The Ibero-American space of communication sciences and the epistemologies of the South

O espaço ibero-americano de ciências da comunicação e as epistemologias do Sul

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the relationship between the Ibero-American space of communication sciences and epistemologies of the South, raising the question of whether research in this space tends to approach the epistemological South. To answer the question, firstly, the historical and conceptual context of the epistemologies of the South is outlined, and then the main results of an empirical study of an exploratory nature are presented, based on a bibliometric and textual analysis of a significant sample of journals. The main conclusion is that research in communication sciences in the Ibero-American space approaches, in several aspects, the conception of a post-abyssal science proposed by the epistemologies of the South.

Keywords: Communication sciences, Ibero-American space, epistemologies of the South, journals

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RESUMO

O tema deste artigo é a relação entre o espaço ibero-americano de ciências da comunicação e as epistemologias do Sul, levantando a questão de saber se a investigação nesse espaço tende a se aproximar do Sul epistemológico. Para responder à questão, faz-se, em primeiro lugar, a contextualização histórica e conceitual das epistemologias do Sul, apresentando, depois, os principais resultados de um estudo empírico de caráter exploratório, baseado numa análise bibliométrica e textual de uma amostra significativa de revistas. Conclui-se que a investigação em ciências da comunicação no espaço ibero-americano se aproxima, em vários aspetos, da concepção de uma ciência pós-abissal proposta pelas epistemologias do Sul.

Palavras-chave: Ciências da comunicação, espaço ibero-americano, epistemologias do Sul, revistas

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IN A MOVEMENT THAT can be seen as a radicalization of the positions of epistemologists such as Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, or Paul Feyerabend, Boaventura de Sousa Santos (from now on, BSS) developed, from 1995 onwards, his thesis on existence of *Southern epistemologies*. Even if we do not accept this thesis, in whole or in part, we cannot fail to recognize that all science, however universal it may be intended, ends up having a place, a time, and a society. If this is true concerning the sciences in general, it is also true, *a fortiori*, about the social and human sciences and, within these, the communication sciences. Therefore, the question arises as to whether the Ibero-American space of communication sciences tends to move closer to an epistemology of the South or whether, on the contrary, it tends to move closer to the epistemologies of the North (European, American).

The discussion of this issue involved structuring this text into two parts, each with two sections. The first part of the article, entitled "Historical and Conceptual Contextualization," includes a first section on the origins of the concept of Southern epistemologies and a second on the delimitation of that same concept – in both cases, having the works of BSS as fundamental references.

The second part of the article, entitled "Empirical Study," includes a first section of bibliometric analysis on the presence of the concept of Southern epistemologies in communication science journals in the Ibero-American space; the second section tries to investigate the possible orientation of these journals towards the epistemologies of the South, using the analysis of a significant sample[1] of scientific journals from different countries in the Ibero-American space.

HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

The origins of the concept of Southern epistemologies

BSS's theorization of Southern epistemologies represents an arrival point and a starting point in his intellectual journey[2]. It represents a point of arrival as it is preceded by his reflection on the sciences, evident in works such as *A Discourse on the Sciences (1988) and Introduction to a Post-Modern Science (*1989)[3]. It represents a starting point as it marks the beginning of what can be seen, simultaneously, as a more radical (critical) and more constructive (of alternatives) phase not only of reflection on the sciences but also of the political action resulting from this reflection—since, as BSS emphasizes in several of his texts, the epistemologies of the South do not arise only from theory but, above all, from a praxis that illuminates both its genesis and its meaning.

[1] I assume, here, the distinction between a representative sample and a significant sample – to emphasize that the sample I used has no intention of "representing," and even less of "faithfully representing," the totality of Ibero-American communication science journals.

[2] See, about this journey, the interview with Bruno Sena Martins carried out on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociai*s and the Center for Social Studies (CES) of the University of Coimbra (Martins & Sousa Santos, 2018).

[3] I referred to both works in my book *A Informação como Utopia* (Serra, 1998, p. 71).

Regarding the (history of the) formulation of the concept, in the introduction to the first of the books written on the subject, BSS and the co-organizer state that "this concept was initially formulated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos in 1995 and later re-elaborated in several publications" (Sousa Santos & Meneses, 2008, p. 12). This is a formulation that Maria Paula Meneses repeats in an article from 2008, stating that "in 1995, Boaventura de Sousa Santos proposed the concept of 'epistemology of the South,' which raised several debates (Meneses, 2008, p. 5). The 1995 work referred to in both cases is the book *Toward a New Common Sense: Law, Science, and Politics in the Paradigmatic Transition*, published by Routledge, in which, concerning the concept in question, the section "The South" assumes particular importance (Sousa Santos, 1995).

In the passage of this section, which we can consider as the seminal formulation of the epistemologies of the South, BSS states that "the critique of the imperial relationship" between the colonizing North and the colonized South implies three phases (which are as many programmatic injunctions): "learning that there is a South," "learning to go South," and "learning from the South," concluding that

> The defamiliarization of the imperial North is thus a complex epistemology, composed of successive acts of unlearning in terms of knowledge-regulation (*from order to chaos*) [emphasis added] and relearning in terms of knowledge-emancipation (*from colonialism to solidarity*) [emphasis added]. (Sousa Santos, 1995, p. 508)

In the interview with Bruno Sena Martins, mentioned above, BSS also refers to three "phases" in his critique of the positivism of modern science and the construction of Southern epistemologies, considering that these are far from being "a finished process" – a consciousness which will be evident in the book then published in the United States of America, *The End of the Cognitive Empire* (2018) (Martins & Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 44).

The first of these phases, which began with the work *A Discourse on the Sciences* (1988), comprises the "struggle for the internal pluralism of science," criticizing scientific positivism, fighting for the inclusion in science of other forms of knowledge than "positive" science (critical theory, philosophies, etc.).

The second phase, whose beginning BSS places in its research work in Rio de Janeiro (Jacarezinho *favela*), is a struggle for *external pluralism*, i.e., for the defense of the idea that science is not the only valid form of knowledge, that there are several valid forms of knowledge, and science is just one of them.

The third phase—in which one would find oneself at the time of the interview—is the one in which the diverse knowledge is placed "in a creative

interaction that is the *ecologies of knowledge and the craftsmanship of practices*," something that can only occur "in contexts of social struggle," "in the processes of the struggle for a more just society"—and this interaction is far from being an easy process, requiring a permanent *translation* effort:

> Intercultural and interpolitical diversity requires an effort at intercultural translation and a robust political reconstruction. It is an external pluralism that does not want to be a synthesis but does not want to be lost in the total fragmentation of diversity. Hence, my fight against relativism. (Martins & Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 44)

Rethinking this delimitation of "phases," which would give the idea of progress typical of positivism itself, BSS reformulates the description of its path in terms of a "spiral," thinking in this way "internal pluralism, external pluralism, the articulation of struggles taking into account the diversity of knowledge, in which all are valid, but not all equally valid, depending on the struggles we are in" (Martins & Sousa Santos, 2018, p. 45).

Regarding the historical, social, and political context in which Southern epistemologies emerge, BSS says:

> On an intellectual level, they would not be possible without two proposals that revolutionized pedagogy and social sciences in the late 1960s and 1970s: Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and participatory investigation-action (IAP) by Orlando Fals Borda. These two portentous pillars contributed decisively to the formulation of the epistemologies of the South. (Sousa Santos, 2019, pp. 355-366)

Delimitation of the concept of Southern epistemologies

Tracing the origins of the concept of Southern epistemologies allowed us, from the outset, to identify some of the fundamental notes of this concept. For an explanation of these and other conceptual notes, taking into account, on the one hand, the hundreds of pages that BSS dedicated to the theme of epistemologies of the South (in addition to the works cited in the text, see Sousa Santos, 2008a, 2008b, 2014, 2018, 2020; Sousa Santos, Araújo & Baumgarten, 2016; Sousa Santos, Nunes & Meneses, 2008) and, on the other hand, the procedural character (in "spiral") of his reflection, we will be based on the last book which, explicitly, the author dedicated to the theme: the already mentioned *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South*, de 2018, from 2018, whose version in Portuguese, with the title *O Fim do Império Cognitivo: A Afirmação das Epistemologias do Sul*, was published in Brazil in 2019 (this is the version we follow here).

We will start by explaining the expression "epistemologies of the South":

> Epistemologies of the South refer to the production and validation of knowledge anchored in the experiences of resistance of all social groups that have been systematically victims of injustice, oppression, and destruction caused by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. I call the vast and very diverse scope of these experiences the anti-imperial South. (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 17)

These epistemologies aim "to allow oppressed social groups to represent the world as theirs and on their own terms, as only in this way will they be able to transform it according to their own aspirations" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 17).

The South of epistemologies of the South does not entirely coincide with the geographic South—since there can be South, and several types of South, within the North and, conversely, North, and several types of North, within the South (Sousa Santos, 2019, pp. 17-18).

Thus, the epistemologies of the South are not epistemologies in the conventional sense, which aim at the study of science and justified belief, or even the respective social and historical context:

> It is rather about identifying and valuing what often does not even appear as knowledge in the light of dominant epistemologies, the cognitive dimension of resistance struggles against oppression and against the knowledge that legitimizes that same oppression. Many of these forms of knowledge do not constitute knowledge thought of as an autonomous activity but rather generated and lived in concrete social practices. (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 18)

The epistemologies of the South aim to counter the role of domination played by the epistemologies of the North, based on a (monist) conception of science as knowledge that is characterized by rigor, universalism, truth, the distinction between subject and object, nature as *res extensa*, linear temporality, the progress of science, objectivity based on social and political neutrality (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 24).

Modern science was the instrument that the colonial, capitalist, and patriarchal North used to carry out the "multifaceted epistemicide" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 162) in the South, depriving it of its own forms of knowledge, constructed over centuries or even millennia, and perfectly adapted to their practice, therefore, imposing what BSS calls *cognitive decolonization* (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 161).

This decolonization does not imply denying science, but rather abyssal science, to put in its place a post-abyssal science. Abyssal science is based on a line of separation between the "side here" (the North) and the "side there" (the South), considering the knowledge of the first as the only valid one and referring that of the second to the non-existence and invisibility; the distinctions, for example, between positive science and philosophies made "on this side" already consider as acquired and natural the abysmal separation made previously, and which is thus hidden:

> Epistemologies of the North conceive the Eurocentric epistemological North as the only source of valid knowledge, regardless of the geographic location where this knowledge is produced. To the same extent, the South, i.e., what is on the "other" side of the line, is understood as the kingdom of ignorance. The South is the problem; the North is the solution. In these terms, the only valid understanding of the world is the Western understanding. (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 25)

Post-abyssal science requires a new methodology, different from abyssal science, which is why Southern epistemologies "propose non-extractivist methodologies" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 179).

Non-extractivist methodologies use "surprising perspectives" to formulate concepts such as the *sociology of absences*—which aims to "study in social reality what seems not to exist there"—the *sociology of emergencies*—"the study of that which is not yet a reality, or that it is reality only in potential"—the *ecologies of knowledge*—"imagines relationships between knowledge that, in the light of conventional systems theories, would be possible only between elements of the same totality," relationships between "autonomous knowledge involved in processes of fusion or hybridization"—and *intercultural translation*—which, unlike its conventional meaning ("forms of intelligibility of the same or similar ideas in different languages"), refers, in Southern epistemologies, to "ideas that are often extremely different and which may or may not be expressed in the same language" (Sousa Santos, 2019, pp. 189-190). Thus, and in summary,

> The main instruments of Southern epistemologies are the following: the abyssal line and the various types of social exclusion it creates; the sociology of absences and the sociology of emergencies; the ecology of knowledge and intercultural translation; and the craftsmanship of practices. (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 41)

In contrast, the extractivist epistemologies of abyssal science, as its name indicates, conceive knowledge as an extraction of information (or data), as an extractivism that is nothing more than the cognitive version of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 193). This extraction is done from human or non-human objects, unilaterally (the extractor is never extracted), intensively or extensively until the sources are exhausted, and the non-extractable is considered irrelevant and, consequently, is eliminated (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 194). While these methodologies cannot be "decolonizable," in certain circumstances, the knowledge produced can "be re-signified or reconfigured and used for counter-hegemonic purposes" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 194).

Concerning the decolonization of methodologies—configuring what BSS calls "anti-extractivist or post-extractivist methodologies"—it "consists of all processes capable of producing acceptable and reliable knowledge in a non-extractivist way, i.e., through cooperation between subjects of knowledge and not through unilateral subject/object cognitive interactions" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 194).

Extractivist methodologies obliterate the fact that science is, from a literal (oculo-centrism) or metaphorical point of view, a particular *perspective*, in such a way that what it allows us to see is only part of everything it hides, or, in the words of BSS, "methodologies only provide us with answers about the world that correspond to the questions that were asked, these questions being a tiny part of those that could have been asked." These methodologies thus fall into *methodological fetishism*, which "consists of the conviction that the truth about the object is obtained for the simple reason of respecting the methodologies and that this is the only relevant truth" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 202).

Another point of contrast between abyssal science and post-abyssal science is that knowledge, in the latter, "arises from processes of *knowing-with* rather than *knowing-about*" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 232), and "all investigation work guided by Southern epistemologies is, in essence, collective" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 235).

However, post-abyssal science "is, for now, something to aspire to, an investigation program that, if evaluated in light of the dominant paradigm (Northern epistemologies), is, without a doubt, utopian" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 209), and scientists who advocate for it are "the target of a double stigmatization: first because they are not 'real scientists' in the eyes of their peers in the academic context; second, because they are not considered 'true combatants' by the protagonists of social struggles" (Sousa Santos, 2019, pp. 209-210).

There is, therefore, also a line of separation between post-abyssal science and "the majority of knowledge that circulates in the world and is relevant to people's lives": while this is "oral and artisanal," universities and research centers privilege "written and scientific" knowledge. For one and the other to integrate the "ecologies of knowledge," aiming to fight against capitalist, colonial, and patriarchal oppression, scientific knowledge must be "demonumentalized" and "oralized" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 413).

Communication sciences and epistemologies of the South

The contextualization and delimitation of the concept of epistemologies of the South that we have just made raises the following question: Does research in communication sciences in the Ibero-American space tend to get closer to the epistemologies of the South? Or does it tend, on the contrary, to get closer to the epistemologies of the North?

Answering this question involves, firstly, determining questions such as the following: What might be the implications of the concept of epistemologies of the South in communication research? How do communication studies that take a Southern epistemology perspective differ from those of a Northern epistemology perspective?

These issues are not new and have already been addressed by other authors—first of all by BSS himself, at least in general terms, when he states that the myth that "all social and political problems would have technical solutions," even if it is found in a phase of loss of credibility, "it still exists among us, now exacerbated by the revolution in information and communication technologies" (Sousa Santos, 2019, p. 409).

This revolution in information and communication technologies, whose impacts on society and culture are profound, also impacts how communication and the media are conceived nowadays.

In fact, as Araújo and Santos (2017, p. 79) emphasize, communication and media studies carried out from the perspective of Northern epistemologies tend to focus on a definition of media that identifies them with the technological, the new, the Western, that of the North – forgetting all other modes of mediation and communication, namely those that characterize the epistemologies of the South, both in the geographic South and North, and which are discarded for what is sometimes called *indigenous* or *traditional*.

Carvalho et al. (2020) reach a similar conclusion. Based on the analysis of a sample consisting of 116 articles published between 2016 and 2018 in communication journals then indexed in the top five places in Scopus (*Journal*

of Communication, *Applied Linguistics*, *Political Communication*, *International Journal of Press/Politics*, and *Communication Theory*), and selected based on four keywords (*media*, *traditional media*, *indigenous media*, *social media*) (Carvalho et al., 2020, p. 223), the authors detected the following dominant trends:

– "Media" tends to be the same as "digital". . . Reference to "indigenous media" was not found, and none of the articles focused on any media other than mass and online media.
– "Traditional media" as "mass media" . . .
– "Social media" as "digital media" . . .
– Prevalence of cutting-edge technology in the definition of media . . .
– Liberal as tending to be universal . . .
– Little recognition of media ecologies . . . (Carvalho et al., 2020, pp. 226-228)

One of the fundamental consequences of the definition of media according to the modern criterion of scientific-technological progress, which considers those that do not fit that definition as non-media or outdated media, is that "the knowledge and reports that the voices that use these media [non-technological, non-digital] expressions are also considered inferior, pre-modern and capable of being legitimately overcome or positively updated" (Carvalho et al., 2020, p. 217).

However, the distinction between communication sciences tending towards the epistemological North or South cannot be made only by the conception of communication and media that they presuppose—but also by aspects such as the themes treated, the methodologies and methods used to investigate them— the results one wants to obtain:

i) Themes: While epistemologies of the North increasingly tend to focus on themes such as new media and their uses, the mediatization of society, media literacy, disinformation, strategic communication, etc., epistemologies from the South tend to address themes related to the conceptual trilogy of capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy, including, for example, themes such as race, gender, migration, social movements, community networks, sustainability, etc.

ii) Methodologies[4]: While epistemologies of the North tend to use quantitative methodologies, characteristic of natural sciences, aiming to obtain universal conclusions, epistemologies of the South tend to use qualitative methodologies, characteristic of social and human sciences ("sciences of the spirit," according to Dilthey), aiming to obtain contextual conclusions (particular "universality").

iii) Methods: While epistemologies of the North tend to use data collection methods such as questionnaires or content analysis, which we can describe as extractivist (investigating the other as an object that must be explored),

[4] I adopt here, with adaptations, the BSS distinction: "When I speak of the question of method, in the singular, I refer to methodology, i.e., to theoretical and analytical questions relating to how research should be carried out concerning its context and the objectives pursued. When I talk about methods, in the plural, I refer to information gathering techniques or the concrete contexts in which knowledge co-creation occurs" (Sousa Santos, 2019, pp. 203-204).

epistemologies of the South tend to use data collection methods such as interviews, discourse analysis or participant observation, which we can consider as non-extractivist and intersubjective (investigating with the other as a subject producing interpretations and meanings).

Therefore, to answer the question stated at the beginning of this section—does research in communication sciences in the Ibero-American space tend to get closer to the epistemologies of the South?—the empirical study presented below was carried out and focused on the various distinctive aspects of both epistemologies.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

This empirical study involved two moments. First, we sought to determine the presence of the concept of Southern epistemologies in communication science journals in the Ibero-American space, using a search in the Scopus and Web of Science databases. In the second, more extensive and relevant, we sought to determine the orientation—more to the epistemological North or more to the South—of a sample, which we consider significant, of communication science journals from the Ibero-American space.

Presence of the concept of epistemologies of the South in communication science journals

According to the current perspective, the scientific impact of a concept or theory is seen, to a large extent, by the number of publications that refer to it. Furthermore, scientific publications are increasingly articles in journals.

Based on this perspective, we conducted an exploratory search to investigate the number of articles from journals indexed in Scopus and the Web of Science Core Collection that refer to the expression "Epistemologies of the South."

On July 7, 2023, the search returned the results presented below.

Scopus

The search considered the following descriptors: Search fields: Article title, Abstract, Keywords; Document type: Article.

The search identified 117 articles, three of which were in communication journals. These articles and journals are as follows:

1. Sousa, L. S., & Oliveira, T. (2018). Cartografias da pesquisa-ação: Em busca de deslocamentos da epistemologia do Sul. *Comunicação*

e Sociedade, *33*, 57-81. (Issue about "Epistemologia e Metodologias em Comunicação".)

2. Suzina, A. C., & Tufte, T. (2020). Freire's vision of development and social change: Past experiences, present challenges and perspectives for the future. *International Communication Gazette*, *82*(5), 411-424. (Special issue dedicated to Paulo Freire.)

3. Souza, J. R. (2021). Discusión sobre el lugar de la cultura en la enseñanza de lenguas: Sobre la no dicotomía entre lengua y cultura. *Revista Caracol*, *22*, 438-463[5].

Web of Science Core Collection

The search considered the following descriptors: Search fields: All fields; Document type: Articles.

The search identified 115 articles, three of which were in communication journals.

These articles and journals are as follows:

1. The same as indicated in no. 2 in Scopus.
2. The same as indicated in no. 3 in Scopus.
3. Baspineiro, A. C. (2022). Comunicologías del Sur. *Chasqui*, (151), 17-50. (Issue about "Tendencias e Innovación en la Educación Superior en Comunicación a Partir de la Covid-19".)

Main results

We thus identified a total of four articles in the journals indexed in both databases (and which are partly repeated): one in the journal of the Center for Communication and Society Studies at the University of Minho (*Comunicação e Sociedade*), one in a journal of Sage (*International Communication Gazette*), one in the journal of the University of São Paulo (*Revista Caracol*), and one in Ciespal's journal (*Chasqui*).

Communication science journals and epistemologies of the South
Sample delimitation

According to the data collection we conducted on July 5, 2023, with the descriptors Subject area: Social Sciences, Subject category: Communication, Region: IberoAmerica, and Types: Journals, there are 59 communication journals indexed in SCImagoJR (Scopus) (https://bit.ly/3upr0ky), distributed across the following Ibero-American countries:

[5] *Caracol*, from the School of Philosophy, Letters, and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo, is one of the journals indexed in Scopus in communication.

Table 1.

Journals by country

Country	No. of journals	Perc. of journals
Spain	32	54.24
Brazil	10	16.95
Portugal	09	15.25
Peru	02	3.39
Chile	02	3.39
Mexico	01	1.69
Colombia	02	3.39
Argentina	01	1.69
Total	**59**	**100**

Note. Prepared by the author with data obtained from SCImagoJR.

Table 1 shows that Spain stands out, with more than 50% of the journals indexed, with Brazil and Portugal, respectively, in second and third place, with almost equal percentages (16.95% and 15.25%). The sum of the percentages of the remaining five countries is below the percentages of Brazil and Portugal (13.55%).

Of the 59 journals, those in Table 2 are in the top five regarding impact factor (SJR – Scimago Journal Rank).

Table 2.

Journal ranking

Order	Title	SJR	SJR Quartile	H Index	Country
1	*Comunicar*	1.412	Q1	51	Spain
2	*Review of Communication Research*	0.97	Q1	8	Spain
3	*Profesional de la Informacion*	0.872	Q1	40	Spain
4	*Media and Communication*	0.865	Q1	30	Portugal
5	*Revista Latina de Comunicacion Social*	0.691	Q1	24	Spain

Note. Prepared by the author with data obtained from SCImagoJR.

The five journals in the top five places include four Spanish and one Portuguese. However, it should be noted that, despite being published in Lisbon by Cogitatio Press (https://bit.ly/3MXgJCp), the one attributed to Portugal not only has a title in English but also presents the following characteristics: its editors are non-Portuguese (perhaps except one, but who has no affiliation in Portugal), has rare Portuguese authors or co-authors, and publishes in English. Therefore, we could hardly consider it a "Portuguese" journal in communication.

Among the 59 journals indexed in Scopus, we selected for analysis a sample of five journals based on the following criteria: *country* – journal with the best rating in each country that, cumulatively, is published in the Ibero-American language (Portuguese or Spanish); *subarea* – communication and media (and not, for example, librarianship, literature, etc.); *continent* – two journals from Europe, one from Portugal, and one from Spain; two journals from South America, one in Portuguese (Brazil), and one in Spanish; a journal from North America, in this case only in Spanish (Mexico)[6].

Under these criteria, our sample consisted of the seven journals/countries indicated in Table 3.

[6] At the time of the research, no Central American journals were indexed in Scopus in communication.

Table 3.

Sample of journals by country

Country	Journal	Website	SJR
Spain	*Comunicar*	https://www.revistacomunicar.com/	1
Peru	*Revista de Comunicación*	https://revistadecomunicacion.com/index	8
Mexico	*Comunicacion y Sociedad*	https://comunicacionysociedad.cucsh.udg.mx/index.php/comsoc	22
Portugal	*Comunicação e Sociedade*	https://revistacomsoc.pt/	27
Brazil	*Comunicação Mídia e Consumo*	https://revistacmc.espm.br/revistacmc	49

Note. Prepared by the author with data obtained from SCImagoJR.

We only considered each journal's issues and articles published throughout 2022, as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4.

Issues and articles published in 2022

Journal (Country)	Issues published in 2022	Total articles[7]
Comunicar (Spain)	4	40
Revista de Comunicación (Peru)	2	39
Comunicacion y Sociedad (Mexico)	1	30
Comunicação e Sociedade (Portugal)	2	26
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo (Brazil)	3	25
Total	12	160

Note. Prepared by the author based on information present on the journals' websites.

[7] Not considering editorials, introductions, presentation notes, reviews, or interviews.

Each of the articles was classified according to the following categories: "Country of first author" (considering the institution to which they are affiliated),[8] "Theme" (based on the title), "Media" (means of communication to which the article refers to, when applicable), "Methodology" (quantitative, qualitative,

[8] Thus, to give just one example, an author with a clearly Portuguese name but affiliated with an institution in the USA was considered by us to be from the USA.

or mixed), and "Methods" (data collection techniques). This classification of data and its collection was done exclusively by me, without any other coders—which is justified due to this article's predominantly exploratory and hermeneutical objective. The data collected is based on the indications provided by the authors in the titles, authors, abstracts, and keywords of the articles. When some of the information in these elements was omitted or doubtful, we resorted to consultation of the complete articles.

Main results
Country of first author

The country of origin of the first author of each article was analyzed to verify the degree of permeability between authors and journals/countries.

As Table 5 shows, Spain has the largest number of first authors (66), followed by Brazil (27) and Portugal (17). These three countries total 110 authors, i.e., 69%, and only Portugal and Spain represent more than half (83). There is, therefore, an overrepresentation of authors from European countries.

This distribution of authors by country immediately implies that some authors write articles in more journals than those from their respective countries, as can also be seen in Table 5.

Table 5.

Country of first author and by journal

Country of 5rst author	Total	Comunicação e Sociedade	Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Comunicación y Sociedad	Comunicar	Revista de Comunicación
South Africa	1	1	0	0	0	0
Germany	2	0	0	0	2	0
Argentina	5	0	1	2	0	2
Brazil	27	6	19	1	1	0
Chile	5	0	0	3	1	1
Colombia	7	0	0	2	3	2
Cuba	1	0	0	0	1	0
Ecuador	1	0	0	0	0	1
Slovenia	1	0	0	0	1	0
Spain	66	2	3	12	23	26
USA	2	1	0	0	0	1
Philippines	1	0	0	0	1	0

Continues...

Continuation

Country of 5rst author	Total	Comunicação e Sociedade	Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Comunicación y Sociedad	Comunicar	Revista de Comunicación
Italy	1	0	0	0	1	0
Lithuania	1	0	0	0	1	0
Malaysia	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mexico	10	0	0	8	1	1
Peru	6	0	0	2	1	3
Portugal	17	15	2	0	0	0
UK	2	1	0	0	1	0
Romania	1	0	0	0	1	0
Türkiye	1	0	0	0	1	0
Venezuela	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**160**	**26**	**25**	**30**	**40**	**39**

Note. Prepared by the author based on information present on the journals' websites.

Thus, it appears that authors from Spain are distributed not only by the Spanish journal (*Comunicar*) but also by other Spanish-language journals, especially those from Peru and Mexico (*Revista de Comunicación* and *Comunicacion y Sociedad*, respectively), publishing very rarely in Portuguese-language journals. Furthermore, no authors from other Spanish-speaking countries publish except in Spanish-language journals.

Similarly, Portuguese-speaking authors publish almost exclusively in journals from Brazil (mainly Brazilian authors) and Portugal (mainly Portuguese authors). Thus, in the case of Portuguese authors, there are only two articles in Spanish-language journals, while there are none in the case of Portuguese authors. These results certainly confirm and reinforce what, in a previous article, I called "the reciprocal (lack of) knowledge of Ibero-American communication science researchers" (Serra, 2016) and which translates into the fact that the Ibero-American science space of communication being a space divided by the two languages.

Themes
To verify which themes were related to the conceptual/thematic trilogy of Southern epistemologies—capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy—we carried out a lexical analysis of the statements in the titles of the articles. The analysis allowed us to identify the following categories: colonialism, consumption, human rights, gender, cultural identity, social movements, community networks, and sustainability.

These categories are presented in Table 6, which also indicates the journals in which the articles were published (the list with article titles and respective categories is included in Appendix 1).

Table 6.

Article themes

Journal	Total	*Comunicação e Sociedade*	*Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo*	*Comunicación y Sociedad*	*Comunicar*	*Revista de Comunicación*
Categories						
Colonialism[9]	13	11	2	0	0	0
Consumption	4	0	4	0	0	0
Human rights	10	4	2	0	4	0
Gender	13	1	5	4	1	2
Cultural identity	4	1	2	0	0	1
Social movements	3	0	0	2	0	1
Community networks	1	0	0	1	0	0
Sustainability	2	0	0	1	1	0
Total (Total articles)	**50 (160)**	**17 (26)**	**15 (25)**	**8 (30)**	**6 (40)**	**4 (39)**

Note. Prepared by the author based on information present on the journals' websites.

[9] The relatively high number of mentions in this category has to do, in part, with the fact – significant in itself – that the journal *Comunicação e Sociedade* (Portugal) dedicated its issue 41 (June 2002) to the theme "Historical Repairs: Destabilizing Constructions of the Colonial Past."

The 50 articles identified in the analysis represent 31% of the total 160 articles consulted, i.e., almost a third of the articles explicitly focus on topics related to the epistemologies of the South.

In terms of journals, *Comunicação e Sociedad*e (Portugal) and *Comunicação, Mídia e Sociedade* (Brazil) have the highest number of mentions (more than half of their titles), while the lowest number goes to *Comunicar* (Spain) and *Revista de Comunicación* (Peru), with *Comunicación y Sociedad* (México) occupying an intermediate position.

Media

Table 7 shows that, in the total of 160 articles, 26 (16%) do not refer to any media (they deal with other aspects of communication), with the other 134 (84%) referring to a specific type of media. In these, the most represented type of media is digital/online media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Web, smartphones, etc.), with 73 mentions—which, in practice, means more than half (55%) of 134 articles that focus on media, in much larger numbers than more

"traditional" media such as television and newspapers (with, respectively, 16 and 15 mentions). On the opposite side, that of the least represented media, the book has four mentions, magazines two, and media such as oral history, photography, cinema, or posters have only one mention each. This clearly highlights the predominant orientation of journals toward what is also called new media.

Table 7.

Media referred to in articles

Journal	Total	Comunicação e Sociedade	Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Comunicación y Sociedad	Comunicar	Revista de Comunicación
Media						
None	26	2	2	7	9	6
Art	1	1	0	0	0	0
Posters	1	0	1	0	0	0
Cinema	1	1	0	0	0	0
Photography	1	1	0	0	0	0
Press	1	0	1	0	0	0
Newspapers	15	6	3	3	0	3
Books	4	4	0	0	0	0
Digital/online media	73	9	10	11	26	17
Media in general	11	0	1	2	4	4
News media	1	0	0	0	0	1
Netflix	2	0	0	0	0	2
Orality	1	0	1	0	0	0
Podcasts	1	0	0	0	0	1
Advertising	1	0	1	0	0	0
Magazines	2	0	1	0	1	0
Television	16	2	3	6	0	5
Transmedia	1	0	0	1	0	0
Videogame	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	**160**	**26**	**25**	**30**	**40**	**39**

Note. Prepared by the author based on information present on the journals' websites.

This trend, similar for all journals, is, however, even more marked in the cases of *Comunicar*, from Spain (26 articles out of 31 of those that focus on the media, i.e., 84%), *Revista de Comunicación*, from Peru (17 out of 33, 52%), and *Comunicación y Sociedad*, from Mexico (11 out of 23, 48%).

Methodology

Table 8 presents the classification of articles concerning their methodology. We observed that, in global terms, qualitative methodologies clearly predominate (84, i.e., 52.5%) over qualitative methodologies (57, i.e., 35.6%), with the remaining 19 representing a small part (11.9%).

Table 8.

Classification of articles concerning the methodology

Methodology	Experimental	Qualitative	Quantitative	Quantitative/ Qualitative	Quantitative/ Qualitative, Design	Total
Journal						
Comunicação e Sociedade	0	22	3	1	0	26
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	0	19	5	1	0	25
Comunicación y Sociedad	0	18	10	2	0	30
Comunicar	1	12	20	6	1	40
Revista de Comunicación	0	13	19	7	0	39
Total	1	84	57	17	1	160

Note. Prepared by the author based on information present on the journals' websites.

Concerning journals, it appears that there is a division between two groups: in the journals *Comunicação e Sociedade* (Portugal), *Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo* (Brazil), and *Comunicación y Sociedad* (Mexico), qualitative methodologies predominate. In the journals *Comunicar* (Spain) and *Revista de Comunicación* (Peru), quantitative methodologies predominate (half or almost half of the articles, respectively), thus contradicting the global trend toward qualitative.

Methods

It was not always easy to classify the data collection methods (or "techniques") indicated by the authors of the articles, either because the names of the same methods were sometimes different[10] or because most of the articles referred to more than one data collection method.

Table 9 presents the most used methods, alone or in combination[11].

[10] This is the case, for example, of content analysis (sometimes referred to as qualitative and sometimes as quantitative) or discourse analysis (sometimes qualified as critique, sometimes not).

[11] We do not consider the literature review here, indicated ten times, as it is, in one way or another, present in all articles.

Table 9.

Data collection methods

Use	Isolated use	Associated use	Total	Perc./160 articles
Methods				
Content analysis	25	10	35	21,9
Questionnaire	18	7	25	15,6
Discourse analysis	13	5	18	11,3
Interview	12	13	25	15,6
Total	68	35	103	64,4

Note. Prepared by the author based on information present on the journals' websites.

These data allow us to conclude that the more extractive data collection methods (or "techniques"), such as content analysis and the questionnaire, are used, alone or in association with other(s), in 60 articles, i.e., 38% of the total of 160 articles; Discourse analysis and interview are used in 43 articles, i.e., 27% of the total. Participant observation, in turn, only gets two mentions, both associated with the interview.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this section, we will make some general and conclusive considerations about the results obtained in empirical studies.

We will start with the first part of the study, on the expression "epistemologies of the South" in communication journals indexed in Scopus and Web of Science (which, in part, overlap). As we have seen, this presence is reduced to four articles and is, therefore, very small.

Regarding the second part of the empirical study, concerning the first author's country, authors from Portugal and Spain represent more than half of the total, resulting in an overrepresentation of authors from European countries, i.e., from the North (geographic). Almost a third of the articles focus on themes related to the South's epistemologies. Concerning the media, there is a predominant orientation of journals toward digital/online media, with older media playing a secondary role. Concerning methodology, although qualitative ones predominate globally, there are journals in which quantitative ones predominate. Concerning methods, although the questionnaire and content analysis are used in most cases, discourse analysis and interviews are also used substantially. Regarding magazines/countries, it can be said that the distinction in the areas mentioned is not between the Iberian and American countries. However, on the one hand, Portugal, Brazil, and Mexico, and, on the other, Spain and Peru—and the first

group of countries have an orientation closer to the epistemologies of the South than the second group.

The results of the study allow us to conclude overall that, even though we cannot consider that the Ibero-American space of communication sciences is (already) a space of post-abyssal science oriented towards the epistemological South, it reveals signs of some orientation in this direction, significantly demarcating itself from epistemologies of the North, particularly concerning its themes, its methodologies, and its methods.

As expected, these conclusions are valid in the context of the study presented here and in the specific conditions it involved, with the need for other complementary studies to replicate or review them.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Article and category titles

Journal	Title	Categories
Comunicar	Explorando la ciberviolencia contra mujeres y niñas en Filipinas a través de Mining Online News	Gender
Comunicar	Discurso de odio y aceptación social hacia migrantes en Europa: Análisis de tuits con geolocalización	Human rights
Comunicar	Una revisión sistemática de la literatura de las representaciones de la migración en Brasil y Reino Unido	Human rights
Comunicar	La trata de personas en Twitter: Finalidades, actores y temas en la escena hispanohablante	Human rights
Comunicar	Educating for a sustainable future through the circular economy: Citizen involvement and social change	Sustainability
Comunicar	Invisibilised human rights: Trafficking in human beings in the media in Spain	Human rights
Revista de Comunicación	La oferta de pódcast nativo en Puerto Rico: La identidad cultural del sector independiente frente a la industria periodística	Cultural identity
Revista de Comunicación	"No es tu cuerpo. No es tu derecho": El argumentario visual del movimiento provida argentino en Instagram	Social movements
Revista de Comunicación	Polarización y discurso de odio con sesgo de género asociado a la política: Análisis de las interacciones en Twitter	Gender
Revista de Comunicación	El rol de la mujer en la ciencia y la docencia en comunicación: Análisis a partir de los programas universitarios en España	Gender
Comunicación y Sociedad	Feminidad y neoliberalismo en las series televisivas españolas de éxito durante la crisis económica (2008-2015)	Gender
Comunicación y Sociedad	Representación del colectivo LGBT+ en la ficción televisiva española contemporánea (2015-2020)	Gender
Comunicación y Sociedad	Todas ellas: Análisis de la mujer LTBI+ en las series españolas originales de plataformas	Gender
Comunicación y Sociedad	Ecología comunicativa del movimiento #YoPrefieroElLago: Un abordaje desde los medios privados, independientes y alternativos	Social movements
Comunicación y Sociedad	El tratamiento periodístico de los movimientos sociales en Iberoamérica	Social movements
Comunicación y Sociedad	Comunicación para los comunes alimentarios: Análisis comparativo de grupos de consumo agroecológico en Portugal	Sustainability
Comunicación y Sociedad	#ElOrgulloPermanece ante la pandemia. Usuarios, redes y contenido LGBT+ mexicanos en Twitter	Gender

Continuation

Journal	Title	Categories
Comunicación y Sociedad	Las redes comunitarias de internet y la producción colaborativa de conocimiento tecnológico y político	Community networks
Comunicação e Sociedade	A reparação da história e os erros dos seus agentes em O Regresso de Júlia Mann a Paraty	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	Como a ficção pós-colonial pode contribuir para uma discussão sobre reparação histórica: Leitura de As Telefones (2020) de Djaimilia Pereira de Almeida	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	O mestiço na ''urgência de existência''. Essa Dama Bate Bué! (2018), de Yara Monteiro	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	A guerra colonial nas narrativas mediáticas: Como os jornais de Portugal e Angola recontaram uma efeméride 60 anos depois	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	A ambivalência colonial nas imagens em movimento contemporâneas: O caso português	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	A iconoclastia contemporânea: O antirracismo entre a descolonização da arte e a (re)sacralização do espaço público	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	Para não esquecer: Memória, poder e arquivo Malê em narrativa amadiana	Cultural identity
Comunicação e Sociedade	Processos de marginalização étnica e cultural na áfrica pós-colonial. O caso dos Amakhuwa de Moçambique	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	Uma perspetiva decolonial sobre discursos dos média online no contexto da violência contra pessoas com deficiência na África do Sul	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	(Des)colonialidade linguística e interculturalidade nas duas principais rotas da mobilidade estudantil brasileira	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	O ciberespaço como denúncia: Assédio e discriminação vinculados à colonialidade no projeto Brasileiras Não Se Calam	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	A noticiação de homicídio corporativo nos rompimentos das barragens da Samarco e da Vale por sites brasileiros	Human rights
Comunicação e Sociedade	Aparições políticas de sujeitos figurantes em imagens fotojornalísticas de chacinas em duas favelas do Rio de Janeiro	Human rights
Comunicação e Sociedade	Violência online contra as mulheres: Relatos a partir da experiência da pandemia da covid-19	Gender
Comunicação e Sociedade	Tecnologia de reconhecimento facial e segurança pública nas capitais brasileiras: Apontamentos e problematizações	Human rights
Comunicação e Sociedade	A arte de macular: Como é recebido o artivismo descolonizador feminista pelos jornais italianos? O caso da estátua de Montanelli	Colonialism
Comunicação e Sociedade	A pandemia da covid-19 e a potencialização das desigualdades: Comunidades ciganas e meios de comunicação	Human rights

Continuation

Journal	Title	Categories
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	O estrato de baixa renda entre a publicidade excludente e a publicidade redentora	Consumption
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Mulheres sem rosto: O corpo feminino e a violência em cartazes de filmes	Gender
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	A conversão semiótica da Ilha do Combu: Representações e ressignificações estéticas da Amazônia no Instagram	Cultural identity
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Uma reflexão sobre pós-colonialidade, decolonização e museus virtuais. O caso do Museu Virtual da Lusofonia	Colonialism
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	O racismo brasileiro a partir da Publicidade: Um olhar sobre a representatividade em anúncios de revista	Human rights
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Práticas de consumo de smartphones no contexto de pandemia de Covid-19: Um olhar etnográfico para as apropriações das mulheres de Maputo – Moçambique	Gender
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Consumo, alteridade e ascensão social no perfil @BlogueiraDeBaixaRenda	Consumption
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	O consumo da corda do Círio de Nazaré na pandemia da Covid-19: Experiências simbólicas nos sentidos (i)materiais	Cultural identity
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	La dimensión política del consumo: Aproximaciones teóricas para abordar problemas contemporáneos	Consumption
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	How are women represented in advertising? Evaluating consumers' attitude in Brazil	Gender
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	"Merchan" como experiência de emancipação e cumplicidade: Feminismo, autenticidade e consumo no YouTube	Gender
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	La mujer en la publicidad televisiva durante la pandemia Covid-19 en España y Portugal	Gender
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	A indústria transnacional do sexo na web: Anúncios virtuais de brasileiras em Portugal e no Brasil	Human rights
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Imbricações entre tradição e modernidade: As inscrições coloniais no discurso imobiliário de um Recife urbano	Colonialism
Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo	Entre o consumo dos cidadãos espaciais e dos sub-cidadãos: Reflexões sobre a pirâmide da cidadania midiática	Consumption

Appendix 2.

Data collection methods

Methods	Frequency	Percentage
Bibliometric analysis	2	1.3
Curriculum analysis	1	.6
Interface analysis, content analysis, behavioral analysis	1	.6
Analysis of app characteristics	1	.6
Big data analysis	1	.6
Content analysis	25	15.6
Content analysis, discourse analysis	1	.6
Content analysis, multimodal discourse analysis	1	.6
Content analysis, semiotic analysis	1	.6
Content analysis, discussion of examples	1	.6
Content analysis, interview	1	.6
Content analysis, questionnaire	1	.6
Data analysis	1	.6
Secondary data analysis, interview	1	.6
Web data analysis	1	.6
Data analysis, thematic analysis	1	.6
Discourse analysis	13	8.1
Discourse analysis, framing analysis	1	.6
Discourse analysis, focus group, interview	1	.6
Discourse analysis, text mining	1	.6
Addressing analysis	1	.6
Image analysis	2	1.3
Image analysis, discussion	1	.6
Game analysis	1	.6
Character analysis	1	.6
Character analysis	1	.6
Social network analysis	2	1.3
Novel analysis	4	2.5
Video analysis	1	.6
Document analysis	4	2.5
Document analysis, interview	2	1.3
Statistical analysis	1	.6
Statistical analysis, comparison	1	.6
Historical analysis	2	1.3

Continues...

Continuation

Methods	Frequency	Percentage
Historical analysis, multimodal analysis	1	.6
Narrative analysis	1	.6
Narrative analysis, content analysis	1	.6
Narratological analysis	1	.6
Rhetorical analysis	1	.6
Textual analysis	2	1.3
Textual analysis, questionnaire	1	.6
Comparison	1	.6
Discussion	5	3.1
Case discussion	1	.6
Interview	12	7.5
Interview, document analysis	1	.6
Interview, Delphi method	1	.6
Interview, questionnaire	1	.6
Scale	1	.6
Statistics, interview, content analysis	1	.6
Digital ethnography, case study	1	.6
Experimentation	2	1.3
Discussion group	2	1.3
Focus group	4	2.6
Focus group, visual analysis, interview	1	.6
Interpretation	1	.6
Online observation	1	.6
Participant observation, interview	2	1.3
Quasi-experimental	1	.6
Questionnaire	18	11.3
Questionnaire, content analysis	1	.6
Questionnaire, interview	1	.6
Questionnaire, scale	1	.6
Questionnaire, discussion group	1	.6
Literature review	10	6.3
Total	**160**	**100.0**