

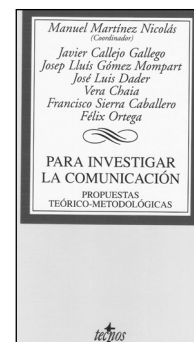
MARTÍNEZ NICOLÁS, M. (coord.) *Para investigar la comunicación. Propuestas teórico-metodológicas.*

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A little over 35 years ago, communication studies achieved university rank in Spain, specifically in the academic year of 1971-1972. Since then, and particularly as from the decade of the nineties, the proliferation of research and specialist journals has risen dramatically. However, it is possible that some epistemological consolidation is still required, i.e. that of the discipline's identity.

The book presented below will undoubtedly help to strengthen the disciplinary muscle of communication studies. This is a collective work that, although it does not pretend to represent the whole scientific community, does offer us an excellent panorama of the status of Spanish communication research. The text is made up of seven chapters whose authors (six Spanish lecturers and a Brazilian lecturer) deal with different aspects, fields and objects of study of communication research.

Manuel Martínez Nicolás, who has coordinated this work and lectures at the Universidad Rey Juan Carlos in Madrid, not only provides us with an overall introduction but is also the author of the first chapter, "La investigación sobre comunicación en España. Evolución histórica y retos actuales" (Communication research in Spain. Historical evolution and current challenges). This text contains a dense, summarised and well structured history of Spanish communication research, divided into three periods: from 1965 to 1980 (the emergence of the discipline), from 1980 to 1995 (consolidation and agitation of the field) and from 1995 to the present day (diversity, recognition and current challenges). For each of these periods the historical conditions, structure of the scientific community and general orientation of research are analysed. This is an excellent interpretation of Spanish communication research. As always happens with states of affairs that attempt to cover decades, some aspects could be developed further but on the whole it must be recognised that this is a highly illustrative review of the state of research.

The lecturer from the Universidad Nacional a Distancia (UNED), Javier Callejo Gallego, provides one of the classic objects of study for communication research: audiences.

However, the fact that this is one of the objects of study that has been developed since the start of the discipline does not mean that it is without its problems. The title of this second chapter is quite explicit in this respect: "Audiencias multimedia: múltiples problemas, múltiples intereses" (Multimedia audiences: multiple problems, multiple interests). Information and communication technologies have notably increased the complexity of the communication panorama in general and their investigation in particular. Studying audiences is not independent of these changes in the media system. These problems do not relate only to the quantification of audiences but also to the use made of the media. In this respect, and without belittling quantification, the text deals with reception studies. Callejo Gallego believes that the trend in research in this area is revealed in "the centrality acquired by media consumption and, in general, by the use of machines to communicate among consumption practices in general; and the unstoppable digital convergence of all media" (page 79).

The third chapter, "Historia de la comunicación e historia del periodismo: enfoques teóricos y metodologías para la investigación" (History of communication and history of journalism: theoretical focuses and methodologies for research), is by Josep Gómez Momparr, lecturer at the Universitat de València. The author makes an important distinction between the history of the media, the history of journalism and the history of communication, although he does admit that they do have some family resemblance. This is a chapter that should definitely be read by those who wish to study the world of communication from an historical perspective or, as the author says, those who wish to "historise communication" (page 116).

Another of the fields of study dealt with by the book is political communication. The text's author is lecturer José Luis Dader at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid. The title of this fourth chapter could not be more explicit: "La adolescente investigación en comunicación política: estructura del campo y tendencias prometedoras" (Adolescent research in political communication: structure of the field and promising trends). This text contains the different epistemic focuses for the study

of political communication (behavioural, structural-functional, interactional/constructivist and dialogue-based), as well as the preferred objects of research. He also provides a brief review of the research methods used. Finally, a very useful section of this chapter goes over the bibliographical landmarks that have shaped research in this field over the last few years.

“Investigación sobre comunicación política en Brasil” (Political communication research in Brazil) is the fifth chapter in the book and its author is lecturer Vera Chaia, from the Pontificia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. Without questioning the intrinsic interest of the text, it is perhaps a little out of place, as it deals with research in Brazil. This chapter and the seventh are perhaps those that result in the book losing a certain internal logic, albeit for different reasons. In any case, the text by Chaia is a brief, interesting state of affairs that contextualises the research and offers an illustrative view of Brazilian research, centres and researcher groups.

Francisco Sierra Caballero, from the Universidad de Sevilla, is the author of the sixth chapter in the book, entitled “Sociedad de la información y comunicología. Una crítica económico-política” (Information society and communication studies. An economic-political critique). The so-called information society is surely the most impactful political, communicative and social phenomenon we are experiencing today. As has been noted in another chapter of this book, information and communication technologies are significantly transforming the world of communication. Sometimes, however, these changes have not allowed a critical view of what is happening. In this chapter, from the perspective of political economics, an interesting critical approach is taken of how this emerging reality can be studied.

The seventh and last chapter of the book is called “Periodistas: entre la profesionalidad y el aventurismo” (Journalists: between professionalism and adventurism) and its author lectures at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid Félix Ortega. This chapter analyses the profession of journalism since the time of Franco's regime and different professional models are provided. What differentiates this chapter from the others is that, while they analyse research (Spanish or Brazilian), here the focus is not research into journalism but its different (self)-representations, thereby revealing the strong and weak points of the profession.

To end, we can state that this book is of great interest and use for communication researchers because, as stated by Martínez Nicolás in his introduction, the text offers “theoretical methodological proposals to investigate communication without risk” (page 11).