The main house and the slave quarters with a satellite dish: the communicational geopolitics of Brazil.

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This paper examines the role that telecommunications has had in Brazilian history, in particular in the formulation of a national identity. Based upon actor-network theory (ANT) and upon cognitive theory, emphasizing the theoretical intuition that Brazilian geopolitical formulations have incorporated in them the phenomena of spaces and dispersed populations. It is affirmed, for this reason, that this area – geopolitics – contributed in an original way to the founding principles of Brazilian communicational thinking within the Latin American school of communications.

Keywords: Telecommunication; Technology, Network Theory; History and Communications of Brazil; Connectionism

Introduction

The history of human communication has been the history of networks. The transport and communications technologies, from the most precarious to the most sophisticated, have always sought the same result; to overcome obstacles of geography and time. In other words, to provide neighbours for disperse communities to mark limits and frontiers. In truth, the regions never were natural. They always result from political definitions that articulate such contacts through the so called “channels of communication”, a term used in the past which did not discriminate between the voyage and the movement of the body, between the message and the movement of information. The areas demarked by such trails depend upon those routes that allow the combination of humans amongst themselves and these with non humans.

Today, such trails are the result of the development of telecommunications and the associated technologies. These infoways of interconnected cables are becoming ever denser. Their topography, ever more complex and the flow increasing in velocity. As a result, in addition to the capillarity of such a system of communicating spaces, the phenomenon of the speed of such links stands out. The cultural, social, political and economic impact of such connections has been addressed by innumerable authors who now explain the world on the basis of new parameters, in particular the fluidity of systems (Mattelart & Mattelart, 1992, p. 53;

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The expansion of the Internet from the 1990s greatly popularised these new terms, and the network as an image of the world took on a paradigmatic status. In truth, there is that indicates this new concept, as an idea and a metaphor for society, is neither original nor new. It has been used, for a long time, to express the human anxiety to overcome the barriers against interaction.

It is to be seen, for example, in the greeting to radio broadcasting in Brazil that the magazine *O Observador* published in 1938. Highlighting the "gigantic territorial extension of the country" it said that radio was "the only thing that could completely overcome the immense national distances". It greeted the new technology as a great element in the contact of Brazil with the Brazilians, "the marvellous cure that the century offers for the ills and the dangers of our own greatness".

The approach to the term "network" continued in the 1950s with theoreticians from various areas who adopted systems theory with enthusiasm. Here the holistic view of interdependence had already insinuated itself. It is to be noted that such a view predicts in its original form that the connection between the parts or elements results directly in the existence of some form of relation that places one factor in contact with another. In a system with many elements there will therefor be many relations. These relations are information. In the example we are concerned with, a nation such as Brazil, dispersed across a continental space, serves as a showcase for these formulations in which the culture arises from neighbourhoods that are shared and mediated technologically.

Geography, for example, was sensitive to such a description of the world. It had always taught that a network is a set of paths between terminals and crossings, understood as vertices and arcs "the vertices being the knots and the arcs, the connections between two vertices" (Bradfor & Kent, 1987, p. 141). Such reticulation of space is, really appropriate. The network orients, guides and channels movements which, trusting and obeying their signals, codes and connections, expect to arrive in a safe harbour. It is thus that humans carry out work and occupy the scene. (Forget & Polycarpe, 1997, p. 27).

Interest, as a consequence, in the interactions of such a body of natural and artificial objects is justified. The emergence of technologically mediated trails should be seen in the view of this special circumstance: the human need for relations. The natural tendency of communities to break out of solitude has been exhaustively documented. The circumstantial presence of isolation in deserts, in the oceans and forests is what calls attention now. The rule in force at the moment is to share with others in ever more intricate webs of communicational artefacts which with topographies ever more multi-formatted allow the sharing and exchange.\(^1\)

Connection emerges, consequently, as a keyword for new theory. This concept is debated in areas such as the Cognitive Sciences. There the model has found fervent adepts and critics. For our purposes it is sufficient to make use of their most relevant insights, which apply also the the actor-network theory (ANT)\(^2\) that is described below.

In the connectionist view, large systems are networks that are constituted of elements, or units, that are capable of mutually influencing one another. As such they possess differing abilities to activate their neighbouring units. There is an obvious reference to how the brain's nerve system is supposed to work, with

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\(^1\) Bedouin tribes are using satellite telephones on their migrations. In the Amazon Forest, the same is happening. Along the rivers, - true infoways – navigate boats with satellite dishes which allow for permanent connection during the voyages which last, sometimes, for several days. The populations which previously were isolated and depended upon air transport make use today of such artefacts for quick, convenient, and accessible connections.

\(^2\) See Law, John. www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology
activations that are positive being called excitation, and when they are negative, inhibition.

Thus, inputs activate units that, through their connections, propagate the impulse through the system until a result is obtained. The activation of the input anticipates the output and guides itself in that direction. Between the entrance and exit the circuit units are involved. Despite controversy and a plethora of theoretical disputes, such a description has been used to describe phenomena such as vision, linguistic processing, inference and motor control.

In a similar direction, authors supporting the actor-network theory (ANT) are seeking to develop a network theory in the social, anthropological, and historical spirit that is proposed here. For them, an object is the result of a cast of relational contingencies. In the psycho-social field, for example, the singularity of the configuration of identity arises from a stable set of connections with other entities. The concreteness of objects expresses the spatial relations which they are taken to have at any given moment. In other words, the object – the construction of Brazilian nationality, for example – takes a specific form of this relational network. Which is to say, from this focuses point of view, we must consider humans and non-humans in a network world-space.

In the same way, the regions are not natural and depend upon the configuration of the transport systems (dominant in the past) and technologies (normal at the end of the 20th century) to provide relations that alter and reconfigure themselves to the degree that the mediating artefacts are sophisticated and influential.

In the case under examination, the Brazilian effort to amplify such interconnected networks, and the strategic concerns generated with the frequent delays in its expansion, in addition to the negative effects upon the economy of the country and on the formulation of a Brazilian national identity, reinforces this understanding of the decisive role that such flows and intersections have in the establishment of frontiers, in the establishment and consolidation of difference through the demarking cultural limits.

In other words, the topography of such a network of artefacts and its technological composition is a political choice. Such structure affects distribution, places limits upon objects and subjects, creates alternative spaces and eliminates others. The AN T analysis, pertinent to the goal of understanding the formation of Brazil as an interlinked organic system, was developed to analyse situations in which it is difficult to separate humans and non humans and where the actors have various forms and competencies. Such elaboration explores the strategic logic of such flows and connections (games) and the materialization of the actors in the network at each moment.

Thus the social is understood as a phenomenon of circulation. Interest is in the choreography of such encounters in which the socialization is the result of a certain type of constituted space. As has been said, the Brazilian case reinforces the idea that nations are also made, and principally so, by such connective mediations, of technological architectures that reveal themselves to be decisive in the control of territory and the dissemination of the integrating symbolic links.

The classics of Brazilian sociology, psychology, anthropology and economy have not included in their analyses the variable of communication as a decisive element in the formation of national identity. To govern today also means to give priority to the construction of infoways, and these are determinants of nationality, of the control of the space, of political democracy and of economic activity. Such facts explain the emphasis that telecommunications is currently being given in official plans, together with projects related to providing the conditions for Brazil
to join the Information Society. It is not possible to avoid the historical evidence that people are now demanding mediated means of relating, through rapid and efficient systems that are capable of providing intimacy and relevance, in addition to acting as an agent of exchange.

This is to say, in our example, the construction of Brazil as an entity demarked by singular traits, the theoretical propositions of a network theory apply. There is a conclusion, as a consequence, that the technological structure always counts, and the relationships allowed by it explain the nature of the result itself.

It still remains to indicate that, thanks to the varied basket of technologies available today, the revolutionary role that the technologies of communication have had in the unfolding of human history can be seen with rare and uncommon clarity, in particular since the 1860s – when the era of the electric telegraph commenced and with it the real acceleration of history.

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The conquest of the Brazilian continental space has been, throughout history, a strategic challenge for the country. This demand derives from the need of the inhabitants to constitute themselves as a nation. As a consequence, since colonial times until current times, this internal drive has manifest itself in various ways. It can be synthesized into three eras that add one to the previous without, by the decade of the 1990s, any of them having been overcome.

The first, the era of territorial unity concentrates its attention on the occupation of dead and empty zones, in the demarkation of frontiers and the overcoming of disputes with neighbouring countries (as has occurred, for example, in the South with the Castilians). The second, the era of cultural unity, focuses its energy on the theme of the homogenisation of the Brazilian population, widely dispersed and strongly marked by local and heterogeneous traditions.

The construction of a Brazilian imagery, filled with myths, heroes, national dates, music and songs commemorative of the motifs emerging from the four quarters of the country, was, in total, the mark of this time, of modernity and its archetypes in ferment and of nationalist slogans of the “tupi or not tupi” type.

The third era, that of economic unity of the nation, has been clearly outlined since the government of Juscelino Kubitscheck and his plan to make Brazil develop “fifty years in five”, with the intention of providing the country with an productive infrastructure which sought to include increasing groups of the population in a standard of consumption that was capable of abating the forces of rebellion and social disintegration. The market economy, the absorption of foreign investment, the industrialisation of the country and the extension of huge amounts of easy credit allowed them to create, with some success, particularly in the decade of the 1970s, a mentality of confidence and national pride.

These eras, which combine and overlap, have a history which allows the dreams and worries that are generated around the formation of Brazil to be seen as well as the strategic outlook consolidated by the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG) after the Second World War around the factors of national power and the elements that constitute it.

With reference to the concerns, it is appropriate to highlight immediately the perception that different writers, in different fields and coming from multiple ideological roots, have of the geographic spaces of Brazil. There would emerge a type of hollow country syndrome, phobically threatened, for this reason, by potential foreign invaders. Brazil does not constitute a unity because it is immense, with overbearingly powerful regional political and economic forces. There would be a tendency, as a result, to disintegration. Evidence for this centrifugal movement, usually cited by the commentators, are the historical Brazilian separatist

3 The tupi are one of the indigenous tribes of the South American continent.
movements, such as the Farroupilha and the Balaiada, amongst others.

Another concern would be generated about the national character, which is to say, the common psychological traits that are capable of giving the emergent Brazilian the links of identity. In this sense, Christianity (and Catholicism in particular), the Portuguese language and Lusitanian latinity serve as the mortar of the nation. In this context an ideology is generated of miscegenation and racial democracy to which, in Brazil, the ideas of multiculturalism that predominate in North America succumbed.

The dream which consolidates is that of a Latin country, whitened, miscegenated, capable of sharing a growing green-yellow imagery. The vocation derived from its potentials (natural wealth, a growing population, the vastness of its territories, the avid internal consumer market and its geographical position which has made Brazil the guardian of the Atlantic Ocean) is that of a manifestly stereotypical Brazilian destiny: that of a potential country, that is not amongst the great only because of carelessness, due to a backwardness that must be overcome.

From the consolidation of the geopolitical perspective promoted by the ESG, undertaken with increasing energy from the decade of the 1950s, the forces capable of promoting such a leap included statism, nationalism, psycho-social mobilisation and planning and control measures. The result of political actions established by the authorities had to, however, mark the national territory with the signs of its sovereignty. The frontier facing the foreigner had to be conquered, controlled and commemorated. Brazilian heroes are, due to this, heroes of space. Barão de Rio Branco, Marechal Rondon, Santos Dumont, Tiradentes, Landell de Moura, Marechal Osório and the bandeirantes marked the frontiers, conquered the forests, tamed the Indians, and expanded the communications networks to the interior; they conquered the spaces and the electromagnetic waves, freed the country from the foreign coloniser and carried civilisation to the distant corners of Amazônia, of the catatinga scrublands, of the pampas grasslands, commemorating each new chapter of Brazilianness which followed from the expulsion of the French, the Dutch, the Paraguayans and the Castilians from the national territory.

This explains why geopolitics developed in Brazil as a science and instrument of political action. Physical geography became a reference point, vertex and anchor for nationality. Later, the theory of aggregate systems authorised a cinemascope perspective, which coupled to the initial vertex the cultural geography, the history of mentalities and political science. This last concerned itself with the waves of concentration and dispersion of power, which would either unify Brazil around strong regimes or authorise its dispersion amongst local oligarchies and municipalism. The cultural geography and the history of mentalities remained subordinate to the habits of the people, with their moral and absurd beliefs, with their behaviour and value scale, with their manifest desires and abilities, craving the formulation of a cultural theory of the Brazilian man.

The telecommunications revolution, verified in Brazil, principally, from the 1970s, ought to, in our view, also be understood in the context of these perspectives that the strategists and the intellectuals are giving to the country. The policies applied in this sector, and for that matter innumerable others, result in a scenario pre-fabricated by this history of initiatives, desires and concerns that have been consolidated into a doctrine whose demands have been being exhaustively realised since the foundation of the Escola Superior de Guerra, on the 20th August, 1949.

The intellectual production of the ESG can not be ignored in the evaluation of the Brazil that emerges from 1964, nor can be the communication policies that have been adopted. Its doctrine has impregnated the state bureaucracy. The new
regime has full awareness of the role of communications in the world. Their staff were trained to see the specific challenge of telecommunications (as with the themes of nuclear energy, micro-electronics, space technology, exploitation of the seas, amongst other emerging topics) in the context established by the doctrine of the Escola.

It is in consequence of this understanding, in our view, that Brazil promoted nationalisation, the mobilisation of resources and set the conditions for the country to make a significant move in the path to the revolution that would introduce into Brazil in the 90s the Information Era.

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The cabling of Brazil is not a recent phenomenon. It relates to an evolution that has involved networks of increasing complexity using various technologies – initially the telegraph, whose vocation was to convert itself into a backbone of continental size, thanks also to submarine cabling, which united the extremes of the country, followed by the conventional telephone, which served as a priority the local networks and with increasing difficulty the regional and national distances. This explains the absence of an interconnected national network until the 1970s. The great leap that truly brought Brazil to the edge of the arrival of the Information and Communication Society would be provided with the construction and operation of the microwave communications system in the 1970s, by Embratel. Such action derived from the clear notion that there were, at that time, indications of a great change as history would come to confirm from then onwards, due to the new information technology – in particular in computing and space communications. In the decade of the 1980s, both would mark the birth in Brazil of the first indications of the new economy.

The leap into modernity finished in decisive form, finally, with the vision of the future of the 70s when the revolutionary role that telecommunications had come to have in human history became evident, in particular from the moment that the country demanded rapid and efficient integration. The construction of a new backbone of microwave trunks between 1969 and 1972 inaugurated terminals with thousands of telephone lines and represented the leap by Brazil into the future. In the form of a network, this structure spread voices and data in various directions around the country, overcoming thousands of kilometers and uniting the country from North to South.

Embratel thus became the operational arm of the National Telecommunications Plan, which had sought since 1967 to interlink all of the Brazilian States and these to a ground station of the international system of satellite communications. This network of microwave communications had an extension of 11,489 kilometers (and 5,105 kilometers of tropodiffusion) inaugurated 50,486 channels of communication, with 194 repeating stations, 63 terminals, which required the construction of 12,408 towers and 541 kilometers of road. Brazil celebrated the advance having made it possible for the first time in 23 locations to watch the World Cup live, in 1970. The event in México would be topped by the capillarisation of the network, which in 1982 already reached 54 locations and affected 80 million people. These TV networks became reality for the first time in Brazil on the 4th October, 1981 when Bandeirantes became the first broadcaster to have the capability technologically and operationally to interconnect its stations via Intelsat.

The similarity to what happened in the world, to the Brazilian experience in respect to telecommunications reveals the fact that history has accelerated in particular since the 70s. In the Brazilian case, the indications of this acceleration

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4 It is worth recording that the games of 1930, for example, were covered only by newspapers and by news that arrived late in the country. The same occurred with the games of 1934. In 1938, appeared the transmission of the cup by radio from abroad.
wee already noticeable in 1963 when the National Telecommunications plan was consolidated, in which the concept was formulated of interlinked national networks of telephones, telegraph, radio transmission, television and the transmission of data.

The rhythm, previously slow, of adoption of new technological innovations, as well as the repeated complaints and bemoanings that are repeated decade upon decade about the inefficiency of transport, initially, and then later also of communications, were radically altered with the first shock of nationalistic technologies and nationalisations of the 1970s in which the investment in telecommunications grew from 2.26 of GNP in 1972 to 3.28 in 1975, one of the highest figures in the world at the time (Telebrasil, 1977, p. 1).

This process now has continuity with the second shock, that of the decade of the 1990s, which saw the introduction of Brazil into the new era of the Information and Communications Society. This was already predicted in 1977, when the argument ran out that only the State had resources "large enough to meet the investment needs of a sector that has remained stagnant for twenty years" (O Estado de S. Paulo, 12.06.1977). Notwithstanding that the constitution of that year had consecrated the thesis of the responsibility of the state for telephone, telegraphic, telex, international communications and postal services, with only broadcasting being left to private initiative, the reality was different. The user ended up financing the installation of the new networks and the resources of the National Telecommunications Fund were diverted to the Fundão (National Development Fund).

Brazil stayed behind those other countries that had a per capita income of a thousand dollars which had a density of eight telephones per hundred inhabitants. The country had, at the time, four. In 1977 the complaints grew and the industry created to serve the authorities complained that it did not have a single contract in the area of telephone centers. The cancellation on the 8th of June 1977, of the Brazilian satellite project (it would be restarted, as stated, in the 1980s) would be ameliorated a few days later by the announcement of the expansion of the microwave backbone in the amazon region covering three thousand kilometers. Such a network in this isolated region is an indication of this path and interconnected at the time 60% of the cities and 80% of the communications needs of the areas that were to have been served by the domestic satellite.

Post war, in particular throughout the 1950s, Brazilian strategists were already noticing the signs of the new scenario that consolidated at the end of the century just passed. They spoke, then, of an world that was open and served by communicating veins (Carneiro, 1983, p. 74), a term that would serve as the cradle for the contemporary concept of globalisation. In the decade of the 1990s, the new times prophesied caused Brazil to use the technological advances to cable its territories with new trails of fibre optics and with these to connect itself to the world through the submarine cables Américas I, Unisur, Columbus II and Atlantis 2. Caused it to increase its commutation network with new digital centres, as well as numerous initiatives which have introduced into the country the most recent version of a network of networks. The privatisation of the telecommunications

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5 Brazil increased by 14,5% the number of telephones in the period 1969 to 1970, being behind only Hong Kong (17,8%), Greece (15,7%) and Korea (14,7%) (Telebrasil Noticiário, 1971, p. 23).
6 Connecting Fortaleza to Florida.
7 Connecting Brasil to Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.
8 Connecting Mexico to the United States and from there going to the Caribbean, from whence it follows to the entrance for Europe. On that continent there will be ramifications in the Canary Islands, in Spain, the Island of Madeira and Italy.
9 Connecting South America to South Africa and from there to Europe.
10 For example, along the Via Dutra a fibre optic network has been installed. With one centimeter in
system of the country, considered the key stone of the organic model (in network, following the new terminology) in force since the 1990s, has produced serious breaches in the geopolitical e that has up to this been in force in the country. Such ill health speaks in respect of, particularly, the occurrences that have weakened the power of action of the state, the key figure in the consolidated strategic perspective between civil and military nationalists and that that the ESG has consolidated throughout its history. As a consequence, the discourse warning of the dangers of globalisation that has followed in the speech of numerous spokesmen of the now dislocated doctrine.

The strategic evaluations of the New World are discreetly technophobic (Ferolla, 1998, p. 103), as they argue for the need to adapt the technological innovations from overseas to the Brazilian characteristics; irritated with the new predominance of the United States, their strategic and military attacks on countries in development (such as Haiti, Iraq and Panama and the nuclear apartheid (id., ib.) which seeks to keep away from nations such as Brazil the right to develop know-how in this sensitive area), together with their falsely redeeming arguments for free trade, and, finally, the critical evaluation of the academics of the Brazilian military establishment (and of the civil sectors, amongst these even those of the left) to the current context described as an economic and cultural war between the countries of the North and the South. Despite the operational interests of the military being protected in the new structure, the recurring complaint relates to the deviance from the route apprehended by the policies of the Authority, which is contrary to the nationalistic doctrine of the ESG.

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In the period from 1994 to 2000, the number of Brazilians who could communicate through their own telephones grew from 14 million to 52 million. The quantitative leap made in the telecommunications network of the country in six years, through its capillarity and diameter, it carries at the same time 123 thousand connections. This network started to be developed in 1993 a cost of US$ 1 billion. With it, as stated, Porto Alegre will be united with Fortaleza, in a total of 7,500 kilometers. The Brazilian satellites in operation already support up to 76 thousand telephone data transmissions, in addition to 24 television channels simultaneously.

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11 The same idea already appeared in Costa (1994).
12 Ambiguity predominates in the various discussions which refer to advances of the latest and most efficient forms of telecommunication. The antenna link Brazil to the world, weakening as a consequent effect the natural power of control previously exercised by the relative isolation of the frontiers from overseas messages. The vice-admiral and ex director of the Naval War School (Escola de Guerra Naval), Carlos de Meira Mattos, one of the most frequent authors in the magazine Revista da ESG and acknowledged specialist in Brazilian geopolitical studies affirms: "The indiscriminate invasion of electronic media, controlled by more highly developed countries, of all nations, places in check the control of the state over its frontiers. There arises therefor the theory of globalisation of the planet, of the society unified by the invasion, ever greater, of electronic communication media, by the speed of transport, and by the incapacity of the nation state to control this foreign interference. (Meira Mattos, 1997, p. 98).
13 Such a perception is shared by Samuel P. Huntington, author of The clash of civilizations. In his article “The lonely superpower”, he acidy criticises the foreign policy of the United States for having shown itseff to be unwilling to form alliances with regional powers. He includes Brazil in this category “Virtually all major regional powers are increasingly asserting themselves to promote their own distinct interests, which often conflict with those of the United States” (1999, p. 37).
14 The companies that have assumed Embratel have committed themselves to maintain the privileges conceded to the security organs. On this list of special clients are the President of the Republic, Emfa, the Army, the Marines, and the Airforce, the Justice Ministry, the Federal Police, the military police and the fire brigade. The Armed Forces of Brazil intend in truth, in the future, an exclusive communications satellite. Embratel rented four independent channels, one for each of the three forces and the Siscomis (Military System of Communications by Satellite) which was under the control of Emfa, made up part of the Military War Structure and interlinked the three forces and the Presidential structure (Folha de S. Paulo, 01.08.1998; Gazeta Mercantil, 22.05.1998).
topography, which has reached gradually to all quarters of the national territory, has provoked a historically desired revolution. This density of telephones, fixed and mobile, which was at 15% in July of 1998, became 25.9% in 1999 and should arrive at 54.7% in 2003. In 2005, 65% of the estimated 180 million Brazilians will have at their disposal around 116 million pieces of telephone apparatus, thanks to investment estimated at 62.2 billion dollars up to that date and made by the 580 concessionaries that operate in this sector throughout the country.

The rural population and those dispersed in inhospitable environments, are integrating themselves into this network at an increasing rate, as are the social classes labelled C and D, historically excluded from the benefits of telecommunications. This phenomenon has been observable since 1998 in São Paulo, where the number of telephones installed in the residences of this population has tripled each year (Problemas Brasileiros, 2000).

Deriving from this scenario is the last scene on a long and tortuous path. A scene that expresses a radically new rhythm, far from the collected stories of Colonial-Brazil, a country that communicated precariously by telegram or in the messages carried to the interior in the pack of a donkey. Following from these efforts are the following affirmations:

1. The technological focus highlights the relevance of the communicational structure and affirms that cultural meanings are derived from such combinations of artefacts. In this understanding there is no pretension whatsoever to reductionism or determinism. The validity of co-related studies of various tones are recognised, as are those of the Human and Social Sciences, which with increasing intensity since the end of the last century have dedicated attention to this phenomenon. The complexity of this object is recognised here, its multifaceted character, which demands, as a consequence of and due to its own nature, a wider and more tolerant perspective. Such tolerance is requested here to provide an opening for this contention to the importance that the structuring of the communications network also has on the formation of a Brazilian civilisation.

2. From the theoretical point of view, the semiotics of materiality is considered as a useful and pertinent reference to the comprehension of communicational phenomena in Brazil. In other words, such a focus emphasises technological evolution and its articulation in space as decisive factors in the comprehension of social, economic, political, and anthropological events that are so beloved of the interdisciplinary approaches that constitute this area of knowledge in the hemisphere and the world. As a focus is introduced the conception that as a condition for the understanding of human phenomena – as is the case of national identity for example – is the understanding of how the communicational network is constituted and articulated which allows or not the social bonds. Such an approach is not original and is comparable to that of numerous authors, in particular Harold Innis, Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan, who dramatize the relevance of such technologies and their effects through time. Brazil is a good example of the connectionist dilemmas, due precisely to its continental status, to the physical obstacles and as a consequence of the sensation of emptiness present not only in the classic texts that debate with a certain anxiety the origins and destiny of the country, but also due to the geopolitical scenarios which until today fear population dispersal, isolation and the failure of political control of immense areas, as is the case with Amazônia Legal.

4. There is to be included, also as a consequence, alongside the areas that strongly mark Latin-American communications studies – such as semiotics of culture, folklore, education, anthropology, sociology and political science – of
perspectives such as Marxism and theology of liberation, additionally geopolitics (and a Brazilian geopolitics) as a theoretical variable that produces diagnoses and heavily influences the communicational reality of the country. The study of the role of Brazilian telecommunications reveals, for example, the ripening of this focus over time. Its relevance can be measured by the impact that geopolitical understanding had on the policies of authority in the sector, despite – this has to be stressed – such indications not being and never having been exclusively specific to Brazilians or Latin-Americans. The history of communications was always of the human efforts to construct networks and to reticulate space, and geopolitics as an area of knowledge emerges, in addition, from overseas sources. It is treated here as yet another idea out of place. However its adaptation to the environment of a Lusitanian civilisation in the tropics is original and peculiar. The Brazilian case is impressive in its dimensions and for its imperial\(^\text{15}\) initiatives that the authorities have found themselves obliged to take.

5. However, to suggest a criticism of the capacity of the “crisis texts” of the 1920s and 1930s to fully explain contemporary Brazil is to add the telecommunications and derived technologies as the necessary references for the understanding of the evolution of the Brazilian in this space and over this time. Such a path is replete with tension between the national actors and the international and various ideologies that permeate this field in disputes around the power of control, of bonds and of cultural diffusion and policies that such apparatus has allowed through history. A main house and the slave quarters with a satellite dish describes Brazil better because it reveals a country that fought against the immobilising and incapacitating isolation, sought symbolic interaction and broke through the barriers of time and space to construct a certain eagerness and carelessness the communications lines that are today markedly decisive in the development of social justice, to integration, to liberty and to the feeling of belonging to a region whose frontier is delimited by the electronic footprints of satellites and telephones.

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\(^{15}\) In the sense in which Getúlio Vargas used the term, which is that given its continentality the Brazilian territory was truly an empire which needed taming. For this reason the ideology of the time spoke of imperialism, but of an internal imperialism, of self conquest.


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