

## 30 years of *Comunicación y Sociedad*: changes and permanence in the academic field of communication

*A 30 años de Comunicación y Sociedad: cambios y permanencias en el campo académico de la comunicación*

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The articles and essays published in *Comunicación y Sociedad* from 2004 to 2016 are analyzed to show authorship tendencies, lines and subject matters followed, as well as to reveal the theoretical and methodological approaches that prevail in the field of communication. By means of a content analysis we find that the critical approach predominates in the research conducted, as well as the use of traditional methodologies.

**KEYWORDS:** *Comunicación y Sociedad*, content analysis, communication studies, scientific communication.

*Se analizan los artículos y ensayos publicados en Comunicación y Sociedad de 2004 a 2016 para mostrar tendencias de autorías, adscripciones y temas abordados, así como revelar enfoques teóricos y metodológicos que prevalecen en el campo de la comunicación. Mediante un análisis de contenido encontramos que el enfoque crítico es preponderante en las investigaciones realizadas, así como la utilización de metodologías tradicionales.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Comunicación y Sociedad, análisis de contenido, estudios de comunicación, comunicación científica, análisis de contenido.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Thirty years after the foundation of *Comunicación y Sociedad*, it is necessary to make a balance of its current state, of its contribution to the field of communication and the challenges it is facing. Being three decades old is an achievement in itself when it comes to a publication in the field of communication published in a Mexican region other than its capital. This regional origin has not closed borders, just the contrary: for three decades *Comunicación y Sociedad* has gained recognition and legitimacy spaces and it strengthens as a window through which the knowledge generated in Ibero-America is disseminated. These years that have elapsed compel us to analyze the contents that circulate in the journal, and to reflect on the role this publication plays in the development of the academic field of communication, observing its strengths as well as its weaknesses.

What are the theories, methodologies, the regions, the subject matters from which thought and reflection move in this field? *Comunicación y Sociedad* is a sample of the knowledge that is produced in the area of communication, as well as of the concerns of the academic community. Fuentes (2004) points out that “there are not many systematic studies about academic publications” (p. 8). There are some descriptive analyses about the contents published in *Comunicación y Sociedad* (Fuentes, 2004; Rodríguez & García, 2007; Tovar, 1997); there are also studies about other academic publications (Fuentes, 1996, 1998; Gómez-Vargas, 2003) as well as bibliometric analyses of communication journals, such as Ramírez y Ramírez’s master and doctoral theses, who conducted an analysis of Mexican (2003) and Canadian publications (2010).

López-Ornelas, Osuna Lever & Díaz López (2017) present a very interesting work, where they analyzed open-access academic journals about communication in Mexico, and their visibility through indexes and databases, the use of Open Journal Systems (OJS), the inclusion of the Digital Object Identifier (DOI), the use of anti-plagiarism software, among other aspects. The authors came to the conclusion that the communication journals existing in Mexico are insufficient, and that many of them have fallen behind in their electronic version, which is

one of the major challenges in view of the international standardization processes.

In order to analyze the contents disseminated by *Comunicación y Sociedad*, in this paper, we continue the previous analyses conducted by Tovar (1997), Fuentes (2004), and Rodríguez and García (2007), thirty years after its foundation, contributing a little more by systematizing, by means of a content analysis, the theoretical-methodological stands that are spread in the field through this publication.

### STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF *COMUNICACIÓN Y SOCIEDAD*

The origins of *Comunicación y Sociedad* date back to over three decades, to the year 1986, when researchers Enrique E. Sánchez Ruiz and Pablo Arredondo Ramírez founded the Centro de Estudios de la Información y la Comunicación (CEIC) at the Universidad de Guadalajara, whose objective was to create a space for the diffusion of scientific knowledge of the disciplines that have an impact on communication (Arredondo, 1997). This center incorporated other researchers to this academic space and just a year after its creation, in 1987, the first *CEIC* notebook was published: “La televisión en Guadalajara: Génesis y Desarrollo”, by Francisco Aceves. That same year the second Notebook was published with a research by Guillermo Orozco Gómez “Televisión y producción de significados (tres ensayos)” and it was followed in 1988 by one by Enrique E. Sánchez Ruiz: “Centralización, poder y comunicación en México”. These three *Cuadernos del CEIC* laid the foundations for what would become later—beginning in issues 4-5— a journal: *Comunicación y Sociedad*. In other studies, it has been pointed out in more detail what the evolution has been from the notebook to the journal formats (Fuentes, 2004; Gómez Rodríguez & Gallo Estrada, 2016; Rodríguez & García, 2007; Tovar, 1997). For this paper, we analyze the so-called “Nueva Época” of the journal, spanning from 2004 to 2016, which coincides with the stage of digital convergence, which entails several transformations for scientific publications.

Three stages can be distinguished which imply changes and transformations in the production and consumption of *Comunicación y Sociedad* (Gómez Rodríguez & Gallo Estrada, 2016):

1) *In paper* (1987-2001): 40 issues were published in this stage. In its early years, contributions to the journal mainly consisted in participations by local colleagues, (especially from Jalisco or the Universidad de Guadalajara), and little by little national and international researchers were incorporated. The journal was made in an almost artisanal fashion at the CEIC (which would eventually become since 1994 the Departamento de Estudios de la Comunicación Social-DECS), where the processes of layout, proof reading and galley proof were carried out in addition to the reception and evaluation of manuscripts; only the printing process was outsourced. The journal began to be known nationwide and the doors towards its internationalization started to open little by little: the CEIC/DECS colleagues took journal issues to congresses, therefore, the researchers from other countries and institutions began to show an interest in promoting the results of their research through the journal; moreover, exchange agreements were entered with other universities and libraries. During 2002 and 2003 *Comunicación y Sociedad* was not published, due to internal bureaucratic issues; once they had been solved, the decision was made to continue with the publication, since 2004; thus beginning a new stage.

2) “*Uploading*” *the contents online* (2004-2014). A New *Époque* started in 2004; a webpage was set up, depending on the main site of the Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades (CUCSH) at the Universidad de Guadalajara, where the contents of the first<sup>2</sup> stage (1987 to 2001) and the New *Époque* (since 2004) were uploaded in PDF format, so as to promote and share the journal with a larger number of readers, who were able to download the contents freely (Gómez Rodríguez & Gallo Estrada, 2016). No doubt, this was a window towards the journal’s projection, since it entailed a new form of promoting knowledge in the field of communication. However, up to this point, the main support of the journal continued to be the printed material.

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<sup>2</sup> The journal was not published in an uninterrupted manner. For a span of two years, it stopped being published and it was decided to start a new period in 2004, hence the “Nueva Época”.

Since 2007 the journal has belonged to the Índice de Revistas Mexicanas de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica del CONACYT (which in 2016 changes to Sistema de Clasificación de Revistas Mexicanas de Ciencia y Tecnología). This institution called upon all the journals that made up the Index to publish only in the electronic format using an online editorial management platform, preferably Open Journal Systems (OJS). The editorial world was transforming and so was the dissemination of science, therefore transformations were coming, which we will mention below.

3) *Electronic Journal* (2015- to the present). Since 2015, with its 23<sup>rd</sup> issue (January-June), *Comunicación y Sociedad* started a transformation in its format and it reinforced its objective aimed at greater international projection; it stopped being a printed journal to become an electronic publication. This entailed operating the editorial processes using the software Open Journal Systems (OJS), meeting the criteria of quality and impact to be eligible for joining renown international indices that measure the impact of a scientific publication (Scopus, in this case); as well as the translation of its texts into English. Another change was modifying the periodicity of the publication (from twice a year to three times a year); spaces were open on the social networks to promote its contents (Facebook, Academia.edu, Twitter), and an in-depth revision of the editorial policies was conducted.<sup>3</sup> Today adaptations and modifications are still being made which will be reflected in the coming issues.

As mentioned previously, Tovar (1997) and Rodríguez and García, (2007) have made systematizations and analyses of the contents of *Comunicación y Sociedad* (up to the year 2007), so providing continuity for these works with a content analysis covering the years 2004 to 2016 (the New Époque), will enrich the reflection on the role played by the publication in the 30 years since its foundation and it will shed light on the challenges to be faced not only by those who edit the publication, but also by the academic community that contributes to the academic field of communication with their reflections and research.

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<sup>3</sup> The writing of this article finished in April, 2017.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was approached from a quantitative perspective and a descriptive design; to this end, we resorted to content analysis. Unlike other approaches that use databases and indexation platforms, our approach aims at the analysis of the texts published. If we assume that a journal is a specialized medium to publish scientific research, where the knowledge of a field find publicity, social existence and its preservation (Ardanuy, 2012), its analysis is an instrument to measure the condition of the researchers' and the field's academic production, as well as its debates and manners of producing said knowledge.

From this perspective, this paper does not focus on impact indicators, or on collectable data from databases, indices and scientific evaluation tools (Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar Citations, SciELO). The analysis systematizes some of the indicators that “are concerned about the authors of the studies, such as age, sex, professional position, country, institutional affiliation” (Ardanuy, 2012, p. 16) and academic production indicators: “the amount of publication by an author, an institutions and country during the analyzed period” (p. 16).

Previous studies on the journal have reported these indicators (Tovar, 1997; Rodríguez & García, 2007), as well as other concerning the content such as “the typical social issues” in the texts, the type of media studied or the level of the communicative process analyzed (Fuentes, 2004). Comparing these previous studies with the one we are conducting here allows establishing the continuity guidelines, tendencies and ruptures in *Comunicación y Sociedad*, as well as proposing new study pathways and scientific research challenges in the area.

In this research we re-appropriate the systematization carried out by Fuentes (2004) regarding the media studied, and we include Jensen's (2014) proposal in the study, who distinguishes the media in three levels: The first refers to the human body as a necessary and sufficient condition for communication by means of socialization and acculturation. This communication is expanded by oral and written language. At the second level, Jensen places *from-one-to-many communication* institutions and practices –books, the press, photography, the cinema, the radio, TV– which are the traditional media that broadened the dissemination of and

access to information through space and time. Lastly, at the third level he places *digital technologies*, and we decide to label them as interactive digital media, which have allowed the integration and expansion of digital forms, taking as their foundation precisely the interactions among the members and the components of a communicative process.

Although we re-appropriated Fuentes' and Jensen's proposals, we go beyond that in this work, therefore every single research article and essay published from the first issue of the *New Époque* (2004) to the 26<sup>th</sup> issue (2016) is analyzed (in total a corpus of 209 texts); which encompass the problems, findings and directions of the field of communication discussed over these years. We left out the analysis of presentations, reviews and interviews.

To delve in the theoretical approaches of the studies, we resort to Craig (1999), who proposed a tentative reconstruction of multidisciplinary traditions of the theory of communication as seven alternative vocabularies to theorize it as a social practice. These traditions are: *rhetorical tradition*: communication as the practical art of discourse; *semiotic tradition*: communication as intersubjective mediation by signs; *phenomenological tradition*: communication as the experience of otherness; *cybernetic tradition*: communication as an information process; *socio-psychological tradition*: communication as expression, interaction and influence, the process by which individuals interact with and influence one another; *sociocultural tradition*: communication as the symbolic process that produces and reproduces shared sociocultural patterns; and *critical tradition*: communication as a discursive reflection.

In order to determine from which tradition the objects and discussions are constructed and to set out the approaches to the problems of the field of communication, as well as the methodological stands and the research techniques used, we analyzed the structure of the essays and articles emphasizing how they articulate with the objectives, the hypotheses, the theoretical-methodological postulates and the results. We designed a worksheet and systematized each article or essay on it, according to its thematic approach and levels of communication; research tradition; design of instruments, tools, research, research techniques.

Discussion in the social sciences about the role of methodology, its variants and uses, continues to be a fertile ground for debates and stands. For the methodological approach, we considered the categories of perspective, design and data collection tools. According to the perspective of instrumental analysis, studies can be conceived from qualitative or quantitative methodologies or from a combination of both; there are also methodologies that entail the design of experimental or non-experimental tools, depending on the manipulation or not of the research variables. These studies should be prepared by means of descriptive, comparative, exploratory and case research designs, depending on the depth and the way in which the variables are constructed and the data selected (Creswell, 2003; Hernández, Fernández-Collado & Baptista, 2006; Rodríguez Gómez, Gil Flores & García Jiménez, 1996).

Regarding data collection, we identified a total of 15 tools, taking into account its use in the social and humanistic sciences. These tools are: ethnography, virtual ethnography, survey, interview, observation, participant observation, content analysis, discourse analysis, bibliometric analysis, framework analysis, documentary analysis, group discussion, field journal and mixed (Creswell, 2003; Hernández et al, 2006; Monje, 2011; Padua, 1979; Rodríguez et al, 1996). In addition, the analysis included those texts where these indicators of content, traditions and methodology may not apply (N/A); these works never surpassed 5% of the universe for each of the indicators, whose contributions and analyses are also discussed.

## RESULTS

61% of the articles published by *Comunicación y Sociedad* during the period under analysis were empirical, while 39% of the texts were essays. The national policy for scientific journals establishes that every publication should have at least 75% of empirical articles; the journal used to publish a larger number of essays before the implementation of this policy.

It should be pointed out in this regard that collaborations about the academic field are considered essays since they do not use an empirical



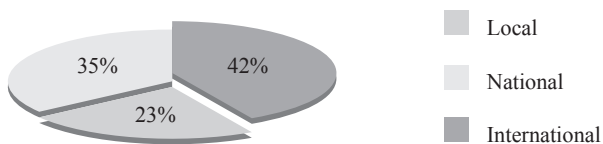
methodology, but a reflection based on bibliographic sources, and yet they are important contributions to the study of communication. This subject matter occupies the second place according to its thematic approach, as we will see later on (Table 4). This suggests the probable reductionisms of the national and international indicators at the moment of not assessing the impact of an essay on an academic periodical publication, in terms of reflection space and discussion about the field.

### *Contributions by sex, origin of the articles, institutions*

In the category of “sex” it is possible to observe a distribution that shows no large differences between men (56%) and women (44%), here the latter represent a little less than half the total number of authors. Here we consider the total number of authors that have contributed in the articles published in the corpus analyzed, not only the authors in the first position. This category had not been explored in previous analyses; therefore, it is not possible to compare the first and the current époque.

In the period studied we observe an increase in the participation of international authors with individual contributions or in the first position, since the journal registered 26.6% international contribution in the first twenty years of its existence (Rodríguez & García, 2007), while now international authors make up 42% of the sample. This larger participation can be interpreted as positive progress in the journal’s positioning at the international level. On the other hand, the national presence presupposes 35%, while local contributions, that is, from authors belonging to its publishing house, account for 23% of the total.

FIGURE 1  
ORIGIN OF THE ARTICLES



Source: The authors.

Fuentes (2004) mentions that the journal “has managed to reconcile in a more balanced way than other journals the dual function of serving to disseminate the research products carried out in the institution that publishes it, and the academic field in which it is located” (p. 12). This has changed in the last decade, since the objective has been to attract more international contributions, and the fact that researchers publish in the same institution where they work is not evaluated well in the bodies that measure the impact of science in Mexico. Therefore, local researchers, which at first found a forum to publish in the journal, today choose to promote the results of their research in external journals.

Yet, when taking into account the institution the first author of each article belongs to, it is possible to observe still a clear predominance of researchers from the Universidad de Guadalajara –mostly, but not exclusively belonging to the Departamento de Estudios de la Comunicación Social– since that was the origin of the main author in 49 of a total of 209 cases (23%), while the Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), is present in the authorship of 13 articles. These results show that, although the tendency is more and more to publish in sources outside the institution, local authorship is still relevant for *Comunicación y Sociedad*, since almost one fourth of its contents are produced in the same institution that edits the journal.

On the other hand, the Universidad Complutense in Madrid ranks fourth jointly with the Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, the Complutense being the only international institution with more than 5 contributions in the journal in the period analyzed.

This international presence can also be seen in the sixth and seventh spots, where along with other institutions with the same number of contributions, we find the Universidad de Buenos Aires, the Universidad de Paris 8 and the la Universidad Pompeu Fabra.

The results of the analysis according to the ranking of the case study show that there is still a clear tendency towards the studies on Mexico, since the focus of attention in 92 articles, which corresponds to almost three times more the number of articles of the following case on the list, which corresponds to the works that are not located in any specific territory, and more than four times the following country with the greatest presence: Spain (see Table 2).

TABLE 1  
INSTITUTIONS WITH THE MOST CONTRIBUTIONS

Ranking	Institution	Number of contributions
1	Universidad de Guadalajara	49
2	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey	13
3	Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana	9
4	Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes	6
	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	6
5	Universidad Veracruzana	5
6	Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO)	4
	Universidad de Buenos Aires	4
7	Universidad Anáhuac	3
	Universidad de París 8	3
	Universidad Pompeu Fabra	3
	Universidad de Sevilla	3
	Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona	3
	Universidad Autónoma de Baja California	3

Note: This table only includes the most representative cases. The institutions that only made one or two contributions in the period analyzed were excluded from the list.

Source: The authors.

In this case, the category N/A corresponds to the articles of the essayistic kind as well as those on theoretical review where research currents, historical development of theories, methodological proposals and accounts by schools of thought are discussed, therefore, they do not adhere to any specific territorial space. This information coincides with the importance reflection on the field has for the journal, that is why this *non value* is relevant for this work.

The third spot in Table 2, corresponding to Spain, confirms the important contribution made by researchers from this country to the journal. The fourth position is occupied by the USA, a case to which

attention should be paid due to the fact that only 2 of the 13 cases refer to problems or studies that concern only that country, the remaining 11 are related with other countries either because they correspond to comparative analyses or because they deal with subject matters such as migration or Hispanic communities; therefore, the works whose authors are contributors from that country have a tendency towards the study of cases about Mexico and other Latin American regions.

With respect to the authors that have the most articles published, some of the names mentioned in previous analyses remain (Rodríguez & García, 2007): the two authors that have been published the most in this period, José Carlos Lozano and Raúl Fuentes, they already appeared in other systematizations made, but occupying lower spots in the ranking.

In this category we find that the tendency identified by Rodríguez and García (2007) remains in terms of the proportion of authors from the Universidad de Guadalajara (UdeG) and the external authors, in the first spots as to frequency of the contributions, where 53.84% of the most published authors belong to that institution, showing a minimal difference with respect to the 2007 analysis, where they made up 55.56% of the total.

As an exceptional case, it is observed that the most published author in the first stage of the journal, Enrique Sánchez Ruiz, only has one

TABLE 2  
DISTRIBUTION OF THE OBJECT OF STUDY BY COUNTRIES  
AND/OR REFLECTION IN THE TEXTS

Position	Country	Number	Position	Country	Number
1	Mexico	92	7	Chile	7
2	N/A	34	8	France	4
3	Spain	22	9	Colombia	3
4	USA	13		Europe	3
5	Argentina	10	10	Cuba	2
6	Latin America	9		Ibero-America	2
	Brazil	9	11	Others	8

Source: The authors.

work in the period covered by this study, this being the most striking change in this category.

In Table 3, it is possible to observe that the first three spots are occupied by thirteen researchers, grouped as follows: two authors in the first spot, with six articles each; three in the second, with four; and eight in the third, with three contributions. It should be mentioned that all the authors with the most publications belong to Mexican institutions.

These results speak of the journal's consolidation in the national scene, where researchers in the field of communication from different institutions in the country continue to trust this publication to promote their research results.

TABLE 3  
MOST PUBLISHED AUTHORS

Position	Author	Frequency
1°	José Carlos Lozano (ITESM)	6
	Raúl Fuentes Navarro (Iteso/UdeG)	6
2°	Francisco de Jesús Aceves González (UdeG)	4
	Rodrigo Gómez García (UAM-C)	4
	Sarah Corona Berkin (UdeG)	4
3°	Carlos Muñoz (UANL)	3
	Carlos Vidales (UdeG)	3
	Celia del Palacio Montiel (Univ. Veracruzana)	3
	Guillermo Orozco Gómez (UdeG)	3
	Juan Enrique Huerta-Wong (UPAEP)	3
	María Rebeca Padilla de la Torre (UAA)	3
	Salvador de León Vázquez (UAA)	3
	Tania Rodríguez Salazar (UdeG)	3

Source: The authors.

Another interesting piece of information concerning the authors, the 21 contributions to the journal are from researchers graduated from the DECS postgraduate courses, since one of the most relevant factors for the consolidation of *Comunicación y Sociedad* is contributed by the networks that the DECS researchers have created over the years as well

as by the academic training spaces at the Department; we find this in researchers such as Salvador de León and Rebeca Padilla, two of the authors that publish the most in the journal, they graduated from the Master of Communication course at the Universidad de Guadalajara, a course that is taught at the above-mentioned department. In turn, they have been the creators of academic nuclei at the Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes (UAA), which stands out as being one of the institutions with the most participation in *Comunicación y Sociedad*. That is, there is a link in the consolidation of the journal with the nuclei of academic training associated with DECS.

### *Levels of communication*

Following the model proposed by Jensen (2014) regarding the three levels of communication: 1) the human body; 2) communication institutions and practices from one to many, and 3) digital technologies (interactive digital media), in *Comunicación y Sociedad* greater relevance is given to level two, that is, mass communication (a total of 126 works), although some space is also given to studies dealing with objects referring to digital subjects and interactive media, with 28 articles each, which explains the opening of the journal's approach and the emergence of new objects and reflections in the field and the academic community.

Table 4 makes it clear that the radio is a research area that has been losing preponderance. It continues to be one of the media with the greatest penetration, but its consumption and production have changed. We believe that it is necessary to conduct studies that reveal how this medium is evolving towards the digital, or about the role played by community and indigenist radios.

We can observe that meaning/content studies continue to predominate, and the approaches to reception/consumption are relevant as well as policies /history /regulation. The reflections on the state of research have significantly increased in the field of communication, which coincides with the fact that it is the second most relevant thematic approach published in *Comunicación y Sociedad*.

As to the thematic reference of the texts (see Table 5), the works that analyze the sociocultural context prevail, and within it the studies about symbolic discourses and representations, which have been one of the

tendencies in the journal. In turn, the publication of works referring to the socioeconomic context is another area of interest for the researchers. We find in addition that though there is still interest in studies with a

TABLE 4  
TEXTS PUBLISHED ACCORDING TO THEIR THEMATIC APPROACH AND  
THE LEVEL OF THE COMMUNICATIVE PROCESS

Thematic approach	Levels											
	T	N/A	First level subject			Second level Traditional media				Third level Interactive Digital media		
			S	X	A	B	C	D	F	G	E	H
Institutionaliza- tion	11	1	7	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Emission/ Production	29	0	3	1	6	1	3	8	4	1	2	0
Circulation/ Distribution	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	0
Reception/ Consumption	35	2	0	0	0	1	0	14	7	1	8	2
Meaning/ Content	57	3	6	5	21	3	1	12	2	2	2	0
History/ Policies/ Regulation	30	1	1	1	1	2	1	9	8	0	6	0
State of research	41	20	2	2	4	0	1	3	3	0	5	1
Total	209	27	19	9	33	7	6	48	27	5	25	3

S: Subjects; X: Texts 1; A: Press and printed materials; B: Cinema; C: Radio; D: TV and Video; F: Media as a whole; G: Texts 2; E: Interactive Digital Media; H: Devices.

Source: The authors based on Fuentes (2004).

sociopolitical leaning, they appear less often than the rest of the areas of study.

TABLE 5  
TEXTS PUBLISHED ACCORDING TO THEIR TYPICAL SOCIAL THEMATIC  
REFERENCE

“Typical” Topics	Texts
Sociocultural context	91
Social subjects and identities	21
Urban culture and everyday life	13
Education, ideology and beliefs	10
Symbolic discourse and representations	47
Academic field	52
Epistemology, theory, methodology	31
Institutionalization, academic production	21
Socioeconomic context	35
Cultural industries, media systems	24
Globalization, regional blocks	3
Modernity, social structure and change	0
Information Society, Digital Revolution (Thompson)	8
Sociopolitical context	31
Legal system and legislation	9
Democracy and democratization	10
Power, political agents, State and government	10
Political Parties and social processes	2
Total	209

Source: The authors based on Fuentes (2004).

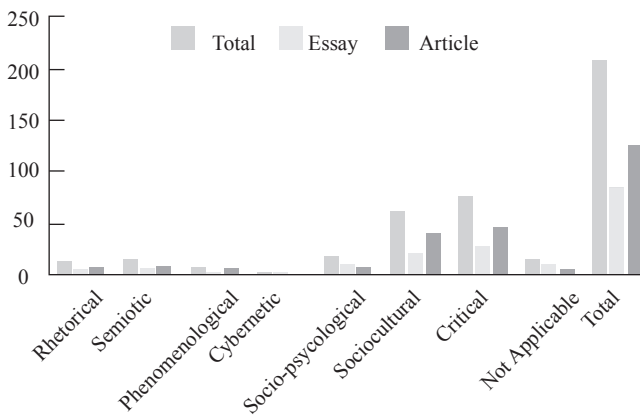
### *Research Traditions*

Regarding the research traditions, in *Comunicación y Society*, studies from the critical perspective predominate, and the second spot belongs to the sociocultural tradition. The ranking is followed by studies from the socio-psychological, semiotic, rhetorical perspectives; and to a lesser extent phenomenological studies with just 7 papers, and 2 with the cybernetic approach.



It is important to clarify that it was difficult to locate some of the works in terms of theoretical traditions, because not all the empirical texts explained to which theoretical stand they belonged, therefore we had difficulty locating these works in terms of the relation that was established among the objectives, the theoretical frameworks or the authors used in the discussion, as well as their respective bibliographic references, conclusion and critical stand. We admit that this can entail a bias for the final interpretation.

FIGURE 2  
TEXTS ACCORDING TO THE RESEARCH TRADITION IN THE FIELD

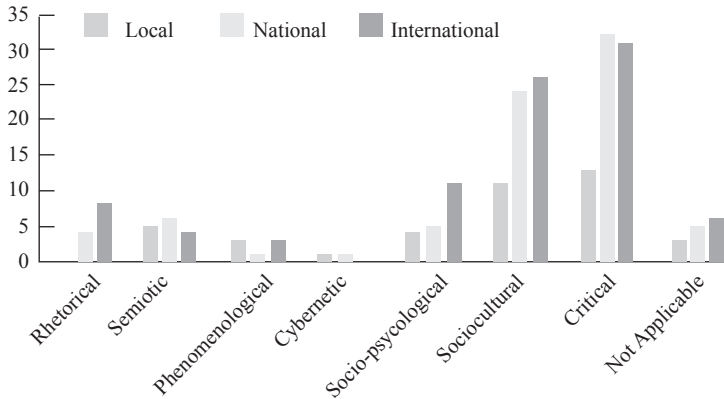


Source: The authors.

In the study, those articles or essays that did not fit in their analysis in any of the indicators proposed for the section are expressed as Not Applicable, which has revealed findings that we include in the present analysis.

An aspect that deserves to be highlighted is that cybernetic and phenomenological traditions are approached less frequently in general terms, and they have been dealt with by national and local researchers, who have published an article in each case.

FIGURE 3  
TRADITIONS ACCORDING TO THE AUTHORS' ORIGINS



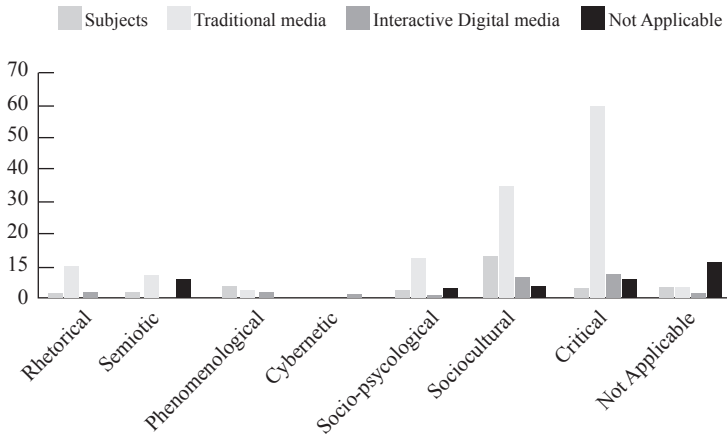
Source: The authors.

Regarding the relation that we can establish between the seven traditions proposed by Craig (1999) and the communicative process levels according to Jensen (2014) (Figure 4), it is interesting that in *Comunicación y Sociedad* critical and sociocultural perspectives predominate, as well as the approach about them in the traditional media, except for the phenomenological perspective, where the approach to the subjects from that tradition predominates. In turn, interactive digital media are approached mainly from the phenomenological and rhetorical perspective.

#### *Methodologies used in the articles*

Articles with a descriptive analysis perspective predominate (49%) in *Comunicación y Society*, followed by case studies (20%) and comparative studies (21%), and just 10% of exploratory studies. The most recurrent character in these research studies, according to tool design, is the non-experimental type, and only 9% of the articles resort to experiments. Experimental designs usually entail greater financial resources for the research, as well as very well contextualized empirical approaches with a difficult generalizing scope. Regarding the research

FIGURE 4  
COMMUNICATIVE PROCESS LEVELS ACCORDING TO THE TRADITIONS

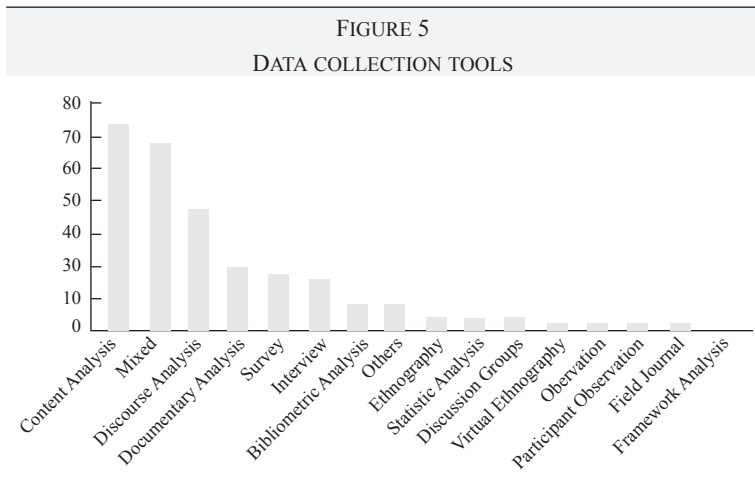


Source: The authors.

design, qualitative studies predominate (56%), followed by quantitative ones (34%) and to a lesser degree the combination of both (10%); these data indicate the prevalence of traditional methodologies in the field of communication studies.

On the other hand, we find a wide variety of data collection tools used in the studies (see Figure 5), with a prevalence of content and discourse analysis, which agrees with the emphasis on discourse and meaning studies. An aspect that should be highlighted is the finding of techniques from historical and linguistic studies, such as generative grammar, which were included in the category *Others*, as well as the minimal use of techniques of anthropological origin. The very frequent use of mixed techniques continues to be circumscribed to instruments that were already traditional in social sciences, with a tendency to combine two techniques, where content analysis, documentary analysis, the interview and the survey stand out.

Few research studies in *Comunicación y Sociedad* have incorporated novel forms of analyzing the field in view of the current media ecosystem. We believe that this will be transformed as the researchers



Source: The authors.

train in the use of other methodologies to study the new media and phenomena, and when the research is enriched with collaborative work with researchers from other non- social or humanistic areas.

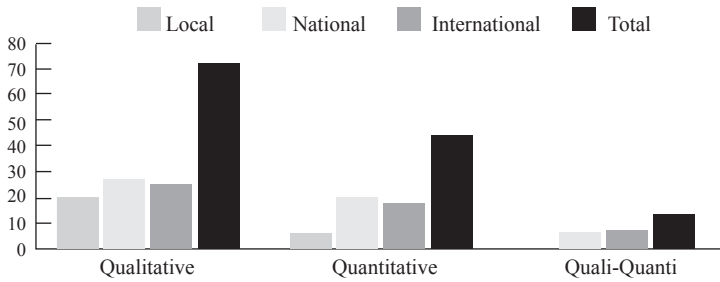
Thus, the analysis reveals that the authors tend to construct their articles from a perspective that is predominantly qualitative and to a lesser degree quantitative; and there is a balance in the assumption of these perspectives among national and international authors. It stands out that local researchers mainly use the qualitative approach rather than the quantitative one.

Regardless of the geographic origin, there is a preference for descriptive research designs, followed by comparative studies and case studies, and very little attention is paid to exploratory studies (Figure 7).

According to the authors' geographic origin, local researchers resort more often to content and discourse analysis, as well as to interviews and mixed techniques. National scholars favor content analysis, above all the qualitative one, followed by mixed and discourse analyses, whereas international researchers prefer mixed techniques, followed by content and discourse analyses.

According to the instrumental analysis perspective, it is interesting that no empirical research is conducted from the cybernetic tradition.

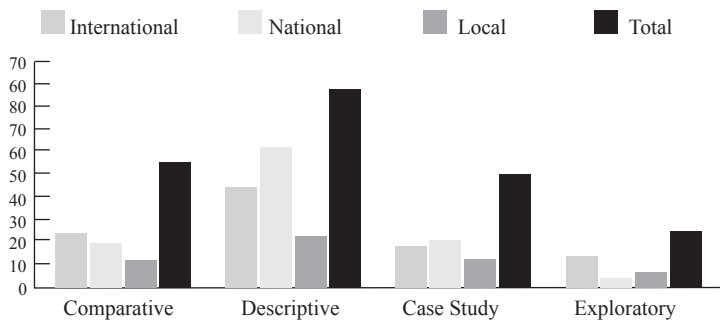
**FIGURE 6**  
**INSTRUMENTAL ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE ACCORDING TO THE**  
**AUTHORS' GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN**



Source: The authors.

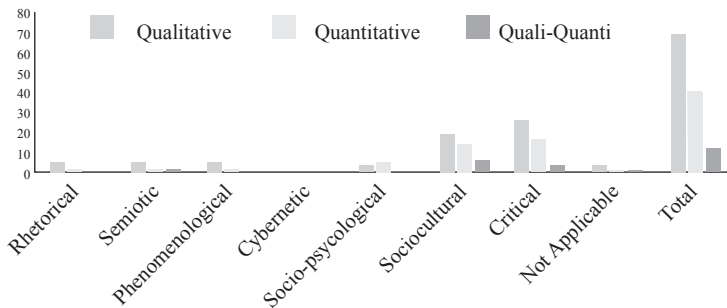
There is a prevalence of the quantitative perspective in the articles of a socio-psychological tradition, unlike the rest of the traditions where the qualitative perspective predominates, while the quali-quantitative perspective is only used in the semiotic, sociocultural and critical traditions.

**FIGURE 7**  
**TYPE OF RESEARCH DESIGN ACCORDING TO THE**  
**AUTHORS' GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN**



Source: The authors.

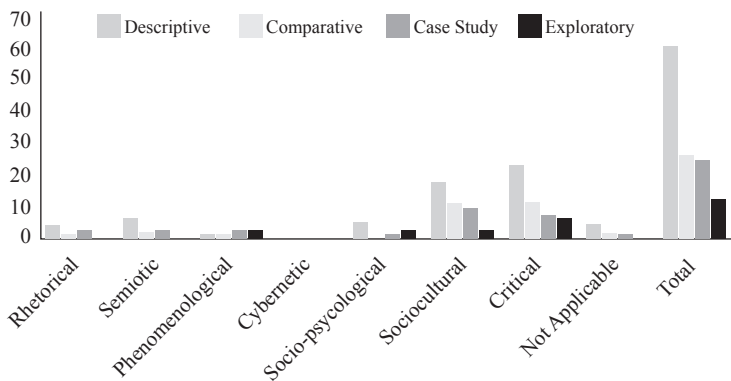
FIGURE 8  
TRADITIONS ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUMENTAL ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE



Source: The authors.

Regarding the relation of traditions with the type of research design, only the critical, sociocultural and phenomenological traditions, use at least once the four types of designs (descriptive, comparative, case study and exploratory). From the rhetorical and semiotic traditions, a case study is never conducted, while there are no comparative studies from the socio-psychological perspective.

FIGURA 9  
TRADITIONS ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF RESEARCH DESIGN



Source: The authors.

Regarding the use of data collection tools according to the traditions, the critical tradition tends to approach objects whose main tools are content analysis, mixed techniques and documentary analysis; while in the sociocultural tradition the mixed techniques, content analysis and the survey are more often resorted to.

The rest of the traditions, except for the cybernetic one—in which the published works do not have any empirical approaches—, use very few techniques. From the socio-psychological one, mixed techniques, content analysis, the survey and the interview are used. As to the semiotic one, content analysis, discourse analysis and mixed techniques are used. In turn, the rhetorical one resorts to content and discourse analysis, and framework analysis; and the phenomenological tradition makes a predominant use of discourse analysis, the interview, observation, discussion groups and mixed techniques. This is a tradition that is not often approached, but one from which a wider variety of research techniques are applied, at least that is so in the works submitted by researchers to *Comunicación y Sociedad*.

If we consider the wide range of techniques available and the scant variety existing in each tradition, it follows that, on the one hand, there is consistency in the way the tools are constructed according to the traditions, but it is also apparent that there is little instrumental innovation among them.

## CONCLUSIONS

From what we have observed in the results, *Comunicación y Sociedad* has been a space for both epistemological reflection and the dissemination of academic production for researchers from different Ibero-American countries. Despite its having been internationalized, the journal is an important space for the promotion of national and local research products, though with a growing tendency to receive works from other countries. The existing editorial policies and the institutions that measure the impact of science, promote academic journals' participation in other dynamics with the aim of making science more visible and having greater global impact, that is why the journal's initial objectives of publishing the research conducted by a small group of CEIC/DECS researchers have been surpassed and widened today.

No doubt, *Comunicación y Sociedad* has become a referent in the field of communication studies in Mexico and it is projected into Ibero-America (López-Ornelas, Osuna Lever & Díaz López, 2017). The tendency to internationalize the authors that publish in the journal should have an impact on the greater variety of the distribution of the empirical phenomena analyzed, without taking away from the value of the authors and the national and local issues. The emergence of phenomena related with the Internet encourage in addition the need to widen the approach of interactive digital media, as well as the subjects, in keeping with the most comprehensive conceptualizations and discussions on communication, not anymore mainly circumscribed to media, and certainly not just viewed from critical and sociocultural approaches.

It would presuppose resorting to other theoretical-conceptual models and methodologies, diversifying thus the journal's approach and scope, without renouncing to its object of dialog in the field of communication, to its diffusion or to its consolidation. We believe that broadening these approaches and studies would contribute to the increase of the prominence of other research traditions on communication such as the cybernetic and the semiotic ones, with other instruments and analytical frameworks to approach communicative phenomena, from perspectives and objects that are less focused on the mass media with a socio-historical character, contributing to unity within the diversity that enriches the field.

The analyses previously conducted on *Comunicación y Sociedad*, as well as other research about scientific production through the journals in the field have focused on impact, geographical, author, institutional indicators. The present study retakes some of them, but the emphasis is put on content analysis within the articles. This emphasis, facilitated by the tools prepared from the ideas by Craig (1999), Fuentes (2004) and Jensen (2014), have allowed us to find out what debates regarding the field of communication are present in the journal's texts, as well as the epistemological anchorage and methodologies used to generate knowledge in the field, from its uses, coherences and contributions in the articles. We believe that that is one of the main contributions of the present research to the studies on scientific production in the field of



communication, by explaining what, how and from what theories and methodologies is being researched.

We hope that *Comunicación y Sociedad* encourages contributions from other countries belonging to the Latin-American region that do not appear in this report and to countries from other continents, we also hope that it encourages interdisciplinary and inter-institutional studies that implement comparative designs, novel methodologies and methods related with the dynamics of a world that is hyperconnected around the information flows and complex communicative processes which are in continual reformulation. That would contribute to enrich and understand the field of communication studies, its most pressing problems and needs.

The subject matter is vast and complex and a lot of publication aspects remain to be dealt with for its analysis, about which we believe that it is necessary to delve in as well as to complement the findings presented with the indicators from sources outside the journal such as Scopus, SciELO, Web of Science, Google Scholar o Almetrics,<sup>4</sup> since they would articulate its production with the international scientific communication system and the field, in addition to showing its visibility and reception.

A pending task would be to get to know the relations between *Comunicación y Sociedad* and other publications in the field, the interdisciplinary dialogs with other fields of study and objects of knowledge covered and encouraged by the journal, as well as knowing the impact of its articles in international indices, but above all in academic communities (departments, associations, work and research groups, academic social networks such as Academia.edu and ResearchGate), from which research both originate and become known. That would contribute valuable data about how science disseminates and impacts, especially in Latin-American communication journals, as compared with

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<sup>4</sup> At the moment this article was finished *Comunicación y Sociedad* does not have the legal prerogatives, attributable to its institution, to manage the DOI (Digital Object Identifier) numbers of each of its articles. That prevents them from being tracked in the databases and searchers, and the subsequent obtainment and systematization of information that it would reveal.

those that occupy the highest spots in the international rankings.

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