

EIROA, M. & BARRANQUERO, A. (2017) MÉTODOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN LA COMUNICACIÓN Y SUS MEDIOS. MADRID: EDITORIAL SÍNTESIS.

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The need to analyze the communication landscape in the societies we are immersed in has resulted in the legitimization of an interdisciplinary field increasingly attractive to many professionals and academics. Consequently, the publication of books such as this one is more than justified, especially if we take into account the importance of research for most of the undergraduate and postgraduate studies in communication, which, on the other hand, have been exponentially multiplied in recent years. It is true that the literature on research methodologies in the area is quite broad, even within prestigious publishers such as Síntesis, which had already published a previous monograph on the subject (Igartua & Humanes, 2010). Some of these books constitute general approaches, while others deal, in a specific way, with quantitative, qualitative or experimental methods. Likewise, academic journals offer a large number of articles facing the methodological challenges that new communication problems raise, and that in many cases advance innovative procedures that will later be assumed by the Academy.

In this scenario, the task of writing a new text on research methodologies different from the previous ones, is a challenge that the authors have resolved with undoubted success. First, this book is adapted to the axiom “one learns to investigate researching”, as the very practice of research draws up the core script of the monograph through the effective recourse of selected cases; that is, practical exercises gradually adjusted to the objectives of each chapter. Hence, the different methods are accompanied by a very informative theoretical reflection that allows to connect the methodologies with the major references and schools of communication theories. Second, the work offers an extensive view of different methodological techniques, including the most important and most used in this field: surveys, interviews, content analysis, experiments, etc. Structured in two blocks and nine chapters, this book offers, third, an interesting support material not only in the body of the text, but also in the web linked to the project, which includes explanatory tables, practical exercises and specific bibliography for each of the chapters, which are, on their own, very useful material for future students and researchers.

The first block includes a single explanatory chapter of the initial phases of any research process: the moment in which the objectives, hypotheses or objects of study are proposed. In this phase the authors ask themselves why, what for, how, when and what is required to research, and talk about the need for an incipient stage of reflection on which later empirical work will settle. In the second block we find a description of the

various techniques – labelled with titles indicative of their usefulness, such as “unveiling”, “knowing” or “examining” – with which the authors aim to facilitate the researchers’ decision-making process when it is time to choose the most appropriate method. These are chapters that reveal the fundamentals and basic operations to be performed when conducting surveys, interviews, conversational techniques of various types, content and discourse analysis, or experiments.

In addition to these classic systems of obtaining knowledge, Eiroa and Barranquero have included a chapter on the analysis of the journalistic dynamics of the classical and digital press that presents categorization proposals for the examination of the news headlines, a novel contribution with respect to other methodological works. Likewise, we consider the chapter that undertakes the study of Internet and digital platforms audacious and innovative, where techniques are drawn upon the different formats of Internet, the structure of hyperlinks or the complex environment of social networks in which a good part of current Communication Research is developed. Together with the explanation of the processes, links and URLs that direct readers to new possibilities and research resources are also interesting. In fact, the authors constantly appeal to what they call the “communicational imagination”, a self-reflective exercise on the need to adapt and re-interpret existing methods to the specific needs of each object of study. Bearing in mind that Internet research almost always has an exploratory and sometimes experimental nature, the formulas that the authors present deserve to be appreciated.

The chapter dedicated to “unveiling the content of messages” also tries to combine contributions from quantitative traditions – content analysis – and qualitative – critical discourse analysis, narratological schools, etc. – to approach communication texts, calling for a necessary methodological triangulation that understands that there are no more or less adequate methods for the study of communication. The last chapter, aimed to describe contemporary trends in the study of the field, encourages avoiding all kinds of technological determinism in the interpretation of new objects, as many of the methods presented today as innovative and suitable to take advantage of the digital potentialities, they are nothing more than a re-enactment of instruments from the past that have been endorsed by a myriad of previous investigations.

To conclude, we recommend reading this book to those people willing to start in the exciting work of Communication Research, since it is a complete, updated and very suggestive guide of the different existing paths today when it comes to deeply addressing the role of media as constructors of social reality. Its informative nature also makes it useful for lecturers, given that their contributions clarify many of the unknowns that both teachers and students face when they select and use the methods from an appropriate perspective. ✍

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE

Igartua, J. J. & Humanes, M. L. (2010). *Teoría e investigación en comunicación social*. Madrid: Síntesis.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Eduardo Francisco Rodríguez Gómez is an Assistant professor at the Department of Journalism and Audiovisual Communication of the Carlos III University of Madrid. PhD in Media from the same university and MSc in Mass Communication from the London Metropolitan University, his research activity is focused on investigative journalism, on the Third Sector of communication and on the analysis of the quality of Communication Research. He is co-founder of RICCAP (Community, Alternative and Participative Communication Research Network) and member of the research groups: Local Communication Studies (LOCALCOM), of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and Research on Social Practices in Communication (MAPCOM), of the Rey Juan Carlos University.

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