinamiento, y, sobre todo, en el reconocimiento de la crudeza de las circunstancias vitales. La moralidad estética muestra la emoción, de la que habla Schopenhauer (2010), de la compasión ante la vista del padecer ajeno.

Las marcas fueron contingentes con el dolor existente en todas partes; se trataba de ensalzar el valor ético de compartir el padecimiento de las experiencias de la pandemia. Consecuencia también de los tiempos, la lógica del capitalismo y el relativismo cultural abrieron paso a una estética difusa.

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La estética difusa se caracteriza por las carencias de normas, reglas, o cánones que diferencien entre la belleza y la fealdad, el objeto auténtico de su imitación, lo culto y lo vulgar, y, a nivel discursivo, el contenido no condiciona la estructura interna de la forma. El capitalismo hizo de la estética un elemento de distinción de las clases sociales más que un asunto de preferencias sociales o particulares. Frente a este espíritu individual del consumo, las corporaciones se preocupan por elevarse "heroicamente" con libertad para correr hacia una vida entusiasta que llega a la unificación afectiva.

En el pasado, el componente subjetivo de las representaciones de la realidad variaba según las características del lugar, del clima y de la manera de ser de los pueblos. La estética se conformaba de acuerdo con las necesidades físicas y los hábitos morales, reflejando el diseño, los climas, las costumbres, las ideas, los gustos y el carácter de los pueblos. Lo sensible se convierte en un campo sobre el cual ya no se puede (o no debe) juzgar solo desde fuera por medio del entendimiento. Lo sensible es más bien en sí mismo una facultad de establecer diferencias normativas; la distinción de lo correcto y lo incorrecto es interna a lo sensible: existe por lo tanto un buen gusto y un mal gusto, un gusto perfecto, que da cuenta de lo perfecto de un objeto, y otro, defectuoso, que lo malogra. El sentimiento que surge del juicio estético enseña lo que es algo antes de que hayamos pensado en examinarlo.

Las marcas podrán en juego la cooperación de las funciones simpatéticas, que según el filósofo Scheler (1961, 1969, 1970) son: a) la unificación afectiva; b) sentir lo mismo que otro; c) amor al humano; y d) amor acosmístico. Con ello, se reconoce que las formas sensibles destacan el amor al hombre como el fundamento del amor acomístico a la persona y a Dios. El propósito de la marca durante la pandemia fue la realización emocional de la humanidad como un género narrativo. El reto del amor acosmístico apareció en los mensajes publicitarios en formas visuales que representaban un amor universal que sobrepasa el amor a la nación, a Dios o al propio círculo de la cultura: una transformación ideológica contra el individualismo y la distinción que diferencia las identidades personales. Es decir, una oposición a la ideología "customizadora" de las marcas.

A MODO DE CONCLUSIÓN

En todos los debates abiertos en el PPGCOM-USP había un propósito: describir la comunicación como un fenómeno de continuidades es equivocarse sobre el auténtico sentido de crear redes de contactos. La heurística tecnológica sugiere que la comunicación es una malla de conexiones, pero es solo una analogía visual que hace más fácil la comprensión de la complejidad de las relaciones humanas.

La comunicación es fundamentalmente un fenómeno de naturaleza discontinua en el pensamiento, fragmentada entre los grupos humanos, multimodal respecto a sus medios y desconectada en las diferencias culturales. La red solo existe en las explicaciones simplistas supeditadas a sus compromisos metodológicos. La comunicación invoca lo sensible, pero lo sensible complica el cuerpo. El cuerpo es el artefacto entre el ser humano y el mundo que se agita en el gesto, y los gestos expresan los deseos y las emociones. Las emociones surgen de la oscuridad del inconsciente, de los rincones del psíquico, de manera que unidos en un modelo tiempo e historia, industria, publicidad y política vibran en tensión con las imágenes. En estos debates del PPGCOM-USP hemos leído estas imágenes, asumiendo que el espacio de lo sensible es en la posmodernidad la expresión de la historia de la cultura, vinculada a un proyecto más extenso de *Kulturwissenschaft*. M

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Paths and exchanges in communication research: A Luso-Brazilian trajectory

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ABSTRACT
In this text I try to outline and analyze about 30 years of a personal research trajectory, based on geographic, political and social contexts in the Portuguese-speaking world and in the Communication Sciences field. The path was made up of personal, professional and institutional encounters and disagreements, where the School of Communications and Arts and the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences at the University of São Paulo acquired great centrality. Many of the references are memories guided by temporal milestones and, as such, present, from the outset, a reconfiguration of the real, where the bias of time, spatiality and generational nostalgia take on significant relevance. Written as an essay, the text adopts a chronological order in the exposition to explain many of the thematic, theoretical-conceptual and methodological options undertaken over these three decades of research.
Keywords: Communication sciences, research, methodologies, media analysis, Portuguese speaking world

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RESUMO
Neste texto, procuro traçar e analisar cerca de 30 anos de uma trajetória pessoal de pesquisa, balizada por contextos geográficos, políticos e sociais no espaço da lusofonia e no âmbito das Ciências da Comunicação. O caminho fez-se de encontros e desencontros pessoais, profissionais e institucionais, onde a Escola de Comunicações e Artes e o Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação da Universidade de São Paulo adquiriram grande centralidade. Muitas das referências são memórias pautadas por marcos temporais e, como tal, apresentam, à partida, uma reconfiguração do real, onde o viés do tempo, da espacialidade e da nostalgia geracional adquirem relevância significante. O texto configura-se como um ensaio e adota-se uma ordem cronológica na exposição, com vista a explicitar muitas das opções temáticas, teórico-conceituais e metodológicas, que foram tomadas ao longo destas três décadas de pesquisa.
Palavras-chave: Ciências da comunicação, pesquisa, metodologias, análise dos media, espaço da lusofonia

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I N THE BEGINNING IT WAS the determination to do a graduate course at the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo (ECA- USP). It was the early 1980s, Portugal still did not offer training in this area and the opportunity to go to São Paulo arose after a stay in Brazil. ECA-USP became an immediate objective due to its international credentials and its trans and multidisciplinary proposal in the field of Communication and Information. In the early 1980s, aged around 30, I had completed a five-year degree in History at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Lisbon – completed in 1974 – and a specialization course in Librarianship/Archivalry, held between 1976 and 1977 in Coimbra. Meanwhile, I accumulated experiences as a librarian at the National Library of Portugal, in Lisbon, from 1973 to 1977, as a cooperating professor in Angola, Luanda, in 1975/1976, and in the newly independent Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, from 1977 to 1979.

Supported by Brazilian friends, many of them ex-exiles from the dictatorship that I met in different places after the Revolution of April 25, 1974 and who were returning to Brazil after the enactment of the Amnesty Law – Law no. 6.683/1979 –, I applied for the graduate school at ECA. In the following years, I completed my master's degree in 1984 and my PhD in 1988, the latter in the specialty of Librarianship and Information Sciences, and then I began to teach and participate in research groups (1984-1990).

Recollecting this period, I observe how important the graduate curricular years at ECA were, both for the master's and PhD degrees. First, I emphasize the theoretical and conceptual diversity expressed in the seminars offered and in the dynamics given by the professors, including visitors from different nationalities and theoretical schools that taught them. Then, I notice how exciting it was to attend seminars at other faculties, such as the Faculdade de Psicologia, Letras e Ciências Humanas (FFLCH-USP), an opportunity that expanded my horizons in relation to Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, Literature and Comparative History and allowed me to be in touch with professors with different academic worldviews, theoretical and methodological understandings, in which the Marxist and structuralist matrix prevailed. Added to this substantive academic path were the experiences arising from living together and sharing ideas with colleagues from all Brazilian states and Latin American countries, with multiple readings and backgrounds that constituted a network of professional and intellectual companionship throughout more than 30 years.

Having taken a degree in History at the Faculty of Letters of Lisbon, during the period of the Salazar dictatorship, between 1969 and 1974, joining

the graduate course at ECA presented me with a range of knowledge and forbidden readings at the time in Portugal, namely by Marxist, structuralist and functionalist authors in the Social Sciences. I emphasize as profoundly impactful the readings of authors of the Frankfurt School, such as Adorno, Benjamin and Horkheimer, as well as the writings of Roland Barthes, Bakhtin, Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, Bourdieu and Umberto Eco, which constituted the theoretical foundations of an academic and research journey. These authors are joined by the Brazilians Raymundo Faoro, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Florestan Fernandes, Celso Furtado, Milton Santos and Antonio Candido, whose readings were mandatory in graduate courses and contributed to deepen knowledge about Brazil, then limited to to the teachings and worldviews acquired in the degree in History in Portugal. The acquisition of this knowledge was always associated with heated and dynamic discussions in classrooms and in informal meetings with colleagues and teachers, against the background of the end of the Brazilian dictatorship, the Diretas Já movement (1983-1984) and the process of democratic affirmation in Brazil.

The intellectual freedom that I experienced in the seminars, in the proposed readings and in the final works allowed me to approach and adopt innovative themes and methodologies, trained my look towards discipline and observation of phenomena and instilled in me doubt and methodical criticism, characteristics that I tried to deepen in the research that I have been developing throughout my professional life. In an academic environment in which the support for the interdisciplinarity of the works was explicit, it was possible to combine, in the master's dissertation and doctoral thesis, the initial training in History with the interest in the history of Africa, with the knowledge acquired in the graduate course – especially of discourse analysis and sociology of language – and the experiences lived in two newly independent countries: Angola and São Tomé e Príncipe.

Also dating from the 1980s are some collaborations that I carried out in the ECA graduate course as a professor, of which I highlight the seminar dedicated to deepening the knowledge of graduate students about Africa and the African legacy in Brazil. As a professor at the Department of Librarianship and Documentation, after my doctorate, I collaborated in the Documentary Analysis seminars inspired by the French archaeologist and philosopher Jean Claude Gardin, which constituted an added teaching learning experience and a stimulus to the deepening of discourse analysis and sociolinguistics. This path influenced the acquisition of skills in computer data processing, reinforced by carrying out a post-doctorate at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), in Paris, between 1990 and 1991.

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RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE SPACES

Personal issues brought me back to Portugal. The one-year stay at the CNRS, where I had contact with professors involved in projects centered on History and Archeology that used content analysis methodologies assisted by specific software, definitely influenced my decision to pursue the field of Communication.

In Portugal, it was the early 1990s and people were starting to talk about Communication Sciences, sometimes simultaneously and in an ambiguous overlap with Journalism. Academic training offers were restricted to a few universities and departments and few professors had specific training in the field (Mesquita & Ponte, 1997; Rodrigues, 2002).

Dating back to that period, and in cooperation with colleagues at ECA and the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences at USP (PPGCOM USP) – namely with Marques de Melo, Immacolata Vassalo de Lopes and Margarida Kunch –, the movements in which I participated, with a view to organizing the association of researchers in Communication Sciences. Thus, the first meeting, with a view to founding the Portuguese Society of Communication Sciences (SOPCOM), took place at the Universidade Lusófona de Humanidades e Tecnologias, in 1997, followed by other meetings to organize associations that grouped Portuguese-speaking countries (LUSOCOM) and Ibero-American countries (IBERCOM). In the country, the media landscape had changed substantially at the beginning of the decade with the privatization of the media and the emergence of private television groups (Pinto et al., 2000). the nationalizations of newspapers and radios were left behind, as well as the governmentalization of public television, situations that characterized the post-Revolution period of April 25, 1974. These changes, following Portugal's entry into the European Union in 1986, constituted a challenge both for teaching and research in Communication and Journalism, because the Salazar dictatorship (1933-1974) did not allow academic training in these areas (Correia, 1999).

I joined the Catholic University of Lisbon in 1992 as a professor, when the Faculty of Human Sciences and the degree in Social and Cultural Communication were created. At the institution, I had the privilege of starting an original academic project that required the deepening of new theoretical and methodological skills in the field of Communication and Social Sciences, in which the research components and student involvement were innovative and determining factors. In this scenario, and stimulated by the lived context, I coordinated the presentation, to European instances, of projects that aimed to apprehend how the Portuguese media, specifically national newspapers, addressed the phenomenon of immigration in Portugal. The objective, at the time, was to create databases on journalistic coverage of migrations, adopting a matrix common

to all European research institutions participating in the project and using content analysis methodologies (quantitative) – based on discourse analysis (qualitative) – which came to shape a field of research called Media Analysis. The experience of the ECA graduate seminars inspired not only the coordination of activities carried out together with master's and doctoral students, but also the works that gave rise to the Media and Migrations line of research.

A phase of economic growth was underway in Portugal, provided by the country's accession to the European Union, with major public works importing labor, such as the Vasco da Gama bridge over the Tagus River, Parque das Nações and the national highways (Viegas & Costa, 1998). Among the migrants who arrived, Brazilians stand out who, together with citizens from countries of the former USSR, and from African countries where Portuguese is the official language, found work, preferably in public works and services.

The developed academic studies, mostly exploratory, aimed to analyze the images/representations of these migrants, in newspapers and on television, by recording the characterization of these actors: attributes conferred, most frequent framings or geographic areas of location (Cunha et al., 1996)[1]. At the same time, these works sought to understand how the routines of communication professionals, journalists and anchors consolidated and renewed certain colonial stereotypes, creating hierarchies, defining profiles and associating attributes with the different national origins of migrants. These empirical works initially intended to obtain results to provide them to funding agencies, which, in turn, used them in their public policies. Subsequently, these researches stimulated and demanded from researchers the acquisition of a growing methodological/ theoretical/conceptual apparatus, capable of framing into their interpretation.

Thus, these researches led to the recovery and deepening of the French sociolinguistic bibliography of such authors as Bronckart and Charaudeau, as well as theoretical and conceptual elements, of critical tendencies, in terms of discourse analysis – Chomsky, Van Dijk and Fairclough. The methodological path that combined quantitative and qualitative methods and acquired new contours, depending on the observed phenomena and contexts, was called Media Analysis. Based on this methodological proposal, Media Analysis has evolved into an area of investigation that presupposes prior mastery of a set of knowledge relating both to the functioning of the media and, evidently, to information and communication technologies and to the themes involved in research objects.

Apprehending the complexity of the representations and images conveyed by the media, mainly television, led to the extension of the understanding of those concepts in other disciplines. The forays into Moscovici's theory of representation and, equally, into symbolic interactionism are highlighted, in which

[1] https://aps.pt/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/DPR492ad0fbef4a4_1.pdf.

Goffman's framing proposals and the discussions on the construction of reality by Berger and Luckman stand out. On the other hand, and under the influence of studies on media and journalism, namely of Anglo-Saxon origin, in a consolidation phase in Portugal by the hand of Nelson Traquina (1993), authors such as Denis McQuail, Gaye Tuchman, Gurevitch and Blumler, Horace Newcomb and Michael Schudson were resorted to in order to analyze the impact of the media, especially television, on Portuguese society.

Simultaneously, taking into account the need to explain complex contexts in which communication phenomena acquire multiple nuances, theories and concepts arising from Cultural Studies were examined, not only Anglo-Saxon ones, with Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall, but also Latin Americans, with the introduction of readings by Canclini and Martín-Barbero (Ferin, 2002).

At first, the diversity of theoretical and conceptual currents that emerged made it difficult to assume a single interpretative theoretical line. Sometimes, in this journey of discovery, the analogy of "going to the supermarket of ideas" arose, a situation that was configured as follows: depending on each study's objectives, the characteristics of each phenomenon and their possible interpretations, the theory or concept that could best clarify it was selected, regardless of theoretical and conceptual orthodoxy. In this way, an attempt was made to fit it into the research objectives. On the basis of support for this attitude, in the face of knowledge and research, authors who focused on the epistemology of knowledge, such as Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend and Boaventura de Sousa Santos converged. Kuhn based a set of procedures that were articulated around the principle of discovery context, paradigm and paradigm crisis; Feyerabend inspired the conviction that objects determine methodologies and methods and that knowledge advances sustained by methodical curiosity; Santos made it clear that knowledge must be socially shared and become a vector of citizenship and social well-being.

The journey undertaken resulted, simultaneously, in a considerable capacity for interpretation in the light of different theoretical scenarios and in criticism from peers fearful not only of a dismantling of theoretical purity, but also of the establishment of a theoretical and conceptual anarchy that would break the commitment to a dominant interpretive line. The multidisciplinary approach has contributed to the studies and research of communication and journalism in Portugal to diversify the primordial philosophical and linguistic matrix, as well as to consolidate the empirical studies in parallel with the existing essay tradition.

Empirical studies on the media and migrations immediately intersected with two other themes: television images of discrimination against Brazilian women and the role of Brazilian *telenovelas* in Portugal. It is observed that, since the end

of the 1970s, more precisely since 1977, with the exhibition on RTP1 – Portuguese public television channel – of the telenovela *Gabriela*, from *TV Globo* , Brazilian *telenovelas* maintained a constant and dominant presence in the television schedules until the beginning of the millennium (Cunha, 2011). The impact of this pheno-menon on Portuguese society, much undervalued by Portuguese academic studies, proved to be decisive when Brazilian immigrants arrived in Portugal during the 1990s. At that time, without field reception studies on Brazilian *telenovelas*, the indicators available in Portugal were limited to *share* and *rating indices* or journalistic chronicles. While the former expressed the Portuguese population's adherence to the telenovela product, the journalistic chronicles tended, with rare exceptions, to call out against the pernicious influence of *telenovelas* on spoken Portuguese and on the acquisition of strange uses and customs. Some commentators even spoke of symbolic post-colonial Brazilian revenge.

Being a phenomenon without many academic studies – specifically, there were two published studies (Moreira, 1980; Viegas, 1987) –, the theme attracted Portuguese and Brazilian masters and doctoral students to Portugal, a moment in which institutional support was obtained, and allowed a closer collaboration with ECA and Núcleo de Pesquisa de Telenovela (NPTN) and their investigators. I emphasize, in this collaboration that extended to the Centro de Estudos de Telenovela (CETVN), to Obitel Internacional and to the participation in seminars of the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences (PPGCOM) of ECA, the dynamic interaction between colleagues, such as Anamaria Fadul, Maria Aparecida Baccega, Immacolata Vassalo de Lopes, Maria Lourdes Motter and Solange Couceiro. I also note the influence that the publication, in 2002, of the research *Vivendo com a telenovela: mediações, recepção e teleficcionalidade* (Lopes et al., 2002) had on reception studies in Portugal, which gave rise to dissertations and theses and a line of research consolidated at the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), the Portuguese research funding agency.

The originality and interdisciplinarity of the Brazilian colleagues' approach to the telenovelas theme constituted the theoretical basis of the research work that I coordinated and boosted the theoretical and empirical expansion as a function of the Portuguese social and academic context, guided by the insertion in European research networks, with relevance to the Anglo-Saxon matrix. Two study pers-pectives emerged as a result of empirical work: one aimed at deepening television fiction and *telenovelas* in Western societies and another aimed at discussing identity issues in the contents and reception of television fiction.

The first perspective led to studies centered, preferably, on fictional products, their production characteristics, evaluation of *shares* and *ratings* and quality of scripts. Examples of these works are the collaborations, in partnership with Obitel

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Internacial, which required the formation of a national team and constituted a challenge to the multidisciplinary and inter-university organization, training a new generation of researchers able to participate in cooperative and comparative research. The second line of studies led to the exploration of the contents and their comparison with perceptions at the moment of reception, focusing on the audiences' identity issues. A line of research that gave rise, for example, to studies on Brazilian immigrant women and simultaneously colonial, feminist and gender issues. This last route resulted in different projects financed by Portuguese national agencies[2], as well as a seminar offered at USP's PPGCOM, in 2006 and 2007, on identity and recognition in the media.

In both paths, inspiration can be seen from classic authors of the 1980s on serial fiction and its reception, such as Brunsdon, Ang, Cantor, Cassata, Morley, Modleski and López Pumarejo, but also from others of the 1990s, such as Geraghty, Gripsrud, Kilborn, Mattelart, Livingstone, Liebs and Katz. Other reading objects are authors who point to globalized scenarios of mediation and reception, in a first reflection on the role of the media and information and communication technologies in a globalized world, for example, Benedict Anderson, Arjun Appadurai, Chris Barker, Katherine Woodward, Alain Touraine and Joseph Straubhaar.

In this context, the tried-and-true methodologies are guided either by principles developed in the works of the NPTN, CETVN or Obitel and in Brazilian manuals on Communication research, or in proposals presented in specialized Communication research manuals, such as *Researching communication* (Deacon et al., 1999).

CHALLENGES IN VOLATILE RESEARCH CONTEXTS

The beginning of the millennium coincided with a new challenge in the degree in Journalism and Communication, at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Coimbra. This degree, preferably devoted to journalism, which had the journalist and professor Mário Mesquita (2003) as one of its promoters, demanded a greater concentration in journalism studies and directed research and projects towards this communication field. Without completely abandoning previous research topics, which initially sought to accommodate new themes, it became clear that it was necessary to redefine priorities. Thus, and gradually, I moved away from the fiction and migration themes and concentrated on projects in the areas of Journalism and Communication and Politics.

[2] For example, the FCT Project *A televisão e imagens da diferença*, carried out between 2002 and 2005. More information is available at: http://cicdigitalpolo.fcsh.unl.pt/pt/televisao-as-imagens-da-diferenca/. It is fair to name the researchers who followed this path, integrated in projects or in training, such as Teresa Líbano Monteiro, Verónica Policarpo, Catarina Burnay, Catarina Valdigem, Josefina Tranquilim da Silva, Fernanda Castilho Santana and Ana Paula Guedes.

I underline that the common thread of these works was media analysis, which, along the route described above, absorbed both the theoretical frameworks of social theories and experimental quantitative and qualitative methodologies, namely those present in cultural studies research, in which the question of perception and emotion acquire value as analysis indicators (Pickering, 2008; Ragin, 1994). Due to the breadth and complexity of the objects to be researched, media analysis expanded the theoretical frameworks, linking to the historical, social and technological circumstances of the analyzed phenomena. It is a theoretical/empirical exercise that resorts to mixed methodologies in order to dissect phenomena present in the media, assuming that the choice of the research object and the type of research to be carried out will determine the choices of models, methods and instruments (Cunha & Peixinho, 2020). I underline that media analysis has, throughout this academic path, acquired a dimension that aimed to contribute not only to the design of public policies on certain phenomena, but also to the civic and citizenship education that accompanies media literacy.

With that perspective, projects were developed that aimed to analyze the journalistic coverage, in the press and on television, of political events in Portugal, such as the elections for the different sovereign bodies. In a media ecosystem in which the transformations caused by accelerated technological and economic change were reflected, with the emergence of new media operators and the interference of foreign capital, these analyses aimed to understand the role of the media, especially television, through the news conveyed in television newspapers, in the construction of images of politicians and politics (Cunha, 2007)[3]. The results reinforced the theories that pointed to the media as political actors, as well as demonstrating: the tendency of the media to favor *fait-divers* to the detriment of substance; the fascination of information formatted in entertainment; the confusion between popular language, the simplification of the sound/image byte; the attractiveness of an ideology critical of democratic institutions and the role of the State in liberal societies.

In these projects, there was always the collaboration of Brazilian researchers from various institutions and states, with emphasis on the partnerships established with the coordination, through Cristina Costa, of the Miroel Silveira Archive, later designated Communication and Censorship Research Nucleus, which involved PPGCOM-USP.

It can be seen that the 2010-2012 period was particularly demanding in terms of funding for research in Portugal, following the bankruptcy and rescue in 2011, caused by the fall of Lehman Brothers in 2008 and the public

[3] The book *Jornalismo e democracia* is derived from the *Jornalismo e Atos de Democracia* project, which can be accessed at: https://bit.ly/3twRoVT. Estrela Serrano, Rita Figueiras and Vanda Calado participated in this project. Brazilian researchers Antonio Albino Canelas Rubim and Leandro Colling were invited to jointly publish.

debt crisis of Eurozone. European and national political circumstances and options generated a period of austerity – which has not been reversed to this day – in its multiple economic, social and political impacts. The consequences of this option for capital, to the detriment of citizens, in resolving the subprime crisis in Europe, led to the emergence of a wave of populist and extremist governments on the continent, accentuating anti-democratic tendencies in most of these countries and jeopardizing the independence of institutions and freedom of expression (Aalberg et al., 2016).

The Portuguese situation, unfavorable to research funding, did not prevent the continuation of partnerships, boosted by previous projects involving researchers and institutions, such as the one developed between 2018 and 2019 and entitled *Freedom of expression and of the press: a comparative analysis of election processes in Portugal and Brazil*[4]. Joint events were organized, some of them for the first time by videoconference, involving Portuguese researchers from the then Center for Research in Media and Journalism (CIMJ), headed by Nelson Traquina, now the Center for Research in Communication at Universidade Nova (Icnova), and ECA – Miroel Silveira Archive and PPGCOM. The events that took place at the two institutions privileged the different faces of censorship, from a historical-political perspective associated with the Portuguese and Brazilian dictatorships, but also explored the growth of new forms of censorship associated with threats to democracy, globalization processes, traditional media, and information and communication technologies (Costa, 2014).

The focus on the globalization process and the threats to democracy in Europe – against the background of the growing dominance of information and communication technologies and the installation of surveillance capitalism – led to the deepening of studies on this theme. The trauma of the European public debt crisis and the adoption of measures centered on capital, to the detriment of citizens, opened new research focuses on communication and politics and on the media's role in the mediatized public space. In parallel, the dissemination of global indicators, presented by international institutions, which monitor the quality of democracy, its institutions and freedom of expression, confirming the decline of democracies in the face of autocracies and underlining, in this process, the role of social networks and the impact of information pathologies on the public space has aroused growing interest in the subject. Under discussion was – and still is – the process of transforming the concept of democracy, focused on citizens into another conception of democracy, centered on the interests of the globalized market. This is a change that tends to transform democracy into a set of rules – or necessary procedures – for the legitimation of governments that manage national public interests in favor of the great globalized economic and

financial interests. In this context, democracy works as a method for forming governments and managing interests, not offering ideological connotations in its practices, but rather making itself available as a utilitarian tool of the political, economic and financial system (Cunha, 2015).

In the aftermath of the Eurozone debt crisis (2014-2017), the project *Political corruption in the media, a comparative perspective,* was in progress[5], which aimed to compare media, political and social systems in three countries that have Portuguese as their official language. The participation and cooperation of researchers from very different contexts and scenarios made it possible to compare electoral political phenomena and governance practices, as well as to assess and confront theories and concepts, such as those associated with the conception of democracy and the understanding of the corruption phenomenon. The work involved theoretical procedures, such as: sharing bibliography, with a view to explaining concepts and theoretical frameworks; the design of the objective contexts of each geographic space and the interpretative contexts inherent to each research group; the discussion of potential methodological approaches, with the aim of adopting common procedures; the identification of comparative categories, having as a criterion the recognition of comparable components, their compatibility, with the purpose of identifying functional equivalents and justifying possible adaptations.

The results obtained, along this path, pointed to the identification of patterns common to the three participating countries, for example, the visibility achieved by political actors in the corruption phenomena, the opacity of corruptors, be they natural individuals, institutions or organized interests, and the constant discrediting of democratic institutions, even when the prevaricators are private. The project's execution also demonstrated the difficulty of comparing the corruption phenomenon in three geographic spaces with disparate political, historical and social paths, to which colonial and post-colonial replicas were added, determining that the understanding of the concept tends to acquire differentiated conceptions and a distinct civic gravity.

The developments of this project were multiple and occurred not only during the execution, but also after it was finished. Within the scope of the collaboration with ECA's Communication and Censorship Research Center and with the Nova Communication Institute (ICNOVA), national and international trends associated with threats to democracy were discussed, as well as the growing signs of a destabilization of the international order implemented by the United States, interpreted as imposed by the West at the end of World War II. If indicators on de-democratization can be universally measured, based on indicators such as those released by Freedom House[6], it is more difficult to

[5] More information about the project is available at https://bit.ly/3g8T84r. The following participated in this project: Estrela Serrano, Ana Cabrera, Rita Figueiras, João Figueiras, Bruno Araújo, Nuno Coimbra Mesquita, Fernando Felgueiras and Álvaro Moisés.

[6] Check out https://freedomhouse.org.

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discuss what is at stake, who are the actors, what are their interests and what future the ongoing process of deglobalization and dewesternization promises (Costa & Blanco, 2019).

It is emphasized that globalization is based on the development of information and communication technologies at the speed conferred by these devices to financial and commercial exchanges and the expansion of a symbolic imaginary of global consumption that was appropriated according to places, regions, continents and cultures. However, while the expansion of globalization in the last century was mainly associated with the written press, the radio, the telegraph and the multiple screens of content produced by film and television companies, deglobalization and the dewesternization process are, imminently, linked to social networks, the commercialization of big data and what is called digital capitalism (Meier, 2019) and/or surveillance (Zuboff, 2019).

At this moment, the route outlined in this text undergoes a theoretical and methodological inflection once again, which starts to focus on the fragmentation phenomena in the Western world, on the polarization of democratic regimes – with the rise of populism and authoritarianism – and on the threats of misinformation, produced industrially and used as weapons. Added to all these elements of change and destabilization is the global blackout caused by the covid-19 pandemic and the start of a war in the heart of Europe.

"IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD THERE WAS A STONE… "

The covid-19 pandemic, which broke out at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China, and spread across the world, has tended to follow the path of globalization. Authors consider that the coronavirus acquired a transmission pattern, called 3C, that expanded, preferably, based on populated places, proximity contacts and confined and closed spaces (Fujita & Hamaguchi, 2020). This pattern had a transversal impact on large urban and industrial areas, but was mainly supported by populations that often live under unhealthy housing conditions, have precarious and low-paid jobs and little access to health care and social protection. The pandemic also demonstrated the weaknesses of globalization, exposing dependence, mainly on the West, on global value chains and Asian suppliers, namely China. At the same time, covid-19 reinforced the power of Big Tech, with the refuge of the working world in a teleworking regime and the use of social networks as an advised and safe form of interpersonal and social communication.

The context of globalization, as it was experienced until 2019 from both the Western and Eastern perspectives, began to be reinterpreted through

the accentuation of cleavages between geostrategic blocs, indicators that had already been observed since the beginning of the millennium (Stiglitz, 2020). In February 2022, the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation effected, apparently irreversibly, the reorganization of the globalization space and the reordering of geographic and political blocs of the great powers and their interests (Roubini, 2022).

The polarized international context was announced in many countries with formal democratic regimes by an extremization of the party and political systems, to which the performance/use of social networks is no stranger. Best-known and studied examples are Brexit, which began in 2016 in the United Kingdom, and the elections that led Trump to the presidency of the United States, in 2016, and Bolsonaro to the presidency of Brazil, in 2018. These events, based on the manipulation of algorithms and in the misappropriation of big data – by specialized companies and pirates contracted for these services – tend to become exponentially more complex when their activities extend to infrastructure security, war and the struggle for technological supremacy. The controversy surrounding the Chinese company Huawei, in Europe and the United States, accused of including a data transfer and analysis device in its technology, indicates this change.

However, polarization, associated with populist and neo-Nazi/neo-fascist movements, had already acquired great visibility in the post-crisis of the Eurozone, especially in central and northern Europe. The ideas of those parties underlined certain values as founders of Western society and, based on them, defended nationalist, xenophobic and homophobic attitudes that were translated into programs aimed at limiting individual rights, especially with regard to gender and migration issues, particularly those of Islamic origin. Freedom of the press and expression and the policing of social networks were also a target of these populist parties, which have been gaining significant positions in national and international parliaments.

Polarization and fragmentation are not an exclusively political phenomenon, but affect, in a movement with contrary political characteristics, academic thought and knowledge. In westernized societies, but above all in universities, mainly Anglo-Saxon ones, a set of movements have grown up which, having a democratic and egalitarian foundation, tend to become extreme, deepening fractures in democratic regimes, they are, for example, the woke movements, the so-called *culture wars*, *cancel culture* manifestations, and decisions based on the principle of *political correctness*. This scenario, driven mainly by universities and non-governmental organizations, has fragmented and threatened democracies, diverting attention from autocratic, populist and

neo-fascist threats, imposing agendas that, while important, prevent democratic convergence and the concerted struggle against neoliberalism. At the same time, these positions, by confining production and activism to the intellectual milieu and universities, distancing them from the aspirations of civil society in general, tend to contribute to anti-science wars, to the propagation of bad information and to the incapacity to understand many of the social, political, economic and technological phenomena that underlie the emergence of current populisms and autocracies.

Social and human sciences, which include communication sciences, seem to falter in the face of these challenges, not only in their theoretical and analytical dimension, but also in their methodological perspective. The data, which would support the understanding and interpretation of the phenomena associated with the use and impact of social networks, are often inaccessible to researchers because they are Big Tech's property. On the other hand, the volume and the necessary apparatus for its processing – hardware and software – are beyond the scope of the work of individual researchers and most research centers. It is worth adding that the developments of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, the platforming of life, as well as their mathematical tools, statistics and principles of rationality, constitute unknown fields for most researchers in these knowledge areas.

With these limits, research tends to focus on the foam of the days and the food of the academic industry. Once again, social networks cooperate for this panorama, privileging the conflict, inflating fractured themes, promoting fan clubs and, in thematic bubbles, favoring the demonization of opponents and the destruction of mediations in the public space.

This scenario does not bode well and only postpones the choices that lie ahead as humanity and as individuals. But history is also made of hopes... **M**

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From ethnography to evolution
Da etnografia à evolução

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ABSTRACT
The author reflects on the development of his epistemic approach to the study of communication and culture first by recounting key experiences he had as a boy and young man, especially travel. He traces the trajectory of his empirical study of media, culture, and communication by citing key scholars and literature as well as his experiences as a professional communicator. Professor Lull's doctoral dissertation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, an innovative ethnography of family life with television, set him on the path of qualitative empirical research for much of his early career. He mentions his article "The Social Uses of Television" and his ethnography of the arrival of television in urban China as his major research accomplishments. In the late 1980s, his focus turned to Latin America, where he has given numerous presentations, seminars, and workshops. His collaboration with the Brazilian-American communications professor Eduardo Neiva helped bring about a transition to his most recent work, the introduction of evolutionary communication as a theoretical alternative in the field.
Keywords: Ethnography, structuration, evolution, evolutionary communication

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RESUMO
O autor reflete sobre o desenvolvimento de sua abordagem epistêmica no estudo da comunicação e cultura, primeiramente, por meio de narrativas de experiências-chave que ele teve quando criança e jovem adulto, especialmente viagens. Ele traça a trajetória do seu estudo empírico sobre mídia, cultura e comunicação, citando os principais estudiosos e literatura, bem como suas experiências como comunicador profissional. A tese de doutorado do professor Lull, feita na Universidade de Wisconsin-Madison, uma etnografia inovadora da vida familiar com a televisão, estabeleceu-o no caminho da pesquisa empírica qualitativa por grande parte do seu início de carreira. Ele cita o artigo The social uses of television e sua etnografia sobre a chegada da televisão na China urbana como suas maiores conquistas em pesquisa. No final da década de 1980, seu foco se voltou para a América Latina, onde ele participou de várias palestras, seminários e workshops. Seu trabalho colaborativo com Eduardo Neiva, professor de comunicação brasileiro-estadunidense, contribuiu para a transição do autor para seu mais recente trabalho: a introdução da comunicação evolutiva como uma alternativa teórica para a área.
Palavras-chave: Etnografia, estruturação, evolução, comunicação evolutiva

M Y INTELLECTUAL *HABITUS* and the decisions, choices, values, and subjectivities that shaped my career as a researcher, writer, and professor reflect a personal trajectory that long precedes five years of formal training in graduate school. I am sure that this is true for most of us.

Communication and culture fascinated me many years before my foray into higher education. Although I consider myself to be a social introvert, I have always loved to express myself through available media, beginning with my voice and body—a private/public divide in expressive behavior that is common among introverts. During high school I became a weekend announcer for a small commercial AM radio station in my hometown of Owatonna, Minnesota, USA. I was the stadium announcer in my high school for football games, a member of the school choir, a writer for the school newspaper, and an actor in school plays.

At age 16, my father gave me something that produced lifelong benefits—a passion for foreign travel and a deep appreciation for the complexity of culture. Dad was a map specialist for an American infantry division fighting in France during World War II. He was determined, 15 years later, to return to Europe to trace his footsteps, refresh his friendship with the French families with whom he stayed during the last stages of the war, and explore countries like Holland, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland—which he had never seen. I became his travel partner for a month-long unchaperoned trip across central Europe by rented car. Dad kept a detailed diary of the trip, filled with observations like the following, describing his impressions of Geneva, Switzerland, on July 4, 1960:

> Took an interesting bus tour of the city. Guide spoke English, French, German, and Italian. We made friends here with young English professor and his sister from India.

Unlike most American teenagers even today, especially those who live in the Midwest, I was getting a first-hand experience of multiculturalism. Because of its ethnic diversity and sheer physical beauty, Dad was enamored with Switzerland. As we ate dinner one evening at a hotel restaurant high in the Swiss Alps, Dad said to me: "Look around you, son. We Americans are having French food served by an Italian waiter in Switzerland. The people at the next table are speaking German and that's a Chinese couple over there." I've never forgotten that multicultural setting more than 60 years ago and Dad's sensitive and respectful description of it. Not only did he observe and point out the cultural things that interested him, *he wrote them down*. I certainly did not know it at the time, but my ethnographic imagination was starting to take shape.

Figure 1   Figure 2

After graduating from high school in 1963 with average grades and no imme-
diate interest in going to college, I joined the US Army to become an "information
and broadcast specialist." Following training at the Defense Information School
then located in New Rochelle, New York, I was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia,
to serve as a military journalist and broadcaster. I also worked off-post on the
weekends as a Top 40 deejay for commercial radio stations in Columbus, Georgia.

When I joined the Army, few people (including me) knew about the
growing military presence of the United States in Vietnam. But in August, 1965,
I was dispatched there with the 1st Air Cavalry division as part of President Lyndon
Johnson's buildup of forces in the war zone. For the first six months in Southeast
Asia, I served as a military reporter for *Stars and Stripes*, *Army Times,* and many
metropolitan newspapers stateside. In January, 1966, I transferred from my
post as a journalist in the central highlands to Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City)
to become a staff announcer on Armed Forces Radio-Vietnam. I was on-the-air
during the *Good Morning, Vietnam!* era of the war. My overnight program on
Armed Forces Radio led into the famous "Dawn Buster" show, hosted by Adrian
Cronauer, who was played by Robin Williams in that famous film.

Conscription of young men into military service in the United States was
mandatory from 1948-1973. That requirement gave me an opportunity to work
with several young professional communicators who had been involuntarily
drafted into service. They were journalists, photographers, and broadcasters
in their civilian lives. All were college graduates, and many of them became

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de facto mentors for me. The experience of covering the war on the ground imbued me with great respect for quality journalism. To this day, I would much rather read a detailed, nuanced, well-sourced journalistic account of a legitimate news story or policy issue than pore through most articles that appear in academic journals.

By the time I turned 21 I had toured central Europe with my father and been deployed to Southeast Asia by the Army—two monumental events in my life. I did not really want to go on that long summer trip with Dad at age 16; chasing girls and playing baseball were far more important. And the military deployment was fraught with danger. But those experiences positively shaped the global worldview I would adopt and the person, researcher, writer, and teacher I would become.

I moved to California to attend college when my military tour of Vietnam ended. To finance my undergraduate education at San Jose State University, I worked as an announcer on a commercial FM progressive rock radio station. In addition to my on-air duties at the station, I was asked by its general manager to conduct telephone survey research on the listening habits of radio audiences in California's Bay Area. That experience—asking people what they listened to on the radio and why at a time when telephone surveys were welcomed by most respondents—became a key moment in my professional development. I realized that I thoroughly enjoyed doing audience research—especially asking respondents open-ended questions about their listening habits.

To further develop my interest in audience research, I moved up the Pacific Coast to pursue a Masters' degree in communication at the University of Oregon. My thesis research took the form of a laboratory experiment that measured television audience members' responses to a videotaped stimulus—a segment of a popular TV show. Embedded in the video was a television "counter advertisement. Counter advertisements were a type of public service announcement that encourages people *not* to buy certain products—those with damaging social or environmental effects, for example. Audience responses to the video, including the counter ad, were measured by each viewer using a hand-held device to continuously indicate how much they "like" or "don't like" what they see on the screen. Created by a professor at the university, the devices were a prototype of equipment which would later be used by commercial research companies to assess the favorability of paid advertisements and reactions to pilots for proposed TV shows. The findings and conclusions of that counter advertisement research led to my first academic publication (Lull, 1974).

My coursework at Oregon also introduced me to the social-scientific study of interpersonal and group communication. I began to think about how the

experience of watching television in the 1970s typically took place in a natural interpersonal context—the family home. Yet, despite their extensive overlap in actual behavior, the academic literature on interpersonal communication and mass communication occupied separate domains. Importantly, around the same time, the idea of communication as a process was emerging as an important new perspective that implicitly encouraged the theoretical intermingling of interpersonal and mass communication (Schramm & Roberts, 1971).

I was determined to study how the processes of interpersonal and mass communication interact in the constituent processes of everyday life. That was the potential line of research I hoped to create when I entered the doctoral program in Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a graduate teaching fellow in 1973. Fortunately, the departments of Communication Arts and Mass Communication occupied the same building on the Madison campus, allowing convenient access to scholars, courses, and facilities in both areas.

Pursing a doctoral degree can be a very challenging, drawn-out experience, and not just in terms of difficult coursework, territory-protecting professors, competition with other students, and financial struggles. In the best sense, graduate school can also become a space in which profound intellectual growth takes place. That growth does not always align with the established priorities and requirements of the university. As I wrote in the introduction to a collection of my essays on family television viewing, I had two simultaneous educations in graduate school: one which met the institutional demands and another that I created for myself—which would contribute more directly to my early career as an ethnographer of communication (Lull, 1990).

By the mid-1970s logical positivism and its attendant quantitative research methodologies had reached their peak in the social sciences in the United States, including the latecomer scientific discipline, communication studies. Learning how to use advanced statistics became the core ritual in the rites of passage for graduate students at the major colleges and universities. If you were clever with path analysis, sequential lag analysis, and multiple discriminate analysis, you were considered to be a good student. Other than the historical and literary methodologies assigned to rhetorical analysis, the scientific arm of the communications discipline was driven by quantitative approaches, despite profound limitations on their explanatory potential and the typical slotting of complex human behavior into pre-determined categories.

In part because of my experience as a journalist and media practitioner, I grew increasingly frustrated with the limitations of the impersonal metho-dological trends that dominated communication studies in the United States at the time. I looked instead to other disciplines in which lines of qualitative

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empirical research had been established—especially sociology, psychology, and anthropology.

Most important was UCLA sociologist Harold Garfinkel's *Studies in ethnomethodology* (1967), a major breakthrough that draws philosophically from Edmund Husserl's humanistic phenomenology (Husserl, 1931) and Alfred Schutz's theory of social intersubjectivity (Schutz, 1967). The ethnomethodological approach documents and explains in microscopic detail precisely how social actors (often unconsciously) carry out ("do") routine communications activities—do walking, do talking, or do watching television, for example. The "methods" in ethnomethodology refer to the patterned ways people do things, *not* to a research methodology.

Ethnomethodologies enacted by research subjects in everyday behavior can be identified and analyzed by employing qualitative research methodologies typically aligned with fieldwork undertaken in qualitative sociology and anthropology, including ethnography. But a word of caution: The term "ethnography" often gets thrown around too loosely in communication and cultural studies. "Qualitative empirical research" more appropriately describes small-scale studies.

Inspired by the ethnomethodological movement in sociology and the longstanding ethnographic tradition in anthropology, I designed studies in graduate school to investigate the dynamic interface between interpersonal communication and mass communication. In the early to mid-1970s, even relatively unobtrusive qualitative audience research techniques like focus groups did not exist in the industry or the academy in the United States. Commercial ratings services only produced data on the popularity of television stations and shows. Some national surveys generated large-scale statistical reports which were mainly focused on demographic categories related to viewing patterns.

I wanted to know not just *what* people watch but *how* people construct the totality of their everyday experiences with television (their ethnomethods). I began my quest by posing a simple research question: "How do people choose the programs they watch?" In the mid-1970s, the typical American home had one television set, usually located in the shared "living room" or "family room." Especially at night, television viewing was almost by default a communal experience. There were no computers, internet, smartphones, or social media to compete for family members' leisure time. Cable television had not yet impacted Madison, so only three major TV networks (CBS, NBC, and ABC) and a public television channel were available. Even in homes with multiple TV sets, a "family decision" or "family vote" had been identified in research as the usual means for selecting programs during prime-time viewing hours at night. But how did these decisions or votes take place?

I conducted a pre-arranged, naturalistic experiment with 20 middle-class families in their homes in Madison when all family members could be present. Sitting around the kitchen table together, I gave each family member an index card with a schedule and description of six sets of fictional television programs. I asked them to "go ahead, select the programs your family would watch tonight if these were the available shows." To document how they made their choices, I turned on a high-quality audio cassette recorder placed in the center of the table and left the room.

I used a task-specific Bales-type verbal interaction coding scheme to analyze the comments made by family members. Categories of talk were distilled from transcripts of those conversations according to family position—fathers, mothers, older children, and younger children. Their comparative willingness to express program preferences, the matrices of agreement on program choices among family members, and verbal displays of power and privilege in their conversations were reported and discussed at various academic conferences and later in a journal article (Lull, 1978).

But limitations that cropped up in the naturalistic experiment convinced me that some deeper, more systematic observational research would be required to get a better picture of family life with television. For instance, my arrival at subjects' residences to conduct the experiment sometimes interrupted the normal television viewing that was already in progress. More upsetting was the spontaneous behavior of many family members at the conclusion of the *in situ* program-choosing experiment. In several cases, the negotiation of real choices for actual television viewing began even before I left the home. In some cases, that authentic behavior took place while I debriefed other family members about the nature of the research and its scholarly implications.

I was encouraged by witnessing that, after I came into the homes of people completely unknown to me (other than the written invitation to participate in the study and confirmation by telephone), normal television viewing behavior often resumed with me still present in the living space, sometimes in the same room. People seemed to be perfectly comfortable negotiating choices and watching television for real in the presence of a person they had just met. I decided to take a leap in my research on families and television; I would conduct an immersive ethnography of audience behavior in people's homes (Lull, 1976).

No faculty member in the Department of Communication Arts at Wisconsin-Madison had any experience doing or supervising ethnographic research. In fact, no one in the entire field of communication had that experience at the time. But Edwin Black—a leading American scholar of rhetoric, chairman of the department, and editor of *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*—heartily agreed to advise my thesis research.

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Black had written the groundbreaking volume, *Rhetorical criticism: A study in method*, a decade earlier (Black, 1965). In that book, Professor Black broke with the dominant canon of neo-Aristotelian rhetorical criticism centered on textual analysis, logic, and persuasion to promote a much broader perspective he called the "rhetorical transaction." Black believed that the critical reading of a text—whether spoken rhetoric, writing, media content, or ethnographic detail—should be a reflective transaction that flows between author and subject. The broad (often political and historical) context and participants' motives in any communications event ought to be considered much more than traditional rhetorical methods allow. Further, the voice of the rhetorical critic should not be dismissed or disguised but carefully invested in the overall work as style—explicit, prominent, and artful.

Figure 3
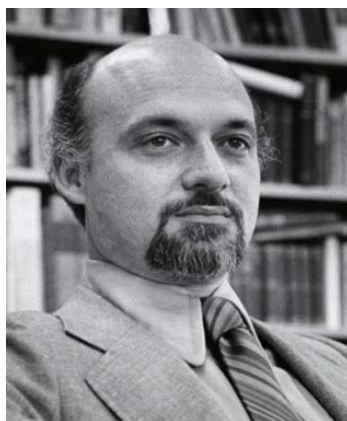
Edwin Black disrupted the revered traditions of rhetorical criticism by proposing an alternative methodology to the array of standard topics in the discipline and advocating an expanded range of relevant material to be analyzed. This move was especially timely because public communication was becoming increasingly mediated by technology in the 1970s. Professor Black taught an innovative course at Wisconsin in television criticism, for instance. He welcomed the opportunity to become the first American scholar in communication studies—a rhetorical scholar at that, not a social scientist—to direct an ethnographic thesis. The critical components of ethnographic analysis would be fundamental and familiar to Edwin Black —text (behavior), context (setting), and authors' voices. I have Edwin Black to thank not only for the guidance and careful reading he provided during the research and writing of my thesis but for encouraging a fierce independence

of mind that can be so lacking in academia. Ed Black remains one of my best imagined critics to this day, a constant presence looking over my shoulder to see what I am writing as I compose any article or essay—including this one!

The foundational article in my empirical research program that followed is "The Social Uses of Television," originally published in the ICA journal *Human Communication Research* (Lull, 1980). The ethnographic data that were interpreted and organized into the social uses typology draws from my dissertation research and follow-up in-home studies I conducted with my advanced students at the University of California in Santa Barbara. It was becoming clear that people strategically employ three dimensions of their television viewing experience as a structural and relational social resource: the physical form of the medium, its program elements, and contexts for viewing—not only the moments when they would watch television and not just at home. Recently, I compared the social uses of television and the internet across the same three factors—form, content, and context (Lull, 2021).

The 1980s proved to be an exciting period for qualitative media audience research, broadly considered. Seminal research projects and theoretical essays falling under the umbrella of "cultural studies" and "reception studies" were being published and noticed. The work of Dave Morley, Ien Ang, John Fiske, and Janice Radway are prominent examples. Tom Lindlof put together a collection of studies and essays in a volume titled *Natural Audiences* (Lindlof, 1987). At the end of the decade, Nick Jankowski and Klaus Bruhn Jensen (1991) published a useful volume focused on qualitative methodology for mass communication research.

Two other developments in the 1980s were crucial to the directions I have taken as a communications scholar. In 1982, I taught media courses in a "study abroad" program called Semester at Sea, affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh. More than 500 college students, faculty members, and crew departed Seattle, Washington on a cruise ship bound for Kobe, Japan. That was the first leg of a four-month journey that circled the globe. Hong Kong was one of the ports of call. From there, I led a contingent of students into the Peoples' Republic of China, stopping first in Guangzhou and then proceeding by air to Beijing.

Deng Xiaoping had ascended to the top of the communist government four years before. I was blown away by that cultural experience and became determined to return to China. Getting television sets into every urban home was a key feature of Deng's modernization plan. To research that transformation, I made three subsequent data-gathering trips to China—1984, 1986, and, by invitation from the People's University in Beijing a few months after the student-worker uprising, in October, 1989. The product of this research is an ethnography of the role of television in urban Chinese society based on in-depth interviews with

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audience members in four major cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Xian, and Guangzhou), interviews with TV producers and programmers, and textual analysis of key television programs (Lull, 1991). An abridged Portuguese translation of the book was published by Rio Fundo Editora in Brazil (Lull, 1992a).

The initial product of my research on China was an article which appeared in a collection of data-rich qualitative audience studies titled *World Families Watch Television* (Lull, 1988b). Researchers from six countries describe how families in England, Germany, Venezuela, India, the United States, and China interact with television and each other.

Leoncio Barrios was one of the contributors to that edited volume. A professor in the School of Communication at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas, Professor Barrios had asked me to read his doctoral thesis at Columbia University, which was based in part on my *Social uses of television* article. While *World families watch television* was in press, Barrios invited me to give a short course in qualitative social research to professors and graduate students at his university in Venezuela. After attending my seminar, two professors then asked me to present a paper at the Inter-American Congress of the American Psychological Association, which met in Buenos Aires in 1989. Again, one thing led to another—this time it was a trip to neighboring Brazil immediately after the conference in Argentina. Professor William Gomes of the Institute of Psychology at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul in Porto Alegre asked me to speak to his colleagues.

The trip to South America was crucial in shaping the middle part of my career. I had just finished my near decade-long work in and out of China but I had been fascinated for years with Latin America too. The trip to Argentina and Brazil gave me extra incentive to continue collaborating with colleagues there. Until then, my experience in Latin America was limited to a trip I took with a friend from Acapulco, Mexico to San Jose, Costa Rica by bus following the 1980 International Communication Association conference. It was exciting, to say the least, to be an American navigating across El Salvador and Nicaragua in the early days of the Sandinista Revolution. Neither my travel partner nor I spoke Spanish. After returning to California, I was determined to learn to speak Spanish sufficiently well to travel and work in Latin America and Spain. I enrolled in Spanish 1A at Cabrillo College, near Santa Cruz, California, while I resumed my teaching at San Jose State University. I kept working on Spanish as time would allow.

The trajectory of my work beginning around the same time was greatly influenced by two key figures. When visiting Rio de Janeiro after making the presentation in Porto Alegre in 1989, I met the chairman of the Social

Communication department at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro, Professor Eduardo Neiva. From the start, Eduardo Neiva and I shared great interests in questions of culture and communication, especially concerning their evolutionary roots. His university invited me to join them for a residence as a Fulbright scholar in 1992.

A year later, I also had the great fortune to meet the Mexican communications scholar Guillermo Orozco Gomez at the ICA convention in Dublin, Ireland. That connection led to my first opportunity to make a (very nervous) presentation in Spanish to a group of Guillermo's graduate students in Mexico City. From that moment until now, my academic trajectory has been greatly influenced by my experiences working throughout Latin America and the many colleagues I have been privileged to know.

So far, I have emphasized how many important people and places have influenced my academic career. The "subject-object relationships" reflected in my work, stemming from my particular "epistemic approach," cannot be separated from those people and places. But let me turn now to some of the key authors and theories which have been integrated into the body of my research and writing.

I have titled this piece *From ethnography to evolution*. Earlier, I described how the travels, academic literature, and experiences I had doing empirical work drew from and contributed to the ethnographic perspective I was developing on human communication. The qualitative studies I conducted and the lectures and seminars I gave were all explicitly influenced by the political, social, and cultural settings and movements where and when the work was done. For instance, the book about China concerned the effects television had in a unique political-cultural context. But all my research projects and writings centered on media, communication, and culture all describe communication processes that take place in a wide variety of specific cultural contexts.

My journalistic experience imbued me with great respect for reporting and interpreting verifiable facts. That put me at odds to varying degrees with much cultural studies research being conducted at the same time my own qualitative work was being published. I never identified myself as a "cultural studies researcher" but, for very different reasons, I was not a typical American "social scientist" either.

As my career progressed, I found myself in many ways more intellectually and culturally comfortable with my colleagues in Latin America than I do with many Northerners—but I have never found a completely agreeable resting place. Epistemological discord occupied both hemispheres around the turn of last century: much American social scientific research was empirically narrow and not sufficiently informed by theory, certainly not critical theory. The clear emphasis

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on the American side was on quantitative methodology and big, well-funded, conventional research programs. In the Latin world, emphasis concentrated on theory, mainly on its Marxist variants. For my taste, insufficient empirical research was being conducted in communications in Latin America and Marxist theory was far too deterministic and pessimistic. My own ethnographic work revealed that audiences, and everyday social actors in general, are far more creative and resourceful than typically acknowledged. Moreover, most critical theory—in mainstream Latin America and in the political-economic critique emanating mainly from Europe and the United States—was driven more by political motives than empirical data.

These are among the reasons I was motivated to give short courses and workshops in qualitative empirical research methods and theory development at many universities in Latin America. This is where my connection with USP developed. At the kind invitation of Professor Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, I gave a short course titled "Cultural Studies, Ethnography, and Media Reception" in August of 2000 for faculty and students in the School of Communication Sciences and Arts.

But eight years prior to that while in residence in Rio de Janeiro as a Fulbright scholar, I gave two presentations at Intercom in São Paulo. One of those papers, *Estructuración de las audiences masivas*, represented a theoretical position I advocated that applies the principles of Anthony Giddens' (1984) structuration theory to the study of media audiences (Lull, 1992b). Essentially, structuration theory integrates macrosocial conditions (reflecting the constraints of structure) with everyday microsocial processes (where agency takes form). Structuration theory proved to be particularly useful because it explains how structure and agency should not be thought of as entirely opposing forces. Too much emphasis on structure exaggerates constraint, making it seem that established social institutions and rules somehow determine people's realities in an airtight fashion. But too much attention to agency grants unwarranted power to individuals and underestimates how dominant forces influence individuals and societies, often against their interests.

This undetermined and dynamic relationship accords with interpretations I had made in the ethnographic work I had been doing for many years, especially my research in China and the social uses research program generally: (1) Media structures are not monolithic; they shape the audience's worldview but, as social institutions, they are composed of human beings with diverse motives and behavior and (2) Media audiences are not dupes but they do not act with unbridled agency either. Structuration finds a theoretical

"sweet spot" that provides the right weighting of agency and structure in the explanation of social behavior.

During the peak of my work in Latin America, the work of three authors in particular offered attractive alternatives to standard research and theory in communication. Their positions were broadly compatible with structuration theory and became extremely important in my own thinking and writing about communication and culture. In no particular order, these authors and their seminal works are likely very familiar to you: Néstor García Canclini (1989, 1995), Jesús Martín-Barbero (1987), and Jorge A. González (1994).

THE EVOLUTIONARY TURN

When done well, ethnographies and other qualitative empirical research projects can give communications researchers close-up views of how structure and agency interact in the everyday lives of media audience members or any other population of interest. In my research on media audiences over the years, the concept that kept recurring is "resource." The "social uses of television perspective" focuses on how people (consciously and subconsciously) employ the form, content, and context of the electronic medium as resources. But social actors exercise their agency within at least three types of structure. A *social structure* refers to relationships among those who co-occupy the living space. Social actors are also subject to the *physical structure*, represented by the living spaces and specific forms domestic technology takes. Media users are further disposed to the *ideological structures* that govern media institutions and occupy program content.

Researchers employing ethnographic and other social scientific methodologies describe and analyze their findings on media audiences and other social configurations in ways that can be interpreted in various ways theoretically. Some combination of social structure and cultural norms, often operationalized as independent or intervening variables, are identified as the causal agents of human behavior. But that assumption fails to acknowledge that society and culture themselves have been shaped over the long course of our biological history. Society and culture are *proximate* causes of human behavior not *ultimate* causes.

Human involvement with communications technology—especially the social uses to which the technologies are put—are driven by motivations that run deeper than those typically described in research articles. In my view, human behavior can best be explained as adaptations grounded in the

D principles of evolutionary theory. I was first greatly inspired to take this turn in my writing by carefully reading Charles Darwin's most important works—*The Origin of Species, The Descent of Man*, and *The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals.*

Eduardo Neiva—the Brazilian-American communication scholar I met in Rio more than 30 years ago—and I have been formally and informally working both independently and together along this line for many years. We published a piece on the topic in **MATRIZes** (Lull & Neiva, 2008) and a book in which we offer an explanation of how communication drives human evolution (Lull & Neiva, 2012). In an attempt to provide greater visibility for this perspective, I recently wrote a textbook (Lull, 2020) and a journal article (Lull, 2022) that introduces "evolutionary communication" to a wider audience.

Figure 4

The evolutionary approach to analyzing human communication emerges from a platform of principles which have been established over many decades of research on organic evolution. The standard theory of evolution—sometimes called neo-Darwinian theory or the modern synthesis—is derived from Charles Darwin's original insights about natural and sexual selection together with the basic principles of genetics. Epigenetic evolutionary theory—often called the extended synthesis—focuses on how internal biology and the external environment interact to influence genetic and behavioral expression. The third explanatory stage moves through genes, biology more broadly, and the physical environment to focus on processes of human interaction and the making of meaning—evolutionary communication. **M**

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Communication as work of diversity (perspective and methodology)

Comunicação como trabalho da diversidade (perspectiva e metodologia)

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ABSTRACT

Starting from the procedural variation of communication found in the world of life and valuing the resulting diversification of research and theories, this article proposes a perspective of knowledge in a line of evolutionary epistemology, with a scope that overcomes dispersion without detriment to the variety of problems, objects of observation and research objectives. The perspective assumes the human species' capacity for diversification as a communicational challenge and proposes a line of connection between this comprehensive challenge and the plurality of interactional urgencies occurring in the social environment. Furthermore, the article develops the relevant research methodology and provides for empirical research to test the perspective.

Keywords: Evolutionary epistemology, communicational challenge, dimensions of variation, communication processors

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RESUMO

Partindo da variação processual da comunicação constatada no mundo da vida e valorizando a decorrente diversificação de pesquisas e teorias, este artigo propõe uma perspectiva de conhecimento em uma linha de epistemologia evolutiva, com uma abrangência que supera a dispersão sem prejuízo da variedade de problemas, de objetos de observação e de objetivos de investigação. A perspectiva assume a capacidade de diversificação da espécie humana como um desafio comunicacional e propõe uma linha de conexão entre esse desafio abrangente e a pluralidade de urgências interacionais que ocorrem no ambiente social. Ademais, o artigo desenvolve a metodologia de pesquisa pertinente e prevê a realização de pesquisas empíricas para testar a perspectiva.

Palavras-chave: Epistemologia evolutiva, desafio comunicacional, dimensões de variação, processadores da comunicação

T O THE EXTENT that the various Human and Social Sciences (HSC), since the 1990s, have stopped proposing general theories about communication – which should be seen, more precisely, as precursor theories –, our field of studies has been developing in its own space an expanded collection of research and theoretical reflections, in a variety of angles, on multiple objects of interest. A simple observation of the annals of Compós and Intercom, as well as of specialized entities in the area, demonstrates this diversified production.

Communication issues are also expressed in all activities and environments of society and are related to the ways in which communication takes place, to the technological presence of communication means, to reception processes, interactional circuits, specialized professions, problems occurring in all social fields and, even, to the most common actions of human gesture: dialogue, rumor, commensality, sign language, bar table conversation.

The diversity of processes observed in society, research and theories that develop knowledge about communication – relevant and necessary as it is – has led to a double problem: dispersion, which limits the search for consistency in the field of knowledge; lack of consistency in the field, which makes it difficult to deepen knowledge[1].

Dispersion, which in the 20th century was justified as a result of an interdisciplinary theoretical generation, is now assumed as an internal dispersion of the area itself, in a multiplicity of "specialties of attention" on the variety of issues and observables that ask for corresponding theoretical and methodological specifications, as well as the use of theories without distinction of origin or focus specification.

The double problem pointed out is an obstacle to the recognition of communication as a discipline of knowledge among HSC. In facing this limitation, the area has been developing metatheoretical scrutiny to systematize the theoretical collection available; cartographic descriptions to identify some composition between the knowledge produced by the different disciplines and their perspectives or, at least, to "territorialize" the diversity; and ontological concepts to capture the substantial aspects of the phenomenon.

All these processes are relevant – except when, in trying to reduce dispersion, they lead to restrictions on diversity. The great variety of research and reflections is required by the very diversity of questions and observables. The processes that human society constantly experiments, invents, readjusts, remakes and transforms make communication a proliferating phenomenon to the point that each moment is different from the previous ones. We must recognize that the diversity of communicational processes in social reality *is a constitutive aspect of our object of knowledge*.

[1] On the insufficient consistency of the communication field as a basic science, see the works of Luiz Signates (2018, 2021).

Under these conditions, the following epistemological question arises, which constitutes the axis of the research forwarded here: how to produce consistent communicational knowledge while maintaining the necessary variety of research on the procedural diversity of the world of life and reducing the dispersion between sectoral discoveries? This article presents a proposal in this direction.

We will not seek *to define* "the communicational phenomenon" as if it were marked by a specific nature. It is not a matter of conceptualizing what communication is, but rather of proposing a possible *research perspective as a comprehensive epistemological instrument, capable of tracking communicational processes wherever they occur and in the form they present.*

A communicational perspective, as a scrutinizing look for the search for knowledge, must embrace the diversity of communicational issues of society itself, serving heuristically to ask questions and stimulate discoveries, and not to explain the communicational processes in a unifying way, but to understand the very variety of developed logics and activated dynamics that interpose in the specificity of the different social urgencies.

Having assumed the potential infinity of communicational gestures, strategies, objectives and logic tentatively put in place by society, the ineffectiveness of seeking this perspective in the very set of communicational processes becomes evident. To respond to the double criterion of valuing diversity and the search for consistency, I propose to shift attention – from gestures and communication processes – *to the problems of the social environment as a function of which processes are triggered or developed.*

It is within the scope of problems – and not of processes – that we must build a perspective[2]. That perspective, under construction, will not be derived directly from the object "communication occurrences in society", *but rather from what can be perceived as the problem that the processes seek to respond to.* It is about offering a communicational angle to observe social occurrences, and then, to apprehend the local logic of the processes aimed to face the specific urgencies that can be referred to the comprehensive challenge.

I emphasize that proposing a comprehensive perspective with a properly communicational approach does not correspond to developing a general theory of communication[3]. Proposing a perspective is an epistemological rather than a theoretical gesture. It should be a heuristic approach in search of knowledge and consistency strategies, and not an explanation or conceptualization of the phenomenon and its processes. Such a perspective, even comprehensive, can coexist with other perspectives, both sectoral and comprehensive. Noting that each HSC includes different perspectives in its theoretical-epistemological body,

[2] I took a first step in prefiguring this epistemological question in the article "Do que não conhecemos os problemas, não saberemos as respostas" (We do not know the problems, we will not know the answers) (Braga, 2021) – stimulated by questions posed by Luiz Signates (2018).

[3] What constitutes each of the human and social sciences is its specific angle of observation of society. *Perspective* is what determines which objects become relevant and the way in which they should be observed, not an object-and-method definition. Nothing prevents a discipline from having different perspectives.

we argue that a search for comprehensiveness over variations of an object of knowledge cannot imply a pretense of totality of apprehension.

DIFFERENCE AND DIVERSITY

Having gone from the diversity of theories and research to the diversity of communicational processes in society, and from the processes to the questions they answer, we still need some preliminary moves to develop the perspective to be forwarded – among these, a reflection on the human differences.

One of the aspects that have attracted the attention of researchers, generating theorizations about communication, is the issue of otherness and the relationship with the diversity of social participants. When Honneth (2003) evokes the issue of recognition and when Lévinas (2007) addresses the barriers of otherness, difference is shown as a problem and, implicitly, communication as a work on this difference. The social specificities of coping with diversity focus attention on the dynamics inherent to the problematized difference and on the punctual logic of building objectives and the search for healing strategies. We will not stray too far from this nucleus, which offers significant clues. It is necessary, however, to avoid treating difference exclusively as a problem and communication as a cure.

Certainly, social goals justify such specified approaches, but they should not occupy the entire epistemological spectrum. The concentration of attention on differences – when these are already socially constituted, verified, or assumed – catches the communication issue at an established stage, making us lose sight of previous and more comprehensive processes. We must, therefore, look at it from a broader and more abstract angle, obtaining a perspective that can both perceive differences to be resolved and obtain an understanding of the generating processes and accuracy on the transformation strategies and actions.

For this, instead of focusing attention on communication processes only as a work of overcoming differences, we are going to pay attention to a third level of diversity – alongside the theoretical and social procedural levels –, reflecting on human diversity itself not as a problem in itself, but as a striking feature of the species.

Lucrécia Ferrara (2021) rightly criticizes "communication aimed at apprehending regularities that are reproduced" and asks whether it would not be necessary "to consider the possibility of developing, in the communication territory, an epistemology of differences" (Ferrara, 2021, p. 7). This study pays attention to that provocation. Human diversity is not made up of established differences, regularized as if they were immutable. We have skills for diversification[4] – of gestures, opinions, processes, perception, strategies, invention, experience and, through all these elements, cultural generation.

[4] Ciro Marcondes Filho (2011, p. 176) points this out when he considers communication as what "can cause transformations in me, change my situation, allow me to transform myself".

This diversification is structural and offers us experimentation, inference, and strategic generation skills. First, as a potential for adjustment to changing environments and then, by the very composition of cultural environments in which diversity is somehow directed towards joint actions.

What is communicationally relevant is not the difference itself, it is the work of diversity, through the relational modes it develops. Diversity work goes beyond praxiological processes on already perceived problems. It implies, to a large extent, proactive processes in search of balances and civilizational advancement.

The so-called "social" animals, with collective behavior, such as bees and ants, have an instinctive apparatus that adequately accommodates different attributions in the collective, according to effective standards for their perpetuation. In the human species, *the need for socially generating the articulating patterns between differences* becomes fundamental. We have some basic instruments to develop practices in this direction – by joint experimentation –, which allows motivated variations and tentative compositions.

Animals also demonstrate variable action skills when they relate, mainly through instinctive processes, to specific niches of natural affordances (Gibson, 1977). But a human peculiarity is the intensive presence of a form of diversity that is produced in the very development of the specimen's life.

What nature does, in our biological constitution, is to make room for an expanded part of our capacities for action not to be strictly dependent on genetic characteristics, attributing this relevant part to direct relations with the social environment, in which we must learn or invent the relevant processes to walk in a world that is continually changing.

This implies a work of diversity – corresponding to communication processes – that is not limited to practices of articulation between differences. It also involves the production of transformations in individuals, as well as between groups and, for the same individual, between moments of his existence. Composition is not necessarily an elimination of differences, but rather a mutable adjustment between them. The two dynamics are not opposed; they feed each other back by generating diversification and linking differences.

Thus, social participants are not simply diverse *per se*. More importantly, they diversify by learning[5], by life circumstances and by the experiments they develop in the presence of different urgencies to be faced. We need a longer time than other animals in "training for the world", but this favors a quick adaptation to changing circumstances without this tuning depending on a very long-term generational biological diversification.

The variations of the human being are not only presented as in the Darwinian perspective – random mutations selected in the sequence of generations by organic

[5] Remembering that, contrary to a widespread notion, learning is not a simple acquisition of established knowledge and stabilized practices. Even in early childhood, learning corresponds to the creative ability to reorganize ideas in the face of each piece of information received – from others or from the world –, inferring its meaning in relation to things and the other ones.

[6] In this regard, see Paul Thagard's critique (1980). On the various ways of considering the relationship between variation and selectivity, see Paulo Abrantes (2004). On a heuristic derived from natural selection, in view of evolutionary epistemology, pertinent to communicational knowledge, see Braga (in press).

adaptation to the environment[6]. More relevantly, they appear as a diversification of possible procedures within the same time frame. The selections made in the social environment, therefore, cease to occur only between variations of the organism itself and start to occur as selections *between variable strategies of social decisions*.

Communication is not simply an adjustment resource between different participants whose diversity can make joint actions difficult; communication is also, and above all, a factor of transformation and flexibility in the face of diverse urgencies.

The differentiated environmental conditions are not only those of nature, but also, to an important degree, of the social environment itself, which is diversified in the individual activities of the participants, in established practices and cultural environments. Society, as a whole, can benefit from differentiation, either through integrated work, tentative strategies or mutual support between different skills. Thus, we have the possibility of articulations in different social and natural ecologies, which makes us less dependent on a specific environment and more viable in multiple circumstances.

[7] Adaptability here does not just refer to the organism's biological and passive aptitude for a given environment. It is no longer exclusively a question of the natural environment, but also of the social environment – which implies a mutual and active action between the participants and the environment, with occasional modifications on both of them.

Adaptability, in such conditions, is no longer restricted to a passive harmony with the environment. It should be perceived as adaptive potential[7], with increased dynamics in relation to other animal species and representing greater creative flexibility (Ferrand, 2008).

To say that we are different by *interactional variation* corresponds to recognizing a mutual transformation between the individual and their insertion cultures. It is what we can characterize as a *constantly ongoing diversification process*.

[8] I emphasize that the "adaptive advantage" addressed here does not concern an internal competition between specimens in search of predominance of the "fittest", as intended by a "social Darwinism", which must be repudiated. The possible advantage pointed out is diversity itself. I also note that Darwin was not a "social Darwinist" (Costa Júnior, 2018).

The risk of misunderstanding and maladjustment between social participants is always present, as well as violence and oppression. The adaptive advantage[8] is only realized to the extent that it is composed not of rigidly concatenated differences, but rather of a joint adaptability to changing circumstances, which calls for an *ongoing*, *experimental differentiation* during the life of the specimens. The counterpart of the adaptive advantage of diversity is the need for procedural standards and generalized practices – the adjustment between gestures and between ideas is not done without effort. It also depends on whether diversities can somehow be reformulated, questioned, and adjusted in complementarity, connecting to a *joint generation of diversified processes*.

Therefore, we need standards, systems, and cultures to generate some stability and continuity, knowing, however, that any continuity, if it loses contact with the situation's requirements, becomes a risk generator. For this very reason, continuity cannot be maintained as automatism. Without significant readjustments in the face of the needs of a changing situation, it becomes a source of tension,

which results in new problems. We have to diversify as individuals, as collectives and as social organizations. Thus, the communicational problem is not simply the need to generate joint actions, as if diversification were a difficulty and standards and systems were the solution. Responding to the communicational challenge is to develop viable compositions between transformations (by diversification) and continuity (as culture).

Communication is the generative and procedural dynamic of the work of diversity, developing patterns and, at the same time, allowing the frequent revision of such compositions. This structuring condition of the human species – which we summarize in the formula diversification/changeable compositions – is what we will assume as the basis for the hypothesis of the communicational challenge, which we will detail in the next section.

THE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE

We have seen that the communication issue is not one of the problems for which comprehensive solutions are sought that leave them behind. Diversity is not just an issue; it is also a structural characteristic, a competence integrated into our conditions of survival and perpetuation, an "adaptive" quality.

This structural characteristic corresponds to what we can metaphorically call a "programmed incompleteness" in biological processes, with a relative reduction of instinctual automatisms and an expansion of communicationally generated variations in the social space, and, therefore, *not occurring in the structure of the organism*, although related to the exercise of its competences. The diversifying characteristic of the species results in an increase in adaptive flexibility. Instead of waiting that, by natural selection, a line of organisms more adapted to the environment survive and proliferate, we depend on a larger part of social generation – and no longer mainly biological – of creative-adaptive responses.

Under these conditions, the challenge facing human society is to exercise the species' own skills to obtain viable compositions, continuously trying to prevent our differentiated specificities from resulting in disastrous tensions. Concomitantly, we have the challenge of exercising diversity, the capacities of diversification and social invention to face the new urgencies that must be interactionally faced, as well as the challenge of overcoming wrong compositions or in the process of disintegration or conflict.

This creative and diversifying aspect does not operate in isolation: its tentative effectiveness is only realized in the set of actions for the survival of the processes attempted in the varied conditions of the world and for the good use and activation of the niches offered or generated. The procedures are only completed

by processes of joint operation – active articulations of the possible diversity in a given culture and historical moment – generating, in turn, culture and history.

The social problem of the species is the very need to constantly find answers that prove to be satisfactory, since the organism's automatisms – which, evidently, do not disappear – cease to occupy the center of the scene. With the expansion of the proportion of adaptivity/creativity not imprinted in the genetic program, the possibilities of dispersion, misunderstanding and oppression also increase.

The set of human characteristics referred to in the previous item – which we gathered in the integrated notion of "diversification/compositions" – thus produces the communicational challenge of the species. The word "communicational" is justified as a central qualifier of the challenge, because diversity and its infinite compositions can only be realized as an adaptive-creative advantage insofar as the skills of diversification and skills for putting in common (articulate, compose) gestures, behaviors and diversified strategies are mutually exercised by the social participants. This also implies resisting the stiffening of established articulations.

This problem is faced directly by human societies in the practical arena of everyday life or in the historical dimension of existence, in the varied concrete and specific forms that today we can recognize as "communicational processes". It is the fact of corresponding to facing the challenges of the work of diversity that allows categorizing such processes as "communicational". In other words, communication is not defined by the conceptual nature of the phenomenon, but by the problems – specified as such – that are faced.

If the communicational challenge is generic and comprehensive, its manifestation in social reality is shown in the form of potentially infinite specific problems. We need to make a clear distinction between the challenge resulting from human characteristics – which I propose as *a comprehensive communication issue* – and specific problems of social reality, to which the generation and activation of processes – specific and plural – of communication are aimed.

For clarity of distinction, I use the expression "urgencies" to refer to local, concrete and specific communication problems of any activity between participants that involves the development of some way of articulation between positions, objectives and action strategies, which will compose the direction to be given to its development. Not infrequently, urgency requires experimentation in search of tentative strategies; but even in the availability of already established and stabilized procedures, these require adjustments to the uniqueness of the situation (Braga, 2010).

The urgencies related to the work of diversity occur in specific ways in all the variety of situations, cultures and social environments, established or not, in the most diverse areas, requesting from its participants positions related to the need to put together the complex and disconnected set of elements in the situation faced.

Interactional urgencies do not just ask for correlated solution strategies – the selection of tried strategies and their insertion in immediate contexts generate possibilities that modify the context itself. Depending on their transforming potential, they can have less or more repercussions in immediate or broader contexts, leading to correlated cultural changes.

We know that the challenge is not always well faced. Quite the contrary: there are communication processes that work with diversity in fallacious ways (as in fake news), that transform it into oppressed differences (as in racism), or even that build excluding dualities (as in political polarization). History shows the strong incidence of error in the exercise of human competences, as well as the resulting risks for civilization. Without an adequate exercise of the two orders of communication skills, the species can even be driven to extinction. The anxiety for universal values and truths and for absolute or mathematical criteria is an indicator of how the challenge weighs us down. However, it is not possible to escape this need for facing the challenge inherent to the constitution of the species.

The scientific issue – both in terms of embracing comprehension and explanation of specific processes and praxeological contributions to society – corresponds to the search of rigorous knowledge about this problem, thus participating in the communicational challenge faced directly by society. What I consider in this article as the communicational challenge hypothesis is not restricted to the descriptive level of human characteristics and the proposition of their general relevance for survival. It also includes the proposition that the challenge thus described is a pertinent basis for a *knowledge perspective on social reality* aimed at a comprehensive and diversified understanding of communication processes.

It is with this proposition that we develop our proposal on the epistemological issue presented in the introduction. The next section presents the hypothesis of the communicational challenge for society as a focal point from a knowledge perspective.

THE PERSPECTIVE

The social processes of communication, as the work of diversity, involve the participation of two types of competences: those of diversification and those of composition, as an infinitely complex game between these two human dynamics.

This perception situates communication issues within the scope of transformation processes and search for continuity, justifying a heuristic of evolutionary epistemology. The epistemological line has as its main reference Darwin's hypothesis on the origin and development of species, replacing a deterministic causality with a process of generating variations, only then selected. In another

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article (Braga, in press), I present the possibility of its heuristic transference to the communicational perspective.

The issue here is to derive a perspective of knowledge from human diversity. Based on the communicational challenge, that perspective should allow investigating composition-generating processes by which strategy variations are produced and selection tactics triggered.

We assume that the set of human characteristics can be considered as *the most comprehensive environment* in which the urgencies and strategies of communication processes are developed. But it is not a matter of making everything depend on the characteristics of the species. For its exercise in research, the perspective must be a line of connection between the comprehensive communicational challenge and specific social urgencies that can be perceived as a problem within the scope of this challenge. Such processes manifest themselves seeking insertion in contexts of occurrence and, occasionally, focusing on the context itself.

The hypothesis of the communicational challenge makes it possible to scrutinize, for each urgency analyzed, *its own specificities* – of the situations of occurrence and of the investigative and theoretical questions triggered –, perceiving the elements that the specific object itself puts on the agenda, as well as what is sought to discover therein. The connecting line makes it possible to understand how the general dynamics embrace the specific responses found and how these responses exercise those dynamics.

The relations of supersumption and subsumption between the two levels thus develop in a double direction, demanding a recurrent reflection between, on the one hand, the comprehensive challenge characterized by diversity and, on the other hand, its highly varied occurrence in the specific urgencies that call for communicational processes to face them.

The finding of a relationship between the general characteristics of the species, with its types of competences – learning, diversification, composition, empathy, inferential competence, critical analysis, imitation abilities, self-awareness, etc. –, and the variation of tactics and strategies to respond to the communicational challenge make it clear that the communicational act *does not start in culturally established interactional processes (languages; consolidated strategies; or means of communication)*[9]. Given the comprehensive challenge, communication starts first, as a necessity, leading to the invention of gestures and processes through which languages are established, strategies are selected, and means are developed.

We can assume that the communication dynamics is at the origin of the specific processes generated (Braga, 2017). The processes are variations of action and thought, tentatively produced as a function of goals objectively related to the communicational challenge. Such variations are selected by the participants

[9] In the methodology section, we categorize these culturally established processes, more precisely, as communication processors, insofar as social participants develop and direct them as a strategy to activate and deepen communicational potentialities of diversity.

within the reach of their understanding and action; and by the context, to the extent of their insertion possibility –, remembering that the goals themselves are socially, culturally and *communicationally* developed.

In the line of connection between the most specific urgencies and strategies and this level of greater scope, possible contexts, socially and culturally relevant, are interposed at different levels. For example, a specific interactional urgency may successively receive relevant incidences from a professional space, from a legal issue, from political circumstances, and from the cultural environment in which it occurs. Each of these levels shows itself as a selective structure for the variations subsumed therein and offers variations for the meaningful structures of a superior level, of supersumption. For the concept of "meaningful structure" we refer to the work of Lucien Goldmann (1970).

The adoption of an evolutionary epistemological line corresponds to giving special emphasis to the connection moved by variations and selectivity. Social processes are not activated by previous universal truths or by ultimate goals, but by experiments – which work in different ways – of searching, trying, learning, facing difficulties, creativity, and social invention, generating variations that are selected according to its viable relationship with the urgencies worked on and their contexts.

This makes it possible to take into account all the elements considered relevant to the specific objects of study, whether in social reality or in the theoretical approach chosen for its relationship with the problem addressed. Context levels can be perceived as stimulating variation and as providing criteria and selection processes.

That observation of intermediate levels and their mutual actions corresponds to the line of connection between the communicational challenge and the urgencies in which communication manifests itself as a relevant issue[10]. In research work, such a connection must be tailored to specific questions and objectives. Thus, it is worth reflecting on its approach in methodological work.

AN APPROPRIATE METHODOLOGY

In the work of empirical research, the perspective calls for two movements of attention – *from the urgencies to the challenge*, in order to perceive how the specific urgencies correspond to the communicational challenge, enabling the development of consistency; *from the challenge to the urgencies*, in order to discover communication as the work of diversity within the scope of reality.

Once the urgency (or type of urgencies) to be investigated is selected, the researcher must observe ongoing aspects related to variations, selectivity,

[10]Vera França (2002, p. 293) pointed out, at the beginning of the century, that "it does not seem opportune for us to be entangled by the discussion of the pertinent and the impertinent [since communication is in everything], but by the discussion of what is relevant".

tentative transformations and sought continuity, insertion strategies in significant contexts, specific procedural logics of the situation, and incidences between processes and their previous contexts. Thereby the singularities of the communicational process in question are apprehended by the specific questioning angle of the research. As is often the case, in situations that require research, such a process will entail tensions, as well as lack of definitions among the participants.

The result of this observation can be related to the characteristics of the comprehensive challenge, leading to connection inferences. Such comprehensive level inferences, returning to the level of singular urgency, allow the apprehension of more details and more precise perceptions.

The reiteration of the two movements makes it possible to expand, at each alternation, the understanding of the comprehensive and the explanation of the specific. Goldmann (1964) proposes: "the clarification of a meaningful structure constitutes a process of *comprehension*; while its insertion into a wider structure is, in relation to the latter, a process of *explanation*". And then: "Explanation and comprehension are not, therefore, *two* different intellectual processes, but one and the same process related to two frames of reference" (Goldmann, 1964, pp. 353-354, our translation)[11].

In the methodological approach from our perspective, this alternation is organized around the potentialities of the connection. About the first movement – from urgencies to challenges – we highlight:

[11]In the original : "la mise en lumière d'une structure significative constitue un processus de *compréhension* alors que son insertion dans une structure plus vaste est, par rapport à elle, un processus *d'explication*." […] "Explication et compréhension ne sont donc pas *deux* processus intellectuels différents mais un seul et même processus rapporté à deux cadres de référence."

- referring different urgencies and strategies to the same comprehensive question makes it possible for them to talk to each other, stimulating angles of composition and mutual tension;
- observing tactical variations of objectives and strategies in concrete situations allows linking them to the species' generic communication skills;
- observing the specificities of urgencies and ongoing strategies favors a better understanding of the comprehensive logics and dynamics available.

From the challenge to urgencies:

- studying the comprehensive challenge in the specific circumstance allows us to perceive the communicational angle of the punctual issue, discovering there how the characteristics of diversity and composition were triggered as well as their communicational quality;
- observing how the comprehensive question is shown in the face of urgencies allows us to apprehend how the challenge materializes and takes place in social practice;

– having a scrutiny logic favors unraveling what is communicational in the specific interactional processes observed, as well as deciding what is their relevance for the research.

Paying attention to intermediate contexts – meaningful structures between punctual urgencies and the comprehensive challenge –, we realize that the endless diversification of processes *does not appear disorderly and random in the social environment and in research*. The procedural variations of communication are organized – not as a unified and stable territory, which could be mapped in a geographic pattern, but certainly in multiple *dimensions of variation*.

The connecting line between the challenge and social urgencies enables attention to all the specificities that characterize the urgencies and communication strategies observed and related to the sociocultural contexts, social fields and areas of knowledge in which they are inscribed and affect these *dimensions of variation*. They are discernible as sets *of processes in society* by which cultures and history are developed.

This perception reinforces the importance of diversified studies for producing communicational knowledge, an importance confirmed by the strategy of the area organizing work groups and lines of research that are evident as dimensions of variation in the development of knowledge. The dimensions of variation are shown, then, by the research problems and approaches that make up and characterize the set.

A second perception, promising for further studies, is the finding that some communication processes, developed at the service of communication objectives, given their tactical plasticity and their productive fortune in the social environment, are characterized as a basis for social experimentation and for activation in situations and urgencies, serving as *a structure that provides communicational dynamics*. More than just dimensions of variation, structures that show such continual generation capability should be categorized as *communication processors*. These function as flexible molds, or condensations of tactics, for the constant production of communication processes. Although the variations produced show a kinship with each other, due to their development within the macro logics of the same processor, they can develop in various directions and with very different objectives.

The concept of communicational processors proposed here is, therefore, a central operative element for the research work. What characterizes that notion, with more concreteness than a similarity of problems, is the presence in the culture of such "processing devices" in material form or as structured social rules and processes available for activation by social participants to continue to exercise appropriate interactional gestures and to develop their communication attempts.

D Communication as the work of diversity
(perspective and methodology)

To a large extent, the communicational processes theorized by the HSC in the 20th century are of this order and were perceived as communicational both for demonstrating their potential in this direction and for being criticized as intervening in an established regularity. Among such processes, we mention: the cultural industry; languages as enabling or required for interaction; the information; the narrative; the rhetoric; the sign; the audiovisual; the technology; the media in general, with its vast productive wealth of communicational processes. We can also include communicational processors in lines of professional action – journalism, advertising, organizational communication, cinematographic creation, etc. Not by chance, disciplinary theories that were considered "general theories of communication" turned to one or the other of these processors.

However, a restrictive characteristic, reiterated in all these studies, is to consider communication only that which is done from the processor in question, due to its characteristics. The processor is the most perceived scope, disregarding the relevance of other processes – and for this very reason the theory was considered general. Processors appeared as *the starting point and guide* of what is considered Communication. When the origin of a processor is occasionally discussed, the communicational dynamics are not observed, but the logics of the disciplinary field in which the theory was developed. The processor is assumed as an instituting element and the communication process is studied as if it were dependent on determinations and paradigms of the discipline that investigates it.

Against that view, from a communicational perspective, processors must be perceived as spaces of generative variation *instituted by communicational processes* and, at the same time, developers of logics that enhance communicational compositions. In the perspective proposed here, and as we observed before, without denying the intervention of motives of all kinds studied by other disciplines, *we see communication as prior to such processors*, participating in their generation. From the development of a processor, communication remains a basic dynamic that, due to the communicational challenge, *redirects the processor by the very fact of exercising it*. By activating a certain processor, the social participants make their communication work within its logic, but the dynamics of diversification continues to be exercised in a readjustment process.

In this origin, characterized by the hypothesis of the communicational challenge, we find a possibility of articulating processes and gestures of human communication without any reduction of their diversity.

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE

The article proposed a perspective focused on the issue presented in the introduction, seeking to value the diversity of observables, research and theories worked on by researchers in the field, at the same time avoiding the dispersion found as a barrier to a greater development of the knowledge produced. We find the guiding axis of the perspective in comprehensive characteristics, which are present in the variety of occurrences and communicational processes and in the diversity of the problems that request them. The following elements were structured in the development of the perspective:

– The objective of maintaining the diversity of observables, research and theories and of reducing dispersion, enabling the search for consistency in the construction of knowledge;
– Perception of human diversity as an adaptive characteristic of the species for different contexts in the social environment;
– Verification of the communicational challenge arising from this differentiating characteristic; and the consequent generation of changeable compositions between differences and adjustable standards in the social environment, as the *work of diversity*;
– Apprehension of this dynamic as a process of transformation-and--continuity in facing the communicational challenge;
– Activation of a heuristic based on evolutionary epistemology, adjusted to the social process of communication in the discovery of its variations;
– Development of the perspective as a connection line between the comprehensive challenge and the endless communication urgencies;
– Reiterated going back and forth between the extreme points of that connection line for the scrutiny of meaningful intermediate levels as the appropriate research methodology;
– Characterization of intermediate levels as dimensions of variation and selection contexts;
– Perception of communicationally generated intermediate levels to process communication as "communication processors".

With such components, what the perspective seeks, tracking the comprehensive challenge that dynamizes social situations, is to discover the characteristics of interactional processes, depending on the problems chosen for research.

The most explicit structural feature in human communicational dynamics stems from the fact that its participants diversify more widely than other species. The dynamics is demarcated as a comprehensive process of transformations

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and search for continuity – which justifies an approach in terms of evolutionary epistemology. Under these conditions, languages, strategies and means are shown to be the work of diversity. Within the scope of the comprehensive challenge that triggers this dynamic, social urgencies multiply through the most diverse social issues.

The proposed perspective offers a line of connection between the urgencies in the social environment – with their correlated research problems – and the generation nucleus of the work of diversity dynamics. It is not, as I emphasize throughout the article, an explanatory theory, in which the diversity of urgencies is "reduced" to a unified pattern. On the contrary, the perspective appears as a heuristic to unravel the specificity of the different ways of facing the challenge in society and, therefore, of the infinite variations produced by the communicational dynamics.

The methodological approach to exercise this line of connection in research is based on Lucien Goldmann's propositions (1970) regarding meaningful structures. The approach is developed as a strategy for perceiving the relationships between a whole and its parts, which are mutually constituted. Given the verification of the different operational levels through which society produces mutable compositions between the ongoing diversifications, in its multiple activities and institutions, it is relevant to research the communicational work of diversity in the production of variations and in the selection processes that are manifested.

Dimensions of communicational variation are developed by urgencies of all kinds and related to all activities of social interest, whose participants trigger different strategies to obtain some composition of their differences. Among these dimensions of variation, the development of the perspective highlights a productive lineage of dimensions *directly turned to the communicational activity itself*, whose focus is to enable, facilitate and direct human interactions, whatever their objectives. I characterize these structures, centrally significant, as "communication processors" and I perceive, preliminarily, three types: languages; consolidated strategies; and means and mediations between the participants. These three possibilities, although distinguishable, are intertwined in varying doses in the social environment.

The perspective presented can encompass and give attention to all dimensions of variation in the work of diversity– occasionally in interface with the specializations constituted around a specific dimension. However, it is worth paying particular attention to communication processors. Although these are long recognized and researched in the area, they have been seen in an isolated and incomplete way. Their own generation already involves the work of diversity, showing that one cannot think of communication as something that only occurs

from a communicational processor, as this was *communicationally* developed as a selector of strategies and generator of variations.

In addition to the structure of the perspective, briefly summarized here, of its epistemological foundation, of the coherence sought between the component elements and of the specified methodological approach, it is necessary to verify both its empirical validity and the productivity of its heuristics. The research initiated by this article proposes to investigate, following the proposed perspective, dimensions of variation and communicational processors through the re-reading of research in the area and by carrying out empirical studies. The development of verifications by other researchers – in analytical and critical terms – would represent a significant contribution to the improvement of the proposal. ◼

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Beyond media imperialism: The challenges of theorizing global TV flows

Além do imperialismo da mídia: Os desafios de teorizar fluxos globais de TV

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ABSTRACT

This article reviews the intellectual journey that led me to study the development of television in Brazil. It discusses how I came to study how media were developing in countries of the global South as part of a Ph.D. in International Relations. It led me to get particularly interested in Brazil, particularly when I discovered that the US State Department was willing to train me in Portuguese and send me there for three years. It discusses the great intellectual support I received for my research on Brazilian television, TV Globo and cultural dependency, from Prof. José Marques de Melo and others at ECA/USP, in which others like Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva and Ana Maria Fadul were beginning to look at some of the same issues. It goes on to discuss how interesting and helpful the INTERCOM and ALAIC network of researchers was in learning about the great upswell in Brazilian and Latin American research that was taking place.
Keywords: Global media, Brazilian television, TV Globo, Intercom, ECA-USP

RESUMO

Este artigo examina a jornada intelectual que me levou a estudar o desenvolvimento da televisão no Brasil. Discute-se como iniciei o estudo do desenvolvimento dos meios de comunicação social nos países do Sul global, no âmbito de um Doutorado em Relações Internacionais. Tal estudo me fez despertar um interesse especial no Brasil, principalmente quando descobri que o Departamento de Estado dos Estados Unidos estava disposto a me treinar na língua portuguesa e me mandar para lá para passar três anos. Discute-se o grande apoio intelectual que recebi para a minha pesquisa sobre a televisão brasileira, a TV Globo e a dependência cultural, do Prof. José Marques de Melo e outros da ECA/USP, onde outros, como Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva e Ana Maria Fadul, começavam a examinar algumas das mesmas questões. Discute-se também como foi interessante e útil a rede INTERCOM e ALAIC de pesquisadores para conhecer o grande crescimento das pesquisas brasileiras e latino-americanas que estava ocorrendo.
Palavras-chave: Rede de televisão global, Rede Globo, Intercom, ECA-USP

MY START WITH U.S. communication study traditions happened during my undergraduate years at Stanford University, 1969, where I started studying psychology and shifted to focusing on communications and international relations. When I shifted to studying communications, I remember being a little surprised that the head of the communications program, Nathan Maccoby, on discovering I had been a psychology major, told me I didn't have to take the introductory theory class because it was all based on psychology anyway. That was a little uncomfortable to me.

One of the reasons I shifted away from psychology was that I had begun to discover that it was very culture bound. Much of it seemed to overemphasize individual psychology based on European and American culture. A big turning point was when I discovered that an effort to replicate a basic experiment about cognitive dissonance reduction in Hong Kong just did not work. One of the assumptions of cognitive dissonance reduction was that if you required somebody to make a statement that conflicted or was dissonant with one of their own attitudes, then they would shift their attitude to be consistent with their public behavior. When an experiment tried to replicate that in Hong Kong, the people being studied didn't feel any need to change their attitude to be consonant with their public behavior, since to them, something culturally different was at stake. If an authority figure asked you to read a statement, you read the statement, but that had nothing to do with how you thought about it. It was just a culture-based deference to authority. I had also taken some courses in cultural anthropology and it occurred to me that maybe what I was really interested in was culture, not psychology.

As I started to study communications, there were courses on several kinds of communication issues. I had classes on cinema history, on journalism, and on radio and TV broadcasting. Many of them seem to have a standard US emphasis on media effects. There was definitely an emphasis on traditional quantitative methodology. But I also had also had a class in my senior year on communication and national development, where I met several interesting Stanford PhD students, including one who would become a mentor to me later, Emile McAnany. I was really intrigued with the connection that the course drew between how communication media were developing and how national cultures and identities were developing. It also focused on using communication as a tool to accelerate or change national development. By the time I got to grad school to study these kinds of issues, I realized I was a lot more interested in understanding how national media systems were developing rather than thinking about how to use media to change patterns of development.

In this Stanford class I got exposed to both more traditional developmentalist thinking, like that of Wilbur Schramm (1964) and Daniel Lerner (1958), but also to more critical thinking like media imperialism by Herbert Schiller (1969). I had also taken a couple of courses that had a Marxist approach to economics. Stanford let you choose between an intro economic course sequence that was much more traditional and one that was much more critical or Marxist. I took the latter because it was a time in which many people were becoming increasingly against the US involvement in the Vietnam War. Like a lot of students, I wondered if we ought to go beyond just being against the war and become somewhat more focused on radical change in the US. We were thinking that if our current system had led us into Vietnam, maybe the system itself had to change. I spent six months doing a study abroad in Vienna in my second year at Stanford and several of us became aware of an opportunity to go on a sponsored official Soviet tour for students under the Sputnik youth tourism agency. As I look back, I'm sure that was a soft power operation which was trying to bring American and European students to the Soviet Union to give them a look around and hopefully give us a better opinion of the Soviet Union.

I had become very intrigued with Marxism in my first year at school. However, spending three weeks in the Soviet Union, 1970-71, put a big question mark on that. Really existing socialism, the way that many people described the Soviet Union at the time, seemed to have some strong points. They built up an impressive industrial structure enabling them to defeat Nazi Germany by 1945. Many of their cities had been well developed, like Moscow, which had a very impressive subway system and many impressive buildings. But there was also a very visible emphasis on social control and political opinion control. People seemed to be afraid to talk to us about anything that didn't stick close to the party line of the Communist Party. This raised a lot of questions in my mind about the Soviet Union. I had been thinking about studying Russia history and the development of the Soviet Union but, honestly, after three weeks traveling there, I found it quite depressing and not something I wanted to immerse myself in studying.

It did raise questions about the way that the US and Soviet rivalry in the Cold War was affecting the rest of the world. I got very intrigued with that as I could sense, being in the Soviet Union, that they were quite serious about promoting their development model to the rest of the world the same way that the US was. And that interaction between the two was interesting, so it got me thinking more about studying the larger questions of international relations and models for development.

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GOING OFF TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

Rather than staying at Stanford University, which had a huge emphasis on how to use communication media to accelerate development, under Wilbur Schram, I decided I wanted a change of scene and of disciplinary focus, to go east to the East Coast of the United States, and study a mixture of communication and international relations. There are probably several places I could've studied that but the most interesting one seem to be at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, at Tufts University, which emphasized media development, cross-cultural communication, public diplomacy, and the interaction of media and international relations.

I wasn't quite sure yet if I really wanted to be an academic. I came from a small farm in Idaho and didn't really know any academics personally other than some of the professors I had gotten to know at Stanford, who still seemed a little godlike and mysterious to me. I did not yet have a lot of confidence in my ability to be a professor but I was increasingly intrigued with being a researcher. I was also somewhat intrigued with working directly somehow in international relations, preferably on the part that media that played.

I was very impressed with one professor, Rosemarie Rogers, who taught me my first couple of courses about international communication and development of media and research methods. She went a long way toward helping me understand how there were multiple research methods for approaching many of the theories, ideas, and questions I was interested in: How different approaches yielded different kinds of evidence and data and that that could range from qualitative to quantitative and mixtures of the two. That was a big relief. In the Stanford psychology program, I had gotten sick of working on psychological experiments, either being an experimental subject or as a research assistant to a couple professors. The experiments increasingly seemed very manipulative. I was really relieved to learn about a broad range of methods, including many different ways of approaching some of the big topics. The training I got at Fletcher School was a good basic grounding and gave me a good strong sense of how to think openly and creatively about different ways of researching a question, which would benefit me greatly by the time I got around to doing a dissertation about television in Brazil.

I also had a chance to study several issues and theories on international media, politics, and development. I liked the idea of looking critically at cultural industries the way the Frankfurt School did. I got very intrigued with the unequal flow of news film and television. I was particularly intrigued with a new report that came out from UNESCO about unequal TV flow in the world in 1974 (Nordenstreng & Varis, 1974). I went deeper on the idea of dependency

theory in terms of the work by Cardoso (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979) and others (Evans, 1979). I was very interested in the issues and processes that led up to the New World Information and Communication Order debate (Unesco, 1978). One of the first books I read about media in Brazil was a report written by Nelly de Camargo, of USP, on Brazilian communication policies (Camargo & Pinto, 1975), as part of UNESCO's 1970s program of urging countries to build up communication policies.

I was really interested in looking at Frankfurt school theories about cultural industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972) in a critical way. But I was also beginning to read things about what media industries and national policies in developing countries like Brazil were doing to begin to apply strategies to promote national production, particularly of television and radio (Katz & Wedell, 1976). I was particularly interested in the way China was taking a very autonomous, very different view of how to do communications and media in the country. I was also interested in the buildup of the TV and film industries in India, the television industries in Mexico and Brazil, and the overall nonaligned, independent approach to media that Yugoslavia was taking. I was very intrigued with the countries that were beginning to push back on dependency and cultural imperialism, whether by government policy actions like in China or Yugoslavia, or by more industrial ways in places like India, Mexico, and Brazil.

Professor Rogers turned into my PhD advisor. She was beginning to tell me explicitly that she thought I would make a good researcher and professor in academia. She could tell that I didn't really have a lot of confidence about that and did me the great favor of deliberately trying to build up my confidence, to let me know that I was plenty smart enough to do that if that was what I wanted to do.

I had taken the US foreign service entrance exam at the urging of Fletcher School. They were very interested in getting as many people as possible to go into the foreign service. I took the exam, passing their different tests and interviews, and, toward the end of my first year, I got a call from them saying, "Well, you passed! Where would you like to go if we were to hire you and send you someplace?" I said I'd be really interested in Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and Yugoslavia.

In terms of research, I was curious to see which developing countries were developing their own media that pushed back at the pressures they were getting from US cultural imperialism, and those countries were all interesting examples. I'd been studying cultural imperialism and dependency theory. Dependency theory in some ways made more sense to me at the time as a workable overall model for understanding what places like Brazil or Mexico are going through than did the kind of holistic idea of cultural imperialism that Herb Schiller

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was promoting in his work. When the foreign service offered to train me in Portuguese and to send me to Brazil for three years, I was thrilled but I asked them if I could stay in school until I finished my coursework for my Ph.D. and they agreed. Even though I had deep reservations about US foreign policy, I saw this as an opportunity to go learn Portuguese, learn a lot about Brazil by spending three years there with them. Then, if I wanted to go back to academia, I would have the field work done for a dissertation. My advisor, Prof. Rosemarie Rogers, basically said "you might enjoy foreign service for a couple of years but you will be back in the academic world."

I did finish my coursework and my comprehensive exams for my doctorate just before I left Fletcher School to go join the foreign service. I went to Washington to study public diplomacy, Portuguese, and area studies for a year at the Foreign Service Institute, which was all useful anyway: The idea of area studies aimed at a general understanding of the countries of Latin America, their international relations with each other, and their relations with the United States and the former colonial powers of Spain and Portugal. All of that seemed important to study generally if I was then going to try to study how media were developing in Brazil. Then, I went to Brazil for three years to give myself a chance to develop a dissertation proposal and do fieldwork in Brazil toward a dissertation.

LEARNING FROM BRAZIL

As I arrived in Rio in early 1976, I continued studying Portuguese at the consulate in Rio. I'd had very good instruction on Washington. I had intensely studied for six months, six hours a day but still I wanted to keep learning, so I took the advanced level Portuguese class in the consulate. An interesting thing happened in my very first week there that set me on what turned out to be my dissertation. The teacher told us that most of us were doing well with our Portuguese but we needed to find ways to go out and have conversations with real people. She suggested two specific things: one was to go get a Rio soccer club jersey and people would talk us about soccer and the team. She said that, even more importantly, we needed to watch a telenovela (the Brazilian soap operas) or two every night because that's what everybody really talks about.

I thought, "Wow, this isn't what Herb Schiller led me to expect." I came to Brazil mostly expecting to do a case study in cultural imperialism. I'd learned enough to know that TV Globo had been started in a joint venture with Time Life from the US. I expected to see the kind of cultural imperialism that people like Herb Schiller talked about, an economic orientation toward capitalist commercial media. That was clearly the case, but also, part of the cultural imperialism

theoretical package is that you would expect to see an awful lot of American television, film, and music content and that that American content would be having a clear ideological impact as part of cultural imperialism (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1972). Instead, I began to realize in that first week that prime time in Brazil, particularly on TV Globo — which most people watched —, was full of three separate Globo-produced telenovelas and a national newscast rather than imported US shows. That got me intrigued with the phenomenon of telenovelas.

I had two possible dissertation topics. One would be looking at what was happening with censorship of the news media. I had arrived shortly after the new Geisel military government announced a policy of *abertura*, or political opening; that they would gradually go back to civilian government. As part of that, they were going to gradually lift censorship, which was still heavy in most media at that point in 1976. They first lifted censorship on elite newspapers like *Jornal do Brasil* and *O Estado de São Paulo* and small leftist weeklies like *Pasquim*, or *O Movimento,* so, seemingly, the military trusted the elite to get a less censored view of the news and they didn't really seem to care what leftist weeklies published. But they clearly planned on keeping censorship on the dominant mass media of television and radio for quite a while, which indicated that they saw television in many ways as more important than the elite media in terms of its impact on the public (Ribke, 2011). That seemed interesting but it ended up pushing me to work instead on television, which was seen by the military and many others as having a much greater impact on the public.

The other possible dissertation topic would be to look at the case of TV Globo and its telenovelas, news, and *shows de auditório*, which seemed to have pushed imported US shows out of prime time, as well as the other competing television stations. In theoretical terms, that seemed to confirm certain aspects of cultural imperialism at a structural level, since Time Life had been part of the creation of TV Globo and had laid down certain very clear commercial patterns, a very efficient advertising operation (Wallach, 2011), an entertainment orientation, and a strong promotion of consumer culture (Mattos, 1990). But there was a lot more to it. There was a lot of interesting cultural creation going on in telenovelas, comedy, music shows, and *shows de auditório*.

I presented both ideas to my committee back in the US. They said this idea of looking at how the development of TV and its strong production of national entertainment challenged to some degree the idea of cultural dependence or cultural imperialism seemed to be a much more interesting theoretical prospect, which would put me into a very important theoretical discussion with an interesting case study. We agreed that I would do my dissertation about television in Brazil and the ways in which it did or didn't fit into the ideas of

D cultural dependency and cultural imperialism. Looking back at it, I was trying to balance what I knew from graduate school about political economy and how that seemed to predict some of the things related to cultural imperialism, particularly the structural nature of TV Globo's approach to commercial TV (Hertz, 1987), and a cultural studies approach based on Stuart Hall (1977) and other early scholars plus TV studies in the United States, which look at industry but also very much at content and reception (Newcomb & Hirsch, 1983).

I got really interested in reading what had been done about television in Brazil and began to meet scholars in Brazil that first year, 1976. I discovered several early key books that really influenced me quite a lot. One was *O Paraiso via EMBRATEL* (Milanesi, 1978), which was a kind of ethnographic account of the arrival of television in a small Brazilian town, which helped me have a better sense of just how much impact television was having in Brazil. Another was *A comunicação do grotesco* (Sodré, 1972), which gave a really fascinating account of the popular culture roots of *show de auditório*. Another was *A Noite da Madrinha* (Miceli, 1972), which was a semiotic account of a popular television talk show. That one challenged me theoretically, as the semiotics perspective is common in Brazil but I was unfamiliar with it. What I had been exposed to in graduate school was more about structuralist issues like political economy and questions of content flows. I was, however, a little surprised that there wasn't more research about television, particularly the content of television in Brazil. There was a very active political debate going on about the role of TV Globo and the legacy of TV Globo's joint venture with Time Life. I found and read a book called *O Livro Negro da Invasão Branca* (Calmon, 1966), written by one of the major stakeholders in one of TV Globo's major competitors, TV Tupi, so perhaps a little suspect, but it certainly raised a lot of interesting background. Most of the classic histories of TV Globo, like *A História Secreta da Rede Globo* (Hertz, 1987), had yet to be written but there was considerable debate in newspaper sources about the Time Life joint venture with TV Globo. I realized I was going to have to work a lot with archival sources, like newspapers as well as interviews.

I talked to some of the people who worked with both culture and media issues in the consulates in both Rio and São Paulo to describe what I was getting interested in and one of them advised me to talk to a senior professor in television and theater at the University of São Paulo, Fred Litto. I contacted him and began what turned into a long friendship and interesting set of exchanges and conversations over the years, which, in the long run, pushed me toward looking more at technology issues in Brazil. Fred introduced me to Prof. José Marques de Melo, who then introduced me to other people, including Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, Fernando Santoro, Anamaria Fadul, and Margarida Kunsch.

The core element of my initial access to people studying media in Brazilian academia was very much at the University of São Paulo in ECA. José Marques de Melo provided a very important opening to a large network of many of the people involved in INTERCOM, the communication research association. I also eventually met and interviewed some very interesting people from elsewhere, like Muniz Sodré at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

However, my initial reception from José Marques and others in São Paulo was so open and welcoming that I concentrated there for quite a while. ECA also had a good library. I found a lot of Brazilian books as well as books from around Latin America. For example, much of what I still know about semiotics I probably learned by reading things in Portuguese both from Brazil and translated from other parts of Europe and elsewhere in the world. Eventually I also met people at PUC São Paulo, like Renato Ortiz and Sylvia Borelli, who were very much more into that school of thought, toward the end of my first three years of fieldwork in Brazil.

I began to realize to that I also needed to learn industry perspectives. I was getting quite a bit about Brazilian TV from scholars and from the literature (which was beginning to build up) but I really needed to understand how the industry itself worked. I started trying to make inroads into TV Globo itself. I was lucky to eventually get in contact with their research director, Homero Icaza Sanchez, who thought it was interesting to have this young American speaking fairly good Portuguese and really interested in what they were doing. He was quite open about talking me through the research they were doing and of his understanding of the history of TV Globo, particularly how they had developed subgenres of telenovela that fit the profile of people watching at different time slots. I began to realize that I wanted to not just understand what was going on currently in these genre categories but to see how they developed over the years.

Talking to people in the advertising industry and the TV industry was fascinating, particularly people at other broadcasters like TV Tupi, TV Rio, or TV Excelsior. Some of my best interviews were from people who formerly worked at all those TV stations before going into either advertising or academia. I had a fascinating interview with Roberto Dualibi, head of a major advertising agency. He was really interested in offering his thoughts not only on advertising but also how TV had developed in general. I also spoke to some people at Mercado Global and Grupo de Mídia (1978), who were beginning to pull together a broad swath of advertising data into useful patterns. Those were very helpful in understanding how TV Globo had overwhelmed its competition and that it was much more efficient in its use of advertising. They had a much better dialogue with advertising agencies via research and upfront presentations of

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coming shows and seasons. I wanted to get a critical outside point of view from political economy, like how it had used favorable contacts with the military government to get licenses and technology to spread across Brazil, but I also wanted to get an insider's view of how it worked and why they thought it had developed the way it had.

I was also fortunate that IBOPE São Paulo let me use their television ratings data, particularly historical stuff. That let me see who was watching telenovelas, music shows, or comedy shows. I had decided to do a content analysis of which television genres different programs fit in (in sample weeks from 1962 to 1979) and how many minutes those genres took up in the schedule (using newspaper program listings), comparing that for primetime versus the total day, adding where those programs came from (Brazil, United States or elsewhere), and then creating an index that linked those content analysis numbers to the IBOPE ratings for the shows. That created a measure that I called audience hours that showed not only how many hours of television and in which genres came from Brazil or the US but also how many people were watching each.

As I started working on that, I also realized I needed to do an industry history. I needed to look carefully at the history of TV Globo and the histories of TV Rio, TV Tupi, TV Record, and TV Excelsior to understand the larger shape of how television had developed in Brazil. I was lucky to find most of the original sources I needed from the public archive of the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*. It was like someone gave me a gigantic Christmas present when I walked into their archive and saw how well-organized they were. Somebody had already organized files of clippings not only from their own newspaper but also from a dozen other newspapers on topics like the history of TV Tupi from 1951 to 1960. I could pay to photocopy whatever I wanted to get the history background that I needed. That became the core element of my dissertation with in-depth histories of each network and of the main genres of telenovela and *shows de auditório*.

INTERCOM

Both USP/ECA and INTERCOM continued to expand my horizons about how to understand Brazilian media. I had a great set of conversations with Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva on the impact of TV Globo from the way he was seeing it in his own doctoral dissertation about the reception of Globo in workers' communities in both the Southeast of Brazil and the Northeast of Brazil (Silva, 1985) and with people like Cesar Bolaño on a more critical perspective of the role of the advertising industry in television (Bolaño, 1988). My graduate school

had given me a structuralist but not particularly Marxist view of how the structures of international relations work, although I had been reading work about cultural imperialism and dependency. A lot of what I came to know in Brazil about political economy was from people like Cesar Bolaño and organizations focusing more on things like political economy in parallel to INTERCOM.

MY FIRST ACADEMIC PRESENTATION WAS AT INTERCOM

After my first three years in Brazil, 1976 to 1979, I went back to the US to work for the State Department in their research department, looking at media and public opinion in Latin America, which was handy; I learned a lot of useful things there, particularly about research methods, and had pretty good access to a lot of useful books from the Library of Congress. I finished my dissertation in 1981 and came back to Brazil in 1982 to give a presentation on it at INTERCOM. That was my first academic presentation of a paper, and I was a little nervous about it. I wasn't quite sure how my argument was going to be received.

What I had found was that, structurally, Globo had been very influenced by its interaction with Time Life and with the advertising industry to become a dominant commercial media industry, emphasizing entertainment and working with the military government to help create a consumer economy, just as political economy researchers feared. On the other hand, I wanted to talk about the cultural aspects of the industry, which were somewhat understudied. There was a widespread belief in Brazil that they were flooded by imported, canned American programming. My research was more empirical work on the development of the main television genres over time, from 1963 to 1979, who produced them, what was domestic and what imported, and how many people watched them. I found a pattern of slight decline of the overall amount of American programming in Brazil. It was declining more quickly on TV Globo, which was replacing more and more American programming with Brazilian programming in different parts of the broadcast day since their own research showed more demand for national programming (Wallach, 2011). However, if you simply looked at the overall volume of American imported programs on all stations, it was still high because several of the smaller networks were counterprogramming TV Globo by using lower-cost American series and American movies. I created an index, audience hours, by weighing the amount of programming in different genres from the US and Brazil by their ratings from IBOPE. Once you looked at what people were actually watching, then the amount of time people spent watching American TV was going down pretty quickly. I got a little bold and called my talk "The decline of American influence on Brazilian television." Some of my

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political economist friends pushed back on that because the political economy or basic structure of Brazilian television was indeed very much influenced by the United States but what I was really talking about was the programming, the cultural and political influences reaching people through TV. And there I saw an interesting change going on with more and more Brazilian programming of a relatively high quality being produced and disseminated to an audience that increasingly preferred national programs (Straubhaar, 1984).

I remember being a little scared what the reaction was going to be. It was kind of a cheeky thing for a foreigner to come in and contradict what many people thought they perceived about the flow of TV into Brazil. But after I presented the paper, I was really struck by the thoughtfulness of the reaction by people at INTERCOM, particularly José Marques de Mello, who, along with several other people, essentially said, "Well, that is interesting. It's not what we thought was going on but you're presenting some pretty good evidence and let us think about it." We had a great discussion, probably one of the more fun academic conversations I've ever had. It made me think "here's a group of people with whom I can have a lifelong academic relationship, learn from, and exchange ideas with." It gave me a very promising sense of having a home in Brazilian academia for the stuff I was interested in working on.

> Other have felt the same way. Emile McAnany told me that "José Marques opened a large network of people/ideas to me and others. José Marques was the central figure at ECA and in Brazil as far as I was concerned." Raul Fuentes Navarro, of Mexico, told me that
> "ECA has been very important in the constitution and development of several influential academic and professional associations in the field within Brazilian, Latin American, and even global spaces. Not only José Marques de Melo, but Margarida Kunsch, Ismar de Oliveira Soares, and Immacolata Vassallo, among others, have been creating and strengthening ties all over the world." Guillermo Orozco Gomez said, "Among other things, I would recognize as a key mark of ECA the study of Telenovelas. ECA was the pioneer in Latin America in approaching TV fiction academically and it is still doing it through OBITEL." Milly Buonano said, "Speaking of Obitel, although Eurofiction has been an inspiration (and I'm proud of this), ECA — especially in the person of Maria Immacolata Vassallo — has succeeded in making it a great and lasting collaborative research endeavor, a real model and point of reference in the international landscape of contemporary media research. Worth mentioning too are the strong and fruitful ties ECA has established with schools of communication like La Scuola Fiorentina della Comunicazione and media scholars in Italy, among other countries[1].

[1] All quotes from personal correspondence with Joseph Straubhaar.

There began to be very interesting research centers around Brazil. One that helped a number of international scholars was Núcleo de Pesquisa de Telenovela, with Anamaria Fadul and Cida Bacega. It is now — CETVN — Centro de Estudos de Telenovela, directed by Immacolata Lopes.

Through INTERCOM, I began to meet a variety of people in several up-and-coming major schools who were doing a variety of communication study work. The number of people working on many kinds of issues was really beginning to grow. Between the people I talked to in those organizations and the articles and books I was reading at the ECA library and finding at bookstores, I was really intrigued with some fields which were quite new to me, like semiotics, structural linguistics, and discourse analysis. All of these things gave me a basis both for critically understanding how media were developing in Brazil and the broader Latin America world, particularly as INTERCOM expanded and began to include other Latin Americans and people from Iberia. Furthermore, the ALAIC network began to grow, in which Brazil had a strong role.

One of the things that fascinated me was how connected INTERCOM was to the Latin American associations that were growing up at the time and Lusophone-oriented associations, like LUSOCOM and its related connections to Europe, particularly Portugal and Spain. It was a fascinating way to build up a whole worldwide academic network that branched out from Brazil. It gave me a perspective on how global media worked that very few Americans were privileged to see, in part because I'd been getting to know people in Brazil for years already and they were kind enough to open up their networks and introduce me to a lot of people at IAMCR, ALAIC, etc. It was a real expansion of what I knew about global media, finding major theorists like Jesús Martín-Barbero (and his ideas of the national popular) before they were made available in translation in the United States. I could see the great value of having a literature that had evolved within Spanish and Portuguese reflecting ideas based on those cultures and languages, and the historical experiences of Latin American and Iberian countries.

I remember being fascinated by how many interesting things were being said in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America that just would never make their way into the global academic discourse that goes on in English. In some ways, I felt very lucky to have access to that, but I also felt a little sad that more people didn't know about all this interesting work. However, that is slowly changing. I went to a meeting, in October 2022, of one of my favorite academic associations, Global Fusion, that is co-sponsored by about six American grad schools to focus on international communication. This one was organized by Temple University, and they did a fascinating symposium with several people from

Latin America, one from the Middle East, and one from the UK, to talk about Jesús Martín-Barbero and his legacy, and how much it affected them. Within television studies, Obitel has done great work in its annual conferences and its annual publications, including translations in English. That has been invaluable in providing a source that global television scholars who don't speak Spanish or Portuguese can access. There are also increasing numbers of journals, like **MATRIZes** and the Journal of Latin American Communication Research (published by ALAIC), that have English translations as well. **M**

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The "course of recognition" in communication studies

O "percurso do reconhecimento" nos estudos da comunicação

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ABSTRACT

The displacement "from the media to mediations" proposed by Martín-Barbero in the formation of a communicologist communicator and his path of recognition based on Paul Ricœur's reflections on the "course of recognition" and on questions of identity, ipseity and otherness in understanding "oneself as another" brings self-reflections on my intellectual course and recognition as a communicologist, discusses communication studies within society mediatization, and invests in articulations between communication and aesthetic experience, "socializing the sensible" and "sensibilizing the social," as per Herman Parret, and as "sensitive strategies," in the words of Muniz Sodré.

Keywords: Mediations, mediatization, course of recognition, communication, aesthetic experience

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RESUMO

O deslocamento "dos meios às mediações", proposto por Martín-Barbero, na formação de um comunicador comunicólogo e seu percurso de reconhecimento são tratados neste artigo a partir das reflexões de Paul Ricœur sobre o "percurso do reconhecimento" e sobre as questões de identidade, ipseidade e alteridade, na compreensão de "si-mesmo como outro". Traz autorreflexões sobre o percurso intelectual do autor e seu reconhecimento como comunicólogo, discute os estudos de comunicação no contexto de midiatização da sociedade e investe nas articulações entre comunicação e experiência estética, para "socializar o sensível" e "sensibilizar o social", nas palavras de Herman Parret, como "estratégias sensíveis", na linha do que propõe Muniz Sodré.

Palavras-chave: Mediações, midiatização, percurso do reconhecimento, comunicação, experiência estética

Y así nos reconocemos
Por el lejano mirar
Por la copla que mordemos
Semilla de inmensidad
Atahualpa Yupanqui

RECOGNITION. MORE THAN a stage of communication studies and knowledge construction, my stay at the Graduate Program in Communication Sciences of the School of Communications and Arts at Universidade de São Paulo (PPGCOM-ECA/USP) represented, for me, the opening to a course of recognition, a term I would come to know by Paul Ricœur's work a few years later. This idea of recognition can be applied to the very concept of communication, if taken as an interactional phenomenon in which active subjects find themselves in dialogue, consensus, and oppositions. Especially when I observed that the current society is in an increasingly intense process of mediatization — as Braga (2006) and Hjarvard (2014) problematize by analyzing the social and cultural changes of our times —, I found that the construction of knowledge implies dynamics of recognition by these subjects in their processes of communication interaction.

In the early 1990s, during my PhD at PPGCOM at ECA, the readings Professor Maria Immacolata Vassalo de Lopes proposed led me "from the media to the mediations," as proposed by Jesús Martín-Barbero (1987) to identify and define the "cultural mediations of communication," a theoretical--epistemological conception that unfolded into several maps and even into a second formulation: the "communicational mediations of culture" (Martín-Barbero, 2004), which joins the first. The History of Communication Theories classes with the late Professor João Aloísio Lopes made me recognize myself not only as a communicator but also as a communicologist. The questions Professor Cremilda Medina presented challenged me to think about communication from a plural, dialectical, and interdisciplinary perspective. The meetings with the also late professor Jerusa da Pires Ferreira reinforced the connections I had already rehearsed between communication and popular culture, literature, music, and arts in general. The dialogues with professors Ismar de Oliveira Soares, Mauro Wilton de Souza, Adilson Odair Citelli, and the late professor Elza Dias Pacheco renewed my interest in reception studies and my commitment to education which I had brought from my master's degree, conducted under Professor Luiz Roberto Alves' guidance (who is still at Universidade Metodista de São Paulo). During that period, I had contact with several teachers,

in addition to many classmates with whom I interact to this day and who serve as references and readings.

I recognize that the PPGCOM at ECA-USP is a matrix for my education, as it is for many people; a place in which I could build knowledge and the bases to draw my course of recognition as a communicator interested in articulating communication and aesthetic experience (Barros, 2014a) and think of "communication without anesthesia" (Barros, 2017), as I was later able to elaborate. In recent years, I have sought to base articulations between communication, aesthetics, and politics.

I had already been working with Communication Theories when I joined PPGCOM at ECA-USP, but it was from my PhD onward that I was able to understand the delimitations of our field of study and the always transitory specificities of our objects of study in a more dense, broad, and complex way. My experiences and interactions with teachers and colleagues with whom I was able to share my day-to-day life in the classroom led me to build during those years and throughout my long teaching career the awareness that the recognition process is continuous and demands the constant rediscovery of oneself. Thus, that study experience between 1989 and 1994 is very present in my professional career, always renewing itself given the opportunity I have to meet and live with new students every academic period given the diversity and constant updating of research themes I have advised.

As I recall my passage by PPGCOM at ECA-USP – a program that completes 50 years of age and has created so many frameworks –, I recognize its importance in building Brazilian communication thinking. In narrating a little of this history, I highlight two of my theoretical-epistemological bases from readings of Jesús Martín-Barbero and Paul Ricœur, briefly articulating them with other authors and dialogues with researchers who have occupied themselves with both authors' ideas and serve as a counterpoint to problematize and question our field of studies. In narrating my readings, I narrate and recognize myself in a way, as Paul Ricœur proposes when he discusses the idea of seeing, saying, narrating, and recognizing oneself.

FROM MEDIATION TO MEDIATIONS, "FROM TEXT TO ACTION"

The epistemological displacement proposed by Martín-Barbero (1987) brought me new perspectives to understand communication studies and eventually strengthened my Latin American identity. It also troubled me, a salutary retreat from our comfort zones, forcing us to overcome the linearity of the most

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fatalistic criticism to the "cultural industry" and the superficiality of the functionalist instrumental vision so we could bet on the possibilities of emancipating the spectator, as Jacques Rancière (2012) proposes and had already featured at the basis of Martín-Barbero's thought due to his proximity to Paulo Freire's libertarian pedagogical propositions.

More than a watertight category model, the mediations Martín-Barbero mapped were configured as dynamic keys to examine phenomena that are constantly changing, such as those we engage in communication. Thus, I understand that it is inappropriate to use the term in the singular, as a label and mere classification. It is not about mediation this or mediation that. These are cultural and communicational mediations that feedback and tension each other. They should be thought *"from mediations to mediations,"* as Girardi Júnior (2018) suggests when discussing the issue of technicality in Martín-Barbero's maps. The use of the term in the singular impairs the idea of displacement to mediations; maintaining the emphasis on the media as if it were talking *from the media to mediation* or even *mediation to mediation*. Mediations lie beyond media even if taken as "communication mediations of culture" (Martín-Barbero, 2004)[1]. They should be considered as devices modulating and giving nuance to communication interactions and acting in processes of meaning production either in either production poetics or in the plane of "reception aesthetics," as per the thinkers of the Konstanz School.

As Maria Immacolata Lopes (2018, p. 51) well identifies, "Barbero's cartography concerns a strategic-rhizomatic method and the mediations should be seen as devices that intersect in a constant movement of mutation, renewal, and updating." Whether from the perspective of "cultural mediations of communication" (the first maps) or "communication mediations of culture" (which emerged later in the context of questions about a possible return of mediations to the media), Martín-Barbero offers us a consistent strategy to think of communication and culture in mediated society. If we find "cultural mediations of communication," i.e., if culture models, modulates, and tensions communication processes and are within the meaning production of production dynamics and media reception, on the other hand, we must acknowledge the "communication mediations of culture" since communication is a structuring component of contemporary culture. This happens not only in the infrastructure but also in the superstructure since it marks the idea of society mediatization. In fact, the second movement of Martín-Barbero's theory — "communication mediations of culture" — holds a certain synonymy with society and culture

[1] In fact, here too, the translation of Martín-Barbero's (2004) "mediaciones comunicacionales de la cultura" as "mediações comunicativas da cultura" (communicative mediations of culture) in the Brazilian edition of *Ofício de Cartógrafo*, compromises the understanding of the displacement proposed by the Spanish-Colombian thinker. Rather than devices or mechanisms that produce communication, they constitute structures and devices that take place in communication.

mediatization. As Gislene Silva (2012) explains, we could reconcile the concepts of mediation and mediatization based on Muniz Sodré's (2002) reformulated concept of "*media bios*."

Navigating Martín-Barbero's maps led me, like many, to establish articulations with the cultural studies of the New English Left. We have to delve deeper into Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, Edward Palmer Thompson, Stuart Hall, and their Gramscian heritages. Ana Carolina D. Escosteguy (2018) details these affinities between thinkers of the Birmingham School and Martín-Barbero and other Latin American authors' propositions. Among them, I highlight Guillermo Orozco Gómez's (2005) classifications, based on Martín-Barbero's cartography, who helped me in application exercises with communication students; namely, technological, cognitive, situational, reference, and institutional mediations.

The paradigm of mediations presented to me at PPGCOM at ECA-USP almost 30 years ago still serves as a theoretical-epistemological basis for my research, advisories, and teaching. Thinking about communication based on culture and British and Latin American cultural studies (Lopes, 2014) constitutes an exercise which mobilizes me and a perspective in which I recognize myself, integrating my communicational thinking-doing.

However, something caught my attention when I began to study Martín-Barbero's work more closely: he had been a student of Paul Ricœur in France. Beyond British culturalists' sociology of culture, it seemed I needed to study a little of that French thinker's vast work. After all, much of mediation theory applies to the debate on the processes of interpreting media discourses and to studies on the production of meanings from the perspective of reception. In addition to the contributions of a cultural anthropology, I had to understand the contribution of hermeneutics to mediations theory – whether regarding the production of meaning related to production and reception perspectives or identity and otherness issues – to fully grasp the idea of mediations worth articulating to Paul Ricœur's hermeneutic reflections, which are closely associated with Martín-Barbero's thought. Moreover, the very displacement "from the media to mediations," giving his paradigmatic work its name, approaches Ricœur's (1991) unfolding "from text to action" in his homonymous book. When the production of meanings goes beyond *poiesis* continents (the products conveyed in the media) and unfolds into an aesthetic experience of perception within *aisthesis* (the dynamics of reception marked by cultural and communication mediations), the text unfolds into action and an experience of recognition and affirmation of active subjects in society.

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When subjects narrate, they narrate themselves, thus building their subjectivity and becoming authors, i.e., more than passive spectators. When aesthetic experience becomes poetic experience (Barros, 2019a) – a continuum between *poiesis* and *aisthesis* – subjects construct the recognition of themselves and the other, of "oneself as another" (Ricœur, 2006). The educommunication researchers at ECA-USP, mentioned at the beginning of this text, followed Mario Kaplún and invested in a new communication praxis which implies giving voice and access to media devices so subjects (who are often silenced) could narrate their stories and themselves, thus authoring their course of recognition. This narrative, marked by concrete temporalities and territorialities and a range of cultural mediations has the power of empowerment. Identities constructed via narratives – or "narrative identities," as Ricœur defines it (1988, 2010) – can be thought of as a place articulating affection and politics, which Rancière (2005) calls "distribution of the sensible."

In the case of educators who admit themselves "ignorant schoolmasters," according to Rancière (2015), once again, the possibility of emancipating spectators and forming communicologist communicators (Barros, 2014b) who articulate and tension doing and thinking communication configures a challenge and a commitment.

Times of hate speech, cancellation, and disinformation require betting and investing in a *communication without anesthesia*, stated as an aesthetic experience that configure, as Parret (1993, p. 174) proposes, that "the social is sensibilized and the sensible socialized" at the same time. We should, of course, avoid working these relations in a romantic and irenic way. Distributing the sensitive consists of consensus, oppositions, harmonies, dissonances, negotiations, resistances, and assimilations within culture and politics. It takes place in "transculturation" relationships, as Octavio Ianni (2000, p. 107) defines the result of conquest and domination or even interdependence and accommodation processes; sharing that transforms reality, changing the polis; sharing that takes place in the plane of the common and in its plurality, enabling us to understand the diversity of the others with whom we live not in search of equality but of otherness in diversity. For Muniz Sodré (2006, p. 69) "the common is the sensitive harmony of singularities capable of producing a harmonization of the diverse."

PRODUCTION OF MEANING, IDENTITY, AND ALTERITY

The question of recognition, so dear to Ricœur, brought into question in this text, and its articulations between narrative and time, identity and otherness,

and the power of narrating and the power of acting are close to the foundations of Martín-Barbero's mediation theory.

Understanding Paul Ricœur's dimensions of recognition at conferences held in 2001 and 2002 in Vienna and Freiburg and gathered in *The Course of Recognition* (Ricœur, 2006) can help us articulate these mediations, production of meaning, and recognition. For this, I briefly return to a text I called *"O 'Percurso do Reconhecimento' para Tempos de Ódio: Estesia e Produção de Sentidos em Paul Ricœur"* (Barros, 2020). His book contains three studies. The first one refers to, as I wrote, "identifying something as something that is already part of the repertoire of those who recognize, of identifying the other as someone already known. To recognize, in this angulation, is to put again in mind, is to re-elaborate what was once mentally elaborated" (Barros, 2020, p. 191). In terms of a practical judgment, it is a question of distinguishing, of recognizing that one is not the other, of a classification exercise, of selection. Ricœur identifies this recognition dimension in the plane of "sameness" or of "*idem* identity."

His second study brings the idea of recognizing how *to recognize oneself* as self-identification. "In this angulation, subjects recognize their idiosyncrasies and abilities and recognize themselves as individuals. In it, subjects recognize their singular identity" (Barros, 2020, p. 191). Ricœur calls this dimension *ipse* identity since it involves recognizing subjects, their I, and make oneself recognized. In this perspective, "recognition happens in the dialectic between 'being able to narrate and narrate oneself' in a narrative identity that places the *idem* identity in a dialectical relation to the *ipse* identity, of *I am*" (Barros, 2019b, p. 44). This dimension significantly marks the relations between time and discourse, which Ricœur (2010) addresses in *Time and Narrative*. The second chapter of *The Course of Recognition* treats recognition as a movable identity, considered in its historical temporality and, due to the changing nature of the being in a situation, in action. Recognizing this dimension relates to being in time in an expression of *ipseity*.

Ricœur completes his course with *mutual recognition* in another dialectical tension, "now between identity and otherness, a dimension he had already worked in *Oneself as Another*" (Barros, 2020, p. 192). This perspective expresses the first meaning of communication, found in the "*making common*" of the Latin verb *communicare*. It involves "recognizing the other and recognizing oneself in the other, recognizing an I in the diversity of the Other, in a relationship of reciprocity and mutuality which implies the recognition of equal rights between the subjects of a society" (Barros, 2020, p. 192).

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My course of recognition, marked in a defining way by my PhD at ECA-USP, brought this dimension of intense otherness and led me to recognize myself as one who carries many others, as Ricœur teaches us in the whole of his work. Others with whom I currently live, near and far, which affect and transform me and with whom I discuss and dispute times and spaces. Others I bring from the past which preceded me — my ancestors, my ethnic-cultural roots, the coexistence I had and what I read — are in me; many who have formed me and continue to form me and others still who are yet to come but are already in my expectations about the future, in my commitments to tomorrow.

Ricœur's *mutual recognition* leads us to recognize ourselves as different subjects, in our dissymmetrical constitutions, in the other. This dimension of recognition leads us to break with logics of individualism and to recognize ourselves as part of the collective. He challenges us to think and communicate in interaction, dialogue, and dialectics. And so, we can con-verse, co-work, and co-live. We can talk *with* the other, rather than *to* the other, as this text will soon discuss, from a dialogue perspective. As Merleau-Ponty elaborates:

> In the experience of dialogue, there is constituted between the other person and myself a common ground; my thought and his are inter-woven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator. (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 413)

When considered from the perspective of dialogue, communication occurs between subjects in dialogue rather than in relations between active subjects and objects suffering those actions. If we recognize ourselves thus within our temporalities and territorialities, we share meanings and sensitivities as ever-changing human beings. As Lévinas (1993, p. 49) states, "the relationship with the Other questions me, empties me from myself and never ceases to empty me, discovering me with ever new possibilities."[2]

As I wrote in *"O 'Percurso do Reconhecimento' para Tempos de Ódio"*, when communication is thought from the perspective of otherness, "the production of meanings takes place beyond the mere exegesis of what is contained in messages. It takes place in the plane of recognition which arises in exercises of interpretation." The question of understanding "does not take place from the perspective of explanation but from understanding because it implies the interpretation and appropriation of meanings that are revealed in a process of

[2] This and other translations, by the author.

recognition and dialogue between interlocutors" (Barros, 2020, p. 193). Thus, in fact, communication arising gives rise to communication.

By discussing issues of identity in a dialectic between *idem* and *ipse,* Ricœur also confronts identity and otherness and maintains that the issue of identity has "a double, private and public, aspect."

Although Ricœur advocates complementarity or even a reciprocity between explaining and understanding, when he works hermeneutically with the interpretation of texts within communication and mediated narratives – combining languages and triggering cultural mediations – the production of meaning seems to better lie within understanding. If we take spectators as emancipated and active subjects in their experience of perception, meaning goes beyond the text but unfolds into spectators' contexts circulating narratives and appropriation processes. Thus, understanding seen as grasping seems to better correspond to the dynamics of interpretation in a semantic-pragmatic plane, in a time-space in which the perception and distribution of the sensible take place.

This emphasis on understanding and communicational flows and mediations puts us, once again, in the face of the ontological question of *oneself* as the other, presented by Ricœur in articulations with Martín-Barbero's mediation paradigm. Thus, the semantic-pragmatic discussion, refined by a complex of cultural and communication mediations, is projected on the ethical-aesthetic plane. According to the French thinker:

> It is finally on the ethical plane that the affection of the self by the other displays the specific features that belong as much to the properly ethical plane as to the moral plane of obligation. The very definition of ethics that we have proposed—living well with and for others in just institutions— cannot be conceived without the project of living well being affected by solicitude, both that which is exerted and that which is received. (Ricœur, 1995, p. 330)

In this context, Ricœur (2014, p. 391, my emphasis) asks us: "The question here is that of determining what new figure of otherness is called for by this affection of the ipse by the other than self and, by implication, what dialectic of the Same and the Other replies to the demand for a phenomenology of the self affected by the other than self." These shared affections in communication processes, in movements of meeting the other, lead us to the plane of understanding, of the distribution of the sensible taking place in the sphere of the common, the community. Moreover, the idea of otherness challenges us to think about "living well," as the original peoples practice and teach us,

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in addition to an anthropological logic brought by the colonizers and cultivated by the market, in which human life is sensibly shared with other forms of life and with nature itself.

SENSUS COMMUNIS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIETY MEDIATIZATION

Our contemporary mediatized society has multiple and complex mechanisms and possibilities for communication interaction. This context precludes both the simple opposition between media and society (as in the criticism of the "cultural industry") and the definition of the media as a mere infrastructural instrument of social dynamics. We must think media, as we have said, within the superstructure. Communication processes go beyond transits between senders and receivers. As Braga (2006, p. 22) proposes in *A Sociedade Enfrenta Sua Mídia*, beyond instances of sending and receiving, we find a "system of social interactions above the media," which he describes as a third system.

> Thus, we propose to develop the finding of a *third system of media processes* in society which completes the procedurality of general social media, making it effectively function as *communication*. This third system corresponds to productive and directed *response activities* by society in interaction with media products (Braga, 2006, p. 22, my emphasis).

It constitutes, Braga (2006, p. 27) claims, a "system of social interaction about the media (its processes and products)," a "deferred and diffuse circulation system" in which "mediatically produced meanings reach society and begin to circulate in it and in people, groups, and institutions, impregnating and partially directing culture."

Several authors have worked this conception — which Eliseo Verón (1971, 2004) had explored between 1960 and 1970 — in recent years. Stig Hjarvard (2014), for example, turned his attention to institution mediatization, working at the *meso level* of cultural and social processes. An active group of researchers at Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos unfolded the theme of mediatization into theoretical and empirical articulations. Muniz Sodré brought the human being to the center of the discussion by proposing the existence of a *media bios*; a derivation of Aristotelian social bios categories, i.e., our existential spheres: knowledge, pleasure, and politics. Sodré proposes the existence of a fourth sphere — the *media bios*. Thus, he suggests that the media are more than mere information transmitters, but a way of life. For him:

> Sociocultural practices, known as communicational or mediatic, have been establishing themselves as a field of social action which corresponds to a new way of life, which we propose to call the media bios. These practices — a kind of ethicist anthropotechnique — do not exhaust or systematize the linking problem since they more directly relate to the relationships socially managed by media devices and, therefore, the market. (Sodré, 2002. p. 233)

Given this context of society mediatization, of the "deferred and diffuse" circulation of media products, they spread and entrench themselves in social tissues, giving rise to symbolic disputes take place and constructing consensus and opposition. From the mediation perspective, already discussed in this article, these negotiations take place both at the macro social level, in the formation of what is known as public opinion and in community spaces and communities of appropriation. Thus, we must problematize the idea of common sense in communication and aesthetics studies to grasp the appropriations taking place in the real spaces of institutions, movements, and communities. People acquaint themselves and recognize each other in this sphere of everyday life. Moreover, this space is also structured in the mediatization logic — or the communication mediations of culture.

When this recognition and sensible experience occurs in daily life and community relationships (appropriation groups), we find more than a social consensus, more than a *sensus communis*. We should think of culture communicational mediations as a place of affirmation and recognition, of affections and knowledge produced from a "*sensus communalis*," as Herman Parret (1997) suggests in *Aesthetics of Communication*. For him, "sensus *communis* is the *sensus* of a community […] which is not argumentative or consensual: it is affective" (Parret, 1997, p. 197). Hence, then, his question-provocation: "why not aestheticize the political on the basis of the essential temporality of the affective community?" (Parret, 1997, p. 199).

In this dialectical context, Ângela Salgueiro Marques (2011, p. 30) asks:

> Would not aesthetic experience also be a problematizing experience? Would not the actions of "indulging in something, being touched by something, and exercising something" show an experience of the order of fruition, transformation, and the production of something new? Experience thus acts as a mediation that helps subjects to have access to an understanding produced about themselves, about others, and about the world in which they live.

Thus, the researcher from Minas Gerais considers that this experience — one's recognition of oneself and the other — may be called aesthetics since the

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perception of oneself is marked by affections and an understanding of the sharing of life with others. As Maria Teresa Cruz (1990, p. 63)[3], defines it, the aesthetic experience "offers subjects a way of experiencing an awareness of oneself and the horizons of their experience of the world."

IN CONCLUSION

What I learned during my doctorate at PPGCOM at ECA-USP enabled me to understand communication as sharing far beyond transmission. As I stated in *Vozes Que Dão Voz* (Barros, 2018, p. 185, my emphasis), "communication itself is interaction, a relationship of otherness," thus appropriate to think "in the sense of *speaking with the other*, not in *speaking to the other*." After all, "this is the original meaning of the Latin term *communicare*, which suggests to us the idea of sharing, of making something common." In this perspective, interactional relationships ground themselves in recognizing the existence of an Other who is a subject and not just the object of my action, and who, although unlike me, is my peer for they carry an I in them. It constitutes, as I argued, "a game between ipseity and otherness, a process that takes place in the sphere of the common, of shared senses" (Barros, 2018, p. 185).

In line with what I discussed in that text, this autobiographical reflection retrieves two quotations by Paul Ricœur that tension these recognition dimensions: ipseity and otherness. The second, from the book *Oneself As Another*, further develops this speculative dimension of recognizing the Other that exists in I and the I that exists in the Other. For him, "the other is not condemned to remain a stranger but can become my counterpart, that is, someone who, like me, says 'I.'" (Ricœur, 2014, p. 390).

Thus, we can think-do communication as understanding and break with systems that deny diversity and annihilate the different, building otherness in times of "othercide." As Achille Mbembe (2017, p. 10) claims, "the constitution of the Other not as similar to oneself but as a menacing object from which one must be protected or escape, or which must simply be destroyed if it cannot be subdued." When he discusses "the racial subject," the Cameroonian thinker confronts the culture of hatred that marks our times; times in which lack of communication is unfortunately predominant and disputes space with anesthetizing communication, in which subjects fail to recognize themselves.

If we think and practice communication as an aesthetic experience from the perspective of interaction, we can recognize ourselves as diverse and alike

or similar subjects at the same time. It is in this perspective that the distribution of the sensible of these lines takes place. To recollect and celebrate is something that constitutes us collectively. To recollect is also an action of resistance and (re)existence. It is an opportunity to recognize ourselves in projects common to many, as is the case of PPGCom at ECA-USP. M

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Epistemophilia: Slowness, fractures, self-research paresis towards a non-anthropocentric anthropology

Epistemofilia: Lentidão, fraturas, paresia da autopesquisa rumo a uma antropologia não antropocêntrica

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ABSTRACT

The present essay follows my personal experience before and after entering university, when I started teaching and conducting research. After criticizing the methods of dialectics and synthesis, the researcher's identity is pluralized to affirm a transitive perspective based on a moving constellation which designs certain mutant and fundamental concepts: Fetishism, syncretism, polyphony, heteronomy, diaspora, friendship, surprises, ubiquity, gender, indiscipline, and Marx66. Ethnography emerges as the attempt to interweave anthropology and philosophy for being at the crossroads of the chiasmus.
Keywords: Constellation, Chiasmus, Philosophy, Anthropology, Ethnography

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RESUMO

O ensaio passa pela minha experiência pessoal antes de entrar na universidade e depois, desde que comecei a ensinar e fazer pesquisa. A identidade do pesquisador é pluralizada após ter criticado o método da dialética e da síntese, para afirmar uma visão transitiva baseada em uma constelação móvel que desenha alguns conceitos mutantes e fundamentais: fetichismo, sincretismo, polifonia, heteronomia, diáspora, amizade, espanto, ubiquidade, gênero, indisciplina e Marx66. A etnografia é apresentada como a tentativa de cruzar antropologia e filosofia por estar na encruzilhada do quiasmo.
Palavras-chave: Constelação, quiasmo, filosofia, antropologia, etnografia

MY MEETING WITH theoretical and successively empirical research – that is, first with philosophy then with anthropology and finally with ethnography – was long, tortuous, dense, full of immovable stagnations, sudden fractures, unpredictable surprises. Currently, all that earthquake seems to have calmed down, as if the winds have ceased to blow and my boat continues to motionless undulate on an ocean from which neither shore nor dock can be seen.

The slowness was determined by my opaque condition in trying to see and interpret what was happening to me, both around me and within my weakened identity. After High School, I felt myself sinking into a swamp of unknown meaning to me. I decided to enroll in Political Science without any intention, an intention that was breached by confronting a professor who failed me just because we had different ideas about De Gaulle. My position was correct, but too insecure in exposition. Hence a mix of apathy and curiosity.

In 1967 I used to go a lot to bookstores and was falling in love with atypical magazines (*Quaderni Piacentini*, *Montley Review*, *Quaderni Rossi, Film Critica*) displayed at Feltrinelli or in small bookstores that were proliferating like mushrooms. Since the previous year, for reasons unnecessary to remember, I had started working in air transportation and, to my great surprise, I was elected a member of the Internal Commission by the CGIL Union. Fracture had exploded. A mix of spontaneous studies, political activities, and amorous practices made me decide and enroll in Philosophy always at Sapienza. The year 1968 arrived.

In the creative chaos of those years I managed to coordinate politics, university, and family. Participation in the movements exalted me, brought me out of my doldrums, we used to meet and discuss for hours, eating, smoking, flirting. At university, the walls of authoritarianism suddenly opened and I managed to pass every exam by studying at night or on buses until I discovered the *Frankfurt School* and was fascinated. The family had an unexpected *eploit*. A dear Venezuelan friend offered me two tips: find a professor of Cultural Anthropology who loved the "*Francofortesi*" and publish a book, which she did not like at all. From this fluke, I became a researcher at the university and published *Dialética della Famiglia* which was translated and published without my knowledge by Editora Brasiliense, at the time headed by Caio Graco Prado of whom I became friends after my first invitation to São Paulo, which changed my life.

Both my thesis on *Dialética dell' Illuminismo* and the book were based on dialectics, as can be seen in the titles. And dialectics at the time was for me a logical and political tool, through which I confronted the subject-object issues in a vision of mutual liberation, to free humans and goods from the reciprocal process of reification that transformed both, subject and object, into alienated

beings. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, particularly the chapter Servant-Boss, was determinant for me. The master loses their relation with the object that is taken by the servant; but the servant, having full connection and knowledge with the object, already separated from the master, who placed the servant between the subject-self and the thing-object, ends up dethroning the master. That is so considering that labor establishes political and gnoseological power between subjects. Marx resumed this dialectic and applied it to wage labor, even though in the *Manuscripts of 44* (1967) his position also faced the relationship with nature, thus a philosophical reflection broader than that of the industrial age.

In the drama that the whole of Europe went through (and not only) because of the two world wars, the theme of the reification of human beings and the fetishism of merchandise was taken up again first by the young Lucaks who, having been linked to Stalin, was forced to abjure that text. Then by a new generation of scholars – Adorno (1937, 1955, 1966), Benjamin (1986), Marcuse, Fromm, Horkheimer, and others – detached from the myth of communism realized in only one country, refused to submit to the PCUS and tried to extend reification beyond the production of goods and thus beyond the centrality of the factory.

The fundamental research that turned my education around was *L'autorità e la Famiglia,* directed by Horkheimer. It clearly showed the insufficiency of the so-called Marxist dialectic that would have affirmed the centrality of the economic structure to define the various cultural forms, among which I point out to family. Enlightening essays were those of Marcuse, who shifted the origin of authoritarianism in the family to Luther, therefore, before the post-war crisis. And even more so those of Fromm, who did empirical research applying psychoanalysis to social research and revealing that workers – rather than being "objective" bearers of a revolution that would free the whole world – practiced sexual violence and replicated violent, sexist authoritarianism within their families. In short, the capitalist mode of production was not solely responsible for Nazifascism, for being an authoritarian tradition it was based on both Lutheran religion and worker sexuality.

The problem was more complex: the dialectic seemed to jam. The relationships between human beings, commodities, and nature were intermingled, and results appeared non-synthesized to my partial conclusions of the time. The body had its eroticism, the family its dramas, nature its violations, instincts their irregular and decomposed autonomies, arts had their indispensable imaginations of creative freedom, religions themselves were unresolved from being a vicious addiction, young people were beginning to manifest not only rights but also pleasures of a generation entering history to change it.

DENIAL

Adorno was the one who understood one of the insoluble aspects of dialectics. The synthesis, in fact, in his view, dumped the irreducible tension of denial, a concrete critique of the existing into a new positive (*aufhebung*). Although dialectics was based on a process of infinite change, the positive affirmation of dialectics through synthesis transformed critical thinking into an apologia for the existent. This view was very clear to the philosopher, not so much for politics, and I would say especially for building the party according to a very clear historical model, for the final reflection on aesthetics that was based on negative dialectics. In art, he argued, the irreducible tension lies in dissolving the forms of the existent into totally different visions.

This deep position of Adorno's fascinated me, and yet I felt it was a partial and almost desperate attempt to maintain, even partially in life, the thought from which it had been originated. If Hegel and Marx had clearly centered the most vital moment of dialectics in contradiction (and thus in the power of denial), Freud's discovery made him further sharpen the tragic view of impetuses and culture in general.

In that period, some importance of sociobiology in its connections with ethology and anthropology was spreading. Wilson's text was the stage for heated debates, and became well-known for its radically opposed position. In short, anthropologists rejected *en bloc* the Selfish Gene hypothesis and the so-called *meme*. I was in agreement about this position, but nevertheless felt there was something missing in the culturalist critique. While attending a conference on the topic, I presented a paper based on the concept of *hypo-structure*. And I should say that my professor at the time, Armando Catemario, liked it very much. Briefly, I tried to see human issues related not only to the dialectic-structure-superstructure, while on this last dimension I had already pointed out Gramsci's fundamental criticisms. Published many years after his death, in the Prison Notebooks, Gramsci strongly asserted the relative autonomy of culture, seen no longer as deterministically derived from structure, i.e., from the Industrial Revolution. This view was of enormous importance in the birth of *cultural studies* that, as is well-known, started facing empirical research based on an urban ethnography verse youth cultures in Britain.

In my view, the dialectic ignored the power of the magmatic dimensions underlying not only the evolution of Homo Sapiens, but of the entire process of civilization. Instincts, emotions, impulses, "centered" attitudes (Eurocentric, phallocentric, etc.) have had and continue to have strong influences on cultural and industrial production, on diffuse behaviors in both leisure and work times. Therefore, I tried to design a kind of dialectic

reform that could no longer bear the same name, based on a triangular inte-
raction between drives, culture, production: that is, between hypostructure,
superstructure, and structure.

I wrote an essay on this hypothesis of "reform" that I tried to state in some
conferences, but I did not have the strength or the ability to develop it into a
complete book. I needed funding, for sure, but even more, I needed time to get
away from academic life, from its daily commitments, which I loved, to devote
myself solely and exclusively to the structure of hypostructure. It was a failure.
However, sometimes I think it was important because it allowed me to turn to
something unexplored.

EPISTEME

In the late 1980s, which are generally considered dark if not reactionary
years, I began to notice and approach a listening to epistemology out of tune.
In the sense that it sounded out of scientific harmonies given by the major and
therefore emanated a pulsating, obsessive, undisciplined cry. Science, in its
historical meaning in the West, was determined by the *logos*, thus meaning the
logic's objectivity. In those years, a different approach was being developed:
perhaps here *logos* had the similar meaning of anthropo-*logy*: that is discourse,
dialogic, polyphony. The problem area, when directed toward a different approach,
was named *complexity challenge*. Powerful project between very different scho-
lars who did not seek any synthesis, but rather respected the coexistence in the
complex constellation of different guidelines.

Dialectics had retired and with it the binary logical relations between
subject and object.

My readings in the 1980s rested quietly and reflectively on the work
of Gregory Bateson, about whom I wrote much and applied much in my
ethnographic research. *Towards an ecology of mind* (1976) is a fragmentary
text, perhaps the fundamental book of an author who was opening spaces,
perspectives, interpretations other than the traditional ones. Metalogue,
double link, sacred, mental ecology, the entanglement-that-connects, nature-
culture, coevolution human being and environment, map-territory: joint
concepts that opened epistemology and from the *logos* approaching it to *philia*.
An enterprising student of mine who had gone to New York to attend the
Academy sent me a priceless book that Gregory wrote and filmed together
with his wife Margaret Mead: *Balinese Character*. The trance captured in a
ritual showed long-haired women dancing and violently beating themsel-
ves on the chest with the *kriss*. Equally and more aggressively, so to speak,

men twisted the blade of daggers that did not penetrate the flesh, stiffened by the alteration.

Gregory retired from anthropology and anthropologists; however, an innovative scientist, Norbert Wiener, invited him to participate in the first meeting that would take place among a group of scholars where cybernetics was "invented." Wiener had read Gregory's complex book based on his only field research among the Iatmul of New Guinea, where a "complex" concept emerged: schismogenesis. The trend among various groups or clans to divide or remain united, very soon. Anyway, the cybernetic hypothesis was based precisely on feedback or retroaction that had strange proximity to schismogenesis. The search is bizarre. A concept that emerged during a ritual – where maternal uncles try to seduce their nephews by dancing and rubbing their backs on the children's bodies – was similar to the model of nascent computing. A nice epistemological problem that can perhaps be tackled with episteme-philia.

The relations between nature and culture are no longer considered dichotomous. The structuralism that radicalized such a model exhausted itself like the dialectic of which it was a distant descendant, perhaps its last follower. The ecology of mind was the first and most radical step beyond dialectics. The connection between beings that exchange information, be they human, animal, plant, mineral, divine, extends the concept of mind and diffuses it among every entity that is crossed by the communication flows. Nature finally becomes a living being that breathes, moves, changes; human beings, as part of nature, co-create genetic and stratigraphic mutations. This definition makes any synthesis impossible. The many and different minds interact by continuous metamorphic assembling, mutating fragments, like a mosaic whose tiles do not stay clued, but move continuously creating new images. In fact, the same tiles incorporate transformations that make them to some extent strange to their neighbors, in turn strange to themselves and to others. The expansion of what is called "mind" to the farthest diversity creates a multifaceted model of communication in its deep connection between every living entity. One could argue that the *subject-object* dialectic decays as the ecology of mind diffuses subjectivity to every sacral creature.

Imagining that a glorious pine tree, a bizarre rock, a majestic elephant, a mysterious cave, a restless book, the unknown smile are individuals with their biologies and biographies: and that their stories are a constituent part of me, my "I" that slips into their fluid identities along with all these subjectivities. It is time to assert a different anthropology: the one that, for now, I will tentatively try to call *non-anthropocentric anthropology*.

CONSTELLATIONS

This whole theoretical process, still quite nebulous, has precipitated into a kind of Maelstrom in reverse. For me, already a castaway of dialectics whether synthetic or negative, I was sucked into a multiverse I did not know, except for passionate but distracted or distant readings. The event took place under the sign of the divine *Kairós*, the god of sudden chance should be immediately grasped by the top of his forehead hair, because behind, he is bald and smooth as the ball on which his winged feet roll. One day my editor at Savelli calls me and says that a book has arrived for me, translated, the *Dialectic of the family*. Of course I run to withdraw it and see that it is a great edition, much better than the Italian one, and that it has a preface by a philosopher: Olgaria Matos.

In a mix of pride and curiosity, I write to the *Brasiliense* on the address shown in the inside pages. The times when the Post Office services were slow, and the Brazilian ones were even slower. However, the letter signed by Caio Graco Prado finally arrived, in which he explained the case: he was walking through Milan when he entered the Livraria Feltrinelli, a very well-known bookstore in Italy, saw my book, bought it and asked to have it translated. He published four editions in a short time and continues to be quoted, according to the information that reaches me daily.

To sum up, they invited me to deliver a course at the University of USP. I obtained financing from the Italian Institute of Culture to disseminate and present some of Pasolini's films at the MIS. This is how I ended up living in Frei Caneca and discovered Augusta, a street that made me fall in love immediately and became my teacher by opening up all the other streets to me, not only in São Paulo, but all over Brazil. I reported my difficulties of arrival in the preface of *Città Polifonica* (2019), referenced in the text, for anyone interested. From that distant year, 1984 was marked by a frosted forecast by a famous book, I began, without stopping, the crossing of Brazilian complexity challenging the classical principles on which the theory, method, writing, images were based, and that difficult to decipher feeling that mixes beauty, emotion, disorientation.

One night, walking by myself on Rua Augusta, teacher and lover, I saw a strange drawing on a store window, maybe a fashion design or a poster of a movie in my favorite theater. I drew it in my notebook because it reminded me of something from high school: a χ. Many years later, seeing that notebook with the drawing, I had an idea. For some years I was in Florianópolis teaching in a village, an offer made by the teacher who had invited me, located on a hill, from where I could see the *Lagoa* (lagoon) on one side and the sea on the other. The panorama spanned the linear extension of calm waters and the undulating movement of the rough waters. From that *Hill*, a first confused image of a

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constellation and graphic came to me that could configure the slow and conceptual mobility (*festina lente*) with the shape of the χ (pron. chi, *ch* aspirated).

The straight line evoked to me **Philosophy**, so calm, decided and oblique, with a strong mark between its formidable history and an uncertain present forever "friend of knowledge". The contorted line struck me as **Anthropology**, so restless, corsair and sinuous. Both have European matrices (from Talet to Zenone, from Xenophon to Tacitus, from Malinoski to Levi-Strauss), lit from understanding the cosmos in general, and intrigued by diverse non-European cultures. One solidly settled in its own polis, the other lightly traveling through different worlds: both seemed to me relatively inadequate due to their growing divergences.

Then I realized a third decisive point: at their liminal meeting point, a bewitching and undefined cross, I imagined that **Ethnography**, the indiscipline of empirical field research, could intersect. If it was begotten from anthropology with a dense curriculum of Philosophy, ethnography chose some time ago to belong to no one, since *it* could define itself as both heir and traitor to both. In rejecting completed systems, fixed paradigms, generalist theories, scattered stereotypes, *it* probes concepts, rituals and myths, symbols and cultures from everywhere, claims singular micrologic passions, observes everything with reflexive arts, collects details, scraps, leftovers, margins. It disdainfully rejects the interview and loves the dialog between different and therefore equal subjects, in fact equal because it is not identical; sometimes it photographs or films always together with the other, involving people or roads, forests or buildings. It loves the "native" self-representation that the digital facilitates, observes with participatory glances the excesses in social networks. In this unforeseen, familiar and strange present – instead of getting apart – seems to mix to release openings and intend isolations.

Ethnography is a solitary research in the strangest or most familiar contexts, trying to interrogate and question itself surrounded by partial and elusive micrology. Because, among other things, ethnography is reflexive: the researcher always questions themselves when confronting the other, thing or person; they learn to make explicit their own emotions not removed or suppressed; sometimes desires, phobias, anxieties, passions, imaginations can be decisive features of the research. The ethnographer *observes the self while observing*, dialogues with the other and with the self, jumps with delicate attention between the inside and outside of the empirical context frame, because the epistemological framework sometimes need to be unmolded. Step outside the established and perhaps rigid paradigm; indulge into unexpected methods; imagine complex epistemologies.

Research in the field is the most alive and worthy part, not so much for those at the university, but for anyone who wants to put their certainties into play and challenge them. Researching is to abandon oneself in the unknown that surrounds us to try to clarify some parts – from arts to communication, from analog to digital, from architecture to kinship. Surrendering in the sense of *giving up*, which in a certain ethnography means letting go of the flows of spontaneity, decentering or loosening theoretical beliefs and implicit biases. Ethnography rejects generalist statements or universalist theories: it always looks for fragments, pursues them with passion, sometimes elaborates an assemblage of these fragments collected over time and space, of destiny (*telos*) to almost always present themselves as temporary. The fragment may partially light up a context or suggest trends, but not the entire reference culture. Collecting fragments and stringing them into a necklace of undefined conceptual seeds is an initiatory metaphor for the ethnographic obsession: glimpse the movement of the constellation.

Composing an essay became collecting spaced conceptual fragments that at a given moment I decided to "fix" – that is, observe them and observe myself in the process of writing. Among the indigenous cultures of Brazil, especially Bororó and Xavante, where I developed my research (Canevacci, 2013, 2017), necklaces consist of pierced seeds, sometimes with part of shells, often with multicolored feathers, or white cotton extracts. I have many necklaces that were gifted to me by my friends but that I dare not wear. Some are beautiful and I would say almost unique: so I transfigure them into rows of geometric conceptual fragments that try to draw the enigmatic meaning of the other: a ritual, a friendship, a panorama. A conceptual necklace in calm and agitated movement, with motto and endless.

The Greek letter χ draws my endless necklace: the central point is the mythical crossroads from which the ethnography departs, which evokes the dissonant depth of Polykleto and *re-actualizes his sculptural philosophy in the form of a chiasmus*. In seeking the aesthetic beauty of the body to be transfigured into statue, the artist Polykleto should not achieve the perfection of harmonic beauty. Through the figure of the chiasmus, the body generates asymmetrical intersections for each statuary work. Contrary to what is usually stated, the chiasmus has no letter χ with two symmetrical terms to cross (**X**), but it is χ with three divergent signs, whose central point is an intersection that belongs to no one: it is the *limen* where **Ethnography** grafts diverging exchanges between **Anthropology** and **Philosophy**, where *she ethnographer* is no longer a philosopher, but not yet an anthropologist, she is the liminal point where everything can change.

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Constellation incorporates the intrusive traffic of ethnography that wants to break and chew the flavors/knowledge of Anthropology and Philosophy. Ethnography is the cake chewed with gluttonous wisdom – *mystical-chewing* – when it stops at orality-anthropology, before being swallowed in the throat-philosophy. At the intersection "between" no longer chewed and not yet swallowed, Ethnography stands where it undergoes its liminal mutation (the "changing" of skin).

Constellation does not suggest any pragmatics. Its task is to clarify the perspective offered by a set of concepts that I will try to present, and that has grown over the years during the entanglements of doing empirical research in contexts too familiar and too strange. Out of these "plots" emerges *an empirical and conceptual movement* that is the brilliant outcome between *fieldwork* and *desktop*. Empiricism and theory challenge each other with quiet reciprocity, bouncing between disorderly action and sedentary calm. It is not about making reason emotional: during fieldwork research, reason is already emotional in its sensitive immanence.

Constellation takes up the concept designed last century by some increasingly current philosophers, and thrusts it into the territories – material and immaterial – of ethnography, suggesting the death of dialectics. I will only speak occasionally of the Bororó, Xavante, and Krahó – my research experiences in the most emotional and wise field – the rituals of juvenile initiation, of funeral transfiguration or mental alteration are present among the white spaces of lines, words, margins. George Marcus' (1995) *multi-sited ethnography* perspective is as enlightening to me as the assemblage of quotations for Walter Benjamin or the data set for Gregory Bateson. With such an approach, ethnography no longer focuses on a single context to narrate it with the "dense" interpretation when the subject approaches Yatmul, Samoan inhabitants, Balinese, Trobrians.

In the process of my ethnographic research in the *village* of Meruri (the same village as Levi-Strauss in *Trópicos Tristes*) the Sangradouro (which Maybury Lewis defines as "dialectic"), I could understand that these cultures could not be understood as an isolated phenomenon only through relations with neighboring cities (Cuiabá or Primavera Dell'Est), far metropolises (São Paulo, and even Rome or New York) the self-managed use with the social networks of *Aldeia Digital* or *Etnomida* could help me alleviate the so-called "native" cultures. This term is hopelessly Eurocentric, since even the "natives" exercise a multi-sited life jumping between local and global. My friends Kleber Meritororeu, Felix Adonuenau, Domingos Mohoroe'o – and even more the new generations – have always physically transited between *village* and metropolis, traveling, studying, delivering lectures or political demonstrations; or ubiquitously with the digital

that has fostered connections between them and the rest of the world. Currently, I can say that their cosmologies can be affirmed thanks to cosmopolitan perspectives. Multi-sited ethnography reviews their concrete experience and can redraw the neocolonial sense of being labeled "native".

If each *village* is no longer isolated (or nearly so), the "correct" term of *native* – successor to primitive, savage, unwritten, etc. – must apply to a Bororo as well as to a Roman. So if my German friend is not defined as a native because he was born in Berlin, why should I call Adonuenau born in Meruri a native? Perhaps because it is alluded that *more Berlin-born*, in the sense that he is or would be closer to nature from birth. A more original, pure, authentic, uncontaminated native. We know that no birth is only natural, but always culturally performed. These more polite taxonomies evoke and reproduce colonial values.

Current ethnographic research is transitive (in-between) and challenges Anthropology and Philosophy to get out of their captive chairs to listen to the tensions, conflicts, passions, liberations that ignite in *denativized* movements. One thing for me is certain: the full freedom of the Europeans, from which colonialism originated, also depends on the freeing of the so-called pre-Columbian "native" populations (and not only that). My own freedom has limits, since genocides have been going on for more than 500 years. The extreme fragility of the Yanomami and Kayapós, Bororo and Xavantes is also my own fragility, a fragility that I should find the way to reverse in liberation of every being, human and non-human. Liberation of trees cut down because they are precious like the stones encrusted in reserves, of sacred animals like the *jaguar* fundamental in rituals and today almost extinguished, liberation even of ancestral divinities expelled into exile by missionaries.

My freedom is also multi-sited.

GRAPHISMS

The nexus of *fetishes, polyphonies, syncretism* was my first multi-sited ethnographic approach, a transitive triptych through which the conceptual contours of a moving constellation between different spaces/cultures begin to be outlined. In the following, I will briefly present the design that has become clear to me over time and that still leaves me suspended. I emphasize that each concept of constellation has been developed in specific texts.

Fetishism is immediately imposed by the amazing theories of Marx and the successive ones of the young Lukács in *History and Class Consciousness*, and further with the continuous readings of Benjamin, Adorno, Kracauer; the transversal looks of Bateson, Taussig, Fanon (1971). The turning point,

D for me, was lit in the last ten years when I was faced with an empirical research on objects, goods, things, bodies, films, advertising, to understand the mutations produced by the visual-digital expansion. I therefore had to articulate an anthropological genealogy about the spell in order to *de-reify* its concept, to tear it from its supposed objective use, and to break through the still hegemonistic colonial matrices. It is the *subjectivity* of dominant history that produces, at times, *objective* meanings applied to and often subordinated by the dominated (Canevacci, 2014; Freud, 1981, 1991).

Polyphony is the more sentimental concept, since it emerged from my first empirical investigation, an ethnography of urban communication in São Paulo. I had Bachtin's (1988) readings applied to literature. The observation of a large metropolis (its "narratives") led to a change of perspective, implying an unbalancing of my Benjaminian background on Paris, Berlin, and Naples. All thanks to a neglected and isolated Bachtin in the Soviets. The urban fragments became polyphonic and dialogical facts, no longer dialectical or synthetic. The strident metropolitan dissonance had to find multiple forms of composition, hence the choice to perform three solo voices: essayistic, ethno-poetic, visual.

Syncretism is all a Brazilian conceptual dance. Since my early experiences, this concept immediately emerged in the traditional Afro-Brazilian religious version applied to Candomblé, but even more on the cultural side constituted by music, fashion, food, cinema, architecture. In short, I believe to have absorbed the brilliant anthropophagic revolution of the Paulista avant-garde of the 1920s, to insert it into a different vision that I tried to define as *cultural syncretism*.

Heteronomy and **Diaspora** seem like heterozygous twin sisters. **Heteronomy** is manifested in my path thanks to the discovery of Fernando Pessoa and his *disquiet of selves*, that is, the restlessness of the self that is pluralized in the pronoun while keeping the preposition in the singular and defying grammars. The Portuguese word then has a baroque sonorous beauty punctuated by five "s" that make the rhythm sibilant beyond a plural. It is unfortunate that Bachtin has not read it: Pessoa is much more polyphonic than Dostoevsky and akin to the contemporary Pirandello, to dispense with literary value (Pessoa,1980).

Diaspora came later as a result of post-colonial readings: Paul Gilroy (2003), Homi Bhabha (2001), Arjun Appadurai (1986) enlightened me with their texts and I rethought to the brilliant anticipations of Franz Fanon, whose thought is still active and growing over time. With my passion for Edward Said and Daniel Barenboim (2002), I tried to develop diaspora in an individual and no longer collective sense, a spatial uprooting that preserves some identity traits from the past to transfigure them into present-future life projects. Scenarios of cosmopolitan change in force cross well-localized subjective diasporas.

Stupefaction originates in the passionate epistolary discussion between Benjamin, surrounded by the Paris library, and Adorno already in exile in the United States. Adorno's critique of his more adult friend, defined with the use of "Mr./Ms." is based on a brilliant concept: the *impressive activity*, a magical circle within which Walter Benjamin would be locked. The latter's response is still brilliant, even now. Definitely, the dialogic between the two releases the possible relations between reification and petrification, between history and myth, whereby the mere political or intellectual struggle against commodity alienation is insufficient. The archaic implications return with the often blind, devastating, uncontrolled power of myth, and come together in the camouflage products or the cultural industry. From this unresolved discussion, philosophical astonishment intertwined with anthropological astonishment, which by other ways accompanied the research on visual communication: hence the arduous attempt to develop *methodological astonishment* through the arrangement of a porous body in the moment before the encounter of the other – the unknown.

Ubiquitously is the darling, as the last to arrive. A concept that emerged on its own, almost by parthenogenesis, during my diasporic conditions in São Paulo and especially in Nanjing, where for six months I taught with the privilege of using the Internet, while students (of communication) were denied it in their free time at night. Thus, being able to communicate – even simultaneously – with friends, relatives, acquaintances increased my habitability as an *absolute foreigner*. Whereas in Brazil I was a *relative foreigner* because I could disguise myself in a syncretic way and speak Portuguese, in China that was impossible. The mutations from the concept of the religious matrix (an attentive God who watches you everywhere) to the digital one implied diversified attitudes. The pleasure of feeling partially ubiquitous, communicating at the same time in different spaces, has corresponded to the growing parochial reactions of rejection to reestablish an unshakable territoriality – physical and psychic, family and work. A "pure" parochialism imagined as a salvation against the communicational accelerations from which not a few perceive to be marginalized (Canevacci, 2015, 2016).

Gender has its foundations laid in my last lessons, when I began to explain the translation of *anthropo-logy* (discourses about human beings beyond anthropocentrism) and culture (popular, mass, avant-garde, analog/digital, values, beliefs, behaviors, etc.). And successively I developed the concept of *gender*: arguing that if the sexes are two, genders are infinite, based on the relationship between biology and culture, evolution of species, and the Anthropocene that includes, since always, techno-cultural mutations.

Indiscipline arrived alone when it became clear that the declarations in favor of *multidisciplinary* led to little or nothing, and that the problem was

D the nexus between the social division of labor and the disciplinary division of knowledge. Faculties, Curricula Departments were (are) strongly tied to a *disciplinary* system to encourage the expansion of research. Indiscipline is not a degraded do-as-you-ask, but rather favoring the choices of researchers or students who – based on precise projects – should have the right to insert knowledge-in-chiasmus (Said, 1978, 2006).

Friendship – which is close to gender – shows a relationship that emerges in its altruistic beauty. *It* leads us to rethink lost, rediscovered, augmented friendships, and even that "extended friendship" that, even within its limits, the social network ends up favoring. During the first phase of the pandemic, I was in a condition that I defined as *loneliness not solitude*. The casual and forced separation from my family in Brazil gave me the opportunity to experience expanded friendship with people I never knew in person: well, the results are largely vital and fruitful. It is true that friendship is based and grows on the sharing of experiences, rather than just the ideas and comments on *social*. Put another way, exercising common experiences fosters the friendly growth of similar but not identical ideas. Without common experiences, Friendship is a feeling as beautiful as it is uncertain.

Marx66 is a target that arrives at the end or the beginning of a peripheral-central journey, with a biographical proposal that demands identity excesses. Pursuing my research on the neighborhood where I currently live (Pigneto), after a return to "my" city, I find that I have become partially foreigner in my own home. *The origin is the goal*, says Karl Kraus with irony, only on the return (*nostos*!) the origin is no longer the same. Fortunately. Experiencing domestic estrangement, trying to live with it more than to get rid of it, is a very common (and obsessive) trait for many people in their daily experiences inside or outside "their own" city that is discovered to be *inappropriate*. Hence the astonishment of having seen at night, in "my" Rome at Termini Station, *Marx* reduced to a bus stop heading for a suburb designated for philosophy. *Marx66* seems to invoke a regeneration of criticism, to address exactly this incomprehensible mutation "in" common. Therefore, I decided to divert Marx66 to the historic notary office located on a street devoted to a great Chamber president: Petroselli. Here I will address various trades to solve the problem related to my ubiquitous *identity cards*.

For now, **Constellation** χ design stirs these concepts, challenges them, puts them in transit and assembly, even "informs" them; sometimes it uses these same concepts beyond or against themselves, often intersects them with asymmetrical aesthetics that pursue the unknown. *Syncretic ubiquity. Polyphonic heteronomy. Generative astonishment. Diasporic fetishism*. The wandering between

philosophy and anthropology of the various concepts inscribed in constellation establishes a reciprocal and somewhat uncoordinated influence of the "constellation"; the eye of the researcher observes it from afar after having been very close, indeed, within each small fragment collected with ethnography. The constellation becomes mutant in the assembling of the various concepts in transit, as its design *re-designs* in the reflective process donating anxiety and happiness. Constellation χ is the challenge of matching Anthropology and Philosophy in their known territories and, unavoidably, in the unexplored ones of Ethnography. Constellation χ seems to want to re-update a Latin saying that fascinated during the Florentine Renaissance: *festina lente*. The turtle that sails *slowly fast* on the seas and in the skies, seems to be appropriate to the current phase change between analog slowness and digital speed. The oxymoron, as is well known, cannot be solved, but is destined to be overcome. Constellation χ is illuminated by dissatisfaction with the state of things, because things, each thing, have no *state* but movement. Because *res* – the most advanced and outdated thing in politics – is *public*: and it is even singular-plural. Trying to detect some of these movements – crossed and unexpected – is the purpose of this constellation χ. Because if the origin is shifting and mutating, the goal is vague and wandering: in that blurry other place it is possible to train the *body of the eye* to fix, interrogate, and interpret blurry, mutating wandering drawings in the form of enigmatic *rebus* attractors that have the power to dissolve certainties acquired as soon as one tries to fix them on paper. Ⓜ

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Epistemophilia: Lentezza, fratture, paresi dell'auto-ricerca verso un'antropologia-non-antropocentrica

Epistemophilia: Slowness, fractures, self-research paresis towards a non-anthropocentric anthropology

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SOMMARIO

La ricerca percorre la mia esperienza personale prima di entrare all'università e dopo, da quando ho iniziato a insegnare e a fare ricerca. L'identità del ricercatore si pluralizza dopo aver criticato il metodo della dialettica e della sintesi, per affermare una visione transitiva basata su una costellazione mobile che richiama alcuni concetti mutanti e fondamentali: feticismo, sincretismo, polifonia, eteronomia, diaspora, amicizia, stupore, ubiquità, genere , indisciplina e Marx66. L'etnografia si presenta come un tentativo di attraversare antropologia e filosofia visto trovarsio al crocevia del chiasma.
Parole chiave: Costellazione, chiasma, filosofia, antropologia, etnografia

ABSTRACT

The present essay skims my personal experience before entering university and after, when I started teaching and conducting research. After criticizing the methods of dialectics and synthesis, the researcher's identity is pluralized to affirm a transitive perspective based on a moving constellation which designs certain mutant and fundamental concepts: fetishism, syncretism, polyphony, heteronomy, diaspora, friendship, astonishment, ubiquity, gender, indiscipline, and Marx66. Ethnography emerges as the attempt to interweave anthropology and philosophy for being at the crossroads of the chiasmus.
Keywords: Constellation, chiasmus, philosophy, anthropology, ethnography

IL MIO INCONTRO con la ricerca teorica e successivamente empirica – ovvero prima con la filosofia, poi con l'antropologia e finalmente con l'etnografia – è stato lungo, tortuoso, denso di lagune immobili, di fratture improvvise, di stupori imprevedibili. Attualmente tutto questo tremore sembra essersi placato, come se i venti avessero cessato di soffiare e la mia barca continuasse a ondeggiare immobile in un oceano da cui non si vedono sponde né approdi.

La lentezza fu determinata da una mia condizione opaca nel tentar di vedere e interpretare quello che mi stava accadendo intorno e dentro la mia identità malferma. Finito il liceo, mi sentii sprofondare in una palude di cui non capivo il senso. Decisi di iscrivermi a Scienze Politiche senza alcuna voglia, voglia che si infranse contro un prof che mi bocciò solo perché avevamo idee diverse su De Gaulle. La mia era una posizione giusta ma troppo incerta nell'esposizione. Da qui un misto di apatia e curiosità.

Nel 1967 frequentavo molto le librerie e mi stavo appassionando per riviste atipiche (*Quaderni Piacentini, Montley Review, Quaderni Rossi, Film Critica*) esposte alla Feltrinelli o nelle piccole librerie che stavo proliferando come funghi. Dall'anno precedente, per motivi inutili da ricordare, avevo iniziato a lavorare nel trasporto aereo e, con mia grande sorpresa, fui eletto membro della Commissione Interna col sindacato CGIL. La frattura era esplosa. Un mix di studi spontanei, attività politiche, pratiche amorose mi decisero di iscrivermi a Filosofia sempre alla Sapienza. Arrivava il 1968…

Nel caos creativo di quegli anni, riuscivo a coordinare politica, università, famiglia. La partecipazione ai movimenti mi esaltava, mi fece muovere dalle mie paludi, ci si incontrava e discuteva per ore, mangiando, fumando, amoreggiando. All'università si aprirono improvvise le dighe dell'autoritarismo e riuscivo a superare ogni esame studiando di notte o negli autobus fino a scoprire la *Scuola di Francoforte* e rimanerne affascinato. La famiglia ebbe un *eploit* imprevisto: una cara amica venezuelana mi offrì due dritte: incontrare un prof di Antropologia Culturale che amava i "francofortesi" e di pubblicare un libro che a lei non andava proprio. Da questa casualità, diventai ricercatore all'università e pubblicai *Dialettica della Famiglia* che fu tradotto e pubblicato a mia insaputa dall'*Editora Brasiliense*, all'epoca molto avanzata da Caio Graco Prado con cui diventai amico dopo il mio primo invito a Sao Paulo che cambiò la mia vita.

Sia le mia tesi sulla *Dialettica dell'Illuminismo* che il libro avevano come base la dialettica, come si evince dai titoli. E la dialettica all'epoca era per me uno strumento logico e politico, attraverso cui affrontavo le questione connesse a soggetto – oggetto in una visione di liberazione reciproca, liberare umani e merci dal reciproco processo di reificazione che trasformava

entrambi soggetti e oggetti in esseri alienati. Per me furono determinanti la Fenomenologia dello Spirito di Hegel in particolare il capitolo Servo-Padrone. Il padrone perde la sua relazione con l'oggetto che viene sussunta dal servo; ma il servo avendo piena connessione e conoscenza con la cosa ormai separata dal padrone, che ha messo il servo tra il sé-soggetto e la cosa-oggetto, finisce col detronizzare il padrone. Perché è il lavoro che stabilisce il potere – politico e gnoseologico – tra i soggetti. Marx riprese tale dialettica e la applicò al lavoro salariato, anche sei nei *Manoscritti del '44* (1967) la sua posizione affrontava anche il rapporto con la natura, quindi una riflessione filosofica più ampia rispetto allìera industriale.

Nel dramma che attraversò l'Europa intera (e non solo) tra le due guerre mondiali, il tema della reificazione degli umani e del feticismo delle merci fu ripreso prima dal giovane Lucaks che, legatosi a Stalin fu costretto ad abiurare quel testo; poi da una nuova generazione di studiosi – Adorno (1937, 1955, 1966), Benjamin (1986), Marcuse, Fromm, Horkheimer ed altri – svincolati dal mito del comunismo realizzato in un solo paese rifiutarono di sottomettersi al PCUS e che cercarono di estendere la reificazione oltre la produzione delle merci e quindi oltre la centralità della fabbrica.

La ricerca fondamentale che diede una svolta alla mia formazione fu *L'autorità e la Famiglia,* diretta da Horkheimer che mostrava chiaramente l'insufficienza della cosiddetta dialettica marxista che avrebbe affermato la centralità della struttura economica per definire le varie forme culturali tra cui appunto la famiglia. Saggi illuminanti furono quelli di Marcuse, che spostava l'origine dell'autoritarismo nella famiglia in Lutero, quindi prima della crisi post-bellica. E ancor più di Fromm che fece una ricerca empirica applicando la psicoanalisi nella ricerca sociale e facendo emergere che gli operai – anziché essere portatori "oggettivi" di una rivoluzione che avrebbe affrancato tutto il mondo – praticavano violenze sessuali e replicavano l'autoritarismo violento e sessista dentro la loro famiglia. Insomma il modo di produzione capitalistico non era l'unico responsabile del nazi-fascismo, in quanto una tradizione autoritaria era basata sia sulla religione luterana e sia sulla sessualità operaia.

Il problema era più complesso: la dialettica sembrava incepparsi. I rapporti tra umani, merci, natura si mescolavano, i cui risultati apparivano privi di sintesi alle mie conclusioni parziali dell'epoca. Il corpo aveva le sue erotiche, la famiglia i suoi drammi, la natura le sue violazioni, gli istinti le loro autonomie irregolari e scomposte, le arti le loro imprescindibili immaginazioni di libertà creativa, le stesse religioni non si risolvevano dall'essere dipendenze oppiacee, i giovani iniziavano a manifestare non solo diritti quanto piaceri di una generazione che entrava dentro la Storia per modificarla.

NEGAZIONE

E' stato Adorno che comprese uno degli aspetti irrisolvibili dalla dialettica. La sintesi, infatti, a suo avviso rovesciava la tensione irriducibile della negazione, critica concreta dell'esistente, in un nuovo positivo (*aufhebung*). Anche se la dialettica era basata su un processo di mutamenti infiniti, l'affermazione positiva della dialettica attraverso la sintesi trasformava il pensiero critico in apologia dell'esistente. Questa visione era chiarissima al filosofo, non tanto verso la politica, anche e direi soprattutto per la costruzione del partito secondo un modello storico ben chiaro, quanto per la riflessione finale sull'estetica che si basava sulla dialettica negativa. Nell'arte, sosteneva, la tensione irriducibile sta nel dissolvere le forme dell'esistente verso visioni totalmente altre.

Tale profonda posizione di Adorno mi affascinava eppure sentivo che era un tentativo parziale e quasi disperato di mantenere anche parzialmente in vita il pensiero da cui si era formato. Se Hegel e Marx avevano chiaramente centralizzato il momento più vitale della dialettica nella contraddizione (e quindi nella potenza della negazione), la scoperta di Freud gli fece ancor più accentuare la visione tragica delle pulsioni e della cultura in generale.

In questo periodo si stava diffondendo una certa importanza della socio-biologia nelle sue connessioni all'etologia e all'antropologia. Il testo di Wilson fu occasione di accesi dibattiti, uno dei quali diventò abbastanza noto per le posizioni radicalmente opposte. Insomma, gli antropologi rifiutarono in blocco l'ipotesi de gene egoista e de cosiddetto *meme*. Mi trovavo d'accordo su questo posizionamento eppure a mio avviso qualcosa mancava nella critica culturalista. Nel partecipare a un convegno proprio su questo argomento presentai un paper basato sul concetto di *ipo-struttura*. E devo dire che piacque molto al mio professore dell'epoca, Armando Catemario. In breve, tentai di vedere le questioni umane legate non solo alla dialettica struttura-sovrastruttura, e su quest'ultima dimensione vi avevo già apportato le critiche fondamentali di Gramsci. Pubblicati molti anni dopo la sua morte, nei Quaderni del Carcere, Gramsci affermava con forza l'autonomia relativa della cultura, vista non più deterministicamente derivata dalla struttura, cioè dalla rivoluzione industriale. Tale visione ebbe un'importanze enorme nella nascita dei *cultural studies* che, come è noto iniziarono ad affrontare le ricerche empiriche basate su un'etnografia urbana verso le culture giovanili in Gran Bretagna.

Secondo me, la dialettica ignorava il potere delle dimensioni magmatiche sottostante non solo l'evoluzione dell'Homo Sapiens quanto dell'intero processo di civilizzazione. Gli istinti, le emozioni, le pulsioni, gli atteggiamenti "centrici" (eurocentrici, fallocentrici ecc.) avevano e ancora hanno potenti influssi sulla produzione culturale e industriale, nei comportamenti diffusi sia nel tempo

libero che nel tempo di lavoro. Per cui tentai di elaborare una sorta di riforma della dialettica ma che tale non si sarebbe più potuta chiamare basata su un'interazione triangolare tra pulsioni, cultura, produzione: cioè tra ipo-struttura, sovra-struttura e struttura..

Scrissi un saggio su questa ipotesi di "riforma" che tentai di affermarla in alcuni convegni, ma non ebbi la forza o la capacità di svilupparla in un libro compiuto. Averi avuto bisogno di finanziamenti, con certezza, ma ancor più di tempo: ritirarmi dalla vita accademica, dai suoi impegni quotidiani, che adoravo, per dedicarmi solo e unicamente all'ipo-struttura. Fu un fallimento. Eppure a volte penso che sia stato importante in quanto mi permise di abbandonarmi a qualcosa di inesplorato.

EPISTEME

Alla fine degli anni '80, che in genere sono considerati oscuri se non reazionari, ho iniziato a percepire e di avvicinarmi a un ascolto dell'episteme stonato. Nel senso che suonava fuori dalle armonie scientifiche date per la maggiore e che, quindi, emanava uno stridore pulsante, ossessivo, indisciplinato. La scienza, nel suo significato storico dell'Occidente, si determinava dal *logos*, intendendo con ciò l'oggettività della logica. In quegli anni si andava sviluppando un approccio diverso: forse qui *logos* aveva il significato affine all'antropo-*logia*: cioè discorso, dialogica, polifonia. L'area problematica quando diretta verso un approccio diverso si chiamò *sfida della complessità*. Potente progetto tra studiosi molto diversi che non cercavano sintesi alcuna, anzi, rispettavano la coesistenza nella costellazione complessa di direttrici diverse.

La dialettica era andata in pensione e con lei le relazioni logiche binarie tra soggetto e oggetto.

Le mie letture di quegli anni '80 si adagiarono calme e riflessive sull'opera di Gregory Bateson, su cui ho scritto tanto e tanto applicato nelle mie ricerche etnografiche. *Verso un'ecologia della mente* (1976) è un testo a frammenti, forse il libro fondamentale di un autore, che apriva spazi, prospettive, interpretazioni diverse da quelle tradizionali. Metalogo, doppio vincolo, sacro, ecologia mentale, la trama-che-connette, natura-cultura, coevoluzione essere umano e ambiente, mappa-territorio: concetti in assemblaggio che aprivano l'episteme e dal *logos* lo avvicinavano alla *philia*. Per un caso, cioè per un mio studente intraprendente che era andato a New York presso l'Academy, ho avuto il libro dal valore inestimabile che Gregory scrisse e filmò insieme alla moglie Margaret Mead: *Balinese Character*. La trance ripresa in un rituale mostrava donne dai capelli lunghi che danzavano e si colpivano il petto violentemente col *kriss*. Altrettanto

e con più ferocia, per così dire gli uomini che finivano per storcere la lama dei pugnali che non penetrava la carne, irrigidita dall'alterazione.

Gregory si ritirò dall'antropologia e dagli antropologi ma uno scienziato innovativo, Norbert Wiener, lo invitò a partecipare al primo incontro che si sarebbe svolto tra un gruppo di studiosi dove si "inventò" la cibernetica. Wiener aveva letto il libro complesso di Gregory basato sulla sua unica ricerca sul campo tra gli Iatmul in Nuova Guinea, dove emerse un concetto "complesso": scismo-genesi. La tendenza tra vari gruppi o clan a dividersi oppure rimanere uniti, molto in breve. Ebbene, l'ipotesi cibernetica si basava proprio sul feed-back o retroazione che aveva strane vicinanze con la scismogenesi. La ricerca è bizzarra. Un concetto emerso durante un rituale – in cui gli zii materni cercano di sedurre i nipoti danzando e strusciando il posteriore sui corpi dei fanciulli – era affine al modello della nascente informatica. Un bel problema epistemo-logico che forse si può affrontare con epistemo-philia.

I rapporti tra natura e cultura non sono più visti come dicotomici. Lo strut-turalismo che ha radicalizzato tale modello si è esaurito come la dialettica di cui era un lontano discendente, forse il suo ultimo seguace. L'ecologia della mente è stata il primo e più radicale oltrepassare della dialettica. La connes-sione tra esseri che si scambiano informazione, siano umani, animali, vegetali, minerali, divini, espande il concetto di mente e lo diffonde tra ogni entità che è attraversata dai flussi di comunicazione. La natura diventa finalmente un essere vivente che respira, si muove, cambia; gli umani in quanto parte della natura co-creano le mutazioni sia genetiche che stratigrafiche. Ogni sintesi è impossibile con questa impostazione. Le varie e differenti menti interagiscono per assemblaggi continui, metamorfici, a frammenti mutanti, tipo un mosaico le cui tessere non rimangono ferme ma si spostano di continuo creando nuove immagini, anzi, le stesse tessere incorporano trasformazioni che le rendono in qualche misura estranee alle vicine, a loro volta straniere a sé stesse e alle altre. L'espansione di quello che si chiama "mente" alle diversità più distanti crea un modello di comunicazione sfaccettato nella sua profonda connessione tra ogni entità vivente. Si può sostenere che la dialettica *soggetto-oggetto* decade nella misura in cui l'ecologia della mente diffonde la soggettività a ogni creatura sacrale.

Immaginare che un pino glorioso, una roccia bizzarra, un elefante maestoso, una grotta misterica, un libro inquieto, il sorriso sconosciuto siano individui con le loro biologie e biografie: e che le loro storie sono parte costitutiva di me, del mio "me" che scivola nelle sue identità fluide assieme a tutte queste soggettività. E' tempo per affermare una diversa antropologia: che per ora provvisoriamente cerco di chiamare *antropologia-non-antropocentrica*.

COSTELLAZIONI

Tutto questo processo teorico, ancora abbastanza nebuloso, precipitò in una specie di Maelstrom al contrario. Per me, ormai naufrago della dialettica sia sintetica che negativa, sono stato risucchiato in un multiverso che non conoscevo se non per letture appassionate ma distratte o lontane. Accadde l'evento sotto il segno del divino *Kairos*, il dio della casualità improvvisa che va afferrata subito per il ciuffo dei suoi capelli sulla fronte, perché dietro è calvo e liscio come la palla su cui rotolano i suoi piedi alati. Un giorno mi telefona il mio editore della Savelli e mi dice che è arrivato un libro per me, tradotto, proprio *Dialetica da Familia*. Naturalmente corro a ritirarla e vedo che è un'edizione ottima, molto migliore di quella italiana, e che ha la prefazione di una filosofa: Olgaria Matos.

Per un misto di orgoglio e curiosità scrivo all'indirizzo della *Brasiliense* che sta nelle pagine interne. I tempi delle poste erano lenti e quelli brasiliani ancora di più. Però alla fine arrivò la lettera firmata da Caio Graco Prado che mi spiegò il caso: stava camminando per Milano quando entrò nella libreria Feltrinelli, molto nota in Italia, vide il mio libro, lo comprò e lo fece tradurre. Fece quattro edizioni in poco tempo ed è ancora citato dalle informazioni che mi arrivano quotidianamente.

In breve, mi invitarono a fare un corso all'università della USP. Ottenni un finanziamento da parte dell'Istituto Italiano di Cultura per diffondere e presentare alcuni film di Pasolini al MIS. Fu così che andai ad abitare a *Frei Caneca* e scoprii *Augusta*, una *rua* che mi fece subito innamorare e diventò la mia maestra per aprirmi tutte le strade non solo di Sao Paulo ma dell'intero Brasile. Ho raccontato le mie difficoltà all'arrivo nella prefazione della *Città Polifonica* (2019), quindi rinvio al testo per chi fosse interessato. Da quel lontano anno, il 1984 segnato da una previsione fosca da un celebre libro, ho iniziato senza soste l'attraversamento della complessità brasiliana. mettendo in discussione i principi classici su cui si basava la teoria, il metodo, la scrittura, le immagini e quel sentimento difficile a decifrarsi che mescola bellezza, emozione, spaesamento.

Una sera, passeggiando solitario lungo rua Augusta, maestra e amante, vidi uno strano disegno sulla vetrina di un negozio, forse di moda oppure un manifesto di un film nel mio cinema preferito. Lo disegnai nel mio taccuino perché mi ricordava qualcosa del liceo: una χ. Molti anni dopo, riprendendo quel taccuino col disegno ebbi un'idea. Ero stato un paio d'anni a Florianopolis per insegnare in una villa, offertami dalla prof che mi aveva invitato, posta su un promontorio, da dove potevo vedere la *lagoa* da un lato e dall'altro il mare. Il panorama incrociava la distesa lineare di acqua calma e il movimento ondoso di acqua agitata. Da quel *morro*, mi è venuta una prima confusa immagine di

D una costellazione e grafica che poteva configurare la lenta mobilità concettuale (*festina lente*) con la forma della χ (pron. chi, *ch* aspirato).

La linea retta mi ha evocato **Filosofia**, così calma, decisa e obliqua, dal segno forte tra la sua storia formidabile e un presente incerto per sempre "amica del sapere". La linea contorta mi è parsa **Antropologia**, così agitata, corsara e sinuosa. Entrambe hanno matrici europee (da Talete a Zenone, da Senofonte a Tacito, da Malinowski a Lévi-Strauss), accese dal comprendere il cosmo in generale e incuriosite verso le diverse culture extra-europee. L'una solidamente seduta nella propria polis, l'altra lievemente viaggiante nei diversi mondi: mi sono sembrate entrambe, alquanto inadeguate, per le loro crescenti divergenze.

Poi ho percepito un determinante terzo punto: nel loro punto d'incontro liminale, un crocicchio stregato e indefinito, ho immaginato che si poteva incrociare **Etnografia**, indisciplina della ricerca empirica sul campo. Se è stata generata da Antropologia con un curriculum denso di Filosofia, Etnografia ha scelto da qualche tempo di non appartenere a nessuno, in quanto *lei* si poteva definire erede e traditrice di entrambe. Nel rifiutare sistemi conclusi, paradigmi fissati, teorie generaliste, stereotipi dilagati, *lei* sonda concetti, riti e miti, simboli e culture da ogni dove, rivendica passioni micrologiche singolari, osserva tutto con arti riflessive, colleziona dettagli, residui, scarti, margini; rifiuta sdegnosa l'intervista e adora la dialogica tra soggetti diversi e per questo uguali, infatti si è uguali perché si è non-identici; a volte fotografa o filma sempre insieme all'altro, coinvolgendo persone o strade, foreste o edifici; adora l'auto-rappresentazione "nativa", che il digitale facilita, osserva con sguardi partecipati gli eccessi nei social network. In questo presente imprevisto, familiare e straniero – anziché separarsi – sembrano mescolarsi per liberare aperturismi e pretendere isolazionismi.

Etnografia è ricerca solitaria nei contesti più estranei o familiari, cercando di interrogare e interrogarsi tra micrologie parziali e sfuggenti. Perché, tra l'altro, Etnografia è riflessiva: il ricercatore si interroga sempre su sé stesso nel mentre si confronta con l'altro, cosa o persona; apprende a esplicitare le proprie emozioni non rimosse o soppresse; a volte desideri, fobie, angosce, passioni, immaginazioni possono essere tratti decisivi della ricerca. L'etnografo *si osserva mentre osserva*, dialoga con l'altro e con sé stesso, salta con attenzione delicata tra dentro e fuori il *frame* del contesto empirico, perché la cornice epistemologica a volte va scorniciata. Uscire dal paradigma consolidato e forse rigido; abbandonarsi a metodi imprevisti; immaginare epistemologie complesse.

La ricerca sul campo è la parte più viva e degna non tanto per chi sta all'università, quanto per chiunque voglia mettere in gioco le proprie certezze e sfidarle. Ricerca è abbandonarsi all'ignoto che ci circonda per tentare di chiarirne alcune parti – dalle arti alla comunicazione, dall'analogico al digitale, dall'architettura

alla parentela. Abbandonarsi nel senso di *surrender*, che in una certa etnografia significa lasciarsi andare ai flussi della spontaneità, decentrando o allentando convinzioni teoriche e pregiudizi impliciti. Etnografia rifiuta affermazioni generaliste o teorie universaliste: ricerca sempre frammenti, li persegue con passione, a volte elabora un montaggio di questi frammenti raccolti nel corso del tempo e dello spazio, dal destino (*telos*) di presentarsi quasi sempre come temporanei. Il frammento può illuminare parzialmente un contesto o suggerire tendenze, ma non l'intera cultura di riferimento. Collezionare frammenti e infilarli in una collana di semi concettuali indefiniti è metafora iniziatica dell'ossessione etnografica: intravedere il movimento della costellazione.

La composizione di un saggio è diventata collezionare frammenti concettuali spaziati che in un dato momento ho deciso di "fissare" – cioè di osservarli e osservarmi nel processo della scrittura. Tra le culture indigene del Brasile, in particolare Bororo e Xavante dove ho svolto le mie ricerche (Canevacci, 2013, 2017), le collane sono costituite da semi forati, a volte da sezione di conchiglie, spesso con piume multi-colorate o tratti di bianco cotone. Ne ho molte di collane regalatemi dai miei amici che non oso indossare, alcune sono bellissime e direi quasi uniche: allora le trasfiguro in filiere di frammenti concettuali geometrici che cercano di disegnare il senso enigmatico dell'altro: un rituale, una amicizia, un panorama. Una collana concettuale in movimento calmo e agitato, con moto e senza finale.

La lettera greca χ disegna la mia collana interminabile: il punto centrale è il crocevia mitico da cui diparte Etnografia, che evoca la profondità dissonante di Policleto e riattualizza la sua *filosofia scultorea in forma di chiasmo*. Nel ricercare la bellezza estetica del corpo da trasfigurare in statua, l'artista Policleto non deve raggiungere la perfezione della bellezza armonica. Attraverso la figura del chiasmo, il corpo genera incroci asimmetrici per ogni opera statuaria. Al contrario di quanto normalmente si afferma, il chiasmo non ha la lettera χ con due termini simmetrici da incrociare (**X**), bensì è la χ con tre segni divergenti, il cui punto centrale è un incrocio che non appartiene a nessuno: è il *limen* dove **Etnografia** innesta scambi dissonanti tra **Antropologia** e **Filosofia,** dove *lei etnografa* non è più filosofa ma non ancora antropologa, è il punto liminale dove tutto può mutare.

Costellazione incorpora il transito intrusivo di Etnografia che vuole spezzettare e masticare i sapori/saperi di Antropologia e Filosofia. Etnografia è il bolo masticato con sapienza golosa – *mastica-mistica* – quando sta fermo sull'oralità--antropologica, prima di essere deglutito nella gola-filosofica. All'incrocio "tra" non-più-masticato e non-ancora-inghiottito si colloca Etnografia dove subisce la sua mutazione liminale (la "muta" della pelle).

D

Costellazione non suggerisce alcuna pragmatica. Il suo compito è di schiarire la prospettiva offerta da un grappolo di concetti che cercherò di presentare e che sono cresciuti negli anni durante le trame del fare ricerca empirica in contesti troppo familiari e molto stranieri. Da queste "trame" emerge *un movimento empirico e concettuale* che è risultato cangiante tra *fieldwork* e *tavolino*. Empiria e teoria si sfidano con reciprocità chiastica saltando tra azione disordinata e calma sedentaria. Non si tratta di rendere emozionata la ragione: durante le ricerche sul campo la ragione è già emozionata nella sua immanenza sensibile.

Costellazione riprende il concetto elaborato nel secolo passato da alcuni filosofi sempre più attuali e lo sospinge nei territori – materiali e immateriali – dell'etnografia, precisando la morte della dialettica. Anche se qui non parlerò se non occasionalmente di Bororo, Xavante e Krahò – le mie esperienze di ricerche sul campo più emozionali e sapienti – i rituali di iniziazione giovanile, di tras-figurazione funebre o di alterazione mentale sono presenti tra gli spazi bianchi di righe, parole, margini. La prospettiva della *multi-sited ethnography* di George Marcus (1995) è illuminante per me, quanto il montaggio di citazioni per Walter Benjamin o l'assemblaggio dei dati per Gregory Bateson. Con tale approccio, l'etnografia non focalizza più un contesto unico per narrarlo con l'interpretazione "densa", quando la disciplina studiava Iatmul, Samoani, Balinesi, Trobriandesi.

Nel processo delle mie ricerche etnografiche nell'*aldeia* di Meruri (proprio il villaggio di Lévi-Strauss nei *Tristi Tropici*) o Sangradouro (che Maybury Lewis definisce "dialettica"!), ho potuto capire che era impossibile comprendere queste culture come fenomeno isolato Solo attraverso le relazioni con le città vicine (Cuiabà o Primavera dell'Est), le lontane metropoli (São Paulo, persino Roma o New York), l'uso auto-gestito dei social network con *Aldeia Digital* o *Etnomida* mi potevano contribuire a schiarire le culture dette "native". Questo termine è irrimediabilmente eurocentrico, in quanto anche gli "indigeni" esercitano un vissuto *multi-sited* saltando tra locale e globale. I miei amici Kleber Meritororeu, Felix Adonuenau, Domingos Mohoroe'o' – e ancor più le nuove generazioni – hanno sempre transitato fisicamente tra *aldeia* e metropoli, viaggiando, studiando, facendo conferenze o manifestazioni politiche; sia ubiquamente con il digitale che ha favorito le connessioni tra loro e il resto del mondo. Attualmente posso affermare che le loro cosmologie si possono affermare grazie alle prospettive cosmopolite. La *multi-sited ethnography* si affaccia nel loro vissuto concreto e può ridisegnare il senso neo-coloniale dell'essere etichettato "nativo".

Se ogni *aldeia* ormai non è più isolata (o quasi), il termine "corretto" di *nativo* – successore di primitivo, selvaggio, senza scrittura ecc. – dovrebbe essere valido per un bororo come per un romano. Allora se il mio amico tedesco non lo definisco nativo in quanto nato a Berlino, perché dovrei chiamare nativo

Adonuenau nato a Meruri? Forse perché si allude che è *più nato* del berlinese, nel senso che è o sarebbe più vicino alla natura fin dalla nascita. Un nativo più originale, puro, autentico, incontaminato. Sappiamo bene che nessuna nascita è solo naturale, bensì sempre culturalmente performata. Queste tassonomie più educate evocano e riproducono valori coloniali.

La ricerca etnografica attuale è transitiva (*in-between*) e sfida Antropologia e Filosofia a smuoversi dai loro scranni per ascoltare le tensioni, i conflitti, le passioni, le liberazioni che si accendono nei movimenti *de-nativizzati*. Una cosa per me è certa: la piena libertà degli europei, da cui si è originato il colonialismo, dipende anche dalla liberazione delle popolazioni cosiddette "native" pre-colombiane (e non solo). La mia stessa libertà ha dei limiti, finché si continuano a compiersi genocidi da oltre 500 anni. L'estrema fragilità di Yanomami e Kayapò, Bororo e Xavante è anche la mia fragilità, fragilità che si dovrebbe trovare il modo di rovesciare in liberazione verso ogni essere, umano e non. Liberazione di alberi tagliati perché preziosi come le pietre racchiuse nelle riserve, di animali sacri come la *onça* fondamentale nei rituali ora quasi sparita, liberazione anche delle divinità ancestrali espulse in esilio dai missionari.

Anche la mia libertà è *multi-sited*.

GRAFISMI

Il nesso tra *feticismi, polifonie, sincretismi* è stato il mio primo approccio etnografico multi-sited, un trittico transitivo attraverso il quale cominciano a delinearsi i contorni concettuali di una costellazione in movimento tra spazi/culture differenti. Di seguito presenterò in breve il disegno che mi si è chiarito nel tempo e che mi lascia ancora sospeso. Sottolineo che ciascun concetto costellare è stato sviluppato in testi specifici.

Feticismo si impone da subito per le teorie stupefacenti di Marx e le successive del giovane Lukács di *Storia e coscienza di classe*, in seguito con le letture continue di Benjamin, Adorno, Kracauer; gli sguardi trasversali di Bateson, Taussig, Fanon (1971). La svolta per me si è accesa negli ultimi dieci anni quando ho affrontato una ricerca empirica su oggetti, merci, cose, corpi, film, pubblicità, per cogliere le mutazioni prodotte dall'espansione visuale-digitale. Ho dovuto quindi articolare una genealogia antropologica sul feticcio per *de-reificare* il suo concetto, strapparlo dal suo presunto uso oggettivo e lacerare le tuttora egemoni matrici coloniali. È la *soggettività* della storia dominante che produce a volte significati *oggettivi* applicati ai dominati e spesso da loro sussunti (Canevacci, 2014; Freud, 1981, 1991).

Polifonia è il concetto più sentimentale, in quanto è emerso dalla mia prima ricerca empirica, una etnografia della comunicazione urbana a São Paulo. Avevo le letture di Bachtin (1988) applicate alla letteratura, per cui l'osservazione verso una grande metropoli (le sue "narrative") ha comportato un mutamento di prospettiva, ha implicato uno squilibrare la mia formazione benjaminiana su Parigi, Berlino, Napoli. Tutto grazie a un Bachtin ignorato e isolato nei Soviet. I frammenti urbani si sono fatti polifonici e dialogici, non più dialettici o sintetici. La stridente dissonanza metropolitana doveva trovare molteplici forme compositive, da qui la scelta di svolgere tre voci soliste: saggista, etno-poetica, visuale.

Sincretismo è tutto un danzare concettuale brasiliano. Fin dalle mie prime esperienze, tale concetto è emerso immediatamente nella tradizionale versione religiosa afro-brasiliana, applicata al Candomblé, ma ancor di più sul versante culturale costituito da musica, moda, cibo, cinema, architettura. Insomma credo di aver assorbito la geniale rivoluzione antropofagica delle avanguardie paulistane degli anni '20 del secolo scorso, per inserirla in una visuale diversa che ho cercato di definire *sincretismi culturali*.

Eteronomia e **Diaspora** sembrano sorelle gemelle eterozigote. **Eteronomia** si manifesta nel mio percorso grazie alla scoperta di Fernando Pessoa e al suo *desassossego do eus*, ovvero l'inquietudine dell'io che si pluralizza nel pronome mantenendo la preposizione al singolare e sfidando le grammatiche. La parola portoghese ha poi una bellezza sonora barocca scandita da cinque "s", che ben rende il ritmo sibilante di un oltre plurale. Una sfortuna che Bachtin non lo abbia letto: Pessoa è molto più polifonico di Dostoevskij e affine al contemporaneo Pirandello, a prescindere dal valore letterario (Pessoa, 1980).

Diaspora è arrivata più tardi in seguito alle letture post-coloniali: Paul Gilroy (2003), Homi Bhabha (2001), Arjun Appadurai (1986) mi hanno illuminato con i loro testi e ho ripensato alle geniali anticipazioni di Franz Fanon, il cui pensiero è ancora attivo e anzi si accresce nel tempo. Con la mia passione per Edward Said e Daniel Barenboim (2002), ho cercato di sviluppare la diaspora in senso individuale e non più collettivo, uno sradicamento spaziale che preserva alcuni tratti identitari del passato per trasfigurarli in progetti di vita presenti-futuri. Scenari di mutamenti cosmopoliti in atto attraversano diaspore soggettive ben localizzate.

Stupore ha origine nell'appassionata discussione epistolare tra Benjamin, accerchiato nella Biblioteca di Parigi, e Adorno già esule negli Stati Uniti. La critica adorniana all'amico più adulto, impostata con l'uso del "lei", si basa su un concetto incandescente: la *stupita fatticità*, cerchio magico dentro il quale starebbe rinchiuso Walter Benjamin. La risposta di quest'ultimo è ancora adesso luminosa. In definitiva la dialogica tra i due sviscera le relazioni possibili tra

reificazione e pietrificazione, tra storia e mito, per cui la sola lotta politica o intellettuale all'alienazione delle merci è insufficiente. Le implicazioni arcaiche ritornano col potere spesso cieco, devastatore, incontrollato del mito e si incollano nelle merci mimetiche o nell'industria culturale. Da questa discussione irrisolta, lo stupore filosofico si è intrecciato con lo stupore antropologico, che per altri sentieri stava accompagnando la ricerca sulla comunicazione visuale: da qui il tentativo arduo di sviluppare lo *stupore metodologico* attraverso la disposizione di un corpo poroso nell'attimo prima di incontrare l'altro – lo sconosciuto.

Ubiquità è il beniamino, in quanto ultimo arrivato. Concetto emerso da solo, quasi per partenogenesi, durante le mie condizioni diasporiche a São Paulo e soprattutto a Nanjing, dove per sei mesi ho insegnato col privilegio di usare internet, mentre agli studenti (di comunicazione!) era negato nelle ore libere serali. Per cui poter comunicare – anche simultaneamente – con amici, parenti, conoscenti ha accresciuto la mia vivibilità da *straniero assoluto*. Mentre in Brasile ero *straniero relativo* perché sapevo camuffarmi sincreticamente, oltre a parlare portoghese, cosa che in Cina sarebbe stato impossibile. Le mutazioni del concetto dalla matrice religiosa (un dio occhiuto che ti osserva ovunque) verso quella digitale, ha implicato atteggiamenti diversificati. Al piacere di sentirmi parzialmente ubiquo, comunicando nello stesso tempo in spazi diversi, fanno riscontro le crescenti reazioni localistiche di rifiuto per ristabilire una territorialità inamovibile – fisica e psichica, familiare e lavorativa. Un localismo "puro" immaginato come salvezza contro le accelerazioni comunicazionali da cui non pochi si percepiscono emarginati (Canevacci, 2015, 2016).

Genere ha le basi fondative nelle mie ultime lezioni, quando ho cominciato a esplicitare la traduzione di *antropo-logia* (discorsi sugli esseri umani oltre l'antropocentrismo) e cultura (popolare, di massa, di avanguardia, analogico/digitale, valori, credenze, comportamenti ecc.). E successivamente sviluppavo il concetto di *genere*: sostenendo che, se i sessi sono due, i generi sono infiniti, con riferimenti al rapporto tra biologia e cultura, all'evoluzione delle specie e all'antropocene che include da sempre le mutazioni tecno-culturali.

Indisciplina è arrivata solitaria quando è stato chiaro che le dichiarazioni a favore dell'*interdisciplinare* non portavano a nulla o a poco e che il problema era il nesso tra la divisione sociale del lavoro e quella disciplinare del sapere. Facoltà, dipartimenti curricula erano (sono) troppo legati a un sistema *disciplinato* per favorire l'espansione della ricerca. Indisciplina non è uno scomposto fare-come-ti-pare, bensì favorire le scelte di ricercatori o studenti che – sulla base di precisi progetti – dovrebbero avere il diritto di innestare saperi-in-chiasmo (Said, 1978, 2006).

Amicizia – che è vicina al genere – mostra una relazione che emerge nella sua bellezza disinteressata. *Lei* ci spinge e ripensare le amicizie perdute, quelle

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riscoperte, quelle aumentate e persino quell'"amicizia espansa" che, pur nei loro limiti, i social network favoriscono. Durante la prima fase della pandemia, stavo in una condizione che ho definito *solitudine non solitaria*. La separazione casuale e forzosa dalla mia famiglia in Brasile mi ha dato la possibilità di sperimentare l'amicizia espansa con persone mai conosciute dal vivo: ebbene i risultati sono in gran parte vitali e fecondi. È pur vero che Amicizia si basa e cresce sulla condivisione delle esperienze, piuttosto che delle sole idee e dei commenti sui *social*. Detto in altro modo, esercitare esperienze in comune favorisce la crescita amicale di idee affini ma non identiche. Senza esperienze comuni, Amicizia è un sentimento bello quanto incerto.

Marx66 è una meta che arriva alla fine o all'inizio di un viaggio periferico--centrale, con una proposta biografica che sollecita eccessi identitari. Inseguendo la mia ricerca sul quartiere dove attualmente vivo (Pigneto), dopo un ritorno alla "mia" città, scopro di essere diventato parzialmente straniero a casa. *L'origine è la meta*, dice con ironia Karl Kraus, solo che nel ritorno (*nostos*!) l'origine non è più la stessa. Per fortuna. Vivere l'estraneazione domestica, cercare di conviverci più che di liberarsene, è un tratto molto comune (e ossessivo) per tante persone nelle esperienze quotidiane dentro o fuori la "propria" città che si scopre *impropria*. Da qui lo stupore nell'aver visto di notte, nella "mia" Roma alla stazione Termini, *Marx* ridotto a fermata di autobus verso una periferia assegnata alla filosofia. *Marx 66* sembra invocare una rigenerazione della critica, per affrontare esattamente questa incomprensibile mutazione "in" comune. Così ho deciso di dirottare Marx 66 verso la storica anagrafe che sta in una via dedicata a un grande sindaco: Petroselli. Qui affronterò diversi uffici per risolvere la questione connessa alle mie ubique *carte di identità*.

Per ora, il disegno di **Costellazione χ** sommuove questi concetti, li sfida, li mette in transito e in montaggio, persino li "informa", a volte utilizza questi stessi concetti oltre o contro sé stessi, spesso li incrocia con estetiche asimmetriche che inseguono l'ignoto. *Ubiquità sincretica. Eteronomia polifonica. Stupore generativo. Feticismo diasporico*. Il vagare tra filosofia e antropologia dei vari concetti inscritti nella costellazione stabilisce una reciproca quanto scombinata influenza "costellare"; lo sguardo del ricercatore la osserva da lontano dopo essere stato vicinissimo, anzi, dentro ogni minuscolo frammento raccolto con l'etnografia. La costellazione diviene mutante nell'assemblare i vari concetti-in--transito, in quanto il suo disegno si *ri-disegna* nel processo riflessivo donando ansia e felicità. Costellazione χ è la sfida di coniugare Antropologia e Filosofia nei loro territori noti e, inevitabilmente, in quelli inesplorati di Etnografa. Costellazione χ sembra voler riattualizzare un detto latino che appassionò nel Rinascimento fiorentino: *festina lente*. La tartaruga che naviga *lentamente*

veloce nei mari e nei cieli, sembra essere adatta all'attuale sfasatura tra lentezza analogica e velocità digitale. L'ossimoro, si sa bene, non si può risolvere bensì è destinato a essere attraversato. Costellazione χ si illumina per insoddisfazione verso lo stato delle cose, perché le cose, ogni cosa, non ha *stato* bensì movimento. Perché *res* – la cosa più avanzata e inattuale della politica – è *publica*: ed è persino singolare-plurale. Cercare di individuare alcuni di tali movimenti – incrociati e inaspettati – è scopo di questa Costellazione χ. Perché, se l'origine è mutata e mutante, la meta è vaga e vagante: su questo altrove sfocato è possibile allenare il *corpo d'occhio* per fissare, interrogare e interpretare i disegni sfocati, vaganti, mutanti in forma di *rebus*: attrattori enigmatici che hanno il potere di dissolvere le certezze acquisite appena si cerca di fissarle su carta. M

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Reflexes, reflexivity, refraction: Consequences of a choice!

Reflexos, reflexividade, refração: Consequências de uma escolha!

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the intellectual production developed between the Master's thesis defended in 1985 under the Communication Graduate Program at the Escola de Comunicação e Artes of the Universidade de São Paulo, and the latest ongoing research. It seeks to identify the marks left by a graduate academic education, considering that the PhD was taken under the same Program, and relating it to other research performed during the academic path.
Keywords: Academic education, research, academic path

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RESUMO

Este artigo trata da produção intelectual realizada entre a dissertação de mestrado defendida em 1985 no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação da Escola de Comunicação e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo e a pesquisa mais recente, em desenvolvimento. O objetivo é identificar as marcas deixadas pela formação obtida em nível de pós-graduação, considerando que o doutorado foi realizado no mesmo programa, relacionando-as às pesquisas realizadas durante a trajetória acadêmica.
Palavras-chave: Formação acadêmica, pesquisa, trajetória acadêmica

SELF-REFLECTIVE PROCESSES TEND TO HAVE surprising effects on those who perform them. It was no different when preparing the Memorial - the starting point for this text - for career progression to Full Professor at the *Faculdade de Comunicação e Biblioteconomia* (Fabico) of the *Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul* (UFRGS). Reviewing what has been produced since the Master's dissertation at the *Escola de Comunicações e Artes* (ECA) of the *Universidade de São Paulo* (USP), resized the perception of the academic path run until then. It was like finding the connections, detours, add-ons, gaps but above all the traces of a life devoted to research and to certain issues and their motivations. Besides the research path, it also enabled measuring the effects on the nurturing of new researchers - scientific initiation fellows, Master's and Doctoral students - and on the building of collectives to act in research groups.

In a previous text, "*Pesquisar é se Tornar Aprendiz*!" (Research is to Become an Apprentice!) (Jacks, 2021), also resulting from the experience of writing the mentioned Memorial, I outlined some considerations about the production, the process I went through, and the long learning about the themes, questions, methodological procedures: the fruits of this pathway.

Here I will try to resume all that in the linking with my Master's and Doctorate studies at ECA/USP between 1985 and 1993, to highlight the marks left in this baseline experience of my path that now endures more than four decades.

I had never done any academic research when I decided to take a Master's degree, because at that time the Course Conclusion Paper (*Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso*, TCC) had not been implemented at the *Faculdade de Comunicação Social* (Facos) of the *Universidade Federal de Santa Maria* (UFSM), where I graduated, and was an assistant professor. On the other hand, I had never lived[1] outside Rio Grande do Sul when I decided to try for selection at ECA, one of the four[2] Graduate Programs (PPG) in Communication existing in Brazil in 1984.

The fact that I chose this program set the directions of the research I conducted during my graduate training and in further years as an emerging researcher in the field. It was at ECA that I took courses that enabled me to study the relationships between communication and culture, which went hand in hand with my undergraduate degree in Visual Arts and Social Communication, bringing together and enhancing aspects of this course.

The theoretical environment found at ECA in a few months undid the original idea of the project presented for the selection, i.e., study the advertising produced for the rural areas of Rio Grande do Sul, since I had a degree in Advertising. I kept advertising as a field to be studied, but matched it with an emerging problem at the time, which was the issue of regional identities in

[1] Until I was ten months old I lived in Pindamonhangaba (SP), where I was born.

[2] The other ones were at the *Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo* (PUC-SP), the *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRJ) and the *Universidade de Brasília* (UnB).

the relationship with the cultural industry in face of the strengthening of the globalization process, aiming to understand its imbrications.

The scenario was the context of the Rio Grande do Sul's culture, in ebullience in the 1980s, when a revamping cultural movement - called 'nativism' - disrupted a previous movement - called 'traditionalism' - which had crystallized the cultural expressions of Rio Grande do Sul in all their dimensions. The theoretical proposal mainly challenged statements about the media's power to weaken, if not annihilate, popular cultures - a popular hegemonic view resulting from manipulation theories.

Thus, the Master's research, published years later as *Mídia Nativa: Cultura Regional e Indústria Cultural* (Native Media: Regional Culture and Cultural Industry) (Jacks, 1998), problematized the media role in building regional identities, having the nativist movement as empirical object, and mainly focused on the advertising production of Rio Grande do Sul. The main concepts developed in the research - cultural industry and regional culture - underwent an appropriation process as by that time they the definition to account for the phenomenon in question was very strict. In his dissertation, Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva (1980), attuned to the debate on popular culture in the Latin American communication forums under the Gramscian perspective of hegemony, helped think that the concept of cultural industry could designate the creation, production, and distribution of media products aimed at their audiences, freed from the sense proposed by Adorno and Horkheimer to criticize the emerging mass culture in the 1940s. He understood that the expression might have been coined more for rhetorical than scientific purposes, but that it was useful to name the logic of the mass cultural production process.

In the same way and under the same perspective, Martín-Barbero - who had just joined the discussions about the relations between communication and culture being established at ECA - helped working with the concept of regional culture in a more flexible way. Based on his ideas, regional culture was understood in a broader sense, including manifestations of "erudite", "popular" and "mass" character. These instances were historically intertwined by determinations of the industrialization and urbanization processes (Martín-Barbero, 1987). The dissertation time was marked by paradigm shifts in communication studies in Latin America. Cultural identity was treated in the point of view of institutions, but also of cultural agents, subjects linked both to nativism and traditionalism, and to the media.

The doctoral thesis followed the same perspective, but from an angle that advanced toward the recipients and their cultural practices, also as a consequence of the arrival at the ECA of what became known as Latin American theories.

D Published under the title *Querência: Cultura Regional como Mediação Simbólica* (Fondness: Regional Culture as Symbolic Mediation) (Jacks, 1999), it explored regional cultural, but now in relation to a soap opera dealing with the mediation of regional culture in the recipients' sense-making process. The soap opera was chosen by virtue of my Doctorate studies at the ECA, considering the strong tendency toward considering this mass product with undeniable elements of the Brazilian culture, and playing an important role in the constitution of identities.

The recipients' daily lives, an essential context to understand the processes of reception, were incorporated into the object of study, and presented elements of regional culture that were experienced and that provided recognition and a sense of belonging to the group studied. We also identified the institutions that acted in the construction and consolidation of regional identity and the social markers present in the identity-building processes of the recipients, besides the articulations in the appropriations and interpretations of values conveyed by the soap opera *Pedra sobre Pedra*, aired by Rede Globo, 1992. The soap operas, after a period devoted to other issues, come back into focus also as an unfolding of the training at ECA, as will be further commented.

Back to the thesis, in theoretical terms two articulated axes marked the study that, in the words of Maria Immacolata Lopes (1999), empirically launched the undertaking of considering the theory of mediations[3], emerging in Latin America at that time, in the study of relations between culture and communication. In the first axis, the issue of cultural industries and their role in the building of contemporary identities; in the second, cultural mediation and the daily practices in the building of audiences, based on Martín-Barbero (1987) and Canclini (1990).

To deal with regional cultural identity, the notions of crossbreeding (Martín-Barbero, 1987) and hybridization (Canclini, 1990) assisted thinking the insertion of the media in its reconfiguration and, in this scenario, the constitution of the audiences' identities. Besides grounding the theoretical discussion, they guided the methodological paths insofar as they reallocated the discussion about the relations between culture and communication, evidenced the negotiated nature of communication and re-dimensioned the role of the recipient as an active subject in the reception process.

The selection of ECA's PPG as a place of training indelibly influenced everything I did in my academic life, both in the nurturing of new researchers and in my own research. That is so because it gave rise to all the Latin American discussion held in forums across the continent, and also because the *Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação* (Brazilian Society of Interdisciplinary Communication Studies) (Intercom) was headquartered at the ECA at the time.

[3] Regarding the appropriation of the concept of mediations brought by the Barberian proposal, already in circulation in Brazil, it was conjugated to the model of multimediations proposed by Guillermo Orozco Gómez (1991), an author popular in the Latin American publications.

The first research carried out as a newly-PhD had the partnership of two other "ecanes", Doris Haussen and Carolina Escosteguy, who worked at the *Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul* (PUC-RS). Sharing the same educational matrix, we joined together inter-institutionally to carry out the research *Indústria Cultural Gaúcha: Estudo dos Meios de Comunicação de Massa e sua Inserção na Cultura Local e Regional* (Rio Grande do Sul's Cultural Industry: Study of the Mass Media and its Insertion into Local and Regional Culture) (Jacks & Escosteguy, 1997), which continued the intent of relating communication and culture - a relevant topic for the three researchers - resuming the perspective that mass culture is a phenomenon intrinsic to contemporaneity, whose agents are inserted in the sociocultural context of which they are part and result from it.

With this focus, we identified and reviewed the structure and contents of Rio Grande do Sul's cultural industry - newspapers, AM and FM radio stations, television stations - of the ten cities with the largest media infrastructure. The analysis of their contents was based on local, regional, national, and international references. In other words, the local content should be produced about and for the community, and the regional content should be of interest to society in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. National contents were identified as those that referred to Brazil, and the international contents were those that did not concern the territory delimited by Brazil's borders. The history of each vehicle was also reconstituted, as well as the identification of their owners. This was an original goal for many of the vehicles analyzed, which did not have their historical paths systematized.

Two academic meetings - with Sérgio Capparelli, who was returning from a Post-Doctoral fellowship in Canada, and with the Danish Thomas Tufte, in a conference in São Paulo - marked a new theoretical and methodological challenge, as we decided to work on an integrated research[4], which resulted in the publication of *TV, Família e Identidade*: *Porto Alegre "Fim de Século"* (TV, Family and Identity: Porto Alegre 'End of the Century') (Jacks & Capparelli, 2006).

As our theoretical traditions were different - political economy of communication and cultural studies - we had to adjust our differences and overcome what had been happening in the area, i.e., analyses that contemplated the social and/or political-economic macrostructures or that went down to the details of the message, via semiotics, rhetoric, content or discourse analysis. Both neglected the subjects involved in the processes and practices related to communication. In an attempt to overcome this theoretical-analytical scenario, we proposed adopting a perspective that comprised understanding the interrelation of the macro and the micro-social spheres. Our purpose was to understand the systems -

[4] With Sérgio Capparelli and Nilda Jacks, for UFRGS, through the *Núcleo de Pesquisa Cultura e Recepção Midiática* (Research Center for Culture and Media Reception) of the *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação* (Graduate Program in Communication Sciences) (PPGCOM). With Thomas Tufte, from the University of Copenhagen.

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media - and processes of communication, reception and media consumption in the light of a theoretical framework. This framework would have a view on the interplay between micro and macro contexts, structures and agents, fields of cultural production and everyday practices, and other issues related to the issue.

Authors such as Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu were at the baseline to support an idea of society that would unveil movements between its many spheres. Methodologically, we were inspired by models proposed by the Latin Americans Jesús Martín-Barbero, Néstor García Canclini, Jorge A. González and Guillermo Orozco Gómez, who deal with the relationship between media and audiences from a dense theoretical framework, operated through by a multimethodology. Nicholas Garnham, Graham Murdock, and James Lull were also among the inspiring models. The analytical strategies adopted from these references followed several paths and took several dimensions, linking Political Economy and Cultural Studies. Such a dialogue was little established in Brazil until then, but was ongoing in Europe, as shown by the intense debate between James Curran and David Morley (Curran et al., 1998).

The macrostructural analysis - headed by Sérgio Capparelli's team - approached both the production and broadcasting of TV programs in Porto Alegre and the other cultural offerings, which were studied from the historical and urban point of view, highlighting their transformations over time. The microstructural analysis, in turn, was carried out by the team coordinated by Nilda Jacks, who also supported Thomas Tufte's work in the city, and attached priority to the pole of media reception and consumption, working on the diachronic and synchronic axes in an articulated manner. In the diachronic axis, the family history technique weaved the path of three generations of five families intending to describe how ethnic, family, and regional identities were built and transformed from one generation to the next, under the influence or not of the media present in each period (newspaper, radio, broadcast TV, cable TV, and Internet). This strategy also allowed us to know how the family institution contributed to the nurturing of their members as a television audience, as regards the preference for genres and types of programs, type of relationship with the medium, definition of roles in the structuring of knowledge, opinions, world-views, etc. On the synchronic axis, the audience's ethnography - developed by Thomas Tufte - produced data on the daily life and social and family relations of a nucleus of each of the five families, in order to disclose cultural practices and uses of the media, especially cable TV, which connects global and local cultures[5].

In order to dimension the role of television in the process of reconfiguring regional identity, an analysis of the discourses on *gaucho* identity, published in *Identidade Cultural como Formação Discursiva* (Cultural Identity as Discursive

Formation) (Jacks, 2018), was carried out in parallel to the previously described research. The purpose was to update the discussion after the emergence of the nativist movement in the 1980s, which had been addressed in both the dissertation and the thesis, taking as corpus the collection "*Nós, os Gaúchos*"[6], published in the 1990s. Besides the discourses about '*gauchismo*', the cultural and social capitals of the producers of these discourses, and based on which disciplinary/professional perspective they wrote their arguments about regional identity at that moment were also identified.

The theoretical challenge in this endeavor was to consider cultural identity as a discursive formation (Murdock, 1993) and as a "regional field" (Bourdieu, 1989), which is socially spread and is produced by various agents, including the media and its producers. The approximation between the two authors gave us a framework to work with representations that ensue from power structures, but that are not static and suffer changes that follow the movements of history. Objectively, Bourdieu's categories of *mental representations* (language, accent, dialect, character, etc.), *objective representations* in things (emblems, flags, anthems, clothing, etc.), and in acts (symbolic manipulation strategies) were compared with those of Murdock, who points out three backgrounds[7] that distinguish modernity: 1) economic and political formations; 2) cultural and wisdom/knowledge formations; and 3) everyday life formations, in which the previous spheres are incorporated and experienced. He envisions cultural identity as organized ways of describing and explaining the social world or proportions of it, and comprising four elements: 1) classification systems; 2) favorite names and images; 3) forms of argumentation and reasoning; and 4) principles of evaluation (Murdock, 1990). Although discursive formations are organized, they are not necessarily coherent as they may present inconsistencies and contradictions, as well as dislocations between analytic connections and the connotations attached to preferred images, which are more open to various interpretations.

Meanwhile, the relationship with ECA is tightened again when an invitation to participate in the *Observatório Ibero-Americano de Ficção Televisiva* (Ibero-American Television Fiction Observatory) (OBITEL) was extended by Maria Immacolata Lopes in the late 2000s. Thus, the focus on the relationship of the subjects with the soap opera, addressed in the doctoral thesis, once again guides the new phase of the research. Since the OBITEL is a permanent project of analysis of production and/or consumption of fiction, it enables systematically following the ongoing transformations, providing a unique opportunity to collectively update the debate on processes and practices of reception. Like the other OBITEL researchers, it became mandatory the adoption of the nomenclature

[6] Published by the UFRGS publishing house it consisted of five volumes: *Nós, os Gaúchos* (1992), *Nós, os Gaúchos Volume 2* (1994), *Os Teuto-Gaúchos* (1996), *Os Ítalo-Gaúchos* (1996) e *Os Afro-Gaúchos* (1996). It gathers 239 texts by 34 authors, 31 historians, 26 literature professors, 20 journalists, 13 university professors (arts, music, political geography, physical education, etc.), 10 politicians, four sociologists, nine anthropologists, seven philosophers, five educators, five musicians/composers, five architects, four religious people, four physicians, three museologists, three theatrologists, three cartoonists, two physicists, two folklorists, two photographers, two filmmakers, one political scientist, one bookseller, one editor, one economist, one lawyer, one ecologist, one fashion designer, one artist, one military man (ex-president of the republic), one diplomat, and others who are not accurately identified.

[7] Murdock (1993) states it is more useful to think of contemporary society in terms of *formations* concerning both institutions and regimes, since the current sociocultural context is made up of a complex and contradictory process that cannot be thought of in structural terms alone.

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transmedia reception to designate the new relations of the recipients with the media in face of media convergence.

In this scenario, our proposal in the last four editions was to longitudinally review the soap operas aired by Globo at the time of the biennial research. The soap operas *Passione* (Jacks & Ronsini, 2011), *Avenida Brasil* (Jacks et al., 2013), *Império* (Jacks et al., 2015b) and *Velho Chico* (Jacks et al., 2017c) were part of the corpus in an attempt to follow the changes and trends in the sphere of both production and reception. To that, the methodological procedures are always resumed in order to monitor and compare the behavior of audiences on digital platforms, thus exercising the observatory methodology, a key point of our team's proposal. In 2019, these narratives were resumed to explore the creation of *likely worlds* - the theme of the year - in the search for the fictional building of popular worlds (Jacks et al., 2019), continuing the systematic way of developing our analyses, even if this time not exactly repeating some procedures, as in the three previous editions, due to the theme of the year.

Belonging to OBITEL was crucial to set the directions of the next surveys, as a CNPq scholar and coordinator of the *Programa Nacional de Cooperação Acadêmica* (National Program for Academic Cooperation) (Procad) in 2013, as the concept of transmedia (Jenkins, 2008) was investigated in *Jovem e Consumo Midiático em Tempos de Convergência* (Young People and Media Consumption in Times of Convergence) (Jacks et al., 2015a) and in *Jovem Brasileiro e Práticas Midiáticas em Tempo de Convergência: O "Brasil Profundo"* (Young Brazilians and Media Practices in Times of Convergence: The "Deep Brazil") (Jacks et al., 2021). Both studies were developed in a comparative manner and with national and regional coverage, respectively, in an attempt to learn about the relationship of young people from all regions of Brazil with digital social networks.

The objective of the first research was to identify the most popular themes among young people in the 26 states and the Federal District[8], in addition to the practices and rituals related to the use of the most popular platforms among them. Contextual information - historical, geographical, economic, demographic, cultural, media, etc. - about each state (Jacks & Toaldo, 2014) and its capital (Silvestrin et al., 2016) were produced to understand and try to explain juvenile practices. Context and situation are two important scales for designating subjects' belonging, forging triangulation strategies to review the use of time and space and the practices that occur there. A pilot study combined with an exploratory survey was part of the procedures which, in technical terms, adopted a questionnaire applied to 10 university students[9] (girls and boys between 18 and 24 years old), followed by an observation of the Facebook profile of additional 10 youngsters. An online questionnaire was formulated based on these initial data, and made available to the youth living in the capital cities.

[8] Surveyed by local teams linked to the *Rede Brasil Conectado* (Connected Brazil Network).

[9] To map the cultural and media consumption. The observation of Facebook raised practices, rituals, and content made available and submitted, in addition to media and cultural consumption.

The successful experience with young people from the capitals raised the desire of some teams from the *Rede Brasil Conectado* to learn about practices of the youth from the interior of Brazil. The research *Jovem Brasileiro e Práticas Midiáticas em Tempo de Convergência: O "Brasil Profundo"*[10] (2021) entered the interior of three states in an attempt to learn a little about the reality of the youth[11] living far from the metropolises and belonging to specific social groups. Young people from small towns in the interior of Pará, Sergipe, and Rio Grande do Sul, as well as from rural and riverside areas and some belonging to *quilombos* were studied in relation to media consumption, and convergent practices in the digital domain (Jacks et al., 2020).

Also tributary to the training at ECA, especially in the discipline of research methodology, was the trend toward producing meta-research, in order to update the state of the art of media reception and consumption research carried out in the PPG. This endeavor gave rise to volumes I, II and III of *Meios e Audiências* (Media and Audiences) (Jacks et al., 2008). The first volume highlights the emergence of these studies in Brazil, the second its consolidation, and the third its reconfiguration in face of media convergence, and is planned to be continued in volume IV (scheduled for 2023).

In *Meios e Audiências* (Jacks et al., 2008), the corpus was related to the 1990s, with a total of 49 surveys that identified three types of theoretical-methodological approaches: sociocultural, behavioral and others. Technical and empirical aspects were also analyzed to prepare a state of the art of research in the area, aiming at proposing an agenda for the next decade. This method followed in all volumes. *Meios e Audiências II*[12] (Jacks et al., 2014) comprises the study developed between 2000 and 2009, whose corpus was composed of 209 surveys focused on the empirical relationship[13] of recipients with the media. The great novelty was the social-discursive approach, tributary to the adoption of discourse theories, mainly brought by journalism studies. *Meios e Audiências III* (Jacks et al., 2014) approached a shorter period - 2010 to 2015. The interval was reduced to keep up with the fast changes operated by media convergence, which brought confusion to the role of the recipient, often participating as a producer, and the inclusion of social networks into the object of study.

In this volume, a distinction was made between media reception studies and media consumption studies (Toaldo & Jacks, 2017), two major strands of Latin American studies, as they are different issues, even if related, which suffer new tensions with media convergence, and also led to the differentiation between media and social media. Institutionality, formality, and regulatory mechanisms characterize the former. Telephone sets, floppy disks, USB sticks, sidings, t-shirts were not considered media, therefore, neither was the human body, as

[10] Expression inspired by Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, who wrote *Mexico Profundo* (1989). "*Profundo*" (Deep) was a notion coined to designate, among the different strands of contemporary Mexican society, the indigenous one. *México Profundo* is the denied civilization formed by a diversity of cultures, communities and social sectors that constitute most of the population of that country.

[11] The concept of youth adopted considers the impossibility of associating it with a single definition, related to a temporal period. Physical condition is reflected in longings, emotions, experiences, signs used, and in the body's own strength, energy, and productive capacity, in a feeling of invulnerability. Other variables additional to age, are: generation into which one is socialized; gender; family condition; and institutions to which they belong

[12] Between *Meios e Audiências I* and *II* the *Análisis de Recepción en América Latina: Un recuento Histórico con Perspectivas al Futuro* (Jacks et al, 2011) was published. The study ensued from a Latin American integrated research that reviewed the production of almost all countries of the continent in the period from 1990 to 2010. The network of researchers met in Quito to discuss the early advances with guest experts to build a Latin American agenda based on the data of each country. Jesús Martin-Barbero, Guillermo Orozco Gómez, Valerio Fuenzalida, and Maria Immacolata Lopes attended the meeting, and produced texts in which they propose a research agenda for Latin America.

[13] The so-called «others» approach was eliminated because they are surveys that only assume the recipients.

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considered by some researchers. For Klaus Jensen (2010), the human body, as well as the other devices mentioned above, are first-degree media that are part of their historical development. O'Sullivan (1993) states that this notion is too broad, and its use declined so as to make room exclusively to mass media, which for Jensen (2010) are second-degree media that act one-to-all, i.e., they are basically analog media.

Social media, in turn, according to Martín-Barbero (2015), is a communication channel between people and between social institutions and their audiences. They produce a set of socially woven information that can be consulted on the networks, what Jensen (2010) calls metamedia or third-degree media. For this reason and by virtue of the analysis undertaken, social media were only considered in the corpus when used by some communication vehicle to expand its relationship with audiences, inserted in the process of media convergence. In this case, the processes of media reception and consumption may occur in a transmedia way, dealing with network audiences, a phenomenon widely identified in the experience of research with OBITEL.

The long process that began in the 1980s, with the first research experience when I took my Master's degree at ECA/USP, still enriches the ongoing research: *Recepção Fílmica e Espectatorialidade Cinematográfica: Explorações Teórico-Metodológicas* (Filmic Reception and Cinematographic Spectatoriality: Theoretical-Methodological Explorations). In it, as in the other surveys conducted, fundamental issues such as starting from the knowledge of field production and having strong methodological bases are commitments sealed with the training received, expressed in a previous text as "know, assimilate, create" (Jacks, 2020). Without this reflective exercise, there is no way to advance and innovate on solid grounds. **M**

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From advertising to consumer culture studies: The long and productive process of creating a shared theory

De la publicidad a los estudios sobre la cultura de consumo: El largo y productivo proceso de creación de una teoría compartida

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ABSTRACT

This text seeks to synthesize the relationship with the Post-Graduation Program in Communication Sciences of the Universidade de São Paulo, established by the work with professors Clotilde Pérez and Eneus Trindade, more than fifteen years ago, when moved by mutual research curiosity , due to the shared certainty about the need to expand the field of study of the advertising discipline, a professional and human relationship was born, one that has grown during all these years, in which our way of understanding and approaching the advertising phenomenon has been consolidated as interdisciplinary, exploratory and collaborative, thus generating ideas that transcend the study of the advertising phenomenon to encompass the consumer culture.
Keywords: Advertising, brand, trends, consumer culture

RESUMEN

Este texto pretende sintetizar la relación con el Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação de la Universidade de São Paulo, establecido por el trabajo con los profesores Clotilde Pérez y Eneus Trindade, hace más de quince años, cuando movidos por la mutua curiosidad investigadora, por la certeza compartida sobre la necesidad de ampliar el campo de estudio de la disciplina publicitaria, nació una relación profesional y humana que ha crecido durante todos estos años, en los que nuestra forma de entender y abordar el fenómeno publicitario se ha consolidado como interdisciplinar, exploratoria y colaborativa, generando ideas que trascienden el estudio del fenómeno publicitario para abarcar la cultura de consumo.
Palabras clave: Publicidad, marca, tendencias, cultura de consumo

MORE THAN 15 years ago, I became aware of the existence of the Post-Graduation Program in Communication Sciences of the Universidade de São Paulo (PPGCOM-USP), when I met professors Clotilde Pérez and Eneus Trindade during the organization of the 2nd seminar Imagens da Cultura / Culture of Images, in Oporto. It is now time to compile all that time in this article, but I will not do it in an enumerative way, but reviewing a long and productive history of collaboration in its most important stages.

From that first contact, driven by mutual research curiosity, by the shared certainty about the need to expand the field of study of the advertising discipline, a professional and human relationship was born, which has grown over the years, in which our way of understanding and approaching the advertising phenomenon has been consolidated in an interdisciplinary, exploratory and collaborative manner.

With the organization of the I Encontro ProPesq PP (Encontro Nacional de Pesquisadores em Publicidade e Propaganda) I had the pleasure of participating in all of these events and in the development of a first class forum for scientific exchange, which is always enriching. The event was organized by the Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Publicidade (Brazilian Association of Advertising Researchers) – of which I have the honor of being a member since its foundation – and the Grupo de Estudos Semióticos em Comunicação, Cultura e Consumo (GESC3), which since 2010 was formed by professors from PPGCOM and the Department of Public Relations, Advertising and Tourism, and to which I have belonged since 2012.

The year 2012 was decisive in my relationship with PPGCOM-USP, since I obtained a scholarship for a postdoctoral stay there, thanks to the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq – National Council for Scientific and Technological Development), and I taught a graduate course, in addition to many other activities that allowed me to know the high academic level of its members and to become definitively linked to this school.

Since then and until now, even during the confinement imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued working, thinking and sharing the numerous publications of articles, books and conferences that we have in common. It was accompanied by funded research projects, co-directions of theses and participating in national and international research forums, such as the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS-AIS), the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), the Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación (ALAIC), the Asociación Latinoamericana

de Semiótica (FELS), the International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction (HCHCI), the Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências da Comunicação (INTERCOM – Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences) and the Associação Portuguesa de Ciências da Comunicação (SOPCOM – Portuguese Association of Communication Sciences). In all these works, the name of PPGCOM/USP was present.

During all these years, in a rigorous but always exciting way, we have worked on what now, in view of the shared history, seems to be the overcoming of advertising studies towards a new alignment with studies on consumer culture from an advertising perspective, considering Semiotics, Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophy and Visual Studies. We will try to synthesize this path with the professors of PPGCOM-USP and others, with whom I shared work and good times thanks to the good work of the School of Communications and Arts of the Universidade de São Paulo (ECA-USP).

ADVERTISING AND IMAGES OF CULTURE

As I explained above, my first contact with PPGCOM-USP arose from mutual interest in a seminar, which I co-organized in ten editions. It explored the relationship between anthropology and communication to articulate research projects. My initial methodological position was a mix between Cultural Studies (of sociological and Marxist inspiration) and Social Semiotics, proposed by Eliseo Verón and continued by others. Thus, we understood that the theory of the social production of discourses cannot be reduced to a study of the immanent text, but has to be articulated within the factors of production, circulation and consumption, which are part of any productive system. Putting these ideas together with Cultural Studies also highlighted the existence of an intertextual network resulting from the ideological dimension of discourse, that is, from its location in a specific historical, social and cultural space.

What was learned in those years, by introducing the anthropological perspective in the study of advertising, was very useful for the continuation of the work with professors Eneus Trindade and Clotilde Pérez. In this context, by using the Anthropology of Consumption – based on McCracken's ideas – to ask ourselves about the role of communication in consumer activities from an interdisciplinary perspective, we obtained results on consumption in everyday life and cultural trends in consumption, and thus understand the articulation of links of meaning between brands and consumers.

In the same way, we began to work with Professor Fernando Contreras – with whom I have shared a good part of my relationship with the PPGCOM-USP – on the

D idea of technoculture, interested in the continuous exposure of individuals and collective identities in the new communication channels, which led to the creation of personal fictions and hyperconstructed identities adopting appropriation, a postmodern artistic technique, as a method of creativity and social innovation. This appropriation is carried to its extreme consequences in the processes of social interaction (citizen and commercial) without taking care of its risky consequences. The aforementioned idea later evolved, thinking about advertising and consumption with the addition of Semiotics, which implied talking about appropriation and proposing a Semiotics of irradiation, presented and widely debated at the ECA-USP, to finally explore the relationship between advertising and art, and visual studies from a philosophical perspective.

Thus, Anthropology contributed to create the idea that it is necessary to historically locate the processes and products of mass culture in order to understand the cultural matrices from which our global media culture is nourished; and to contextualize media products with the other products of our global consumer culture.

THE BRAND AS A SOCIAL ACTOR

Since the beginning of our work, we have been interested in knowing the links between the brand and consumers, with the aim of understanding the discursive and cultural mechanisms articulating the social meaning that makes them desirable. Thus, mainly with Dr. Clotilde Pérez, but also with other professors of the PPGCOM-USP, we are working to open a reflection on the use of universalized social values in the field of corporate advertising messages. Our intention was to draw a map that would allow us to create the necessary epistemological bases for the development of the question. Starting from the contrary to the atomistic and destructuring conceptions idea that we must consider advertising as a creative and conditioning communicative process of culture, whose internal grammar, by means of its pragmatic component, conditions and is conditioned by its contextualization in the not very well defined field of mass culture.

In their permanent search for new arguments, in the changing world we are living and participating in, large corporations have to direct their interests towards immutable ideas. Looking for arguments that vary as little as possible and that can be transferred from one country to another, following the market, maintaining their meanings (even if it is through the most universal symbols). These arguments are social values, understood by transnational companies as ideas shared by a large part of the population and extrapolated to different

countries. So that your advertising messages can be disseminated and understood by huge audiences without modification. The social values chosen are those common to Western industrialized and democratic culture. It is clear that it cannot be demonstrated that a certain type of culture necessarily leads to economic development, nor that economic development necessarily produces a certain type of cultural pattern. It cannot be said either that certain cultural patterns have the capacity to generate a democratic political regime or that democratic institutions make certain cultural systems of values and beliefs appear. In any case, the predominant culture in a society and its values can help to clarify the relationship between value, economic and political systems.

Economic development and cultural and political changes are linked in a coherent way, structured in reciprocal causal links. Moreover, the historical evolution is not linear, since modernity creates a subsequent current, postmodernity (hypermodernity, liquid modernity) with different characteristics. If it is not linear, social change moves in a different direction from the one pointed out by the previous one. In fact, postmodern authors have pointed out some characteristics of the new direction. They move away from economic efficiency, bureaucratic efficiency and the scientific rationality associated with modernity, towards a more flexible society, with more room for personal autonomy, something more human-like.

In this context, brands use advertising to achieve personality, just as people use fashion to individualize their appearances. Advertising works as a cosmetic for the brand, it dresses it with exclusivity, distancing it from everything that is ordinary and commonplace. Thus, the phenomenon of brand competition and industrial standardization raised a race whose goal is to achieve the unprecedented, the exclusive, in order to capture the attention of consumers. Advertising, by its postmodern nature, always leaves the possibility of escaping its persuasive action: change the television channel, change the screen or turn the page. Advertising tries to influence a collective whole, without trying to reform man and customs, it takes people as they are, trying to stimulate only the thirst for consumption that already exists in them. By continually proposing new needs, advertising is content to exploit the common aspiration for well-being and novelty. It is more a matter of pragmatically utilizing the existing taste for material pleasures, well-being and novelties than of reconstituting the human being.

The consequence of overproduction is that advertising does not show us the products as they are, but dresses them up with values born in society. Advertising manufactures sign-objects whose function is to be exchanged for certain experiences and social values. The obsolescence and rapid replacement

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of objects does not respond to their strictly functional expiration of use, but to their symbolic expiration. In the past, objects were inherited from fathers to sons. Now, for each generation of people, there are several generations of objects: people feel they are surviving, enduring in the face of the repeated mortality of the objects passing through their hands. However, advertising is not therefore relegated to a sign of an object-sign, a subsidiary sign, or at best a semantic fuse that activates a meaning embodied elsewhere, since advertising is useful in two different and complementary ways. Firstly, advertising is not simply an intermediary between the object and its consumer, but is also consumed as a cultural and aesthetic object. Secondly, advertising offers us the adaptation of the consumer society to our needs in images, while we are required to adapt to the real order of the consumer society.

Consumer culture is for Baudrillard a postmodern culture, without depth in which all values are revalued and art triumphed over reality. The aestheticization of reality puts the importance of style in the foreground, proposes a constant search for new fashions, styles, sensations and experiences. Thus, the old artistic countercultural notion is more vigorous. The interest in lifestyle suggests that consumption practices, the purchase and display of goods and consumption experiences in everyday life cannot be understood merely through ideas of exchange value. The new consumer culture makes lifestyle a life project and exhibits its individuality and sense of style through its goods, clothes, practices, experiences and body appearances that it brings together in a lifestyle. The modern individual of the consumer culture knows that he speaks not only with his clothing, but also with his house, furniture, decoration, automobile and other activities that must be read and classified in terms of presence or absence of taste.

In the immensity of purchasing possibilities, supported by access to information and improved technology, contemporary people are becoming more and more critical in their decisions. Probably much of these decisions are based on a more conscious relationship with consumption, including the role of brands in our daily lives, which includes the positive dimension that brands can have in contemporary society, hedonistic, emotional and technological – following Lipovetsky – as promoters of multiculturalism and consumption as an experience producing values. Thus, brands are a symbol of economic success and status, as well as a tool for identity, authenticity and personalization.

Then, the use of brands is a possibility of visibilization for people in contemporary society, and although there are different modes of presence of the visible in our environment (Landowsky), the advertising made by brands is configured as a privileged manifestation of contemporary society, based on synesthesia,

polyphony and the visualization of the concepts of singularity and exclusivity. This fact, as we have already mentioned, is evidenced by the displacement of the material in the product, in favor of symbolic dematerialization, eroding the concrete with the intention of creating links of meaning from subjectivity in order to establish complicity and identification. Advertising is an effective, involving and intentionally accessible presence, resulting in a synthesis of the tension between the promise of permanence (strategic objective of products and brands) and the relentless transience, characteristic of the pragmatism and ephemerality of contemporary supply and demand.

This line of work has reported and continues to contribute, from the understanding of consumption rituals shown in brand messages, the perception of consumption trends from advertising manifestations that are expressed visually, textually and synesthetically. Such trends opened a perspective of study on consumer culture, since corporate advertising builds the values of the organization seeking its consolidation in the sphere of action of citizens in their daily lives and its main objective is to give meaning to brands, much more than to promote products. Therefore, brands build meaning by responding to the desires and aspirations of their target audiences. They stimulate the imagination and provide answers to the everyday problems of their consumers. In addition, brands shape sensibilities and guide cultural practices of consumption, because although the ways of seeing the world vary from society to society, reflecting the diverse historical experiences of different people, what remains as commonplace are those spreading advertising messages and forms of consumption.

THE MEDIATIZATION OF CONSUMPTION

The third line of work, shared with Professor Eneus Trindade and other PPGCOM-USP researchers, was the exploration of the emerging concept of mediatization and its application to the study of consumption from an initial phase of understanding the phenomenon to the following attempts at applied research. Once the concept that advertising is an economic, cultural and social activity that has been playing an essential role at the dawn of modern capitalism and the most advanced economies was consolidated by most authors in the strictly advertising field and other social sciences, it became clear that advertising is an economic, cultural and social activity. In this line are the ideas that the advertising system plays a decisive role in shaping identities, consumption habits, desires, aspirations and collective imaginaries, allowing the time to adapt the idea of *mediatization* to the field of consumption.

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The concept of mediatization is widely used in areas such as religion, politics and sports. In these cases, media presence, together with sociological discussions on the social interaction of the media, makes mediatization a phenomenon that, despite appearing to be contemporary, has its roots beyond the current configuration of the media ecosystem. This phenomenon is, even today, one of the central discussions in communication, from which several applications and studies are developed in Humanities and Social Sciences, in order to understand processes of social, cultural and material change. The origin could be placed as a way of understanding the centrality and growing relevance of the media in the social processes of industrialized countries. This has to do with the fact that the increase in the speed of internet access, the universalization of mobile devices and the emerging culture of knowledge sharing through digital platforms constitute a central reference in people's lives. There is a shift from a conception of the study of communication based on production-text-audience to a non-linear and open configuration, in which there is a communicative construction of social and cultural reality by the media.

The connections between mediatization and consumption – as pointed out by García Canclini – are twofold, direct and indirect. Direct mediatization is when a certain activity is performed in a different way due to the influence of the media, such as shopping in virtual stores using the Internet, while the indirect form of mediatization refers to the influence of the media on a certain activity, without significantly affecting the way it is performed, such as deciding what clothes to buy or what our style will be for the coming winter. The difference between them is the degree of influence, and indirect influence is the most subtle, although in consumption processes both forms can concur. While online consumption would be a clear example of direct mediatization, the presence of the media in the purchasing process by proposing certain consumption rituals in its different contents would be an example of indirect mediatization.

Consumption is characterized by processes of transfer of meaning from a socially constructed world towards consumer goods and from these towards the consumer through two essential vectors: the advertising system and fashion. Both exert their influence by suggesting ritualistic practices of possessing goods, acquiring them, exchanging them or dispossessing ourselves of them. These consumption rituals act as media devices, since they can be anything capable of capturing, orienting, determining, intercepting, modeling, controlling and securing people's gestures, behaviors, opinions and discourses.

The most radical consequence of the influence of mediatization on consumption is the process of substitution, according to which certain social activities are being replaced by mediated activities: We listen to the radio while driving or

watch TV while eating, although the most widespread case is online shopping. The media also act as catalysts of social change, since their social relevance implies the sustenance of people and institutions, which contributes to a great extent to the growth of wealth and the sustainability of cultural industries. Consequently, different economic agents adapt their actions to the media's operations. This is clearly visible in athletes, politicians, and entertainment and cultural professionals. In short, the media offer new ways of consuming products and services, beyond geographical or time limitations, what Habermas called the implosion of consumption to describe how consumption has ceased to reside in the sphere of intimacy to live in the social sphere.

This preliminary work of conceptual definition allowed us to confirm that there is an effective presence of the media that penetrates the daily life of individuals and banishes the logical and interactional processes. In other words, in mediatization, and in the case of advertising by brands, there is a wide menu of strategies for the dissemination of messages, although these are not yet consolidated, but traditional forms of advertising planning have changed and now aim to disseminate the brand on the Internet. These facts indicate the existence of a greater participation of the consumer as a user of social networks and a market practice based on the use of the spontaneous reactions of the consumer-collaborator or prosumer for the expansion of the message. Thus, the growing power of the consumer, who gives brands a voice, but who can also criticize and question them, is evident. The context of the new media seems to reconfigure power relations and encourages a more balanced set of relations between producers and consumers.

Traditional advertising is only a part of the communication possibilities that brands have nowadays. Today the advertising system relates brands to their users by using tags in search systems such as Google, is disguised as journalistic information in institutional and synthetic communication campaigns on Twitter and allows the formation of a critical opinion that, with a new form of management, gives expression to the relationship between the general public and the communities of followers, as happens on Facebook. Advertising is also present in the new social networks and web supports that allow the production of voice and image with aesthetic criteria. All these sites are spaces where brands can advertise with enormous possibilities to cultivate sensory links with their audiences. That is why we believe it is necessary to understand the qualitative nature (and promote its study from this perspective) of these sensory links established in the digital world, included in what we call programmatic or numerical advertising, based on big data and statistics, but deeply rooted in social culture and consumer practices.

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GLOBAL ADVERTISING CULTURE

As a logical consequence of all these years of work, dialogue and shared study, having established the general context of advertising on cultural, technological and communicational issues from a multidisciplinary perspective, a common theory emerged. It is a consensual idea about the nature of the advertising phenomenon, which has to do with the existence of an expanded culture that has as its advertising expression the brand and its aesthetic-cultural universe, an advertising meta-culture between art and algorithm.

As we explained earlier, mediated communication has undergone a radical transformation with the irruption of artificial intelligence, networks, artificial realities and the new attitudes of individuals towards technology. This has led to the emergence of new forms of creation, reception and interpretation of advertising, although it is not the only thing that has influenced the profound renewal of the advertising world. Since the beginning of the century it was accompanied by the digital economy of knowledge, the dominance of techno-liberalism, platform capitalism, robotization and the culture of innovation. Thanks to it, today's organizations can introduce new products into the market and stimulate non-stop consumption. This system of mass consumption implies a logic of destruction that eliminates the old in favor of the new by means of a creative process aimed at the permanent diversification of supply through the stimulation of novelty.

This creative destruction typical of advertising acquires a planetary dimension today. Global markets force us to work in a frontier scenario between different cultures, worldviews and different social and political scenarios. That is why advertising cannot be considered a technical discipline, but rather a human paradigm containing philosophical, cultural, ontological and anthropological reasons, in addition to business, commercial or purely communicational reasons. The irresistible expansion of advertising establishes a process of change that is delimited by the passage from an objective vision to one that looks beyond the near and close. The world expands through information coming from other places through digital media and consumption in a market oriented to the profile of an individual with a cross-border vocation. This global expansion of communication needs the symbols of the past to be replaced by their digital simulacrum, more ethereal and faster for global communication. The symbolic transfer between industrial production and advertising images no longer arises from *ex novo* practices, but symbolic creations are born from the appropriation of the authenticity contained in the real object. This appropriation operates with fragmented and organized forms using the syntax of hypertext, the transmedia format and the criteria of the intelligent algorithm, all oriented towards the

dominance of the brand as the unquestionable protagonist of this expanded and expansive project.

This is global advertising culture in which we find the best possible vantage point from which to consider the changes to which our societies are being subjected now immersed at the end of the first quarter of the 21st century. We hope that the PPGCOM-USP, with its initiative and leadership, continues to foster these rich debates, so necessary for the creation of research networks and intellectual advancement. M

De la publicidad a los estudios sobre la cultura de consumo: El largo y productivo proceso de creación de una teoría compartida

From advertising to consumer culture studies: The long and productive process of creating a shared theory

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RESUMEN

Este texto pretende sintetizar la relación con el Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação de la Universidade de São Paulo, establecido por el trabajo con los profesores Clotilde Pérez y Eneus Trindade, hace más de quince años, cuando movidos por la mutua curiosidad investigadora, por la certeza compartida sobre la necesidad de ampliar el campo de estudio de la disciplina publicitaria, nació una relación profesional y humana que ha crecido durante todos estos años, en los que nuestra forma de entender y abordar el fenómeno publicitario se ha consolidado como interdisciplinar, exploratoria y colaborativa, generando ideas que trascienden el estudio del fenómeno publicitario para abarcar la cultura de consumo.

Palabras clave: Publicidad, marca, tendencias, cultura de consumo

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ABSTRACT

This text seeks to synthesize the relationship with the Post-Graduation Program in Communication Sciences of the Universidade de São Paulo, established by the work with professors Clotilde Pérez and Eneus Trindade, more than fifteen years ago, when moved by mutual research curiosity , due to the shared certainty about the need to expand the field of study of the advertising discipline, a professional and human relationship was born, one that has grown during all these years, in which our way of understanding and approaching the advertising phenomenon has been consolidated as interdisciplinary, exploratory and collaborative, thus generating ideas that transcend the study of the advertising phenomenon to encompass the consumer culture.

Keywords: Advertising, brand, trends, consumer culture

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HACE ALGO MÁS de 15 años que conocí la existencia del Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação de la Universidade de São Paulo (PPGCOM-USP), cuando en la organización del 2º seminario Imagens da Cultura / Cultura de las Imágenes, en Oporto, conocí a los profesores Clotilde Pérez y Eneus Trindade. Toca ahora recopilar todo ese tiempo en este artículo, pero no lo haré de forma enumerativa, sino con el espíritu de revisar una larga y productiva historia de colaboración en sus etapas más importantes.

A partir de aquel primer contacto, movido por la mutua curiosidad investigadora, por la certeza compartida sobre la necesidad de ampliar el campo de estudio de la disciplina publicitaria, nació una relación profesional y humana que ha crecido durante todos estos años, en los que nuestra forma de entender y abordar el fenómeno publicitario se ha consolidado como interdisciplinar, exploratoria y colaborativa.

Con la organización del I Encontro ProPesq PP (Encontro Nacional de Pesquisadores em Publicidade e Propaganda) he tenido el placer de poder asistir a todos ellos y participar en el desarrollo de un foro de primera calidad para el intercambio científico, siempre enriquecedor. El evento fue organizado por la Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Publicidade –a la que tengo el honor de pertenecer desde su fundación– y el Grupo de Estudos Semióticos em Comunicação, Cultura e Consumo (GESC3), que desde 2010 fue constituido por docentes del PPGCOM y del Departamento de Relações Públicas, Propaganda e Turismo, y al que pertenezco desde 2012.

Ese año 2012 fue decisivo en mi relación con el PPGCOM-USP, puesto que conseguí una beca para realizar una estancia postdoctoral allí, gracias al Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), e impartí un curso de postgrado, además de que realicé otras muchas actividades que me permitieron conocer el elevado nivel académico de sus integrantes y ligarme definitivamente a esta escuela.

Desde entonces y hasta ahora, incluso durante el confinamiento impuesto por la pandemia de la COVID-19, hemos seguido trabajando, pensando y compartiendo a las numerosas publicaciones de artículos, libros y conferencias que tenemos en común, le han acompañado proyectos de investigación subvencionados, codirecciones de tesis y participación en foros nacionales e internacionales de investigación, como la International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS-AIS), la International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), la Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación (ALAIC), la Asociación Latinoamericana de Semiótica (FELS), la International Conference on Human-Computer Interaction (HCHCI),

el Congresso Brasileiro de Ciencias da Comunicação (INTERCOM) y la Associação Portuguesa de Ciências da Comunicação (SOPCOM). En todos estos trabajos, el nombre del PPGCOM/USP ha estado presente.

Durante todos estos años, de forma rigurosa pero siempre apasionante, hemos trabajado en lo que ahora, a la vista del historial compartido, parece la superación de los estudios sobre publicidad hacia una nueva alineación con los estudios sobre la cultura de consumo desde una perspectiva publicitaria, teniendo en cuenta a la Semiótica, la Antropología, la Sociología, la Filosofía y los Estudios Visuales. Intentaremos sintetizar este camino recorrido con los profesores del PPGCOM-USP y con otros, con los que he podido compartir trabajo y buenos momentos gracias al buen hacer de la Escola de Pós-Graduação de Comunicações e Artes de USP (ECA-USP).

PUBLICIDAD E IMÁGENES DE LA CULTURA

Como ya expliqué anteriormente, mi primer contacto con el PPGCOM-USP surgió por el interés mutuo en un seminario, que coorganicé en diez ediciones, en el que se exploraba la relación entre la antropología y la comunicación para articular proyectos de investigación; y mi posición metodológica inicial era una mezcla entre los Estudios Culturales (de inspiración sociológica y marxista) y la Semiótica Social, propuesta por Eliseo Verón y continuada por otros. De esta forma, entendíamos que la teoría de la producción social de los discursos no puede reducirse a un estudio del texto inmanente, sino que tiene que ser articulada dentro de los factores de producción, circulación y consumo, que forman parte de cualquier sistema productivo. Al poner estas ideas junto a los Estudios Culturales también se ponía de manifiesto la existencia de una red intertextual fruto de la dimensión ideológica del discurso, es decir, de su ubicación en un espacio histórico, social y cultural concreto.

Lo aprendido en aquellos años, al introducir la perspectiva antropológica en el estudio de la publicidad, resultó muy útil para la continuación del trabajo con los profesores Eneus Trindade y Clotilde Pérez. En este contexto, al utilizar la Antropología del consumo –a partir de las ideas de McCracken– para preguntarnos por el papel de la comunicación en las actividades de consumo desde una mirada interdisciplinar nos permitió obtener resultados sobre el consumo en la vida cotidiana y las tendencias culturales de consumo, y así comprendemos la articulación de vínculos de sentido entre marcas y consumidores.

Del mismo modo, comenzamos a trabajar con el profesor Fernando Contreras –con el que he compartido buena parte de mi relación con el PPGCOM-USP– la idea de tecnocultura, interesados por la exposición

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continua de los individuos y las identidades colectivas en los nuevos canales de comunicación, que han provocado la creación de ficciones personales e identidades hiperconstruídas que adoptan la apropiación, técnica artística posmoderna, como método de creatividad e innovación social. Esta apropiación ha sido llevada a sus extremas consecuencias en los procesos de interacción social (ciudadana y comercial) sin un cuidado de sus consecuencias de riesgo. La referida idea fue posteriormente evolucionando, al pensar en la publicidad y el consumo con la suma de la Semiótica, lo que supuso hablar de apropiación y plantear una Semiótica de la irradiación, presentada y ampliamente debatida en la ECA-USP, para finalmente adentrarnos en la relación entre la publicidad y el arte y los estudios visuales desde una perspectiva filosófica.

De esta manera, la Antropología ha contribuido a crear la idea de que es necesario ubicar históricamente los procesos y los productos de la cultura masiva para conocer las matrices culturales de las que se nutre nuestra cultura global mediática; y de contextualizar los productos mediáticos con los demás productos de nuestra cultura global de consumo.

LA MARCA COMO ACTOR SOCIAL

Desde el principio de nuestros trabajos hubo interés por conocer los vínculos existentes entre la marca y los consumidores, con el objetivo de comprender los mecanismos discursivos y culturales que articulan el sentido social que las hace deseables. Así, fundamentalmente con la doctora Clotilde Pérez, pero también con otros profesores del PPGCOM-USP hemos trabajado para abrir una reflexión sobre el uso de los valores sociales universalizados en el ámbito de los mensajes publicitarios corporativos. Nuestra intención era trazar un mapa que permitiera crear las bases epistemológicas necesarias para el desarrollo de la cuestión, partiendo de la idea, contraria a las concepciones atomistas y desestructurantes, de que debemos considerar a la publicidad como un proceso comunicativo creador y condicionador de la cultura, cuya gramática interna, por medio de su componente pragmático, condiciona y está condicionada por su contextualización en el ámbito, no muy bien definido, de la cultura de masas.

En su permanente búsqueda de nuevos argumentos, en el mundo cambiante al que asistimos y del que participamos, las grandes corporaciones tienen que dirigir sus intereses hacia ideas inmutables, buscando unos argumentos que varían lo mínimo posible y que sean trasladables de un país a otro, siguiendo al mercado, manteniendo sus significados (aunque sea mediante los símbolos más universales). Estos argumentos son los valores sociales, entendidos por las empresas transnacionales como ideas compartidas por una buena parte de la

población y extrapolables a diferentes países. De forma que sus mensajes publicitarios puedan ser difundidos y entendidos por enormes audiencias sin necesidad de modificación. Los valores sociales elegidos son aquellos comunes a la cultura occidental industrializada y democrática. Es claro que no se puede demostrar que un cierto tipo de cultura conduzca necesariamente al desarrollo económico, ni que el desarrollo económico produzca necesariamente un cierto tipo de pautas culturales, tampoco que ciertas pautas culturales tengan la capacidad de generar un régimen político democrático o que las instituciones democráticas hagan aparecer ciertos sistemas culturales de valores y creencias, pero, en cualquier caso, la cultura predominante en una sociedad y sus valores puede ayudar a clarificar la relación entre sistemas de valores, sistemas económicos y sistemas políticos.

El desarrollo económico y los cambios culturales y políticos están vinculados de forma coherente, estructurados en vínculos causales recíprocos. Además, el devenir histórico no es lineal, ya que la modernidad crea una corriente posterior, la posmodernidad (hipermodernidad, modernidad líquida) con características diferentes. Si no es lineal, el cambio social se mueve en una dirección diferente a la que apuntó aquella, de hecho, los autores posmodernos nos indicaron algunas características de la nueva dirección, que se apartan de la eficiencia económica, de la eficiencia burocrática y de la racionalidad científica asociada a la modernidad, dirigiéndose hacia una sociedad más flexible, con más espacio para la autonomía personal y más parecida al hombre.

En ese contexto, las marcas se sirven de la publicidad para conseguir personalidad, del mismo modo que las personas nos servimos de la moda para individualizar nuestras apariencias. La publicidad funciona como cosmético de la marca, la viste de exclusividad alejándola de todo lo corriente y ordinario. Así, el fenómeno de la competición de marcas y la estandarización industrial han dado origen a una carrera cuya meta está en alcanzar lo inédito, lo exclusivo, para con el fin de captar la atención de los consumidores. Por su propia naturaleza posmoderna la publicidad deja siempre la posibilidad de sustraerse a su acción persuasiva: cambiar el canal de televisión, cambiar de pantalla o pasar la página. La publicidad trata de influir en un todo colectivo, sin pretender la reforma del hombre y las costumbres toma al hombre tal cual es, procurando estimular solamente la sed de consumo que ya existe en él. Al proponer continuamente nuevas necesidades, la publicidad se contenta con explotar la aspiración común al bienestar y a la novedad. Se trata más de utilizar pragmáticamente el gusto existente por los goces materiales, el bienestar y las novedades que de reconstituir al hombre.

La sobreproducción trajo como consecuencia que la publicidad no nos muestre los productos tal y como son, sino que los viste con valores nacidos en

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la sociedad. La publicidad fabrica objeto-signo cuya función es intercambiarse por determinadas experiencias y valores sociales. La obsolescencia y rápida sustitución de los objetos no responde a su caducidad estrictamente funcional, de uso, sino a su caducidad simbólica. Antes los objetos pasaban de padres a hijos, ahora por cada generación de hombres discurren varias generaciones de objetos: el hombre se siente sobrevivir, perdurar ante la repetida mortalidad de los objetos que pasan por sus manos. Ahora bien, la publicidad no queda por ello relegada a signo de un objeto-signo, signo subsidiario, o en el mejor de los casos espoleta semántica que activa un sentido encarnado en otro sitio, ya que la publicidad resulta útil de dos formas distintas y complementarias. En primer lugar, la publicidad no es un simple intermediario entre el objeto y su consumidor, sino que es también consumida como objeto de cultura y estético. En segundo lugar, la publicidad nos ofrece la adaptación de la sociedad de consumo a nuestras necesidades en imágenes, mientras a nosotros se nos exige adaptarnos al orden real de la sociedad de consumo.

La cultura de consumo es para Baudrillard una cultura postmoderna, sin profundidad en la que todos los valores se revalúan y el arte ha triunfado sobre la realidad. La estetización de la realidad pone en primer plano la importancia del estilo, propone una búsqueda constante de nuevas modas, estilos, sensaciones y experiencias. Resulta así mayor vigor a la antigua noción contracultural artística. El interés por el estilo de vida sugiere que las prácticas de consumo, la compra y la exhibición de bienes y experiencias de consumo en la vida cotidiana no pueden entenderse meramente mediante las ideas de valor de cambio. La nueva cultura de consumo hace del estilo de vida un proyecto de vida y exhibe su individualidad y sentido del estilo a través de sus bienes, ropas, prácticas, experiencias y apariencias corporales que reúnen en un estilo de vida. El individuo moderno de la cultura de consumo sabe que no solo habla con su vestimenta, sino también con su casa, su mobiliario, la decoración, el automóvil y otras actividades que deben leerse y clasificarse en términos de presencia o ausencia de gusto.

En medio de esa inmensidad de posibilidades de compra, apoyada por el acceso a la información y la mejora de la tecnología, el hombre contemporáneo es cada vez más crítico en sus decisiones. Probablemente una buena parte de esas decisiones está basada en una relación más consciente con el consumo, incluyendo el papel de las marcas en nuestra vida cotidiana, que incluye la dimensión positiva que las marcas pueden tener en la sociedad contemporánea, hedonista, emotiva y tecnológica –siguiendo a Lipovetsky– como promotoras del multiculturalismo y el consumo como una experiencia que produce valores.

De esta forma, las marcas son un símbolo del éxito económico, del estatus, además de una herramienta de identidad, autenticidad y personalización.

Entonces, el uso de las marcas es una posibilidad de visibilización para las personas en la sociedad contemporánea, y aunque existen diferentes modos de presencia de lo visible en nuestro entorno (Landowsky), la publicidad que hacen las marcas se configura como una manifestación privilegiada de la sociedad contemporánea, basada en la sinestesia, la polifonía y la visualización de los conceptos de singularidad y exclusividad. Este hecho, como ya mencionamos, está evidenciado por el desplazamiento de lo material en el producto, a favor de la desmaterialización simbólica, erosionando lo concreto con la intención de crear vínculos de sentido a partir de la subjetividad para, con eso, establecer complicidad e identificación. La publicidad es una presencia efectiva, envolvente e intencionalmente accesible, que ha resultado una síntesis de la tensión entre la promesa de permanencia (objetivo estratégico de productos y marcas) y la fugacidad implacable, característica del pragmatismo y lo efímero de la oferta y la demanda contemporánea.

Esta línea de trabajo ha reportado y sigue aportando, desde la comprensión de los rituales de consumo mostrados en los mensajes de las marcas, la percepción de las tendencias de consumo a partir de las manifestaciones publicitarias, expresadas de modo visual, textual y sinestésico, que han abierto una perspectiva de estudio sobre la cultura de consumo, ya que la publicidad corporativa construye los valores de la organización buscando su consolidación en el ámbito de actuación del ciudadano en su vida cotidiana y tiene como objetivo principal significar las marcas, mucho más que promover productos. De esta manera, las marcas construyen sentido en la medida que responden a los anhelos y aspiraciones de sus destinatarios, estimula la imaginación y aporta respuestas a los problemas cotidianos de sus consumidores, constituyendo las sensibilidades y orientando sus prácticas culturales de consumo, ya que aunque las formas de ver el mundo varían de sociedad en sociedad, reflejando las diversas experiencias históricas de gente diferente, lo que queda como lugar común son los que difunden los mensajes publicitarios y las formas de consumo.

LA MEDIATIZACIÓN DEL CONSUMO

La tercera línea de trabajo, compartida con el profesor Eneus Trindade y otros investigadores del PPGCOM-USP, ha sido la exploración del concepto emergente de mediatización y su aplicación al estudio del consumo desde una fase inicial de comprensión del fenómeno hasta los intentos de investigación

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aplicada que se han ido sucediendo. Una vez afianzadas por la mayoría de los autores del ámbito estrictamente publicitario y de otras Ciencias Sociales, surgieron las ideas de que la publicidad es una actividad económica, cultural y social que viene jugando un papel esencial al albor del capitalismo moderno y las economías más avanzadas, que el sistema publicitario desempeña un rol decisivo en la configuración de identidades, hábitos de consumo, deseos, aspiraciones e imaginarios colectivos, lo que permitió el momento de adaptar la idea de *mediatización* al ámbito del consumo.

El concepto de mediatización tiene un uso extendido en ámbitos como la religión, la política o el deporte. En estos la presencia en medios, unida a las discusiones sociológicas en torno a la interacción social de los medios, hace de la mediatización un fenómeno que, a pesar de mostrarse como contemporáneo, hunde sus raíces más allá de la actual configuración del ecosistema mediático. Este fenómeno constituye, aún hoy, una de las discusiones centrales en comunicación, a partir de la cual se desarrollan diversas aplicaciones y estudios en Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales, con el fin de entender procesos de cambio social, cultural y material. El origen podría situarse como una forma de entender la centralidad y relevancia creciente de los medios en los procesos sociales de los países industrializados y tiene que ver con que el incremento de la velocidad de acceso a internet, la universalización de dispositivos móviles y la emergente cultura del conocimiento compartido a través de plataformas digitales constituyen una referencia central en la vida de las personas. Se pasa de una concepción sobre el estudio de la comunicación basada en producción-texto-audiencia a una configuración no lineal y abierta, en que existe una construcción comunicativa de la realidad social y cultural por parte de los medios de comunicación.

Las conexiones entre mediatización y consumo –apuntados por García Canclini– tienen una doble vertiente, directa e indirecta. Así, la directa es cuando una determinada actividad pasa a ser ejecutada de una forma diferente debido a la influencia de los medios, como comprar en tiendas virtuales usando internet, mientras que la forma indirecta de mediatización hace referencia a la influencia de los medios en una determinada actividad, sin afectar significativamente a la forma en que se realiza, como decidir qué ropa compraremos o cuál será nuestro estilo para el próximo invierno. La diferencia entre ambas estaría en el grado de influencia, y la indirecta es la más sutil, aunque en los procesos de consumo ambas formas pueden concurrir. Mientras que el consumo online sería un claro ejemplo de mediatización directa, la presencia de los medios en los procesos de compra al proponer determinados rituales de consumo en sus diferentes contenidos sería un ejemplo de mediatización indirecta.

El consumo se caracteriza por procesos de transferencia de significado desde un mundo socialmente construido hacia los bienes de consumo y de estos hacia el consumidor a través de dos vectores esenciales: el sistema publicitario y la moda. Los dos ejercen su influencia sugiriendo prácticas ritualistas de poseer los bienes, adquirirlos, cambiarlos o despojarnos de ellos. Estos rituales de consumo actúan, a su vez, como dispositivos mediáticos, ya que pueden ser cualquier cosa capaz de capturar, orientar, determinar, interceptar, modelar, controlar y asegurar los gestos, conductas, opiniones y discursos de las personas.

La consecuencia más radical de la influencia de la mediatización en el consumo es el proceso de sustitución, según el cual determinadas actividades sociales vienen siendo sustituidas por actividades mediadas: escuchamos la radio mientras conducimos o miramos la televisión mientras comemos, aunque el caso más extendido es el de las compras online. Los medios actúan además como catalizadores de cambios sociales, desde el momento en que su relevancia social supone el sustento de personas e instituciones, lo que contribuye en buena medida al crecimiento de la riqueza y el sostenimiento de las industrias culturales. De este modo, agentes económicos diversos acomodan su forma de actuar a la operativa de los medios. Esto es claramente visible en deportistas, políticos y profesionales del entretenimiento y la cultura. En definitiva, los medios ofrecen nuevas formas de consumir productos y servicios, más allá de limitaciones geográficas u horarias, eso que Habermas llamó la implosión del consumo para describir cómo este ha dejado de residir en la esfera de la intimidad para vivir en la esfera social.

Este trabajo previo de definición conceptual nos llevó a constatar que hay una presencia efectiva de los medios de comunicación que penetra en la vida cotidiana de los individuos y destierra los procesos lógicos e interaccionales, es decir: la mediatización, y en el caso de la publicidad realizada por las marcas, se encuentra un amplio menú de estrategias para la difusión de mensajes, aunque estas no están consolidadas aún, pero si han cambiado las formas tradicionales de planificación publicitaria que ahora tienen como objetivo poner la marca a circular por la internet. Estos hechos indican la existencia de una mayor participación del consumidor como usuario de las redes sociales y una práctica de mercado que se basa en el uso de las reacciones espontáneas del consumidor-colaborador o prosumidor para la expansión del mensaje. De esta forma, se hace patente el creciente poder del consumidor que es quien da voz a las marcas, pero que también puede criticar y cuestionarlas. El contexto de los nuevos medios parece reconfigurar las relaciones de poder y propicia un juego de relaciones más equilibrado entre productores y consumidores.

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La publicidad tradicional solo es una parte de las posibilidades de comunicación que tienen las marcas en este momento. Hoy el sistema publicitario relaciona a las marcas con sus usuarios mediante el uso de etiquetas en sistemas de búsqueda como Google, se disfraza de información periodística en las campañas de comunicación institucional y sintética de Twitter y permite la formación de una opinión crítica que, con una nueva forma de gestión, da expresión a la relación entre el público general y las comunidades de seguidores, como ocurre en Facebook. La publicidad también está presente en las nuevas redes sociales y soportes web que permiten una producción de la voz y la imagen con criterios estéticos. Todos estos sitios son espacios en los que se pueden anunciar o publicitar marcas, con enormes posibilidades para cultivar los vínculos sensoriales con sus públicos. Por eso creemos que es necesario entender la naturaleza cualitativa (y promover su estudio desde esa óptica) de estos vínculos sensoriales establecidos en el mundo digital, incluidos en lo que ahora llamamos publicidad programática o numérica, basada en el *big data* y la estadística, pero de profundo arraigo en la cultura social y las prácticas de consumo.

CULTURA GLOBAL PUBLICITARIA

Como consecuencia lógica de todos estos años de trabajo, diálogo y estudio compartido, habiendo establecido el contexto general de la publicidad sobre cuestiones culturales, tecnológicas y comunicacionales desde la perspectiva pluridisciplinar, ha surgido una teoría común, de próxima publicación, una idea consensuada sobre la naturaleza del fenómeno publicitario, que tiene que ver con la existencia de una cultura expandida que tiene como expresión publicitaria la marca y su universo estético-cultural, una metacultura publicitaria entre el arte y el algoritmo.

Como explicábamos antes, la comunicación mediada ha experimentado una transformación radical con la irrupción de la inteligencia artificial, las redes, las realidades artificiales y las nuevas actitudes de los individuos frente a la tecnología; lo que ha causado el surgimiento de nuevas formas de creación, recepción e interpretación de la publicidad, aunque no ha sido lo único que ha influido en profunda renovación del mundo publicitario, pues el comienzo del siglo vino acompañado de la economía digital del conocimiento, del dominio del tecnoliberalismo, del capitalismo de plataformas, de la robotización y de la cultura de la innovación. Gracias a ella las organizaciones actuales consiguen introducir en el mercado nuevos productos y estimular el consumo sin respiro. Este sistema de consumo masivo implica una lógica de destrucción que elimina

lo viejo para favorecer lo nuevo mediante un proceso creativo orientado a la diversificación permanente de la oferta mediante el estímulo de la novedad.

Esta destrucción creativa propia de la publicidad adquiere una dimensión planetaria en la actualidad. Los mercados globales obligan a trabajar en un escenario fronterizo entre distintas culturas, cosmovisiones y escenarios sociales y políticos diferentes. Por eso no se puede considerar a la publicidad una disciplina técnica, es más bien un paradigma humano que contiene razones filosóficas, culturales, ontológicas y antropológicas, además de las propias razones empresariales, mercantiles o meramente comunicacionales. La irresistible expansión de la publicidad establece un proceso de cambio que viene delimitado por el paso de una visión objetiva a una que mira más allá de lo cercano y de lo próximo. El mundo se expande a través de la información que llega de otros lugares mediante los medios digitales y el consumo en un mercado orientado al perfil de un individuo con vocación transfronteriza. Esta expansión global de la comunicación necesita que los símbolos del pasado sean reemplazados por su simulacro digital, más etéreo y rápido para la comunicación global. La transferencia simbólica entre la producción industrial y las imágenes publicitaras ya no surge de prácticas ex novo, sino que las creaciones simbólicas nacen de la apropiación de lo auténtico que contiene el objeto real. Esta apropiación opera con formas que ahora se fragmentan y organizan mediante la sintaxis del hipertexto, el formato transmedia y el criterio del algoritmo inteligente, todo orientado hacia el dominio de la marca como protagonista incuestionable de todo este proyecto expandido y expansivo.

Una cultura global publicitaria en la que encontramos la mejor atalaya posible para plantearnos cuáles son los cambios a los cuales se ven sometidos nuestras sociedades ahora que estamos inmersos en el final del primer cuarto del siglo XXI. Esperamos que el PPGCOM-USP, con su iniciativa y liderazgo, continúe propiciando estos ricos debates, tan necesarios para la creación de redes de investigación y el avance intelectual. **M**

A communitarian epistemology of communication

Uma epistemologia comunitarista da comunicação

R A Q U E L   P A I V A [a]

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the reinterpretation of the concept of community as proposed by the author, from her initial studies to concepts that qualify her to understanding today's social structure, such as generative community and floating minorities. Her research activity intersects with her individual, social and professional existence, context in which emerge colleagues from University of São Paulo, with whom she established relationships over the years and considers as references, such as dean José Marques de Melo. This revisionist and autobiographic reflection is written in the first person, since intellectual production and personal life are intensely intertwined.
Keywords: Community communication, generative community, comprehensive epistemology

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RESUMO

O texto discorre sobre a perspectiva de reinterpretação do conceito de comunidade proposto pela autora, desde os seus estudos iniciais com o desdobramento de conceitos que a qualificam para o entendimento da estrutura na atualidade, como comunidade gerativa e minorias flutuantes. A autora realiza um entrecruzamento da atividade de pesquisa com sua existência individual, social e profissional, contexto em que emergem os colegas da Universidade de São Paulo, com os quais, ao longo dos anos, estabeleceu relações e considera referências, como o decano José Marques de Melo. Trata-se de uma reflexão revisionista e autobiográfica, por isso realizada na primeira pessoa, uma vez que se entrecruzam de maneira intensa produção intelectual e vida pessoal.
Palavras-chave: Comunicação comunitária, comunidade gerativa, epistemologia compreensiva

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"ARE FLOATING, ON the surface / of my soul, remains / of things that I don't know if, together, they would be enough / to build life... Or if they were only pretexts". This poem (free translation) by the Portuguese poet Cabral do Nascimento, who died in 1978, has always intrigued me and remained an enigma to me. I begin the incursion into my life of theoretical production this way - with an autobiographical revisionist effort, believing that behind an author's biography lies the cartography of their time and of their work - and because it is clear to me that, due to a special taste for poetry, I could have followed another path. In fact, I even had a poem published in a collection that the Juiz de Fora City Hall produced, by the end of the 1970s, early 1980s, under the title "*Novos Poetas*" (New Poets). Later on, I found that I had been very audacious in enrolling in the contest and, what is more, to have been selected to publish a poem together with some of those who today are renowned writers and poets of the country.

I never published anything literary again. After my short career as a poet, I immersed in the craft of journalistic narration of daily life and then in reflecting, challenging it and trying to produce alternative and inclusive formats for the brilliant activity of describing life. In 1984, when I passed a public contest at the Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora (UFJF), I definitely entered the activity that has always guided my life and that has given me the most pleasure: being close to books, even more than to people. This is the truth I have to admit, before undertaking an objective narrative about myself considering that my love, family and friendship relationships have always brought me more questions than appeasement. This could possibly be one of the reasons why I have always bet on trying to show the viability of a proposition, often considered as utopian. Community has always been for me the horizon of a bond and a practice of the common good.

Empathy has always been a hallmark of my life, and I have exercised it even in the managerial activities I have taken on. I have occupied all the places I wanted to, I have accomplished everything I wanted to do, and I don't have a million friends, because I wouldn't know how to take care of so many people; however, the very few that I do have the certainty that they can count on me. This certainty is what moves me, impelled by the French theorist Maurice Blanchot (1984), for whom community serves to recognize individuality.

This singular aspect of my personality, however, should be refined in order to avoid hasty conclusions. My biggest struggle has always been with myself, my shyness and the difficulty of socialization, which I attribute in part to the long years in religious schools and to the fact that I spent the most fertile period of my life under the dictates of a military dictatorship, which

imposed on an entire generation an education for which I was (and am) particularly inept: the notorious scientific one in which humanities were completely banned in favor of algebra, organic and inorganic chemistry, physics, biology, and the like.

I should clarify that I lived very closely with the military and their families, because I lived my childhood and adolescence in places that a friend once called "fantasy island", i.e., the military villages. My father, who died during the Covid-19 pandemic, at the age of 84, was the most remarkable person in my life. He was who insisted that I enter public university when I was 17, and then supported me in going to live in Ecuador for six months when I was 25, when I was selected as one of 12 professors from Latin America to be a lecturer at the *Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Comunicación para América Latina* (International Center of Higher Studies in Communication for Latin America) (Ciespal), set up in that country little known in 1985. I always admired him in his not easy life, for being the person with whom I could experience affection and partnership for the longest time, besides being the only one to delight in my stories whether they were good ones, which made him laugh, or bad ones, which visibly cut his heart.

I started this text and consumed two long pages of it, because I cannot recognize myself disincarnated from these aspects, even though personal, that make up my theoretical production and professional relationships, to which I will now dedicate myself with more emphasis. A colleague once diagnosed me as a nomad. She was right in her definition when she heard about someone who had already lived in Juazeiro, Petrolina, Catolé do Rocha, Pindamonhangaba, Pires do Rio, Recife, Natal, Boa Vista, Juiz de Fora, Quito, Turin and Rio de Janeiro. This nomadism, which I make a point of admitting, was very important to me as it allowed me to recognize the possibility of weaving this patchwork quilt that is human existence.

I intend to conclude this initial part by bringing the opinion of some professors with whom I worked, and who were very important for my education. The first of them I met while still in college where, I am proud to say, I met authors who are my soul bibliography to this day: Josué de Castro, Aristotle's "The Rhetoric" and Paulo Freire. José Luiz Ribeiro, my professor and advisor during my undergraduate studies at UFJF, whom I monitored for a long time, and later on became a colleague, encourager and godfather in my first marriage, in a recent statement said that I was "crafted in the tempering that forges intangible values. A temperament of strong personality and haughtiness in achieving her goals. I would say a true warrior" (Ribeiro, 2013 apud Fernandes & Gabbay, 2014, p. 237, free translation).

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COLLEAGUES, FRIENDS, AND THEORETICAL REFERENCES FROM THE *ESCOLA DE COMUNICAÇÕES E ARTES* (SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ARTS) OF THE UNIVERSIDADE DE SÃO PAULO

I also remember with immense affection the times when I worked at the *Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação* (Brazilian Society of Interdisciplinary Communication Studies) (Intercom), first as coordinator of a research group devoted to the study of minorities, then as Cultural Director and even as Scientific Director, mandates always accompanied by the firm and enterprising presence of José Marques de Melo. I have no doubt that the respect and admiration have always been mutual. If there was any doubt, there was always Dona Silvia, his wife, reminding me of the affection shared whenever we met. And working together meant having in the e-mail, at 7 in the morning, his assignments and tasks to accomplish.

José Marques in São Paulo, at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), José Luiz Ribeiro in Juiz de Fora, at UFJF, and also Muniz Sodré - with whom I share my life - at the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), all of them transmitted to me that spirit of boldness and firmness that led them, each one in their respective places, to found a school devoted to studying and teaching communication. Time may pass, new mandates impose new guidelines, but origin is destiny, and it is undeniable that José Marques marked with his entrepreneurial spirit the places he passed through. His concern in agglutinating, producing agendas in the area, and recording the accomplishments in order to consolidate the institution, always caught my attention, possibly because these are practices that are close to the "community spirit" and binding spirit. In one of these creative missions, we organized a book when he introduced the awards by categories of researchers, and named as founders the important authors for the field of communication.

Once, to my pride, I could hear him say at one of many meetings: "Raquel is a Republican." This compliment struck me so deeply that I used it to start a text I wrote about him. With this phrase we sealed our partnership, because it filled me with pride to know that he recognized my goals for equality and respect. The last time we met was at a meeting at Intercom's headquarters, when he gave me a batch of books from his personal library. I had other opportunities in which I could have met him again, but I confess I escaped in order not to see him already consumed by Parkinson's disease, which hindered his movements and made his speech difficult to understand. This last time, I even escaped from the meeting before it was over, and I know that he, smart, sensitive, and sagacious as he was, understood my motives. Even today, I still come across many, many e-mails

that we have exchanged over the years. With José Marques de Melo I was able to get to know more closely colleagues from São Paulo, both from the *Escola de Comunicações e Artes* (ECA) and from other faculties, to strengthen partnerships and friendships with some that were part of my student bibliography, such as Ciro Marcondes, Arlindo Machado, Lucia Santaella, Cremilda Medina, Ana Maria Fadul and Lucrécia Ferrara.

I am afraid of leaving someone out, but I cannot fail to mention my friend and partner Maria Immacolata Vassallo, who even wrote the preface to one of my books, *Política*: *Palavra Feminina* (Politics: A Feminine Word), a research on women and politics, in particular, on the 2006 elections. It is also impossible not to remember Ismar Soares, a reference in the area of Alternative Communication, with whom I had the pleasure of working a few times, mainly due to the thematic proximity. But I cannot fail to mention, also from ECA-USP, colleagues with whom I worked closely, such as Ismail Xavier, when we were area representatives at the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development) (CNPq), and the researchers Adilson Citelli, Margarida Kunsch, Irene Machado and also Cláudia Lago, my companion in several meetings of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), among others with whom I have had interfaces over the years.

MY DESIGNS AND RESEARCH LINES

I believe that when I mention colleagues, friends, and even theoretical references, I am already drawing the composition of the materials that form my thought life. However, even if such affective path materials signal the plastic conformation of my research area, it is necessary to specify that my thematic engagement, which took off since the course of Community Communication in 1985, was really consolidated in the year 1997, when I defended my doctoral thesis and created with a dear undergraduate and Master's advisor, André Esteves, the *Laboratório de Estudos em Comunicação Comunitária* (Laboratory of Studies in Community Communication) (Lecc).

In 2019, starting the preparations for Paulo Freire's centennial, I started thinking over the research methodology we had been developing for 12 years, both with activities and practical interventions in Rio de Janeiro's slums, and with undergraduate and graduate courses at the *Escola de Comunicação* of UFRJ, texts published in Brazil and abroad, participation in congresses and seminars, and a considerable number of monographs, dissertations, theses, and post-doctoral reports. Therefore, I considered that what had moved me

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until then and what had made my students and students connect with the theme was the desire to understand: the exercise of comprehension. Since the Lecc we thought that our proposal was that of a comprehensive epistemology, for being inclusive in the sense of giving the same importance to all forms of knowledge that emerge in the territory. This would explain the variety of themes, territories, languages, and possibilities of community that came to me through students and researchers from all over Brazil. In the end, Lecc has broadened the concept of *community* to a comprehensive idea as full of possibilities as human communication can be. Projects in the fields of slums, ruralities, art, Brazilian culture, radio and the press, and gender all had in common the search for the common.

This perspective has enabled the active expansion of the Lab's scope of work and research, including more and more themes that complement each other and that are based on Freire's foundations. What Paulo Freire (1996) preferred to call the *epistemology of curiosity*, the Portuguese sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2010) prefers to call *epistemologies of the South*. For Paulo Freire, his epistemology is a kind of antidote to the certainties that, in the spectrum of knowledge, make up a limiting environment. In Bonaventura's perspective, new possibilities of intervention in the narrow knowledge may emerge in the South, with new cognitive forms. Based on the thought of the Indian economist Vandana Shiva (2003), the author proposes an ecology of knowledges.

The proposition of an ecology of knowledges, i.e., the coexistence of different ways of reading the world in the same degree of scientific importance, is what we have called comprehensive epistemology. The comprehensive perspective allows us to circumvent the "monoculture of knowledge and rigor", i.e., the idea guided by the rigor of hegemonic knowledge, in which other possibilities of knowledge and plural knowledges have no scientific status and validity. The assumption of inclusion of knowledge from the Southern Hemisphere carries with it the idea that the colonialism to which the nations from this part of the planet were subjected must be overcome, and that the ways and knowledge produced by these populations constitute scientific knowledge.

Comprehension represents the pragmatic proposal of this dwelling on the multiplicity of knowledges that make up our culture. And to have realized that my whole life has been guided by this theoretical perspective was, without a doubt, the recognition of a proposal not only theoretical, but also of social action, both of which have been underway for more than 30 years.

It is important to point out that the proposition centered on understanding necessarily mobilizes an effort of knowledge that is not restricted to thinking anchored in the individual as the subject of the process. The construction is necessarily based on social action, on the composition of a collective ground,

of groupality or, more appropriately, of community. It is also important remembering that "knowing is the task of subjects, not of objects" (Freire, 1977, p. 27, free translation). The comprehensive epistemology then implies the subject in its collective, plural, contradictory, and open construction. The recent experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has left, among so many undigested lessons, the awareness about the importance of a collective construction of science, so that it can act generatively on societies.

The grounds for my proposition and action come from Paulo Freire, but also from Milton Santos, Darcy Ribeiro, and Muniz Sodré, with their perspectives of valuing territory and everything related to it. After all, the central issue is that of culture and its fabrics. On the other hand, it is impossible not to mention the foundations that consolidate all my studies around the community issue.

I have to admit that over the years I have very often handled authors that I believe provide a more direct understanding by students and peers, and among them is the German Ferdinand Tönnies with his very pedagogical distinction between community and society. I have trained countless researchers based on his book and the interpretations and readings we have done. I never quite knew whether they preferred the original or the interpretation I always made of his reflexive effort. In this endeavor, I never left aside classic texts, such as Max Weber on social action and the question of solidarity in Émile Durkheim. Friedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* was, since college, one of the books that fell into my life like a bolt of lightning, and made me understand the presence of the human being on earth. Any text that I have written on the issue of gender and patriarchy has always been based on this work, even though it is never profiled in my bibliographical references.

There are others that, I must admit, never appear as my references, but they are solid grounds for my reflections and ways of thinking. For example, Freud is part of a period in my life that I still took to my Master's degree, in which Psychology was the field I would like to study. In the Masters, I broadened this spectrum with readings from Jacques Lacan's seminars, which in turn led me to Julia Kristeva, an author I admire a lot. But Carl Gustav Jung was a more recent reading, never fully completed and never expressly cited by me, despite the undeniable theoretical force his propositions have on me and my current research.

Resuming the line around the purposes that ground the basis of my production around the communitarian proposition, I believe I can delimit, after discussing the scope of the classical authors, two periods as marking the contact with authors that consolidated my research. One is the period of the discovery of Latin American exponents, featuring Antonio Cabezas, Daniel Prieto, Juan Diaz Bordenave and Mário Kaplún, and the period of the narrowing of

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readings that broadened the theoretical range around the community question, starting with the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo, with whom I studied at the Università Degli Studi di Torino in 1995. That was when I had contact with the work of Karl-Otto Apel and his unlimited community of communication that Vattimo referred to so much at that time. I also had contact with the work of an author who has remained one of my favorite authors; having read almost everything written by the American pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty. Consequently, I dwelt more on John Dewey, whom I always turn to when I need to discuss the democracy-citizenship-education-community axis.

Until then, the foundation around the theme of community had been basically through anthropology and sociology.

There was a period, in the mid-1990s, when Michel Maffesoli, as well as Benedict Anderson, started the studies on the issue of virtuality, with countless publications always guided by the principle of *filia*, that is, the untying of proximity via territorial and even kinship ties towards groupality and tribes.

Among the texts that marked me during this phase, I cannot fail to mention the theoretical discussions between Maurice Blanchot and Jean-Luc Nancy on the subject. In the 1980s, both French authors were at the center of discussions about the communitarian: Jean-Luc Nancy with his celebrated *The Inoperable Community* and Maurice Blanchot with *The Inconfessable Community*. Finally, I should mention an author from whom I also translated and published a text, the Italian Roberto Esposito, with his *Communitas* and *Immunitas* that, in my opinion, close the discussion around the differences between aggregation and fragmentation.

However, to close the approach around the comprehensive epistemology and its materials, I should refer to the approach of a basic author for the materials of this theory. My first contact with his writings was back in the late 1980s, when I attended some of his lectures. It is very present in one of my books, *Histeria na Mídia*, but it certainly forms the grounds of my reflections. I could have some contact with Jean Baudrillard, because he was a good friend of my life partner. And I have in my resume one of my birthdays when we spent the four of us eating food from Bahia in a restaurant here in Rio de Janeiro: me, Muniz, Baudrillard and Vattimo.

I was recently invited to participate in an event in his honor at the University of Quebec, and perhaps because we were in the middle of the pandemic period, and I imagined his face not at all surprised by the unusual situation, I wrote a text in which I united the thought of the indigenous leader Ailton Krenak with that of Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard had that precise look at catastrophes, the announced, imminent, and real ones, and he could be immensely creative in the face of them. Perhaps for this very reason he became a photographer in the last years of his life.

To conclude this theoretical sketch I should approach the city. It became a necessity, as the theoretical investigations and actions in popular spaces went on to understand the social fabric and the venue that generates agglutinating and dispersive forces. Thinking about the city on this horizon became a challenge, since the prerogative would be to think about the real city, but not through the eyes of Architecture, nor through those of Anthropology, but rather from the *sensorium*, from the marks printed on the bodies and minds of those who experience this work in permanent process. For this reason, my basic author was the journalist and sociologist Ezra Park and the exponents of the Chicago School, followed by Richard Sennett and Sassia Sasken, as well as the journalist and activist Jane Jacobs, among many others, among whom I also include Jesús Martín-Barbero and Néstor García Canclini. And the writers that started it all: James Hillman, Marc Augé, David Byrne, Pierre Sansot, Francesco Careri, among others, as my initial interest came from the experience of resuming cycling in 2013.

The understanding of the city as a comprehensive space made me revisit the urban ecology of the Chicago School in its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s, with Robert Ezra Park engaged in reflecting on the social and cultural changes that were drastically happening in the American cities, and especially in Chicago in that early twentieth century. Focused on direct observation, these early works on the city can be of great use for current studies. In fact, when reviewing the writings and propositions that guided the Chicago School, especially in its most flourishing period, one can find texts of a disconcerting contemporaneity and even similarities not always declared with many of the concepts that appeared there.

Besides the sociological observation of the Chicago Americans, the post-Jungian psychologist James Hillman, with his *City and Soul* (1993), brought a proposal very close to what interested me, especially in his approach about the irreplaceable need of man of walking as a way to achieve a deep reflection on the city that we transform, where every day this simple act becomes increasingly difficult. As I said, my relationship with the bicycle from the year 2013 onward brought with it a greater interest in the spaces in which we transit, and the way the territory opens or closes to the dynamics of the social.

Still among the theorists who came to help me in my relationship with the city, I cannot forget the German sociologist Georg Simmel, with his classic *The Metropolis and Mental Life* (1979), and the American anthropologist already mentioned, Richard Sennett, who has dedicated himself to decipher urban life, notably in the book *The Conscience of the Eye*: *The Design and Social Life of Cities* (1992), in which he made quite evident this relationship between the senses, architecture, the work of art, and the city.

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Lately, besides the authors that allow me to think about the sensitive, such as Jacques Rancière, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Muniz Sodré, due to the lurking of new and unthinkable times, I have focused on the writings of the Italian Emanuele Coccia, the first one that led me to think about the theme of metamorphosis as a way to understand current times. Certainly, the pandemic seems to constitute a civilizing milestone for the new times. However, we should add to it the reversal of political systems in various regions of the planet, with the establishment of specific projects whose primary theme is the return to cruelty, characteristic of barbarism. Some authors, following the path of diagnosis by metamorphosis, even argue that this is a deep transformation, something unprecedented, and different from the social changes when the premise of development and progress was still on the horizon. And perhaps exactly because of this scenario of great transformations and uncertainties to compose prognostics, two categories-concepts that I developed some years ago have returned with full force. I will now discuss them, precisely because they are theoretical concepts of practical application that derive from the comprehensive epistemology.

GENERATIVE COMMUNITY AND FLOATING MINORITIES

The proposal of the generative community was consolidated as a project before the new millennium. The idea of floating minorities was built starting in 2002, in the context of the coordination of the Intercom working group "Minority Culture". I was then able to access numerous proposals from groups that were consolidated according to their themes. Both concepts have been published in book chapters that colleagues in the area in Brazil and Portugal have organized, and that I myself have organized. They are also present in the work of numerous students and researchers since their first publications. Surprisingly, they have returned now, during the pandemic, when we saw the emergence especially in big cities of groups calling themselves collectives, with the objective of acting in areas neglected by the constituted governments.

Before going into more detail on these two topics, it is important to highlight that, for about 10 years, I was in charge of the BRICS-Journalism project, coordinated by me in Brazil and funded by the Finnish Research Academy, under the coordination of the important Finnish journalist and researcher Kaarle Nordenstreng. The results of the project are available on the website[1], but I would like to point out that, even though the project started with the research on the work of journalists in the BRICS countries, their daily lives and productions in Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa over the years we have been able to insert themes that we have been working with, such as the issue of

counter-hegemonic communication, community radio productions, and alternatives to the current communication pattern. This research, which has been consolidated into books published by the important English publishing house Routledge, led us to assemble research groups and get to know the reality of the BRICS countries. Maintaining my aggregating profile, which I have already made a point of emphasizing, I included in the project, besides professor and friend since my journalism days, Márcio Guerra and his team at UFJF, who were with me from the very first moment in the fieldwork. I should also include colleagues from UFRJ, the University of Brasília (UnB), the Universidade Estadual do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), and USP, with professor and friend Cláudia Lago.

Currently I can recognize that the pandemic period brought me the benefit of consolidating views into research that certainly were not so visible before: research is closely linked to the life of the individual and their groups. There is definitely no such thing as separate and isolated research: either it is integrated or it is a desert field, where nothing thrives. And so, armed with this definitive understanding, two phenomenal doors opened before so many losses in the pandemic period: first, the invitation to be a visiting researcher at the *Programa de Pós-Graduação em Ciências da Comunicação* (Graduate Program in Communication Sciences) (PPGCOM) at UERJ, where I could live more closely with colleagues with whom I already had excellent relations, deepen my friendship and produce with a friend, Ricardo Freitas and the researchers in his laboratory. And, finally, the Laboratory that I created and coordinate until 2019, competed for a call for proposals by the *Fundação Carlos Chagas Filho de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro* (Carlos Chagas Filho Foundation for Research Support of the State of Rio de Janeiro) (Faperj) and was the only one to win in the Humanities area. Our project, with a budget forecast for four years, started to be executed this year with a course on Community Communication, involving dozens of researchers from all levels that make up the Lab, for 53 members of the collectives from Rio de Janeiro, Niterói, Duque de Caxias, and Belford Roxo that have been working since the beginning of the pandemic.

This is the passage I needed to justify the two approaches described above. The *floating minorities* were an proposal of approach that emerged after the publication of *O Espírito Comum* (The Common Spirit), a book resulting from my doctoral thesis, in 1997. Despite all the effort to construct the theme of the book, and its good reception by the university community, the search for a more and more comprehensive approach about counter-hegemonic social movements led me to observe the different strategies of floating manifestation of social movements in the field of media discourse. The first text with this term appears in the Intercom Congress of 2001, named "*Minorias Flutuantes*:

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Novos Aspectos da Contra-Hegemonia" (Floating Minorities: New Aspects of Counter-Hegemony), and coincides with my interest in the forms of action of groups such as Greenpeace and the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra* (Landless Rural Workers Movement) (MST). If on the one hand the language of the media established a discursive arena of interest for social movements, on the other hand the dynamics of internal linkages followed a parallel course. This moment, marked by the book I organized with Alexandre Barbalho, *Comunicação e Cultura das Minorias* (Communication and Culture of Minorities), in 2005, is also the beginning of my plunge into the question of affect and its generative function.

By *generative community* we understand the performance of our Lab at this moment, as it qualifies to act together with the collectives in the sense of consolidating their actions, with activities that strengthen their citizen presence in the context of an unequal megalopolis such as Rio de Janeiro. In the first action in the month of October, a course was held with classes in person and online on themes requested by the collectives: community communication, data extraction and processing, racial issues, approaches to the city and the slum, migratory mobility, journalistic coverage, as well as research fundamentals and themes such as politics and culture. The Lab, over the next four years, will act as a generator for these communities in that it will maintain a permanent forum for discussion and development of actions.

So, in order to consolidate the issue of the generative community one should understand which bodies, institutions, and even specific groups can assume the role of generative. The proposition of a generative community appeared for the first time in a chapter written for the book *Vozes Cidadãs* (Citizen Voices), organized by Cicília Peruzzo (2004) for the thematic group "Community Media and Citizenship" of the *Associação Latino-Americana de Livre-Comércio* (Latin American Free Trade Association) (Alaic), in 2004. At that time, Community Communication faced challenges when faced with the implementation of the Community Broadcasting Law nº 9.612, of 1998, which authorized the Federal Police to close down unapproved popular radios in an almost impossible bureaucratic system. Thus, the idea of generative emerges in the gap left by the transformation of a more social model of communication into a model largely driven by the market and class interests. It is the beginning of a metamorphosis in my gaze toward the more affective realms of communication and community. In the generative community one seeks to produce or generate the common good; any universality or determinism is not welcome; rather, one pursues affective transmutations and belonging.

And it was precisely in the magazine MATRIZes, in 2012, that I presented for the first time the proposition of a *community of affection*, in the text "*Novas Formas de Comunitarismo no Cenário da Visibilidade Total: A Comunidade do Afeto*" (New Forms of Communitarianism in the Total Visibility Scenario: The Community of Affection) in which I wonder whether community is still a destiny in a world increasingly motivated by the law of survival - a thought at the time sparked by the image of the stunning 19th century canvas *Le Radeau de la Méduse* by Théodore Géricault. Having already taken up the influence of Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) in his sociology of emergences, I thought of community as a deeper binding phenomenon, whose cement would be the affections expressed in feelings of generosity and gratitude.

Finally, in March 2020, I received the title of Professor Emeritus from UFRJ, to which I have dedicated more than 20 years of my career. The title came a week before the pandemic of Covid-19, when we still could not imagine the gravity of the path we were to face. It was the last solemnity of the *Escola de Comunicação* (School of Communication) at UFRJ and of the University itself. When we returned to classes, two years later, the posters of the event were still on the walls. At the time, I received the proposal with a mixture of joy and surprise, since this is normally a title bestowed on long-time professors. But on second thought, this has always been a challenge I have faced throughout my career, because among foreign colleagues, for example, I was often considered too young to be a university professor, even though I already had a 30-year career.

I believe that my career has served to open paths for young female researchers of today because, in fact, people today start much younger. Finally, it was a feminist event, held on the week of the International Women's Day and on the centenary of UFRJ. The feminine aura was present from the musical track - which started with the young Alicia Keys and ended with Milton Nascimento's "Maria, Maria" - to the composition of the official board, all composed by women, including the first dean of the centenary institution.

After this autobiographical journey, and before the reliefs found in it, I see that my trajectory is intertwined with the constructing of studies in Community Communication in our country. And this was a path of affections, however tortuous it may have been. That is why I close with an excerpt from Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*: "It is stupid not to hope". **M**

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50 years of Communication Studies: Academic Cross Paths

50 años de estudios sobre Comunicación: Trayectorias académicas cruzadas

R A Ú L   F U E N T E S   N A V A R R O [a]

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a self-reflexive exercise undertaken by the author concerning his path as a university professor and academic researcher in Communication Studies for the last five decades. It assumes that no individual path can be isolated, since history implies recognizing the mutually determining intersections with others and with multi-scale institutional frameworks. Any academic autobiography is necessarily a reconstruction of collective bonds with peers and with institutional contexts situated in specific times and spaces—in this case, Latin America, especially Mexico and Brazil.
Keywords: Professionalization, Academic Field, Latin America, Mexico, Brazil

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RESUMEN

En este texto se despliega un ejercicio autorreflexivo del autor acerca de su trayectoria como profesor universitario e investigador académico en el campo de estudios de la comunicación durante las cinco décadas más recientes. El punto de partida es la convicción de que es imposible aislar una trayectoria individual, puesto que la historia implica reconocer los cruces mutuamente determinantes con otros individuos y con marcos institucionales de diversas escalas. Toda autobiografía académica es necesariamente una reconstrucción de los vínculos colectivos con pares y con contextos institucionales situados en tiempos y espacios concretos, en este caso ubicados en América Latina, sobre todo en México y en Brasil.
Palabras-clave: Profesionalización, campo académico, América Latina, México, Brasil

ACCORDING TO THE French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the methodological principle of *participant objectivation* "is undoubtedly the most difficult exercise that exists" because "it requires the breaking of the deepest and most unconscious adherences and adhesions", that is, the interest "of the studied object itself for the one who studies it" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 51, free translation). If this statement is applicable to my case, my professional path in the academic field of communication can be understood as a long process of adopting and exercising the principle of "participant objectivation" or, in other words, according to the Spanish sociologist Jesús Ibáñez, of a continuous *epistemological vigilance* to integrate the process of this research into my "researcher persona", which is "socially determined by the system of social relations" (Ibáñez, 1985, p. 218). According to the North American sociologist C. Wright Mills, in turn, if we are to understand the changes in many personal milieus we should look beyond them. "And the number and variety of such structural changes increase as the institutions within which we live become more extended and more intricately related to each other." Being able to discover such linkages means "having *sociological imagination*" (Wright-Mills, 1961, p. 30, free translation). More than 25 years ago, in my doctoral thesis in Social Sciences I was able to formulate, supported by the work of these and other authors, "*a commitment to the production of meaning*" by assuming the option of "building a professional position and identity for myself as a communication scholar", which constructed as an object of study "the very field in which I act as a subject" (Fuentes-Navarro, 1998, p. 10, free translation).

The process of my university education, however, began 25 years earlier. The decision to enter the undergraduate program in Communication Sciences in 1970, at the *Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara* (Jesuit University of Guadalajara) (ITESO) was basically intuitive. The program was still unknown, and became extremely attractive for those of us who, like me, preferred a *project of future* to be built rather than one pre-specified for traditional professions or careers. Comprehensive grounds in humanities and orientation towards practice in "media" was a novel and stimulating combination in an era that offered young university students multiple options for cultural development (Prieto, 2021). Cinema and audiovisual arts were my core reference for initial learning and professionalization in communication. For ten years, including five years as a student, I worked as radio and audiovisual producer, both in commercial and educational fields. In 1979, I participated in the foundation of a Department of Audiovisual Resources at the *Universidad de Guadalajara* (UDG), with the task of producing support materials for the teaching-learning processes in higher education.

However, film editing gave rise to theoretical and epistemological questions about communication. I could work on these questions as a professor of Communication Theories - a subject that did not exist in the syllabus, but which I took over at ITESO in 1978 and read the few materials available on the subject. In that way, I changed my professional career from being an audiovisual producer toward being a full-time academic. That that transition was consolidated in 1981 when I was appointed director of the *Escuela de Ciencias de la Comunicación* (School of Communication Sciences) at ITESO, so I resigned from my job as a producer at the *Universidad de Guadalajara*. At the same time, the incorporation to national organizations in the academic field was decisive for my future: the *Consejo Nacional para la Enseñanza y la Investigación de las Ciencias de la Comunicación* (National Council for the Teaching and Research of Communication Sciences) (Coneicc), which I chaired from 1984-1986, and the *Asociación Mexicana de Investigadores de la Comunicación* (Mexican Association of Communication Researchers) (AMIC), which had been founded in 1976 and 1979, respectively.

Two of the most important lessons learned from that first period in my academic career were that communication had to be understood from perspectives that, even then, we called "sociocultural", i.e., that situated practices in *structuring* contexts on different scales and dimensions, both material and symbolic. Such perspectives included contributions from semiotics (Eco, 1976; Verón, 1980), sociology (Martín-Serrano, 1977; Giddens, 1984) and the Latin American pioneers of communication studies (Pasquali, 1970; Martín-Barbero, 1987). The other fundamental lesson was that, while "communication" was instrumentally adopted by many social agents as a resource for competition and the imposition of proposals of meaning in social life, the academy had the responsibility to exercise it, "comprehensively" or "reflexively" as a resource for collaboration and incentive for the development of the interlocutors' own visions on common referents (Krippendorff, 1989; Carey, 1992). These two lessons also guided my practice as a teacher and university "trainer" of professionals and researchers. This facet was recently analyzed as one of five ethnographic case studies by specialists in higher education in Mexico (Moreno Bayardo & Torres Frías, 2020), who characterized my position as "interaction as the center of training in thesis supervision".

And in 1988, already fully incorporated into the academic profession, two changes occurred in my career path that pushed me decisively toward research. One was the end of my tenure as director of the School at ITESO, which shortly after disappeared to become a Coordination and eventually a Department. Freed from that institutional responsibility, I had the opportunity to focus more on research

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through my teaching work in communication theories, and in the development of the CONEICC Center for Documentation on Communication in Mexico, which had been entrusted to me in 1983 and would lead, years later, to the *cc-doc*[1] website, an open access repository of communication research products in the country. The other crucial event of that year was José Marques de Melo's invitation to participate in the *Estudo Comparativo dos Sistemas de Comunicação Social no Brasil e no México*, (Comparative Study of Social Communication Systems in Brazil and Mexico), proposed by INTERCOM to CONEICC. This participation allowed me to broaden and deepen the Latin American links that I had already begun to establish, but which were focused until then on teaching, in the space opened by the *Federación Latinoamericana de Facultades de Comunicación Social* (Latin American Federation of Social Communication Faculties) (FELAFACS). I was assigned the "system" of communication research in Mexico (Fuentes-Navarro, 1991) for the comparative study with that of Brazil, commissioned to Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, with whom I have a very productive academic relationship of collaboration and friendship ever since.

Both "impulses" to research brought me closer to *meta-research*, i.e., research on research. And recognizing this epistemological "splitting", I tried since then to develop a communicational approach to these same processes. Thus, I assumed that the study of communication could be better understood as the *social production of meaning about the social production of meaning* (Fuentes-Navarro, 2003), as I had the opportunity to present at the 3rd COMPÓS seminar in 2002 in São Paulo, on the 30th anniversary of the postgraduate course at the *Escola de Comunicação e Artes* of the Universidade de São Paulo (ECA-USP). More than a decade of academic collaboration with Brazilian colleagues had allowed me to learn and exercise several critical perspectives on the common *academic field*, a process that, fortunately, has continued for many more years.

In 1990, as the *Comparative Study* progressed, I was invited to stay at ECA-USP with other foreign consultants, within the framework of a process of "Transition toward Modernity" of that School (Melo et al., 1992), and specifically in connection with the research undertaken by the ECA on its graduates and the labor market (Lopes et al., 1992). For a whole month I shared with Luis Ramiro Beltrán and Marcelino Bisbal, among colleagues of other nationalities and many Brazilian academics from ECA, the activities and coexistence typical of an institution that systematically sought to renew and endorse its international importance within the academic field of communication. I also shared with many other colleagues, in those years, the process of restoring the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación* (Latin American Association of Communication Researchers) (ALAIC), headed by José Marques

de Melo, especially regarding the amendment to the bylaws and the preparation of the Latin American seminars, the first of which was held near São Paulo, in the city of Embú Guaçu, in 1992. A little later, I also collaborated in the design of the WGs (working groups or thematic groups) of ALAIC, and I joined the Theory and Methodology of Communication Research from the beginning.

In the first half of the 1990s, however, in that process of "transition" toward research as a priority academic task, I had the opportunity, which I had not sought before, to take a high quality doctoral program, without changing residence. I was part of the first generation of the PhD in Social Sciences offered jointly by the Universidad de Guadalajara (UDG) and the *Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social* (Center for Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology) (CIESAS), specifically in the area of Sociology. My instinct, jointly with the experience accumulated during more than twenty years in the field, led me to place my theoretical and practical questions about communication in a broader "epistemic space", that of the Social Sciences. It was very clear to me, from the beginning, that what I would seek to develop in the doctorate would be methodological "solvency", and therefore I decided to work on an "object" that I had already worked on, namely the constitution of the academic field of communication in Mexico.

During the PhD process, the most academically demanding stage in my university education, I managed to learn a lot about methodologies and disciplinary approaches, but also something more difficult and of greater importance: I learned to work at home without isolating myself from family life, i.e., I learned to "come and go" instantly from concentration, surrounded by four children and a wife who, also, learned to facilitate the process, accompanying me lovingly but without interfering too much or "unnecessarily" in my tasks. Of course, it meant that they defined what was "necessary". The experience of those four years was very stimulating and enjoyable both personally and academically. I received my degree shortly before my 44th birthday, an age that at the time and in my academic environment was not as late as it might now seem. The following two and a half decades have reaffirmed that for me.

I began to assume myself as a "communication researcher" when I presented a paper at the *Primera Reunión Nacional de Investigadores de la Comunicación* (First National Meeting of Communication Researchers) of AMIC in 1980. But I felt institutionally fully recognized as such in 1996 when I obtained my doctorate degree, and was accepted into the *Sistema Nacional de Investigadores* (National System of Researchers), which at that time only ten colleagues in the field of communication had joined. Two years earlier I had returned to the UDG, now with a position as a professor-researcher. As "collective" and "social" as the

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construction of any other identity, that of researcher depends on the *habitus* as a system of "internal" dispositions, as well as on institutional recognition and positioning, in addition to peers. The term "colleague" that is usually used to treat academic peers implies the condition of being "mutually chosen" subjects. And that is the basis of collegiality, the form of collectivity inherent to the Academy. I have been fortunate to share my professional activity with excellent people, colleagues and work teams. I have been able to join that broad and multifaceted collective subject in Mexico and Latin America that has sought and succeeded to a great extent in legitimizing communication studies, and keep them in permanent consolidation and renewal, restlessly following their object in changing and elusive contexts.

I could summarize, as I did in my speech of gratitude and acceptance of the *Doctorate Honoris Causa* awarded to me by the *Universidad Autónoma de Baja California* (Autonomous University of Baja California) (Fuentes-Navarro, 2020), that as a member of several collective subjects I have had the opportunity to dedicate myself for five decades to learn, discover, experiment, convene, organize, stimulate, criticize, question, preserve and renew knowledge and interventions, more than to teach them; to share, imagine, discuss, disseminate, consolidate findings and methods, rather than cultivate pretended scientific certainties of universal value. The legacies I have appropriated and the generosity with which I have been treated made me confident in the long-term effects of university education and the essential contribution of research in it. Thus, I assume myself to be a full-time academic, who has learned to understand their world as a result and stimulus of communication, and knows that one cannot oppose or separate social and professional commitment; nor communication from education, culture and politics. Communication is indeed an ethic, a practical and inescapable reality, as well as a resource for interaction and an exercise of power. But it is also, in many ways, an *enigma* that challenges us permanently. As the Nort American colleague John Durham Peters (1999, p. 2) states, "understand communication is understand much more", and that could be a summary of my path over the last fifty years: as a student and professional, as a teacher and researcher, as the most reflective practitioner of communication possible.

Undoubtedly, the most productive period of that path is the most recent 25 years, in which most of my publications appeared, most of the Master's and Doctoral students I had advised received their degrees, and I visited most of the countries of Latin America at least once as a visiting professor. In this last aspect, the country where I carried out the greatest number of these activities was Brazil, including my participation in 2015 in a PROCAD/CAPES Project, entitled *Comunicação e Mediações em Contextos Regionais: usos midiáticos, culturais e*

linguagens, which involved teaching a seminar on *Epistemología de la comunicación y mediaciones de lo local: heurísticas socioculturales* (Fuentes-Navarro, 2019) at the ECA/USP graduate school in São Paulo (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwRXm42KdSk), and later at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, in Natal, RN, and the Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul, Campo Grande, MS. Before and after these experiences, I taught similar seminars at the *Universidad Nacional de Córdoba*, Argentina; *Universidad Católica del Perú*; *Universidad Católica de Minas Gerais*, Belo Horizonte, Brazil; *Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Cali*, Colombia; *Universidad Iberoamericana*, in Mexico City; and the *Universidad del Norte*, em Barranquilla, Colombia, among others.

With different emphases, in all these Latin American academic spaces I exposed how dispersion and fragmentation in the academic field of communication are conditions currently observed anywhere in the world and are increasingly manifested in the multiple perspectives and prevailing positions on four major dimensions (ontological, epistemological, praxeological and methodological) of theoretical interpretations of communication, and their mutual relations in an increasingly ambiguous *epistemic hierarchy*. Therefore, a special attempt can be made to identify, historicize and contextualize the fundamental tensions and options, as well as the practical consequences that their confusing multiple intertwining entails for the public understanding of the resources, communication rights and for the consolidation of scientific research programs and researcher training at global, national, regional and local scales.

I have proposed and debated - beyond my regular courses in graduate programs at ITESO and UDG - with several academic communities that defining "communication" as a result of how and from where one proposes to study it and how one approaches its problematization and conceptual development. The undifferentiated and undiscussed proliferation of definitions generates what James Carey (1992, p. 34) very eloquently reported many years ago: "Our existing models of communication are less an analysis than a contribution to the chaos of modern culture." Accordingly, far from authoritatively claiming a reductionist unification, I know that it is appropriate to communicatively engage, in a committed and responsible conversation among agents in the field (Craig, 1999), on the relationship between the generic question "what is communication?" (Located in the ontological dimension) and "how to know communication?" (Core question of the epistemological dimension). Additionally, not only should the consistency of the epistemological question be depended on the ontological definition, but also vice versa, recursively and reflexively.

The recursive and reflexive search for consistency of knowledge about communication implies that communication as an object of knowledge is the

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result of a work of *modeling reality*, of imposing some model on reality in order to be able to recognize it as such. There are interesting difficulties in the specific work that should be investigated in order to do that "modeling of reality": selecting and, therefore, constructing that reality in some terms determined by our way of knowing and not by the "objective reality" itself, which we cannot know as such without that mediation (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). This allows us to bring into play the definition or core concept of communication as "social production of meaning", as a starting point and also as a point of arrival. This concept of communication, defined from a sociocultural perspective, as mentioned above, implies that the study of communication is the '*social production of meaning about the social production of meaning*' and is a way, among others, to locate, understand, contextualize the object of knowledge, at the same time as its relationship with the subject of knowledge; a way of not leaving the object 'floating in the air' as if it were a totally arbitrary definition.

This way of theoretically conceiving the study of communication is by far not the prevailing one in the processes of university training and institutionalized research in Latin America. For this reason, my main interest has been to investigate these processes of institutionalization, through their most important "objectivation": undergraduate and graduate programs, academic publications and specialized associations. In 1992 I published a first approach, under the title *Un campo cargado de futuro. El estudio de la comunicación en América Latina* (Fuentes-Navarro, 1992), and in the following years several updates and developments of that "history", including articles on its "disciplinary and post-disciplinary challenges" (Fuentes-Navarro, 1997), its "conditions and perspectives for the 21st Century" (Fuentes-Navarro, 1999), its "international referents and conditions of a transversal dialogue of knowledge" (Fuentes-Navarro, 2010) or its "disintegrated internationalization" (Fuentes-Navarro, 2014). There are also the conferences held in Bogota - FELAFACS - in 1992 on "*El estudio de la comunicación desde una perspectiva sociocultural en América Latina*"; in Quito -SEICOM-CIESPAL- in 2011 on "*Tendencias de la investigación de la comunicación en América Latina: perspectivas y desafíos*"; in Curitiba -INTERCOM- in 2017 on "*Memoria e historicidad de la investigación en Comunicación en América Latina*"; or in Campo Grande (remote) - COMPÓS - in 2020, on "*Comunicación y fronteras: geografías y espacios simbólicos de las prácticas comunicativas en América Latina*", among others.

From the sociocultural perspective developed throughout multiple experiences of research and debate, we consider *institutionalization* in university programs and professional associations as the most "objective" manifestation of the constitution of an academic field, to the extent that in this way the instances of social power assign or recognize a specific place to the production and reproduction

of knowledge, as well as to professional training in a given area, and implicitly or explicitly define the orientation and meaning (social function) that the work on that area in that place should fulfill to obtain and reinforce its legitimacy. This process is then inseparable from the *professionalization* of the subjects who, within the established programs, have to exercise academic practices and articulate, in more or less strong ways, academic production with decision-making in the area, which in turn contributes to the *legitimization* of knowledge, of the institutions where it is cultivated, and of the subjects who generate it.

The extension and distribution of programs in the higher education system of one country or another indicate, at the same time, the "positions" the "discipline" is acquiring in the system in relation to others, and that distinguish university institutions in the constitution of the field, as well as the networks that coordinate them in certain ways and not in others. In addition to these processes of *social* institutionalization in university facilities and networks that interconnect them, it is essential to take into account the *disciplinary* institutionalization which, following the classic contribution of Burton Clark (1991), is considered even more important than the former for the analysis of the academic field structuring. At the level of social institutionalization, and even more so at the cognitive level, the constitution of a discipline or scientific specialty "crosses" the facilities linking (and unlinking) them to each other through the action of the subjects attached to them. The trans-institutional dimension is fundamentally important in the study of this structuring, and is even more so when institutions and subjects are located in different countries, i.e., in different national regimes. But an international history of communication studies has yet "to be written" concerning this or any other logic, for "so far, most histories have been national, with a predominant focus on North America and Western Europe" (Simonson & Peters, 2008, p. 764). What is quite clear is that the social institutionalization has been much stronger than the disciplinary one...

Nevertheless, in the most recent decade an "international point of view" has emerged and been strengthened, in which I have been able to participate, and that "helps us to see how the organized study of communication has at the same time reflected, refracted and driven the transnational geopolitics, institutional patterns of education and professionalization, and ways of knowing and acting" that are determinants of collective life since the last century. The search for adequate socio-historical frameworks to ground not only international, but increasingly "transnational" research into the processes of constituting the academic field of communication with properly theoretical foundations has recently gained strong momentum: "transnational history takes shape alongside comparative, international, world and global histories" (Simonson & Park, 2016, pp. 2-6,

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free translation). That is the academic context to which I most identify today, when I have been honored as a *National Researcher Emeritus* by the *Sistema Nacional de Investigadores del Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología* (National System of Researchers of the National Council of Science and Technology) (CONACYT), based on an evaluation that considered a self-presentation that I summarize to conclude this paper.

During forty years of academic career I have learned to articulate interpretation and intervention as fundamental operations for the production of knowledge about communication. Research on theory and practice has allowed me to develop a methodology based on heuristic and self-reflexive models. The formula is recursive: to know communication is only possible through its exercise, so the central task has been to practice the *social production of meaning on the social production of meaning*. This summary of many authors' contributions, and their manifestations and consequences systematically reviewed at empirical level, has been recognized as a useful and productive contribution in the academic contexts of the study of communication both in Mexico and in Latin America and other regions, and increasingly in other academic fields of social sciences and humanities, as the importance of communication as a process of social structuring is recognized. In this way, communication is no longer conceived simply as "exchange of messages" or "instrumental use of media", although these practices are also incorporated in what is assumed to be a sociocultural perspective. In this framework, I have been able to develop activities and resources that are highly valued for their scarcity and usefulness, such as those related to academic documentation, to which I have dedicated myself since 1983. This work is materialized in the *cc-doc* repository, available for open consultation on the Internet since 2003. To date, it includes more than eight thousand documents, products of research on communication in Mexico or about Mexico: books, chapters, articles and graduate theses, more than half of which can be retrieved in full text. This core resource to make critical summary and research background in Mexico serves as a complement to the construction of theoretical-methodological as well as referential frameworks on international documentary sources. As such, it facilitates the most pertinent orientation of projects, especially graduate theses, toward close and very relevant contexts. It also facilitates the development of comparative projects, at national and international levels, on topics and approaches of emerging academic interest.

My specialty as a university professor has been the field of communication theories, especially those oriented toward a sociocultural perspective and as resources for post-disciplinary construction of models of scientific interpretation

and professional intervention. For more than fifteen years, the primary objective of my work has been the professional training of competent and reflective communicators to explore new spaces of sociocultural development through communication. I supervised 75 undergraduate theses in communication. The next twenty-five years, without abandoning that objective, my priority was oriented toward the training of researchers at the Master's and Doctoral levels, I supervised 47 graduate theses. I was able to do that simultaneously in one of the best public and one of the best private institutions in the country in the field of communication. Hundreds of communication science undergraduates and dozens of graduates have extended their learning, with which I was able to contribute directly, in various regions of Mexico and other Latin American countries.

An essential dimension in my academic path has been the collaborative and articulated work through inter-institutional instances, to promote shared spaces of action for the discipline in broader contexts than one single local. Participation in the building and development of national and Latin American academic associations has been an essential means to contribute to the strengthening of responsible and solvent scientific and academic communities. This also implies the promotion of institutional development projects which, in my case, were channeled through the integration of different work teams that, between the mid-1980s and the first decade of the 21st century, designed, managed their approval and put into operation three Master's degree programs and two Doctoral programs that, at the time, reached the highest level ("International Level Competition") in CONACYT's National Quality Programs of Graduate Courses, and have maintained it at the Universidad de Guadalajara and ITESO. In these five programs, communication research is a central axis of training and a fundamental institutionalized link with national and international academic production in the field. On the other hand, since the early 1980s I have collaborated in the construction of convergent academic spaces through the trans-institutional academic associations.

The main contribution of my research comes from my studies on the institutional structuring of the communication academic field. Thirty years ago, in a book entitled *La comunidad desapercibida, investigación e investigadores de la comunicación en México* (Fuentes-Navarro, 1991), I made a first systematic approach to what I have continued to do in the following years, and in which, with a generous foreword, Jesús Martín-Barbero helped me to better understand what it was all about and how far the project could go. I quote him:

> In these times of disenchantment, in which disillusioning balance sheets and realistic reformulations abound, this book knows how to read, beneath the visible

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dispersion and fragmentation of the field, the slow maturing of a community and in broad strokes it clarifies - and in this it is undoubtedly a pioneer - how communication becomes an intellectual field to the extent that its actors form a community, made not only of knowledge but also of re-knowledge, not only of paradigms but also of theoretical positions and social questioning. (Martín-Barbero, 1991, p. 13, free translation).

The game of meanings that I deliberately included in the title of this work, since qualifying the community as unnoticed meant it as "unknown or ignored", but also as devoid of essential resources, allows us to recognize it now as better appreciated and more consolidated, both advances as part of a complex and sustained, but insufficient, process of maturation. The multifaceted communication, generic object of study, has exceeded and challenged those of us who study it. And that is why I believe, with others, that it is more important than ever to reinforce university attention to it, that it is the core responsibility of university programs of research and training in communication to formulate as precisely as possible how to *interpret and intervene*, and not only one or the other: not only interpret nor only intervene in the diverse and complex social realities in which communication is currently a fundamental mediation. **M**

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50 años de estudios sobre Comunicación: Trayectorias académicas cruzadas

50 years of Communication Studies: Cross academic trajectories

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RESUMEN

En este texto se despliega un ejercicio autorreflexivo del autor acerca de su trayectoria como profesor universitario e investigador académico en el campo de estudios de la comunicación durante las cinco décadas más recientes. El punto de partida es la convicción de que es imposible aislar una trayectoria individual, puesto que la historia implica reconocer los cruces mutuamente determinantes con otros individuos y con marcos institucionales de diversas escalas. Toda autobiografía académica es necesariamente una reconstrucción de los vínculos colectivos con pares y con contextos institucionales situados en tiempos y espacios concretos, en este caso ubicados en América Latina, sobre todo en México y en Brasil.

Palabras clave: Profesionalización, campo académico, América Latina, México, Brasil

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a self-reflexive exercise undertaken by the author concerning his trajectory as a university professor and academic researcher in Communication Studies for the past five decades. It assumes that no individual trajectory can be isolated, since history implies recognizing the mutually determining intersections with others and with multi-scale institutional frameworks. Any academic autobiography is necessarily a reconstruction of collective bonds with peers and with institutional contexts situated in specific times and spaces—in this case, Latin America, especially Mexico and Brazil.

Keywords: Professionalization, academic field, Latin America, Mexico, Brazil

D E ACUERDO CON el sociólogo francés Pierre Bourdieu, el principio metodológico de la *objetivación participante* "es sin duda el ejercicio más difícil que existe" porque "requiere la ruptura de las adherencias y las adhesiones más profundas y más inconscientes", es decir, el interés "del propio objeto estudiado para aquel que lo estudia" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 51). Si esa afirmación es aplicable a mi caso, mi trayectoria profesional en el campo académico de la comunicación puede entenderse como un largo proceso de adopción y ejercicio del principio de la "objetivación participante" o, en otras palabras, según el sociólogo español Jesús Ibáñez, de una continua *vigilancia epistemológica* para integrar el proceso de esa investigación en mi "persona de investigador", que está "socialmente determinada por el sistema de las relaciones sociales" (Ibáñez, 1985, p. 218). Según el sociólogo estadounidense C. Wright Mills, a su vez, para comprender los cambios de muchos medios personales, nos vemos obligados a mirar más allá de ellos. "Y el número y variedad de tales cambios estructurales aumentan a medida que las instituciones dentro de las cuales vivimos se extienden y se relacionan más intrincadamente entre sí". Ser capaz de descubrir esos vínculos "es poseer *imaginación sociológica*" (Wright-Mills, 1961, p. 30). Hace más de 25 años, en mi tesis doctoral en Ciencias Sociales pude formular, apoyado en la obra de estos y otros autores, "*una apuesta por la producción de sentido*" al asumir la opción de "construirme una posición y una identidad profesionales como académico de la comunicación", lo que construía como objeto de estudio "el propio campo en que actúo como sujeto" (Fuentes-Navarro, 1998, p. 10).

Pero el proceso de mi formación universitaria comenzaba 25 años antes. La decisión de ingresar a la licenciatura (pregrado) en Ciencias de la Comunicación en 1970, en la Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara (ITESO) fue básicamente intuitiva. El programa era muy desconocido todavía y resultó enormemente atractivo para quienes, como yo, preferíamos un *proyecto de futuro* por construir y no uno prefigurado para profesiones u oficios tradicionales. Una amplia fundamentación en humanidades y una orientación hacia la práctica en "medios de comunicación" eran una combinación novedosa y estimulante, en una época que de por sí ofrecía a los jóvenes universitarios múltiples opciones de desarrollo cultural (Prieto, 2021). El cine y las artes audiovisuales fueron mi referente central de aprendizaje y profesionalización iniciales en comunicación. Ejercí durante diez años, incluyendo los cinco de estudiante, diversas actividades como productor radiofónico y audiovisual, tanto en ámbitos comerciales como educativos, y participé en la fundación, en 1979, de un Departamento de Recursos Audiovisuales en la Universidad de Guadalajara (UDG), con el encargo de producir materiales de apoyo a los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje en la educación superior.

Pero el montaje cinematográfico me generó preguntas teóricas y epistemológicas acerca de la comunicación, sobre las que pude trabajar como profesor de Teorías de la comunicación, una asignatura que antes no existía en el plan de estudios, pero de la que me hice cargo en el ITESO a partir de 1978, por lo que leí el poco material disponible sobre el tema. De esa manera, modifiqué mi trayectoria profesional, de ser un productor audiovisual a un académico de tiempo completo, y esa transición se consolidó en 1981 cuando fui nombrado director de la Escuela de Ciencias de la Comunicación del ITESO, así que renuncié a mi trabajo como productor en la Universidad de Guadalajara. Al mismo tiempo, fue determinante para mi futuro la incorporación a los organismos nacionales del campo académico: el Consejo Nacional para la Enseñanza y la Investigación de las Ciencias de la Comunicación (Coneicc), del que fui presidente en el período 1984-1986, y la Asociación Mexicana de Investigadores de la Comunicación (AMIC), que habían sido fundados apenas en 1976 y 1979, respectivamente.

Dos de los aprendizajes más importantes de esa primera época en mi trayectoria académica fueron que la comunicación tendría que ser entendida desde perspectivas que, ya entonces, nombramos "socioculturales", es decir, que situaban las prácticas en contextos de *estructuración* en distintas escalas y dimensiones tanto materiales como simbólicas. Se incluían entre tales perspectivas aportes semióticos (Eco, 1976; Verón, 1980), sociológicos (Martín-Serrano, 1977; Giddens, 1984) y de los pioneros latinoamericanos de los estudios de comunicación (Pasquali, 1970; Martín-Barbero, 1987). El otro aprendizaje fundamental fue que, si bien la "comunicación" era adoptada instrumentalmente por muchos agentes sociales como un recurso para la competencia y la imposición de propuestas de sentido en la vida social, la academia tenía la responsabilidad de ejercerla, "comprensiva" o "reflexivamente", como un recurso de colaboración y estímulo para el desarrollo de las visiones propias de los interlocutores sobre los referentes comunes (Krippendorff, 1989; Carey, 1992). Estos dos aprendizajes orientaron también, especialmente, mi práctica como docente y "formador" universitario de profesionales e investigadores, faceta que recientemente fue analizada como uno de cinco casos de estudio etnográfico por especialistas en educación superior en México (Moreno Bayardo & Torres Frías, 2020), que caracterizaron mi postura como "la interacción como centro de la formación en la dirección de tesis".

Y en 1988, ya incorporado plenamente a la profesión académica, ocurrieron dos cambios en mi trayectoria que me impulsaron decisivamente hacia la investigación. Uno fue el término de mi gestión como director de la Escuela en el ITESO, que poco después desapareció para convertirse en una Coordinación

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y, eventualmente, en un Departamento. Liberado de esa responsabilidad institucional, tuve la oportunidad de orientarme más hacia la investigación a partir de mi trabajo de docencia en teorías de la comunicación y en el desarrollo del Centro CONEICC de Documentación sobre Comunicación en México, que me había sido encargado en 1983 y derivaría, años después, en el sitio *cc-doc*[1], repositorio de acceso abierto a productos de investigación de la comunicación en el país. El otro acontecimiento crucial de ese año fue la invitación de José Marques de Melo a participar en el *Estudo Comparativo dos Sistemas de Comunicação Social no Brasil e no México*, propuesto por INTERCOM al CONEICC. Esa participación me permitió ampliar y profundizar los nexos latinoamericanos que ya había comenzado a establecer, pero que habían tenido hasta entonces como foco principal la enseñanza, en el espacio abierto por la Federación Latinoamericana de Facultades de Comunicación Social (FELAFACS). Se me asignó el "sistema" de investigación de la comunicación en México (Fuentes-Navarro, 1991) para el estudio comparativo con el de Brasil, encargado a María Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes, con quien desde entonces mantengo una muy productiva relación académica de colaboración y amistad.

Ambos "impulsos" a la investigación me acercaron más precisamente a la *meta-investigación*, es decir, a la investigación sobre la investigación. Y reconociendo ese "desdoblamiento" epistemológico, intenté desde entonces desarrollar un enfoque comunicacional de esos mismos procesos. Así, asumí que el estudio de la comunicación podría entenderse mejor como *producción social de sentido sobre la producción social de sentido* (Fuentes-Navarro, 2003), como tuve la oportunidad de exponerlo en el III seminario de COMPÓS de 2002 en São Paulo, en el 30.º aniversario del posgrado de la *Escola de Comunicação e Artes* de la *Universidade de São Paulo* (ECA-USP). Más de una década de colaboración académica con colegas brasileños, me había permitido aprender y ejercitar diversas perspectivas críticas sobre el *campo académico* común, proceso que, por fortuna, ha continuado durante muchos años más.

En 1990, conforme avanzaba el *Estudo Comparativo*, me invitaron a realizar una estancia en la ECA-USP con otros consultores extranjeros, en el marco de un proceso de "Transi*ção* para a Modernidade" de esa Escuela (Melo et al., 1992), y específicamente a propósito de la investigación emprendida por la ECA sobre sus egresados y los mercados de trabajo (Lopes et al., 1992). Durante un mes completo compartí con Luis Ramiro Beltrán y Marcelino Bisbal, entre colegas de otras nacionalidades y un buen número de académicos brasileños de la ECA, las actividades y la convivencia propias de una institución que procuraba sistemáticamente renovar y refrendar su importancia internacional dentro del campo académico de la comunicación. También compartí con muchos otros colegas,

en esos años, el proceso de reconstitución de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores de la Comunicación (ALAIC), encabezada por José Marques de Melo, especialmente en cuanto a la modificación del estatuto y la preparación de los congresos latinoamericanos, el primero de los cuales se realizó cerca de São Paulo, en la ciudad de Embú Guaçu, en 1992. Un poco después, colaboré también en el diseño de los GT (grupos de trabajo o grupos temáticos) de ALAIC y me incorporé desde el principio al de Teoría y Metodología de Investigación de la Comunicación.

Pero en la primera mitad de los años 1990, en ese proceso de "transición" hacia la investigación como tarea académica prioritaria, tuve la oportunidad, que no había buscado antes, de cursar un programa de doctorado de alta calidad, sin cambiar de residencia. Fui parte de la primera generación del Doctorado en Ciencias Sociales ofrecido conjuntamente por la Universidad de Guadalajara (UDG) y el Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS), específicamente en el área de Sociología. Mi intuición, en conjunto con la experiencia ya acumulada durante más de veinte años en el campo, me orientó a ubicar mis preguntas teóricas y prácticas sobre la comunicación en un "espacio epistémico" más amplio, el de las Ciencias Sociales. Tuve muy claro desde el principio que lo que buscaría desarrollar en el doctorado sería "solvencia" metodológica, y por ello decidí trabajar sobre un "objeto" que ya había trabajado, la constitución del campo académico de la comunicación en México.

Durante el proceso del doctorado, la etapa de mayor exigencia académica en mi formación universitaria, logré aprender mucho de metodologías y enfoques disciplinares, pero también algo más difícil y de mayor importancia: aprendí a trabajar en casa sin aislarme de la vida familiar, es decir, aprendí a "entrar y salir" instantáneamente de concentración, rodeado de cuatro hijos y una esposa que, también, aprendieron a facilitarme el proceso, acompañándome amorosamente pero sin interferir demasiado ni "innecesariamente" en mis tareas. Por supuesto, eso suponía que lo "necesario" lo definían ellos. La experiencia de esos cuatro años fue muy estimulante y disfrutable en su aspecto personal y académico. Recibí el grado un poco antes de cumplir los 44 años, una edad que en aquel momento y en mi entorno académico no era tan tardía como podría ahora parecer. Las siguientes dos décadas y media así me lo han reafirmado.

Comencé a asumirme como "investigador de la comunicación" cuando presenté una ponencia en la Primera Reunión Nacional de Investigadores de la Comunicación, de la AMIC, en 1980. Pero me sentí institucionalmente reconocido en plenitud como tal en 1996 cuando la obtención del doctorado me permitió solicitar y obtener la aceptación en el Sistema Nacional de Investigadores,

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al que entonces no habían ingresado más de diez colegas del campo de la comunicación. Dos años antes había regresado a la UDG, ahora con una plaza de profesor-investigador. Tan "colectiva" y "social" como la construcción de cualquiera otra identidad, la de investigador depende del *habitus* como sistema de disposiciones "internas", así como del reconocimiento y posicionamiento institucional, además de los pares. El término "colega" que suele emplearse para tratar a los pares académicos implica la condición de ser sujetos "mutuamente elegidos". Y esa es la base de la colegialidad, la forma de colectividad propia de la Academia. He tenido la fortuna de compartir mi actividad profesional con excelentes personas, colegas y equipos de trabajo, y he podido integrarme a ese amplio y multifacético sujeto colectivo en México y Latinoamérica que ha buscado y conseguido en buena medida legitimar los estudios de comunicación y mantenerlos en permanente consolidación y renovación, siguiendo incansablemente a su objeto en contextos cambiantes y elusivos.

Puedo resumir, como lo hice en el discurso de agradecimiento y aceptación del *Doctorado Honoris Causa* que me otorgó la Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (Fuentes-Navarro, 2020), que como integrante de diversos sujetos colectivos, he tenido la oportunidad de dedicarme durante cinco décadas a aprender, a descubrir, a experimentar, a convocar, a organizar, a estimular, a criticar, a cuestionar, a conservar y a renovar saberes e intervenciones, más que a enseñarlos; a compartir, a imaginar, a discutir, a difundir, a consolidar hallazgos y métodos, más que a cultivar pretendidas certezas científicas de valor universal. Los legados de los que me he apropiado y la generosidad con la que he sido tratado me han hecho tener confianza en los efectos de largo plazo de la formación universitaria y de la esencial contribución de la investigación en ella. Así, me asumo como un académico de tiempo completo, que ha aprendido a entender el mundo en el que vive como resultado y estímulo de la comunicación, y sabe que es imposible contraponer o separar el compromiso social y el profesional; ni la comunicación de la educación, de la cultura y de la política. La comunicación es, efectivamente, una ética, una realidad práctica e inescapable, además de ser un recurso para la interacción y un ejercicio de poder. Aunque también, en muchos sentidos, es un *enigma*, que nos desafía permanentemente. Como afirma el colega estadounidense John Durham Peters (1999, p. 2), "comprender la comunicación es comprender mucho más", y ese podría ser un resumen de mi trayectoria durante los últimos cincuenta años: como estudiante y profesional, como profesor e investigador, como practicante lo más reflexivo posible de la comunicación.

Sin duda, el período más productivo de esa trayectoria es el de los 25 años más recientes, en el que aparecieron la mayor parte de mis publicaciones, se titularon la mayor parte de los estudiantes de maestría y doctorado de quienes fui director

de tesis, y visité como profesor invitado al menos una vez la mayor parte de los países de América Latina. En este último aspecto, sin duda el país donde realicé la mayor cantidad de estas actividades fue Brasil, incluyendo mi participación en 2015 en un Proyecto *PROCAD/CAPES*, titulado *Comunicação e Mediações em Contextos Regionais: usos midiáticos, culturais e linguagens*, que supuso la impartición de un seminario sobre *Epistemología de la comunicación y mediaciones de lo local: heurísticas socioculturales* (Fuentes-Navarro, 2019) en el posgrado de la ECA/USP en São Paulo (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwRXm42KdSk), y después en la Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, en Natal, RN, y de la Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso do Sul, Campo Grande, MS. Antes y después de esas experiencias, impartí seminarios similares en la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina; la Universidad Católica del Perú; la Universidad Católica de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brasil; la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana de Cali, Colombia; la Universidad Iberoamericana, en la ciudad de México; y la Universidad del Norte, en Barranquilla, Colombia, entre otros.

Con diferentes énfasis, en todos esos espacios académicos latinoamericanos expuse cómo la dispersión y la fragmentación en el campo académico de la comunicación son condiciones constatables hoy en cualquier lugar del mundo y se manifiestan de manera creciente en las múltiples perspectivas y posiciones prevalecientes acerca de cuatro grandes dimensiones (ontológica, epistemológica, praxeológica y metodológica) de las interpretaciones teóricas sobre la comunicación, y sus relaciones mutuas en una cada vez más ambigua *jerarquía epistémica*. Por ello puede proponerse un intento especial por identificar, historizar y contextualizar las tensiones y opciones fundamentales, además de las consecuencias prácticas que su confusa imbricación múltiple acarrea para la comprensión pública de los recursos, de los derechos comunicativos y para la consolidación de programas de investigación científica y formación de investigadores en escalas globales, nacionales, regionales y locales.

He propuesto y debatido –más allá de mis cursos regulares en los programas de posgrado en el ITESO y en la UDG– con varias comunidades académicas que definir la "comunicación" como un resultado de cómo y desde dónde se propone estudiarla y cómo se aborda su problematización y su desarrollo conceptual. La indiferenciada y no debatida proliferación de definiciones genera lo que muy elocuentemente denunció James Carey (1992, p. 34) hace muchos años: "Nuestros modelos existentes de comunicación son menos un análisis que una contribución al caos de la cultura moderna". En consecuencia, lejos de pretender autoritariamente una unificación reduccionista, sé que conviene entablar, comunicativamente, una conversación comprometida y responsable entre los agentes del campo (Craig, 1999), acerca de la relación entre la pregunta

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genérica "¿qué es la comunicación?" (situada en la dimensión ontológica) y "¿cómo conocer la comunicación?" (pregunta central de la dimensión epistemológica). Adicionalmente, no solo tendría que hacerse depender la consistencia de la pregunta epistemológica de la definición ontológica, sino también viceversa, recursiva y reflexivamente.

La búsqueda, recursiva y reflexiva, de consistencia del conocimiento sobre la comunicación implica que la comunicación como objeto de conocimiento es resultado de un trabajo de *modelizar la realidad*, de imponerle algún modelo a la realidad para poderla reconocer como tal. Hay dificultades interesantes en el trabajo específico que hay que invertir para hacer esa "modelización de la realidad": seleccionar y, por lo tanto, construir esa realidad en unos términos determinados por nuestra forma de conocer y no por la "realidad objetiva" en sí misma, que no podemos conocer como tal sin esa mediación (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Esto permite poner en juego la definición o concepto central de comunicación como "producción social de sentido", a manera de punto de partida, pero también de llegada. Este concepto de comunicación, definido desde una perspectiva sociocultural, como ya se ha dicho, implica a su vez que el estudio de la comunicación sea la '*producción social de sentido sobre la producción social de sentido*' y es una manera, entre otras, de ubicar, de entender, de contextualizar el objeto de conocimiento, al mismo tiempo que su relación con el sujeto de conocimiento; una manera de no dejar el objeto "flotando en el aire" como si fuera una definición totalmente arbitraria.

Esta manera de concebir teóricamente el estudio de la comunicación no es, ni con mucho, la prevaleciente en los procesos de formación universitaria y de investigación institucionalizados en América Latina. Por ello, mi principal interés ha sido investigar estos procesos de institucionalización, por medio de sus "objetivaciones" más importantes: los programas de grado y posgrado, las publicaciones académicas y las asociaciones especializadas. En 1992 publiqué un primer acercamiento, bajo el título *Un campo cargado de futuro. El estudio de la comunicación en América Latina* (Fuentes-Navarro, 1992), y en los años siguientes un buen número de actualizaciones y desarrollos de esa "historia", entre las cuales cabe destacar artículos sobre sus "retos disciplinarios y post-disciplinarios" (Fuentes-Navarro, 1997), sus "condiciones y perspectivas para el Siglo XXI" (Fuentes-Navarro, 1999), sus "referentes y condiciones internacionales de un diálogo transversal de saberes" (Fuentes-Navarro, 2010) o su "interna-cionalización desintegrada" (Fuentes-Navarro, 2014). También se encuentran las conferencias dictadas en Bogotá –FELAFACS– en 1992 sobre "El estudio de la comunicación desde una perspectiva sociocultural en América Latina"; en Quito –SEICOM-CIESPAL– en 2011 sobre "Tendencias de la investigación

de la comunicación en América Latina: perspectivas y desafíos"; en Curitiba –INTERCOM– en 2017 sobre "Memoria e historicidad de la investigación en Comunicación en América Latina"; o en Campo Grande (a distancia) –COMPÓS– en 2020, sobre "Comunicación y fronteras: geografías y espacios simbólicos de las prácticas comunicativas en América Latina", entre otras.

Desde la perspectiva sociocultural desarrollada a lo largo de múltiples experiencias de investigación y debate, consideramos a la *institucionalización* en programas universitarios y asociaciones profesionales como la manifestación más "objetiva" de la constitución de un campo académico, en la medida que de esa forma las instancias del poder social asignan o reconocen un lugar específico a la producción y reproducción del conocimiento, así como a la formación profesional en un área determinada, e implícita o explícitamente definen la orientación y el sentido (función social) que el trabajo sobre dicha área en dicho lugar deberá de cumplir para obtener y reforzar su legitimidad. Este proceso es entonces inseparable de la *profesionalización* de los sujetos que, dentro de los programas establecidos, han de ejercer las prácticas académicas y articulan, de maneras más o menos fuertes, la producción académica con la toma de decisiones en el área, lo cual a su vez contribuye a la *legitimación* del conocimiento, de las instituciones donde se cultiva y de los sujetos que lo generan.

Por ello, la extensión y la distribución de los programas en el sistema de educación superior de uno u otro país indican, al mismo tiempo, las "posiciones" que va adquiriendo la "disciplina" en el sistema, en relación con otras, y las que distinguen entre sí a las instituciones universitarias en la constitución del campo, así como las redes que las articulan de ciertas maneras y no de otras. Pero además de estos procesos de institucionalización *social* en establecimientos universitarios y redes de interconexión entre ellos, es indispensable tomar en cuenta la institucionalización *disciplinaria* que, siguiendo el aporte clásico de Burton Clark (1991), se considera aún más importante que la primera para el análisis de la estructuración del campo académico. En el plano de la institucionalización social, y con mayor razón en el plano cognoscitivo, la constitución de una disciplina o especialidad científica "atraviesa" los establecimientos vinculándolos (y desvinculándolos) entre sí mediante la acción de los sujetos adscritos a ellos. En el estudio de esta estructuración, la dimensión transinstitucional es fundamentalmente importante, y lo es más, obviamente, cuando las instituciones y los sujetos están situados en distintos países, es decir, en distintos regímenes nacionales. Pero está todavía "por escribirse" sobre esta u otra lógica una historia internacional de los estudios de la comunicación, pues "hasta ahora, la mayor parte de las historias han sido nacionales, con una predominante atención sobre América del Norte y Europa Occidental" (Simonson & Peters, 2008,

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p. 764). Lo que sí queda bastante claro es que la institucionalización social ha sido mucho más firme que la disciplinaria…

No obstante, en la década más reciente ha emergido y se fortaleció un "punto de vista internacional" del que he podido ser partícipe, que "nos ayuda a ver cómo el estudio organizado de la comunicación al mismo tiempo ha reflejado, refractado e impulsado la geopolítica transnacional, los patrones institucionales de educación y profesionalización y maneras de conocer y de actuar", determinantes de la vida colectiva desde el siglo pasado. La búsqueda de marcos sociohistóricos adecuados para fundamentar una investigación no solo internacional, sino crecientemente "transnacional" de los procesos de constitución del campo académico de la comunicación, con fundamentos propiamente teóricos, ha cobrado recientemente un fuerte impulso: "la historia transnacional toma forma junto a las historias comparativa, internacional, mundial y global" (Simonson & Park, 2016, pp. 2-6). Ese es el contexto académico el que más me identifico en la actualidad, cuando he sido honrado como *Investigador Nacional Emérito* por el Sistema Nacional de Investigadores del Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT), con base en una evaluación que consideró una autopresentación que resumo para terminar este texto.

Durante cuarenta años de trayectoria académica he aprendido a articular la interpretación y la intervención como operaciones fundamentales de producción de conocimiento sobre la comunicación. La investigación sobre la teoría y la práctica me ha permitido desarrollar una metodología basada en modelos heurísticos y autorreflexivos. La fórmula es recursiva: conocer la comunicación es posible solo mediante su ejercicio, por lo que la tarea central ha sido practicar *la producción social de sentido sobre la producción social de sentido*. Esta síntesis de los aportes de muchos autores, y sus manifestaciones y consecuencias sistemáticamente analizadas empíricamente, ha sido reconocida como una contribución útil y productiva en los contextos académicos del estudio de la comunicación tanto en México como en América Latina y otras regiones, y crecientemente en otros campos académicos de las ciencias sociales y las humanidades, conforme se reconoce la importancia de la comunicación como proceso de estructuración social. De esta manera no se concibe más a la comunicación simplemente como "intercambio de mensajes" o "uso instrumental de medios", aunque esas prácticas quedan también incorporadas en esta que se asume como una perspectiva sociocultural. En ese marco, he podido desarrollar actividades y recursos muy valorados, por su escasez y utilidad, como las referidas a la documentación académica, a la que me he dedicado desde 1983, y que se concretan en el repositorio *cc-doc*, disponible a consulta abierta en Internet desde 2003, y que a la fecha incluye más de ocho mil documentos, productos de

investigación de la comunicación en México o sobre México: libros, capítulos, artículos y tesis de posgrado, más de la mitad de los cuales se pueden recuperar en texto completo. Este recurso indispensable para la realización de estados de la cuestión y antecedentes de investigación en México sirve como complemento a la construcción de marcos tanto teórico-metodológicos como referenciales sobre fuentes documentales internacionales y, por lo tanto, facilita la más pertinente orientación de los proyectos, especialmente las tesis de posgrado, hacia los contextos cercanos y por ello muy pertinentes. También facilita el desarrollo de proyectos comparativos, nacional e internacionalmente, sobre temas y enfoques de interés académico emergente.

Mi especialidad como docente universitario ha sido el campo de las teorías de la comunicación, sobre todo las orientadas hacia una perspectiva socio-cultural y como recursos de construcción postdisciplinaria de modelos de interpretación científica y de intervención profesional. Durante algo más de quince años, el objetivo primordial de mi trabajo fue la formación profesional de comunicadores competentes y reflexivos para explorar nuevos espacios de desarrollo sociocultural mediante la comunicación. Dirigí 75 tesis de licenciatura en comunicación. Los siguientes veinticinco años, sin abandonar ese objetivo, mi prioridad se orientó hacia la formación de investigadores en los niveles de maestría y doctorado, dirigí 47 tesis de posgrado, y eso lo pude realizar simultáneamente en una de las mejores instituciones públicas y una de las mejores privadas del país en el campo de la comunicación. Varios cientos de egresados de la licenciatura en ciencias de la comunicación y varias decenas de postgraduados han extendido sus aprendizajes con los que pude contribuir directamente, en varias regiones de México y de otros países latinoamericanos.

Una dimensión esencial en mi trayectoria académica ha sido el trabajo colaborativo y articulado mediante instancias interinstitucionales, para fomentar espacios compartidos de acción para la disciplina en contextos más amplios que un solo local. La participación en la formación y desarrollo de asociaciones académicas, nacionales y latinoamericanas, ha sido un medio esencial para contribuir al fortalecimiento de comunidades científicas y académicas responsables y solventes. Y eso también implica el impulso a proyectos de desarrollo institucional que, en mi caso, se canalizó mediante la integración en distintos equipos de trabajo que, entre mediados de los años 1980 y la primera década del siglo XXI, diseñaron, gestionaron su aprobación y pusieron en operación tres programas de maestría y dos de doctorado que, en su momento, alcanzaron el nivel más alto ("Competencia a Nivel Internacional") en el Padrón Nacional de Posgrados de Calidad de CONACYT, y lo han mantenido en la Universidad de Guadalajara y el ITESO. En esos cinco programas la investigación de la

comunicación es un eje central de la formación, y un nexo institucionalizado fundamental con la producción académica nacional e internacional en el campo. Por otra parte, desde principios de los 1980 he colaborado en la construcción de espacios académicos convergentes mediante la figura de las asociaciones académicas transinstitucionales.

El aporte principal de mi investigación proviene de mis estudios sobre la estructuración institucional del campo académico de la comunicación. Hace treinta años, en un libro titulado *La comunidad desapercibida, investigación e investigadores de la comunicación en México* (Fuentes-Navarro, 1991), hice un primer acercamiento sistemático a lo que he seguido haciendo en los años siguientes, y en el que, con un generoso prólogo, Jesús Martín-Barbero me ayudó a entender mejor de qué se trataba y hasta dónde podría llegar el proyecto. Lo cito textualmente:

> En esta época del desencanto, en la que abundan los balances des-ilusionadores y las reformulaciones realistas, este libro sabe leer, por debajo de la dispersión y la fragmentación visibles del campo, el lento madurar de una comunidad y a grandes trazos esclarece –y en ello es sin duda pionero– cómo la comunicación se constituye en campo intelectual en la medida en que sus actores forman comunidad, hecha no sólo de conocimientos sino también de re-conocimientos, no sólo de paradigmas sino de posiciones teóricas y de interpelaciones sociales. (Martín-Barbero, 1991, p. 13)

El juego de sentidos que incluí deliberadamente en el título de ese trabajo, pues calificar como desapercibida a la comunidad la significaba como "desconocida o ignorada", pero también como desprovista de recursos esenciales, permite reconocerla ahora como mejor apreciada y más consolidada, ambos avances como parte de un proceso de maduración complejo y sostenido, pero insuficiente. La multifacética comunicación, objeto genérico de estudio, nos ha rebasado y desafiado a quienes la estudiamos. Y por eso creo, con otros, que es más importante que nunca reforzar la atención universitaria sobre ella, que es responsabilidad central de los programas universitarios de investigación y formación en comunicación formular de la manera más precisa que sea posible cómo *interpretar e intervenir*, y no solo lo uno o lo otro: no solo interpretar ni solo intervenir en las diversas y complejas realidades sociales en que en la actualidad la comunicación es una mediación fundamental. M

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TESES E DISSERTAÇÕES

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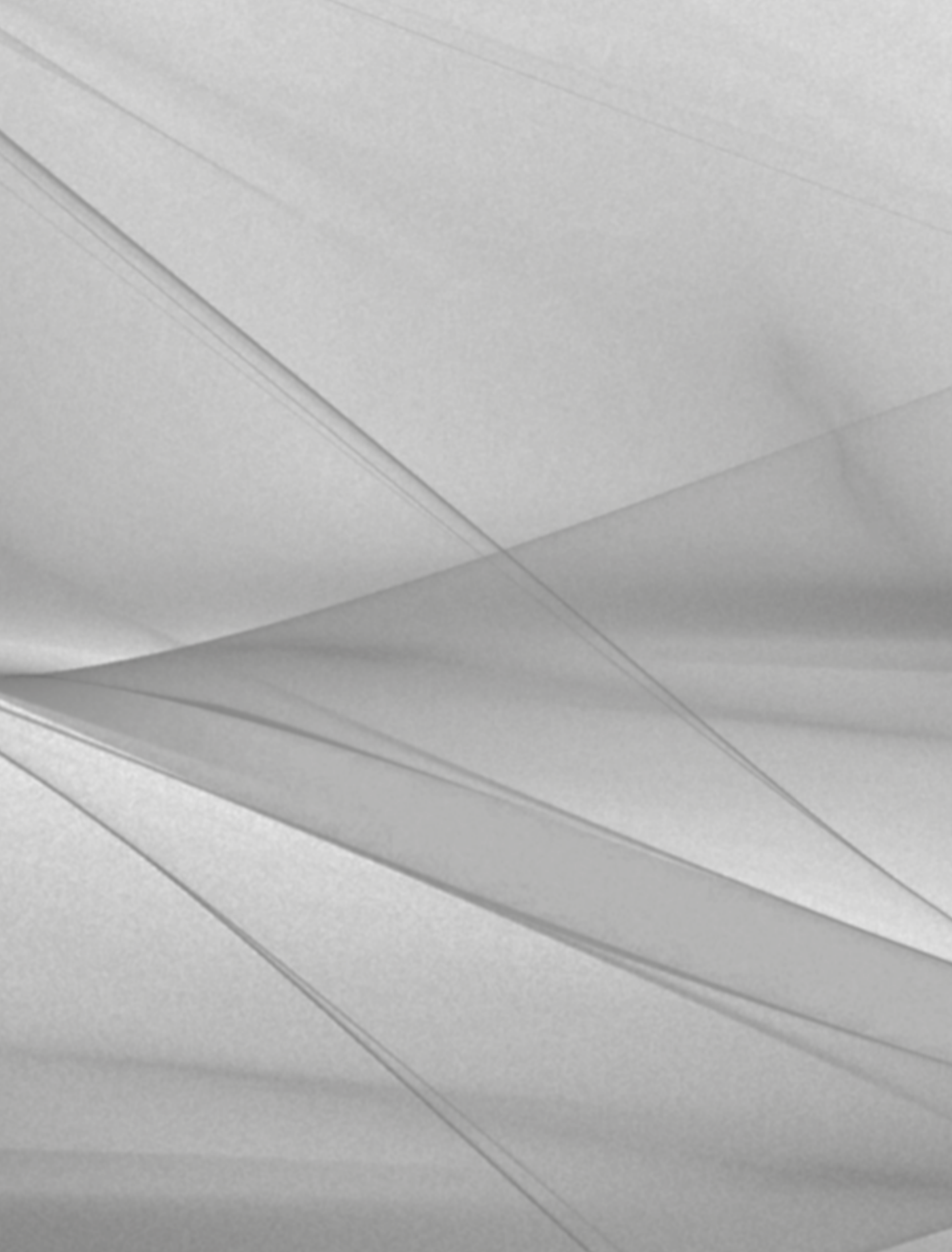
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(2019-2020): reflexões e direcionamentos para a construção de um instrumento
de apoio para fomentar a igualdade racial na produção publicitária*
ORIENTADOR: Leandro Leonardo Batista

MATRIZes é um periódico destinado à publicação de estudos que tenham por objeto a comunicação. Acolhe pesquisas teóricas e empíricas sobre processos comunicativos, meios e mediações nas interações sociais. Trata-se de uma publicação aberta às reflexões sobre culturas e linguagens midiáticas e suas implicações sociopolíticas e cognitivas. MATRIZes preserva o horizonte transdisciplinar do pensamento comunicacional e espera redimensionar conhecimento e práticas que contribuam para definir, mapear e explorar os novos cenários comunicacionais. No limite, MATRIZes busca ser um espaço de debates das diferentes perspectivas do campo da Comunicação.