

Mediatization beyond Western democracies: a three-dimensional proposal to measure the influence of the media in Brazil

Mediatización más allá de las democracias maduras: una propuesta tridimensional para medir la influencia de los medios en Brasil

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ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the power of mass media—and, more specifically, a dominant media group—in Brazil since its recent transition to democracy. However, the media influence on Brazilian politics is treated almost always from a socio-economic perspective. In this essay, I argue that it is necessary to take into account the influence of “media logic” in policy making, based on the theoretical framework known today as mediatization. However, recognizing that the lines between the different types of media interference are often blurred in the new democracies, I propose measuring its influence in Brazil using four interrelated variables in a three-dimensional system: Mediatization, democratization, concentration and regulation of the media sector. Finally, I apply this analysis framework in the recent selection of a DTT standard in Brazil, since I believe that digital migration offers a unique opportunity to understand how politics interact with either media logic or workers and corporations.

Keywords: Brazil, mediatization, mass media, television, digital standards, media power, media logic, democratization.

RESUMEN

A partir del proceso de redemocratización en Brasil, mucho se ha escrito sobre el poder de los medios –y, más específicamente, de un grupo mediático– en el país. Sin embargo, su influencia sobre la política brasileña es tratada casi siempre desde un sentido socio-económico. En este trabajo, planteo que es necesario también tomar en cuenta la influencia del formato o modus operandi mediático en el hacer político, a partir del marco teórico conocido hoy día como mediatización. Pero, reconociendo que en nuevas democracias las líneas que separan los tipos de interferencia están muchas veces empañadas y difíciles de precisar, propongo sistematizar la medición de la influencia mediática en Brasil a partir de cuatro variables que se interrelacionan tridimensionalmente: mediatización, democratización, concentración y (des) regulación del sector. Por último, aplico el sistema de análisis propuesto al reciente episodio de selección de una norma digital en el país, defendiendo que la transición digital es una oportunidad única para comprender las relaciones entre medios y políticos.

Palabras Clave: Brasil, mediatización, medios de masas, televisión, estándares digitales, poder mediático, lógica mediática, democratización.

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INTRODUCTION

As McQuail wrote, (2010) “there has always been an intimate connection between mass communication and the conduct of politics, in whatever kind of regime” (p. 523). For this reason, many studies throughout modern history have focused efforts to detect and define the processes by which media and politics interact.

Due to its recent re-democratization, high concentration of media and historic symbiosis between politicians and owners of radio and television stations, the media power in the Brazilian political processes have frequently caught the attention of scholars (Singer, 2000-2001; Albuquerque, 2012; Porto, 2012; Fox, 1997). However, the influence of media in Brazil was hardly explored when it turns to mediatization, i.e., how the media’s representation of politics have shaped it (Fuenzalida, 2013). It must be admitted, nevertheless, that there is a void in the literature on mediatization regarding Latinamerican democracies, where the lines that separate the various types of media influence are often blurry.

Therefore, in this essay, I propose a system to analyze this influence, which integrates mediatization to other three variables. I state that this systemic view is especially relevant in the contexts of the most important innovation of the television sector since its inception: the migration to the digital system. Because, in addition to the semiotic and technological changes brought by that migration it may result in a real reconfiguration of the sector (Galperin, 2004a). From the point of view of the companies established in that market, it represents a risk scenario. Media corporations, then, see the definition of a digital television standard in a country as a vital issue for their business. Therefore, it is when the “intrusion of the media in politics” (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999) can be used as a corporate strategy. In fact, when investigating digital transitions in the United States and the United Kingdom, Galperin (2004b) also found evidence that the DTT standard definition of each country was a reflection of the relationship between political institutions and the broadcasting sector.

In other words, to study the relationship between media and Governments during the definition of standards of Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) in a country can be a valuable thermometer. As noted by Bustamante (2004), “the development of cultural industries in the Digital Era (digital radio and TV; sat-

ellite, cables or digitalized waves) cannot be imagined on a virgin land”¹ (pp. 20-21), but over a background that includes, around the world, a fast forward of media concentration, in which “economic censorship overrides, stronger than ever, the old political censorship” (p. 20).

The text is divided into five parts: in the first, I present a literature review of the concept of mediatization and its forms of measurement. In the second, I discuss the difficulties of applying this theoretical framework in non-Western in-development democracies, such as the Brazilian one. Then, I explain the analysis system I developed to measure media influence, interrelating mediatization with others three processes (democratization, concentration and regulation of the sector). In the fourth part of the study, I apply the model to the case of the selection of a DTT standard in Brazil. Finally, in the conclusions, I discuss the limitations of the study and directions for further research.

It is worth highlighting that, regarding the case study, my subjectivity as a researcher, inevitably present in the analysis, is based on the experience of fifteen years as a political journalist. During that time, I had the opportunity of generating countless interviews about the topics covered here. These impressions will inevitably be registered in my research, serving as backdrop for the object that I intend to scientifically analyze.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE MEDIATIZATION CONCEPT

The term “mediatization” is still used in different contexts and with different meanings (Livingstone, 2009). From a broader definition, Schulz (2004) assumes it as a phenomenon in which mass media have an impact on other social institutions, generating “problematic dependencies, constraints and exaggerations” (p. 87). He states that their influences are strongly associated with three basic functions of media in communication processes: the economic function, the semiotic one (as media encode and format messages) and the relay function (as they serve as a technological bridge between spatial and temporal distances). Through such functions, media are then able to alter reality in four ways: they extend it, substitute it, amalgamate it and accommodate it, as the environment adapts to its logic.

Hjarvard (2012) defines mediatization as a double-faced process, by which media become semi-independent institutions in society, to which other institutions have to accommodate. As the author points out, various studies use mediatization as a framework to investigate not only universal phenomena, such as postmodernity, but also the effects of media in specific sectors (religion, science, politics, etc.).

Krotz (2007) prefers to conceptualize mediatization as a “metaprocess”. According to him, unlike what we call processes—intended as a linear sequence with a starting point and a direction—the metaprocesses, do not have a clear beginning or end, and they are hardly unidirectional. Thus, Krotz considers mediatization as one of the four metaprocesses (together with globalization, individualization and commercialization) that are interrelated, influencing democracy and society. Therefore, he does not consider mediatization to be necessarily problematic or negative.

Now, despite these wide range definitions, the term “mediatization” is increasingly associated with the influence of media in politics. As recognized by McQuail (2010), it “has been widely used to describe the adaptation of politicians to the media criteria of success and the growing importance of symbolic politics” (p. 528). In that sense, a mediatized society would be the one whose political system is highly influenced by, and adjusted to, the demands of mass media political coverage (Asp, 1986, cited by Strömbäck, 2011). In that case, as indicated by Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999), the term “mediatization” necessarily denotes a problematic issue. For this reason, the authors propose to differentiate “mediatization” of “mediation”, although other scholars still address the terms as synonyms (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996) or attribute the difference only to a semantic distinction between European and Anglo-Saxon schools (Livingstone, 2009; Landerer, 2013).

To Mazzoleni and Schulz (as well as to other European theorists of mediatization in politics), “mediation” is the process by which policy decisions depend mainly on the media to be perceived by society in general. Therefore, saying that modern politics is “mediated” is nothing more than a purely descriptive statement. Mediatization, on the other hand, is an “intrusion of the media in the political process”, meaning that

mediatized politics is the one that lost its autonomy, becoming dependent on the media and continuously molded by them.

Thomas Meyer (2002) describes such problem using a blunt metaphor: according to him, media is “colonizing” politicians. According to Meyer, colonization means “the almost unconditional surrender of politics – at least in all visible, publicly accessible aspects of communication – to the logic of the media system (p. 71-72)” For the author, the policy is thus reformulated from the interaction of two processes: the way media represents the political universe, from their own specific rules, and the desire (or perhaps need) of political actors to be subjected to those rules.

Like Meyer, most of the authors dedicated to investigate the mediatization in politics seem to take the “media logic” as an important thermometer of mediatization. Although the concept is not always explicit, the “media logic” posed here is consistent with the proposition of Altheide and Snow which, in 1979, defined it as the process by which media organizes, presents and transmits the information, from its own grammar (quoted in Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2011). It is also in this sense that researchers use expressions such as “media criteria of success” (Kepplinger, 2002), “news value criteria” (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999) and “newsworthiness” (Strömbäck, 2011). Thus, as noted by Landerer (2013), although it lacks greater conceptual precision, the term “media logic” is especially related with the influence of the media *format* on politics. Or, as synthesized by Ross (2010), the way in which media coverage influences the terms of political debate, determining the voices that will be heard, how they will be understood and when they will have the chance to give an opinion (p. 273).

The question generated by such concepts is how to evaluate a society’s degree of mediatization. Recognizing that there are still few studies devoted to define variables of it, Strömbäck (2008; 2011) proposes to systematize the study of mediatization into four dimensions. The first measures the degree in which media become the most important source of information. The second measures their degree of independence from political institutions. The third dimension seeks to determine to what extent media contents are presented under their own logic (media logic) or a political one. And the fourth measures

which of these two logics predominates among political actors. Thus, both the third and fourth dimensions are concentrated on the analysis of the media logic in a given context, but with an important theoretical difference between them: the third can be measured based on the analysis of media coverage, while the fourth is related to the behavior of political actors (Zeh & Hopmann, 2013).

In tune with that last premise, two lines of research seem to have captured attention of scholars around the world: the analysis of the historical changes perceived in politics, and their relation to media coverage (Strömbäck & Dimitrova, 2011; Kepplinger, 2002; Vliegenhart & Walgrave, 2008; Zeh & Hopmann, 2013); and the perception of politicians about media power in the societies that they represent (Cohen, Tsfaty & Sheaffer, 2008; Ross, 2010; Strömbäck 2011).

To measure that perception, surveys have been made to members of Parliament from different countries. The approach is particularly validated by the findings of a theory known as the “*influence of presumed influence*” (Gunther & Storey, 2003). As stated by Cohen, Tsfaty and Sheaffer (2008), the literature indicates that “*people act upon their perception of media influence regardless of whether or not these perceptions are accurate*” (2008, pág. 332) Then, if politicians think that media are too influential in the political process, their conduct is already mediatized, regardless of the fact that the perception is or is not real.

Strömbäck underlines, however, that mediatization should not be interpreted as a linear process. I.e., its results may vary according to the time, the country and even to the different political institutions involved in each country (for example, judiciary and Parliament), making it even more complex to understand the phenomenon.

METHODOLOGY: MEASURING MEDIATIZATION OUTSIDE WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

As admitted by Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999), “media intrusion cannot be assumed as a global phenomenon, because there are significant differences between countries in this respect” (p.248). In fact, Hjarvard (2012) sees mediatization as a trend intensified especially at the end of the 20th century, in

“modern societies, highly industrialized and mainly Western” (p. 65), such as Europe, Japan and Australia. However, the author also recognizes that, with the advance of globalization, more regions and cultures will be mediatized, but probably with considerable differences in each case. Somehow, the studies carried out in New Zealand and Israel are already a reflection of this expanding trend.

In the same sense, the attempt to analyze mediatization in a Latin American country can represent a contribution to the improvement of a theory that was almost exclusively developed under a Western perspective. In addition, as recognized by Schulz (2004), “mediatization, media dependency and related hypotheses are products of the television era” (p. 94) and Latin America is perhaps the subcontinent which presents the most emblematic relationship between TV, politics and audiences nowadays (Fuenzalida, 2013).

However, measuring mediatization in the region can be more complicated than it seems. In a scenario that Fox (1997) recognizes “the emerge of the monopolistic media industries as autonomous domestic political forces, aided by the weaknesses of political parties and of elected democratic government” (p.2), the lines that divide the influence of media logic (or format) from their political strength as a corporation are blurry. In this sense, Brazil is a paradigmatic case. Still according to Fox, the country is one of the strongest examples of media power concentrated in the hands of a single corporation, to the point that its executives may be called “Kingmakers”, due to their “enormous political power in the selection and even legitimization of national leaders” (p. 4).

In such a context, the focus of analysis on the relationship between journalists and politicians—whether it is to find out the reasons why they “undermine or support each other” (Ross, 2010, p.273) or to discover “who leads the tango” (Strömbäck, 2011)—can have its results compromised by a preliminary bias: not considering that both actors also relate to a third one, equally decisive, which are the media corporations. In other words, if you want to know which logic prevail in the relationship between journalists and politicians, it is also important to take into account the relationship journalists have with the corporations they work for (do the bosses influence the coverage?)

as well as the relationship between the latter and the politicians. To paraphrase Ross, the rumba here is a little bit more complicated, because it necessarily includes one more dancer.

Somehow, the inclusion of corporate power in the mediatization discussion dialogs with the precepts of Schulz, who admits the influence of the media not only from semiotics and technology, but also because of its economic importance (a function perhaps taken into account only tangentially in the majority of studies on mediatization of politics). In Krotz words, “in a capitalist world, all those meta processes depend on the economic dimension” (2007, p. 259). When it turns to media, which actors would better represent such dimension than media corporations?

The recent proposal of Landerer (2013) seems to go on that same direction. Claiming that there is not only one media logic, and that the other pole of the variable –the political logic– is an even less clear concept, he suggests rethinking mediatization from a new axis: on one side, the *normative logic* (when behavior is based in “idealized view of what should be for the well-being of a democratic society (p.11)”) and on the other, the *market-oriented logic* (when priority is given to self-interest goals, such as audiences, profit, votes, etc). That same axis would thus measure the behavior of both journalists and politicians. For him, then, medi-

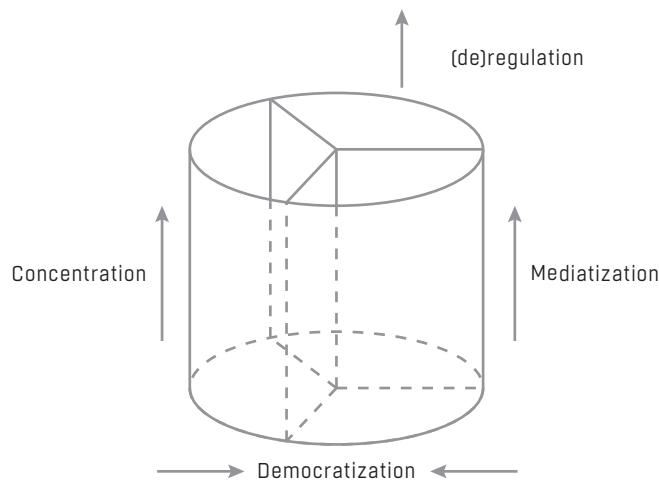
atization of politics happens to be defined as “the predominance of audience-oriented market logic in political actors’ behavior in day-to-day decision making processes” (p.2). And, just as Driessens, Raeymaeckers, Verstraeten and Vandebussche (2010), he defends that politics analysis must be based on the adaptation of the *practices* of politicians, rather than their logic.

THE “COMPARTMENTED GLASS OF THE INFLUENCE MEDIA”: A THREE-DIMENSIONAL MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

Considering that (i) “a process of political system losing power over the media is not necessarily caused by mediatization” (Zeh and Hopmann, 2013) and (ii) it is often difficult to distinguish when the (real or perceived) influence of media is a reflection of that or other forms of media power, it only seems possible to me to treat mediatization in Brazil as one of the faces of a greater, three-dimensional, process.

Inspired by the model of measurement created by Godoy (2013), I propose the study of media influence in Brazil using a glass with three compartments. Each of them represents an aspect of the media influence in politics: mediatization, media concentration, and the (de)regulation of the sector. In addition, they are all affected by a fourth transverse variable, democratization, capable of influencing the general proportions of the glass (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Compartmented glass of the influence media



Source: own elaboration

In general, media market concentration will serve as a relevant thermometer of the potential power of media corporations (Fernández, 2004). The (de)regulation and/or privatization will reflect the presence of the State, through two assessments: (i) its policies of restraint or liberty of the sector, from two axes: one regarding media contents and the other regarding their economic/corporate interests (Curran & Seaton in Godoy, 1997/2010) and (ii) the level of State participation in its role as manager, owner and/or enabler of media activities (Bustamante, 2004).

Mediatization, on another hand, is the compartment of analysis that will focus on the adaptation of political practices to the media modus operandi. To do so, I am going to focus here in just four variables previously employed by other authors: the importance of the media as a portal for access to information, the professionalism of media sector, the perception that politicians have of media relevance (Strömbäck, 2011; Ross, 2010; Cohen, Tsfati & Sheaffer, 2008) and the decline of political parties' prestige in response to a trend of personalization of politics (Driessens et al., 2010).

Finally, the analysis of the democratization process seeks to understand in what sense society is more or less receptive to the development of the other three variables. Here, I adopt the definition of democratization posed by Porto (2012), who sees it as "the strengthening of the long-term institutional arrangements that ensure the articulation and expression of the interests, opinions and perspectives of the represented" (p. 169).

Within that system, it can be said that the first two variables (concentration and mediatization) are used to assess the "intrusive" strength of the media, while the other two (regulation and democratization), to measure the "resilience" of the political environment. It is necessary to add that, besides sharing sides, the compartments of the glass have openings that connect one to another. Therefore, a high degree of deregulation, for example, will gradually contribute to also increase media concentration, as well as a high mediatization may, in the long run, represent a trend towards deregulation, and so ahead. As a transverse variable, the democratization process means the gradual resizing of the glass.

THE SELECTION OF A DIGITAL TV STANDARD IN BRAZIL FROM THE APPLICATION OF THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL PROPOSAL

In mid-2006, Brazil announced the (unprecedented) decision to import Japanese technology of DTT², suggesting some minor modifications of it. From these changes, the standard internationally known as *Integrated Services Digital Broadcasting-Terrestrial* (ISDB-T) won a technology update and its acronym, one more letter to differentiate it from the original model.

Despite the strong international lobbies (Barbosa, 2012; Vianna, 2012), evidences are that the Brazilian choice of the ISDB-Tb standard resulted more of the internal pressure than the external. In fact, the Brazilian decision was announced after years of discussion and a process that involved two Presidents, many Ministers of State and sectors of society, more than one hundred institutions, 1500 researchers and tens of millions of dollars (Badillo Matos, 2012; Brittos & Bolaño, 2007). It seemed, then, that the selection of the ISDB-Tb standard was the result of these variables, and the culmination of a transparent and democratic way of definition of a public policy, an unprecedented fact in the world (Bustamante, 2008). However, as stated by different authors, the Government authorities ended up relegating their own investments and efforts (Cabral & Cabral Filho, 2012), to opt for the standard that favored the interests of Brazilian private broadcast television stations (Bustamante, 2008; Delarbre, 2009; Badillo Matos, 2012; Cruz, 2006; Angulo, Calzada & Estruch, 2011; Bolaño & Brittos, 2007). Private stations, led by the dominant TV Globo, openly preferred the Japanese standard, mainly for two reasons: internal reception tests supported the greater robustness of Japanese standard (Martins, 2012; Yamada, et al., 2004) and –perhaps the most important reason– the adoption of that technology prevented the entry of telecommunication companies in their business (Cruz, 2006).

The in-depth analysis of this process allows foreseeing that, in fact, the arrival of Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva to presidency in 2003 represented a break of the protagonism trend of the broadcasting sector in the promotion of a political debate on the subject. It was especially true in his first year in office, when the Minister of Communications was an open advocate for the development of a Brazilian standard (Bolaños

& Brittos, 2007), and implemented an ambitious plan of investment in national research on DTT. However, from the second year on, the proposal of a national standard began to lose strength (Cruz, 2006), resulting in the intensification of the dialogue with international standards lobbyists (Wikileaks, 2004). And, from the arrival of Helio Costa at the Ministry of Communications, in July 2005, the process suffered a new decisive change: despite not being officially announced, the Government's preference became evident. Costa, with strong and historical connections with TV Globo, even publicly discredited the research funded by the very Government, when they presented results unfavorable to the ISDB-Tb (Zimmermann, 2006; Villas-Boas, 2012).

Framing all the phases (and trends) of the DTT policy discussion is particularly important because they help to clarify the temporal correlation between the arrival of Helio Costa to the Ministry (virtually, the milestone that marks the victory of the broadcasters dispute) and the explosion of the case known as "mensalão", the most thunderous scandal of corruption of the Brazilian history until that day (Miguel & Coutinho, 2007). That unmistakable temporal correlation makes plausible the hypothesis that the appointment of the new Minister—and his mission of defending the standard suitable to that media group—happened under an exchange (whether explicit or implicit) of interests: on the one hand, the interest of broadcasters led by TV Globo; on the other, the interest of the Government to protect themselves from an even more serious institutional crisis, inflated by the coverage of those mass media.

There are still missing studies that evaluate the treatment that television stations gave to the scandal and/or to the Government before and after the arrival of Helio Costa at the Ministry. However, Miguel and Coutinho (2007) found evidence that the journal of Globo Organizations presented, in its editorials on the scandal, a more moderate tone of confrontation to Lula than the other two main newspapers of national circulation. For the authors, one possible explanation for this finding is that Globo Organizations "maintained privileged relationship with the Government, with intimate links with the Minister of Communications Helio Costa, a former worker, (...) and were directly interested in a crucial decision

being taken in the period, the Brazilian digital television standard" (p. 119).

Stated the facts, we pass to the analysis of the influence of television in Brazil, using the proposed variables: concentration, regulation/nationalization, democratization, mediatization.

CONCENTRATION

Despite the small rise in competitiveness in the ratings of broadcast television in recent years (Bolaño & Brittos, 2007), Brazil remains one of the most concentrated media markets in the world, in the hands of the private sector. In addition to the largest broadcast television station in the country (with long advantage over the competition, and one of the largest on the planet), Globo's companies also control newspapers of national circulation, magazines, radio stations, dozens of pay TV channels, distributors of films and a provider of internet, among other companies (Portal Globo, 2013).

(DE)REGULATION Y (DE)NATIONALIZATION

The described scenario, of high grade of media concentration—both vertically and horizontally (Nissen, 2006)—can be seen as consequence and cause, in a spiral of influence of private broadcasting, of an obsolete regulatory policy (Porto, 2012; Cruz, 2006). In fact, the only successful legislation changes that were made during this period were defended by media themselves, as the entry of foreign capital to the broadcasting companies in 2002 (Bolaño & Brittos, 2007). In the same sense, the (de)regulation of content in Brazil is quite evident and, as writes Albuquerque (2012), broadcasters "react aggressively to any proposal or regulation effort" (p. 22), referring to them as attacks against democracy.

Also, the Brazilian State has exercised timidly its role as a manager or enabler of activities in the television sector. Policies aimed at the promotion of public television and radio stations played a minor role in the Government efforts in this period (in fact, such stations have very little audience in Brazil).

Thus, it can be said that Brazil presents what Juan C. Miguel (1993) defines as an attitude of liberal regulation, tempered by the coexistence of a public and a private sector, each one with its own missions, rules and financing mechanisms—in which public broadcasters are relegated to a little expressive complementary role.

The choice of the ISDB-Tb standard in Brazil, and its posterior regulation allowing multiprogramming just for public broadcasters, reinforce this characteristic. From such a perspective, the creation of the *Empresa Brasileira de Comunicação* (Brazilian Communication Company) –responsible for the new public television channel, TV Brazil– is a remarkable milestone from 2007 (Otondo, 2008).

DEMOCRATIZATION

Despite its acknowledged influence in the definition of policies, politicians (Cruz, 2006), and even in the elections (Singer, 2000-2001), the power of the media organizations cannot be interpreted as static during the nearly three decades of democratic regime in Brazil. As evaluated by Porto (2012), it is also necessary to recognize that the process of democratization in the country forced TV Globo to significantly reduce intentional bias in its political coverage, and the station arrived to 2006 (last year of the author's research) “with newsrooms becoming more independent and professionalized” (p. 170).

MEDIATIZATION

Even if Porto does not explicitly treat the subject of mediatization in his studies, it is interesting to observe that its conclusions on the process of “media opening” show, somehow, what would be the reflection of the second of the dimensions proposed by Strömbäck: the professionalization of the sector and its gradual independence from the political logic. This because, according to Porto, “when TV Globo begun covering the presidency with more autonomy, presidents started to face more difficulties to control the news agenda” (p.170).

Another basic evidence of mediatization –and, indeed, prior to the first– found in Brazil is the absolute supremacy of the broadcast TV as a source not only of entertainment, but also of information, in a society that still has low educational levels, little consumption of print media, as well as a minority Internet penetration (IBGE, 2010). Such media strength could not pass unnoticed for the Brazilian politicians; however, it is also a cause for a certain degree of “distrust”. In the legislative period of the selection of the DTT standard (2003-2007), only 56% parliamentarians had much or enough confidence in the media (the average is below the Latin America as a whole).

On the other hand, almost all of the members of Congress in this same survey recognize the low prestige of the party structures (32.8% saw a progressive estrangement between parties and society, while 64.2% believed that few people really had any identification with parties) (Observatorio de Elites Parlamentarias en América Latina, 2005). In addition to this, Brazil has a presidential regime³, which is already considered an institutional level of individualization (Driessens et al., 2010). Besides, Brazilian politics clearly demonstrates its high degree of personalization by creating neologisms that associate political trends with the names of their main leaders (examples include “Lulismo” and “Carlismo”, referring to Lula and Senator Antonio Carlos Magalhaes).

CONCLUSIONS: FULL GLASSES, THEORETICAL VOIDS

The selection of the DTT standard in Brazil scenario is framed by a relatively recent process of (re)democratization. Therefore, media institutions, such as press and television, are often “older” than political institutions. Brazilian media market is also characterized by the supremacy of one of those media –broadcast TV– as source of entertainment and information. In that scenario, and based on the three-dimensional analysis here employed, mediatization of Brazilian politics seems quite undeniable. Even considering its limitations, this study raises some important directions for further research:

- a) Despite the fact that mediatization is raised by the vast majority of theorists as a problem in politics, in Brazil, part of its growth is associated with the process of democratization. I.e., something desirable for society. Thus, outside mature democracies, variables that measure mediatization cannot be interpreted only from a negative approach;
- b) While it is true that there is a transverse correlation between the process of democratization and the other analyzed processes (mediatization, concentration and (de)regulation), it seems also clear that the first will interact differently with each of the others. Thus, in the proposed system, it would be better to suppose democratization to have an impact not only in the size of the glass, but also in the dimen-

- sions of each compartment inside it, reshaping the distribution of media power in the society;
- c) Due to the high concentration of the industry, it was not possible to distinguish (from the collected data) between the power conferred to media by politicians and the one media corporations actually have (distinction that perhaps explain why four of every ten Brazilian deputies still “wary” of mass media). Thus, part of the analysis on levels and effects of mediatization is darkened. This limitation should be suppressed in future research;
- d) When it turns to the definition of policies for the sector, media corporations can also use mediatization phenomena as a political bargaining tool. In that sense, the Brazilian election of a DTT standard raises issues that may also be relevant in other

international contexts: to which extent mass media organizations, empowered by mediatization (real or perceived by the political actors), can use their primary product –i.e., their audience (McQuail, 2010)– as an instrument of negotiation to defend corporate interests? To what extent political scandal can be interpreted as a weapon? Which democratic instruments can be barriers to that?

All the highlights seem to point out that the discussion about mediatization outside Western democracies still has blind spots, challenging a theoretical development that incorporates them. In that sense, the proposed analysis model, as well as the thoughts on it, should be interpreted as a first step towards future research, both in Brazil and in other countries.

FOOTNOTES

1. Todas las traducciones de textos originalmente en inglés son de la autora.
2. Los otros estándares de TDT en funcionamiento (y en proceso de expansión en el mundo) eran el estadounidense ATSC y el europeo DVB-T.
3. Régimen adoptado históricamente en Brasil desde que se convirtió en República, y reafirmado por plebiscito en 1993.

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