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Pre-ICA conference paper

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Name: Dr. Carolina Matos

Institution: Department of Government, University of Essex

Title: *Inequality and emancipation: Brazil's changing role in the world*

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Introduction

The Latin American continent has changed significantly since the fall of dictatorship regimes, with democracy flourishing in the continent amid the rise to power of centre to centre-left wing governments. This has culminated in new approaches to foreign policy, new efforts of restructuring the state, expansion of internal and global markets and the deepening of welfare and income distribution programmes. The re-democratization of Latin America's social and political institutions since the decade of the 1990s has also seen the changing role of women in society and the rise of female leaders throughout the continent and in Brazil. Other innovations have included the adoption of initiatives aimed at empowering public communications to assist in the democratization process as an attempt to guarantee information rights to vast segments of the population independently of economic income and social status.

In this paper I will look at the changing role of Brazil in the world stage, the ways in which it is re-branding its image alongside other BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries, assessing its current challenges, including the necessity to boost productivity, reduce the gap between the rich and the poor and attend to the wider demands for media democratization as well

as social inclusion of less privileged sectors of society. This paper looks at Brazil's changing role in the world stage, giving a brief overview of the transformations that have occurred in Brazilian politics and the media in the last decades following from the collapse of the dictatorship in 1985.

In the midst of all the euphoria surrounding the fact that the country has passed the UK and is destined to be the 5th biggest economy in the world in 2013, not to mention the media hype around Brazil's hosting of the Olympics in 2016 and the World Cup in 2014, this paper examines the reasons that have contributed to place Brazil amongst the so-called BRIC countries, and the challenges it is currently confronted with in order to develop more fully into an advanced democracy.

A pressing concern for most Brazilians is that the country's growth is truly solid, long-lasting, that it will boost wealth distribution and reduce inequalities, providing the majority of its citizens with a better and more fulfilling life, with more opportunities for all in education and employment, better well-being and less needless suffering. In short, that Brazil's growth is not just a project "for the English to see"ⁱ in the run up to the World Cup. Thus in order for Brazil to confront its many challenges, it is also necessary for the nation to pave a stronger role for itself as a global player, fully inserting itself in globalization and reaping the benefits similarly to other countries in Western Europe, the US and other BRICS like China.

The last part of this paper investigates the role of the media for national development by examining until what extent media organisations in Brazil can act like, or are acting, as a "soft power" for the country, focusing specifically on *TV Globo* as well as the new "public" service broadcaster, *TV Brasil* and *TV Cultura*, in the context of the debates that are taking place in Brazil now concerning the strengthening of a public communication structure more committed to the public interest and aligned to the democratization project. It concludes by assessing broadly some of the core problems faced by Latin American countries and the importance of the region pursuing

its own path of development and better insertion within globalization, creating more equal opportunities for all.

Brazil's changing role in the world stage and democratic governance

The shift of Latin America towards global capitalism has paralleled the move from British to US ascendancy, as well as the move away of foreign capital from primary export production and manufacturing to finance since the 1970s (Cammack, 1997, 159). If in 1980 only a handful of countries in Latin America were liberal democracies, by 1995 at least half of the region was part of the 'third wave' of democratization, which was taking place in other parts of the world (Little in Potter et al, 1997, 174). It has also been suggested that a key impediment to the full realization of democracy in the region was the very fact of Latin America's subordinated integration into the capitalist global market, including the combination of landed power, strong state and a relatively weak national bourgeoisie.

If we take the case of the changing role that Brazil has had in the last few years following the democratization process, including its entry in the G20 coalition and its defense of the reform of the Security Council, as well as the entry of South Africa in the coalition of the *BRIC* countries, not to mention the changing political situation in the Middle East, it is clear that key poor and other developing countries are slowly requiring a greater presence in the international stage. This is crucial for countries like Brazil, for the tackling of global social and economic inequality can only be achieved through cooperation, global social justice and the granting of wider voice and (global) political participation to developing countries, followed evidently by the country's own pursuit of wider social and economic equality, issues that are examined throughout this whole paper.

Various studies have pointed out how many Latin American countries have advanced in the last years, reducing inequality levels and boosting economy growth. According to a recent 2012 study conducted by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (Habitat) entitled “State of the Cities of Latin America and the Caribbean”, the fact of the matter is that nations like Brazil still appear as the fourth most unequal country in Latin America, behind Guatemala, Honduras and Colombia. The report also highlighted how Latin America is the most urbanised region in the world and how Brazil saw a strong growth of its GDP (Gross National Product) from 1970 to 2009, leaving behind Mexico and the countries that form the South Cone, including Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay.

Problems throughout the region still include improvements in infrastructure, housing conditions, transport systems and links, levels of pollution, public security and reduction of police violence as well as drug dealing and political corruption. In the case of Brazil, the study underlined how the country has advanced significantly in the last years regarding the reduction of inequality levels from what it once was in 1990s. These are some of the core issues that I examine next in my discussion of some of the reasons for the rise of Brazil as a BRIC country, which is done through an investigation of the pressing challenges that the nation currently faces.

a) *Brazil as a leading BRIC country*

Brazil has a series of pressing global, national, regional and local issues to tackle. Although between 2003 and 2010 it did not grow as significantly as the other *BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China)* countries did, and that its economy is not as strong, the future estimations however are that Brazil will have a growth of 8% of its GDP. According to the statistics provided by the IMF, Brazil in 2010 was the eighth biggest economy in the world, but from 2011 onwards it surpassed

Italy and went on to occupy the seventh place, just behind the UK (6th),ⁱⁱ which it also passed. By 2013 the country is destined to be the fifth largest economy in the world, according to data provided by the Brazilian Citibank.ⁱⁱⁱ

As Lattimore and Kowalski (2008) point out, Brazil has faced a number of challenges in achieving a sustainable rate of economic growth and improvements in income distribution over the last 60 years. Notably, a key aspect of Brazil's strength has been trade. It is now twice as important as it once was. In 1988, trade constituted 14% of the GDP and by 2006 it was 30% (Lattimore and Kowalski, 2006). As the authors further note, inflation has been driven down to around 3%, while growth has recovered to 4-5% in recent years, all factors which made Goldman Sachs conclude that Brazil showed enough promise of high growth capable of making it possible to include the country amongst the BRIC group of emerging economies.

If by the mid-1990s inequalities worldwide increased very much as a result of neoliberal and Third Way policies (Burity in Nederveen Pieterse, 2009, 161), on the other hand Brazil began to see a slight reduction in poverty levels between 1996 and 2006 (Ipea/UN, 2008) during the governments of presidents Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Lula due to social policy reforms and wealth distribution projects, such as the *Bolsa Familia*. Recent social and economic indicators in Brazil have pointed to a decline in inequality levels cutting across groups, women, blacks and white men in all of the regions in the country (Ipea/UN, 2008). Between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of poor whites went from 21.5% to 14.5%, representing a reduction of 33% and 29% for the black population. There are also differences between regions, with 44.3% of blacks in the North being poor and in the South, this number fell to 12.6%.^{iv}

As the United Nations-Habitat study pointed out, Brazil is the 14th country with more people living in shanty towns, a reality that is evident in some of the bad housing conditions that still characterises much of everyday life in the metropolitan centres of the country. That said, the number of poor people in the country has fallen by half in the last two decades: from 41% in 1990

to 22% of the population in 2009. Argentina and Uruguay also reduced in half the number of poor people, but it is Chile which is being seen as the champion in the campaign to combat inequality, with a reduction of 70% to 39% in 1990 to 12% in 2009. Brazil nonetheless still loses out to these neighbouring countries in regards to the number of poor people, with little more than 20% of the population living in a situation of poverty, a percentage that is higher than in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Peru.

Brazil is the largest country in South America with just over 1.5% of the world's GDP, and has under 3% of the world's population. The country has also natural resources, including agricultural land, tropical forests, water resources, hydroelectric power and a range of mineral deposits (Lattimore and Kowalski, 2006). Brazil is seen as being an advanced economy from an international relations perspective and is a stronger player when it comes to representing developing countries' interests in the G4 and other organizations. Brazil was also one of the 23 founding members of the GATT in 1947. Brazil supplies essential commodities, such as steel and aluminium, to developing countries, and accounts for the world's largest water reserves, not to mention exporting products needed by both China and India.

As Lattimore and Kowalski (2006) affirm, since 2002 China, the Latin American Integration Association (LAIA), Africa and Argentina are the regions of the Top 10 Destinations to have grown as export destinations for Brazil, with the latter country reflecting the increase in regional trade. During the period from 2002 to 2007, imports from China to Brazil have tripled to 9%, with Asia, Africa and the LAIA also increasing. Notably, Brazil's exports and imports have also increased after the opening up of the economy since the 1980s, issues developed further in the next section of this paper. Among the products which are important for Brazilian exports and imports are mineral products (iron and steel, aluminium), energy products (oil, gas, petroleum, and electricity), agricultural products (orange juice, poultry, soya bean, coffee, sugar and wheat) and

other manufactured products (machinery and equipment, aircraft and motor vehicles and IT products and services as well as ethanol and biodiesel (Lattimore and Kowalski, 2006, 213).

The authors also underscore how Brazil's coke and refined petroleum sector have achieved quite an impressionable level of growth in comparison to other Brazilian export sectors. They also correctly add how Brazil became self-sufficient in oil in 2006, with *Petrobras* having invested heavily in the development of this new resource as a means to attend the global demand for oil. *Petrobras* was also privatised in 1995, with the government remaining the majority share-holder. The national Petroleum Agency was created soon afterwards in 1997 to boost foreign and national private investments.

Brazil's most important trading partners are the European Union and the US. Nonetheless, the growth of China has provided Brazil with new opportunities in trade, including higher relative prices for resource-based products and new bilateral trade that has seen the country shift its traditional focus from the US and Europe to other nations of the South. Such a strategy has already been seen by many as also rooted in the concerns of establishing a more updated or alternative approach to international relations that is capable of contemplating other emerging economies of the South in a new South-South foreign policy philosophy. Notably, Brazilian exports have shifted away from the OECD^v markets towards China, with exports to the former countries falling from 64% of worldwide exports in 2000 to 51% in 2006 (Lattimore and Kowalski, 2006). There has also been a decrease in exports by 2% and 9% from the EU and the US, respectively.

Burity (2009) has underlined however how the Brazilian dilemma continues to be one of reversing its historical legacy of having established an impersonal modern capitalist order which has naturalised inequality, excluding millions of its citizens. He also notes how increasing globalization and neo-liberal policies have not managed to live up to their promises for greater wellbeing to all. Burity (2009, 173) has correctly asserted that Brazil faces the challenge of confronting social and environmental justice and of matching itself to its global partners, including

expanding further its programme of poverty reduction, wider inclusion of Afro-Brazilians and other less privileged sectors of the population in mainstream politics and society.

The 2004 report published by the United Nations Programme for Development (PNUD), *Democracy in Latin America – Towards a Democracy of Citizens*, and which talked to political leaders, business elites and entrepreneurs, academics and 41 presidents, found out that among the main obstacles to the consolidation of democracy in the region were the tensions which existed between the institutional powers of each of the countries. The report listed three main points. These included the internal limitations as a consequence of inadequate institutional controls and the multiplication of interest groups which functioned like lobbyists. The report also underlined the external factors provoked by international markets, such as the threat posed by drug-dealings as well as growing media concentration. In answer to the question on who exercises power in the region, the response was the financial economic sector (79.8%) and the media (64%), with the latter seen as having substituted the traditional role of political parties.

The Brazilian Monitoring Report of the Millennium Development Goals pointed out that between 1992-2002, the share of the national income of the poorest 20% rose from 3% to 4.2%, whereas the wealthiest 20% in 1992 had 55.7% and in 2002, they had 56.8% (Burity, 2009, 171). This indicates a small rise in income for the wealthiest segment of the population. The social indicators also reveal that women and blacks are the ones who register higher levels of unemployment in the South of the country, 11% and 7.1% respectively, against 6.4% given to men and 5.7% to whites (Ipea/UN, 2008, 9). Most significantly, recent social and economic indicators in Brazil have pointed to a decline in inequality levels cutting across groups, women, blacks and white men in all of the regions in the country (Ipea/UN, 2008), with a growing “new middle class” emerging.

Data from Brazil’s IBGE’s *Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra de Domicilios* revealed a decline in inequality concerning the distribution of household income since 2001. The minimum wage

increased in 61% from 1999 to 2008.^{vi} Moreover, according to experts, programmes of wealth distribution such as the *Bolsa Familia* are having a direct impact on income distribution. Close to the end of its second term, the former Lula government in Brazil claimed that 25 million Brazilians had moved into the middle classes since 2002, whilst the proportion of extreme poverty had fallen from 12% to 4% between 2003 and 2008.^{vii} Brazil continues nonetheless with a high degree of income inequality: the United Nations 2007/2008 report on Human Development, using data from 2004, gave Brazil a *Gini* coefficient of 0.570, whereas the US also continued with a high score. Its index of national income inequality in 2000 was of 0.408.

All these indicators and studies underline the many challenges that the country faces. One challenge is to invest fully in proper infrastructure, in the construction of roads throughout the whole country and in better transport systems and links between towns and states, including trains that reach more rural areas and other parts of the still neglected North, not to mention the expansion of programmes of digital inclusion to all sectors of the population independently of income and social status, something which is already being put in place by the government's programme of digital inclusion which I discuss elsewhere.^{viii} Thus among Brazil's many challenges are improvements in its educational levels, from primary to university, the combatting of corruption in state structures and politics as well as in public spending.

Other issues to tackle include the raising of productivity levels in businesses in line with other countries in a way that would enable that higher level of productivity to culminate in wider wealth distribution of living standards. As Lattimore and Kowalski (2006) further underline, the country lacks sufficient technological innovations to make firms more competitive. As the authors affirm, only 1% of Brazil's GDP is devoted to research and development effort, although the country scores highly regarding the adoption of technology embodied in capital equipment, according to the Brazilian Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea, 2007). The challenge here is for

Brazil to innovate in order to boost the competitiveness of its economy. Capital equipment imports have also doubled over the last five years (Lattimore and Kowalski, 2006).

A more pessimistic diagnosis would indicate as well that the country's more serious problems in education, training and health will take years to sort out. These are structural problems that have deep roots in the authoritarian legacy that has characterised Brazilian society, politics and the media since the end of the dictatorship, issues to which I turn to next.

Brazilian politics and the media in the aftermath of the dictatorship: the role of the media in national development

The slow democratization of Brazil during the last three decades has taken place not altogether disassociated from the authoritarian legacy that has characterized the society's formation. The increasing insertion of many Latin America countries in globalization from the 1990s onwards following the end of the dictatorships, and the gradual adoption of neoliberal policies and philosophy of state dismantling, began to slowly expose the contradictions of the whole Western globalization process, as well as the various internal problems that Latin American countries like Brazil are being confronted with.

Latin American countries have emerged at the dawn of the twenty-first century with a series of challenges to confront, from coming to terms with their authoritarian past to tackling economic and social inequality and inserting themselves fully in the global economic and political order. As Lugo-Ocando (2008, 3) notes, after less than two decades of democracy, some of the societies in Latin America are only just beginning to get to grips with the notion of freedom of speech in the context still for many of these countries of weak institutions, political confrontation and clashes between different elite groups regarding the future directions of the countries. In the case of Brazil,

this was manifested more clearly in the clashes between the PT (Worker's Party) and the PSBD (Social-Democratic Party), the two main political players in Brazil's multi-party system, in the aftermath of the dictatorship, mainly in the last three decades (Matos, 2008).

Such a turbulent contemporary environment following the collapse of dictatorship regimes throughout the continent since the 1980s has made rational, peaceful and necessary political debate regarding policy issues, from the reduction of poverty to agrarian and media reform, highly charged and problematic, although not an utopian dream. Liberal democracy was fragile and dominant in the region mainly from the 1930s until the 1980s. In Brazil, a significant period of the dictatorship (1964-85) was characterised as the years of the 'economic miracle', another factor which points to the fact that the relationship between economic growth and political development is not such a straightforward one as might be previously assumed.

In Latin America, the model of substituting imports for domestic goods created international debts and was responsible for much of the economic stagnation of the 1980's. There was a lot of expectations in relation to the capacity of the *Real plan* of combating inflation and for some, of actually redistributing wealth. The early 1990's were years of struggle for both political and economic stability. This decade saw a strengthening of the role of the presidency, with high expectations being placed by the population on individual politicians and presidents regarding the chances that they could actually reduce social inequality levels and boost economic growth. Inflation was eventually controlled by the real plan, with a drop from 2.500% in 1993 to the current 4.79%. Amid the decline of export-oriented development in the region from the 1980s onwards in the context of expanding free trade, fierce political debate emerged in each country regarding the best policies of national development and economic growth.

The democratization process in Brazil is thus an ongoing project, with democracy still being relatively fragile. Threats still emerge occasionally in relation to the continuity of governments, and many argue that the reluctance of the last governments of Fernando Henrique, Lula and of

Dilma Rousseff in tackling more sensitive topics such as agrarian and media reform and the opening of the archives of the crimes practiced during the dictatorship are but a sign of this. Contrary to other more successful examples like Argentina, Brazil has also not come fully to terms with the excesses committed during the military dictatorship (1964-1985); social groups still have a restricted influence and business and traditional elites still play a powerful role in Brazilian politics. Social and economic inequalities remain key problems demanding urgent solutions.

Civil society has also gotten stronger and the state is slowly assuming more of a participatory democratic role, in spite of the persistence still of political corruption and *clientelistic* practices between the state, the private sector and more privileged groups of Brazilian society. Arguably, a stronger (more socially democratic) state and civil society groups, combined with a market sector more preoccupied with the public interest, could help lay the foundations for a more representative and advanced democratic society. Inevitably the media will have a role in this, as it had already in the past and in particular periods of Brazilian history, such as the direct elections campaign of 1984 and the rise of Lula and the PT since the early 1990s onwards (Matos, 2008).

When it comes to discussing the relationship between media and politics in Brazil, there are a series of pressing issues to consider, ranging from the problems concerning the granting of wider access to the Internet to various sectors of the population, especially in the North of the country, and in more rural areas as well as in the Amazon region. This also includes greater dissemination to diverse segments of the population to quality in depth information and debate. This can function as a means to create citizens with more knowledge of their rights, more fully understanding of the workings of politics and of society's various layers and ways of oppressing and disempowering certain groups, and in this sense to become more aware and conscious of media manipulation and abuse of power of authority figures over the more vulnerable and weak. This will enable citizens to exercise their rights more fully and thus demand more from governments and authorities, including from the media and from decision-making elites.

One of the pressing problems in countries like Brazil is the persistence of biased and manipulated information and politicization of the media, in contrast to a slow growth in media diversity and the availability of more ‘objective’ information due to commitments established by the mainstream media to balance (Matos, 2008). Various studies have indicated a link between the media and the national development of a country. As Norris (2004, 1) highlights, media systems can strengthen good governance and promote positive development, especially if there is a free and independent press which is capable of performing the watchdog role, holding powerful people to account and acting as a civic forum of debate between competing interests. The 2010 Unesco report, *Media development indicators: a framework for assessing media development* has also underlined the close relationship that exists between the health, independence and quality of the media with the development of a country.^{ix}

Academics have also pointed out the complex role that media systems can have in democratization. As authors such as Voltmer (2006) and including myself have (Matos, 2008) pointed out, media democratization involves more than the transformation of media institutions, a freer press and the rise of journalistic professionalism, or even the good intentions of journalists. At its best, it involves a change of behavior in citizens’ understanding, use and approach to the media. Thus demands are placed on media systems to provide better quality information and a commitment to representing political diversity, giving voice to different groups in society and wider attention to professional standards.

Various academics have affirmed (i.e. Raboy, 1995; Voltmer, 2006) that the problems facing many media systems in the transition to democracy are often the best example of the problems of *democratization* more generally. The consolidation of quality, in depth and balanced information by the media is crucial to the better health of a country and to national development. This can undoubtedly contribute to open up wider avenues for debate within the press of controversial issues, such as the combat of poverty and illiteracy levels as well as the need of wider investments

in education, and in this way contribute to put pressure on politicians and to make citizens more aware of such problems and more willingly to engage in the media's public sphere of debate.

Voltmer (2006) further argues that information quality and the need for orientation is even more significant in new democracies in the context of the breakdown of old regimes. Citizens in new or transitional democracies thus need to make sense of information which comes from various sources which are not only closely tied with political orientations, but also subject to the authoritarian cultural and historical legacy of the country in question.

Most definitely, a feature of democratization during the last years has been the growth of political debate amongst various sectors of Brazilian society, with the *blogosphere* emerging as a vehicle for strengthening debate, boosting political pluralism and undermining media concentration. The public media platform has also been traditionally skewed towards the personal interest of politicians, with pressures being placed by civil society players to reverse this trend and construct public communication structures more committed to the public interest. Notably, the ways in which the Brazilian media can have a role in national development, and the examination of the extent to which sectors of the Brazilian media can also have a role in public diplomacy, are examined next.

a) Brazilian media as vehicles of "soft power"?: from TV Globo to the public media

Latin American nations to start with have had a weak public sector and are currently seeking to fortify existing public spaces of debate in order to expand citizens' information rights as well as creating the means for wider cultural emancipation. Some of the key challenges facing public television stations like *TV Cultura* and *TV Brasil* concern precisely the lack of full editorial independence, a consequence of the impact of political influence which exists at both stations. The breaking of the historical tradition of promiscuous relationships, which has been established

between the public media and specific political groups and/or oligarchic politicians, as well as the investments in innovative programming capable of creating a medium which offers positive quality competition to the commercial media, juxtaposed to wider commitments to professionalism and editorial independency, are among key elements which need to be pursued with greater impetus if one aims to fortify the public media platform in Brazil.

International organisations like *Unesco* have defended the case for a new regulatory framework for the country in order to keep up with other international initiatives, advocating the need to fortify both public as well as community communication structures.^x*Unesco's* representation in Brazil began from January 2010 a series of workshops committed to analysing the implementation by the government of a new regulatory framework for the media, part of the project *Marco regulatorio das Comunicacoes no Brasil: analise do sistema a luz da experiencia internacional*, funded by the Ford Foundation. Its main aim was to encourage a culture of public regulations for the media through comparative analyses of Brazil with other 10 democracies.^{xi}

Since its launch, there also has been a lot of expectations that *TV Brasil*, with the beginning of its transmissions to 49 of the 53 countries in Africa, will help Brazil occupy a less subordinated position in the international stage. As Lima (2010)^{xii} has argued, Brazil wants to do something similar to what other European countries do with their PSBs, including the UK does with the BBC, Spain with TVE and Portugal with RTP in terms of promoting national culture and language abroad, serving also as a form of intellectual expression and dispute of Brazil's foreign policy with other nation-states and their global private and public media corporations. As Banerjee and Senevirante (2006) have stressed, it is precisely when PSBs are most vulnerable in Europe that they start to be perceived as being quite relevant for other parts of the world in their fortification of their democratic project.

Writing in the context of the US and the importance of the country using its cultural industry and other institutions as a vehicle of "soft power" and influence in the international stage, Nye

(2005) has coined this expression to talk about the power of the Hollywood film industry all around the world as well as the US' regaining of its positive foreign influence with the election of the first African-American president, Barack Obama, in 2008. When it comes to looking at the Brazilian media through the "soft power" theory, it seems evident that this role has been traditionally reserved for *TV Globo*, considered to be one of the fourth largest in the world according to common knowledge (Straubhaar, 2001).

Commercial television in Brazil has had a major role in selling not only cultural goods and ideas, but in shaping lifestyle and consumerism habits and behaviours of large sectors of the population independently of class, ethnicity and race. It has also played a significant role in defining national politics and in obstructing, as well as contradictorily assisting, in the construction of the democratization project following the end of the dictatorship in 1985 (Matos, 2008; Bucci, 2001; Conti, 1999). Significant research has been done on *TV Globo* and its role in assisting in identity construction (Porto, 2007; Straubhaar, 2001; Sinclair; 1999), which I explore elsewhere (Matos, 2012). *Globo TV* has been heavily influenced by American commercial formats, combining American influences with national characteristics as well as regional influences, and thus producing a distinctive Brazilian television noted for its *Brazilianess* and for articulating a particular type of national Brazilian identity (see Matos, 2012).

The fact of the matter is that *TV Brasil*, the still relatively new public media channel in Brazil, is not as widely known internationally as *Telesur* and cannot yet be seen as communication vehicle of soft power and public diplomacy. *TV Brasil International* for instance, which was launched in May 2010, has been set up with the intention of promoting Brazil's economic, political, social and cultural reality, and currently reaches 49 countries in Africa through the DTH operator and cable *Multichoice*. The choice of the continent is closely linked to EBC's strategy of contributing for the continent's development and for recovering Brazil's historical debt with Africa. It is also being transmitted by various companies in Latin America, making its presence in

Portugal through MEO TV, in the US through DISH Network as well as in Japan. It has thus started to compete with *TV Globo International*, which was launched in 1999 and is transmitted in 118 countries via satellite, cable and IPTV. It currently has 620 million subscribers in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

Having struck comparisons with other broadcasters such as *Al Jazeera* and *Euronews*, the Venezuelan channel *Telesur* has been seen as being an ambitious attempt to facilitate geopolitical Latin American integration, whilst also claiming to function as a reaction to US cultural imperialism (Canizalez and Lugo-Ocando, 2008) in its articulation of a largely confrontational foreign policy tone. *Telesur* started its transmissions on July 2005, and was created in a partnership that included not only Venezuela, but also Cuba, Argentina and Uruguay. It was modelled on the assumption of being a counter-weight to the market media, offering educational programmes in the Spanish language relevant to the country of origin.

Although it does strike comparisons as well with the Brazilian *TV Brasil*, *Telesur* has been constructed on a largely different political agenda than the former, which is striving to model public-committed broadcasters like the UK's BBC. However, fears and anxieties concerning how both stations could be used as the state's ideological tool are shared by elites in both countries. *Telesur's* emergence has also been seen as a response to the 1970s and 1980s debates on the unevenness in international flows, but it has taken on a more leftist radical rhetoric which caused countries like Brazil to withdraw their support and concentrate on their own public media (Canizalez and Lugo-Ocando, 2008, 216).

Promoted as an alternative to US and UK news, Venezuela's *Telesur* is part of the country's public diplomacy and aims to serve national geopolitical interests. It has included famous intellectuals such as Eduardo Galeano and Tariq Ali as part of the advisory council of the station in a strive to link the channel to other global resistance movements (Canizalez and Lugo-Ocando, 2008, 212-214). *Telesur* is however viewed with suspicion by Colombian elites, and is seen as

being a vehicle of ideological alliance with Cuba against the US. Brazilian politicians have also perceived it to be a threat to their own regional hegemony (Canizalez and Lugo-Ocando, 2008, 222)^{xiii}.

Immersed in media hype and frowned upon by sectors of the market and the opposition, which accused it of being a new ‘TV Lula’, *TV Brasil*, part of the public media platform *Empresa Brasileira de Comunicacao* (EBC), was launched by the Ministry of Culture and the Brazilian government in December 2008. The total funding for *EBC* includes money from the federal government as well as donations. According to the former minister of Communications, Franklin Martins^{xiv}, the new channel received a budget of R\$ 350 million. The main programming is provided by Rio’s educational television (*TVE*), with two programmes from *Radiobras*. The morning slot is largely dedicated to children’s shows as well as distant learning programming. The latter is also broadcast on *TV Globo*’s cable channel, *Canal Futura*.

The current Brazilian TV market, which is funded with public resources, includes the television stations *TV Cultura*, which has an annual budget of R\$ 160 million; *Radiobras*, with R\$ 100 million; *TVE*, which had R\$ 35 million in 2004, and which has been incorporated into *TV Brasil*. There are also other resources which go to the television stations of the Legislative federal, state and municipal powers, plus *TV Justica* and university channels (Possebon, 2007, 290), all of which have a low audience rating.

Nonetheless, according to *Abepec* (Brazilian Association of Public Educational and Cultural Stations), with less than two years of its existence, *TV Brasil* is watched regularly by 10% of the population and has 80% of the audiences’ approval. Twenty-two per cent considered the programming excellent, and 58% classified it as ‘good’. The research was conducted during the 18th and 22nd of August 2009, with 5.192 people being interviewed throughout Brazil. One of the most popular programmes of the station is *Nova Africa* (New Africa).

Given the culture of interference of politicians and pressure placed on the media in the country, academics like Antonio Brasil^{xv} have made pessimistic claims, affirming that there is no room in Latin America for a public communication system inspired on the UK's BBC. Brasil sees *TV Cultura* as being the closest example of a public media designed along similar lines. Another problem is the historical tradition of misuse of public communication resources for personal and political interests. Eugenio Bucci, former president of *Radiobras*, believes however that the public media in Brazil has in overall improved since the launch of *TV Brasil*. *TVE* and *TV Nacional*, which joined to form *TV Brasil*, have grown since the launch of the latter. Perhaps where the public media is differing most also from the commercial stations is in regards to the production of distinctive cultural and historical programmes, like *TV Brasil's Almanaque Brasil*, *Sustentaculos* and *Brasilianas.org*.

The journalism staff at *TV Brasil* has been built around largely professional norms. It includes names of professionals who worked for the mainstream media, such as the current president of *EBC*, Tereza Cruvinel, former *O Globo* columnist. Some of the subjects explored by *TV Brasil* have included the social programmes implemented by the Lula government, including the *Bolsa Familia*. Programmes like *Brasilianas.org* and *Caminhos de Reportagem (Ways of Reporting)* nonetheless have strived to investigate issues which are part of the national-political agenda. The former program is structured around interviews with famous experts, whilst the latter provides in depth analyses of selected topics.

TV Globo has also produced some similar in depth reporting occasionally in its Sunday magazine-format show, *Fantastico*, as well as other shows like 'Brasileiros.' The latter examines human interest stories about people who have managed to transcend barriers. One of the more subtle differences between the two nonetheless is *Reporter Brasil's* wider emphasis on stories on poverty, the improvement of the lives of the working-classes and wealth distribution programs. Thus the wider democratization of the Brazil media, issues that are developed elsewhere (Matos,

2008, 2012) is seen as a necessity alongside other reforms and challenges, which I mentioned briefly in this paper, and which are aimed at reaching greater economic and social equality as well as further democratization. Notably, the media in Brazil, from the public media to the Internet and other outlets, can be seen as destined to play a larger role in the deepening of democracy in the country, in the same way that mainstream newspapers also performed this role, however contradictory and embedded still in social hierarchies and authoritarianism, in the last decades (Matos, 2008). Lastly, it is to the current challenges confronting the whole of Latin America, mainly the reduction of economic inequalities and its wider insertion within globalization as a more equal and influential player in the international stage, that I turn to next.

Cosmopolitan democracy and inequality in Latin America: towards a politics of social justice and a new global order

Globalization has had many consequences for the distribution of power and wealth both within *and* between countries. Imperialism theses and perspectives which predominated during the 1970s underlined how developing countries had established in the contemporary period a relationship of subordination in relation to the First World countries that had its historical roots in European colonialism. The increasing insertion of many Latin America countries in globalization from the 1990s onwards following the end of the dictatorships, and the gradual adoption of neoliberal policies and philosophy of state dismantling, began to nonetheless slowly expose the contradictions of the whole Western globalization process.

Authors writing critically about globalization like Petras (in Chilcote, 1999, 184) have argued that ‘the current expansion of capital, goods and technology (CGT) via unequal relations in the contemporary period is a continuation of the imperialist relations of the past’. As Petras further states, *globalization* can be understood as a deepening and extension of the past exploitative class

relations into areas previously outside capitalist production. According to the 2005 UN Human Development Report for instance, which is sceptical about the effects of globalization on inequality, the world's richest 500 individuals have a combined income greater than that of the poorest 416 million. As Burity (2009, 173) further points out, all the richest 10% live in the high-income countries (UNDP, 2005, p. 4; Sen, 2002, in Burity, 2009).

Taking these definitions as a starting point, one can begin to articulate alternative conceptions of globalization that are of benefit to all of the parties involved and result in more equitable power relations, less global inequality and exploitation of various groups at either the national or global level. It would thus make more sense to envision an alternative conception of globalization, rooted on socio-economic development for Third World countries and based on more equal power relations between advanced and emerging societies, wider political participation of developing nations on the international stage and the building of a stronger internal industrial market.

The European Commission claims that it aims to fortify the Latin American strategy and the challenges it is encountering in regards to the consolidation of democracy, including regional integration (i.e. the *Mercosur* project); the promotion of human rights and more equitable wealth distribution as well as sustainable development and investment in human capital. The European Commission initiated a partnership with Latin America during the Rio summit in 1992, and which was re-established in 1999 to strengthen the links between the nations and to promote further integration of the region into the world economy. The European Union is also Latin America's main source of development assistance, and it is the region's second largest trade and investment partner. Furthermore, as Gwynne (Gwynne and Kay, 1999, 69) notes, the development of *Mercosur* around Argentina and Brazil has created a counter-weight to the US and NAFTA, as the former is considered to be the third most significant 'trading block in terms of production and population after the European Union and NAFTA'.

As Blaug and Schwarzmantel (2000, 1) affirm, several countries have not achieved the goal of becoming fully democratic states and are encountering various difficulties in putting into practice the core values of democratic theory given the complexities of economic globalization, national politics, cultural changes and international migration. Blaug and Schwarzmantel (2000) have further asserted that the ideal of democracy has been criticised from across the political spectrum, from Marxism to Feminist theorists, and mainly on the grounds that it places too many demands on people and is highly optimistic about human nature.

Many countries, ranging from advanced democracies like the UK to transitional societies like Brazil, also are embedded still in structures of oppression based on race, class and gender, with variations between countries but with a clear stagnation of human rights of such groups as well as reversal of equality rights since the economic recession of 2008. In Brazil, race oppression of mainly Afro-Brazilians and gender inequality, violence towards women and a culture still of *machismo* that keeps many women *in their place*, and which has been contradictorily responsible for the rise of female leaders throughout the continent in the last years (see Matos, 2012), are everyday realities. For democratic struggle, as Blaug and Schwarzmantel (2000) further note, is above all about expanding the space for the inclusion of a wider citizen body, avoiding exclusions based either on property, gender, race or ethnicity which is a problem of both developed *and* developing societies alike.

After taking into consideration their historical differences, levels of economic and political development, power and wealth, we can see that democracies across the world in an age of globalization face similar democratic struggles in regards to inequality of income, economic deprivation, social exclusion of certain segments of society and poverty as well as various other forms of taken for granted injustices. Thus a more participatory form of democracy should work from the global to the local level, and it should also pay attention to structural inequalities both between and within countries.

Globalization is a complex process that has both conservative as well as progressive tendencies, and which can be better understood in its plural sense, of ‘many globalizations and paths of development’ (i.e. Neverdeen Pieterse, 2009). What we term the *progressive* dimension of globalization – such as the wider global political role that should be given to developing countries to participate more in the global public sphere in order to debate their dilemmas and problems of underdevelopment in order to overcome them - is the most challenging, even ambitious, but undoubtedly the best way forward.

What are then the forms of alternative globalization and development for the national interest? The fact of the matter is that Latin America still remains a somewhat forgotten region, subjected and subordinated to Western powers and highly constrained and oppressed economically, political, culturally and socially. Thus genuine democratic global governance and cooperation between countries in the pursuit of similar aims, and with the intention of tackling similar problems (i.e. economic recession and growing inequality), demands the establishment, creation and fortification of better and more equitable relationships, including a more participatory or *cosmopolitan* form of global democracy (Held, 1999). This needs to function on both a global and national level, and should not benefit only small groups from the advanced democracies.

Brazil and Latin America should thus pursue their own path of development, seeking to insert themselves within globalization in a way that undermines growing global inequalities and dependency of the developing countries on the rich nations, something which is already beginning to happen with the rise of the BRIC countries and the economic growth of countries like Brazil and India, as we have seen. Notably, global development, or the formation of a *global partnership* for development between ‘First’ and ‘Third’ World countries, has been included as one among the eight goals envisioned by *UN’s 2000 Millennium Development* aims.

Globalization and internationalism do have the capacity of functioning as progressive forces which can contribute to reverse or minimise this state of things, especially in an age of increasing

racism, worldwide economic recession and ‘crisis’ of European multiculturalism and reinforcement of nationalistic sentiment. Thus it is to a more participatory and/or ‘cosmopolitan’ model of democracy, one which envisions democratic participation at the global, national, regional and local levels, and the strive to reinforce the progressive dimensions of globalization, as briefly outlined in this paper. For as Blaug and Schwarzmantel (2000) underpin, a society, be it in a developed or developing country, dominated by the market or by sectional group interests may be on the way to digging democracy’s own grave.

Conclusion

We have seen in this paper how Brazil has been on a path of change in all spheres, from the political, to the economic, social as well as cultural (in the field of media and communications) since the years of the dictatorship and mainly from the mid-1990s onwards following the social and economic reforms implemented by the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-2002) and Lula (2002-2010). This has evidently had an impact in its slow change of image in the world stage, and in its inclusion as member of the emerging economies alongside Russia, India and China (BRICs).

I have emphasised here how the political liberalization of the country in the last three decades has not been enough to guarantee full media democratization in Brazil. Traditionally media players like *TV Globo*, who have had a major role in identity construction in the country and an ambiguous relationship with the country’s political democratization, have slowly lost ground to other media outlets which have emerged in the last years, including new websites and an emerging blogosphere on the Internet as well as new public media stations like *TV Brasil*.

There are still various roadblocks in the way of advancing media democratization and reform, which persistent throughout much of Latin America but are especially problematic in Brazil, as I

discuss in detail elsewhere (Matos, 2012). Media reform is one among many of the challenges that the country faces, which include the continuous reduction of inequality levels; the granting of wider opportunities to employment and quality education to various segments of the population independently of class, race, gender and background; the elimination of populations living in shanty-towns; the boosting of the country's competitiveness through major investments in the training of staff and in the hiring of highly skilled professionals in national firms and industries; the investment in more quality education, from primary level to universities, with better salaries for teachers, and a more robust and competitive international higher education market as well as the building of more modern roads, public and council housing and improvements in the transport system.

Obviously all of this requires proper political will, a reduction of corruption in governmental practices, a stronger commitment by decision-making elites of constructing a country for all of its citizens, an undermining of selfishness and greed and a cultivation of a wider public spirit, followed by true compromise and willingness of helping build a more prosperous nation for future generations to live in well. These are some of the many challenges that I highlighted here as challenges that Brazil needs to confront in order to become a more truly advanced democracy for a wider majority of its citizens, finally leaving the stage of being accused of conducting some "minor" changes only for "the English to see".

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Endnotes

ⁱ The expression in Portuguese is “Para Inglês ver”, which is used to refer to changes that are superficial and artificial and not structural. It is used as a form of suspicion towards changes that do not tackle structural inequalities and that are destined to be short-lived.

ⁱⁱ “Brasil deve supercar Italia em 2011” (*Brazil will surpass Italy in 2011*, *O Globo*, 10/12/2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ According to the story “Brazil deve ser a quinta economia do mundo em 2013” (*Gazeta do Povo*, 06/12/2012), Brazil is set to have an economic growth of 3.9% in 2013 and 4% in the following year, with both France and the UK losing ground for Brazil and India, which is destined to be the sixth biggest economy in the world in 2015.

^{iv} See details of the report “Retrato das desigualdades de genero e raca” (Portrait of gender and race inequality) – 3rd edition in the bibliography.

^v The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been signed by 20 countries in December 1960, with 14 other countries having become also member since then, including Chile and Mexico from South and Central America and countries from the former Eastern European bloc alongside Northern and Southern Europe, Scandinavia, US and Australia and New Zealand.

^{vi} See interview given by USP professor Rodolfo Hoffman in “Desafio de uma geracao – Trazer a desigualdade a niveis de Primeiro Mundo levaria 20 anos, diz especialista” (*Challenge of a generation – bringing inequality to levels of the First World would take 20 years, says expert*, *O Globo*, 27/12/09).

^{vii} See “Lula hails oil-fuelled ‘30-year boom’” in *The Guardian* (27/09/10).

^{viii} See chapter on the Internet and the public media in McChesney, R. (eds) edited book on *Media and Power in South America*, forthcoming Palgrave Macmillan 2014.

^{ix} The report was the result of the debates that were held in the 2006 *International Intergovernmental Programme Council for the Development of Communications* (IPDC).

^x *Regulatory framework of communications in Brazil: an analysis of the system in the light of the international experience*. Information obtained from Unesco’s press release, *Unesco no Brasil lanca projetos na area de desenvolvimento de midia*, and from the translated version of the Unesco report.

^{xi} Canada, UK, Tailand, US, Chile, France, Malaysia, Jamaica, South Africa and Germany.

^{xii} “TV Brasil internacional – Na disputa por espacos de expressao” (*TV Brasil international – in the dispute for spaces of expression*, *Observatorio da Imprensa*, 01/06/2010).

^{xiii} The initial idea proposed by president Hugo Chavez was that the network would incorporate content from the public broadcasters of Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela in order to present the social realities of Latin America, although the main content focuses on news. It would have a network of correspondents in LA, Mexico, Bogota, Lima, Buenos Aires, Brasilia and Rio, with the channel’s share being divided between Venezuela (46%), Argentina (20%), Cuba (19%) and Uruguay (10%). Bolivia and Ecuador have shares of 5%. The initial amount of investment of US\$ 10 million was paid by the Venezuelan government through the state-owned Petroleum Corporation (Canizalez and Lugo-Ocando, 2008, 213).

^{xiv} Interviewed by telephone on August the 5th, 2010.

^{xv} Interviewed via e-mail on the 10/08/2010.