



The Press and Classical Populism in Argentina and Brazil

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Comparison of the policies vis-à-vis the press of the classical populist governments of Argentina and Brazil reveals that the populist elites came into conflict with traditional media elites over exclusionary views that modified the contours of the public sphere. Newspapers committed to liberal principles engaged in intransigent struggle with populism, and this struggle created opportunities for new entrepreneurs to form political alliances with these governments to expand their businesses. The relationship between these “mediatized populisms” and the new media entrepreneurs contributed to the patrimonialism that came to characterize the link between the media and Latin American states in subsequent years.

Una comparación de las políticas relativas a la prensa por parte de los gobiernos populistas clásicos de Argentina y Brasil muestra que las élites populistas entraron en conflicto con las élites de los medios tradicionales. Dichas desavenencias fueron causadas por puntos de vista excluyentes que alteraban el contorno de la esfera pública. Los periódicos comprometidos con los principios liberales sostuvieron una lucha intransigente con el populismo, lucha que dio la oportunidad a nuevos empresarios de formar alianzas políticas con dichos gobiernos y expandir así sus negocios. La relación entre estos “populismos mediáticos” y los empresarios de los nuevos medios contribuyó al patrimonialismo que asumiría el vínculo entre dichos medios y los Estados latinoamericanos en años subsiguientes.

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Given the current strained relations between the so-called national-popular Latin American governments and the press, it is of interest to reexamine the media policies of the classical populist regimes (Peronism [1946–1955] and Vargism [1930–1945 and 1951–1954]). The clash between the traditional media elites and the new populist ones contributed to political polarization, involving contestation over the contours of the public sphere as social subjects previously excluded, disdained, or ignored by the liberal elites burst into it. The central

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issue was the power struggle between reformist populism and the traditional media over the meaning of “democratization.” For the traditional oligarchies, the public sphere was meant to represent a range of views and was understood as a space for exchanging ideas that were the product of “enlightened reason.” For populism, the public sphere was not a given, and its expansion involved limiting the participation of viewpoints and social groups that opposed its narrative.

Canovan (1999) argues that democracy has two interdependent faces, one redemptive and the other pragmatic. The redemptive dimension involves an impulse against bureaucracy and the pragmatic dimension a spur to directness and spontaneity. When a gap is created between the two, emptying formal democracy of its content, populist leaders arise who promise to replace “dirty,” bureaucratic party politics with a democratic renewal that has popular legitimacy. This redemptive dimension fosters a renewal of faith that is important for institutions and for democracy itself. Populism, then, is an appeal to the people in opposition to the structure of power and dominant ideas and values, and populists claim legitimacy by speaking to the people, arguing that they represent democratic sovereignty rather than particular interests. Populism is a “politics of faith” that involves popular mobilization and enthusiasm—religious or secular salvation in the redemptive dimension of democracy—and is therefore impatient with legal restrictions that stand in the way of salvation.

Latin America is characterized by a constant contradiction between the discourse of the liberal elites that founded the nation-states and the concrete practices of exclusion and repression employed by the politically dominant oligarchic regimes (Ansaldi, 1992; Rouquié, 2011). Thus, the liberal constitutions created by the elites display serious discrepancies between the promises made in their formal principles and the application of those principles in practice. The gap that fostered the emergence of populism in Latin America lies in the inability of the nineteenth-century elites to fulfill their liberal promises.

James Cane (2011), examining the relationship between the Peronism of 1946–1955 and the press, points out that Peronist discourse regarding the media repeated the unfulfilled promises of nineteenth-century liberal discourse, envisioning a genuinely open and participatory public sphere—promises that were in fact empty. The redemptive dimension of democracy in populist discourse was situated in this gap between discourse and practice. Populism’s legitimacy came from an appeal to popular sovereignty—its promise of representation for the excluded (Cane, 2011).

In contrast, Waisbord (2013) points out that populist discourse tends to denounce the concentration of media ownership (and therefore to advocate its democratization) while at the same time fostering top-down communication and centralization of the communications agenda in the presidency. His view on the link between populism and the media is closer to that of De Ípola and Portantiero (1981), who see it as a complex and contradictory articulation between the “national-statist” and the “national-popular” in which there is alternation between popular empowerment and top-down centralization in the figure of the leader. The problem with these theories is that they are ahistorical and thus at risk of falling into essentialist assumptions about changing historical phenomena.

Francisco Panizza (2014) identifies “an inevitable tension between the majoritarian logic of populism and the pluralist logic of liberalism” that partly explains the clashes between the press and the classical populist governments. One feature of classical populism (see Capelato, 2013; Córdova, 2014; Gomes, 1994; Laclau, 2007; Weffort, 1999) is the incorporation of previously excluded sectors into the citizenry, something that characterized both the Vargas regime in Brazil and Peron’s administration in Argentina. Insofar as it brings formerly excluded sectors into effective citizenship, populism appeals to popular sovereignty to legitimize its practices. This Rousseauvian legitimation tends to clash with the principles of liberal democracy, as Steve Ellner (2012) has pointed out in referring to Venezuelan Chavismo as “radical social democracy.” In other words, inasmuch as populism identifies its interest as representation of popular sovereignty and the nation as a whole, this majoritarian logic tends to reshape the contours of the public sphere to the detriment of “minority” views.

When it comes to the media, this results in a contradictory relationship that, while affirming the principles of an extended representation that meets the unfulfilled promises of liberalism and redefines representation in the public sphere, tends toward the potential suppression of external pluralism¹ when it seeks to annul those viewpoints that do not correspond to its dominant interpretation of the political and social reality legitimated by popular sovereignty. In this regard, Kitzberger (2014) disagrees with Waisbord’s focus on ideology in distinguishing the policies of governments he classifies as “populist” or “social-democrat” and argues that populist policies are the result not of preexisting ideologies but of power relations and institutional conditions in particular contexts. Both writers are correct on one point: There is a tendency in populist ideology to question the concentration of media ownership and seek reforms and, as Waisbord posits, a tension between popular empowerment and top-down power centralization. However, the way in which the conflict between populism and the private media plays out in each country is a response to power relations and cultural and institutional conditions. In certain contexts this can better explain this conflict than any a priori definition based on ideology, which, as Kitzberger suggests, may act as a bias in an attempt to understand the empirical dynamics of this clash.

Capelato’s (1998) classic work analyzed political propaganda under Vargism and Peronism, and Fiorucci (2004) addressed these regimes’ relationships with intellectuals. Their addressing Vargism only during the period of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship causes Capelato to interpret populism as authoritarianism and dismiss its democratizing nature (more often associated with Peronism and the second Vargas administration) and Fiorucci to conclude that Vargism was “less populist” than Peronism. Capelato pays too much attention to theories that associate populism with European fascism, sidelining interpretations such as those of García (2008) and Sader (2009) that highlight the particular features of Latin American populism. The latter point out that the anti-imperialism of the region’s populisms helps distinguish them from the European fascisms. Gené (2005) has criticized Capelato’s work by noting that the public relations and communications policies of the classical Latin American populist regimes (particularly during the first Peronist period), although reflecting a range of

influences, were closer to those of the U.S. New Deal than to the European fascisms.

I argue that, while Vargism emphasized its authoritarian and national-statist dimension during its first period, in the second it tended toward the national-popular. Peronism, in contrast, exhibited a tension between these two aspects from the start, beginning with an emphasis on the national-popular (through the power accorded to the union movement and its various expressions) and emphasizing the national-statist toward the end.

With regard to Vargist and Peronist policies dealing with the press, my hypothesis is that populism's pursuit of reorganization and expansion of the public sphere led to a confrontation between the traditional media elites and the new populist ones that created an opportunity for new political alliances between media owners and the state. I differentiate here between the stance taken toward these populist regimes by the liberal-conservative press (e.g., *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *La Prensa*) and that of newer and more commercial newspapers such as *O Globo* and *Clarín*. My aim is to contribute to an understanding of "mediatized populism" in the relationship between the state and the media in both Argentina and Brazil. This developing link was to play a crucial role in the evolution of the media system.

VARGISM(S) AND PERONISM: STRATEGIES INVOLVING THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Perón and Vargas had in common an early ability to introduce innovations in the traditional forms of political communication. During the presidential campaign of 1930 with the Liberal Alliance, Getúlio Vargas took Brazil to places unexplored by previous political campaigns and established a link with the powerful media entrepreneur Assis Chateaubriand, owner of *Cruzeiro* (Neto, 2012). Perón launched an innovative campaign in 1945 (Mercado, 2013), using new newspapers such as *La Época* and *Democracia* to counteract the attacks of the traditional media *La Nación* and *La Prensa*. In both cases there was a search for new resources for political communication as tools for the construction of populist leaderships. Charisma was another element that was amplified and solidified via types of mediation that were innovative at the time.

Peronism's Undersecretariat of Information, headed by the journalist Raúl Apold, and the Estado Novo's Department of Press and Public Relations, led by the journalist Lourival Fontes, played active roles in the dissemination of government information and the creation of a centralized strategy with regard to the press. The Undersecretariat became increasingly influential as the government developed, coordinating official public relations, controlling the distribution of newsprint on the basis of political affinities, and organizing popular events to celebrate the government. It was also responsible for the development of information to be disseminated abroad, an important concern of the Peronist political elite. Countries such as the United States, Brazil, Spain, Chile,² France, and England were prioritized. As was noted in a December 1947 communiqué to Undersecretary Emilio Cipolletti,³

As the undersecretary may surmise, this agency is intended to fulfill a felt need: to organize the distribution of information abroad, an aspect that, in our opinion, has not yet been addressed with the decision and breadth that the emerging interest in our country currently demands following the great achievements of the present government; these have not only garnered the near unanimous support of our people but also managed to awaken a new awareness in various nations around the world.

On the other hand, the purpose of disseminating effective public relations abroad responds to the express wish of our Highest Authority, to prevent initiatives of singular local and international importance from remaining unknown by the peoples of other nations or being made known in a distorted fashion for purposes that need not be pointed out in this note.

Apold played a very important role in Peronist communications. He had influence on Eva Perón (Evita), for whom he prepared or edited several speeches, and on *Democracia*, which he headed from 1947 on and which became “the Señora’s” favorite medium.

As Cane (2011) has stressed, Perón defended his journalists as workers engaged in a struggle against the “commercial greed” of the large newspapers. For example, in a speech during the closing ceremony of the Second Congress of the Argentine Press Union in 1955, Perón said:⁴

Fortunately, it has been years, constructive years of work. And just as, at that time, I said I would do everything I could so that journalism would belong to journalists, I want to tell you today, on the occasion of this Congress, that I have fulfilled that promise and that, every day, journalism will belong more and more to journalists and less to the business owners.

The Peronist strategy entailed the gradual acquisition of newspapers to be subordinated to the government’s discourse. In this regard, Varela (2007: 12) points out that Peronism countered “imperialist advertising” with systematic public relations about the “revolution” and the welfare of the Argentine people. Thus, “the image of workers, children, the elderly, and Argentine families was crowned by the attentive presences of Perón and Evita, who ensured the well-being of the nation.” He recognizes that the strategy of media centralization and concentration reached its peak during Perón’s second term (1952–1955), when Peronism adopted a more authoritarian approach to the press, tending to reduce external pluralism in favor of national-statist unity. Thus it sought to subordinate the media system to a celebration of the president and of governmental measures in the face of “antipatriotic,” “communist,” or “foreign” interests.

In Brazil the 1930 revolution, which put an end to the dominance of traditional oligarchies and elevated Getúlio Vargas to the presidency, profoundly altered the press. The disputes within the alliance that had brought Vargas to power between the liberal sectors and those more closely aligned with the military were reflected in different attitudes toward the press (Pilgallo, 2012: 93). Sodré (2007: 277) points out that

since most of the newspapers linked to the pre-1930 context did not yet have the material means to resume circulation, a new opposition press emerged

from the divergences between the triumphant factions of the October movement. Rio's *Diário Carioca*, which owed its influence to that movement, broke with the government shortly after the latter was installed. In February 1932 a group of army officers sacked its offices in Tiradentes Square.

The press and other media underwent strict censorship during the first years of the Vargas administration, especially during the Estado Novo dictatorship. Estado Novo ideologues were critical of the liberal press and associated it with the dissemination of ideas that they thought would lead to "social anarchy" (Capelato, 1989). Because the press was viewed as a public utility, all newspapers had to publish the government's releases to avoid having their editors imprisoned.⁵

At the same time, Vargas systematically employed the media from his seat of power to construct political legitimacy. The Department of Public Information and Cultural Dissemination was created during his first administration, between 1934 and 1937, and rebaptized as the Department of Press and Public Information in 1939 (Abreu, 2001). From then on and following the lead of the journalist Lourival Fontes, this machinery would focus on the construction of a national narrative that celebrated the president as the "father of the poor." The department's image of the president was, in turn, supported by the censored press, which published only news favorable to the government (Liedtke, 2008: 33).

The state agencies that played key roles in the creation and image of Perón as the "first worker," Eva Perón as the "spiritual leader of the nation" (and, after her death in 1952, as the "illustrious departed" and a "martyr of labor"), and Vargas as "father of the poor" deployed a powerful state-based narrative that nurtured the popular support (Capelato, 1989) that was part of these leaders' political capital after they were deposed by the military (Vargas in 1945, Perón in 1955). Their modes of communication with their followers had some common features. Certain dates, for example, were celebrated with popular rituals (e.g., October 17 for Peronism, May 1 for both Vargism and Peronism); these refreshed the bond between the leader and his followers, recalling past triumphs and pointing toward the future (Gomes, 1994). These events, which granted pride of place to those who had been excluded, reaffirmed their incorporation into political and social life and linked this new status to the governments in place.

The refoundational nature of populism (Aboy, 2013) had concrete effects on the government's management of the news media, especially media outlets under government control: a narrative that tended to contrast the shameful past and the prosperous present was established. Peronist newspapers such as *La Época*, *Democracia*, and *El Líder* constructed this narrative by condemning the past and defending the present, and the same can be said of *O Estado de S. Paulo* during the Estado Novo and of Vargist newspapers such as *Diário Carioca*. The subsequent evolution of the bond between populist political process and the news media, however, seems to have taken opposing paths in the two cases. The Peronist government moved from tolerance of external pluralism to centralizing practices via the purchase of the major media outlets (Cane, 2011; Mercado, 2013; Sivak, 2013) and the ALEA government chain,⁶ in addition to curbing opposition newspapers with restricted newsprint distribution and the

expropriation of *La Prensa* in 1951. In Vargas's case, while his first administration implemented authoritarian censorship, his second (1951–1954) sought to adhere to democratic institutionality, a goal that clashed with Vargism's authoritarian elements. The persistence of these elements in the new institutional and democratic context led to an attempt to assassinate the journalist Carlos Lacerda in August 1954.

The democratic framework developed in Brazil with the 1946 Constitution conditioned and limited new restrictions on freedom of expression. As Panizza (2013) explains, it is institutions that condition the framework within which populism operates; while populist appeals are compatible with a variety of ideological formulations and institutional configurations, their effects are contained within political institutions. Thus, in the new liberal-democratic constitutional context developed after 1946, Vargas surrounded himself with a new political elite whose main representatives were the journalist Samuel Wainer and the politician João Goulart. Both were attracted to Vargas's labor policies rather than to his authoritarian past. These new Vargists sought to establish a liberal-democratic relationship between the press and the rule of law.

Vargas wanted to show his opponents, the União Democrática Nacional (National Democratic Union—UDN) and the liberals, that his new government, unlike the *Estado Novo*, would be a democratic one (Neto, 2013). His second term therefore allowed ample freedom of expression, even in a context of intense and growing political polarization. In contrast, Peronism expanded state power over the print media during its second period (Sivak, 2013), the most representative moment in this regard being the takeover of *La Prensa*.

During the second Vargist government, journalistic conflict manifested itself in the creation of *Última Hora*, a newspaper funded by the Bank of Brazil and designed to defend the government. Sensing that the press had turned on him (Wainer, 1987), Vargas used third parties and the bank to issue loans to Wainer, who had worked with him on the 1950 election campaign, allowing him to finance a new newspaper that was close to the government. This paper revitalized journalism, introducing innovations in graphic presentation, news content, and business strategy (Goulart, 2007: 99), and this spirit brought it success in the Rio de Janeiro market. For his part, the opposition journalist Carlos Lacerda established *Tribuna da Imprensa*,⁷ which was critical of Vargism and greatly influenced public opinion. The subsequent journalistic battles involved the confrontation between these two newspapers. Vargas was besieged by the UDN and the press, and now he had limited power in this regard. His political capital had been eroded by a scandal involving *Última Hora* and attacks on Labor Minister João Goulart, while Lacerda's antigovernment discourse was becoming increasingly notorious in Rio society. Gregorio Fortunato, a loyal Vargas follower for more than 30 years and a member of the presidential guard, understood, from the message being circulated among those close to the presidency, that Lacerda, who was using *TV Tupi*, *Radio Globo*, and *Tribuna da Imprensa* to shake up Rio's middle sectors and discredit the administration with charges of corruption, had to be taught a lesson.

The failed attack on Lacerda's life that took place early in the morning of August 5, 1954, and resulted in the death of the air force officer Rubens Vaz did irreparable damage to the government. The defamatory and threatening tone

of the press intensified (Capelato, 2013). Since Fortunato's envoy had failed to kill Lacerda, Vargas now had to face the air force and the army. While the air force, which had been directly affected, confronted the government, the army was initially divided over this turn of events (Abreu and Lattman-Weltman, 1994: 36). The air force said that it would investigate the crime—a stance that enjoyed both social and military legitimacy—and initiated the so-called Republic of Galeão, where those involved in Vaz's murder were to be investigated. The opposition's rhetoric flared up, and military pressure increased. Vaz's death was touted by the opposition press and the UDN as a humiliation of the armed forces (Ferreira, 2011).

Vice President João Café Filho suggested that both he and the president resign, but Vargas rejected this option. A manifesto issued by the army demanding Vargas's resignation put him in an untenable position. He chose to "exit life to enter history," as he put it in a farewell letter (a text that would play a fundamental role for the *trabalhismo* movement, which sought to regain the initiative). The disruption caused by his death was immense. Protests erupted around the country, causing disturbances in Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, and Porto Alegre, and the offices of *Tribuna da Imprensa* and *O Globo* were attacked. These demonstrations prevented a coup (Abreu and Lattman-Weltman, 1994), and Vargas's suicide caused a combination of depression and euphoria among UDN supporters, preventing them from coordinating an effective strategy for seizing power (Benevides, 1981: 90).

In summary, while in Peronism we see a strategy of gradually purchasing media outlets to ensure their political alignment with the government, in Brazil authoritarian restrictions gave way to a period in which the government's only move to control the media was the creation of *Última Hora* with a loan from the Bank of Brazil. This strategy was compatible with external pluralism in a media system that differed from that of Peronism,⁸ allowing for the existence of private media free from state interference. Paradoxically, this broad spectrum of opposing media contributed to the terminal crisis of the second Vargas administration, revealing how difficult it was for a Latin American populist government to coexist with traditional media elites in a context of pluralism.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The clash between populist governments and traditional media elites created opportunities for other media outlets. The journalistic entrepreneurs Roberto Marinho and Roberto Noble established a new kind of relationship with the state—one characterized by constant negotiation and political adaptation. An analysis of their main publications, *O Globo* and *Clarín*, attests to an editorial approach that sought to rise above political conflict and represent the nation while remaining close enough to the state to ensure access to government loans and newsprint (Goldstein, 2017; Sivak, 2013).

Since its establishment in 1925, *O Globo* had adopted a discreet and conservative line. During the Estado Novo, it gave in to government pressure and took an editorial stance that favored the regime, with Marinho even participating in the Department of Press and Public Relations. However, as the government

weakened, the newspaper began to advocate free elections and support the UDN's Eduardo Gomes (Goulart, 2007: 73). During the second Vargas administration, the paper oscillated between government support and criticism until the growing political crisis and the change in the social climate led it to denounce the administration's "political scandals." Commercially speaking, Marinho's businesses were among the most favored during the 1950s, obtaining more than US\$1 million in loans from the Bank of Brazil with advantageous repayment conditions (Goulart, 2007: 31).

The Argentine Noble, for his part, ignored Perón during the 1946 campaign and offered the pages of *Clarín* to the Democratic Union. Sivak (2013: 66) points out that this "civic courage lasted one semester. He then moved from total rejection to interspersed criticism, and worked hard to find points of agreement with Perón." From then until the last days of the presidency in 1955, he defended the government's agenda. In exchange, he enjoyed the concomitant state benefits, including newsprint, bank loans, and advertising. After the 1955 coup, *Clarín* moved within a matter of hours to endorse the discourse of *Revolución Libertadora*, which spoke of the fall of the "dictatorship" and the "fugitive tyrant."

Noble built a mutually beneficial bond with Apold: *Clarín* circulated the work of the powerful undersecretary in exchange for preferential treatment regarding paper imports. Their correspondence is evidence of this: while most of the people who wrote to Apold did so with the utmost reverence in recognition of his influence over Perón and Evita, Noble and the *clarinistas* spoke to him as presumed equals.⁹ *Clarín* used the conditions provided by the Peronist regime to maximize commercial benefits, demanding that negotiations with the state be entered into on equal terms.

Both Noble and Marinho built early political alliances with the populisms in power to consolidate their investments in the media market. They also sought strategies of rapprochement with the state through strategies different from those of the liberal-conservative press. *La Prensa* and *O Estado de S. Paulo* severely attacked the populist leaders on ideological and political grounds and were uncompromising in their values. The new entrepreneurs, in contrast, sought to build media that, by taking corporate shape and negotiating with the government and significantly popular leaders, could increase sales and expansion toward new audiences. They also demonstrated an increased capacity to adapt to volatile conditions and changes in political junctures.

In a media market characterized by the dominance of traditional elites and ideological polarization, the persistence of entrepreneurs such as Alberto Gainza Paz and Julio de Mesquita Filho opened new avenues of opportunity for the likes of Noble and Marinho. They were willing to put their powerful media vehicles at the service of populism in exchange for an increased presence in the media market, whereas *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *La Prensa* had a loyal and established liberal-conservative audience by the time populism emerged. Both papers, founded in 1875 and 1869, respectively, had a long tradition. By contrast, *O Globo* and *Clarín*, founded in 1925 and 1945, respectively, had yet to find or consolidate a national market and build a relationship with an audience. Their material conditions allowed them less autonomy in the face of political power. That said, their owners also had a new view of their link with the state,

which they viewed as negotiable and as an avenue for reaching new audiences. The takeover of *O Estado de S. Paulo* in 1940, during the Estado Novo, and the exile of the Mesquita family had led to a deep mistrust on the part of the paper's owners with regard to the presumed democratic character of the 1951 Vargas administration. They feared more censorship and repression. The paper used its views on Vargas's inherent authoritarianism to erode his second government, opposed to its interests, and identified every action and word of the "former dictator" as a gradual move toward dictatorship (Goldstein, 2017).

In Argentina, *La Prensa*, owned by the Gainza Paz family, which had links to the U.S. embassy and a great deal of influence over the Latin American press, embodied the nation's liberal-conservative stance and became the center of the dispute over political power. According to this paper, "Perón was the natural offspring of the antiliberal military regime, and the rise of his policies was proof that he was a demagogue similar to Hitler or Mussolini, building an antidemocratic regime akin to European totalitarianism" (Nállim, 2009: 51). The paper's strength was that, while it belonged to an aristocratic tradition that naturally addressed the upper classes, its extensive classifieds section allowed it to reach the middle and lower classes (Nállim, 2009: 38). Its commercial success gave it the freedom to criticize Peronism, a fact the government found intolerable.

The cases of these two papers are quite similar, starting with their shared so-called liberal-conservative ideology (Biroli, 2004; Fonseca, 2005; Nállim, 2009). Both papers represented the traditional media elites that found themselves subordinated to "popular reason" as per the populist demand for a general Rosseauvian will that annulled dissent in the interest of the nation, and both were denounced as representatives of an antipatriotic element that had to be abolished. Until 1946, with the fall of the Estado Novo, and, in Argentina, 1955, with the fall of Peronism, both papers were turned into purveyors of "populist reason" and rule—not simply closed down but transformed into voices meant to serve the government.

These papers had journalistic and intellectually similar goals, perspectives, and traditions: they advocated an "enlightened" and unwavering view of the liberal ideal vis-à-vis caudillismo. Both were expropriated so that their voices could be subsumed under populism, and their liberal-conservative and anti-populist editorial lines turned them into perfect enemies for these governments. Reflecting the contradictions inherent in the pragmatically restricted liberalism that characterized Latin American elites, their antipopulist discourse also took on antidemocratic and antipluralist outlines. In short, both the governments and the opposition failed to recognize the need for a more inclusive and pluralistic public sphere.

Both *O Estado de S. Paulo* and *La Prensa* failed to acknowledge their nations' populist presidents alongside their followers, espousing an illuminist and elitist argument regarding the lack of education and knowledge of Perón and Vargas voters, with *La Prensa* (February 24, 1946) referring to the former as "victims of misleading propaganda or their own lack of character." Numerous editorials highlighted the struggle between institutional advocates and those who wanted to subordinate the whole system to their personal interests (in a clear reference to Perón and Peronism) (*La Prensa*, December 31, 1951): "The struggle between those forces addicted to the republican, democratic, and

constitutional truth and ‘personal,’ oligarchic, and discretionary trends; between the freedom respected by the first and oppression, the compulsory resource of the latter, continues and will continue, who knows for how long and with what alternatives.” *O Estado* (July 15, 1954) employed a similar but even more elitist discourse to depreciate Vargist voters:

The electorate’s poor organization has a history. It dates back to the first election after the dictatorial regime. Its main defect is the so-called *ex officio* qualification. The way it was undertaken, it led to the inclusion of thousands and thousands of foreigners and illiterates in the electorate. For years we have shown that these deficiencies need to be corrected, all in vain. . . .

Postponing the elections because the current law does not work means rendering them virtually impossible. If we were to wait for a good law, elections would never take place. It is our fate to persist in this error and perpetuate what does not work. Are we not governed, by the deed and the grace of the electorate, by a man who has caused extreme damage to Brazilian democracy and is constantly seditious against the rule of law?

Both papers invoked the elitist concept of “enlightened reason” to depreciate voters as captives of demagoguery and challenged these governments and their leaders as if these processes were historical accidents to be eliminated. They did not stop to consider the social advances they entailed or the processes of popular political identification they signified. Ultimately, the values held by the traditional media elite that saw itself as representing enlightened reason directly clashed with and challenged the democratic model based on popular sovereignty that characterized the Perón and Vargas administrations. This was a clash of values and mutually exclusive political traditions.

As we have seen, this conflict involved two kinds of media entrepreneurs vis-à-vis the state: those committed to liberal principles and those representing a new approach to the media as business. The former were subordinated to the populist logic that reaffirmed the indissoluble link between the state, the people, and the nation. The latter enjoyed significant success because their ideological flexibility allowed them to receive benefits from the state, expanding their sales and their audience. The traditional newspapers clashed with the populist regimes when they claimed an elitist and restricted public sphere. Political infighting began when populism opened the doors to the participation of previously excluded sectors in a “popular democracy” viewed by the traditional media as a violation of a restricted public sphere organized according to enlightened reason. The political struggle between the new populist elites and the traditional media elites opened new avenues of opportunity for media entrepreneurs willing to serve the state in exchange for state-issued benefits.

The “communications populism” that emerged during these years posited a new model of dependence on the state (editorial support in exchange for favorable market conditions and access to state credits); it created a dependent and patrimonialist pattern that would become a dominant feature of Latin American relationships between the media and politics (Waisbord, 2013). Both Brazil and Argentina saw the consolidation of this patrimonialist relationship between the

state and new, populism-abetted media entrepreneurs like Marinho and Noble in the subsequent years.

CONCLUSIONS

The classical populist periods in Argentina and Brazil were characterized by a clash between governments and traditional media elites that involved mutually exclusive values and political traditions. The enlightened reason espoused by *La Prensa* and *O Estado de S. Paulo* rejected the expansion of the public sphere undertaken by Peronism and Vargism through the deprecation of their voters. Mediatized populism, for its part, acted against these liberal perfect enemies and subordinated them to popular reason on the pretext of ensuring a public sphere that was truly representative of “popular interests.”

The values held by the traditional media elites directly clashed with—and disavowed—the majority-based democratic model implemented by the Perón and Vargas governments. The antipopulist discourse of the traditional newspapers, while reflecting the contradictions inherent in Latin American liberal elites, took on antidemocratic and antipluralist contours. Although “intransigent” newspapers were arbitrarily taken over by these populist regimes to be subordinated to popular reason, the papers themselves failed to recognize those regimes and their voters, employing enlightened reason to justify the need for a restricted public sphere lacking popular participation. This led to a conflict between the traditional media and the new populist elites that opened up opportunities for the likes of Roberto Marinho and Roberto Noble, who willingly established alliances with the state. Entrepreneurs of this new breed at *Clarín* and *O Globo* faced the challenges posed by the media’s subordination to popular reason in a different way. Marinho and Noble found alternative ways of negotiating with the government, taking advantage of the situation to expand sales and audiences via state financing. The model of communications populism that emerged during these years of state-centric economics and new media entrepreneurs created a pattern of state and media dependence and strengthened the dependent and patrimonialist model that came to dominate the region.

New national-popular Latin American governments have reawakened debate and struggle over the expansion of the public sphere in a new political context. The latter’s outlines are still being disputed: the traditional media elites seek to impose narrow viewpoints while national-popular governments that are hardly free of contradictions struggle to reorganize it.

NOTES

1. Whereas “internal pluralism” refers to the breadth of views present in an organization’s news coverage, “external pluralism” refers to the existence of different views as part of the “media ecology” (Waisbord, 2013)—the media landscape as a whole (Viñe-Freiberga et al., 2013).

2. Relations of reciprocity with Chile were particularly sought after during the presidency of General Carlos Ibañez del Campo.

3. Comunicado al Subsecretario de Informaciones Emilio Cipolletti, Buenos Aires, diciembre 1947. Archivo intermedio, Fiscalía Nacional de Recuperación Patrimonial, Comisión 21, Caja 17, diciembre 1947.
4. Acto de Clausura de los delegados al Segundo Congreso del Sindicato Argentino de Prensa. Archivo intermedio, Caja 26, Página 1, 04/05/1955.
5. "Diretrizes del Estado Novo—La prensa." Fundación Getúlio Vargas. <http://cpdoc.fgv.br/producao/dossies/AEraVargas1/anos37-45/EducacaoCulturaPropaganda/Imprensa> (accessed June 19, 2015).
6. Carlos Vicente Aloé, governor of Buenos Aires, was the head of this group and owned a variety of newspapers in charge of defending the Peronist government.
7. *Tribuna da Imprensa* was founded on December 27, 1949, and included the following shareholders: the former Pernambuco governor Carlos de Lima Cavalcanti, the entrepreneur José Vasconcelos Carvalho, the pro-UDN lawyers Adauto Lúcio Cardoso and Heráclito Fontoura Sobral Pinto (Dulles, 1992), all of them part of Brazilian high society. The newspaper also had the support of São Paulo businessmen linked to *O Estado de S. Paulo*. It was clearly the product of the UDN and anti-Vargism, and it is difficult to decouple its creation from Lacerda's links with international news agencies linked to U.S. interests.
8. The differences in the press markets of the two countries are important. While Argentine newspapers around 1950 enjoyed noteworthy circulation, with *La Prensa* reaching 480,000 copies per day (Sivak, 2013) in a population estimated at 17 million, in Brazil major newspapers like *O Estado de S. Paulo* did not exceed 200,000 copies per day (Goulart, 2007) in a population estimated at 51 million. The absence of anything that could be termed a national press contrasted with the Argentine case. In Brazil, the impact of the news media was restricted to the more educated circles.
9. Archivo intermedio, Caja 26.

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