

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

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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

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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.

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

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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 Paraíso 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 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

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 countries¹.”

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. ■

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