

**NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND DEMOCRACY IN BRAZIL:
FROM MASS COMMUNICATIONS TO SEGMENTED
COMMUNICATIONS**

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Key words:

mass communication media, segmented communication media, telecommunications, Brazil, democracy, new technologies, information society, governance, public policy, political parties, citizenship, United States, European Union

ABSTRACT

A drastic transition is taking place from mass communications media to segmented communications media with the turn of the century. This transition is facilitated by telecommunications in the so-called information society. One of the main consequences of this transition is the transformation of the public communication spaces that have made the relationship between the political elite and the citizens possible under mass democratic regimes. The purpose of this work is to reflect on the resulting challenge to the polity and to the citizenship arising from this transition, and to apply this reflection to the case of Brazil in comparative perspective. An erosion of a traditional and important channel of relation between the political elite and the citizenship is founded. In general, as for the role of governments in the new situation and changes in public policy, there are important challenges for democratic governance ahead. There are also questions to be raised over the capacity of political parties to aggregate and articulate social demands when the forum to present their position, the mass media, declines in its reach with respect to segmented media. In the case of Brazil, the structure of the industry, with a clear hegemony of the Globo group in mass communications, and a relatively low spread of access to new segmented media, specially the Internet, pictures a slow transition scenario. With regard to the citizen, findings are mixed.

Coincidiendo con el cambio de siglo, se está produciendo una transición drástica en el alcance de los medios de comunicación de masas, que son sustituidos por medios de comunicación segmentada. Esta transición está siendo facilitada por las telecomunicaciones, en lo que se ha denominado “sociedad de la información”. Una de las consecuencias de esta transición es la transformación de los espacios públicos de comunicación que han venido haciendo posible la relación entre la elite política y los ciudadanos bajo los regímenes de democracia de masas. El propósito de este trabajo es reflexionar en el reto que supone el cambio para la polity y para el ciudadano, y aplicar esta reflexión al caso brasileño en perspectiva comparada. Se concluye que se está produciendo una erosión importante de una canal tradicional y fundamental de relación entre la elite política y la ciudadanía. Existen importantes retos relacionados con la gobernabilidad. Hay también cuestiones relevantes relacionadas con la capacidad de los partidos políticos para agregar y articular las demandas sociales cuando el foro para presentar sus posiciones, los medios de comunicación de masas, ver cada vez más su alcance mermado a favor de medios de comunicación segmentada. En el caso de Brasil, donde existe una estructura de la industria con una clara hegemonía del grupo Globo en comunicaciones de masas el escenario esperado es de

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transición lenta. Respecto a la ciudadanía, con los datos disponibles, es temprano para realizar análisis concluyentes.

Introduction

A drastic transition is taking place from mass communications media to segmented communications media with the turn of the century. This transition is facilitated by telecommunications in the so-called information society. One of the main consequences of this transition is the transformation of the public communication spaces that have made the relationship between the elite and the citizens possible under mass democratic regimes. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the resulting challenge to the polity and to the citizenship arising from this transition, and to apply this reflection to the case of Brazil in comparative perspective.

During the last century, mass communications media were the actual public spaces of relations between the elite and the citizens. Nowadays, however, public spaces are being fundamentally changed by the drive towards the segmentation of audiences.

The subsequent aim for a future research is to achieve results that can be applied to a wide number of cases to identify factors indicating politico-institutional and social progress (or regression). The project's objectives can be divided into two categories. First, theoretical and methodological objectives, related to new methods of analysis of the new communications media and their relationship with the polity. Second, there are substantive objectives related to 1) the meaning of the transition and the change that the move from mass communications media to segmented communications media entails; 2) the role of governments in the new situation and changes in public policy; 3) citizen participation and the impact on civil society.

This paper is divided as follows; first of all there is a presentation of the questions to address and their treatment in the existing literature. There is a review and analysis of materials based on the existing literature. The ultimate purpose of the reflection is to search preliminary theoretical basis for explaining the changes occurring in the role that the new communications media and new technologies play in constructing political reality. Secondly, the challenges to these approaches are introduced. Here, in this description and analysis, we see

key differences between the mass media and the new segmented media. We also examine some of the consequences and the significance of the shift from one type of media to the other both for the polity and society. Lastly there is an analysis of the Brazilian case. The work ends with a brief discussion, in which empirical information will also be taken into account by having in mind the differences and similarities of the roles of these media in other regional areas (the United States, and Spain within the European Union).

I. Questions to address and existing literature

In the last decade, new communications media have appeared and become widespread, in opposition to the classic mass communications media. Among those, Internet and cable TV, both targeted to particular audiences. This new communications media are addressed to highly segmented audiences, as one of the *motu* of their promoter's states: "tailored to the individual particular needs". The new media appear and consolidate at the time when the role of governments and the nation-state weakens worldwide, due in part to the growth of the network economy (Castells, 1999). In this network economy, market transactions are replaced by strategic alliances, co-production, and benefit-sharing agreements among cooperating firms (Riffkin, 2000);¹ at the same time, governments are less capable of controlling new entities which are no longer businesses in the Adam Smith's classic sense (1997).² As Riffkin points out, networks, by their very nature, are designed to eliminate the markets made up of buyers and sellers, replacing them with chains of suppliers and users.

In this new context, do the new segmented communications media, such as the Internet, present challenges to the capacity for democratic governance? Will the political parties be capable of aggregating and articulating social demands when the forum where they used to present their positions publicly, the mass communications media, is quite frankly declining with respect to the new segmented communications media? Are new media facilitating or hindering

¹ One example is the so called "reciprocal trade" among firms. The International Reciprocal Trade Association estimated garter among firms amounting next to 8.000 million dollars in 2001.

² Riffkin goes even further by bringing up the question: supposing that the networks continue to eliminate the markets, will they be violating anti-monopoly norms whose only purpose is to protect traditional markets? (Riffkin, 2000:105). How will 'anti-monopoly' be defined in a network economy and what is the State's role in preserving it?

participation in civil society? Despite reasoning according to which the new technologies and communications media are the key to solving our social and political crises, it is interesting to note that the accelerated exchange of messages provided by present-day technology does not always result in mutual understanding. Although this is partly true in the economic realm, it is much less so in political and social phenomena, as Wolton has pointed out, and sometimes the contrary effect is achieved: "the acceleration in the circulation of messages, images, and information makes the differences among cultures and value systems more visible: and this can create a repulsion as well as the opposite" (Wolton, 2000:47).

Within the new communications sector, deregulation and liberalization of the business environment have had a major impact on the communications sector, as barriers to cross-media ownership have come down, and foreign firms have been allowed to purchase domestic corporations. On the one hand, the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Global Liberalization of Telecommunications Industries (WTO 1997) has reinforced the trends mentioned. On the other hand, there has been an increase in the complex web of interlocking alliances and co-funded projects, simultaneous to deregulation of telecommunications and media industries (Held and McGrew 2000:347). Together with these changes, a change with political consequences is taking place; the big private actors directing changes in the business sector "are in the business of making money -not founding alternative centers of political identity and legitimacy" (Held and McGrew 2000:374). Their aim is to respond, through flexible adaptation to changes posed by competition. Williamson (1997), following Hayek (1945) and Barnard (1938) maintain that the central problem of an economic organization is that of adaptation. Confronted with a continuously fluctuating environment, adaptation must be achieved in two grounds: in the market and within the firm: "the survival of an organization depends upon the...readjustment of processes internal to the organization... by which [adaptation] is accomplished" (Barnard 1938:6). This last form of cooperative adaptation, as Williamson points out (1994) is far from the invisible hand approach, and thus, we may conclude, closer to the challenge that the state face

confronted with contemporary changes in society and the need for coordination through the renovation of the social contract.

In the case of the largest communications corporations -social actors themselves- the tendency is to have different portfolios of business and media interests, "combining news papers and news gathering, magazine and book publishing, television, broadcasting and production, film production and distribution, video sales and rentals, and record music (Held and McGrew 2000:349).³ While governments are by far less rapid in their adaptation to the changes mentioned, the role that the new communications media play in the construction of political reality will be fundamentally different to that played by the traditional mass media. The reason for this is the segmentation of audiences that is at the core of the purpose of the new media. Therefore, the main question to reflect upon is how much will the change produced by the mass communications media's loss of audience and the appearance of thematic communications media affect the construction of political reality and political action in itself – that is, democratic governance and the citizens' political trust in government. Closely related to this question is the inquiry into the role that the polity, and the citizenship, might play in this new context, and what their limitations might be.

In the sense of the former, Paramio (2000b) indicates the challenge that the social use of technology presents to government, that is, "how to develop an institutional framework in which the incentives to individual decisions favor results close to the aggregated social preferences". Paramio adds that the design of democratic institutions already presents complexities, and the problem becomes greater when -as in the case of the media- the regulating role of the governments lags far behind the dynamics imposed by businesses and by innovation (Paramio 2000b: 3). In the sense of the later, the citizenship, new challenges are set forth to the social contract, as will be seen later on.

³ For data on media conglomerates see Held and McGrew (2000:348).

	Old media	New media
Mission	Centrality of the public service ethos Based on national systems of broadcasting and national print mediums	Centrality of “consumer” and products tailored to consumer needs Transnational and global communications plus local variations
Form & Output	High incidence of state ownership funding and regulation Limited availability of broadcasting spectrums Offer public spaces at which citizens can “commune, grieve and celebrate”	Respatializing of interest emerging form network spaces Privatization, deregulation of technical and legal barriers of ownership (content and programming) Interactivity, immediacy and resistance to hierarchical mediation ⁴
Political deliberation	Did ever old media offer a model of robust dialogical and deliberative politics?	Selective take up of new technologies by political parties, more concerned to improve internal communications than deliberation by the grass-roots

Table 1: main differences in mission, form & output and political deliberation allowed between old and new media

Sources: Barber (1998:7), Gibson and Ward (1999), Newton (2001)

As Williamson points out (1994:324) following (Barnard, 1938:ix), the task of the social scientist, our task, is to capture the processes of coordination and decision that underlie a large part of the phenomena described, and the recognition of formal organization as a most important characteristic of social life.⁵ The question then, is to apply these tools to the challenges posed to the polity by the new segmented media.

This analysis draws upon a stream of work that has tried to analyze the governments’ and political parties’ strategies for adapting to the new challenges coming along with globalization – such as the re-composition of the spectrum of political parties (Paramio, 2000:15). It also follows the line of analysis of the new strategies that break through the institutional and intellectual legacy of an interventionist state and the study of the adjustment of government structures to adjust to contemporary challenges (Majone, 1997:1). In this vein, studies such as those of Edurne Uriarte (2001) and Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan (2000)

⁴ In this sense, Ken Newton (2001) argues that new media systems have had a substantial impact on the structure of central government in Britain.

⁵ By formal organization Barnard meant "that kind of cooperation among men that is conscious, deliberate, purposeful" (1938:4).

have taken an interest in the relationship between mass communications media and democracy. These studies have borne fruit in publications, which analyze the relationships between the media and politics in Spain, giving special attention to the transition from the dictatorship to democracy (Gunther, Montero, and Wert, 2000), to the role of the media in the United States (Patterson, 2000), and in Latin American countries such as Chile (Tironi and Sunkel, 2000). In another recent study, González (2001) attributes the function of average reader to the mass communications media, as differentiated from the function of average voter (2001:7). González conceives of the media as an instrument used by politicians to modify public opinion in their favor.

These studies make a vital contribution by offering comparable data on the public's preferences in choosing communications media, and by stressing the function that the media carry out as an arena for the articulation of political demands.

From another perspective, Dhavan Shah et al. do research on media uses and gratifications to provide insights into the relationships between patterns of new media use at the individual level. The fundamental questions in this analysis are why citizens choose to attend to particular media channels or types of content; and the gratifications they expect to gain from interactions (Shah et al. 2001:144). Following the work of classical media theorists, Shah et al. pose a four-part typology of motives for media consumption: 1) information, 2) personal identity, 3) integration and social interaction, 4) entertainment and diversion. This typology developed for mass media has important drawbacks to understand the motives behind Internet use, according to authors such as Eighmey and McCord (1998), and Norris & Jones (1998) --quoted by Shah et al. (2001). Instead, these authors find four types of Internet users; a) researchers (using Internet for investigation) b) consumers (shopping on-line and using the Internet as financial and travel tool); c) expressiveness (participating in bulleting boards, newsgroups, chatrooms), and d) party animals (going on line to play games or entertain themselves).

According to Shah et al. (2001:144-6) these distinctions are highly suggestive of emerging patterns of new media use when applied to research differentiating generational age breaks in the United States. Thus, Shah et al. find

that it is easier to conceive of generational preferences for media, with different age media cohorts relying on the medium that served as their initial window to the world. Shah et al. (2001: 155), find that each generation seems to have a distinctive medium that most significantly accounted for their reserves of social capital:

"For Generation X, the Internet is clearly shown to be the most influential medium for all three aspects of social capital, and the significance of the Internet for Generation X becomes clearer when its relative importance to other media is compared across generations. For Baby Boomers [...] TV emerged as the most important medium. [...] For the Civic Generation, the contribution of news papers use in accounting for variance in criterion variables was distinctively important..."

II. Challenges to these approaches

With regard to approaches tied to electoral marketing, (Uriarte (2001), Gunther and Mughan (2000) Gunther, Montero, and Wert (2000), Patterson (2000), Tironi and Sunkel, (2000), and González (2001)) recent systematic interest in the mass communications media in political science has problems of theoretical and practical elaboration. Linked to political explanations of the role of the media in declining confidence in government, these studies ignore general political changes. As Nye (1997) has pointed out, in the case of the United States, cynicism and declining confidence in government may be explained by the underlying political changes, starting with the collapse of the New Deal coalition in the 1960s caused by the

"defection of the South and the parts of the ethnic urban electorate from the Democratic to the Republican party, the displacement of party organizations by movement and single-issue groups that weaken the consensus building, and the rise of marketing consultants. Although the majority of the electorate remains at the center of the political spectrum, party activists and parties in the Congress shifted to more inflexible partisanship that was corrosive of institutions and accentuated the gap between political élites and the electorate" (Nye 1997:5-6).⁶

Nye finds also cross-nationals analogues to these changes that have precipitated a drop in confidence in government.⁷ Norris (2001) finds a correlation

⁶ Nye (1997:6) indicates that the "cost of television campaigning and the roll of money in the political process increased the sense of distance between citizens and the politicians. As a New York Times story reported about the 1996 senate race in New Jersey, "both Mr. Zimmer and Mr. Toriicelli say that the don't really have time to spend with voters. They are to many donor calls to make, to many breakfast shows to appear on, too many editorial boards to meet and too diffuse an electorate"

⁷ "1) Long term secular changes in socio cultural attitudes toward authority and traditional social order that came to a head in the 1960s, 2) profound economic changes caused by the information revolution and globalization, 3) changes in the political process that increased the distance

between the existing channels of communication and access to free press with good governance and human development.

Also hindering approaches linked to electoral marketing is the fact of not taking into consideration the contributions in the area of communication theory, dealing with the impact and significance of the mass communications media (MCM) (Wolton, 2000).⁸ Emirate's work (2001), as well as that of Gunther, Montero, Mughan, Patterson, Sunkel, Tirony, and Wert (2000), is also far behind the phenomenon of the appearance of new communications media, which are no longer mass media but segmented communications media.

With regard to approaches based on media use in the United States, the findings of Shah et al. (2001) highlighting the need to focus on various forms of Internet use are suggestive and open interesting lines for future research. However, these analyses might share a problem with other works heavily empirically grounded, in their negative association of total television viewing time with trust and contentment. The authors also associate the high spent viewing argument with a low community knowledge and overall civil activity. Recent research in the UK suggests that media consumption has not a debilitating effect upon levels of political knowledge and participation (Norris et al. 1999).⁹ While these conclusions may be more valid for the context of the United States, where the choice of TV channels already segments the audience, in Europe and Latin-American countries, generalist television --with a few channels concentrating most of the audience- is the case. Moreover, while a passive audience, heavy TV user, may be a predictor of low community involvement, Wolton still argues that generalist TV programs provide a forum for a shared imago, which makes

between the political activists and the public, and 4) a more consistently negative approach by the press to the government and other institutions. Together, these changes have reinforced a popular culture of bad government and broad mistrust in institutions."(Nye 1997:7).

⁸ Wolton (2000:43) argues that even though the concept of communication is one of the fundamental values underlying the western political culture, at the same level than concepts such as liberty, equality and fraternity, it has not received the same theoretical attention, and has been seen with mistrust when new developments came across --the mass press, and radio, and television later on. Studies on political communication have tended to focus on political marketing, advertising and media manipulation, without exploring, to the same extent, the relation between mass democracy and the media that facilitates it.

⁹ Norris et al. (1999) note that regular attention to news media seems to mobilize some forms of civic engagement, like voting, rather than anomie audiences.

possible and facilitates mutual knowledge among different groups within society and from different societies.¹⁰

The segmented communications media mean an important erosion of large-scale public communication and space, the modern equivalent of the classic agora, where the elite come into contact with the citizens in mass democracies. Pointing out the central role of the MCMs in democracies, Wolton sets forth this question: "How can we imagine the working of a mass democracy without large-scale public communication? How can a political debate be organized on the country level, a result gained at a high price after two centuries of political battles, without a public space moved by political communication?" (2000:43). The mass media is also the major source of information on the condition of the country for the general public (Nye 1997:5).

While the MCMs have allowed us to maintain both the individual and the collective levels of communication, the new media, such as Internet or menu television, situate themselves basically at the individual level. From the perspective of the polity, by segmenting the audiences, the segmented communications media contribute to the erosion of the contemporary public agora and the collective imago, the basis of a common polis and a common idea – whether of state or of nation – in modern democratic countries. At the same time –and in contrast with the role played through the MCM in the daily organization of the coexistence of completely separate social and cultural universes, the new segmented media set forth problems concerning the ability to govern related to social destructuring.¹¹ The segmented communications media apparently break the link between generalist television, public service and national identity. These new media mean a breakdown in television's generalist function as an accessible media form for the public at large, in comparison to the role of mass media – mainly television- in facilitating the public's understanding of the world –

¹⁰ Wolton opposes the view of the passive viewer for classical TV, as he asks "Has been any single time passive this citizen that has not stopped watching, filtering and arrange in a particular order an increasing number of messages over the past fifty years?" (2000:40). Kenneth Newton (1996), in the same vein, argues that the strongest media effects "seem to be in the early links in the chain of causality -those consisting of the framing and substance of news -rather than the last links, such as voting turnout or governability."

¹¹ According to Wolton, the new media and evolution in the direction of demand are in danger of creating social devastation.

habitually within state limits.¹² What is now true, following the insight of Dahlgreen (2001) is that politics has embraced the logic of media, and it is in the process of transforming itself. In this sense, new technologies have facilitated various new media of political communication, including telephone polling, database marketing, direct-mail videos and electronic town meetings, as well as e-mail web-based bulleting boards and portals.¹³

Political effects of the new –segmented- media	
Segmentation of audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erosion of the public agora and the collective imago • Erosion of the basis of the common polis and the idea of nation in modern democratic countries
Evolution in the direction of demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems of social destructuring
Transformation of Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New media of political communication (data based marketing, direct-mail videos, electronic town meetings, e-mail based bulleting boards)

Table II

From the perspective of the society, Jeremy Riffkin (2000:322) documents the relationship between the increase in time that a citizen spends connected to the network and the decrease in time available for developing the deep kind of social relations – which only happen face-to-face and in real time – that are the foundations of trust in a participative society. Furthermore, the stress on differentiating audiences those new media purports, while apparently liberating, may do nothing to increase the actual power of marginal groups.

An additional problem of governance, and a threat to citizenship is the division which occurs between the people whose social relations are tied to virtual networks, that is, communication through the new technologies, and those who do not have access to this sphere (Riffkin, 2000:24 and Luke, 2000), a change which will force us towards a global reconsideration of the social contract.

In contrast, Internet as a new media has been used a tool in the field of traditional politics, as a vehicle for opposition. In this regard an example is the instrumentalization of the Internet by the Mexican Zapatistas in Chiapas, in order

¹² Wolton (2000:71) explains certain characteristics of classical television which are habitually criticized, such as the diversion, banality, and heterogeneity of its programs, as a way to compensate the destabilizing effect of opening up to the world.

¹³ O’Shaughnessy (2000) and Scammell (1999) defend that these media have become the very stuff of political marketing in general and campaign politics in particular.

to avoid repressive state action: “This guerrilla movement utilized media connections, specially the Internet, to gain attention all over the world. Computer networks were used to inform and mobilize individuals to support the Zapatistas’struggle” (Linjakumpu 2001:8). It has also been used to show and spread civil discontent; this is the case of “*escrache*”, a type of direct action used by human rights activists. In a *escrache* action, the place in which a person accused of having collaborated with the repressive aparatud of a dictatorship is identified. Afterwards, Internet is used to organize a mass meeting at a time previously determined at the door’s house. This type of action is being used at the moment in Argentina to protest against judges, public employees and bankers suspicious of untransparent practices (Cullel 2002:10).

Socio-economic effects of the new –segmented- media	
Increase in social mistrust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming form the relationship between the increase in time that a citizen spends connected to the network and decrease in time for developing face to face relations
Digital divide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not helping to increase the power of marginal groups (counter example, the use of the Internet by the Mexican guerrilla in Chiapas) • Need to reconsider the social contract
Shift in dominant logic of media companies+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the logic of values, in the realm of the social contract, to the logic of interests (of suppliers and users)
Internet as a vehicle for opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i.e. the Zapatistas’s mexican guerrilla, using it to avoid repressive state action

Table III

Premises based on recent results of studies in different areas such as political science (Bimber), communications theory (Wolton), business economy (Riffkin), and sociology (Castells) help us to build up our reasoning about the consequences of the new communication media for citizenship and for constructing political reality. The starting point is the basic idea that communication is a necessary condition for mass democracy –just as it is necessary for the political construction of contemporary Europe. Speaking of communication, we must distinguish between the logic of interests and the logic of values, as recommended by Wolton (2000). The social foundations that support the social contract and the polity that guarantees this contract are constructed on the logic of values --which are not only based on premises of self-

interest. The social bases of both the social contract and the polity rest on the logic of values (Wolton 2000:13).

III. Old and new media in Brasil

In this case study on political communication in Brazil, three main aspects will be analyzed. First of all, the context in which new technologies are applied. This context refers to basic indicators of the country, including technology and infrastructure, and the impact of politics upon this context. Secondly, the perspectives and resources of agents are looked upon. Here contents, concentration of the industry, and financing, are clues to understand tendencies in the near future. Finally, there is an overview of the different forms of “old” and “new” media and how they re-mediate each other.

The context in which technologies are applied

Being a very populated country, Brasil has the incentive of a potential and growing internal demand for the Internet and new segmented media firms (Accenture/Markle/UNDP, 2001:57). In a country with over 170 million population, TV sets are widely spread against the other form of more elitist media, daily newspapers (which have a circulation of 45 per 1000 people). In the new segmented media, 19% of homes have cable TV connections, and roughly 11 million people (6,5%) are Internet users. Internet users figures double each year, however, this has to be seen in a context in which the gross national income (GNI) per capita has descended from 4,320 dollars in 1996 to 3,580 in 2000, while high technology exports have risen from 6,1% of manufactured exports to a 18,6 % in the same period.

Brazil: Selected indicators		
	1996	2000
Population, total	161,7 million	170,4 million
Urban population (% of total)	78,9	81,3
GNI per capita¹⁴	4,320	3,580
Services, etc., value added (%GDP)	62,3	64,0
Industry value added (%GDP)	29,4	28,6
High-technology exports (% of manufactured exports)	6,1	18,6
Daily news papers	45 (1)	
TV Sets	289 (1)	

Table IV

Source: World Bank ([World Development Indicators database, April 2002](#)); (1): per 1.000 people, (The World Bank, World Development Report: Knowledge for Development-1998/99.)

The Globo conglomerate has the hegemony in the mass TV and the segmented market for cable TV.¹⁵ A hegemony that has an already long history; The concession of TV Globo is made in 1957 by Juscelino Kubitschek.¹⁶ TV Globo consolidated its operations during the Garrastazu Medici government (1970-1974) when telecommunications were designated an area of national security (Guimarães and Amaral 1988:127). During that period, Embratel the state-owned Brazilian telecommunications company, “paid for and set up the infrastructure that made it possible for TV Globo, a private company, to reach an audience of close to 80 million people. From 1962 to 1969 a short but productive association with the Time-Life group gives O Globo the necessary resources to soundly take off with the business.¹⁷ In 1969 a credit from the Banque of Guanabara (Banque of the State of Rio de Janeiro) allows O Globo to buy the shares of Time-Life (49%) in TV Globo (Ortiz-Ramos 1995:15).

¹⁴ GNI per capita (formerly GNP per capita) is the gross national income, converted to U.S. dollars using the World Bank Atlas method, divided by the midyear population. GNI is the sum of value added by all resident producers plus any product taxes (less subsidies) not included in the valuation of output plus net receipts of primary income (compensation of employees and property income) from abroad.

¹⁵ The radio and TV regimes in Brazil have federal state property consideration. A concession for 10 years for radio stations and 15 years for T.V. stations is given to private and public enterprises. There are certain limits to the number of generalist channels within national limits -5 stations-, and 2 for the federated states. There are no limitations, however, for crossmedia ownership (see Brazilian Code for Telecommunications 1962).

¹⁶ 'J'étais très critique vis-à-vis de la télévision au Brésil. Je la trouvais d'un niveau très bas et j'ai décidé de faire TV Globo... Toute la partie technique a été réalisée par le général Mauro Medeiros, qui était chef des communications de l'armée.' (Roberto Marinho, president of the Globo Group, in Echevarria 1990).

¹⁷ 6 millions dollars, equipments, technical and administrative know-how (Ortiz-Ramos 1995:15).

In the Internet market, usage figures are low by U.S. and European standards. There are a (growing) relatively low number of users due to technology and economic drawbacks. Given the economic differences among social classes, the potential market only reaches between 25-30% of the total population (Hercovici 1995:25). Beside, the majority of contents in the web are in English, which makes this new segmented media quite inaccessible to the majority of the population who does not speak English.¹⁸ Nonetheless, this segmentation makes more significant the study of virtual communities in which connected Brazilian citizens take part.¹⁹

	1996	2000
Internet users	740.0 thousand	11 million (1)
Internet hosts		4,2 (2)
% of home w/ cable TV		19,2 (3)
Fixed line and mobile telephones (per 1.000 people)	111,4	318,0
Telephone average cost of local calls (US cents \$ per 4 minutes)²⁰		3 (4)
Personal computers (per 1.000 people)	21,5	44,1

Table V. Brazil: Technology and infrastructure

Source: World Bank ([World Development Indicators database, April 2002](#)). (1) Brazilian government figures for 2001; (2) per 10,000 people in 1997 (The World Bank, World Development Report: Knowledge for Development-1998/99); (3) 1997, Grupo Clarin; (4) <http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,45526,00.html> (July 30, 2001)

¹⁸ The Internet, while clearly a global medium, is still heavily dominated by the English language. In 1996, the Internet Society conducted a survey sampling 60,000 of the 30 million computers around the world with Internet addresses. The study revealed that of the 17 most common languages in the world, English was by far the most frequently encountered -- accounting for no fewer than 82% of home pages on the WWW. German was second with 4%; followed by Japanese 1.6%; French 1.5% and Spanish 1.1%. Other Internet experts assert that more than 90% of the Internet sites are posted in English. More recently, a study by the Agence de la Francophonie, Union Latina and the NGO Funredes found that English is still the language that appears most frequently on the Internet at about 75%, while French accounts for 2.8%, Spanish 2.5%, and Italian 1.5%. (Rodríguez-Alvez 1999)

¹⁹ I thank Phillippe Schmitter for this comment.

²⁰ There is a public discussion about three possible models of pricing access to the Internet: "A última etapa da Consulta Pública n.º 372 - Aspectos Relevantes Para o Uso de Serviços e Redes de Telecomunicações no Acesso a Serviços de Internet foi encerrada no dia 3 de junho. O documento foi colocado em discussão no dia 22 de março, com propostas para a implementação de três modelos de acesso à Internet: 1) o padrão atual; 2) o código não geográfico (0i00), 3) e o modelo IP (Internet Protocol) Direto. A segunda fase está recebendo, exclusivamente, réplicas às mais de 912 contribuições encaminhadas na primeira etapa. As contribuições poderão ser acessadas e replicadas por meio do formulário eletrônico do Sistema Interativo de Acompanhamento de Consulta Pública, disponível no Portal da Agência Nacional de Telecomunicações - Anatel, na Internet (www.anatel.gov.br). Também poderão ser encaminhadas manifestações por fax (61- 312-2002) e correspondência eletrônica (biblioteca@anatel.gov.br)." See http://www.governoeletronico.gov.br/noticias.cfm?id_noticias=765

The Brazilian government has developed Internet policies aimed to extend the use and to curve the distance, between those who have access to this new segmented media, and those who have not:²¹ “to reduce the exclusion of 160 million Brazilians who are outside of the fastest growing sector in the world” (Tavares 2001). In this realm, a special commission was formed in 2001 to study suggestions from civil entities and non-governmental organizations to expand Internet and e-mail use all over the country, especially among the poorest people under the so called *Digital Inclusion Project* in 2001.²² There is also a government initiative to produce low cost computers with an on built capacity to connect to the Internet. Under this initiative, the government gives cheap credits to low rent families to facilitate purchases. “the initiative is related with a strategic option of the country to further the development of an industrial sector on information technology. It also entails agreements with multinationals to produce hardware products within the country (Jordana 2002:26).

Two *Secretariats* of the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry for Science and Technology are currently applying to a cooperation program of the European Union in the area of the Information Society --Programa @lis (Aliance for the Information Society).²³ There are also examples of non governmental organizations developing projects to extend Internet use.²⁴

²¹ The government intends to cover every large city -- those with populations of at least 600,000 -- with Internet terminals, which will be found mainly at post offices. For this purpose, According to Brazilian Planning Minister Martus Tavares, the government planned to invest \$400 million in 2001 to expand Internet use in Brazil.

²² Among the many suggestions, the most polemic and important ones are: "provide computer and e-mail terminals to all the population;" "provide reduced telecommunications fees for digital inclusion actions;" and "launch a free and public ISP."

²³ This program has a total budget of 85 millions € and intends to finance projects in the area of governance, education and cultural diversity, public health and social integration “A proposta tem como objetivo a criação de uma rede mundial de quiosques de acesso gratuito via Internet a informações e serviços públicos e privados” http://www.governoeletronico.gov.br/noticias.cfm?id_noticias=764

²⁴ In Rocinha the non-governmental organization Viva Rio launched the *Viva Favela* portal in 2001, with the aim of extending Internet use among those who can't afford to buy a computer or even a phone line.

	Old media	New media
Context	<p>1964-1985 bureaucratic-authoritarian regime imposes restrictions on every level of the mass media</p> <p>TV Globo, expanded with the dictatorship, to the fourth largest network in the world</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reaching 95% of the 17 millions households in the country • 43 television channels • Owned the most influential newspaper, O Globo, as well as a chain of radio stations. Globo has also a publishing division (books, comics...) • Covered the strikes against the government and for presidential elections in 1984, and protested censorship –from that date 	<p>Relevance of regions in the awarding of TV concessions.</p> <p>Oligopolistic features in TV market are reinforced during the Sarney government in a very politicized environment</p> <p>Cable TV Law(lei 8.977) impose the obligation of having legislative, community and university channels²⁵</p> <p>Internet: lack of access, and contents in Portuguese</p>

Table VI: The Context of the Old and the New Media

Source: Cesar Guimarães and Roberto Amaral (1988), César Bolaño (2002)

The perspectives and resources of agents

The main differences between old and new media in the realm of resources, is the entrance of foreign capital and firms in the new segments, such as the Internet. There is a plurality of actors (transnational foreign actors), coming into the market, emphasizing old tendencies of concentration and control of the productive cycle of contents. Competition brought by new communications firms may to a great extent change the groundfield in which political parties compete. This is a hypothesis that may be tested in the coming future for the Brazilian case. Hypothesis, which has been confirmed for other latiamerican case, such as Mexico.²⁶

²⁵ The law for cable communications was approved in a climate of consensus and wide participation through the *Conselho de Comunicação Social* from societal groups. Networks are public, according to the principle of common carriage (proprietors may not discriminate by reasons of content). There are also guarantees for the existence of a single network for the purposes of connectivity.

²⁶ I thank Phillippe Schmitter for this comment.

	Old media	New media
Perspectives and resources of agents	<p>Monopoly of contents, censorship during the military regime²⁷</p> <p>Concentration, centralization and transnationalization of capitals</p>	<p>Contents have a strategic value. The tendencies are towards costs inflation, reinforcement of direct intermediaries, high level of vertical integration.</p> <p>Contents tend to focus on films, mass sports, video games and tele-business, emphasizing ludic, and commercial aspects.</p> <p>Financing focused on pay per view and very segmented publicity slots</p> <p>Concentration, centralization and transnationalization of capitals</p>

Table VII
Source: César Bolaño (2002)

The forms of media and how they re-mediate each other

The following table shows the difference in media forms between the old and new media.

²⁷ During the dictatorship, "l'occultation des faits, les manipulations, ont été une constante des journaux de TV Globo, sur ordre du gouvernement et de la direction de la chaîne. TV Globo était attentive aux vœux de la dictature et ne voulait pas de complications avec un État qui pouvait lui retirer sa concession" (Ortiz-Ramos 1995:21)."

	Old media	New media
Forms of media and how they re-mediate each other	<p>Television: Private media (mainly) in a concessional regime, financed by publicity: "Même sans rencontrer de succès immédiat, une émission était maintenue si elle permettait de consolider l'image de la chaîne; les bénéfiques ont été réinvestis en totalité pendant quatorze ans (Ortiz-Ramos 1995:18)."</p> <p>Television programming with educational aims is fostered by Decree, to guarantee representation of different territorial groups, universities and foundations (Décret n° 52.795, October 31, 1963, Regulation of Radio Services). These services are considered to have "une finalité éducative et culturelle (...) et sont considérés comme étant d'intérêt national (Hercovici 1995:26)."</p> <p>Contribution of TV Globo to the construction of the nation state.²⁸</p>	<p>Possibility of entrance of foreign capital in mass media markets from 2002</p> <p>Mass Television: Very centralized production system at the network's head (Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro). The only exception being the regional RSB, affiliated to Globo-- concentration of innovation capacity at the core of the system --Globo has the hegemony in the mass TV and the segmented markets</p> <p>Main features of Digital TV firms: -Control over a wide range of programs copyrighted in specific fields (films, mass sports). - Capacity to edit them in segmented packages for diverse markets - Knowledge of the market through marketing techniques - Control over channels to broadcast (networks: satellite, cable, spectrum allotted)²⁹</p>
	<p>Oligopolistic regime in which affiliated firms of states and federal nature coexist.</p>	<p>Convergence of telecommunications and audiovisual markets Expansion of segmented TV and the Internet Acquisition of Telesp by Telefonica</p>

Table VIII

Source: César Bolaño (2002)

²⁸ "la Rede Globo a amplement participé au processus de construction nationale... elle a ainsi assuré une fonction idéologique importante, liée à permis l'homogénéisation, donc la construction, de l'espace national...liée à la construction de l'Etat-nation. (Herscovici 1995:23)".

²⁹ Since the simultaneous control of these basic elements needs a high investment profile, only few groups are able to undertake it through alliances. In Latin America these alliances include the groups Sky and Galaxy.

The Globo group is well established due to its hegemony in the traditional and new network realms.³⁰ It has also important advantages coming from its knowledge of the contents market in Portuguese language.

Recently, however, an important change has occurred at the legislative level. The Brazilian Parliament has adopted new legislation allowing foreign capital to enter in the national media market, including the electronic ones –a forbidden possibility before.³¹ Up to May 2002 only Brazilian citizens were allowed to enter the market. The opposition in the left defended that contents and programming would only be defined by Brazilians. This transaction was necessary in order to accept the changes.

An interesting field of study, to refine subsequent analysis is the application of Subirats’s table, measuring the dimensions in which new technologies may be used to further democracy. This measurement has important implications both for the political and social realms:

		Policy	Polity
Degree of democratic innovation and acceptance of participative and pluralist processes	Low	Consumer biased mechanisms	Changes in democratic elitism
	High	Pluralist networks for the provision of services	Processes of direct democracy

Table IX
Subirats (9:2002)

IV. A discussion in comparative perspective

As far as methods of analysis of new communications media and their relationship with the polity, the work undertaken has reviewed main approaches in the literature. The pitfalls of these approaches have been stressed, setting a base line for future research which may avoid the shortcomings mentioned.

³⁰ “Hoje, a Globo cobre praticamente todo o território nacional, sendo vista por 99,84% dos 5.043 municípios brasileiros. Os números da Rede Globo são prova definitiva de seu crescimento: 113 emissoras entre Geradoras e Afiliadas, 74% de share no horário nobre, 56% no matutino, 59% no vespertino e 69% de share de audiência no horário noturno. No mercado publicitário, a participação da Globo corresponde a 75% do total de verbas destinadas à mídia televisão.”<http://redeglobo3.globo.com/institucional/>

³¹ El País, May 24th, 2002, p. 34.

The theoretical basis to explain changes in the role played by new communications media in constructing political reality have been rooted in the works of Dominique Wolton. Wolton's reflection on the role played by the mass media as forum for political debates under mass democratic regimes, and the erosion of these means of communications with the transition towards segmented media is the point of departure chosen for forthcoming analysis --with the differentiation between the logic of interests and the logic of values in any communication activity. The meaning of the transition and the change entailed by the move from mass media to segmented media for the polity is an erosion of a traditional and important channel of relation between political elite and the citizenship. In the case of Brazil, the structure of the industry, with a clear hegemony of the Globo group in mass communications, and a relatively low spread of access to new segmented media, specially the Internet, pictures a slow transition scenario. However, close to 20% of households with access to cable TV, and the segmentation of publics that this entails offers sound reasons to study the political and social effects of this transition further. In this sense, detailed work needs to be done on who this new media affects the organization, activities and goals of political parties in their relations with the citizenship. In general, as for the role of governments in the new situation and changes in public policy, there are important challenges for democratic governance ahead. There are also questions to be raised over the capacity of political parties to aggregate and articulate social demands when the forum to present their position, the mass media declines in its reach with respect to segmented media.

Finally, addressing the themes of citizen participation, we have discussed whether new media are facilitating or hindering participation in civil society from a theoretical perspective. Findings are mixed in this regard, on the one hand research carried on and reviewed here shows that the predisposition of users toward new technologies is already an indicator of participation, while the medium itself do not seem to foster special patterns of participation. In this sense, however, we still need to know the results of case studies addressing the role of new media in the coordination of social activities with a political projection. The

use of the new segmented media by the citizens with political purposes needs also research in the case of Brazil.

A conclusion that seems to follow from the analysis carried out is that the challenges for civil society -and the polity- are large with the transition to new segmented media. If only because in the new context, the citizen counting equally one vote in contemporary democracies rests in a weaker position with respect to other social actors, the economic ones, and this is true for the field of communications as for other economic fields. The question then, seems to be how to renegotiate the social contract, and how to articulate values, not only interests, in this contract pertaining communications --the base of the relation between the citizen and elite in traditional mass democracies.

Further ideas for subsequent research is the use of the comparative method, in the diachronic and spatial senses. In the diachronic sense, the differentiation between the peak of the mass communications media and the rise of the segmented communications media may allow us to point out differences and construct qualitative indicators.

The empirical study needs refinement for the case of Brazil, and I plan to undertake comparisons with others more developed zones, the United States, and Europe. Predictably, the meaning of an analysis with this slant will be different for Europe, the United States, and Brazil, as a developing country, where the priorities in terms of the logic of values and the logic of interests of communications also differ. One illustrative example is the European Union which, like the United States, sets for itself the objective of “becoming the ‘number one information and communication society’”. Nevertheless, what is at stake in Europe is completely different from what is at stake in the case of the United States. The organization of intercultural communication is a challenge of present-day Europe, whereas in the United States, there is a century-long tradition and a defining slant in public policy on this subject.

The nature of the challenge that governments face as a consequence of the emergence of the new segmented communications media and the new communications technologies will be quantitatively and qualitatively different in the countries within more developed zones, such as the United States and the

European Union, and in the countries with lower levels of economic and institutional development. In these last countries, “the problems of the political system become problems for the state to carry out its function, and the challenge for the parties...[is] to find a new state model that will allow them to offer solutions: to reconstruct the state” (Paramio, 2000:20).

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