

A Brief History of the Latin American Academy of Communication¹

Octavio Islas and Amaia Arribas

Tecnologico de Monterrey
Campus Estado de Mexico

Autonomous University of Barcelona
Spain

This essay in no way attempts to completely analyze the main objects of study or even the uniqueness or relevance of the theoretical and methodological imagination that we have designated as the “Latin American academy of communication.” Instead this essay responds to a far more modest concern—to describe specific episodes of relevance to our troubled historiography of the Latin American academy of communication, understanding that it definitely can not be understood as an essence but as a story.

Beyond the description of certain events, it is essential to understand that the history of Latin American programs of communication results from the actions and commitments of some groups which, over the years, have become the powers inside the Latin American programs of communication and from the unquestionable “charisma” of certain leaders. It could not be otherwise. The Latin American programs of communication simply reflect and to some extent reproduce the historical inevitability of Latin America. In the deep history of our troubled region, national chiefs and leaders have taken on key roles and appealed to constitutional goals. This situation has hindered the healthy development of our institutions. Something similar has happened within the Latin American academy of communication. In the vast majority of associations, councils, and federations, which should specifically promote the study and research of communication, the democratic and institutional life still presents a major unresolved subject. In these days, however, the hegemony which a remarkable historical generation of scholars and researchers of communication has sustained over three decades has gradually vanished. These main leaders are Jesús Martín-Barbero (for the Latin American Federation of Faculties of Social Communication: FELAFACS), and José Marques de Melo (for the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers: ALAIC).

As residents of the periphery, our narrative and interpretation differ from the vaunted heroic assumption about who recounts and describes the script and names the protagonists of the story. Our position towards Latin American programs of communications is also critical, and the critique, as rightly pointed out by the Mexican Octavio Paz—the smartest of the 20th century—“consist[s] as much or more as in the knowledge to free us. Criticism displays a possibility of freedom and it is an invitation to action” (Paz, 1970, p. 12). The maturity of Latin American communication programs depends on the strength of their institutions, not the charisma of their leaders or the intricate interests of some of the powers that actually have managed to subordinate the interests of the academy to their particular interests. Perhaps future generations of scholars and researchers of communication are able to act with greater generosity, noting the actual benefit of the Latin American programs of communication, apart from the interest groups.

1. Background: The Latin American academy of communication before CIESPAL

José Marques de Melo (2007), a leading Brazilian communication researcher argues that since the late 19th century we find evidence of Latin American studies on certain phenomena of communication. Maria Cristina Gobbi (2006), a researcher at the Methodist University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, where Marques de Melo works, said that in the 1930s the economic and political problems arising from the First World War, compounded by such phenomena as the development of the industrialization process, fascism, national socialism, and abrupt urbanization, among other things, significantly extended the objects of study of the social sciences. Such an excited context, of course, favored the development of journalism, advertising, and propaganda, encouraging further implementation of the first studies on U.S. public opinion, which soon

¹To Edgar Jaramillo. With sincere gratitude and appreciation.

after began to be applied in Latin America. (In 1930 George Gallup published a summary of his doctoral thesis on public opinion in *Journalism Quarterly*; in the 1940s the Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics—IBOPE—began.) The 1930s also saw the first offerings of degrees in journalism in some Latin American universities. In 1934, the Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP) and the Graduate School of Journalism in Buenos Aires—connected with the Institute for Writing [Instituto Grafotécnico]—in Argentina, offered their first bachelor's degrees in journalism in the region. Later, journalism schools were opened in Brazil (1935), Cuba (1942), and Mexico (1949)—in Mexico's Federal District, at the School of Journalism Carlos Septien García.

According to Marques de Melo (2007), in the 1950s the development of radio, the beginnings of television, and the diversification of advertising stimulated some research regarding the impact of those media in certain countries in the region. These include

the research that the Brazilians Salvyano Cavalcante de Paiva and Alex Vianny undertook on the cinema and the work that Saint-Clair Lopes made on broadcasting in Brazil, and the publication in Argentina by Mouchet and Rafaelli about the artistic rights of collective media. But there were continuing studies on the analytical tradition of propaganda, such as by the Brazilian Genival Rabelo and the Chilean Alfonso Silva Délano, in the same way that Mexico's Salvador Borrego, the Bolivian Gustavo Adolfo Otero, the Venezuelan Julio Febres Cordero, and Brazilians Luis Beltrán or José Leao would advance on the interpretation of peculiar phenomena in the transmission of news and the communication of the press. (2007, p. 342)

Gobbi, Marques de Melo's student, considers these studies irrelevant:

The available literature on communication in Latin America in the late 1950s was practically negligible. It was often translated work or results of local research. The work was based mainly on American functionalism, the investigation of communication based on the Chicago School and on information science of the Paris School. (2006, p. 62)

In the late 1950s two events of particular relevance in the gestation of the "Latin American community of communication" (as Marques de Melo put it) occurred. First, in 1957 the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) undertook the study, "Current research on media" ["Recherches actuelles sur les moyens d'information"], which generated great interest in the study of media in the region. Second, on October 9, 1959, again urged on by UNESCO, the Central University of Ecuador and the Ecuadorian government kicked off the activities of the International Center for Studies in Communication for Latin America (CIESPAL) located in Quito, Ecuador. (Also on the initiative of UNESCO, a center similar to CIESPAL began operations in Strasbourg, France in 1959.)

2. The formation of the Latin American community for communication study

Marques de Melo (2004) argues that the Latin American community of communication "can be viewed through three periods labeled in accordance with the language of the Cold War: a) the battle for hegemony; b) the battle for survival; c) the battle for reconstruction" (p. 13). In our brief historical review, the starting point is the chronology proposed by Marques de Melo. However, we will make reference to certain events that we believe will be particularly relevant in understanding the development of the Latin American community of communication scholars.

A. The battle for hegemony: The early years

The first period reported by Marques de Melo began with the creation of CIESPAL and continued until the founding of the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC) in November, 1978 at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas. Marques de Melo (2007) recognizes the important role CIESPAL played in the teaching of communication research in Latin America: "before the International Center for Studies in Communication for Latin America (CIESPAL), communication research in Latin American countries consisted of episodic activities, occasionally" (p. 311). CIESPAL, says Marques de Melo, deserves the credit for forming the first generation of effective communication researchers interested in analyzing communicative phenomena in the region:

The germinating seeds were planted in the fertile soil of CIESPAL in Quito, which aspired to the condition of a dominant core. Consolidated during the '70s, the international center that initially worked on the campus of the Central University of Ecuador stimulated the professional organization

of former international students in their courses, creating a flow of diffusion of ideas through *Chasqui* magazine (first phase). (2004, p.13)

In the mid 1970s, CIESPAL began to project itself as a hotbed of the thought of Latin American communication, just as the leading researcher, Ecuadorian journalist Edgar Jaramillo points out, who until March 2009 served as president of CIESPAL:

In the mid-70s, CIESPAL began to manifest itself as a seedbed of its own communication thinking—"with a significant counterpoint to both the sociology of American mass communications and to European critical sociology, to the point that it replaced on its own initiative the term Communication for that of Journalism"—and its goals expanded to include not only journalists but also all the media and all areas where communication is done. (Jaramillo, 2004, ¶6)

An act of unquestionable importance that Marques de Melo failed to mention in his chronology took place in Mexico City in 1960. That year the Universidad Iberoamericana (UIA), which belongs to the Society of Jesus, began offering a degree in information science. (It is difficult establish with full assurance that the Universidad Iberoamericana began offering the first Bachelor of Science in Communication in Latin America, as the University of Zulia, located in Venezuela, is said to have offered the BA in Communication Sciences since 1959.) In this regard Prieto (2008) says:

The course was established at the Universidad Iberoamericana by a Jesuit of Sayula, José Sánchez Villaseñor. The original name followed the intention of the founder, although he was forced to change it because for the officials of the Secretariat of Public Education the title "communication science" referred to engineering issues. This circumstance caused the degree to be named as "Science and Technology of Information." (p. 9)

Most schools and universities that immediately began to impart a degree in the science of communication over the years adopted a model imposed by the Universidad Iberoamericana, to which researchers such as Felipe López Veneroni have agreed to designate as a "multipurpose model" because it intended to transcend the relative autonomy of independent professions associated with the "science of communication," such as advertising, public relations, journalism, photography,

etc., subordinating them to the perspective of a science degree in communication. According to José Sánchez Villaseñor, cited by Prieto, the curriculum of the "Bachelor of Science in Communication," responded to the purpose of "forming a true professional, capable of combining an organic core of humanistic knowledge and a harmonious set of techniques that allow the judicious and effective public exercise of this knowledge, in which they are intertwined, hierarchically, in science and technology, practice and theory" (Prieto, 2008, p. 9).

According to the prominent Mexican researcher Claudia Benassini, the 1960s serves as a kind of hinge between the analogue and the digital, between modernity and postmodernity, and between global and local. During this time only a small number of countries in the region had civilians at the head of government. To prevent the replication of the Cuban example, the U.S. government decided to support military dictatorships in the region. Faced with this adverse scenario, one can easily understand the behavior of the emerging Latin American community of communication research, which decided to adopt the "Dependency Theory" as the basis of Latin American thought on communication, showing also a particular interest in scientific materialism or Marxism.

In the 1970s, various academics and communication researchers in Latin America theorized the "science of communication" from the perspective of scientific materialism. A group of academics and communication researchers affirmed the thesis of the French Marxist Louis Althusser (1981)—on the role of the ideological state apparatus in advanced capitalist formation—as authentic dogmas of faith. According to such radical interpretations, the media serve the bourgeoisie to ensure the effective expanded reproduction of the dominant ideology, contributing as well to ensure the expanded reproduction of qualifying a diversified workforce. In the most advanced capitalist formations, the media have collectively achieved the status of a hegemonic ideological apparatus, displacing family background and efforts in school to ensure the expanded reproduction of the dominant ideology and the expanded reproduction of the workforce (Esteinou, 1979)

In Chile, the Socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970-1973) encouraged the development of a stream of intellectuals, a "Latin Europe" inspired by Althusser, whose leader, according to Marques de Melo (2007), was Armand Mattelart. Members of this group included Héctor Schmucler, Hugo Assmann, Michèle Mattelart, Mabel Piccini, and Ariel Dorfman.

The most emblematic book of that trend, *Para leer al Pato Donald. Comunicación de masa y colonialismo* [*How to Read Donald Duck: Imperialist Ideology in the Disney Comic*], by Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart (1971), largely summarized the arguments made by Althusser's followers against the United States and "mass culture." "To be expelled from the Club Disneyland" come these lines:

Those responsible for the book will be defined as obscene and immoral (while the Walt Disney World is pure), as complicated and confused in sophistication and refinement (while Walt is sincere, open, fair), members of an embarrassed elite (while Disney is the most popular of all), as political agitators (while Disney World is innocent and it harmoniously gathers together all around that have nothing to do with partisan interests), as calculating and bitter (whereas Walt D. is spontaneous and emotional, and makes you laugh). (Dorfman and Mattelart. 1972, p. 15)

Besides the Althusserian Marxism and the Frankfurt tradition—which is recognized as the direct heir of the tradition of political economy of communication spread throughout the region—the Christian-Marxist analysis of Paulo Freire (Brazil) sought to lay the groundwork of an effectively and original Latin American Marxist thought, attentive to the realities and contradictions of the region.

In the 1970s, a number of communication academics and researchers incurred criticism for objectionable excesses. Raúl Fuentes Navarro (1992), a prominent Mexican scholar, talks about it, referring to some passages from the thesis of Daniel Carlos Gutierrez Rohan:

Within the scientific practice of communication study, research is accepted when it works for the general system, adapting to the rational objectives already set when they fulfill the role of reproducing society and concealing in the relations of production within the capitalist system. . . . Only in cases where scientific practice produces theoretical constructs that can be used by marketing, election campaigns, the changing of attitudes (just to mention three examples) is when they are given a scientific validity. . . . So, when communication study no longer conceals the conflicts and contradictions produced in capitalism and addresses them as they really are (examining their causes, from their origins to their results and effects), communication study

will exceed the ideological implications that it has. (p. 92)

In these revolutionary days, the study of public relations, organizational communication, advertising, marketing, information technology research, and many other subjects that today can be considered as perfectly indispensable in any curriculum for all undergraduates in communication sciences, were then systematically disqualified by several academics and researchers of communication in Latin America because they were considered lower-ranking subjects in theoretical reflection and contemporary critical communications.

In some universities it even got to a point of labeling public relations and organizational communication as "functional concerns," a situation that automatically transformed them to irrelevant subjects in the training process of truly "critical" communications specialists. In such revolutionary days "theorization" prevailed—a term proposed by Daniel Prieto Castillo to designate intellectual work, fundamentally ideological. In this respect, the prominent Mexican scholar Enrique Sánchez Ruiz (1994) says:

Certain dogmas and certain absolute truths were taken which prevented a particular investigation. In the '60s and '70s, many Latin American researchers forgot to treat with rigor their theories, methodologies, and research techniques. Therefore they elaborated a very polished discourse, sometimes with factual backing, but it was still a discourse. (p. 35)

According to Marques de Melo, the first stage in the development of Latin American academic communication—the battle for hegemony—ended with the founding of the ALAIC. Marques de Melo (2004) states that only since 1972 can we locate the first initiatives to create an organization capable of integrating the majority of communication researchers in Latin America. In November, 1978, during a meeting at the premises of the Institute of Communications Research (ININCO) in Caracas, Venezuela (part of the Central University of Venezuela), the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC) was created. Marques de Melo (2004) states that the foundation of the ALAIC

was aided by four national academic associations in operation: ABEPEC (Brazil), AVIC (Venezuela), AVIC (Colombia), and CONEICC (Mexico). It also added two professional associations: FELAP (based in Venezuela) and ILET

(Mexico). UNESCO also participated in the foundation. The researcher Mario Kaplun joined personally. . . . In total, 10 men of the founding assembly participated (Alberto Ancizar, Venezuela; Eleazar Díaz Rangel, Venezuela; Enrique Oteiza, Venezuela; Fernando Reyes Matta, Chile; Josep Rota, Mexico; Luis Anibal Gomez, Venezuela; Luis Gonzaga Motta, Brazil; Mario Kaplun, Uruguay; Oswaldo Capriles, Venezuela; Rafael Roncagliolo, Peru) and two women (Patricia Anzola, Colombia and Elizabeth Safar, Venezuela). (p. 15)

In his valuable chronology, Marques de Melo omits a fact that we consider of particular relevance. In 1976 Universidad Iberoamericana began offering the first graduate program in communication sciences in Latin America. Again other universities, first in Mexico and then throughout Latin America, opened their respective graduate programs in communication, replicating the curriculum of the Masters in Communication from the Universidad Iberoamericana.

B. *"The battle for survival":*

The adolescence stage

In the second stage of the chronology proposed by Marques de Melo—"the battle for survival" (what we term "the difficult adolescent stage of the Latin American communication research and study—which covers the period from 1979 to 1988, the main character is the Latin American Association of Communication Researchers (ALAIC). During this period, five scholars chaired the ALAIC: Luis Aníbal Gómez (Venezuela), Jesús Martín-Barbero (Spain-Colombia), Oswaldo Capriles and Alejandro Alfonzo (both Venezuela), and Patricia Anzola (Colombia). According to Marques de Melo (2004) this period manifested great instability for the ALAIC:

The obstacles faced by the vanguard of ALAIC to implement the decisions taken in Caracas were difficult to overcome. . . . The Directors of ALAIC held three meetings, Lima, Quito, and Mexico in conjunction with international meetings sponsored by various organizations to which some of its members were invited. . . . The ALAIC functioned less as a professional body and more as a service-providing agency, specifying professional opportunities for its partners. (pp. 15-16)

Martín-Barbero, the most outstanding disciple of Manuel Martín Serrano (the founder of the first depart-

ment of communication theory in Spanish universities and the holder of the chair of communication in the Department of Sociology in the School of Information Science of Complutense University in Madrid and the father of the theory of social mediation) served first as vice president of the ALAIC. However, when Anibal Gomez resigned the presidency, Martín-Barbero took office. Frankly, the communication academics and researcher members in ALAIC seemed unaware of or indifferent to the change. Therefore, under the chairmanship of Martín-Barbero and within the framework of the Second ALAIC General Assembly (July-August 1980), the group decided to amend the statutes to find a role for national associations "The statutes were altered to emphasize the national associations of researchers, with the exception for some personal memberships" (Marques de Melo, 2004, p. 16). In 1982, with Patricia Anzola (Colombia) the president of the ALAIC and Elizabeth Fox the vice president of the association, ALAIC received funding from the International Development Research Center, an organization supported by the Canadian parliament, in order to publish six volumes and to set up a new account for the ALAIC finances which had recorded losses.

In his valuable chronology, Marques de Melo fails to mention that in 1980 UNESCO published the report of the International Commission chaired by Sean MacBride, *Many Voices, One World* [*Un solo mundo, voces múltiples*]. The report—now considered almost reverently by many academics and communication researchers in Latin America—responded to the need of diagnosing the main problems of information and communication in order to outline the need for a new information order. With respect to the relevance of the report, Raúl Fuentes Navarro (2005) says, "In placing that famous text in the framework for moving towards a more *new and just world order in information and communication*, the McBride Commission explained to the world the necessity of democratizing communication, recognizing the important role of participation as a right of all people in determining the organization and fate of social life" (p. 12).

Another important event in the development of the Latin American communication academy missed by Marques de Melo occurred with the creation of the Latin American Federation of Faculties of Social Communication (FELAFACS) in October, 1981. This took place in Melgar del Castillo, Colombia, thanks to the initiative of a group of academics and researchers in communication, most of whose colleges were affili-

ated with the Society of Jesus, such as the Iberoamericana University, the University of Lima, and the Javeriana [la Universidad Iberoamericana, la Universidad de Lima, la Universidad Javeriana], among others. On the foundation of FELAFACS, Teresa Quiroz (2006), its current president, noted:

The first meeting of scholars from six Latin American countries at the University of Lima in 1979 led to the idea of founding a federation that grouped the faculties and schools of communication in Latin America, without any distinction for their leadership or character (public, private, secular, or religious). An organizing committee, also at the University of Lima with the assistance of two countries, called a second meeting. That took place in October, 1981, in the city of Melgar in Colombia, and there FELAFACS was founded and Joaquin Sanchez, S.J., of the Pontifical Javeriana University became its first president, with Walter Neira as its Executive Secretary, who has served until today. (§ 1)

On the foundation of the FELAFACS, the federation's website records the following information:

In March, 1979, in Lima, the deans and professors from 27 Schools of Social Communication, mainly from the Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela) and some universities in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico met. It was thus possible to make the **First Latin American Meeting of Faculties of Social Communication**, where a group of prominent scholars exchanged experiences for the first time and looked for ways of dialogue and common action. However, the mechanisms that could facilitate what was already felt necessary—integration and horizontal cooperation—were not yet clear. (FELAFACS, n.d., § 1)

To avoid the financial deficit, which since its foundation had weighed on ALAIC, FELAFACS obtained from its beginning the generous support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Germany, an organization interested in promoting the development of Christian Democracy in the region. Through the Program of Media and Democracy of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, with a base in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Frank Priess (the Foundation representative) decided to provide financial support for FELAFACS, which during its early years affiliated with more than 150 colleges or schools of communication in 16 countries. Shortly after, "Entities in five

countries in Latin America in addition to the 21 countries represented in our federation, in addition to Spain, the United States, and Canada become affiliated" (Quiroz, 2006, § 2).

During the 1980s, which some scholars have designated as "the lost decade for Latin America," while the ALAIC literally faced a *battle for survival*, FELAFACS grew to over 300 affiliated schools and colleges of communication. In 1987 UNESCO recognized FELAFACS as an international organization, with headquarters in Lima, Peru; the Peruvian government recognized it as an "International Technical Cooperation Agency." In 2010 FELAFACS will move its headquarters to Cali, Colombia. FELAFACS has made significant contributions to the study of communication in the region, with the publication of *Diálogos de la Comunicación*, an on-line journal, *Cuadernos Diálogos*.

C. "The battle of reconstruction"

The period designated by Marques de Melo as "the battle of reconstruction" begins with the founding of the ALAIC in Brazil in 1989 and continues until today. During this period, the Latin American academy of communication became a kind of disputed franchise.

ALAIC

In 1988, as part of the Biennial Conference of the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) held in Barcelona, Spain, leading Latin American researchers Rafael Roncagliolo, Luis Peirano, Jesús Martín-Barbero, Anamaria Fadul, Fatima Fernandez, and Joaquin Sanchez took the initiative to convene an open meeting to discuss the future of the ALAIC, ending a recognition of the need for a revamping. The group assigned that responsibility to Brazil, through INTERCOM (the entity representing the academic community devoted to the study of communication in Brazil), which designated José Marques de Melo as the ideal person to do so. The involvement of communication researchers, mainly from Brazilian and Mexican associations, played a key role in the resurrection of the ALAIC, as Marques de Melo (1992) recognizes:

The proposal was well received by participants in the 11th Brazilian Congress of Communication Researchers (meeting in the city of Vicos, MG, in September, 1988), mainly thanks to Professor Margarida Kunsch, president of Intercom, which basically ensured the private

support of the committee in charge of restructuring ALAIC. . . . In December, 1988 representatives of leading Brazilian and Mexican institutions operating in the area of communication (INTERCOM; ABECOM, UCBC, AMIC, CONEICC) and the regional body OCIC/AL met in the town of Embu Guacu, to sign a document convening the Assembly of Reconstituting ALAIC. Margarida Kunsch (INTERCOM), Enrique Sánchez (AMIC), Antonio Carlos de Jesús (ABECOM), Luis Núñez (CONEICC), Francisco de Assis Fernández (UCBC), and José Tavares Barros (OCIC-AL) signed this document. (1992, p. 97)

The Board of Reconstruction of ALAIC met in 1989 in Florianopolis, Brazil, at the Annual Congress of INTERCOM. José Marques de Melo assumed the presidency of ALAIC from 1989 to 1992. Between 1979 and 2009, 11 scholars and researchers have served as presidents of the ALAIC: Luis Aníbal Gómez (Venezuela), 1979-1980; Jesús Martín-Barbero (Colombia), 1981-1982; Oswaldo Capriles and Alejandro Alfonzo (Venezuela), 1982-1984, Patricia Anzola (Colombia), 1984-1989; José Marques de Melo (Brazil), 1989-1992; Enrique Sanchez Ruiz (México), 1992-1995, Luis Peirano (Perú), 1995-1998; Margarida Krohling Kunsch (Brazil), 1998- 2005; Erick Torrico (Bolivia), 2005-2008, and Cesar Bolano (Brazil), 2009-2012.

Since 1992, ALAIC has organized nine academic conferences and five workshops:

1992	I Congress	Sao Paulo, Brazil
1994	II Congress	Guadalajara, México
1996	III Congress	Caracas, Venezuela
1998	IV Congress	Recife, Brazil
2000	V Congress	Santiago de Chile, Chile
2002	VI Congress	Sta. Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia
2004	VII Congress	La Plata, Argentina
2006	VIII Congress	Sao Leopoldo, Brazil
2008	IX Congress	Monterrey, Mexico
1999	Seminar I	Cochabamba, Bolivia
2001	Seminar II	La Plata, Argentina
2003	Seminar III	Sao Paulo, Brazil
2005	Seminar IV	La Paz, Bolivia
2007	Seminar V	Caracas, Venezuela

Through 22 thematic groups, ALAIC promotes communication research in Latin America: Communication, Technology and Development; Communication and City; Communication and Media Policy; Political Economy of Communications; Reception Studies; Journalism Studies; Ethics and Communication Law; Popular Communication; Communication and Education; Communication and Health; Speech and Communication; Organizational Communication and Public Relations; Advertising Communication; History of Communication; Media and Citizens Community; Soap Operas and Drama; Theory and Methodologies of Communication Research; Internet and the Information Society; Intercultural Communication; Communication and Socio-Cultural Studies; Media, Children and Adolescents; and Communication for Social Change. The large number of research groups in ALAIC show marked differences in the degree of commitment and participation. In recent ALAIC Congresses, organizers have found it necessary to invite alternate coordinators due to absence of the group leaders. In most cases, many note the lack of resources to meet the costs of attending the congress. Presently, the organization has discounted the possibility of conducting a virtual congress. Additionally, despite the large number of professional fields that the new digital media have opened, ALAIC has rejected the possibility of opening new research groups over the last six years.

Since July 2004, ALAIC has published an international scientific journal, *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias da Comunicación*. So far eight issues have appeared. In the editorial of the first issue, Margarida Krohling Kunsch (2004), the editor of the journal, set out the objectives of the publication:

With a monthly periodical and international scope, this publication aims primarily to promote the diffusion, democratization, and strengthening of the Latin American Communication School of Thought. We also propose to extend the dialogue with the worldwide academic community and to contribute to the integral development of society on the continent. (p. 8)

The 30th anniversary of ALAIC took place during the group's ninth congress, attended by over 1,000 participants in Monterrey, Mexico. To mark the anniversary, Maria Cristina Gobbi, a leading Brazilian researcher, published the book *A batalla pela hegemonia comunicacional na América Latina. 30 anos da ALAIC* (2008), which offers a detailed account of the relevant contri-

bution of ALAIC to the development of Latin American communication study.

Some academics and researchers involved in the ALAIC have assumed the role of “contenders” in an imaginary “war” for hegemony of communication in Latin America. Gobbi’s book (2008) deals with the “soldiers” of Latin American communication study, willing to fight against “others.” Some questions immediately arise for us: “Who can claim interest in the communicational hegemony in Latin America and why?” and “Against whom do they compete for information hegemony in Latin America?”

The identity of Latin American communication research inevitably defines boundaries, separating, dividing, and segregating those considered “out” with respect to some insiders—a particularly delicate situation when you realize that the “importation of knowledge” is considered a contrary practice to the spirit of academic work in the region. Such a sectarian vision denies the universality of knowledge. But this affirmation in no way questions the affirmation of the singularity of Latin America communication research. What is questionable is the political project that makes the teaching and research of communication in the region a tight explanatory system in which the chief authors taught are the leaders of the same Latin American academy of communication.

The caudillo—a tragic figure in the imagination of Latin American political development—is by no means exhausted in the sphere of politics. Within our institutions, including those involved in academics and research, one may find the presence of certain chiefs and leaders, as well as clientelistic practices which allow them to maintain their influence and, worse, to validate and extend this phenomenon of dominance.

Despite efforts made by ALAIC to promote the development of a Latin American community of communication teaching and research, the number of communication scholars and researchers that regularly participate effectively in its activities is very low. Several Latin American researchers have objected to the incipient internal democracy of ALAIC. Even in the recent elections conducted at the Fifth Seminar of ALAIC in Caracas, Venezuela (2009)—which should have occurred in 2008 at the Ninth Congress—only 150 members voted (the majority via the Internet) and for a single ticket. Unfortunately, ALAIC postponed a crucial self-criticism. Now, the potential for generational change is minimal. Caudillism prevented the transition to an indispensable stage of institutional maturity. It is

essential to move from a “battle for reconstruction” towards building a genuinely democratic and institutional life.

FELAFACS

The sustained growth achieved by FELAFACS during the 1980s largely resulted from the work done by some of its founding members, those performing teaching, administrative, and research duties in schools and faculties of communication in some of the leading universities of the Society of Jesus in Latin America, like the Universidad Iberoamericana, the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO), both in Mexico, the Universidad Javeriana (Colombia), and the University of Lima. (Peru).

Over the years, the founders of FELAFACS, who also participated in the founding of some national associations, also influenced these, just as had previously occurred with at least three of the nine national associations of communication in schools and universities affiliated with FELAFACS: the National Council for Teaching and Research in Communication Sciences (CONEICC) in Mexico, the Colombian Association of Faculties of Social Communication (AFACOM), and the Peruvian Association of Schools of Social Communication (APFACOM). (The remaining national associations affiliated with FELAFACS are the Argentine Association of Schools of Social Communication (AFAC), the Brazilian Association of Schools of Social Communication (ABECOM), the Dominican Association of Departments and Schools of Social Communication (Adecom), the Panamanian Association of Higher Education in Social Communication (ASPECOM), the Puerto Rican Association of Academic Programs for Social Communication (APPACS), and the Venezuelan Council for Teaching and Research.) The influence of those associated with the Jesuit schools helped to promote a Jesuit priest—Joaquín Sánchez from Colombia—as president of FELAFACS from 1990 to 1993.

In 1992, the seventh meeting of FELAFACS had the theme of “Communication, Identity, and Latin American Integration.” In the days prior to the meeting, CONEICC also met, with both meetings organized by Luis Núñez Gornés, the director of the Universidad Iberoamericana (Mexico), who, based on his planning work and with the strong support of the “founders” of FELAFACS, easily won the presidency of the federation, assuming its duties in 1994. During his term (1994-2003) Núñez faced two crisis that rocked FELAFACS: first, the distancing of outstanding

Brazilian researchers, such as José Marques de Melo, Margarida Krohling, and Mary Inmacolata; and second, the reduction of funding by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The withdrawal of the Brazilians occurred during the planning of the October, 2000 meeting in Sao Paulo. Currently only one Brazilian university—the Methodist University of Sao Paulo, Brazil—remains affiliated with FELAFACS. The results from that difficult meeting influenced the directors of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, who decided to gradually reduce the grant awarded to FELAFACS. Dr. Karla Spon became program director of the Media and Democracy in Latin America program replacing Frank Priess, who took a senior post in the office of the Foundation in Mexico. FELAFACS represented only one of Spon's priorities, who allocated considerable resources to the Program for Media and Democracy in Latin America, a network of expert consultants in American propaganda.

In adverse conditions Teresa Quiroz, Peru's most outstanding researcher who works at the University of Lima, became the president of FELAFACS. Quiroz implemented a plan to meet the demands of new times. FELAFACS, not exactly accustomed to austerity with the generous contributions of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, had to adjust. It moved the journal *Diálogos de la Comunicación* to the Internet and relocated the facilities of FELAFACS to the University of Lima. FELAFACS has organized 13 Latin American meetings, most recently in October, 2009 at the University of Havana in Cuba, where Alvaro Rojas, dean of the Faculty of Social Communication at the Universidad Autonoma de Occidente, Colombia, became chairman of FELAFACS for 2010- 2013.

Other Agencies

In the mid 1980s, José Manuel de Pablos, a well known Spanish professor in the Faculty of Information Sciences at the Universidad de La Laguna, located in Tenerife and the editor of *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social* (<http://www.ull.es/publicaciones/latina>) coordinated a group of faculty from Spain who taught the first doctoral programs in communication for students from Latin America, mainly from Mexico, Colombia, and Argentina. In 1996 on the initiative of a group of Latin American doctoral students at the University of La Laguna and from the recommendation of the first *Jornadas Canarias-América* two projects emerged: the *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social* and the second *Jornadas*

Canarias-América (in Cartagena de Indias). In 1997 the First Biennial meeting Iberoamericana de Comunicación occurred in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, with the theme, The public media on the threshold of the 21st century. Subsequent biennial meetings took place at the University of La Laguna, Spain (1999); Universidad de Las Americas, Mexico (2001); El Salvador (2003); Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico (2005); University of Rosario, Argentina (2007); and Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua, Mexico (2009).

On the initiative of some graduates of the doctoral program at the University of La Laguna, as part of the fifth Biennial (2005), the Iberoamericana Academic Network of Communication was created which will offer doctoral programs in communication with some of the major Latin American universities.

ASICOM

Carlos Fernandez Colado, Mexico's leading communications expert and former rector of the University of Celaya (Mexico), is president and chief sponsor of the Iberoamericana Communication Association [Asociación Iberoamericana de Comunicación] (ASICOM). The Association collaborates in the Masters in Communication and New Technologies with the University of Oviedo in Spain and has recently concluded an agreement with the university and the Mexican newspaper *El Universal* to offer a Masters in Cyberjournalism (<http://www.asicom.info/index.html>).

CIAC

In 2009, at the Ninth Latin American Congress of Communication (IBERCOM), Latin American representatives of various agencies dedicated to communication research and teaching founded the Iberoamerican Confederation of Associations of Communication Science [Confederación Iberoamericana de Asociaciones Científicas de Comunicación], CIAC. Various associations participated at the founding assembly of this new entity: the Iberoamericana Communication Association [Asociación Iberoamericana de Comunicación] (ASSIBERCOM), ALAIC, FELAFACS, and the Lusófona Federation of Communication Sciences [Federación Lusófona de Ciencias de la Comunicación] (LUSOCOM). In addition, representatives of other communication associations participated, including the Argentina Federation of Communication (FADECCOS), the Bolivian Association of Communication Researchers (ABOIC), the Brazilian Federation of Scientific and Academic Associations of

Communication (SOCICOM), the Spanish Association of Communication Researchers (AE-IC), the Mexican Association of Communication Researchers (AMIC), and the Portuguese Association of Communication Sciences (SOPCOM).

José Marques de Melo was named president of this new partnership, which began with full support of the presidents of the various Latin American organizations such as Erick Torrico (ALAIC). The headquarters of CIAC will be located in Sao Paulo, which will also host the “First World Conference of Latin American Communication Research” and the “First Iberoamericana Forum for Graduate Communication Study,” activities planned for the 2010-2011.

Publications

From the mid-1980s, FELAFACS sponsored a network of Iberoamericana journals, which brings together some of the major Latin American print publications specializing in communication issues, such as *Oficios Terrestres*, *Intersecciones/Comunicación*, *Nexos de la Cultura Bahiense*, *Temas y Problemas de la Comunicación* (Argentina); *Punto Cero*, *Aportes de la Comunicación y la Cultura* (Bolivia); *Comunicação e Sociedade*, *Comunicação e Educação*, *Biblioteconomia e Comunicação*, *Pensamiento Comunicacional Latino-americano*, *INTERCOM—Revista Brasileira de Comunicação*, *Comunicación UPB* (Brazil); *Signo y Pensamiento*, *Ojo de Buey* (Colombia); *Arandu*, *Chasqui* (Ecuador); *Comunicar: Revista de Educación en Medios de Comunicación*, *Analisi*, *Comunicación y Sociedad* (Spain), *Convergencia*, *Comunicación y Sociedad*, *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, *Estudios sobre las Culturas Contemporáneas*, *Tecnología y Comunicación Educativas*, *Versión*, *Estudios de Comunicación y Política* (México); *Diálogos de la Comunicación*, *Contratexto* (Perú); *Comunicación: Estudios Venezolanos de Comunicación*, *Revista Predios*, *Revista de Literatura Hispano-americana*, *Anuario ININCO* (Venezuela); and *Inmediaciones de la Comunicación* (Uruguay). Most of these magazines have disappeared and some, such as *Diálogos*, are now only published online.

The first web magazine in Iberoamerica dedicated to communication is *Razón y Palabra*, which a team from the Tecnológico de Monterrey Campus Estado de Mexico has published on the Internet (www.razonypalabra.org.mx). The second web magazine is *Latina*, by José Manuel de Pablos at the Universidad de La Laguna in Tenerife (<http://www.ull.es/publicaciones/latina/>).

3. Conclusion: A strange paradox

Several Latin American communication scholars and researchers have aspired to extend their political-administrative career at the International Association for Mass Communication Research (IAMCR). At the organization's 40th anniversary meeting (in Oaxaca, Mexico), the meeting's planner, Carmen Gomez Mont, a leading Mexican researcher and then Director of the School of Communication at the Universidad Iberoamericana, sought a leading position in the IAMCR. Notwithstanding the planning work and the substantial budget for the Congress, Gomez Mont failed to secure election to the managers of the IAMCR, composed mainly of U.S. and European scholars and researchers. The Brazilian researcher César Bolano, current president of ALAIC, served as treasurer of the IAMCR in recent years, but without access to accounts and funds of that organization. The most recent conference at the IAMCR (Mexico, 2009), aimed to position certain Latin American leaders—those identified with the “political economy of communication” study—in the group of decision-makers who will determine the future direction of the IAMCR. Regardless of the interests of those particular researchers, one should ask what benefit will the promotion of those academics and researchers from Latin America within IAMCR have for the larger Latin American academy of communication.

Today the emerging Latin American academy of communication is undergoing a profound transition to the digital present. The uncertain outlook has definitely caused great confusion in the older generations of scholars and researchers of communication, who fear that they have lost the authority to diversify and multiply the sources of knowledge. The crisis definitely will not be solved by creating new associations with the same people and leaders, replicating the same patterns. The crisis can be solved if and only if the Latin American academy of communication undertakes an indispensable self-criticism. That is, without a doubt, the first step.

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