Ethics and theories of communication: power, interactions, and participative culture

Luis Mauro Sá Martino & Ângela Cristina Salgueiro Marques
lmsamartino@gmail.com; angelasalgueiro@gmail.com

Faculdade Cásper Líbero, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
Belo Horizonte – MG - Brasil Cep. 31330-110

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to make an epistemological approach of the ethical conceptions presented in the main Communication Theories, identifying in some of its epistemological proposals elements of an *ethos*. It is highlighted how these theories approach communicative mediated processes and at the same time propose procedures and practical actions. We develop our argument in a historical-critical perspective, mapping how notions of power, communicative capacities and constitution of the political citizen, among others are interlaced to the theoretical articulations of the research field. The analysis is developed around three perspectives: (a) anti-symmetrical, evincing the way power is placed side by side with media; (b) symmetrical, making equivalent, in different spaces, media producers and receivers; (c) paritarian, with intersections between these two types of agents in a participative culture. The text analyzes these three perspectives focusing the ruptures and continuities between ethics and epistemology.

1. Introduction

Any approach to ethical issues in Communication Theories should consider a lack of explicit links between epistemological and normative issues. Communication theory is seldom associated with the ethical principles underneath them, even if they investigate a dimension specifically turned to the practices of communication professionals (cf. Meyer, 1986; Martino & Silva, 2013) or studied from the point of view of a communicative ethics (Marques, 2011).

If we compare the Communication Theory syllabuses in universities, apart from a remarkable epistemological dispersion (Martino, 2011, 2012), there would be few intersections with the subjects of "Ethics" or "Ethics and Law", in which there are themes related to issues of professional character (Christofolletti, 2011). Scattered at different points of courses, "theory" and "ethics" seem not to maintain relations with each other, as if the knowledge of the "theories" were not linked to the knowledge of the "practices" and responsibilities at the very moment of their academic studies.

Among the exceptions, one can point out the work of Barros Filho (1995) and Karam (1997; 2005) as contributions in which ethics is inserted in the context of theories of Communication, Journalism and Semiotics, respectively. However, these studies suggest an appropriation of the Communication Theories to study the topics of ethics, without

focusing specifically on what could be thought of as an ethics present in the realm of theories themselves, as suggested by Signates (2005: 2) when he states that "from the beginning, the object of communication is ethical; therefore, its definition implies ethical standards".

This paper outlines some ethical dimensions of Communication Theories, focusing on its main postulates as the prospects that set an interpretation of the world.

As a start point, Ethics could be examined from its first Aristotelian systematization, which highlights two main dimensions derived from the concept of *ethos*. The first one concerns the *ethos as a way of being*, as a way of life that assures to individuals the establishment of an identity and links them with an environment. In this dimension we define who we would like to be and reflect on the provisions that guide us to act towards an end, happiness or *eudaimonia*. Secondly, we have *the ethos as usual principle of action*. In this sense, ethics would also present a social and communicational character, because although centered on the individual and his reflection on values and standards of behavior, it belongs to the field of social relations.

Given this situation, it is possible to ask about the ethical problems are studied in theories of Communication. This question requires some care in the use of concepts (Bourdieu, 1983), since any attempt to establish a link between ethics and communication could suggest an opening of focus perhaps incompatible with the procedures of research. Thus, approaching these two issues requires some definitions. We argue that it is possible to take as a starting point the ownership of theoretical sets targeted both on books titled "Theories of Communication" as those mentioned in the and academical spaces of epistemological discussion.

As a "discourse" designed as an articulated production of knowledge of a field, the Communication Theories do not withdraw from the spaces of their production or the conceptions of society, power, participation, autonomy, hierarchy, and social behavior. In this sense, the text of Bennett (1983) symptomatically titled "Theories of Media, Theories of Society" can be understood as a source to this text, considering that a theory of Communication necessarily intersects a "Theory of Society".

Thus, when we say "ethics" regarding theories of Communication, the reference is not a study on the varieties of "ethics", but is closer to a meta-observation to understand the concepts of a principle of action within a framework of theories. A theory of Communication, to the extent that it deals with human (and also inhuman) elements in its cognitive, political, social and historical dimensions, implicitly brings a number of considerations about "what is human" and "what is society", "what one can (or should) do", and especially how it is constituted in the field of relations with the media.

Is it possible to think of an ethics of Communication Theories?

A normative and deontological approach emerges from the ambivalence in the Communication Theories resulting from concepts present in diversified media, independently of the society with which they can be articulated. Barros Filho (1995) specifies

that when one argues on "effects", "articulations", "appropriations" and "resistances" in the relation between individuals, communities and media, one is implicitly suggesting what can be done. In some cases, it does not seem to be possible the separation of the diagnosis and a certain outcome, even if this is not accomplished by incitement to an action. For the author, the "normative" in this sense is another consequence of the epistemological question than exactly a *causa sui* directed to regulate a practice.

In the epistemological discourse, especially in its reflection on the reality and practice, there are elements that constitute the prerogatives of a normative action. This happens mainly because it also might turns into the practice.

In other words, one of the points of intersection between the ethical and the epistemological instances is revealed when "what happens" can also be understood as a proposition about "what to do from this". The analysis of Communication Theories allows one to underline an *ethos* as well as dissensual forms of expression and interaction that invent ways of being, seeing and saying, setting up new subjects and new modes and scenes of collective enunciation. Esteves (2007) calls this "the agonistic of the collective life".

Communication theories help to considerate how these interactions have an ethical element, especially in their symmetric and asymmetric parts. So, we can focus on the positions of the communication process in which those involved are invested with marks of power that are able to attribute social positions, spaces of visibility or invisibility, limitations of discourse, and participation in discussions and collective decisions to the most diversified subjects.

Just for clarity purposes, it is possible to outline three main types of ethical perspectives within the theories of Communication field: (1) theories that postulate an ontological asymmetry between the people involved in the communication process that attribute to the conceptual reflection the task of denouncing aspects of control, power and domination between these poles; (2) a second perspective studies a certain symmetry between media and the audience, this last understood as an element of fruition/ reconstruction of the message and therefore valued in theoretical reflection as an active part of the process; (3) the identification of a prospect of intersection among media, individuals and the society from which emerges an ethics centered to the analysis of ways of power eventually exogenous to the media, present in media and social control apparatuses.

It is worth noting that these three perspectives, although they had diachronic historical developments, are present within current Communication studies as active operational perspectives in epistemological spaces of research, in which they can express their implicit / explicit ethical premises. Chronology, in other words, should not be taken as a synonym of succession.

The asymmetric perspective

A distinction which could help one to discuss the ethical issues within Communication theories results from the observation of a certain ambivalence between the title "Theory of Communication" and the action of observing practices and processes in order to extract therefrom some kind of conceptual elaboration consistent to what could

be called a "theory", in this case related to the Communication. If we think this way, the ethical dimension of theories can be even enhanced.

Taking chronology as its starting point the theoretical concern with the Communication results from a political understanding of "media effects" on society in the context of the end of the First World War. Studies conducted by the so-called "founding fathers" of one of the cornerstones of the theory of Communication in the United States, in particular Lasswell (1927), Merton and Lazarsfeld (1948), were based, though not explicitly, on a purpose to determine how media could influence perceptions and cognition of individuals with regard to the formation of an "audience" in relation to a conflict. The pioneering studies of Lasswell (1927, 1931; see also Varão, 2010; Martino, 2012) reflect this theme, considering that media would be relevant in the political behavior of citizens, influencing even electoral decision-making.

This first theoretical approach to Communication is based on an alleged asymmetry between the media and individuals that engage with them. Here, the notion of "mass" assumes a central role in order to classify the audience as a homogeneous totality on which it is possible to act. To some extent, this asymmetry attributes power to the media, understood in an almost exclusively political dimension (and later "ideological"), in which any economic consideration is relegated to the background. Media power is related also in this sense to a perspective linked to the audience: as a "mass", the potential of manipulation – a word that would become insistent in communication studies of various sorts – would be considerably increased, reinforcing the asymmetry between the character of citizens affected by a potentially harmful media.

In its critical instance, the analysis of media indicates a resonance of this asymmetry in relation to groups and individuals. In this sense, even a lengthy task as the chapter on "cultural industry" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, by Adorno and Horkheimer, or the later Adorno's texts on this subject – it is excluded the pioneering study of Horkheimer (2006) entitled "Art and Mass Culture " – remains curbed to a perspective of inequality between a sender, in which it is possible to identify a powerful influence of political economy, and a receiver consisted of individuals at the mercy of this system. The second generation of the Critical Theory, mainly represented by Jürgen Habermas and his reflections published from the 1960s, somehow perpetuates and amplifies this asymmetrical dimension, highlighting how the media, besides preventing the subjective emancipation, undermine the constitution of public spheres for free expression of views and mutual justification of arguments. Habermas considers the transformation of opinion press in trade press, highlighting the loss of its critical-reflective character in favor of the "entry of privileged private interests in the public sphere" (1984: 218). For him, "on the one hand it is true that the scope of the public sphere has expanded with the contribution of the media, but on the other hand, the balance of interests and the intentions of the sender are still based on the common good, but without satisfying it" (1984: 233).

In 1992, although Habermas having revised his claim that there was a linear development of a politically active audience for an audience secluded in privacy - ranging from an "audience that debates culture to a culture consumer" (p. 438) - he never stopped to

consider the asymmetry between producers and receivers of information, nor the dubious character of action of the media in the constitution of public spheres. According to him, if on the one hand the media give visibility to the discourses of actors located in different communicative arenas, on the other, the "media professionals produce a discourse of elite, powered by actors vying with each other for access and influence" (2006: 417).

Perhaps, with critical variations, it would not be exaggeration to say that such asymmetric position had a broad resonance and multiplication in research on Communication, thus establishing a series of more or less explicit ethical positions in relation to their conceptions.

A first topic would be a defenseless human being, unable to reason on his own without the media support. The notion of "alienation" taken often from an ordinary sense and detached from its Marxist origin is one of the symptomatic words of that vision. If the receiver is part of a mass without self-awareness of its condition, and therefore susceptible of a considerable influence in the flow of its daily activities through the messages of the media, perhaps it would not be entirely wrong to assume that this receiver is "unprotected" before the power of the media. Thus, his decision-making, whether in the political sphere or in a personal level, would result from a constant use of media as a way to acquire some knowledge about the world.

If the media would have to control and the receiver would have to obey, how could a theoretical reflection offer other options to individuals, or being able to assist them in their identity projects towards the construction of their autonomy and citizenship? Here it seems to arise the second component of ethical character linked to the origins of Communication theories.

In this case, the ethics of theory would be to report these mechanisms of action - and the word "mechanism" is used intentionally here in order to underline the prospect of these theoretical elaborations - to help the individual either in the protection of the democratic game or in the very prospect in order to take him from an "alienated" condition. In both cases, there seems to be in Adorno and Horkheimer's writings, despite their profound disbelief in the critical ability of the subjects, a vague assumption of a bestowal action of theory in order to "free" ("clarify" or "emancipate") individuals under such conditions.

The ethical reflection that seems to emerge from this asymmetric perspective refers to the theoretical study as an element responsible for restoring any "balance" between senders and receivers, defined as unequal poles of action. This would immediately lead to questions regarding the existence of an equally asymmetrical posture between the "audience" and the "well informed" people (experts, intellectuals) regarding what would be considered "emancipation": there seems to be an implicit assumption that the "audience" should be "released", "agreed" or even "saved" from potential influences of the media and their products. Still, emancipating through the critical voice of the intellectuals does not lead the subject to "take the word", to become an interlocutor in scenes of dissent and conquer his autonomy through a public communicative exchange. Speaking on behalf of the subject or on his defense does not mean emancipate him, but submit him, make him dependent on the discourse and skills of others (Spivak, 2010).

Somehow, Eco (1995) identifies this position as representative of a perspective that puts a gap between researchers and "audience", and at the same time invites those who share the assumptions of the research to note themselves as belonging to a particular side of this rupture. Referring to critical research, Eco (1995: 42) notes that "deep down, the apocalyptic *comforts* the reader", indicating that the exercise of reflection alone would separate him from a "mass" reached by the media. In contrast, Eco himself (1997: 12) also mentions that before the media there is no separation between the "general audience" and those epistemologically prepared to understand these messages.

Also within the scope of the subject emancipation, Habermas' contribution does not point towards a clarification coming from experts, but derived from the subjects' own communicative activity (Marques, 2013). In his work, it is the pragmatic bias of language that outlines ethics as a way and principle of action in the face of moral problems (Martino & Marques, 2012). In order to reveal how individuals could achieve their political autonomy and reach a mutual understanding of their interests and needs through a discursive interaction in the public sphere, Habermas (1995) outlines a set of regulatory procedures, an ethics of discourse able to highlight how the communicative use of language is able to promote emancipation, achieved by the development of communicative skills for argumentative exposition and public justification. An ethics of discourse also includes the search for an ethical self-understanding that inspired by considerations of George Herbert Mead often puts the subject in relation to a second person, in a perpetual reading process of meaningful gestures for the recognition and resistance to the expectations of others.

We have to emphasize that the achievement of emancipation and political autonomy in its relational bias depends on external components to the subjects, ie, communicative, social, and institutional dimensions. Considered the asymmetries of power and discourse, they have to enable their participation in public life, being respected, understood and valued.

The possible symmetry

A second approach within what might be called the "ethics" of Communication Theories seeks to modify the previous approach in order to find a balance between the messages produced by the media and their receivers no longer thought in terms of a "mass", but as "active receivers" responsible for assigning meanings to messages within a negotiation process rather than in a strictly linear-causal model.

In a first instant, we note in that model a concern to emphasize the characteristics of the receiver, thought not as a "target" of a process, but as a subject to be considered in his historical, political, and social dimensions. In particular, a subject who articulates his experiences and therefore his material and historical conditions of perception with the content of the media, and, why not, with the media themselves.

This second perspective received a considerable acceptance in the field of Communication, particularly from the 1990s (Jacks, 2010; Jacks & Escosteguy, 2005). However, it would be unwise to search in the timeline a homology with any development in terms

of succession or overcome: the asymmetric models continued not only in place but also guided several searches in this field.

Here, the idea of "symmetry" does not mean an institutional equivalence of powers between the mass communication private-owned (or sometimes state-owned) companies, characterized as large conglomerates, and the receiver. This attitude seems to touch the points of resistance and even refusing to media messages within the articulation of meanings, presenting a receiver that is not only before the media but also participates in their meanings.

More than being "protected" or "strengthened" by a research that seeks to report effects, the proposal here aims to understand how the subjects receive and reconstruct media messages without losing the critical bias in relation to them. The subject becomes known as a source of countervailing power identified by theory as a counterpoint to the mass media. Paraphrasing an expression of Martin-Barbero (1997), the receiver in his net of interactions finds the place where the very communication happens, despite all the technical and business apparatus of media.

The receiver ethics does not put him on an institutional equal footing, but assumes that any message of the media will be reconstructed by individuals which will bring new meanings from readings beyond any contracts previously established by the media. The subjective dimension stands out from the perspective of mass, and its ethics is also different.

Under a constellation of influences that range from literary studies to Gramsci, Foucault and the French post-structuralists, the formulation of Cultural Studies is one of the first attempts to bring a new perspective on practical rationality regarding the receivers. If Jauss' studies of literary reception (2004, see also Cruz, 1986) or, going yet beyond, Walter Benjamin's studies (1986) indicated an alternative to thinking receivers as an inalienable part of the process of "work" construction, understood as something that exists to the extent that articulates with a reader/spectator, the Cultural Studies will suggest objectively the prospect not only of a resistance but also of a counter-power.

In the works of some of its founders, as Hoggart (1983) and Thompson (1995), it is possible to find evidence of a receiver ethics emphasized mainly on the work of Hall (1981). Accordingly, subsequent texts by McRobbie (1990) and Lewis (1994) are established as classic ones to indicate forms of cultural consumption and resistance to the media messages at the time of their reworking, or even a critical appropriation of messages (Hebdige, 2000) in the way of contemporary recreations and appropriations (Fiske, 1993a, 1993b).

In the ethics of these theoretical developments, the power of the media is balanced by the power of the links constructed by a multidimensional receiver who will rebuild the contents of the media from their political, historical, and affective experiences. Both spaces of power intersect, complement and challenge each other in the construction of hegemony and resistance in a dynamic balance, then resulting from the identified symmetry, far from being static in any circumnstance.

In Latin America there are a number of developments according to this point of view objectified in the various appropriations of the so-called "Theory of Mediation" elaborated by Martin-Barbero (1997) in his initial study originally titled "From the Media to Mediations". In its further developments, the book somehow paved the way for the asymmetric perspective "power of the media/vulnerability of the receiver" could be translated into "power of the media/mediations of the receiver", as a construction of meanings and significances.

The work of Lopes, Borelli, and Resende (2004); Baccega (2006); Jacks (1999), Escosteguy (2001) and Jacks and Escosteguy (2005), among many others, suggest this trend by articulating the receiver within a discursive frame in which he is the protagonist - but an equally multidimensional protagonist within a perspective in which his multiple linkages, such as gender, age, social class, affection and reasons are thought of as indispensable items in the formation not only of his status as receiver, but of an autonomous subject. Hence the ethical perspective of this theoretical discourse offers a conception of political subject apart from the first one: in the place of the atomized individual in a mass there is an individual belonging to a community in which he can discuss and elaborate the meanings. In this discursive process, he builds relationally his autonomy and emancipation.

This opens space for the third perspective, the ethics of a productive receiver.

Intersections between producers and receivers within a culture of participation

A theoretical dimension of communication in particular advocates the practice of co-production of discourses and meanings between media agents and social actors: that one linked to collaborative practices of production of information and discursive construction of events in the virtual space.

The redefinition of epistemological alternatives of Communication intersected with the context of digital media and cyberculture is one of the reasons of an extensive discussion according to considerations by Felinto (2011), Pimenta (2011), Rüdiger (2011), and Ferreira (2012), among others. A timeline setback can also indicates the contributions of Lankshare (2003), Trivinho (2003), and Santaella (2003). The shortcomings postulated in relation to the sender-message-receiver model, already pointed out in past decades (see Beltrán, 1978), reappear when the Theory of Communication articulates with the empirical scenarios of cyberculture.

Considering that the discussion about these relations is still in development, it is possible to observe in research produced by researchers in several approaches a transposition and alteration of ethical issues suggested in previous sections, in order to formulate further issues. Would it make sense to think of "symmetry" and "asymmetry" between one and the other pole in digital environments and in cyberspace, to the extent that it is debatable that there is a "sender-receiver" relation? And could one indeed propose the idea of "poles" within a "participatory" culture, according to Jenkins (2008), in which the field of languages exceeds the monopoly of some types of communication? To

the extent that, according to an argument by Shirky (2008), each individual is a media producer or a part of a core constitutive of a "collective intelligence" - a famous expression by Lévy (1999) -, it is questionable whether there would be differences to be thought.

Finally, one has to consider the forms of association and civic and/ or political engagement in online social networks, as suggested by Merkle (2010), Papacharissi (2009), Marques (2011), Recuero (2012), and Altheman (2012), among others. They could be understood as forms of rearticulation of power, discourses and actions in society.

In this sense, the theories that discuss Communication in digital environments seem to replace a dichotomy "symmetry/asymmetry" by a dynamic one, this time guided by "connection and disconnection" between discursive spheres and actors/interlocutors, or by a specific form of intersection and articulation. The messages of the mass media which continue to exist are not only "reworked" or "processed" by receivers located and locatable within a given space and time, but they are redone with new meanings, commented and reconfigured in discursive contexts absolutely different from their production. Moreover, these productions are shared in the digital media space, gaining impact and other directions that escape due to the structure of the network. It is worth to check works by Lemos and Santaella (2011), Leão (1999), and Recuero (2008) about the control of the mass media.

Thus, "media", "producers" and "receivers" join in a multimodal way into numerous "nodes" of the net, in which relations of power adapted to a rhizomatic interaction structure (cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1999) spread without necessarily being constitutive of other resonances in the same direction. To some extent, this is the argument of Siegel (2005) when he analyses the uses of machines and digital nets.

For example, the "fan culture" indicates not only reappropriations of Cultural Industry products, but sometimes shows the existence of very personal recreations towards directions fundamentally opposed to those of their producers, as suggested by the texts of Jenkins (2006, 2008), Santaella (2003; 2005; 2013), Braga (2009), Amaral (2010) or Auxílio, Martin & Marques (2013).

Moreover, the Internet interaction itself does not get away from the vicissitudes, demands and constraints of the society in which it is inserted. Here, we have the impositions of a market economy in which each space can be an object of appropriation by the capital in its multiple ways. The examination of the Internet political economy and digital media, as well as the cognitive elements of social differentiation, is able to highlight another ethics. In some cases, if it is not possible to make a complete census of all these approaches, it is worth summarizing them when they are indicative of an ethics next to the asymmetric perspective indicated.

The political problem related to the control and regulation, but also the criticism to the inclusion indicated by Cazeloto (2008) or Brittos (2010), among others, can be considered as part of an ethical thinking that understands internet in terms of conflict of powers and therefore it is submitted to a critical instance towards the receiver. Similarly, research on surveillance, transparency and visibility of individuals on the internet, topics studied in Bruno (2003), Sibila (2005) and Antoun (2008) works suggest a position contrary to the "strengthening" of users/receivers/interagents in virtual environments.

The dilution of borders between the private and public spheres according to Papacharissi (2008), as well as the forms of solitude generated by/in digital environments (Turkle, 2005) imply a scenario in which we note a weakening of political and social ties.

The alleged equality established between senders and receivers through social nets also hides inequalities and asymmetries that materialize mainly in the discursive design of nets to conversation and discussion. In the universe of cyberculture, although receivers are considered producers not only of information, narratives, cultural products and databases, but also of their own media and broadcast channels, the social uses and productions of the media have to overcome barriers ranging from the limitations imposed by discursive architectures of platforms designed by few people until the constraints associated with institutional, political, and market pressures (maintaining vehicles via digital marketing).

We have always to bear in mind that the network communication is mediated by software, mediation agents, and conditioned by protocols that define the contents and formats of interaction. The asymmetry between interagents in virtual spaces of dialogue puts in doubt whether speech acts and communicative freedom are minimally balanced in interactions between those who dominate or understand the codes and those that do not understand them (Silveira, 2009). Such imbalances and constraints on relations and opportunities for access to interconnected network hamper the equal participation of individuals and the very existence of online public spheres.

Some caution to establish online spaces as public spheres derives from the fact that different types of discursive architecture of online spaces have both the potential to constraint and facilitate the opening, the use of reason, the cultural creativity, as well as self-organization and solidarity. What is perceived on screen in online conversational exchanges is the questioning of hierarchical and consensual orders in which the speech of each one and the place occupied by people are defined in terms of their ownership and adaptation to a previously defined function (Altheman *et al.*, 2013).

Associated with this issue, there has been a resurgence of perspectives of institutional surveillance, forms of control and detection of the actions of the individual in the proliferation of what Agamben (2012) called "apparatuses". Thus, the citizen would be relatively unprotected in the environment of digital media.

Finally, but perhaps with less political emphasis, a theoretical and ethical perspective into the cyberculture and digital media postulates the existence of a receiver clearly inept to join or manage such environments, becoming an easy prey to his own inability, as suggested by Keen (2008). To some extent it would be possible to observe in this last item two opposing perspectives. If in ethical terms there is a theoretical novelty - the extinction of a sender-receiver polarization -, considering this user able to generate content, at the same time the continuity and transformation of capitalism and the proliferation of apparatuses is present in the theoretical field as a part of a reflection in which the powers spread without dissolution, and the user would not be far away from the conception of a perspective of mass communication. And this can be considered paradoxical.

Final remarks

The intersection between the ethical and the epistemological instances under the theories of Communication can not be immediately captured by specific studies of each part. Then, they use to be studied separately. Nevertheless, it is stated an opportunity to regain the perspective of Communication theories as an objectification of a reflective and conceptual discourse on the "field of experience" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1999). So, both instances are not separated, as well as the entire production of discourses, from the specific conditions of their origins, mediated by other circumnstances of institutional and epistemological appropriation and reappropriation. The existence of what could be called "policy" to define the conceptual space studied by Communication theories (Ferreira, 2003), as well as the conditions of its institutionalization (Martino, 2012) suggest one of the premises explored in this text.

Here we presented the perspective that the theoretical discourses on Communication are related more or less explicitly to ethical assumptions derived not only from their epistemological links but also from propositions. In particular, we highlighted the propositions concerning the relations between the "media", an elastic definition explored in its various forms over time, and individuals and communities who, in some way, will be linked to those medias. The historical and social conditions, as well as the epistemological and conceptual ones derived from this connection suggest analysable inferences. This text was structured from them.

Ranging in perspective with regard to relations between senders, media, and receivers (in a perspective previous to the digital media), or to the prospect of reworking and participation in the case of digital and interactive internet environment, Communication theories seem to be designed not only as a reflection on the conceptual and methodological elements to understand a phenomenon, but also as a specific normativity that somehow proposes a previous and often underlying protocol related to how they should observe these relations between environments, media, and society.

In other words, Communication theories, after electing their objects, methods and concepts, show which will be the ways of understanding proposed in relation to people and communities in their practices and experiences, mediated or not by the media.

The conceptual identification of the individual in front of a screen (subsequently inserted in a restricted context for several mediations) - ranging for example from "mass", "receiver", "spectator", "user" and "fan" - does not indicate only modes of epistemological appropriation of an interaction phenomenon (more controlled in some conception, freer in another), but also the ethical perspectives of these modalities in the space; not an ethics of Communication, but the perspective of thinking an ethics for the theories of Communication - not necessarily beyond the epistemological instance, but in its articulation.

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