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# EARLY SURVEYS IN LATIN AMERICA AND TRANSNATIONAL COMMUNICATION RESEARCH, 1941–1945

## Cantril's Discontinued Legacy in the Americas

**Mariano Navarro and José Luis Ortiz Garza**

*This article examines the history of survey and communication research in Latin America. Aiming to contribute to a more robust transnational history of communication research in the American continent we examine the works of Nelson Rockefeller's OIAA (Office of Inter-American Affairs) and Hadley Cantril in several Latin American countries. We argue that, despite the importance of these early studies, they are not considered in the official history of communication because they failed to leave institutional traces in Latin America and also due to the fact that transnational archival work has only seldom been considered an important source in Latin American history of communication.*

**KEYWORDS** Transnational communication history; Latin America; Hadley Cantril; Office of Inter American Affairs; archival research

### Introduction

Latin America is omitted from Twentieth century accounts on the origins of survey research. Though the study of communication has been marked by recent calls for its 'de-westernization',<sup>1</sup> much of the dominant narratives persist in historical accounts of the origins of the field. Some remarkable scholarly work has aimed to internationalize the history of communication study by focusing on the transnational flows of education and research outside of the North Atlantic,<sup>2</sup> but much is left out or unavailable in English.

In Latin America, the works of Luis Ramiro Beltrán were the first to revise and acknowledge for the transnational conditions and influences that shaped Latin American communication research, but the scope of his historical accounts go as back as 1959, when the International Center for Higher Studies in Journalism for Latin American (CIESPAL) was established in Quito by UNESCO.<sup>3</sup> Some recent historical accounts of Latin American Communication research identify the first forty years of the twentieth century as the scenario of 'sporadic and occasional attempts and the result of personal and non-institutional interests'.<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that some of the most interesting efforts to contextualize the emergence of the study of communication in Mexico and Latin America have focused on the institutionalization of an academic field<sup>5</sup> from the 50s on, rather than on the previous international political and intellectual flows that had set up the conditions for such possible institutionalization. It is quite eloquent that in one of the most recent reassessments of the history of Latin American communication studies Raúl Trejo labels the

years between 1934 and 1958 as 'The Prehistory of Latin American communication research'.<sup>6</sup>

Under this premise, this paper attempts to show an important yet forgotten effort undertaken by both US Government Agencies and private enterprises between 1941 and 1945. The aim of such efforts was to display a clear picture of public opinion in several Latin American countries in the years prior to and during World War II. This revision will contribute to a growing transnational understanding of the origins of communication research.

The first surveys on public opinion conducted in Latin America at the beginning of World War II were curtailed by conflicts between official diplomacy and intelligence gathering strategies for cultural diplomacy purposes. The former, carried out by the State Department, dealt with interpersonal relations between the heads of the governments; the latter, undertaken by Nelson Rockefeller's OIAA (Office of Inter-American Affairs), attempted to reach populations directly without consulting local governments.

This completely forgotten chapter of early social surveys in Latin America can rightly reshape the 'official' historic narrative of American communication studies making a case for a 'new history of mass communication research' in the American Continent,<sup>7</sup> showing that Hadley Cantril was the first person to give scientific communication research a broad international and intercultural dimension. This article departs from his work to show that, although not completely articulated, the *framing* of community in the research carried out in Latin America pointed out the importance of interpersonal relations and strong cultural bonds for communication processes. While other framings of community—like Lazarsfeld and Katz's *Personal Influence* analysis—approached it as an obstacle to media persuasion, the idea of community underlying early public opinion studies in Latin America clearly pointed toward the understanding of differences.

As a manifestation of a vast war effort, this survey program implied the imperious necessity to collect and examine the opinions that the U. S. population had of Latin America. These domestic surveys established a clear and strong link between internationally-oriented polling and community and minorities comprehension. These premises connected international and community polling, and opened fruitful approaches in the fields of public and cultural diplomacy. These advances, nevertheless, focused mainly on the reality and dynamics of power, leaving out several communication issues still to be considered by scholars.

### **The First Surveys in Latin America and the 'Office of Inter-American Affairs'**

Systematic empirical survey research in Latin America constituted one of the objectives of the Office of Inter-American Affairs, or OIAA, an agency created in August 1940 by the U. S. Government and chaired by Nelson A. Rockefeller. Aimed to increase and strengthen hemispheric solidarity and combat Axis propaganda, Rockefeller realized that his program required an in-depth knowledge of field conditions in Latin America as well as reliable methodologies of research.<sup>8</sup> The OIAA was the most ambitious project ever attempted in the Western Hemisphere in the fields of international and intercultural communication, propaganda, cultural diplomacy, public relations, and mass communication research.<sup>9</sup> For the objectives of the OIAA it was fundamental to have a clear notion of

what ‘being a Latin American’ meant. The conceptual definition of the term would condition the research program and its methodology.

It was, then, in the very gestation of this survey project that a deeply relevant intercultural question was raised: Was there an *essence* behind the concept of ‘Latin American’? If so, did all the population possess identical psychological and sociological features as to bring them together under a common denominator? Moreover, could all the countries below the Rio Grande be analyzed in inclusive multinational polls? Was such an approach the way to achieve successful intercultural communication between the United States and the other American Republics? On the other hand, the absence of a common definition for all Latin Americans brought the need to account for national cultures and regional particularities.

This ‘common essence dilemma’ was inextricably linked to research methodologies. The OIAA faced a predicament depictable in terms of qualitative versus quantitative techniques: on the one hand, either the OIAA needed to follow the ethnographic methods with scholars immersing themselves as participant observers in the cultures being studied, or they should use quantitative methods applying questionnaires to representative samples of society to make inferences according to the logic of statistics. Either Nelson Rockefeller or his staff assumed the existence of a Latin American essence, a shared identity that allowed propagandists to design and disseminate information through media communications of a continental scope. Contents created from centralized offices in the United States or elsewhere followed this premise. This mindset might have been influenced by John Marshall, a Rockefeller Foundation officer who specialized in social communication. In 1939 Marshall arranged a ‘Communications Seminar’ in New York that brought together top-notch scholars to discuss the problems of mass communication research, aiming to set a paradigm for the field. In spite of opposition from some of the participants, Marshall

helped impose theoretical coherence and a ‘scientific’ research paradigm on this inchoate area of interdisciplinary inquiry. The goal, before the war, was to shape an empiricist blueprint for the incipient field, aimed at addressing what Marshall saw as the chief problem of mass communication research: ‘Mass communication in reaching millions becomes mass influence, for better or for worse’<sup>10</sup>

The approach followed by the OIAA assumed an oversimplified homogeneity in the other American republics, and that expectation of a common Latin American identity that animated the project was eventually contested by empirical findings. Leaving out community differences was to be paid at a high price, since the entire experiment would shape the dominant paradigm for intercultural communication studies. Henceforth, the concept of community would only be considered relevant by media effects research more than a decade later.<sup>11</sup>

### **The U.S. State Department and Hadley Cantril in Latin America**

Polling was seen by Rockefeller’s Office as a relevant weapon to gauge the feelings and opinions in the republics below the Rio Grande. It was, however, a hazardous activity for diplomatic traditions and procedures. This explains the reluctance of Larry Duggan,

Assistant Secretary for Latin America at the State Department, to collect political information abroad without the consent of local governments. Hidden or indirect interviews were deemed an option, but not as reliable as Gallup's methodology, which marked the genesis and demise of the initial opinion surveys carried out in Latin America during World War II.

Almost immediately after his appointment, Rockefeller consulted George Gallup and obtained his consent to advise some of the OIAA's projects.<sup>12</sup> Gallup, who asked the Coordinator to steer his name away from the public, recommended Hadley Cantril, of Princeton University, to lead the project. The two became close friends when the latter opened the Office of Public Opinion Research at Princeton, and afterwards when they co-chaired the Radio Research Project. The Rockefeller Foundation funded both projects.<sup>13</sup>

Considered one of the key figures in modern social communications studies, Hadley Cantril was a true precursor of scientific communication research in Latin America. After graduating in 1928 from Dartmouth College and receiving a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1931, Cantril taught briefly at both universities and at Columbia. He moved to Princeton in 1936 and began a prolific twenty-year career as Chair of the Department of Psychology, Head of the Radio Project, founder of its Listening Center, and Director of the Office of Public Opinion and Research. Cantril's work at Princeton is recognized as 'the first time that academic social science took survey research seriously, and it was the first attempt to collect and collate systematically survey findings'.<sup>14</sup>

Cantril caught the attention of the Roosevelt administration after successfully predicting voting behavior in gubernatorial and other elections using small samples. He also experimented with methods that allowed interviewing people with surreptitious techniques. 'The interviewers had to memorize the questions, ask them in casual conversations, make no written notes during the interview, but record the answers as soon as possible after they had left the respondent'.<sup>15</sup> These hidden and informal techniques were repeated during World War II in some Latin American countries, especially in Mexico.

On October 14, 1940, Rockefeller established 'American Social Surveys Inc.' (ASS), a private, nonprofit corporation with Gallup as nominal President, Cantril as Vice President and executive officer, and two chief aides: Leonard Doob and Lloyd A. Free. Shortly after, ASS signed an agreement (NDCar 1) to deliver to the OIAA some scientific reports about the basic attitudes of people in Latin America and some opinion polls in the United States to test attitudes toward the other American republics.<sup>16</sup>

Late in October 1940, Laurence Duggan and James Young—Chief of the Communication Division of the OIAA—approved the agenda for researching communications in the months to come. The plan was to send Lloyd A. Free to Brazil to do a pilot public opinion survey, and to post field agents in the main capitals of the other American republics.<sup>17</sup> In early December 1940, Cantril reported that things were progressing well enough: 'I think', he remarked, 'that in another eight months we shall know more about opinion, tastes, habits, and propaganda going to South America than Mr. Goebbels himself'.<sup>18</sup>

In response to the State Department's anxieties toward opinion polls in Latin America, the OIAA created 'The Export Information Bureau, Inc.' (EIB), a bogus branch of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (usually called AAAA or 4A's). After creating the EIB, the contract with ASS changed in order to work only in the U. S. and expired December 31, 1941. Also managed by Hadley Cantril, the EIB was formed as a different

corporation, with a new staff separate from that of the 4A's, and with the exclusive purpose to serve the Coordinator under two contracts: 'NDCar 11' (also called 'Advertising contract') and 'NDCar 35' (named 'Surveys contract' or 'Cantril's contract'). The latter covered the work of several observers in Latin America, all recruited by Hadley Cantril and trained by him and Leonard Doob.<sup>19</sup> The list included George Landes in Argentina and Paraguay; Harald Corson in Mexico; Jack Fahy in Colombia and Central America; Charles Todd Lee in Peru and Bolivia; Eugene Warner in Chile; Roy Nash in Brazil, and George Massey in Cuba, who was later replaced by John Corbin.<sup>20</sup>

Because these agents opened their offices within the same time period, surveys on communications started almost simultaneously in the Latin American republics between February and May, 1941. All observers worked for U.S. Governmental offices, were trained by scholars, founded and directed fully staffed bureaus in foreign countries, received similar tasks to be solved within specific deadlines, shared problems and solutions, and followed common techniques and methodologies. Unlike pioneers like Laszlo Radvanyi, who started his works on public opinion in Mexico in 1942, and who has received the attention of scholars interested in his biography,<sup>21</sup> OIAA's contributions to the history of mass communication research took place in a completely international context, closely related to 'psychological warfare', as described by Simpson.<sup>22</sup> Among the several examples of this the contract that on February 1, 1941 gave birth to the EIB and served as a cover-up to Brazil's first survey on communications is illustrative. Sticking to the plan set up in October 1940 by Duggan and Young, Lloyd A. Free carried out the research with a cross-national representative sample of 2342 people. Working from February to May 1941, Free hired, trained, transported and supervised a crew of twenty interviewers.<sup>23</sup> On May 29, 1941, Hadley Cantril claimed that it was 'the first survey of its kind ever done in a Latin American country', and that it was 'worth more than any number of impressions sent on by observers no matter how competent they may be'.<sup>24</sup>

Almost simultaneously, between March and April 1941, the J. Walter Thompson Company (JWT) in Buenos Aires carried out a survey about short wave listening in Argentina. The manager of the agency took care of the fieldwork, preliminary tabulations and supervision; Lloyd A. Free chose the sample of 1977 persons and Hadley Cantril made the final analysis and report.<sup>25</sup>

### **Frictions Between the State Department and the OIAA**

On April 1941, the observers were asked to place full-page advertisements of a mock American travel company in the main newspapers of every Latin American republic, especially in those with unfriendly attitudes toward the United States. Authorized by both Nelson Rockefeller and Adolf Berle, Assistant Secretary of State, the objective of the plan was to make doubtful papers dependent on U.S. advertisement money, and thus bring them to heel over time.<sup>26</sup> Many Embassies expressed their discontent at not having been informed or consulted. As Under Secretary of State in charge of Latin American relations since 1934, Sumner Welles opposed Nelson Rockefeller's intrusions and convinced President Roosevelt to put all OIAA's activities under the authority of the Department of State.<sup>27</sup>

Although the controversial advertising campaign undertaken in spring 1941 had no direct relation with the system of observers employed by the OIAA, in some countries the U.S. embassies objected to the activities of the 4A's and the EIB. Cantril reacted, and on May 29 sent a letter to Shelley Tracy, Assistant Director of the Communications Division, to clarify his position:

The main purpose of the Research Department when it was originally set up was to do systematic surveys of Latin American countries to study the opinions, tastes and habits of the people. Permission from the State Department was given to do a trial survey in Brazil.<sup>28</sup>

Cantril's initial enthusiasm had been badly dented by then. On June 19 he highlighted to John McClintock, Chief Executive Officer of the OIAA, the necessity of clearing up as soon as possible the relationship between the observers and the embassies. He also requested permission to continue with opinion surveys and systematic studies of communication habits, since that was the type of work he was supposed to do for the OIAA. He considered that the surveys made in Brazil and Argentina were 'far and away the most valuable and unique types of information we have gathered'. Cantril also expressed that he was 'more than eager to pursue this kind of work in other countries', but needed to get an answer about its feasibility.<sup>29</sup>

Rockefeller responded by convening a special meeting between the staffs of the OIAA and EIB. At Cantril's request to be relieved from activities not directly related to opinion polls, the EIB was restructured into three sections: General Information, Propaganda Analysis, and Public Opinion; managed by Robert Miller, Leonard Doob and Hadley Cantril, respectively.

The Public Opinion Surveys section intended to gauge attitudes on issues relating to the United States such as the political, economic and social climate, reaction to specific events, trends of opinion and comparisons by longitudinal polling, etc. The hope was to conduct public opinion surveys in several countries under the direction of Cantril at the request of Rockefeller and other government agencies.<sup>30</sup>

The EIB was also reorganized to serve as an 'Intelligence Division' in alignment with similar governmental offices. This decision proved crucial in turning OIAA's field observers into detectives of media organizations and practitioners in the region. After compiling detailed information, they indicated unfriendly persons and firms to be included in black-lists. Among the methods used to determine enemies were content analysis, covert observations and personal interviews.

During August, 1941, John McClintock asked Laurence Duggan the petitions posed by Cantril about polling in the countries below the Rio Grande. Duggan admitted that he and others at the Department of State remained very doubtful about making opinion surveys. Partly because they had not received sufficient information from the field, and partly because 'there was a division of opinion in the State Department on the subject', Duggan suggested postponing the decision until the new structure, based on 'Coordination Committees', was set up. McClintock agreed, for he was convinced that 'the matter of making opinion surveys would be turned down if we pressed for decision at the present time'.<sup>31</sup>

Harassed by angry or suspicious American ambassadors in several countries, many of the observers faced difficulties in carrying out their information activities, specially those related to interviewing people. For instance, in Cuba and Chile frictions between the embassies and the EIB became so harsh that the observers were expelled from each country.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, in some places the observers worked favorably with their embassies and without problems with local governments. This was the case in Colombia, Argentina and Mexico, where the field men made public polling either under the sponsorship of EIB or American advertising companies. In Cali, Jack Bradley Fahy conducted an opinion survey in November 1941 about tastes and preferences in press, radio and motion pictures. His findings covered interests toward popular and classical music; programs featuring news, educational and political affairs; percentage of listeners to foreign radio stations, etc.<sup>33</sup> In Buenos Aires, President Roosevelt's broadcast on January 7, 1942 was picked up by the radio stations 'El Mundo', 'Belgrano' and 'Splendid'. During four days, pollsters of J. Walter Thomson interviewed 621 people, with the objective of learning who listened to the radio address.<sup>34</sup>

Mexico was by far the country where U. S. sponsored communication research in general, and public opinion surveys in particular, thrived in Latin America. Harald Corson, the observer of the EIB, was so skillful and talented that at some point Cantril and Rockefeller considered sending him to other Latin American countries to share his knowledge with fellow observers.<sup>35</sup> By November 1941, through the method of casual or indirect interviewing invented by Cantril, Corson had finished 27 public opinion surveys from highly strategic sectors, such as the military, bureaucrats, labor unions and college students.<sup>36</sup> With samples of around 280 people categorized according to their socioeconomic level, Corson obtained such valuable information that even the disdainful State Department praised his job.<sup>37</sup> He made the first longitudinal poll in Mexico about attitudes toward the United States, and trained a crew of pollsters for whom he wrote a 'Manual for Surveyors'.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Coordination Committees and Mass Media Research in Latin America**

On August 19, 1941, Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Rockefeller formally established a new field organization composed of prominent United States citizens in Latin America serving in 'Coordination Committees'. By early December 1942, twenty of them were established and functioning.<sup>39</sup> The contracts with the ASS (NdCar 1), AAAA (NdCar 11), and EIB (NdCar 35) were canceled on their expiration dates: December 31, 1941, June 30, 1942, and March 3, 1942, respectively.<sup>40</sup>

Thereafter, the observers became either employees or executive secretaries of the Coordination Committees in Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile.<sup>41</sup> The State Department, however, limited their activities to 'a newspaper clipping service, and any other function which may be agreed upon by the Missions and the Coordination Committees'.<sup>42</sup>

In April 1942 the State Department sent a memo to its embassies in Latin America to remind them that it was more appropriate to conduct informational activities by the Coordinating Committees than by diplomatic representatives. In the sphere of politics, however,



the Department emphasized that 'It would not be appropriate for the coordination committees to carry out any independent reporting or investigating of political subjects'.<sup>43</sup>

This clause did not prevent Nelson Rockefeller from trying to resume public opinion surveys, an activity that was considered essential to OIAA's objectives. To discuss the issue, on May 23, 1942 Rockefeller summoned George Gallup, Hadley Cantril, Leonard Doob, Robert Miller, John H. Withney, and John C. McClintock. They agreed on the urgent need to resume monitoring the sentiments of Latin Americans. At a conference with Under Secretary Sumner Wells later on, Rockefeller made the point that systematic opinion surveys were 'essential in order to execute effectively the plans and projects of this Office', and emphasized that:

Experience gained in securing the systematic reports on public sentiments in Latin America will be useful not only in our present work but as a guide to obtain similar reports inside of enemy countries between the period of the Armistice and the peace conference.<sup>44</sup>

If Wells consented to the plan, Wallace K. Harrison, head of the Information Division at OIAA, would try to persuade every Coordinating Committee and Ambassador that the service could be 'of infinite service to the entire mission'. Thereafter, technicians trained in The U.S.A. would be sent to each country to work with people acquainted with local conditions. Both pollsters had to decide social samples and techniques of interviewing. The samples would be relatively small, yet extremely carefully selected. The interviewers had to be nationals, unaware that they were working for the Coordination Committee or the Embassy, and at all times tricked into thinking that they were conducting a market survey. All interviews had to be informal, they were asked not to take notes in the presence of the interviewees. The data of the interview was to be susceptible to statistical treatment as well as qualitative analysis. More importantly, the issues reported through the interviews had to be determined in Washington.

In the end Rockefeller's project on public opinion did not work out as planned. He succeeded, however, in expanding the Coordination Committees through the creation of Information Centers to handle the dissemination of information and measure its effectiveness. Ten of them were formed in July 1942 in the main cities of Latin America. Surveys related to mass media contexts, uses, processes, preferences and reactions to propaganda were included amid their main functions. Press, Radio and Motion Pictures Divisions of the OIAA made many reports of this kind and staff members associated with existing local advertising agencies made interviews, either personally, by mail or telephone.

### **Early Survey Research in Latin America: A Preliminary Balance Within the History of the Field**

The Export Information Bureau, and later the Coordination Committee in each Latin American country became the first professional organization fully dedicated to applying and measuring persuasive communication processes, disseminating messages and measuring their effects. Transnational and intercultural communication became their core fields, which were deeply associated with psychological warfare, cultural diplomacy, propaganda and public relations. Yet, in most historic accounts of the constitution of

research traditions on communication in Latin America the EIB and the following Committees are completely absent, to the point that the period before the foundation of CIESPAL (1959) is often referred to as the 'prehistory' of Communication research.<sup>45</sup> Further research about the events in every Latin American country is waiting for deeper analysis, though the works on communication research carried out by the Office of Inter-American Affairs between 1940 and 1945 are of great importance for an authentic transnational historic narrative.

To begin with, the contributions of Hadley Cantril to public opinion surveys and methodologies related to mass communication in Latin America deserve due credit. As a forerunner of empirical public opinion research in the region, he left a substantial legacy in the training of personnel and the adaptation of methods to entirely different social and political conditions. While Cantril spawned a school of social communication researchers that boosted the field in the region, not a single 'observer' or agent is included in the historiography of Latin America. Among other factors, the covert nature of that research prevented it from establishing connections with Latin American academic institutions, placing it outside the realm of the historiography of a field of study.

Furthermore, the eventual outcome of the colossal work undertaken by the OIAA and the State Department has still to be assessed. Thousands of reports made in Latin America about mass media facilities, communication habits, sizes and types of audiences, reaction to persuasive appeals, preferences of radio programs or movie content, etc., seem to have been left out by subsequent propaganda agencies as the International Information Service and the United States Information Agency.

Within the context of vast pre-war and war efforts that acquired several different shapes, the dismissal of these programs and their subsequent disregard by Government agencies can be read as a significant decrease in the strategic value of the information obtained by early surveys in Latin America to American propaganda agencies criteria. On the other hand, the lack of attention from scholarship to this episode supposes a burden to the articulation of a transnational history of communication.

### **A Reassessment of Cantril's Contributions, *Personal Influence* and the Official History of Communication Research**

One of the more pressing issues from the official story is the need to reevaluate Hadley Cantril's contribution to communication and social science at large. Even if already an important figure in communication studies, Cantril's involvement in Rockefeller's Agency and his activities in Latin America are hardly considered relevant in his lifetime work. The failure to completely grasp the importance of this episode has certainly prevented Cantril's from gaining a disciplinary consideration close to that surrounding the (so called) founding fathers of communication studies. Furthermore, a revision of Cantril's labor and achievements in Latin America brings out evidence of a forgotten conceptual lineage that closely tied together international, intercultural and community approaches.

The constant need shown by communication studies for an examination of its roots has allegedly been motivated by permanent institutional fragility.<sup>46</sup> Profound assessments of historical narratives have shown that the price to pay for organizational stability comes in the form of intellectual delimitation.<sup>47</sup> In fact, historical narratives can only unify and

structure a field of study by tracing a line between it and the rest of disciplines. To the effects of the institutionalization of the nascent field, a very clear narrative of the history of communication, media and public opinion studies—which included a clear pantheon of founding figures—was useful. Undoubtedly, Paul Lazarsfeld is to be counted among those prominent founding figures, and the extent to which the field's historical narrative replicates his studies plays a part in the oblivion to which these first studies in Latin American have been relegated.

In a piece of remarkable scholarly work, Jefferson Pooley signals the fifteen-page account of the development of mass communication research included in Lazarsfeld and Katz's *Personal Influence* (1955) as the single most influential text in the field's historical self-understanding, and traces its intellectual roots to Edward Shils.<sup>48</sup> Shils paid little interest to the empirical study of the media, but a series of studies he conducted on the social psychology of primary groups in the German armed forces ended up providing the 'powerful-to-limited-effects' structure to the field narrative present in *Personal Influence*. Summarily, Shils denounced the disappearance of the ideas of small group and community in American sociology to follow the European tradition heavily focused on the *Gesellschaft*.<sup>49</sup> According to Shils, European theorists underestimated the important role small groups and community ties played in modernity. To any American social scientist, this omission of small groups and community ties implied a turning away from one of the first traditions of social thought in the United States around the University of Chicago early in the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> Such approaches would be left out by mainstream social scholarship to follow a (European) interpretation of modern society as the dismemberment of communal bonds.

As early as 1942, Lazarsfeld noted the difficulties in achieving attitude change through media persuasion,<sup>51</sup> yet he was more than a decade away from developing the *Personal Influence* approach based on the limited effects of the media. In the process, Shils and Janowitz's 1948 analysis of the effects of propaganda on German soldiers was extremely useful. Primary groups seemed capable of isolating themselves from generalized propaganda, proving its effects to be limited.<sup>52</sup> This all crystalized in what would become not only the 'powerful-to-limited-effects' storyline in *Personal Influence*, but also Lazarsfeld's last word on 'the field'.

Lazarsfeld's 'powerful-to-limited-effects' framing of the history of media research could only have been attained by emphasizing community ties and primary bonds of association. In a way, Lazarsfeld's last historical revision of communication studies was a calling to save the idea of community for *empirical* media research. Such 'rediscovery' of the idea of community changed communication research paradigms. But it is more than dubious that before Lazarsfeld called attention to the concepts of community and personal influence, they never showed as a factor or result in social research. The idea of community as a set of strong inter-group cultural bonds, even with a clear reference to leadership dynamics through interpersonal relations, was part of the frame of reference assumed by public opinion studies in Latin America, as can be seen in Child's formulation of 'the *Jefe* principle'.<sup>53</sup>

In making a case for differentiating between the *raw findings* of any given research and the *framing* within which those findings are placed, Pooley reminds that 'the interwar public opinion cluster, as well as postwar empirical sociology, tended to be meticulous and attentive to research design and process, but rather loose and instrumental with contextual

frame'.<sup>54</sup> This malleable relation to conceptual framing constitutes one of the structural meta-narrative conditions that allows many revisions of the history of the field of communication study. Furthermore, Pooley points out two relevant issues relating to research *framing* that show to be especially pertinent in the case of the role played by the concept of community and small group in early communication research. On the one hand, the attempt to explain the wider meaning of the findings was a later afterthought; on the other, research framing was a 'vital reputation-building instrument'. Granted that Lazarsfeld's 'powerful-to-limited-effects' storyline was only conceivable after Shils' account of the resistance displayed by *Wehrmacht* close-knit communities to general propaganda, and that a good amount of the reputation Lazarsfeld gained as an interpreter of the history of media studies directly came from pointing out the importance of the community in the (two-step) process of communication, two questions raise. One deals with the possibility of framings of community different than the one pointed out by Shils and assumed by Lazarsfeld. The other raises the pertinence of reconsidering the told story of communication studies.

In acknowledging the small group factor as an obstacle to propaganda and media persuasion, Lazarsfeld conception of community was relevant only as a bumper to media effects, understandable from his media effects and persuasion approach. On the other hand, and going back to the whole set of public opinion studies promoted by Cantril in Latin America, despite their origin in the extensive effort to fight Axis propaganda, and the assumptions behind them of the existence of a common Latin American essence, they ended up pointing out the particularities of the countries where they were carried out. Hadley Cantril's absence in the official narrative of communication research history in Latin America is striking considering all the studies he promoted under the auspices of the OIAA and the Rockefeller Foundation. The causes for this are twofold.

- (1) *Cantril's studies did not directly contribute to the institutionalization of the field of communication in Latin America.* Both in purpose and method, studies carried out by Cantril and the OIAA related to undercover intelligence gathering objectives conceived of by American institutions. Even if some Latin American associates were involved during the process there was no influx that channeled all the produced knowledge to Latin American higher learning institutions. The fact that a massive continental research program did not make it to the official history of Latin American communication and public opinion research reveals a deep institutional bias<sup>55</sup> with national scope that should be taken in account for further research.
- (2) *Furthermore, most of Cantril's activities in Latin America can only be know of by distant archival research.* The conventional body of historical sources for communication research in Latin America does not include transnational archives as the sources explored throughout this article. If logistical difficulties for Latin American historians to work with international archives can be understood, this chapter also shows some logistical implications in the task of writing of a transnational history of communication.

In the end, the colossal polling task undertaken by the OIAA in Latin America between 1941 and 1945 was eventually abandoned primarily due to conflicts with the State Department, as has been said before. The outcome of all this work was left out not

only by subsequent propaganda agencies, but—and more important to the purpose of this paper—it was mostly ignored by communication historiography. To the official history of the field this omission suited well, but a broad transnational history can no longer underplay the importance of all these works.

### Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Notes

1. See Waisbord and Mellado, "De-Westernizing Communication Studies"; Christians and Nordenstreng, *Communication Theories in a Multicultural World*; Wang, *De-Westernizing Communication Research*; Curran and Park, *De-Westernizing Media Studies*.
2. Simonson and Park, *The International History*, 2–3.
3. Beltrán, "Communication Research in Latin America," 23–5.
4. González-Samé et al., "La investigación en comunicación," 430.
5. Fuentes Navarro, "Institutionalization and Internationalization,"; Vasallo de Lopez and Romancini, "History of Communication".
6. Covi and Trejo, *Tejiendo nuestra historia*, 321–3.
7. Pooley, "The New History," 43.
8. Rowland, *History of the Office*, 1–7.
9. Aikman, "The Machinery for Hemisphere Cooperation," 551–3.
10. Gary, 1996:126.
11. It is in this sense that Beltrán writes that after the 1955 the concept of the primary group was 'rediscovered' in North America by scholars like Lazarsfeld, Katz and Schramm, though that 'rediscovery' had little impact on research carried out in Latin America. Beltrán, "Alien Premises, Objects, Methods," 116.
12. Cantril, 28 January 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 138, fol. 15, National Archives at College Park, Maryland, U.S.A. The bulk of letters, reports and memoranda cited in this paper are housed at the National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland, U.S.A.
13. Rogers, *A History of Communication*, 268–9.
14. Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, 80–1.
15. Glander, *Origins of Mass Communications Research*, 88.
16. Gallup, 25 September 1940, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 138, fol. 14; Gallup, 8 November 1940, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 137, fol. 8.
17. Young, 28 October 1940, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 138, fol. 14.
18. Cantril, 5 December 1940, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 138, fol. 14.
19. Turnbull, 24 December 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, Manila envelope.
20. "Names and addresses of observers," no date available, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 137, fol. 19.
21. Moreno and Sanchez-Castro, "A Lost Decade?".
22. Simpson, *Science of Coercion*, 3–9.
23. Converse, *Survey Research in the United States*, 153.
24. Cantril, 29 May 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 138, fol. 18.

25. Cantril, "A Study of Communications in Argentina," no date available, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 137, fol. 5.
26. Rowland, *History of the Office*, 245–8.
27. Erb, *Nelson Rockefeller and United States*, 96–7.
28. Cantril, 29 May 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 138, fol. 18.
29. Cantril, 29 June 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 138, fol. 19.
30. Cantril, 8 August 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, fol. 21.
31. McClintock, 16 August 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, fol. 21.
32. Robbins, 11 September 1941, and McClintock 27 November 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, Manila folder.
33. "Press-Radio-Motion Picture Survey of Cali, Colombia," No date available, Record group 229, entry 1, Box 137, fol. 6.
34. Granger, 4 January 1942, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 307, "Reaction".
35. Cantril, 24 November 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, Manila envelope.
36. Ortiz Garza, *Ideas en tormenta*, 115–2.
37. Drier, 15 December 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, Manila envelope.
38. "Principal Activities of the AAAA Export Information Bureau at Mexico City," 9 February 1942, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 105, fol. 13.
39. Rowland, *History of the Office*, 245–8.
40. Levy, 4 December 1941, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, Manila envelope.
41. "Memorandum," 9 March 1942, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, Manila envelope.
42. Duggan, 23 March 1942, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 139, Manila envelope.
43. Rowland, *History of the Office*, 254.
44. Doob, "Reaction to Films," 23 May 1942, Record group 229, Entry 1, Box 214.
45. Covi and Trejo, *Tejiendo nuestra historia*, 321–2.
46. See Wahl-Jorgensen, "How Not to Find a Field".
47. Peters, "Institutional Sources of Intellectual Poverty," 557.
48. Pooley, "Fifteen Pages".
49. Shils, "The Study of the Primary Group," 44.
50. See Coser, "American Trends".
51. Lazarsfeld, "The Effects of Radio."
52. See Shils and Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration".
53. Child, "The Background of Public Opinion," 247.
54. Pooley, "Fifteen Pages," 19.
55. See Fuentes Navarro, "Institutionalization and Internationalization".

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