

Communication, body, and emotions. Incorporating emotional dimension to communication research

Comunicación, cuerpo y emociones.

La incorporación de la dimensión emocional en la investigación de la comunicación

MARTA RIZO GARCÍA¹

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<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3066-1419>

This essay presents the need to incorporate the affective and bodily dimension in communication research. The theoretical perspective is framed in the “Affective Turn” and in the studies on corporeality, from which is presented a proposal of conceptual articulation between body, communication, and emotions. The methodological strategy is based on documentary research and interpretation. The essay provides elements to think about human communication from a point of view that transcends the media and integrates the corporal and the affective as basic axes.

KEYWORDS: Body, interpersonal communication, emotions, affections, communication theory.

En este ensayo se plantea la necesidad de incorporar la dimensión afectiva y corporal en la investigación de la comunicación. La perspectiva teórica se enmarca en el “Giro Afectivo” y en los estudios sobre corporalidad, a partir de lo cual se presenta una propuesta de articulación conceptual entre cuerpo, comunicación y emociones. La estrategia metodológica se fundamenta en la investigación documental y la interpretación. El ensayo aporta elementos para pensar la comunicación humana desde una mirada que trasciende lo mediático e integra lo corporal y lo afectivo como ejes básicos.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Cuerpo, comunicación interpersonal, emociones, afectos, teoría de la comunicación.

Este ensaio levanta a necessidade de incorporar a dimensão afetiva e corporal na pesquisa em comunicação. A perspectiva teórica está enquadrada na “Virada Afetiva” e nos estudos sobre a corporalidade, a partir dos quais se apresenta uma proposta de articulação conceitual entre corpo, comunicação e emoções. A estratégia metodológica baseia-se na pesquisa documental e na interpretação. O ensaio fornece elementos para pensar a comunicação humana a partir de uma perspectiva que transcende a mídia e integra o corporal e o afetivo como eixos básicos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Corpo, comunicação interpessoal, emoções, afetos, teoria da comunicação.

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¹ Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México, Mexico.
marta.rizo@uacm.edu.mx

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This essay infers the necessity to merge the relationship between the body, communication and emotions, and in general what is related to the affective dimension of social life, to the investigation of communication. Within the purpose of providing elements that help to think about human communication beyond the media, although without excluding it, the text takes as its starting point the contributions of the so-called “Affective Turn” in social sciences.

At first, the particularities of the “Affective Turn” are exposed, and it is emphasized on the way in which the rupture between the public and the private has been derived, to a great extent, from the irruption of new media and digital platforms that they accentuate the commodity character of intimacy. In the first section, in addition, some conceptual keys are offered in order to distinguish affects and emotions. In a second moment, the proposal of a conceptual relationship between emotions, communication and the body are presented, and the emotional dimension of human communication is distinguished. The third section of the essay emphasizes the body –in its significant dimension– as a basic axis for understanding communication from an affective-emotional point of view. Finally, the text proposes some arguments to defend the need to think about human communication from this bodily and emotional perspective.

AFFECTIVE TURN, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND COMMUNICATION

The border that separates the public from the private is increasingly fragile. There are continuities in both dimensions of life, and it is more common that attitudes are observed in public spaces that, until not long ago, were destined to be expressed only in intimate spaces. We refer, for example, to emotions. This emotionalization of public life is precisely one of the elements that gives rise to what is known in social sciences as the Affective Turn.

The term “Affective Turn” was used for the first time by American sociologists Clough and Halley (2007). The basis of their initial proposal was to go against the basically discursive orientation of social constructionism. For Clough (2008), affect must be understood as an ontology of those phenomena that do not depend on human

consciousness or linguistic communication. The author defines affect as the body's ability to affect and be affected, a condition that is related to being alive.

Regarding the Affective Turn, Lara and Enciso (2013) state that:

This has been defined mainly by two theoretical urgencies: the interest in the emotionalization of the public life, and the effort to reconfigure the production of knowledge aimed at expanding such emotionalization. Therefore, affection and emotion appear as the new affair that is strongly seducing the social sciences, causing an academic movement that focuses on "what it feels like" (pp. 101-102).

According to the same authors, "we could (wrongly) summarize the affective turn as a change in the conception of affection that has come to modify the production of knowledge and the very logic of the disciplines" (Lara & Enciso, 2013, p. 102).

Based on the previous assessments, we consider pertinent the question about what impact this affective turn has had on the production of knowledge in the field of communication, whose hybrid and dynamic nature has generated many disagreements about the particularities of its object of study. We assume that communication research has as its object of study the "processes of production of meaning" (Fuentes, 2008). As the author states:

At the center of our object of study, communication, there are not only the "messages" or the "contents", but also the relationships, established and investigated through their multiple mediations, between the production of meaning and the identity of the social subjects in the most diverse sociocultural practices (p. 113).

The contributions of the Affective Turn to communication can be seen, for example, in Sibila's reflections on *La intimidad como espectáculo* (*The intimacy as a spectacle*) (2008). In this work, the author addresses how the digital communicative ecology transforms people's ways of relating and, ultimately, the subjectivities, understood as fluctuating and resilient. The display of intimacy, of the private, in

the digital public space, provokes “a displacement of that internalized subjectivity towards new forms of self-construction” (Sibila, 2008, pp. 27-28).

For Sibila (2008), what is suggestive about this blurring of the boundaries between the public and the private is that it generates a new refuge for the privacy of the subjects that:

It not only denotes an exclusive concern for the small stories and the particular emotions that afflict each subject, but also an evaluation of the political action –exterior and public– only from what it suggests about the personality of the agent –interior and private– (p. 72).

The interiority of the people –sphere in which practically all affective and emotional expressions were previously destined–, then becomes essential to formulate new questions about the public, about the outside world. Therefore, the importance of considering the affects, and of talking about the emotionalization of the public.

The Affective Turn implies conceiving emotions as a fundamentally sociological problem, without this implying the denial of their biological nature. From this point of view, emotions cannot be understood only as human accessories, but must be seen as an indivisible part of the bodily experiences of the subjects. Body and emotions go hand in hand.

Without being a homogeneous theoretical current, the Affective Turn has been nourished, especially in the last decade, by various lines of reflection and research from sociological, historical and anthropological perspectives. It can hardly be attributed indisputable premises and a perfectly determined object of reflection. The tendency that it has granted has been to provide sociological visibility to a set of topics –with the emotional and affective at the center– that has been slightly legitimized in the field of social sciences (Abramowski & Canevaro, 2017). And the field of communication has not been, as we shall see, the exception.

Affects and emotions: some basic distinctions

Defining emotions is a complicated issue, as they have been reached from very diverse approaches: from neurobiological perspectives to sociocultural perspectives, passing through psychosocial and phenomenological approaches. What is interesting is that biological visions no longer predominate, but it is currently considered that emotions must be incorporated into the social and cultural logic, so that “what sustains the life of the civic subject, that moves him, that excites him, his personal and private issues, cease to be part of the sanctuary of intimacy to enter the realm of the political and the public” (Dahlgren, 2012).

The theory of affective intelligence considers that emotions are ruled by two systems: one that has to do with the individual disposition and that is related to the habits and customs of the subject, and another that is called the *surveillance system* and that, in the moment it is mobilized, causes people to reflect on their most common decisions and consider other options that they were not previously aware of.

For Clough (2008), “affection” refers to the capacities of bodies to affect and be affected, or to the increase or decrease of the body’s capacity to act or connect. In this proposal, we can observe the importance of communication in the “connection” function that the affects fulfill. For their part, Blackman and Cromby (2007) affirm that “affect” is used “to refer to a force or intensity that can deny the movement of the subject that is always in a process of becoming” (p. 6). The same authors consider that emotions refer to patterns of responses, both physical and cerebral, that “are culturally recognizable and provide a certain unity, stability and coherence to the felt dimensions of our relational encounters” (p. 6).

There seems to be quite a general consensus in giving a more corporeal character to the affect, and a more discursive character to the emotions. This can be seen in the approach of other authors, such as Lara and Enciso (2013), for whom affection is conceived as corporeal, pre-conscious, energetic and other explanations “far from meaning” (p. 109), while the emotions have mostly been thought of as an individual interpretation of affect. Damasio (1995) adds that emotion is associated with an objective and organic process, while the feeling is

the subjective experience of that emotion. Thus, it seems that affect is seen more as an organic and biological aspect, while emotion refers to the sociocultural interpretation of that affect.

The approach of the affective is interdisciplinary, and also, the communication research can contribute to the debate, as well as be enhanced by incorporating the affective dimension of the social into its objects of study, although this field is not usually mentioned when talking about studies on affectivity in the social sciences:

In contemporary studies on affectivity, the paths inaugurated by sociology, anthropology and the history of emotions can be noted, especially in the effort to point out the cultural and socially constructed character –and not innate and essential– of affective experiences. Also, the paths opened by gender studies and feminism are observed, which fight for the status of the corporeal and enhance the politicization of the feeling (Abramowski & Canevaro, 2017, p. 15).

As it may be seen, it is in the articulation between the body, communication and emotions where we can find fertile ground for communication studies that seek to go beyond the reflection on media communication. And it is because “paying attention to the affects often helps to notice what holds the subjects in certain positions or places, what adheres them, ‘attach’ (Ahmed, 2004), links, bind or joins” (Abramowski & Canevaro, 2017, p. 15). And that which binds, links or joins them, isn’t it communication?

The relationship between emotions and communication often goes through reflections on language. Emotions are natural bodily experiences that, after being experienced physically, can be expressed through language. Belli (2009) affirms that this language is conceived as irrational and subjective: “first we feel in the body what later comes out of our mouths in the form of a discourse that in a certain way opposes reason” (p. 16). It is irrefutable that emotions are social and cultural constructions, despite having an organic-biological origin, and that their nature is, above all, discursive. The emotions need to be expressed –even to oneself– in order to be recognized as such.

Even though the social construction of emotions is only possible through language (Belli, 2009), which is related to the fact that emotions can be conceived as discursive resources (Lakoff, 1980), we must not lose sight of the fact that emotions have two facets, the mental and the organic. And it is precisely the organic facet of emotions that allows emphasizing the body: “Emotions are corporal experiences that cannot be separated from the sociocultural contexts in which we find ourselves” (Belli, 2009, p. 32).

What emotions allow is sharing (Larsson, 1997), which is related to the emotional dimension of communication. Therefore, the emotional experience needs to be expressed, communicated. As Izquierdo (2000) states, “an essential characteristic of the emotional experience is its expression. If the emotional experience includes its expression, the primary purpose of the interaction is to communicate, verbally and nonverbally, feelings and needs to the others” (p. 135). Next, it we’ll be seen how communication and emotions are more specifically related to the mediation of the body.

EMOTIONS, COMMUNICATION AND BODY

Generally, the reflections on communication, body and emotions are grounded in the theme or phenomenon of interpersonal communication, not so much of mediated communication. In every situation of interpersonal communication, messages that cannot be understood solely from their informative content are exchanged. Emotions are always displayed, whether in a more intense and direct way or in a subtler way. The people who are communicating are bodies that affect and are affected, subjects that feel and express different states of mind. This is how Izquierdo (2000) explains it:

As interpersonal communication does not occur in the void, it is necessary to take into account the goals, needs, desires, moods, expectations and learning of people, including the conceptual representation of feelings and knowledge of the norms of emotional interaction in the context, when directing attention, interpreting and responding to the emotion elicited by a relational event (p. 136).

The same author affirms that “people manifest through their verbal and non-verbal behavior a tendency to share the emotions of others (emotional contagion), even in cases in which emotions are not intentionally communicated” (Izquierdo, 2000, p. 136).

The notion of “emotional contagion” enunciated in the previous paragraph is related to what Collins (2009) calls “emotional energy” in the chains of interaction rituals. For Collins, the rituals of interaction are situations of physical co-presence that demarcate the participants from the others and that differ according to two major dimensions: the coincidence degree of the participants in their shared focus of attention, and the intensity of the emotional linkage that arises between them. The central core of any ritual of interaction involves a process in which the participants develop a common focus of attention and in which their bodily rhythms and their emotions enter into “reciprocal consonance” (Collins, 2009, p. 71). What increases or decreases the emotional energy is the consonance of communicative gestures and emotional rhythms between the participants of a certain ritual. Emotional energy accumulates in memories, ideas, beliefs and symbols, and is recycled in conversational networks, in internal dialogues and in chains of interaction rituals that take place subsequently.

The above mentioned clears up the relationship between emotions and communication, a link that will be resumed later. Now is the time to ask ourselves what happens to the body, what role does it play in the expression of emotions. As Scribano (2009) points out:

What we know about the world we know by and through our bodies, what we do is what we see, what we see is how we divide the world. In this “there-now” the devices for regulating sensations are installed, through which the social world is apprehended and narrated from the expropriation that gave rise to the situation of domination (pp. 144-145).

Social subjects know the world through their bodies, and that knowledge is given by perceptions, sensations and emotions, felt and experienced in, from and by the bodies.

For this reason, it is also strange that the subject of emotions has been excluded for so long from social and cultural analyses,

characterized by a predominance of macro-social approaches. This exclusion, furthermore, has to do with an androcentric gaze that relates the masculine with the objective-rational (and the fair and appropriate), and the feminine with the emotional (and the lacking and incomplete): “The masculine becomes, thus, the measure of all things, the universal point of view” (Fabbri, 2011, p. 4).

The sociology of emotions has a background of more than four decades (Bericat, 2016) in the sociological field. This does not mean that previously there were no sociological approaches to the emotion, to the affective dimension of the social, but without a doubt, the presence of the emotional dimension was something residual until well entered into the seventies of the 20th century. In “The sociology of emotions”, Bericat (2016) offers a very detailed state of the contributions of the sociology of emotions to sociological thought.

One of the main achievements of the sociology of emotions is that “it opens an important horizon of social study, also necessary for the development of sociological metatheories that correct the rationalist bias which affects almost all of them” (Bericat, 2000, p. 149). All the proposals emanating from the sociology of emotions are based on the consideration that most human emotions are nurtured and make sense in the framework of our social relationships:

The nature of emotions is conditioned by the nature of the social situation in which people feel. They are an expression, in the body of individuals, of the very rich range of forms of social relationship. Loneliness, envy, hatred, fear, shame, pride, resentment, revenge, nostalgia, sadness, satisfaction, joy, anger, frustration and a host of other emotions correspond to specific social situations (Bericat, 2000, p. 150).

Although the research about emotions in the field of social sciences is not new, in the Latin American space it would take a few more years for the proliferation of works on emotions and affectivity, being incorporated at the end of the 1990s and already the beginning of the XXI century. One of the lines of reflection that has aroused the greatest interest has precisely one of its central elements in the body, since it recovers the body and the affectivity as elements that affect and are

affected. This current is part of the so-called Affective Turn, which we already referred to in the first part of this text, a turn towards the body and against the privilege of the study of the meaning and the discourse (Lara & Enciso, 2013). The gaze is placed, then, on the bodies and the senses, and not on the discourses. Despite the fact that we understand the centrality of the body and the senses, ultimately any approach to these elements will go through a story of the person carrying the body, of the sentient person. Moreover, the body is in itself a discourse loaded with meaning, therefore the Affective Turn cannot, we understand, discard any approach to the discourses.

Despite the growing interest in the body-affectivity relationship, there is a huge gap between the studies of the body and the studies of emotions, something that worries several authors (Sabido, 2011; Scribano, 2013). We share this concern and we comprehend that body and emotions cannot be understood independently. To that end, we agree with Denzin (1985) when he states that emotions are not found in the subject neither in its body, but in their relationship, in what is between one and the other.

Addressing the body-emotion relationship also implies giving a central role to the senses, to the sensory dimension of human life. And we must not lose sight of the fact that “the senses are everywhere” (Bull et al., 2006, p. 5). They mediate the relationship between idea and object, mind and body, self and society, culture and environment (Howes, 2014, p. 21). Like bodies, emotions are always situated, individually expressed, but always shaped by the culture.

From a sociocultural perspective, the relationship between emotions and body can be approached from the notion of cultural dispositions. Emotions are present in these corporal dispositions, and are related to social and cultural constructed discourses. These ideas are fundamental in the proposal of Le Breton (1992/2001, 1999, 2002) whose contributions we have previously recovered. Along the same line, Bolaños (2015) states that “the body is the vehicle of meanings of culture and space in which emotions, feelings and sensory elaborations fit” (p. 184).

Communication, body and emotions go hand in hand: “the power of expression of the word is not different from the power of the body,

since language is the expression of the body itself” (Verano, 2009, p. 611). In the next section we will delve into the emotional dimension of communication.

The emotional dimension of communication

Both communication and emotions can be approached from various dimensions or components. From a perspective that links it more to the communion and sharing between people, communication has been analyzed from three basic components: cognitive (apprehension of the external object or the natural world); evaluative (apprehension of everything considered an external subject or the social world); and emotional “is oriented to the apprehension of everything considered internal subject-object (personal world)” (Bericat, 1999, p. 228). It is precisely this last component that is fundamental to be able to argue the importance of the emotional dimension of communication and, simultaneously, to strengthen the idea of the communicability of emotions.

As mentioned above, emotions involve physiological changes, and therefore are closely related to the body, but they also imply thoughts, meaning, they have a cognitive component. However, emotions are neither exclusively mental nor exclusively corporal. They are thought, yes, and they are felt, too. Emotions, therefore, simultaneously imply a subjective and an objective experience.

The experience referred to in the previous paragraph cannot be lived outside of human communication, because during any communication process, rational information is not only exchanged. Emotional information is present and is transmitted with greater or lesser intensity, but it is always present in the communication process. In every communication situation, then, emotional information is displayed on the interactants, and this plays an important role:

One of the main functions of emotions is to facilitate the appearance of appropriate behaviors, the expression of emotions allows others to predict the behavior associated with them, which has an undoubted value in interpersonal relationship processes (Chóliz, 2005, p. 5).

Our emotions, as well as those of the people with whom we interact, provide us with information about others and ourselves, hence the need to talk about emotional communication as a basic human capacity in our interpersonal relationships. All communication presupposes some type of emotion, but not all emotion is easily communicable. Therefore, it is considered important to consolidate, both in formal and informal settings, an effective emotional education.

The need to link body, communication and emotions is installed in a proposal that aims to give importance to the affective dimension of human life, to everything that does not pass through the filter of reason, to what is not said, to “that diverse which resists to the univocal orders of reason” (Zamorano & Hernández, 2017, p. 41). In the next section we inquire into the body and its importance for addressing the relationship between communication and emotions.

BODY(IES) AND CORPORALITY(IES) AS BASIC AXES FOR THE EMOTIONAL APPROACH OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION

The body is one of our main vehicles of communication with the world. From the body and with the body we create significance and give meaning to everything that surrounds us, thus we can speak without hesitation of the significant potential of the body. And hence, also, that it is necessary for communication research to consider the body as a complex object of reflection that can contribute entirely to the views around the social world that communication sciences build.

As a social and cultural construction, the body is the carrier of meanings. The body speaks of the subject and, at the same time, communicates features of the social environment that the person inhabits: “We are a body, understanding as such that reality where the private and the public, the intimate and the exposed, are combined. Each feature of our body speaks of what our passage through life is like” (Corres, 2007, p. 212).

Thereby, thinking about the body implies taking into account the uses that are made of it, uses that depend on cultures (Noguez, 2009). As Connell (1995) affirms, society is a reflexive bodily experience, so it is not very useful to present completely biological or completely

constructivist approaches to the body. As in the case of emotions, it is more pertinent to think about the body from perspectives that consider social interaction and reflexivity. Following Vergara (2009):

From a sociology of bodies and emotions, we can embark on the path to find clues that lead us to: understand the meaning that the actors give to their practices, identify conflictual nodes that emerge in these daily understandings, account for how the society that is made body can be tracked from the analysis of certain social emotions (p. 36).

And it is that the body has no meaning outside its context, “it is clinging to the fabric of meaning” (Le Breton, 1992/2001, p. 37). Or what is the same, “bodies are covered by our individual and collective histories” (Weeks, 1999, p. 177).

The above mentioned demonstrates the importance of thinking about the body from its relationship with communication and emotions. From a socio-phenomenological perspective, Schütz (1993) introduces a suggestive idea to articulate the body and intersubjective communication. The author speaks of intersubjective understanding and defines it as the observation, on behalf of the observer, of the other person's body movements, which become indications of the experiences that the other person experiences.

As we have already mentioned, the body speaks about the society in which it lives, and how the body is conceived in a society is an indicator of the ways in which the person is conceived. Although it seems that the body is seen as a representation of the culture and society in which it is found, “we cannot separate its representations on the one hand and how the body is lived on the other, they cannot be separated as if they were different perspectives, or as if they were antagonists” (Aguilar-Ros, 2004, p. 51). In the body “nature and culture, biological condition and social learning, physiological aspects and incorporated sociabilities are found united, gathered and fused” (Vergara, 2009, p. 35). The biological and the sociocultural are absolutely linked when speaking of the bodies.

A few decades ago, the body was treated as a biological and natural phenomenon, and as such, it was attended almost exclusively by medical and biological disciplines. Very occasionally it was considered

from a social and cultural perspective, hence it was not conceived as an object of study proper to social research. Fortunately, decades later, the body has been gaining legitimacy in sociology, anthropology and history, three of the disciplines that have dealt with it the most.

The body is highly ritualized and “cultural logics are inscribed in the bodies” (Le Breton, 2002). For the subject, his body is the most immediate thing in the world. But the body, as we said, does not belong only to the order of the individual: “The body is social, socialized and sociable, just as the social is corporal and embodied” (Varela, 2009, p. 97).

We are body, we see, we live, we perceive the world through our body. And this perceptive experience cannot occur if it is not through sensations. Our body is the first thing that makes us aware of our being and our presence in the world: “In the face of ambiguity and lack of definition, the body of the subjects is their palpable ‘truth’, the only certainty in uncertain moments” (Muñiz & List, 2007, p. 7).

It is necessary to transit, according to Sabido (2016), “from the study of the body to the study of bodily experience, highlighting the sensitive dimension” (p. 66). In other words, the body must not only be seen as a “knot of living meanings” (Esteban, 2004), but also as a perceptive body, which is what the shift from the sociology of the senses to the sociology of the perception (Sabido, 2016).

Thus, one cannot speak of the body outside of the experience of the body itself:

The body can only be understood in the experience of itself, which is carried out throughout the entire process and which needs the world as a correlate of its action. In other words, the human body is the condition of consciousness as it is a subject in dialogue with the world (Noguez, 2009, p. 51).

For De Certeau (1996, p. 131), subjectivity is the journey, and the body is the map. And it is that the body is not reduced to its form. Everybody is signified in the context of a determined space and time.

The significant dimension of the body

We have already referred to the communicative capacity of the body, to its function as a means of communication between people and the world. Muñiz and List (2007) speak of a “textual corporeality, with values and meanings attributed to it” (p. 8).

The body speaks, and it is spoken about: “More than speaking of them, the bodies speak for themselves, of themselves, to themselves. The lived body wanders as it is, just as the perceived and interpreted body has marked it” (Guzmán, 2007, p. 55).

From the field of communication,² the works on non-verbal communication have historically considered the body as a structure that reveals a lot of information about the subject. The body is a complex of signs, but it is not reduced to that. According to Finol (in Reynaga & Vidales, 2013), the body “is not only an intrinsically symbolic set,

² In some previous works we explored the presence of the body as an object of study in communication research at the Ibero-American level (Rizo, 2020, 2021). Some of the conclusions we reached were the following: 1) empirical works predominate, to the detriment of theoretical reflection; 2) some of the authors that are repeated the most as theoretical referents are Foucault, Goffman, Butler and Le Bretón; 3) many of the empirical works refer to the representations of the body in the media, especially on television (both fiction and non-fiction, and with a large presence of works on advertising); 4) gender and sexuality are two basic thematic axes both in Latin America and in the Spanish State; 5) aspects such as fashion, religion, music –and other artistic manifestations– are more addressed in the Latin American academic field. In the specific case of Mexico, we obtained the following: 1) sociocultural studies predominate, well above philosophical and interpretive studies; 2) the notion of intersubjectivity, especially useful to delve into non-media approaches to communication, is practically non-existent in works that address the relationship between the body and communication; 3) works on the female body from the perspective of gender stand out; and 4) in empirical research on body and media is notable the predominance of works on the representations of the body in media such as television and cinema, based on methodological strategies such as discourse analysis.

but rather this is a dynamic system of meanings that interact with each other while being held by the society and culture in which the body is articulated” (p. 68).

For Ayús Reyes and Eroza Solana (2007, p. 44), the body is a primeval bearer of signs; each culture uses the body to elaborate socially acceptable and highly conventional meaning; studying the body is inseparable from the investigation of the symbolic codes with which a culture operates. The communicative potential of the body makes it pertinent to propose that communication research should integrate the corporal –and, therefore, the affective and the emotional– in its works and reflections. We dedicate the following section to this.

THINKING ABOUT COMMUNICATION FROM A PERSPECTIVE THAT INTEGRATES THE CORPORAL-AFFECTIVE

Our relationship with the world goes through the sensations we experience with the body. The world is not only a world narrated and constructed discursively. It is, above all, a bodily experienced world.

Despite the fact that the field of communication seems to be clear that its object of study are the processes of production of meaning, it continues to be a significant predominance of studies on broadcast media –and today, above all, digital media are analyzed–, in detriment to the interpersonal communicative phenomena.

Consolidating the idea of the production of meaning as an object of study of communication allows to open up conceptual spaces and articulate, as we have tried to do in this essay, the emotional (with the body in the center) and rational dimensions as ingredients deployed in the communication situations, understood as processes of production/construction of meanings.

The conceptual triangle that articulates body, communication and emotions gives a lot of itself to continue thinking about the ways in which we communicate, in order to try to solve our communication problems and to continue bringing to light that which was archived for decades: the interest in unmediated communication. The affirmation that this interest was archived is supported by documentary works that represent a great contribution to knowing what has been investigated in

the academic field of communication. This type of meta-research work reveals that the media (first the press, radio and television, and since the end of the 20th century the Internet and digital media) continue to be the central object of study in the field of communication research.

Looking back at the unmediated does not imply disowning the importance of the media and digital technologies in current societies. This look that integrates the corporal and the affective also involves understanding how the media and, above all, digital technologies, are contributing to the construction of new subjects and the emergence or expansion of new ways of expressing emotions. Even new ways of experiencing them, of feeling them.

Therefore, it seems important to us that the field of communication participates in the Affective Turn, which has burst into the field of social sciences. And it seems so to us because we do not conceive situations of communication between people in which the senses, the affections and the sensations are absent, in addition to the more rational-argumentative discourses. We are body, and from our body we communicate. Our body produces meanings and, simultaneously, receives those emitted by our peers, with whom we interact on a daily basis. The body, emotions and, in general, the affective dimension of the world forge a suggestive conceptual space for the field of communication to offer more complex explanations about people in the present world.

As we have demonstrated throughout the essay, thinking about the relationship between communication and emotions makes it important to reinstate the contributions of the Affective Turn in the social sciences. Communication, in a broad sense, is a central element for human life, it is the basic condition of life in society and can be understood as a network of interactions in which people build and share meanings and interpretations about themselves, about other people and about the environment they inhabit.

Our body is the first channel of communication with the world that we people have. We are aware of our environment, of objects and of other subjects, because we have perceptive awareness of our body, and because from our body outline we constitute the images we have of others and we are capable of interacting with them.

Our relationship with the world is given by the body, hence this can be considered as the universal space. It is from the bodies that human beings signify their environments, they give meaning to other beings, to the space and time they inhabit. Therefore, we cannot understand ourselves as bodies if it is not from the significant display that we emit towards others from our body outline. And, at the same time, we cannot understand our societies if it is not through what our bodies communicate about them. Whether as a producer of meanings, as a receptacle of meanings in face-to-face situations, or as a body-thinking subject from which the consciousness of oneself and of others emanates, the body is our main vehicle of communication with the world. For all of the above, attending to the communicative potential of the body, and in general everything that refers to the emotional and affective dimension, is compelling for the field of communication.

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