

Unveiling the Reasons for Asymmetrical Dialogue: Exploring Exclusion in the Field of Communication

*Develando las razones del diálogo
asimétrico: Explorando la exclusión en el
campo de la comunicación*

*Descobriendo os motivos do diálogo
assimétrico: explorando a
exclusão no campo da comunicação*

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The processes of exclusion within the field of communication on the basis of gender, race, language and, above all, geographical contexts, has been a constant. Several empirical studies confirm the marginal contribution of 1% of Latin America to the central production of the field in the most highly indexed journals. This article presents a reflection to understand the logic of exclusion that has led to this marginal participation, despite the valuable contributions made in the continent. The article concludes with an invitation to bet on a plural, broad and inclusive research agenda.¹

KEYWORDS: Latin America, Global South, field of communication, critiques, inclusion, exclusion.

Los procesos de exclusión al interior del campo de la comunicación por razones de género, raza, lengua y, sobre todo, contextos geográficos han sido una constante. Diversos estudios empíricos ratifican la marginal contribución de América Latina de un 1% a la producción central del campo en las revistas de más alta indexación. Este artículo presenta una reflexión para comprender la lógica de la exclusión que ha propiciado esta marginal participación, a pesar de los aportes valiosos efectuados en el continente. El artículo concluye con una invitación a apostarle a una agenda de investigación plural, amplia e inclusiva.

PALABRA CLAVE: América Latina, Sur Global, campo de la comunicación, críticas, inclusión, exclusión.

Os processos de exclusão no campo da comunicação por razões de gênero, raça, idioma e, sobretudo, contextos geográficos têm sido uma constante. Vários estudos empíricos ratificam a contribuição marginal da América Latina de 1% da produção central do campo nas revistas mais bem indexadas. Este artigo apresenta uma reflexão para entender a lógica de exclusão que levou a essa participação marginal, apesar das valiosas contribuições feitas no continente. O artigo conclui com um convite para investir em uma agenda de pesquisa plural, ampla e inclusiva.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: América Latina, Sul Global, campo da comunicação, críticas, inclusão na comunicação, exclusão.

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, the field of communication has faced scrutiny for perpetuating exclusionary processes that limit its richness and diversity. Extensive systematic research confirms the existence of these exclusionary processes across various dimensions, including racial discrimination (Chakravartty et al., 2018; Freelon et al., 2023), gender (Wang et al., 2021; Knobloch-Westerwick & Glynn, 2013), citation patterns (Demeter, 2018; Salvador-Mata, 2023), methodological (Walter et al., 2018), epistemological (Bryant & Miron, 2004), geographical (Albuquerque, 2021), and linguistic approaches (Waisbord, 2016). Notably, the vibrant discussions within the field in Latin America have been subject to this process of exclusion and marginalization.

Efforts are increasingly underway to denounce and counteract these exclusionary processes (Freelon et al., 2023; Salvador-Mata et al., 2023). Initiatives aim not only to raise awareness of these processes but also to bring visibility to excluded voices and place on the academic agenda those “other narratives” that offer renewed perspectives on the field (Simonson et al., 2022). Noteworthy among these endeavors is the publication by Oliveira Paulino et al. (2020), which engages Latin American researchers affiliated with ALAIC in a dialogue with their European counterparts from ECREA (European Communication Research Association). This joint effort seeks to foster a more holistic reflection on the field of communication. Additionally, the work of Simonson, Park, and Pooley, in collaboration with scholars from Latin America, the Caribbean, and various European countries, has led to initiatives such as online seminars, international conferences, and the publication of the journal *History of Media Studies*, all aiming to rewrite the history of the field from a more comprehensive and inclusive perspective.

However, there is still much work to be done. Following an analysis of journals indexed in WoS (Web of Science) over 43 years, Demeter (2018) discovered that South America contributed only 1% to overall knowledge production in the field. Similarly, major social-science journals in the same database disclose that 90% of publications over a 30-year period originated from the United States and Europe, with only 1.5% coming from Latin America (Mosbah-Nathason & Gingras, 2013).

Reflecting on the exclusionary processes in the field is crucial for several reasons, as emphasized by Simonson et al. (2022). Without explicit efforts, “exclusions implied by gender, race, language, colonialism, geopolitical location, and institutionally endorsed privilege will be reproduced in the formal and informal accounts of our field’s pasts” (p. 1). It also underscores the need to overcome provincialism, where only theoretical constructs from a specific geographical context, such as the Global North or the North American and European academy, are considered valid. Finally, such reflection facilitates the transition to an inclusive paradigm, promoting horizontal and equitable dialogue among academics, incorporating diverse epistemologies and approaches from all corners of the globe to the overall benefit of the field.

This article aims to explore some of the reasons behind the exclusionary processes related to knowledge production in Latin America. The goal is to understand why, despite significant contributions from the southern part of the continent, these contributions remain largely unknown in the United States academy, which dominates knowledge production in both the social sciences (Mosbah-Nathason & Gingras, 2013) and communication (Demeter, 2018). These reflections aim to provide insights within the thematic section that addresses exclusionary processes in the history of media. The subsequent section will delve into studies that illuminate these processes, followed by an exploration of reasons that have facilitated exclusion in the context of Latin America. The article concludes with an invitation to embrace an inclusive paradigm to foster a polyphonic, integral, and enriched field.

EVIDENCE OF EXCLUSION IN THE COMMUNICATION FIELD

Despite persistent calls since the end of the last century to de-Westernize and make the communication field more inclusive (Blumer & Gurevitch, 1995; Waisbord & Mellado, 2014; Hanitzsch, 2019), the voices of minorities in terms of gender, race, geographic location, and language continue to be notably absent from broader discussions. This section presents empirical evidence of such exclusion processes.

Gender and Race Exclusion

The issue of gender discrimination in academia is not a novel one. Several bibliometric studies reveal that research published by women receives fewer citations than research by men in fields such as astronomy (Caplar et al., 2017), economics (Fabere et al., 2011), and physics (Teich et al., 2012). Similarly, in communication, women not only receive fewer citations (Mayer et al., 2018; Knobloch-Westerwick & Glynn, 2013), but male authors also tend to dismiss novel ideas presented by women (Hofstra et al., 2020).

Moreover, numerous studies indicate that women continue to earn lower salaries than men, even when occupying similar positions in academia (Curtis & Thornton, 2014; Monroe et al., 2008), and receive less recognition for their research work (Wang et al., 2021). In an analysis of the International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy (Brun Jensen et al., 2016), Mayer et al. (2018) found that women appeared as authors or co-authors in less than 20% of the entries. Additionally, “while 40 articles were devoted to male communication scholars, female scholars had no independent entries” (Wang et al., 2021, p. 135).

Concerning minority groups, Chakravarty et al. (2018) discovered that, in the 12 core publications in the field appended to the WoS database, only 14% of authors over a 26-year period (1990-2016) were non-White. Furthermore, the citation patterns of these non-white authors were significantly lower than those of their white counterparts. Freelon et al. (2023) later confirmed this trend, revealing that 91.5% of the so-called Communication Citation Elite (CCE) were white, with authors of Asian origin at 5.1%, Hispanics or Latinos at 1.5%, and Blacks at 0.8%, based on a longitudinal study spanning 2000 to 2019.

Discrimination Based on Geopolitical Location

In alignment with the concerns raised by Simonson et al. (2022), extensive research supports patterns of exclusion based on geographical reasons. Whether due to language differences, diverse epistemic approaches that deviate from the established canon of hegemonic publications, or the exploration of alternative methodologies and topics, exclusionary processes are evident.

In the realm of social sciences, the comprehensive study conducted by Mosbah-Natason and Gingras (2013) highlighted this exclusionary trend. The researchers carried out a longitudinal content analysis spanning 30 years, examining citation patterns in the top 200-ranked social science journals within the esteemed Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) of the Web of Science (WoS). The findings were unequivocal. American authors overwhelmingly cited their compatriot researchers: from 1983 to 1985, the figure stood at 82.9%; from 1993 to 1995, it was 80.2%; and from 2003 to 2005, it decreased to 76.7%. Conversely, U.S. authors cited European researchers to a lesser extent: 1983-1985: 15.8%; 1993-1995: 18.3%; and 2003-2005: 21.9%. However, the citation patterns from U.S. authors to Latin American and African authors remained consistently at 0% from 1983 to 2005, mirroring the scenario for authors from Eastern Europe.

Upon examining citation patterns of European researchers, Mosbah-Nathason and Gingras (2013) found that these scholars cited their U.S. colleagues as follows: 1983-1985: 43.1%; 1993-1995: 45.3%; and 2003-2005: 48.1%. In contrast, European authors cited their compatriot researchers as follows: 1983-1985: 54.4%; 1993-1995: 52.1%; and 2003-2005: 50.0%. The citation patterns of Europeans regarding academics from Latin America and Africa over the 30-year analysis remained consistently at 0%. The authors concluded that there was evidence of a kind of “phagocytosis” in social science research in the periphery, leading authors to cite the two major poles (Europe and the USA) to the detriment of locally relevant subjects.

Demeter (2018) discovered that in fields such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, psychology, general social sciences, and philosophy, knowledge production in the Science Citation Index (SCI) and Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) databases of WoS was dominated by authors from U.S. and Western Europe. While Asian countries had a slight presence in areas like mathematics, physics, and chemistry, they never reached the level of the two aforementioned powers. Shifting the focus to the field of communication, a content analysis conducted from 1975 to 2017 on all publications indexed in WoS in the communication domain found that 96% of all published articles corresponded to authors from the Global North (USA and

Europe). The remaining 4% went to authors from the Global South, including Africa (1%), Eastern Europe (1%), and South America (1%).

However, Global North countries also hold hegemonic positions in the editorial boards of major journals (Albuquerque et al., 2020) and the presidency of key associations in the field (Miller & Arroyave, 2021). For instance, in their study on the geographical distribution of members on the editorial boards of major WoS-platform journals, Albuquerque et al. (2020) found that 58.49% belonged to North America, 8.32% to the United Kingdom, 4.68% to Australia, and 2.45% to Canada. In total, 74.4% of the members belonged to English-speaking countries, and 87.7% to countries in the Global North. Latin America and the Caribbean contributed only 1% of reviewer members to these core publications in the field.

Exclusion is evident in the content of the texts, the subjects, and the publications leading the discussion. Thus, none of the theories identified as the most cited in communication have their origin in Latin America (Bryant & Miron, 2005; Potter et al., 2014; Walter et al., 2018). The researches that account for the most cited authors do not identify a Latin American author (Griffin et al., 2023). Likewise, no scientific journal from Latin America is indexed in the considered hegemonic WoS database, and only 14 are part of the more than 400 that exist in Scopus, which in terms of percentage means a little more than 3% of the total number of journals in the area of communication (Arroyave & González, 2021). Finally, the databases where the main Latin American journals are indexed, such as Latindex, Dialnet, and Redib, are completely ignored by researchers in the English-speaking context (Miller & Arroyave, 2021).

EXPLORING THE REASONS FOR EXCLUSION

Once the exclusion of the Latin American academy from central publications becomes evident, it is necessary to explore compelling reasons to make sense of this process. The United States academy, which dominates the central production of knowledge in the field of communication (Demeter, 2018), emerged, evolved, and positioned itself with particularities that mostly distance it from Latin American academia. This section highlights those differences.

Scientific vs. Humanistic Approach

Communication emerged as an institutionalized academic field in U.S. universities via doctorates in the social sciences (Rogers, 1997; Rogers & Chaffee, 1994). Wilbur Schramm, who inaugurated the first formal communication program at the University of Iowa in 1943, was committed to training social scientists with the conceptual tools and research rigor to address the increasingly complex relationship between mass media and society. This academic program departed radically from the journalism schools of the early twentieth century, which emphasized humanistic and technical training for journalists.

In crafting the foundational narratives of a non-existent field, Schramm himself (1963), designates four social scientists as the founding fathers of mass communication theory: Harold Lasswell, Paul Lazarsfeld, Karl Hovland, and Kurt Lewin. They were notable for their adept use of quantitative and empirical approaches. Despite Schramm's background as a doctor of literature and a humanist, with experience in fiction writing and teaching creative writing in Iowa, his role in the Office of Facts and Figures during World War II in Washington brought him into contact with eminent figures in the social sciences—political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists. This exposure led him to develop a new academic interest, diverting him from literature and the liberal arts.

This choice created tension in the North American academy, challenging the established journalism training led by Williard "Daddy" Blayer, which advocated for a profound humanistic education to equip journalists with conceptual tools for understanding and writing more effectively on the topics they covered in their reporting (Rogers & Chaffee, 1994). The famous dispute, dubbed the "Chi squares" (a statistical operation) versus the "green eyebrows" (named for the mark left on the copper monocle/visor used to check printing proofs in presses), unfolded within the renowned association AEJMC. Over time, communication largely absorbed journalism in most schools, and particularly at the graduate level, scientific, objective, and empirical training became the established norm.

In contrast to the U.S. context, the origins of communication in Latin America are tied to avowedly humanistic rather than purportedly

scientific approaches (Fuentes Navarro, 2020; Marques de Melo, 1988). Early publications are characterized by biographies of renowned journalists, historical reviews of print media, and profiles of directors and intellectuals whose pens illuminated reflections on various topics framed by the historical moment. These initial themes were complemented by essays related to media legislation or regulation, aligning closely with the principles of press freedom (Marques de Melo, 1988).

At the institutional level, the inaugural communication program surfaced at the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City, in 1960. Gradually, communication absorbed the existing journalism training schools. Fuentes-Navarro (2010) identifies three models in university communication training from this early period. The first, predating the establishment of the program at the Universidad Iberoamericana, focuses on the professionalization of journalists. The second, initiated in 1960 with the aforementioned university, emphasizes humanistic education to prepare intellectuals for media work. The third model aligns with the launch of the first public communication program in 1974 at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (UAM), concentrating on training social sciences professionals with a critical approach. Thus, the training in social sciences adopted a critical perspective, closely aligned with the argumentative and reflective style of this socio-philosophical currents.

A fundamental distinction between the two research traditions becomes evident here. In the southern part of the continent, reflection takes center stage, characterized by a deep, at times erudite exploration that extends beyond the exclusive confines of the field into philosophy, literature, and contemporary social thought. The essay emerges as a prevalent mode of advancing thought and research in many Latin American journals. In fact, Orozco Gómez's (1997) content analysis at the close of the last century revealed that 80% of the continent's journals conveyed research or knowledge advancement through essays. Conversely, in the northern part of the continent, an approach rooted in the scientific, objective, empirical, and pragmatic tradition, focusing intensely on concrete and singular aspects, becomes one of the predominant methods for addressing field-related concerns.

Therefore, two distinct traditions have grappled with concerns in the field of communication on the same continent, yet on different geographical shores and with different stylistic nuances. As the United States emerged as an economic powerhouse and exerted dominance in international academia, the scientific model, characterized by empirical, objective, and predominantly quantitative research, was established as the central canon. Other approaches to knowledge, boasting rich intellectual traditions, substantial contributions to the humanities, and closer ties to the Iberian heritage of the continent, faced limited acceptance in the central academy, resulting in processes of exclusion.

Research at the Service of Power and Counter-Power

Research interests in the field of communication during its early stages in World War II were shaped by significant differences closely tied to the political, economic, and social contexts in various regions of the Americas. In the North, economic and political power definitively molded the agenda of mass communication research (Simpson, 1994). Latin America, on the other hand, followed a distinct path, with the most impactful contributions of Latin American communicational thought intimately connected to “the others,” the excluded, and counter-power groups. Both regions contributed transcendental theories and reflections that ultimately defined the field.

Mattelart and Mattelart (1997), revisiting the origins of mass communication research in the United States, argue that researchers essentially believed it was natural to put their intelligence at the service of the state, given the perception of living in a fairly just democracy with a fair political system and ample opportunities. Faced with the external threat posed by the spread of Nazism in the Western world, and particularly in the United States, a certain esprit de corps led many academics and intellectuals to unite and support their country. As a result, research agendas were clearly shaped by power structures, abundant resources, and clear goals.

In his well-documented study of communication research from 1945 to 1960, Simpson (1994) contends that the government’s psychological warfare program played a pivotal role in transforming “mass communication research into a distinct scholarly field,

strongly influencing the choice of leaders and determining which of the competing scientific paradigms of communication would be funded, elaborated, and encouraged to prosper” (p. 3). It is not an exaggeration to assert that, at least in its initial theorizing, mass communication essentially aligned with the political and economic interests of the U.S. government.

Indeed, Simpson (1994) reveals that over 75% of the annual budget for Paul Lazarsfeld’s Office of Applied Social Research at Columbia University, Hadley Cantril’s Institute for International Social Research at Princeton, the Center for International Studies (CENIS) at MIT, and, more broadly, the six most prominent communication centers, came from the US State Department, the Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

As Simpson (1994) concludes:

The government allocated between \$7 million and \$13 million annually for university and think-tank studies of communication-related social psychology, communication effect studies, anthropological studies of foreign communication systems, overseas audience and foreign public opinion surveys, and similar projects that contributed directly and indirectly to the emergence of mass communication research as a distinct discipline (p. 9).

On the other hand, Latin America’s most original contributions to the field of communication in its early days emerged as a reaction against power. Indeed, Latin American communicational thought aligns more closely with a tradition that distances itself from, questions, and criticizes the political, economic, social, and cultural powers associated with the establishment. The distrust inherited from more than 300 years of invasion, conquest, and colonization by European countries, coupled with the military dictatorships that ruled the region in the middle of the last century, the close link between the political and economic elites that have ended up benefiting both to the detriment of other less favored sectors, and the strong social discrimination resulting from the accentuated economic and cultural inequality experienced by the continent have distanced academics and intellectuals from political and

economic powers. Neither Beltrán, Díaz-Bordenave, Pasquali, Verón, nor Freire, considered fathers of Latin American theoretical thought, put their intellect at the service of power.

While in Latin America sociology was associated more with the critical current and as a source of reflection and action for political change and revolution, in the United States sociology was born within an institution founded by a tycoon (Rockefeller), the University of Chicago, and had as its social mission “to contribute to the good” (Rogers, 1997). Indeed, Albion Small, the founding director of the first program and a Protestant pastor, conceived sociology as a field of social science to “do good.” Schwarz and Jaramillo (1986), for their part, argue that critical theory meant to Latin American academia what Einstein meant to physics (p. 52). On the other hand, the ideas of revolution were more associated with themes of rebellion in the United States, not social change or progress.

Blacks, Native Americans, women, and other ethnic minorities did not come into the focus of North American researchers until many years later in the field of communication. Neither did they view mass media as instruments capable of educating, transforming, and empowering disadvantaged groups. For instance, the black press played a crucial role during a historical period marked by significant social transformations in the U.S. As early as 1827, when slaves were still not literate, Samuel Cornish and John Brown Russwurm published the first African American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. By 1890, there were over 500 publications nationwide, becoming a key means of opposing slavery, denouncing lynching, and advocating for the black cause on the national agenda.

Newspapers associated with Native Indian groups were equally significant and served diverse purposes. For instance, The Cherokee Phoenix (1828) and the Indian's Advocate, both bilingual tribal newspapers, were established to provide a national voice for these groups and defend their rights (Arroyave, 2020). These publications competed with others in Indian languages created by white religious leaders seeking to indoctrinate Native Americans into various religious affiliations. Additionally, the immigrant press emerged as a widespread phenomenon, with thousands of newspapers founded in

the United States, and in many languages, during the early twentieth century, proving vital for various social groups.

Undoubtedly, these were fascinating phenomena that sparked curiosity and reflection on the role played by these early media with marginalized groups and had the potential to evolve into original theorizing. However, this was a path not taken in U.S. communication theory. The primary books on communication theory lack valid conceptual models to help us understand such phenomena. The causes, interests, reasons of counter-power groups, those marginalized in economic processes, the reasons for exclusion, and the possibility of granting voice and agency were not on the research agendas of the so-called “founding fathers of the theory.” When Schramm, Rogers, and other theorists conceived the media as “magic multipliers” to achieve development processes, they did so from the perspective of financiers, planners, generally from the viewpoint of the empowered sender aiming to impose a particular agenda (Arroyave, 2007).

Latin American communication thought took a distinct trajectory. Grassroots groups, the praxis, and life experiences of the working class—including miners, peasants, indigenous peoples, women, and Afro-descendant communities—along with social movements, became central subjects of study. The figures regarded as founding fathers of Latin American communication thought made contributions from the standpoint of counter-power, the subaltern, the other, and the excluded. They positioned themselves within this perspective to assert their voices, ensuring their causes were heard. Luis Ramiro Beltrán, Juan Díaz-Bordenave, Armand Mattelard, and Paulo Freire, mostly working without significant funding or substantial resources from political or private powers, demonstrated a deep commitment to social reality. They challenged established ideas and made original contributions that broadened the communication field, bringing visibility to voices and actors marginalized by the dominant conceptualization of the field.

There are fundamental structural differences that have shaped distinct research approaches in the field at both ends of the continent. In North America, research, generously funded with public and private resources, consistently benefits both the funders, addressing their concerns, and the researchers, providing ample resources. On

the southern side of the continent, research on a range of topics, often associated with community and counter-power groups, is conducted with limited resources, lacks state support, and is profoundly committed to social reality. Despite its significance, the research on “the others” tends to have less visibility in the central publications of the field (Walter et al., 2018).

Epistemological differences

Communication as a field of study will also have different conceptions and meanings in the North and South of the Americas. Likewise, its founding fields or disciplines will be different, leading to different paths and approaches to research. Despite the use of the same word, it will mean different things in different contexts.

In Latin America, communication has been associated with mass media since its inception (Waisbord, 2014). The so-called founding fathers of Latin American communication thought offered important reflections on the impact of media on culture. Beltrán, Díaz-Bordenave, Pasquali, Verón, and Mattelart showed great concern about the instrumental use of the media. Similarly, Freire questioned the mass media as a kind of extension that fulfills the task of indoctrinating social groups. Beltrán and Díaz-Bordenave’s denunciations of the instrumental use of the media in the processes of agricultural modernization, Pasquali, Verón and Mattelart’s denunciations of the massification of culture and the advances of cultural imperialism also alluded to this central theme.

In the United States, for its part, communication in some contexts is associated not only with mass media but also with fields or areas of study such as rhetoric, cybernetics, information theory, and linguistic analysis. Waisbord (2014) notes that in Latin America, “disciplines that shaped the development of communication studies in Western rhetoric, such as cybernetics, biology, and psychology (Rogers, 1997), have had an insignificant influence” (p. 3). Likewise, “the traditions of media effects research, social networks, message design, and information processing have little presence” (p. 8). Theoretical approaches such as pragmatism, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology have not been as prevalent in the subcontinent as they have been in the United States.

It is because of these epistemological differences that the dialogue between the two contexts of the Americas will not be fluid. Shannon and Weaver's mathematical theory of communication, proposed in 1948, would become a central conception of communication, permeating the various theoretical constructs of the time, such as the theory of diffusion of innovations (Arroyave, 2007), and becoming "the first diagram of communication that every student entering the field found in the widely used book by Schramm and Berlo" (Rogers & Chafee, 1994, p.7). Enthroned as the creator of the "Magna Carta of the information society," Shannon was an engineer with a Ph.D. from MIT who, while working for one of the most important telephone companies in the U.S. at the time, focused on the effective transmission of messages. His linear model will be essential to the field of information and cybernetics. However, from Latin America, a different point of view will be taken.

From another epistemological school, Pasquali (1977) questions the linear view of communication. His reflection leads him to distinguish information from communication. While the first process, coming from the field of engineering, alludes to the mere transmission of information, emphasizing the sender as an empowered agent, the second implies a clear exchange between sender and receiver, from a horizontal view, of coexistence and reciprocity and bivalence between sender and receiver (Torrico, 2016). In fact, Pasquali will raise the concept of *con-saber*, which means to know with the other. From the perspective of the South of the continent, the dialogue, the exchange of roles, the construction of knowledge in a collective way, in *comunnis* (community, Latin root of communication), was essential when communication was eluded.

On the contrary, paradigms such as rhetoric, cultural studies, and postpositivism (Bryant & Miron, 2004; Walter et al., 2018) will play a central role in knowledge production in North America. In contrast, linguistic structuralism and functionalism will remain invisible in this academic environment, representing one of the most significant areas of divergence between the two traditions. Structuralist semiotics, with its broad theoretical framework, will struggle to gain a foothold in most northern schools of communication. Instead, its development is likely to occur within linguistics departments. In contrast, functionalism,

despite being the dominant theoretical perspective in the social sciences in the postwar period, particularly in sociology in the U.S. with notable figures such as Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton (Nielsen, 2011), is absent from meta-analyses in the region. Conversely, in Latin America, Eliseo Verón, recognized as one of the pioneers of Latin American communication thought, will produce significant works that illuminate multiple generations through semiotic structuralism. In addition, deep reflections on research influenced by economic or political resources to maintain the status quo and favor specific interests, closely related to the functionalist view, will attract the attention of numerous intellectuals in the region. These divergent epistemological and paradigmatic paths have not only widened inequalities, but also accentuated exclusion.

CONCLUSION

Exclusion undeniably manifests itself as a tangible phenomenon with concrete ramifications in the field of communication. Not only does it perpetuate certain theoretical, epistemological, methodological, thematic, and stylistic perspectives at the core of the field, but it also relegates students and researchers worldwide, preventing them from embracing the richness, breadth, and diversity inherent in a pluralistic discipline like communication. Brilliant ideas, innovative theoretical frameworks, unique methodological approaches, and distinctive local/regional issues flourish in different geographical contexts. Yet, due to various processes of exclusion, they remain hidden from the wider academic and student community.

It is time to bring to the fore the imperative of transitioning to an inclusive paradigm within the field of communication. Progress toward an equitable, diverse, expansive, and participatory agenda is critical. This shift should not compromise quality or rigor, but rather create space for all voices that have been muted by the logic of exclusion. The academy must embrace a polyphony of voices, foster horizontal and equitable dialogue, and prioritize participation as its new constant. Now is the time to address the “historical debt” and advocate for “epistemic justice” to set the field on a trajectory where inclusion and equity serve as its true guiding principles.

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PROFILE

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