

Editorial 2

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Female roles, contributions and invisibilities in the field of communication

Roles, aportaciones e invisibilidades femeninas en el campo de la investigación en comunicación

The field of communication's history continues to shape its present, just as histories and stories we write in the present continue to reshape our understanding of the past and define the conditions for our futures. This special issue illustrates those truths as they manifest themselves through gender and both the historical and contemporary marginalization of women in the communication field and in mediated public life. To understand how they play out, we need to investigate specific institutional locations and national contexts, trace the transnational movements of researchers and ideas, and think comparatively and globally about patterns of gender-based exclusion and hard-won battles for voice and place in the patriarchal, heteronormative academic and public cultures that have set the terms for opportunity, recognition, and success for women.

The international history of women in communication research has yet to be written, but we have pieces of the broader story. We know that in the United States before the 1950s, there were dozens and perhaps scores of women who conducted media research at Columbia University and elsewhere, though they rarely received the credit they deserved (Ashcraft and Simonson, 2016; Rowland and Simonson, 2014; Dorsten, 2012 and 2016). Herta Herzog is the most famous figure in this group, whose transnational journey from Austria to the U.S. and back saw her do the bulk of her work in non-university, commercial contexts (Klaus and Seethaler, 2016; ver también Fleck, 2021). The opportunity structure for women to secure faculty positions only began to open meaningfully in the 1970s, thanks to the organized work of the women's movement, though we know about women in Germany and elsewhere who successfully fought for a place for themselves before then (Thiele, 2016). Second-wave feminists in the academy formed women's caucuses in professional communication associations in the 1970s and '80s, and by the '90s were beginning historical recoveries of forgotten women and celebrations of those who had found success (Signorelli, 1996; Rodríguez, Magallanes, Marroquín, & Rincón, 2021). Paralleling those feminist histories were critical analyses of the gendered inequalities that continued to define the contemporary field, making for entwined efforts to resist the patriarchies of the academic present while rewriting the histories that dominated it (Rakow, 1986; Jansen, 1993).

Despite these efforts, women's stories, contributions and experiences tend to disappear from the historiography and textbooks of the field. There are countless erasures, false attributions and reappropriations: Herta Herzog pioneered the use of the focused interview but Robert K. Merton has been recognized as its "father"; Else Frenkel-Brunswick co-authored a classic text of the 20th century, *The authoritarian personality*, but Theodor Adorno is frequently listed as sole author; Mae Huetting in the 1940s wrote the first doctoral thesis on the political economy of communication, but she is rarely remembered (García-Jiménez, in press)... We could go on and the list would be endless. Even worse, we could think that these false attributions, invisibilities and exclusions are a thing of the past. If only. Despite the remarkable improvement of women in science, leadership, prestige, intellectual authority and credibility as sources of knowledge, there continue to be pronounced gender biases. In the

Spanish case, for instance, the MAPCOM project has shown a 30% gap between men and women in the leadership of collaborative investigations and research groups (Lozano-Ascencio, Gaitán-Moya, Caffarel-Serra, & Piñuel Raigada, 2020; Tur-Viñes & Núñez-Gómez, 2018). This gap also occurs at the international level, where women academics remain a minority on the editorial boards of higher-impact journals in communication (Goyanes and De Marcos, 2020). The same is true of access to university professorships, an area in which women account for just around 20% of positions in the global north (E.U., U.S., Canada or UK) (Diezmann and Grieshaber, 2019). The numbers are clear, as is the scientific evidence accumulated to date. Female researchers are less frequently included as a source of information; they receive fewer awards, recognitions and bibliographic citations, and they get lower teaching evaluations; and their contributions are often ignored or perceived to be of lower quality (Knobloch-Westerwick, Glynn and Hugu, 2013).

These phenomena are not anecdotal or the result of chance or bad luck. They reflect a fundamental devaluation of women as scientific and cognitive subjects, with roots extending back to Descartes's *Rules for the direction of the mind* (Lloyd, 1979). Why did this all occur? Better, what can we do to understand the past in all its complexity; not lose the feminine potential of the present; and relaunch a scientific future for communication that is innovative and pluralistic? With these questions as our *leitmotiv*, we present this special journal section, one of the first in the Ibero-American and Anglo-Saxon worlds dedicated to the analysis of the roles and contributions of women and often-invisible female points of view in the discipline of communication. The papers in this special section clearly contribute to these broad and necessary efforts.

The article by M. Cruz Tornay-Márquez, "Gender and media: Contributions to communication with a gender perspective from feminism and its influence on equality policies," outlines the genealogy of gender communication studies and identifies the researchers who founded this field between the 1960s and 1980s. In so doing, the essay excavates the work that created the conditions of possibility for the valuable historical and epistemological projects that make up this special section.

The historical work continues with the essays by Rafiza Luziani Varão Ribeiro Carvalho ("A first look at the work of Dorothy Blumenstock Jones") and Yamila Heram and Santiago Gándara ("Visibility and recognition of pioneer women in the Latin American communication field: An analysis of the trajectory of Mabel Piccini"). These investigations reconstruct the careers of two women of great scientific and intellectual significance. The U.S. researcher, Dorothy Jones, who made important contributions to the quantitative content analysis of cinema, and the Argentinean Mabel Piccini, a key thinker of Latin American critical thought, are both figures whose recovery enriches our understanding of the field from positionalities beyond those of well-known and widely-cited men.

Beyond these important genealogical projects, three other essays investigate female visibility and leadership in the academy and the media in contemporary society. Francisco Segado-Boj, Juan José Prieto-Gutiérrez and Raquel Quevedo-Redondo's essay, "The Matilda effect in the Spanish and Latin American co-authorship network," highlights how patterns of authorship in top journals assign female researchers to secondary positions. Meanwhile, Virginia Medina-Ávila and Rosa-Azucena Mecalco-López approach visibility and influence in a different sphere through their analysis of female voices broadcast over Mexican radio, "Symbolic violence and gender inequity in radio advertising in Mexico." Those two studies of women in contemporary science and the social environment connect thematically to the project undertaken by Sonia-Aranzazu Ferruz-González, Leticia Rodríguez-Fernández and Juana Rubio-Romero, "Visibility of female leadership on Twitter: An approach to the Top 100 ranking of women leaders in Spain."

In summary, these six papers recover forgotten histories that have invisibly shaped the current state of our discipline. And they also develop present stories that help us to understand the past, and undoubtedly, to establish the epistemic conditions for a better future.

We do not want to close without thanking the journal's editors, Carmen Marta Lazo and Victoria Tur-Viñes, and the publisher, Jesús Segarra-Saavedra, for their guidance throughout the process and for their support for a topic as little explored as this one. Our sincere thanks also to the authors and the external reviewers for their vital contributions to advance greater integration, pluralism, innovation, and epistemic justice in the field of communication. We are convinced that this special section is a valuable contribution for moving ahead further in these directions.

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