
REVIEW ARTICLES
ОГЛЯДИ

Theoretical framework media and political economy of communication

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ABSTRACT

This article is presented with a **deductive method** orientation, with a paradigm of hermeneutic order, based on experience, carried out under an exclusively qualitative approach, which will serve as a scaffold for a next study of digital media. Communications are a means or mechanism of organization for coexistence in society. The political economy of communication has its origin in the theories or critical approaches of Frankfurt and cultural studies, which has analyzed the role of the owners or concessionaires of large radio and television corporations, highlighting the bias they have given to the dissemination of information and culture, orienting it towards the defense of their ideology or their commercial interests, thus leading to the alienation and training of large masses of audience. In these modern times, the massification of the media is the result of technological convergences, where three disciplines or spaces are at work: information technology, telecommunications and the Internet, which is the axis or center of the new communications ecosystem. Social networks allow feedback between sender and receiver of news, transforming the unidirectional communication process provided by conventional media.

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Ця стаття представлена з орієнтацією на дедуктивний метод, з парадигмою герменевтичного порядку, заснованої на досвіді, здійсненому в рамках виключно якісного підходу, який слугуватиме основою для наступного дослідження цифрових медіа. Комунікації є засобом або механізмом організації співіснування в суспільстві. Політична економія комунікації бере свій початок у теоріях або критичних підходах франкфуртських і культурних досліджень, які аналізували роль власників або концесіонерів великих радіо- та телевізійних корпорацій, підкреслюючи упередженість, яку вони надавали поширенню інформації і культурі, орієнтуючись на захист своєї ідеології чи своїх комерційних інтересів, що призводить до відчуження та навчання широких мас аудиторії. У наш час масовізація медіа є результатом технологічної конвергенції, де працюють три дисципліни або простори: інформаційні технології, телекомунікації та Інтернет, який є віссю або центром нової комунікаційної екосистеми. Соціальні мережі забезпечують зворотний зв'язок між відправником і одержувачем новин, перетворюючи односпрямований процес комунікації, який забезпечують звичайні медіа.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: ЗМІ, інформаційні медіа, комунікація, комунікаційні дослідження та політика

Introduction

The objective of this essay is to analyze the referential framework of communication sciences, as a fundamental part of social relations, as well as to describe the political economy of communication (PCE), understood as a bias of ideological and commercial interests of the concessionaires; at the same time describing digital media and social networks. The purpose of this study is to set the theoretical and conceptual framework for subsequent works to be presented on modern or digital media.

The approach of this article is based on the deductive method, through which access to knowledge is generated in reasoning and in the creation of abstract systems with a high degree of universality (Finol & Vera, 2020, p. 10), following a paradigm of hermeneutic character, which is given by the experience in having worked in a traditional media (radio), addressing an exclusively qualitative approach, since descriptions of situations or defined behaviors are made, to analyze a segment of reality, without using statistical information in depth (García, 2020, p. 34-35).

The mass media have been present throughout our lives, especially those considered traditional or conventional (radio, television, print), which have always been influenced by the ideology and interests that permeated their owners or concessionaires, so the political economy of communication analyzes these behaviors and attitudes.

The first point deals with the theoretical aspect of communication sciences, pointing out the definition and characteristics that will serve as a frame of reference, as well as describing the approaches that have approached the study of communication theory.

The second point deals with the subject of the political economy of communication, oriented from the Latin American scope, which is heir to neo-Marxism and the historical structural current of Latin America, as well as cultural studies. A third point briefly addresses the aspect of modern or digital media, which will serve us in the not too distant future to reflect on these issues that have stood out in the last decade.

1. Conceptual framework of communication sciences

Communication sciences are also known in other countries or regions as social communication, communicology or simply communication. The objective of the communication sciences is to analyze information and the action and effect of human communication itself, as well

as the study of the mass media and the relationships between them. The best known disciplines that can address communications are political science, sociology, psychology and marketing.

TECH Technological University (2021, p. 4) notes in its presentation of the doctorate in the area of communication sciences: "Communication sciences study, analyze and discuss phenomena related to the transmission of information between people, mass media and cultural industrialists. It is, therefore, an area in constant change in which the advance of technology has a direct impact".

According to T. Ballesteros (Ballesteros & Martínez, 2019, p. 28) "To communicate means to exchange information", therefore when we talk about communication technologies we refer to the means that human beings have created in order to make it easier to exchange information with their fellow human beings. For Sinnaps (2019; cited by Méndez, 2020, p. 41) communication: "...is the basis of the evolution of humanity. Since the origin of communication and its elements, the transmission of information and knowledge has always been identified as one of the most primitive needs of our being".

J. Aguado (2004, p. 9; Infosol, 2021) comments that the term communication is used in a great variety of contexts and with a wide diversity of meanings, which can sometimes cause confusion, in this regard P. Natta and E. Pelosio (2008, p. 11; cited by Infosol, 2021) write about the theory of communication:

The field of communication is one of the newest as a scientific discipline. There is not yet an agreement that delimits these different views in a more or less similar point of view, as if it exists in Physics or Chemistry... there is no model in which the vast majority of communication scholars agree. Each theory functions as a lens that allows us to approach reality, but at the same time establishes its own rules.

From Edison Otero's text (2020, Ch. 1) I derive several senses or approaches in which the word communication can be used:

- Fact: To refer to the contact and relationship of people with their peers. Here people talk to each other, make phone calls, send messages. It is also a fact that the mass media (television, radio and the press) report news or activities of general interest.
- Educational: To refer to an area of study in universities, where students, professors and researchers address the phenomenon or area related to communication. In this vision, theories, concepts and methodologies are treated as the objective of study of the first sense (fact).
- Engineering or persuasion: Referred to the field of those who consider themselves 'experts' in communication (publicists, marketers, producers of television and radio campaigns). People whose profession consists in the use of techniques or procedures aimed at influencing the tastes or preferences of consumers.

Similarly, and following Otero, the concept of communication can be used: 1) as a fact: gestures, conversation, use of technological resources and media programming; 2) as a theory: models, hypotheses, intellectual products; and 3) as engineering: advertising, propaganda and public good campaigns.

Regarding the elements that make up communication, Sinnaps (2019; cited by Méndez, 2020, p. 41) indicates that it is composed of six elements:

- Sender: creates and emits message.
- Receiver: receives the transmitted information.
- Channel: means of transmission.
- Message: data and information.
- Code: set of signs.
- Context: set of temporal, spatial or sociocultural circumstances that allow the receiver to understand the message.

It is also often said that experience shows that theoretical and engineering approaches to communication do not usually intersect, since they operate on separate tracks that do not usually

converge in the academic world and the communications industry, in this sense Edison Otero (2020, Ch. 1) states:

The academic world mixes a certain disdain for the communicational medium and a certain ignorance about its dynamics; in turn, the media and advertising world generally exhibits a considerable ignorance of the findings of academic-scientific research and a cheerful activism in terms of mythologies about the unrestricted power of their trades.

Communication is a means or mechanism of social organization, which is an intrinsic part of the life of human beings as a whole, regardless of the language spoken; it is impossible to conceive of a world without communication. Science is advancing by leaps and bounds, with which the means of communication are developing in an incredible way and its application can be seen during the last two decades at its peak.

The science or theory of communication can be explained or analyzed with the help of several social sciences, mainly sociology, psychology and political science, thereby generating a persistent interest in understanding the role or role of the media in society (Otero, 2020, Ch. 3).

García Jiménez (2019, p. 39) makes two important notes on the best-known classifications of the conceptualization of communication:

- Robert Graig (1999) raises the seven traditions that historically communication has been analyzed: socio-psychological, sociocultural, critical, cybernetic, phenomenological, semiotic and rhetorical. These seven traditions or forms have dominated the field of communication research and therefore have historically responded to the cultural contexts of Western countries.
- Rodrigo-Alsina (2001) explicitly refers to three epistemological paradigms of communication: functionalist, critical and interpretative.

The functionalist perspective would correspond to Graig's socio-psychological tradition, where both visions point to the importance of mass communication research, the analysis of the effects of communication (interpersonal, group and media), where these studies come from American socio-logy. In a context where communication processes produce distortions and social inequalities, there is room for the critical perspective or current, which tends to denounce abuses and domination. The interpretative perspective would correspond to Graig's phenomenological and sociocultural perspectives, where social meanings are reproduced through interaction.

For the Infosol Consulting Team (2021) these are some of the communication theories that have been developed over the last century, presenting their main exponents:

- ❖ Information Theory: also known as mathematical theory of communication or information mathematics, proposed by Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver in the late 1940s, which sought to design a mathematical framework for message coding.
- ❖ Structural functionalist theory: elaborated by Harold Lasswell in 1948, completed by Paul Lazarfeld and Robert Merton, it takes from biology the idea that every agent must be considered part of an organic system.
- ❖ Critical theory and Frankfurt school: the former, already mentioned, while the Frankfurt current was founded by Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm and Jürgen Habermas in 1923, whereby a means of communication could broadcast certain information in order to achieve or attain a specific end.
- ❖ Theory of effects: its antecedents are the consolidation of the cinema, the press, the radio, as well as industrial and urban expansion; its exponents are Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and Max Horkheimer, who saw journalism as a persuasive mechanism.
- ❖ Theory of behaviorism or limited effects: with their actions, the media are able to influence the public, as long as the latter wants them to, pointing out that the media no longer totally determine social behavior.

- ❖ Agenda-setting theory: it is derived from the theory of effects, stating that the media select the topics that will be talked about and discussed, previously elaborated by means of an agenda.
- ❖ Hypodermic needle theory: developed between 1900 and 1940, in the scenario from the Russian revolution to the coming to power of Mussolini, Hitler and Franco. The media 'inject' information and content to the user public in order to influence them.
- ❖ Semiology: emerged at the beginning of the 20th century with Ferdinand Saussure and Charles Pierce, allowing a structural explanation of the phenomena of culture and communication.
- ❖ Cultural studies: emerged in the 1950s in England. Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall studied the daily life of the popular sectors of society, drawing on areas such as sociology, economics, history and psychology.

According to M. Castells (2009, p. 216; cited by Lotero et al. (2020, p. 73), research on communication has identified three major processes in the relationship between media and people, particularly with the broadcasting and reception of news: 1) Media agenda; 2) Prioritization; and 3) Framing. Agenda-setting is the theory that attempts to explain the contribution of the masses with respect to current affairs and information events. In this sense Zunino & Grilli (2020, p. 402) note: "The concept of media agenda stems from the Agenda Setting theory. It was coined by Mc Combs and Shaw in 1972 and identifies the list of issues that the media offer to public opinion...."

Agenda-setting is composed of the news that make us reflect and think (about what and how), as well as the objects of attention and the selection of frames or frames for thinking. S. Iyengar (1990, p. 4; quoted by Lotero et al, 2020, p. 75) states: "The well-known agenda-setting effect refers to the tendency of people to cite issues 'in the news' when asked to identify the significant problems facing the nation".

Communication theory was reconstructed in the course of the past half century and now has its place among the sciences or scientific knowledge (Serrano, 2019, p. 5-6). From the period from 1968 to 2018 there were two significant facts or innovations in information technologies that influenced co-communications, the use of which produced social and historical changes, adding Martín Serrano (2019, p. 20) in this regard:

That stage has been analyzed in retrospective key, because it began in the mid-sixties of the last century and lasted until the nineties, which was when referential communication was in-integrated with multidimensional communication. Since then, communication and information share the digital networks that establish the technological foundations for the creation of a virtual "space".

In reference to which are the constructs (concepts, propositions, contexts, theories) that make up the communication sciences, Castillo Hilario (2020, p. 328-329) distinguishes four types of constructs:

- Technical: body of knowledge taught in schools or faculties of communication sciences: advertising, journalism, public relations and new professions that have emerged with ICTs.
- Normative: it is made up of laws and deontological norms referring to the media and communication spaces.
- Scientific: knowledge derived from scientific research on communication, including cultural studies.
- Philosophical: it is made up of existential reflections on communications, in fields such as morals and ethics.

In the vast majority of cases, communication careers or postgraduate courses are usually called communication sciences, but for Castillo Hilario (2020, p. 330-331) they cannot be called sciences since, due to the type, structure, objectives and methods of their constructs, they should be called

schools or faculties of engineering or communication technologies, as Castillo himself explains (2020, p. 339):

...in the schools, generally, communication researchers are not trained, but communication professionals. And the profession has to do with knowing how to do and doing, rather than with knowing. In other words, students and graduates of schools of communication sciences are often trained to do journalism, advertising or manage communication in organizations, but not to do scientific communication research.

Other authors use the term broadcast media, which covers a wide range of media including television, radio, podcasts, blogs, advertising, websites, online streaming and digital journalism, whereby broadcast media provide useful and valuable information to inform and educate, including daily news, weather forecasts, interviews and documentaries. In this sense Zambrano Granda (2021, p. 10) points out:

...television and radio have traditionally covered most of the broadcasting, the digital era brings with it a set of communication and entertainment media with infinite possibilities and which are based on technological advances derived from the digitalization of content, which has been called New-Media (European Graduate Center, 2021).

2. Political Economy of Communication

For Bernadette Califano (2021, p. 57) the political economy of communication (PCE) was born in the mid-twentieth century, when theorists trained in the neoclassical economic schools and Marxist theory planned the need to analyze the media as industrial organizations that produce and distribute goods of a cultural order, expressing:

Thus, they began to inquire into the economic specificity of the cultural industries and their products, and into the relationships established between States, media companies and large corporations. As the industries of the communication sector expanded and gained relevant weight in the world economy, the PCE became one of the central approaches for the study of the economic behavior of the media, their productive processes, forms of growth and development, and public policies in the area.

Approaching the PCE from the neomarxist approach, from the reading of Guillermo Mastrini (2017, p. 142) I entress the concept and the objective of the political economy of communication:

The role of the media in the process of capital accumulation, the problem of social classes, the media and the legitimization of social stratification, the relationship between material production and intellectual production constitute the analytical basis of the Political Economy of Communication. The conceptual theoretical approach of political economy is, then, a valid tool for the analysis of the communicational structure in Latin America.

According to Curran & Sheton, and McNair (1977; 1998; cited by Gómez, 2004, p. 58) it has been observed that the owners of the large radio and television concession corporations tend to limit the fields of information and general culture, orienting and biasing them to the defense of their ideology or commercial interests, increasingly shaping communication to what has been called 'infotainment'.

During the last two decades, the field of communication in Latin America, as well as the treatment occurred in England, in the opinion of C. Bolaño et al (2017, p. 154) was divided into two theoretical perspectives, which are linked and complementary: 1) Political economy of communication (PCE), heir to Marxism and Latin American historical structuralism (Celso Furtado the most prominent); and 2) Cultural studies, which incorporates the current of anthropology to communication studies.

In 1960, Canadian Dallas Smythe wrote one of the first articles on CPE, for which he is considered one of its founders, together with American Herbert Schiller, who in 1969 wrote the

book entitled 'Mass Communication and Yankee Imperialism', years later, in 1973 the English Graham Murdock and Peter Golding write their work on the political economy of mass communication, while Nicholas Garnham publishes a similar work in the same year, then the French Bernard Miegge and Patrice Flichy address related topics at the end of the eighties (Califano, 2021, p. 61-63).

The CPE in Latin America emerges linked to the structuralist and national liberation currents or schools, where the theories of dependence and cultural imperialism, which emerged after the Second World War, give conceptual support and which are born as a response to the movement of the theories of modernization and global movements of decolonization of the metropolis.

Of the first Latin American exponents of the 1970s of the CPE, Bernadette Califano (2021, p. 67) writes about the role of one of the most important think tanks that conducted analyses on these issues:

Among the pioneering research centers that contributed to the consolidation of work in the field was the creation of the Latin American Institute of Transnational Studies (ILET), which brought together a group of South American intellectuals exiled in Mexico in the context of military governments in several countries of the region. ILET was founded by Chileans Juan Somavía and Fernando Reyes Mata in 1975. Its Communication and Development division has become the most dynamic area...

In this regard, I am very pleased to remember that during my undergraduate studies I had the opportunity to enjoy the knowledge of excellent professors who came from Central and South America exiled by military governments, one of whom came from Nicaragua and two others from Peru, one of whom was my Seminar teacher for three semesters.

Within the Latin American perspective, Bolaño, Narváez & López (2014; cited by Califano, 2021, p. 67) mention that CPE can be conceived in its triple facet:

- As an approach: it constitutes an epistemological alternative that constructs its object (media and communication industries) from its insertion in the depths of capitalism.
- As a field: it brings together researchers for whom it represents a real possibility of interpreting and transforming communication relations in society.
- As a cultural community: in the academy, it is grouped in organizations that allow it to project itself internationally as interlocutors of Anglo-Saxon studies.

The CPE current began to regain strength in the second half of the 1990s, vindicated by the foundations of the Latin American critical school and reinforced by economic analyses of the communications sector. CPE is considered to be a branch within communication studies, which draws on contributions from economics, political science, sociology and history.

From the critical school of Frankfurt and cultural studies derives the CPE, which like all political economy in general, considers with tendencies of Marxist order, with some exceptions. This theory tries to explain the context of communications and the adjacent causes that explain its origin and development within the development of the capitalist system. In the opinion of Guillermo Mastrini (2017, p. 141) the EPC is contrary to the explanations of neoclassical economic theory and also has differences with Marxist currents, expressing in this regard:

But in addition, the economics of communication and culture present specifications that defy both the presuppositions of the neoclassical school and those of Marxist approaches. For example, the theory of marginal costs cannot be applied to cultural production due to its symbolic character and, on the other hand, it is very difficult to transform concrete labor into abstract labor.

García Calderón & Olmedo Neri (2019, p. 86) tell us that CPE has its origins in the following disciplines:

- Sociology: it takes up the basis of the Frankfurt School and cultural studies, studying the context of the commodification of the cultural industry.

- Communication: it takes up the effects that have been felt in the media, as a result of technological advances, where individuals and capital appear interconnected.
- Economy: recovers the Marxist tradition in the productive and mercantile field and the set of social relations of production (bourgeoisie-proletariat), which are executed and modified according to the dynamics demanded and demanded by the capitalist system.

Since the sixties of the last century, the critical school has tried to integrate the economic analysis to the considered industry of culture and communication, although it was not achieved in a hegemonic way, however, during the last thirty years progress has been observed. Culture can be approached from an economic perspective, in such sense Guillermo Mastrini (2017, p. 141) expresses:

This means that cultural industries, one of the economic forms of cultural production, contain the sector of mass communication of a commercial nature including television...The Political Economy of Communication can be considered as the result of the crossroads of various academic fields: economics, political science and the so-called communication or information sciences.

It should be remembered that in their origins the written press and radio broadcasting were more linked to the dissemination and communication of ideas and messages than to the search for economic profit. In their different historical stages, the traditional media (press, radio and television) came from technological changes that favored their development, and the times in which these changes took place are shortening in shorter periods, as is the case of the digitalization of the current media.

With the incorporation of capital to the process of cultural production, the analysis of the economic dimension in communication studies becomes understandable, but one must avoid falling into the error of economic reductionism, as Vicent Mosco (2006, p. 18; quoted by Mastrini, 2017, p. 142) states: "The Political Economy of Communication can be understood as a gateway to the understanding of communicational phenomena, but in no way can it aspire to give a complete account of the communicational phenomenon".

Regarding the industrial production of culture, this occurs when commercial and profit characteristics are superimposed on cultural purposes, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1982; cited by Mastrini, 2017, p. 145), expresses on this subject:

It is generally considered that a cultural industry exists when cultural goods and services are produced, reproduced, preserved and disseminated according to industrial and commercial criteria, that is, in series and applying a strategy of an economic type, instead of pursuing a cultural development purpose.

I close this chapter with the words expressed by Bernadette Califano (2021, p. 81) in her conclusions on the Political Economy of Communication (PEC):

The variety of issues addressed from the PCE has been expanding since its origins, and has established crossings with other branches of communication and with other approaches and disciplines, in an attempt to carry out holistic analyses of the media. Nevertheless, the essence of the work framed within the critical school preserves the emphasis of the initial studies on the question of power relations in the processes of production, distribution and consumption of communicational goods and resources, although in a different and expanded context...

3. Modern digital and social media

It is well known the phrase of Heraclitus of Ephesus, a Greek philosopher who was born between 550-480 B.C. "the only permanent thing is change". I bring this up in view of the dizzying changes that social media are undergoing in our times.

When we talk about the digital world, we must analyze three objectives or pillars that apply to people and businesses: communication, sales and customer service. In this way, communication becomes the first of the objectives and the most popular in social networks, trying to make our qualities or products known. The digital ecosystem is understood as the set of platforms that we will use to make ourselves known or to take our products into account.

The second pillar of the digital world refers to the commercial aspect and can be carried out by individuals or companies on a large scale, where this objective can be channeled through e-commerce activity. The third pillar is closely linked to sales and is the careful attention that must be given to the customer, both before and after the sale is made.

The digital era is dragging communication along a dizzying path of changes. Van Glabbeek (2020; Zambrano, 2021, p. 11) asserts that one of the objectives of digital communication is to attract people, seeking to give them an improved experience through which they feel attracted and retained, while the world moves towards the digital space, new forms and channels of communication are appearing, including platforms that create interpersonal opportunities and that also work for business.

Within the theoretical field, the science of communication has been subject to two transformations generated by the global digital society: 1) The modern context that bases the subject as the guiding axis, which has found a broad development with the use of the Internet and social and digital networks; 2) These changes have resulted in modifications on the communication process itself, specifically concerning the virtual space (Olmedo, 2020, p. 157).

As a result of the digital revolution seen in the last two decades, human beings are undergoing important changes in their daily routines and contexts, such that the ways of establishing contact, creating bonds of friendship, planning leisure activities and obtaining learning have changed substantially. In this regard, Barón Pulido et al (2021, p. 125) note the following:

The digital revolution can be understood as the growth in the supply of digital technology and the rapid replacement of mechanical and electronic technologies by digital ones...Thus, a number of interactions, which previously made sense through physical face-to-face communication, have changed or moved to the context of the digital plane.

As a result of the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT), it has been stated that traditional media (print, radio and television) tend to become extinct, where digital media will occupy the positions left by the former, on this aspect Jáuregui & Ortega (2020, p. 360) make us see the following:

...the reality is that the media are useful as long as society assumes them to be necessary, that is why media convergence has turned out over the years to be a tool with multiple instrumental purposes for the social structure.

Esteban Zunino & Grilli Fox (2020, p. 401) consider that digital media were born in the nineties, adopting a continuous logic with radio and television rather than with printed newspapers, noting that in Ibero-America digital media are released in 1995 and digitization substantially changed the ways of information consumption of audiences, in addition to the entire media ecosystem was modified by the irruption of the information society.

The continuous and exponential advances in technological aspects in recent years have given rise to the global digital culture of communication, observing changes in practices and public spaces. According to Quispe Román (2015, p. 49; cited by Ponce et al, 2021, p. 4) digital communication practices should be understood as the set of individual, group or institutional activities that were digitized, which implies their transformation to a mass of bits.

Following this order, communication models are defined that affect and go beyond the different educational, political, economic, social and organizational contexts to which we belong as social subjects and in which relationships and modes of production are modified in a meaningful way (Ponce et al, 2021, p. 5).

In a similar sense, Cebrián Herreros (2009, p.16; Jáuregui & Ortega, 2020, p. 360) states that the starting point is a conception of cybermedia as processes different from traditional communication processes; however, they are not radically opposed, but on the contrary, they establish links between one and the other media.

The privilege of communicating is no longer restricted to analog mass media, nor to filters in the communication process; now there is the possibility of creating alternative content in the digital space. For A. Hermida (2018, p. 507; cited by Olmedo, 2020, p. 162) "sociological networks operate as an external space to the institutional and hierarchical structures of publishing in journalism".

Before advancing on the topic, it is convenient to understand what media are, according to the newspaper La Tribuna de Honduras (2017; cited by Alberto Vizuela et al, 2020, p. 2):

Digital media are those that are used on the internet for the dissemination of content and information. They appeared at the end of the twentieth century, thanks to the development of informatics and new information and communication technologies, and since then, they have strongly invaded the context of human communications, causing a revolution in the way people consume, produce and interact with information.

On the specific part of digital communication, Andrea Pastor (cited by Baumann, 2021) points out the following:

Effective digital communication occurs when the message that is intended to be sent reaches the receiver in the most similar way possible to the idea that was intended to be expressed. For this, it is essential to know the characteristics of the user's personality and culture.

In addition to the significant progress that has been achieved as a link and friendly relationship between people, digital communication has become a very important part for business today, in that sense Hans Baumann (2021) expresses:

Digital communication is any online transmission of a message of an organization through a wide range of online channels. Such as a website, social networks, blogs, etc., which allow companies to connect with their customers, employees and other stakeholders of the organization.

In today's societies, the participation of users connected to the network makes them act interrelated, it can be said that on equal terms from mobile devices that make it possible to produce and broadcast content in the online ecosystem. In the opinion of Calvo et al (cited by García & Pérez, 2020, p. 8), we must try to diagnose and ensure media literacy, which will allow us to empower citizens and reduce the digital divide, guarantee access to quality information, reduce media manipulation and communicate safely.

Two terms that are often used as synonyms are social communities and social networks: the former are usually driven by a specific target topic and are controlled by moderators or guides, having an organizational architecture that can be framed in a specific area or place; while social networks are not centered on a place, but on the individuals involved in them, have self-organization and a random dynamic, which makes them user-controlled (Martín, 2016; cited by Barón, 2021, p. 129).

The emergence of new media is the result of what has been considered as technological convergence, where three communication spaces interact: 1) Computer science; 2) Telecommunications; and 3) The internet, which is the center of interconnection and the new communication ecosystem, Bisbal (2020, p. 15) states on this subject:

Internet is the medium of the media. We are in the era of the internet and all that derives from it. The figures that are thrown in different investigations are telling us that people spend many hours of their free or leisure time in front of the network. The statistics speak for themselves....

In the same sense, it is worth differentiating between social networks and social media, according to Ba-rón Pulido et al (2021, p. 129-130):

In line with this distinction, it is worth referring to the confusion that is often made between social networks and social media. While the former refers to groups of individuals who share interests and passions, the latter refers to the instrument, the means by which the former can be initiated or strengthened.

Social media helps people to connect with the help of technology, while social networks enhance this connection, since people only connect in social networks because they have common interests and purposes. In the same sense, RD Station (2021) mentions that social networks and social media for many people are the same and the terms can be used as synonyms, but this is not correct, pointing out in this regard:

Social media is the use of technologies to make dialogue between people interactive, while social network is a social structure formed by people who share similar interests...The main purpose of social networks is to connect people. You complete your profile on social media channels and interact with people based on the details they read about you. It can be said that social networking is a category of social media...Social media, in turn, is a broad term, encompassing different media, such as videos, blogs and the aforementioned social networks.

The term social networks began to be used in the mid-1950s by English anthropologists and sociologists, characterizing the set of human relationships that have a lasting impact on the life of an individual and that offer patterns for everyday life, where this concept was consolidated in the 1970s and became widely used at the end of the 20th century.

Since the end of the 20th century, information and communication have been intensified and enhanced, with digital communication tools, especially social networks that have transformed the unidirectional communication processes, typical of conventional and printed media, to achieve mass communication flows in which users are also producers of content, as shown by M. Castells (Lotero et al, 2020, p. 96).

Websites and social networks are considered a form of communication, because they provide and can exchange information and data in real time, allowing feedback between sender and receiver. Hans Baumann (2021) mentions the 12 characteristics of digital communication:

- Immediacy: It allows us to collect information at all times.
- Multimedia integration: access to content in real time through multiple channels.
- Interactivity: User participation and interaction is fundamental.
- Real-time updating: Editing and updating of any content in real time.
- Multidirectional: The sender can be at the same time a passive or active subject.
- Objective: Communication is not only written, there are mixtures of images, audio and text.
- Self-branding: Application of personal concepts and ideas.
- Dematerialization of relationships: It makes it easier to meet new people and products.
- Content production: It allows to transmit messages that will be heard or seen.
- Verbal communication: Oral or verbal communication predominates in the messages.
- Content publishing: Texts, images and videos that will leave evidence.
- Social groups with similar interests: It is considered a way of socializing.

Speaking of multimedia integration, Jáuregui & Ortega (2020, p. 360) point out about this concept:

Multimedia development is defined as a new way of creating applications in which concepts such as sound, video, music, interactivity, graphic design, etc.[...] Multimedia is the combination of text, graphics, sound, animation and video to achieve a presentation (Izanola, 2005).

Digital communication has general characteristics inherent to its codified language process, L. Manovich (2005, p. 64-72; Jáuregui & Ortega, 2020, p. 361) mentions other characteristics of digital co-communication: 1) Digitalization; 2) Modularity; 3) Variability; 4) Automation; and 5)

Transcoding. In reference to the channels or types of digital communication, (Baumann, 2021) mentions the following:

- Video: Extremely effective for driving traffic and conversations.
- Social networks: Effective channel to engage in conversations and promote products.
- Blog: Spaces designed to provide information on specific or specialized topics, thus increasing the visibility of what they want to make known.
- Audio: Podcasts have increased the quality of audios and can arouse emotions.
- Email marketing: Channel to deliver a personalized message to those who show interest.

The digitization of audio gives room for the transmission of sound broadcasts on Internet platforms, although many of the digital audio products used creative combination of voice, effects and music taken from traditional radio. Such is the symbiosis that the contents preferred by digital audio consumers coincide with the top three places of open radio: music, news and sports. Mejía Barquera (2020) adds: "Let's enjoy this new stage of radio, digital audio and radio language".

Social networks are transforming the way people and companies communicate through their brands. One-way communication is less and less used, social networks, in addition to serving as a means of mass communication for people, can ensure that businesses have an appropriate channel for the view of their products or services.

A few decades ago there were only a few channels and means of communication to express oneself freely, with the revolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) the media openness is much wider. In the virtual space there is a great variety of possibilities of presentation, derived from the use of the Internet, represented by platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, among others.

Conclusions

Communication is a means or mechanism of social organization that is part of life in society. The science or theory of communication can be explained with the help of other sciences, such as sociology, psychology and politics, where it will aim to understand the role or role of the media in society. The communication sciences have been approached from the following approaches: Information or mathematical; Structural functionalist; Criticism and Frankfurt School; of the effects; Agenda-setting; Hypodermic needle; Semiology; and Cultural studies.

The political economy of communication is identified with two theoretical schools or approaches to communication: Frankfurt criticism and cultural studies. In their approach, the concessionaires of the large private radio and television corporations set the tone and the limits of information and culture, biasing them towards the defense of their commercial interests or their ideology, seeking to alienate and entertain the masses.

The emergence of digital media is the result of technological convergences, where three disciplines or spaces act: information technology, telecommunications and the Internet (which is considered the center of the new communications ecosystem). Social media make it possible for people to be united through the use of technology, while social networks connect individuals who share common interests and goals.

Social networks provide information in real time, allowing feedback between sender and receiver, transforming the unidirectional communication process typical of traditional media (television, radio and print), turning users into producers as well. Until fifteen years ago, there were few communication channels to express oneself freely, but ICTs have allowed a much wider opening, with a great variety of communication possibilities.

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