

Evaluation of Latin American Thought of Communication Beginnings, Key Moments and Current Situation

Gustavo Adolfo León Duarte¹ & Diana Elizabeth Moreno Carrillo²

Abstract

The text aims to analyze and discuss the beginning and fundamental moments of the process of institutionalization of teaching and research in Latin American communication studies and its association and impact on Latin American thought's configuration of communication. Its historical development has shown some claims requiring combinations of Communication, Social Studies and Humanities studies. One of the most productive integration arises from the perspective of interdisciplinary research. Particularly, when looking to solve complex and multidimensional social problems.

Keywords: Communication research, Latin America, institutionalization, interdisciplinary.

1. Introduction

The field of communication studies in Latin America comes from a series of social and cultural historical processes that have occurred in a short and vigorous course. In some way, these processes have been identifying the structural characteristics of the processes of habituation in different courses of the production and reproduction of communication in Latin America. Within the processes and historical issues that are considered to be treated with a significant basis for communication studies in Latin America, as they have an impact on the developing of the own discipline practices, they stand those aspects that denote the transit and the crash or collision, more or less violent, antagonistic among civilizations and cultural projects; between models of modernization and development policy; between demands and impositions of the international market and indigenous human inequalities; between projects and cultural patterns of Western modernity and late representations but faithfully fueled by modern American mass culture of early last century, as projected faithfully in *El Espíritu del Tiempo* (Morin, 1966).

There are many practical examples, but the creation of Latin American cultures' identity and communicational thought that supports it for 80 years, was forged primarily by the unequal distribution of economic and social capital; the persistence of undemocratic systems and populist governments and / or corrupt; by irregular symbolic and cultural capital which characterized (and still characterizes, in many national cases) different Latin American societies in an homogeneous manner. Consequently, today has also been shown that the objects, themes and social problems that could be addressed from the field of communication studies in Latin America have a clearly limited epistemological perspective depending precisely on the complex, social and multidimensional objects of study.

Therefore, the LTC today introduced a natural culmination day characterized by the need to integrate the disciplinary and interdisciplinary views from different dimensions that allow qualifying the real possibilities to analyze and explain a complex and multidimensional social phenomenon.

¹ gustavoadolfoleon@gmail.com, Postgraduate Social Studies Program, University of Sonora (www.pics.uson.mx)

² dianamorenoca@gmail.com, Postgraduate Social Studies Program, University of Sonora.

In this sense, a focused approach from one discipline is incomplete. On the contrary, the field of communication studies requires some degree of proximity and dialogue with and between the different social disciplines. For example, the field of communication studies and its theoretical models usually are moving within a system of thoughts that lie between two poles. On one hand, there is a system that links simple combination of components and systems. Consider, for example, in the historical development of basic communication model where its subject, object and media of the analyzed problem has even multiple levels of components, relationships, connections and settings and categorized in hierarchical order or based on some structure. However, a central identification seal is about the relationships between these components and their connections that are predominantly linear. A simile of this pattern could be applied to modern geography, discipline whose primary objective is the explanation of a series of natural and social phenomena not only referring to the location of these phenomena, but also how they are and how they have changed to become what they are. This means, among other things, that geography is a science that simultaneously questions the tracks left by companies or nature. That is why geography is interested in (physical and human) as well as the fundamentals (demographic, socio-economic, cultural, climatic, biogeographic, geomorphological) dynamics that take place in different regions. Precisely for these reasons, the discipline has begun to gradually integrate various cultural fields such as landscape painting, descriptive literature, film and even digital technologies. In the field of media studies or, if preferred, the use of a communication model itself, may allow more integrate and link components and sub-systems.

Structuring a single system integration and interconnection in studies of global communication arise with Shannon since 1947, by the mathematical model applied to the relations of production and distributions of the communicative act (Shannon, 1948). In terms of defining the object of study in this perspective, communication has traditionally been defined as the exchange of feelings, opinions, or any other information by speech, writing or other signals. Usually, forms of communication require linear relationships between a sender, a message and a receiver, including the context in which the recipient is present or not conscious (or not) the communicative intent by the issuer for the act communication is performed. Under this model, the linear communication process ends when the receiver decodes the message and provides a response. In the case of more complicated systems (ie, based on more complex relationships under a linear relationship) show the theoretical pattern of emotions in communication and theoretical models of intercultural communication (Rodrigo, 1999; 2001).

For more complicated relationship systems and even systems of complex relationships and coming to establish nonlinear relationships, it can be located from the inclusive array of different theoretical models of communication that can interact seamlessly (Craig, 1999). That is, what Vidales (2015) called a metamodel or second order model while integrating the seven theoretical traditions in the study of communication in terms of the practical implications they may have for social life and improving communication processes. In the Latin American level, the analysis model of communication from mediations and subjects is the articulation between communication practices and social movements (Martin, 1987).

From creating a minimum account historical from the origin and processes of habituation and institutional classification in different processes of production and reproduction of communication studies, articulated and contextualized with factors discursive field history and development cultural and social development of Latin America, it is understood the historical development of Latin American thought of Communication has shown some claims requiring new integrations of communication studies with all the Social sciences and Humanities. One of some aspects that can embody precisely this integration is perhaps the most productive emerging from the perspective of interdisciplinary research. Particularly, when looking to solve complex and multidimensional social problems.

2. Roots Of Latin American Thought Of Communication.

How to understand and identify practices that Latin American academic community communication takes place in the production and reproduction of knowledge? How to identify the characteristics of knowledge that are proper to the academic field and in particular those generated in communication research in Latin America? How to identify these production practices chronologically through time and space, in both forms of social behavior and culturally habituated? How and when can define the beginning of specialization in the production of communicative knowledge in the Latin American academic community? Or better yet, when can you set the start of the institutionalization of teaching and research in communication? What are the specific practices in their collective history? What is what defines its character and production practices that are adherent to the objective structure of the academic field of communication?

In Latin America the most significant to establish the basis for development in the academic field of communication factor becomes subfield reproduction of communication, that is, from previous experiences relating to the teaching process. This first feature appears evidenced mainly in journalism education, and practice of first type and time in its constitution. In turn, this journalistic practice also opens horizons to similar experiences and anticipated character for the subfield of research. The historical choice posed by the initial evolution of this starting point is the origin of modernity and its various processes of channeling and resistance that have performed the various nations of Latin America.

Integration processes of Latin American nations to Western project of modernity, imposed by European mid-sixteenth century, did not led to the independence of the nations of the region (Bonfill, 1987: 9). By contrast, traffic suffered by people and driven by those new groups that took power ,creoles and mestizos, embodied the modern model that passes through the establishment of national markets with different directions and rhythms, which will be possible in terms of their adjustment to the needs and demands of the international market (Martin, 1987: 164-166). No wonder that carriers of the first evidence of Latin American studies on communication phenomena are studies on the Latin American press of the mid-nineteenth century, which show how the concept of information was originally understood by discussing ideas, interpretation of reality and political positions (Reyes, 1977: 3). In recent years, the great Latin American writers had in the newspaper an unavoidable task for his literary, political and ideological field vocations. Thus, it would continue the tradition inaugurated by the very birth of the Latin American press in the late eighteenth century, when the idea of nationhood and independence will be forged precisely in the pages of the first newspapers, the same as surrender one efficient service to the wars of liberation in our region. In the late nineteenth century discourses on the press in Brazil, whose analytical perspective let to glimpse modern treaties of political sociology and mass culture, according to current models of the time (Marques de Melo, 1992). As a concrete expression of those needs and demands of the international market, in 1920 the United Press achieves its first agreement to provide news service in Latin America with the newspaper *La Prensa of Buenos Aires*. Search the news in the region was driven by new factors progressively increased as the American news agencies increased their presence in Latin America: the need for "shocking" information derived from the growing interest in the speed and immediacy of plus news of the growing role of the state, which should start in these years his incarnation in the form of populism to the ongoing commitment of the mass.

This was also due to the imminent (and permanent) economic crisis in Latin America that began to distinguish sharply in the primary sector of countryside and rural areas. It get as a result, the emergence of the masses in the city. It was in Argentina, where years ago the United Press achieved the first agreement to provide news service in Latin America, where the first school of journalism in Latin America is founded. Teaching the first course began in 1935 with the initial enrollment of 131 students. With this first experience of a very significant nature within the field of communication, quickly it forms a habituation process throughout Latin America. Here we set the time and place where the first practical teaching of communication as a germinal process institutionalized practice is reflected in our region.

3. Key Moments of Institutionalization in Teaching and Research in the LTC

Contrary to existing theory, it would be with the founding of CIESPAL in 1959, when communication research in Latin America developed a new appearance. It is precisely with the founding of the International Centre for Higher Studies in Journalism for Latin America (CIESPAL-Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Comunicación para América Latina), in 1959, when communication research in Latin America developed a new appearance. There is a palpable consensus among researchers from the communication in Latin America that one of the main factors involved in the development of the field of study between 1959 and 1978 was CIESPAL. It was not only a contributing factor to develop the field but it developed the first undisputed previous experience in the field of communication research in the region. Since the early years of its foundation, its practices are widely recognized by the agents and the countryside. Unlike to what normally hold their illustrious several sources; these experiences represent clearly more than just open horizons for research and teaching of communication in the region. The founding of CIESPAL, is the establishment and heavier foundation for the development of the academic field of communication in Latin America, which also creates the road to open the development of institutionalization in its investigation and the consolidation of the education.

CIESPAL is created in 1959 in Quito, Ecuador, took office in 1960. With the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, for its acronym in English) and the Organization of American States (OAS), CIESPAL focused its work on three areas of concentration: journalism education and communication, documentation and research. (CIESPAL, 1965).

Consequently, it is from the mid-60s, when an early but crucial for communication research presence in the region is constituted. They are determined, from then until the mid-70s, the first expressions of influence in Latin American production of communication studies. Since then, the critical impulse and ethical-political positioning as core structural features in their research would be preserved. However, the historical struggles of scientific capital for 70 years has never objectified the academic field of communication in Latin America to express potential appreciation as important as to the investment made by Jesus Martin Barbero. The researcher, from the early 80s and even today, would become the main foundation for understanding the transformations of the field. Also, to reflect, contrary to theoretical logic exposed by the same Bourdieu (2000), breaking conservation strategies discipline (or disciplining), formulating projects and places counter-strategic thinking society from an interdisciplinary perspective. The scientific practices that identify main scientific productions of the Latin American School of Communication (ELACOM), the Latin American Association of Communication (ALAIC) and the main Latin American journals in communication separately confirmed that Jesus Martin Barbero is the principal agent of recognition for the entire academic peers who publish there.

Sharply from the 80's in Latin America it is palpable the conditions and historical and structural determinations (especially technological and political) that have been well ahead of the generated in the production and reproduction of knowledge about communication. Epistemic and structural backwardness to account for a multidimensional, complex and unequal actually do emerge the gap and the dismantling of the academic field of communication in this region. However, it is concluded that this structural feature of dismantling the field begins to manifest with some frequency in the Latin American research until the mid-nineties as a result of the relationships and integrations of converging disciplinary contributions to communication studies, the specificity of their analytical contributions, and particularities of historical development between them.

4. Current Situation of Latin American School of Communication. Thirteen Central Issues

The LTC is another result of internal historical processes that has been created within a field of knowledge that has just settled the ability to self-organize (León Duarte, 2006; 2014). The scientific production that identifies the practices and discursive strategies involved in different scientific initiatives (for example, see: ALAIC, Elacom, scientific journals, etc.), as well as systematic and persistent references to the generational players who could identify and characterize it, are so diverse and broad that certainly ends up in an uneven and filled with many distinctions that escape any practical and initiative of institutionalization of knowledge development.

However, it is relevant to refer to a Latin American thought of Communication certain objects and research topics that are unique and distinctive of Latin America reality. The knowledge generated is specific knowledge that involves different elements and features that will certainly depend on several factors, among which stand out the period and specific socio-historical context in which it is situated and contextualized the topics addressed and, secondly, participation of the agents involved and, consequently, particular scientific practices and strategies that define and characterize a subject and an object of study. For example, it is concluded that the main structural features that work ELACOM, later mentioned, is identified to be originated from a specific set of strategies and own balance of power between the central characters, by the way how the scientific capital is distributed and where it is generated from a specific type of knowledge. In essence, the so-called Latin American School of Communication is the product of a set of initiatives and strategies governed by a particular structure of objective relations patenting a specific group of researchers, which are, by attributes, its true sources of production.

The acquired positions and objective relations established by the 131 researchers and researchers involved in ELACOM published in the first decade expressing themselves in this structure. The topics discussed and the specific scientific practices developed in the first eight volumes of the series ELACOM concluded that the features of a native communication thought of megaregion arise between 60 and 70. In this period comes from incipient ethics definition -political current that generally involves the PLC. The main features of the PLC are developed and consolidated during the 80s and 90s, respectively. Some of the major structural features that can identify the scientific production of the Latin American School of Communication in the last decade are:

1. Since the early 60s the identification of the structural characteristics of the Elacom own thinking as evidenced by the very practices of communication research moving from a functional and informative year to the challenge of assessing and implementing the same direction communication as a human process, dynamic, egalitarian and democratic dialogue that seeks participation channels and real interaction.

2. It is in the 70s when the LTC starts to achieve a precise identification of objects, subjects and approaches to analysis of communication. This would question the methods, instruments and purposes applied so far in the field of communication research in Latin America. It is through institutional initiative, led by CIESPAL, and some pioneering and far-reaching sources of the field, and begins the conquest for hegemony in the Latin American communication thought.

3. The change of ethical-epistemological perspective in this period of orientation tour to discover what the media does to people to observe what society, its dynamics is and what individuals make with their communication.

4. The structural feature that defines communication in the work Elacom itself as the main tool for understanding Latin American society, conceived since as a dynamic and complex process with multiple intersections.

5. Within the structural characteristics that identify Elacom production, the theoretical characteristics are an important reference value. Their starting points initially come from the budgets of the dependency theory, which would come from the same matrix of knowledge ECLAC vigorously boost in the region since the early 60s.

6. Since the mid-70s, it is concluded that the perspective of critical theory is the main theoretical and methodological model which self-identifies the PLC, according to the work of Elacom, and therefore represents the main paradigm used for build and transcend the different alternatives of media study in the region.

7. The existence and legitimacy of Elacom endorses the initiative of patenting communication as a social process that emphasizes social change dynamics and conditions.

8. Ethical-political platform of communication, amalgamated with a critical and socio-historical vision, where resides the main condition to build the unity of his subjects, objects and methods of study.

9. The identification mark in knowledge production initially targeted as opposition and denunciation as well as continuing to question the cultural and economic dominance of the United States of America on the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

10. In the scientific production of the Elacom has been clarified that it was during the 80s, when the LTC manages to distance and definitely give up the original features that twinned with the informational and developmental prospects, but also with those positions and ideological perspectives court complaint and seventies. In this period, the today main analysis model of communication in the region would arise, without rejecting the ethical-political platform of the 70's.

11. The structural characteristics that identify Elacom during the 90's are profiled to elevate the LTC as a true school of thought. Its features are tailored primarily to the different local, regional and global realities. In this period we can conclude that the theoretical mixture that initially drew the LTC during the 60's and 70's mutates into an ethical and epistemological syncretism. It is the ethical and epistemological syncretism implicit in their research practices, which can transform the same concerns of yesteryear in native studies cosmopolitan awards. It is concluded that the ethical and epistemological syncretism is forged as the central feature in the identification of the Elacom in the 90's.

12. Contrary to what is commonly believed, the ethical and epistemological syncretism not only is defined as a product that researchers and research and communication in Latin America are immersed in a culture marked by methodological miscegenation, or that by the theoretical hybridity, they have had the ability to combine cosmopolitanism inherited procedures of the main intellectual centers of the world. By its original terms and strictly speaking, the ethical-epistemological syncretism tends to be shared with the epistemological and ethical dimensions for several reasons which revolve around the understanding that this feature is best suited to translate the tendency to homogenize a whole theoretical and methodological diversity of historical, multidimensional and interdisciplinary court, under the common denominator of the peculiar Latin American reality.

In addition, because this feature translates into an ethical and political syncretism which tends to unify other structural features that defines particularly the Elacom: the position of a variety of research practices that unify his mood intervention for social change with justice, equality and self-sustainability for Latin America.

13. In the model of ethical and epistemological analysis syncretism differential factor is not so much the method but the social and ethical commitment of his research for social change in Latin America. Its effect profile is distinguished by gravitation toward an upward movement of deterritorialization and hybridization that Latin American modernity itself produces and leading to a significant part of researchers and Elacom to use a comprehensive qualitative methodology that seeks court especially reliability and greater depth knowledge of the object studied.

Importantly, there are few structural features that distinguish the work of other relevant sources Elacom production in Latin America plane as the ALAIC, among others. Some structural characteristics of knowledge that distinguish this from other sources can be many and occur primarily by three major factors:

- a) First, for the existing radical difference between the share of capital involved in scientific work of Elacom and the two contrasting sources, same as itself have a virtually homogeneous pattern of actors and institutions;
- b) On the evident divergence on the issues and research lines that others develop in their scientific contributions;
- c) And as a direct consequence of prefixed factors, the discrepancy in positions that locate the agents to generate a set of practices and discursive strategies in production and other sources of knowledge.

It is concluded that the main differences in the structural characteristics of the Elacom in comparison to the production of ALAIC are several and obey a treatment on several factors and issues related to the research agenda that both groups print:

- a) Updating discipline (theoretical and methodological) communication
- b) The meaning and the construction of objects of communication research
- c) Prospects, balance sheets and communication challenges
- d) The stories of methodological experiences applied to case studies of communication

Unlike the recorded in Elacom, including actors and ALAIC production there is a clear discursive consensus that drives a common and shared approach (at least in substance) of goals, targets and methods in the study of communication. A structural feature that makes notary and distinctive production of ALAIC is the premise of the central questions that reveals the academic field of communication, and the challenges now present themselves to their research, they deal mainly with their disciplinary status. In particular, it is concluded that ALAIC's production in its disciplinary status points, as their main sources of recognition hold, towards overcoming the boundaries between closed and hierarchical specialties in the fields of knowledge and the establishment of a field of discourse and social practices, whose academic and social legitimacy will increasingly depend on the depth, extent, relevance and strength of their own explanations or those arising from the demands of knowledge, and not the cumulative institutional prestige.

The structural feature that defines the meaning of communication in ALAIC is presented as an indisputable point of agreement among peers: communication as the main trigger of the economic, political and cultural aspects of modern society, but also as a field of knowledge with an object eminently cultural, complex, multidimensional subjects and focused on production and sense processes. In ALAIC the theoretical and methodological foundation of communication is strongly influenced by the role and the system of ethical and political values that develops the social subject, as both are factors that influence the fact that the same social activities make sense in the practice.

Hence the epistemic foundation of communication in this group consists in producing common sense. His research and theorizing cannot, therefore, be limited to the study of social subjects means used to generate the sense of their activity and therefore necessarily that of their own identity. However, the main difference is the sense and meaning of communication that defines the group of ALAIC: communication as a social production of meaning on the social production of meaning. The sense of communication emerges as a possible field of configuration concepts, visions, perceptions, operations, actions and intentions; where it is learned to arranged as a collective socio-cultural and legitimately can and requires intervention in the forms of developing. It is not surprising that here it is understood that communication is not a discipline or a science itself.

In ALAIC production their contributions generally self-identify as an open field where his research study can promote the theoretical and methodological enrichment of the social and human communication. Therefore, the main structural feature of the methodological strategies that identifies and distinguishes the group of ALAIC regarding the set of strategies that incorporates Elacom is that the center of his reflection has gradually shifted from media to social groups that are integrated into broader social and cultural practices. ALAICs' Communication researchers are taken into account on the existence of real strategies of discursive organization to achieve an important path. An example of the detailed description of this tour in the region is the analysis of the reception of media and cultural consumption, which has earned them the character of ethnography of the audience. Finally, we mention here another structural feature that distinguishes methodological cut into the central production ALAIC: which emphasizes the creative synthesis and interpretative sense of the researcher to the object of study; methodological contrasting with the socio-historical and discourse analysis; and the interpretation and reinterpretation of common sense. Hence their self-reflections evolve slowly by an analysis that examines, separates and reconstructs, seeking to discover new patterns and resources in the establishment of communication in Latin America, which generally does not involve Elacom.

In addition, it is concluded that the ALAIC collective exists and early development led precisely by some sources that increased presence and recognition have before academic peers that there involved, to what this study has been called the Trans-methodological communication perspective. Its cardinal features are based on considering the diversity and complexity of dimensions; the abundance of contexts and the multiplicity of processes and phenomena have communication. Targeting procedures and delimitation are dialectical, flexible, large character, heuristics, heterodox, analytical and hermeneutical. It seeks to combine various interpretations, models and processes of construction of concrete knowledge on a dimension in which converge certain principles of interpretation that demand to be mediated by a range of explanatory methodologies, socio-historical analysis and constant reflection of cultural processes and communication. The confluence of the scenarios assessed in particular, on one hand, the production of meaning and unity, plurality and multidimensionality of contexts; on the other, the appropriation of diverse and alternative logical and theoretical models that make up the confluence of the mediation and mediation strategies.

5. Conclusions

In the last decade, the academic field of communication presents various movements of convergence and transposition of content and methodology but also new epistemological and methodological challenges as a result of the theoretical diversity and the growing momentum generated interdisciplinary study in various fields such as Communication. For example, a central issue that is beginning to loom in the academic field of communication has to do primarily with their disciplinary status.

An approach to the structural characteristics of the different groups that today make up the LTC confirms this: the disciplinary statute is characterized as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge that is the result of converging relationships between the object of study, the specificity of their analytical contributions and the particularity of the historical evolution of both. In particular, it seems clear that in the movement of its interdisciplinary status points to overcome the boundaries between closed and hierarchical specialties with different fields of knowledge. Communication in Latin America is studied as a field of knowledge with a study object eminently cultural, complex, multidimensional subjects and focused on processes and production of Trans-historic study. The disciplinary affirmation of communication in Latin America is predominantly sustained by this consensus and on an ethical-political platform; it is precisely here that seems to lie the conditions of developing a specificity of its object. It is clear that in the field of communication studies in Latin America exists the demand for a new integration to all the Social Sciences and Humanities. One of the most productive integration of communication studies with all disciplines of social sciences arises from the perspective of interdisciplinary research, particularly when we face the challenge of solving complex and multidimensional social problems.

6. References

- Bourdieu, P. (1983). *Campo de poder y campo intelectual*, Buenos Aires: Folios.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Los usos sociales de la ciencia*, Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión.
- CIESPAL (1965). *Enseñanza de periodismo y medios de información colectiva*, Quito: CIESPAL.
- CIESPAL (1969). *Informe de 10 años de labores (1959–1969)*, Quito: CIESPAL.
- CIESPAL (1974). *Seminario sobre la investigación de la comunicación en América Latina. Costa Rica 1973*, Quito: CIESPAL.
- Craig, R. (1999). Communication Theory as a Field, *Communication Theory*. 9(2), 119-161
- Morín, E. (1966). *El espíritu del tiempo: ensayo sobre cultura de masas*. Madrid, Taurus.
- León, G. (2010). *Sobre la institucionalización de la comunicación en América Latina*. México: PEARSON.
- León, G. (2014). *Comunicación y Sociedad en América Latina*. Saarbrücken (Deutschland): Verlag PUBLICIA.
- Marques, J. (1992). "Euforia tecnológica y malestar en la teoría". *Diálogos de la Comunicación*, (20), 6-16.
- Martín, J. (1987). *De los medios a las mediaciones: comunicación, cultura y hegemonía*, México: Gustavo Gili.
- Reyes, F. (1977). *El concepto de noticia en América Latina. Valores dominantes y perspectivas de cambio*. México. ILET, pp. 1-41.
- Rodrigo, M. (1999). *La comunicación intercultural*. Barcelona: Anthropos.
- Rodrigo, M. (2001). *Teorías de la Comunicación. Ámbitos, Métodos y Perspectivas*. Barcelona: Aldea global.
- Shannon, C. (1948). A Mathematical Theory of Communication. *The Bell System Technical Journal*.27, 379–423
- Vidales, C. (2015). Historia, teoría e investigación de la comunicación. *Comunicación y sociedad*, (23), 11-43.