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THE HYBRIDIZATION OF THE SPANISH COMMUNICATION FACULTIES: ECONOMIC CRISIS, DIGITALIZATION, AND NEW ACADEMIC APPROACH

LA COMUNICACIÓN COMO ESTUDIO TRANSVERSAL: EVOLUCIÓN DE LAS FACULTADES ESPECIALIZADAS EN ESPAÑA

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RESUMEN

La transformación digital ha provocado una verdadera revolución en la industria de la comunicación. Este nuevo escenario ha originado la aparición de nuevos profesionales polivalentes y versátiles, que incorporan competencias humanísticas y técnicas, y que deben tener una visión global y una formación interdisciplinar. Además, la comunicación en sí se ha transformado en un eje de estudio transversal. En consecuencia, las facultades de Comunicación españolas han tenido que actualizar su formación con vistas a satisfacer la demanda del mundo profesional, cada vez más cambiante. A su vez, la crisis económica de 2008 aceleró esa transformación y se hace necesario que los planes de estudio estén actualizados para fomentar la empleabilidad. Este artículo presenta el mapa actual de facultades de Comunicación en España, analiza el porqué de las denominaciones de sus centros, cada vez más alejadas de las que adoptaron las primeras facultades en 1971 y se centra en las facultades híbridas, aquellas que anuncian en su concepción la fusión de la Comunicación con otra área de conocimiento. Mediante la revisión de su oferta académica, de las líneas de investigación y de la entrevista a sus decanos se pretende averiguar si el nuevo posicionamiento favorece la formación de los nuevos comunicadores.

Palabras clave: Facultades de Comunicación, Universidad española, Hibridación, Digitalización, Crisis económica, Perfiles profesionales en Comunicación, Perfiles polivalentes, Interdisciplinariedad, Transversalidad.

ABSTRACT

The digital transformation has caused an unprecedented revolution in the communication industry. This new scenario has led to the appearance of new multipurpose and versatile professional profiles, that now incorporate humanistic and technical skills. These skills have been influenced by current technological developments and include a global vision as well as an interdisciplinary approach. Therefore, the Communication faculties have had to update their education programs to satisfy the demand of the professional world, which has become more and more changeable. At the same time, the digital transformation was boosted by the 2008 economic crisis, and it was necessary to update study programs to promote the employability of graduates. This paper presents the current map of Communication faculties in Spain and analyzes the reason for the denominations given to these centers, which today are quite distant from the original ones in 1971, and it places a special focus on hybrid faculties, those that have in their name the fusion of Communication with another area of knowledge. By reviewing its academic offer and areas of research, the article intends to find out if the new positioning helps to adapt the training communicators receive to the needs of the current society.

Keywords: Communication Faculties, Spanish Higher Education, Hybridization, Digitalization, Economic crisis, Professional Communication profiles, Multipurpose profiles, Interdisciplinarity, Transversality.

A COMUNICAÇÃO COMO ESTUDO TRANSVERSAL: EVOLUÇÃO DAS FACULDADES ESPECIALIZADAS NA ESPANHA

RESUMO

A transformação digital provocou uma verdadeira revolução na indústria da comunicação. Este novo cenário fez surgir novos profissionais polivalentes e versáteis, que incorporam competências humanísticas e técnicas, e que devem ter uma visão global e uma formação interdisciplinar. Além disso, a própria comunicação tornou-se um eixo de estudo transversal. Conseqüentemente, as faculdades de comunicação espanholas tiveram que atualizar sua formação para atender às demandas do mundo profissional que cada vez mais está em constante mudança. Por sua vez, a crise econômica de 2008 acelerou esta transformação e é necessário que os planos de estudos sejam atualizados para promover a empregabilidade. Este artigo apresenta o mapa atual das faculdades de comunicação na Espanha, analisa o porquê das denominações dos seus centros, cada vez mais distantes daquelas adotadas pelas primeiras faculdades em 1971 e enfoca as faculdades híbridas, aquelas que anunciam em sua concepção a fusão da Comunicação com outra área do conhecimento. Através da revisão da sua oferta acadêmica, das linhas de investigação e da entrevista com os seus reitores, pretende-se saber se o novo posicionamento favorece a formação de novos comunicadores.

Palavras chave: Faculdades de Comunicação, Universidade Espanhola, Hibridação, Digitalização, Crise econômica, Perfis profissionais em Comunicação, Perfis polivalentes, Interdisciplinaridade, Transversalidade.

Translation by **Paula González** (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, Venezuela)

1. INTRODUCTION

The first stage of communication education in Spain dates back to 1926, with the foundation by Herrera Oria of the School of Journalism of *El Debate*, which ceased its activity after the Civil War and resumed its mission of training information professionals in 1960, when it became the School of Journalism of the Church (Cantavella, 2003). 11 years later, in 1971, the faculties of Communication were born in Spain with the creation of the first centers and, since then, studies in the area have undergone different transformations.

Cebrián (2012) summarizes the first 40 years of the history of Communication faculties as positive if one looks at the power of attracting students, the increase and consolidation of the teaching staff, and the multiplication of research.

If we look at the last decade, when the 50th anniversary of the faculties in the area is celebrated, we discover a paradigm shift in Communication education, motivated by digitization. The arrival of the internet and social networks totally alters the use and consumption of information; The appearance of digital media and the conversion of networks as alternative channels of information, entertainment, and advertising coincides with the change in the business model of traditional media and with the reflection on how to establish new market systems (Villafañe et al., 2020).

Likewise, Communication has become a general subject for other degrees and an interdisciplinary competence that demands comprehensive education strategies (Morcela et al., 2020).

Authors such as Ackerman (1988), Field (1994), Torres (1996), and Carvajal (2010) explain that interdisciplinarity benefits students since it develops cognitive capacity and improves learning skills; fosters flexible, critical, and divergent thinking; acquired knowledge is accessed; integration in changing contexts and the possibility of acting in the face of diversity is worked on; the ability to synthesize and assimilate concepts is improved; intuition, creativity, and originality are trained; confidence and risk acceptance grow, and sensitivity and flexibility are favored.

Since Communication is an area of knowledge necessarily attached to linguistic, social, and cultural realities and technological changes, hybridization with other areas, a fact that does not have to diminish the strength of the main discipline, may prepare future professionals to live in a changing world and make them capable of analyzing the circumstances and promoting coexistence (Flores-Vivar, 2006).

The network is consolidated as a window for the consumption of content and this fosters a new scenario for the communication business in which the industry has revised its analog routines and has reinvented the processes of creation, production, and marketing of products (Saavedra et al., 2018). Access to and consumption of content has been transformed and this has implications at a cultural, sociological,

economic, and educational level, which is why Communication faculties have to rethink their structure in the context of big data, algorithms, robotic learning, transmedia production, and multi-media diffusion.

We live, as López-García and Vizoso (2021) point out, in the digital times of the third millennium, where a metamorphosis of communication marked by technology is observed. The new communication environment, supported by continuous digital innovation, provides opportunities for new communication professionals who must establish their central role in the network society and achieve media sustainability.

This situation, in its beginning, coincides with a strong economic crisis and the fall of the traditional advertising system in 2008, which also causes a rethinking of Communication studies to promote employability. The sector needs, for economic reasons, polyvalent, versatile profiles, capable of working independently and combining humanistic and technical skills (Herdero and Reyes, 2016). But, as a result of digitization, it also requires professionals with statistical, computer, and programming skills.

Journalism, for example, cannot ignore growing areas such as data journalism and derived sections such as visualization or fact-checking (Saavedra et al., 2020). Advertising cannot forget the measurement, monitoring, and analysis of big data (Papí-Gálvez, 2015), nor techniques created for a more direct approach to the audience by brands such as native advertising (Zomeño and Blay-Arráez, 2021) and branded content (Olivares and Gago, 2021). Likewise, Audiovisual Communication, to speak of the three classic areas of Communication, cannot underestimate the study of the audience either, since digitization has brought with it the empowerment of the public in the communication process (González-Neira and Quintas-Froufe, 2020), or other areas of job opportunity such as app design, the creation of virtual and 3D scenarios, or digital marketing related to the new exhibition windows (Saavedra et al., 2018).

On the other hand, the creation of interdisciplinary work groups in the business field requires graduates with transversal skills and creativity, capable of facing decision-making in a differential way (Perlado, 2017). Workers with professional skills (teamwork, leadership, negotiation, etc.), social skills (empathy, active listening, or communication skills), and personal skills (respect, service attitude, among others) to successfully carry out their work (Zamora et al., 2018).

Flores (2014) argues that media reality requires a conceptual approach between the communicator and the information technology professional. And Peg (2018), for her part, claims that the challenge of digital education at a general level goes through the combination of disciplines from the STEM area (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and HECI (Humanity, Ethics, Creativity, and imagination).

Very much in line, at the 2018 World Economic Forum summit, the concept of digital humanism was coined to determine the present and future need for professionals who, with a very broad cultural base, are capable of using and applying the new digital tools and languages in their job performance.

For his part, De-Moragas, already in 2005, indicated that one of the causes of the formative poverty of Communication studies at the time was the excessive attention to media centrality and called for a commitment to deep and hybrid training in Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as in the skills demanded by the labor market.

2. OBJECTIVES

This article intends to observe the development and evolution of the Communication faculties in Spain and explain why the denominations of these centers have moved away from the original denomination that the first institutions received back in 1971, with the creation of the faculties of Information Sciences from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and la Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona.

This general objective is broken down into a series of specific objectives: 1) to study the impact of the economic crisis, the change in the media model and its digitization in Communication studies, and, by extension, the structure of the faculties that teach related degrees; 2) present the national offer of Communication faculties to determine those that follow a classic denomination and those that have found their positioning in hybridization with other content areas; 3) find out if the hybrid faculties present a more versatile academic offer and train for different professional opportunities, adapted to the transversality suggested by the professional market, and 4) inquire about the economic, structural, or academic motivations that have driven this decision in the faculties.

3. METHODOLOGY

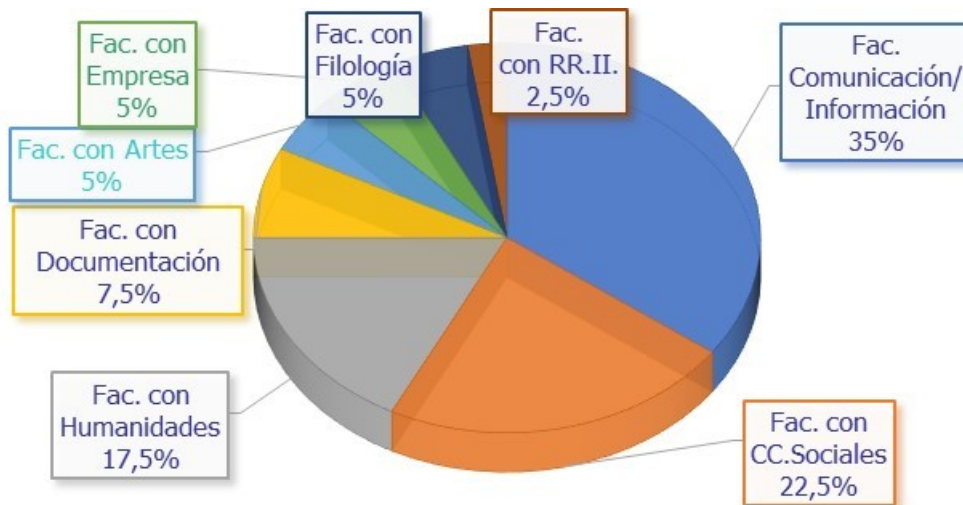
The study will follow three phases. The first of them, of a descriptive nature and based on the study of secondary sources that help us to contextualize the studied phenomenon, will try to present how digitization, together with other factors, has encouraged training in Communication from a more interdisciplinary approach.

The second phase, of a quantitative nature, aims to present the current map of Communication faculties in Spain, based on the Registry of Universities, Centers, and Degrees of the Ministry of Universities. The main search engine has been to locate the centers in whose denomination the term "communication" appeared. The first record had a total of 73 entries, from which the Faculties of Telecommunications, technological institutes, and departments were eliminated because they were not part of the object of study.

After this filtering, we find 38 faculties, to which we add the two centers that maintain the classic name of Faculty of Information Sciences.

Table 1.

Spanish Communication Faculties



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the RUCT.

Of the 40 faculties, 14 follow the traditional denomination so they are outside the study sample since we will focus on those institutions that merge Communication with other disciplines. These centers are: Universidad de Málaga, Rey Juan Carlos, Internacional de Catalunya, Francisco de Vitoria, Santiago de Compostela, Autónoma de Barcelona, A Coruña, Sevilla, Navarra, Pontificia de Salamanca, Castilla-La Mancha, Pompeu Fabra, Complutense de Madrid, and Barcelona. Our study sample is made up of 26 centers.

Table 2.

Hybrid Communication Faculties in Spain

| Faculties | University | Denomination | Total | % |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------|-------|
| Communication and Social Sciences | Internacional de la Empresa Cádiz | Faculty of Applied Social Sciences and Communication | 9 | 34,61 |
| | La Laguna | Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication | | |
| | País Vasco | Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication | | |
| | Vigo | Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication | | |
| | Católica San Antonio | Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication | | |
| | Europea de Madrid | Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication | | |
| | Valladolid | Faculty of Social, Legal, and Communication Sciences | | |
| | San Jorge | Faculty of Communication and Social Sciences | | |
| Communication and Humanities | IE | Faculty of Human, Social, and Communication Sciences | 7 | 26,92 |
| | Camilo José Cela | Faculty of Communication and Humanities | | |
| | Abat Oliba CEU | Faculty of Communication, Education, and Humanities | | |
| | San Pablo-CEU | Faculty of Humanities and Communication | | |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|-----------|-------------|
| | Cardenal Herrera-CEU Burgos Carlos III de Madrid | Sciences Faculty of Humanities and Communication Sciences Faculty of Humanities and Communication Sciences Faculty of Humanities, Communication, and Documentation | | |
| Communication and Documentation | Extremadura Granada Murcia | Faculty of Documentation, and Communication Sciences Faculty of Communication and Documentation Faculty of Communication and Documentation | 3 | 11,53 |
| Communication and Arts | Internacional Valenciana Nebrija | Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Communication Faculty of Communication and Arts | 2 | 7,69 |
| Communication and Business | Vic Internacional de La Rioja | Faculty of Business and Communication Faculty of Business and Communication | 2 | 7,69 |
| Communication and Philology | Barcelona València (Estudi General) | Faculty of Philology and Communication Faculty of Philology, Translation, and Communication | 2 | 7,69 |
| Communication and International Relations | Ramón Llull | Facultat de Comunicació i Relacions Internacionals | 1 | 3,84 |
| Total | | | 26 | 100% |

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the RUCT.

We proceed to the analysis of the content of the web pages based on a research pattern with four fields of significance:

- Structure (departments)
- Degree offer (degrees, double degrees that are born from the hybridization of different areas of knowledge, professional opportunities)
- Master's degree offer (degrees, identification of new areas within postgraduate courses)
- Research (groups, lines, and projects following the integration of areas)

To complement the research and investigate the possible motivations that lead the universities to propose these faculties, the third phase of the research, of a qualitative nature, proposes the technique of in-depth interviews with a representation of the deans of the centers that we are analyzing.

In the selection of interviewees, the representation of men and women, as well as public and private universities, has been sought. Likewise, a selection criterion has had to do with the trajectory of the dean because a broad vision can help us understand the evolution of the faculties.

Table 3.

Experts interviewed in each area

| Faculty | University | Type | Dean | Cod |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------|------------------------------------|-----|
| Communication and Social Sciences | Cádiz | Public | Dr. Jesús Rodríguez Torrejón | E1 |
| Communication and Humanities | San Pablo-CEU | Private | Dr. María Solano Altaba | E2 |
| Communication and Documentation | Granada | Public | Dr. Benjamín Vargas Quesada | E3 |
| Communication and Arts | Nebrija | Private | Dr. Marta Perlado Lamo de Espinosa | E4 |
| Communication and | Internacional | Private | Dr. Pablo Cardona Soriano. | E5 |

| | | | | |
|---|-------------|---------|---|----|
| Business | de La Rioja | | Recomienda la participación de la Dr. Eva Asensio, Vice Dean | |
| Communication and Philology | Barcelona | Public | Dr. Jesús Javier Velaza Frías. Recommended the participation of Dr. Joan G. Burguera, Vice Dean of Teaching and Communication | E6 |
| Communication and International Relations | Ramón Llull | Private | Dr. Josep M. Carbonell Abelló | E7 |

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the RUCT.

The interviews have followed a semi-structured questionnaire on different axes: origin, evolution, and development of the Faculty; hybridization motivations; positioning and differentials brought about by the merger of areas and the evolution of Communication studies, and required profiles. It should be noted that the qualitative sample does not seek statistical but structural representativeness, since what it seeks to understand are the different social meanings and relationships with the researched phenomenon, not the extrapolation of data to the universe (Rubio and Perlado, 2015).

4. RESULTS

Of the 40 faculties of Communication, 26, 65%, have merged the discipline under study with other areas of knowledge.

Although we find different denominations, if we follow the catalog of disciplines that make up the areas of knowledge described by the National Agency for Quality Assessment (ANECA by its acronym in Spanish), all the centers could be listed in two categories: Communication and Social Sciences and Communication with Arts and Humanities.

4.1. Communication, discipline and surname in Social Sciences

Within what we can call hybrid faculties, the bulk is concentrated in the field of Social Sciences: nine faculties combine Social Sciences and Communication in their denomination, three unite Communication studies with Documentation, two add them to Business, and one unites the discipline under study with International Relations. We can study this hybridization in a differentiated way or group them under the field of Social Sciences, which would mean that 57.6% of the hybridized faculties are represented in this group (37.5% of all Spanish Communication faculties).

Let's start with the first group, the faculties that combine Social Sciences and Communication in their denomination. Regarding their structure, there is little representation of departments linked to Communication and, likewise, most of the titles in the area are a minority within a very varied offer.

The field of Communication that is most exploited is Advertising, since this degree is the most offered, being present in 7 of the 12 faculties (58.3%). It would seem logical if it had been verified that within the faculties the most exploited position was that of Business, but two trends are visualized: faculties that promote two areas of knowledge, Communication and a second discipline (Tourism/Business in the case of the Universidad de Cádiz, Sociology in La Laguna, Political Science in País Vasco, or

Public Management in Vigo), and multidisciplinary faculties that include very diverse disciplines. We must add that four faculties teach the three classic degrees in the field of Communication, 33.3% of the sample (San Jorge, Europea de Madrid, Católica de Murcia, and País Vasco).

In general, hybridization is not encouraged in terms of academic offerings -bachelor's and master's degrees-, nor in terms of new professional opportunities or research projects. There is a minority of double degrees in different but very complementary fields such as Advertising and Tourism in Cádiz and Valladolid. Also, new degrees were born from this hybridized positioning such as Communication for social purposes in Valladolid or Translation and intercultural communication in San Jorge.

Three faculties unite Communication with Documentation and in all three the two disciplines are present at the departmental level. The Communication title with the greatest presence, being offered in the three centers (Extremadura, Granada, and Murcia), is Audiovisual Communication. In the universities of Extremadura and Murcia, there are hybrid double degrees: Journalism and Information and Documentation. In all three cases, there are master's degrees that structure their contents on the two axes, such as Information Management in Social Networks and digital products on the Internet in Extremadura, Scientific Information and Communication in Granada, or Mobile Communication and Digital Content in Murcia.

Likewise, hybrid lines of research coexist in the three centers. It should be remembered that Documentation and Communication Sciences have a shared path; In fact, some faculties, such as the one in Murcia, began by being called the Faculty of Library Science and Documentation and after offering the second cycles of the Communication careers and incorporating the complete programs later on, they changed their nomenclature. This shared trajectory causes the combination of researchers in different projects or the existence of indexed journals such as *El Profesional de la Información* which, as stated in its description, is a publication on communication, information, indicators, libraries, and information technologies. Going back to the analysis of the three faculties, Extremadura presents as a hybrid line of research "New technologies and media digitization processes", Granada has "Communication, Education, and Documentation", and Murcia has "Semiodoc" or "Social communication, Culture, and Technology".

For their part, the two faculties that combine Business and Communication in their names follow different strategies. The Universidad de Vic offers a mixture of qualifications not only from these fields but also from the Education area. It offers the three classic bachelor's degrees and, on the other hand, there are no degrees related to Communication in the master's degree. It does not present double degrees that link different disciplines, nor are new areas resulting from the hybridization of profiles observed in the catalog of professional opportunities of the degrees.

The UNIR, on the other hand, has an offer very focused on the business field and, in fact, the Communication degrees are the most oriented to this vision (Degree in Advertising and Public Relations and Marketing). Although it promotes hybridization in doubles such as ADE and Marketing, it could present a more ambitious combined

offer. Curiously, it has a general degree in Communication, but it is not located within this center but in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Finally, the faculty that combines Communication and International Relations (Ramón Llull) has a clear commitment to hybridization and, in fact, the resulting professional profiles are much more transversal. It presents, for example, two simple degrees that in themselves include two areas of Communication: A degree in Journalism and Corporate Communication and a Degree in Advertising, PR, and Marketing. It also has double degrees that link the two areas present in the name of the faculty, such as the Double Degree in Journalism and Corporate Communication and International Relations. It even presents an innovative Degree in Global Communication Management, born from the fusion of the two areas of knowledge and the result of the globalization of communication. Although the postgraduate offer respects this hybridization less, there are research projects that combine researchers from different fields.

4.2. The classical integration of Communication with Humanities and Art as a new positioning based on creativity

The fusion of Communication with Humanities is consolidated. For example, the Universidad CEU San Pablo collects this denomination since the creation of its communication studies, with the approval of the Faculty in 1993 (RUCT, 2021), although the teaching of Communication studies dates back to 1933, when El Debate, the first School of Journalism, was founded.

Six other faculties have followed this path. But, four other centers hybridize Communication with other humanistic disciplines, such as Art (two faculties) and Philology (two others). In these cases, hybridization is very attractive because, as pointed out in the theoretical framework, language and culture are fundamental to communicative competence.

The total of Communication faculties that merge their studies with Humanities represents 42.3% of the total hybrid centers and 27.5% of the total Communication faculties.

In the case of faculties with Humanities, there is a dominant presence of Communication in the departmental structure. The degree with the most representation given its connection with the field of art and culture is the Degree in Audiovisual Communication, present in 5 of the 7 faculties (71.4%).

Regarding the hybridization of degrees, professional profiles, and research projects, we find different levels.

At Universidad Camilo José Cela there is no hybridization between Communication and Humanities, in fact, the offer is more geared towards Social Sciences (Law, Criminology, Security). Abat Oliva has both areas, but there is no apparent connection between them, although Communication studies do hybridize with others in Social Sciences, for example, with the double degree in Journalism and Political Science, being the second degree from another faculty. Carlos III presents double

degrees that merge the disciplines of the faculty (Journalism and Humanities) and new degrees born from this hybridization: Science, technology, and humanities or Cultural Studies. One more step is taken by CEU, both San Pablo and Cardenal Herrera, which presents a complete offer and hybrid double degrees between the degrees in Humanities and Communication, such as History and Journalism or Humanities and Audiovisual Communication, but also between degrees in other areas such as Journalism and International Relations or Law and Advertising and PR. Burgos, although it does not have a hybrid offer in bachelor's degrees, it does advance the previous ones in postgraduate degrees, offering a master's degree that combines Communication and Humanities (Heritage and Communication); Additionally, it continues this line in the field of research, with two groups in "Communication, dissemination, and advertising of culture and heritage" and "Shows and audiovisual culture".

IE University, for its part, abandons the classic offer of Communication degrees and opts for the STEM+HECI profile which, as we mentioned in the initial part of this research, involves defending the education of a highly qualified professional in the exploitation of technologies and big data but that has a solid humanistic base that makes it possible to interpret and transmit this information. Thus, it divides its bachelor's and master's degree offerings into three areas: Communication and consumer, Digital technology and Data Science, and People, behavior, and transformation.

With a similar approach to the Anglo-Saxon School of Visual Arts, with a long tradition, the faculties that hybridize Communication with the Arts are born, being creativity and the ability to tell stories -of an informative, commercial, entertainment, or artistic nature- their point of union. The first is the Faculty of Communication and Arts of the Universidad Nebrija, the result of the evolution of its former Faculty of Communication and the merger with the Department of Arts, previously covered by the Faculty of Literature. Regarding the departmental structure of the center, three areas are registered: Communication, Advertising, and Arts. Above all, there is a hybridization of profiles between Communication and the Arts in the double degrees: Performing Arts and Audiovisual Communication, Audiovisual Communication and Digital and Multimedia Design, or Advertising and Public Relations and Digital and Multimedia Design. In the master's degree, the degree that incorporates communication and marketing into the field of art is Art Markets and related companies.

At the Universidad Internacional de Valencia there is no departmental structure. In the degree, the field of Arts has more presence than that of Communication and does not present degrees or double programs that hybridize the disciplines. For master's degrees, the offer is compensated and although there are no registered degrees that combine the areas announced by the center, there are postgraduate courses that can meet the interest of communicators and graduates in Humanities such as Publishing and editorial management or Literary creation.

In the two faculties of Communication and Philology, although there is a presence of the discipline under study in the departmental structure, there is an undecided commitment to our field both at an organizational level and in terms of the offer of degrees.

The Universidad de Barcelona does not have classic degrees in Communication and, therefore, does not offer double degrees that merge the areas announced by the center's name. Instead, it has an innovative program that merges the two disciplines into a single degree: Communication and cultural industries. Among the professional profiles for which it trains are those of communication in the media but also those related to the management of the entertainment industries. The area of Communication remains poorly developed in the master's degree, with a single program that is also in the updating phase and does not have linked lines of research.

In the case of the Universidad de Valencia, the degree offer includes Journalism and Audiovisual Communication but these programs are not linked to other degrees in the field of philology. Nor is there a hybrid offer in master's degrees, although there are lines of research that relate the two fields such as "Interculturality and Communication".

4.3. Assessment of Communication studies and causes of hybridization

As we have been pointing out, the current situation of Communication studies is changing. We are experiencing a transformation of the media and cultural industries that necessarily affects study plans. Let us now see the opinion of the deans, selected based on the criteria indicated in the methodological section. Studies in Communication and its faculties have proliferated a lot, too much, in recent years. It would be necessary to assess whether all the programs meet the quality standards required by training in Communication, which is so necessary for today's society.

This is how the dean of the Faculty of Communication and International Relations of the Universidad Ramón Llull, Josep M. Carbonell (E7), begins. Despite this, and acknowledging that the employability rate must be improved, the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication of the Universidad de Cádiz, Jesús Rodríguez Torrejón (E1), recalls that the demand from students continues to grow.

The vice-dean of the Faculty of Business and Communication, Eva Asensio del Arco, of the UNIR (E5), agrees, recalling that "registrations in Communication remain in a regular number over the years." Likewise, she reflects on how digital communication "is introduced in all undergraduate and postgraduate curricula in a transversal way".

Precisely, E1 points out three difficulties for updating communication studies to the current demands of employers: The introduction of new technologies, in general, in the university is done slowly. The reasons for this situation are due, among other causes, to the difficulty of modifying the study plans. We must also take into account the cost of having the resources that allow us to introduce digitization since the software is usually very expensive. Furthermore, continuous teacher training is necessary.

Despite these difficulties, the dean of the Faculty of Communication and Arts of the Universidad Nebrija, Marta Perlado (E4), does consider that some centers train graduates for the demands of the sector.

Digitization and the change in the model of the media and entertainment industries cause the necessary updating of the study plans and a reorientation of the faculties that brings with it the correct education of the professional in communication and advertising. The commitment to experiential teaching is vital since graduates must demonstrate their skills in a particularly competitive and changing environment; Likewise, it is important to have a strong conceptual base, a global vision, international experience, and the ability to work in interdisciplinary teams (E4).

For its part, E5, from UNIR, adds that a professional with leadership is needed, capable of working in a team, with critical thinking and creativity, and defends that the private university is more agile in the implementation of changes towards digitization and employability.

Regarding the reasons that make the universities change their name to include several disciplines, the deans reveal different causes and explain what current position the centers have.

From the Universidad de Cádiz, E1 tells that the history of the center dates back to the School of Commerce and that, after 90 years attached to the field of business, in 2004 the new configuration was presented (Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication). "The UCA had a Business School and the redundancy of studies represented a risk for us", he explains, indicating that the hybridization with Communication derives from structural causes. The current position, for the dean, is positive since "in the current context of the company, communication management is fundamental". "Companies are aware of managing their social networks and their reputation; we are in a world where if you do not communicate you do not exist", he completes. He considers that for Communication students, having a business vision is beneficial.

The Universidad de Barcelona, says E6, finds in Communication studies "a window of opportunity for its traditional Faculty of Philology". "We were very clear that it was not about repeating the traditional triadic structure, we wanted a new and differentiated offer and we launched the Degree in Communication and Cultural Industries". "Communication brings innovation and modernity to a Faculty of Philology", he reflects, while explaining: "We are a hybrid faculty by group, but we are working on establishing collateral areas". "In the end, philology is not understood without tradition and language and communication without culture, so our position is based on cultural reflection."

For its part, E7, from the Universidad Ramón Llull, explains that when he became the director of the Faculty, he carried out a market study on the degrees in Humanities and Social Sciences, observing a stagnation in Communication studies that continued to bet on the classic structure of three degrees. At the same time, he discovers, as in the previous case, an opportunity for growth and differentiation by hybridizing the faculty with related areas. "It was the case of International Relations. The

globalization process has directly affected communication and I believed that they were two disciplines that should coexist”, he collects. Thus, he maintains: "Having a Faculty that hybridizes Communication and International Relations gives students of both degrees a differential." "Those from Communication come out more capable, with a global vision. Those from Relations are more empowered in the labor market because they have certain communication techniques”, he completes.

For E4, from Universidad Nebrija, the engine of hybridization was innovation. "It was about having a differentiating approach that colored our degrees with a transformative positioning, based on creativity," he explains. Its old Faculty of Communication gave way in 2016 to the new center, which added the Department of Arts. The academic offer has been growing up to the current 19 degrees and its practical methodology, "attached to the learning by doing concept", extends to teaching innovation and university extension projects "where the synergy of Communication and Art is a reality, a fact that encourages the involvement of the teams and the transfer of skills”.

4.4. The formation of transverse profiles

Sectoral studies reflect that a transversal professional is required, with a holistic vision and capable of working in interdisciplinary teams. The deans consider that the hybridization of the faculties favors the formation of these profiles.

"We want to educate employable professionals. Our students know about journalism or audiovisual communication but also of business management and cultural industries”, specifies E6.

E7 justifies: "The first two years of the degrees have a deep base in Humanities and Social Sciences. We encourage writing, speaking, reflection, and critical analysis. Companies value it enormously. And it is that our hybridization is not so much between International Relations and Communication but between Humanities, Communication and International Relations”.

E5 explains that the conception of its faculty is based on the fact that "communication is one of the strategic tools of companies and communication campaigns allow corporate and commercial objectives to be achieved”. For this reason, he considers that UNIR degrees "respond to market demands, offering specialized graduates in all areas of communication and marketing with extensive business knowledge."

One of the pioneering universities in the hybridization of Communication studies is San Pablo CEU. Its dean, María Solano Altaba (E2), agrees with her colleagues and defends that hybridization favors the training of communicators. In fact, she considers that the graduates of these faculties have training that is more in line with the needs of the market:

The hybridization formulas return us to the universality of the university, we educate transversally with a more enriched sense of knowledge. Now, with the industrial revolution of digitization, there is a need for communicators who know how to ask, for example, the right question. We have many technical

capacities to know the information, but this volume of data must be refined and interpreted (E2).

For the dean, Humanities are key in the digital scenario and, more specifically, in the field of digital communication. "The classics of rhetoric, like Aristotle, already spoke of the fact that good speakers, great communicators, had to be well trained and have values," explains E2. "Humanities are key to transforming the world into a better place", she considers and underlines that the basis of history, philosophy, culture... "is a wardrobe that helps communicators to interpret".

To prevent students from living together in "parallel worlds", as E6 warns, the faculties have initiated interdisciplinary projects that encourage student interaction and the learning of hybrid skills.

For example, the Universidad de Barcelona has opened an optional course and has created a magazine with cultural content where future communicators and philologists coexist. Online, they want to create radio programming that enhances this work and exploits linguistic diversity by having different philologies.

Universidad Nebrija has the Nebrija Medialab media platform, where undergraduate students -regardless of their degree- participate through five laboratories in editorial projects (Revista N), advertising campaigns for real clients, digital design exercises, the weekly radio program NOA, and informative, fiction, or entertainment products of an audiovisual nature and broadcast on Canal Nebrija. "With this, everyone acquires Communication skills, vital in the current environment and the connected society, even if their degrees are not from the center", reflects E4.

Furthermore, they have other university extension activities where students from different studies collaborate to simulate a real business work environment: Festival Jóvenes Tocados por la Publicidad, Festival de Cortos AdN, or, among others, the Nebrija Escena theater show. This university adds, as its dean narrates, the Interdisciplinary Final Degree Projects, "group projects in which students from different degrees and even faculties face the resolution of a common challenge".

The deans point out that coexistence among the teaching staff is also important and that the key can and should be research. In this sense, the hybridization in the research scene seems, according to the account of the deans, a pending phase or, in some cases, an early phase. Some cases are found, such as the project "Disinformation and aggressiveness in Social Media: analysis of language" at the Universidad de Barcelona, where philologists and communicators interact, or the GLOBALCODES group on globalization, conflicts, security, and development, at Ramón Llull, where political scientists, experts in international relations, and communicators work together.

A curious case, regarding the seven faculties interviewed, is that of the Universidad de Granada. Its dean, Benjamín Vargas Quesada, affirms that his center "contemplates two unique and independent degrees" and that therefore they cannot speak of hybridization as such. On the other hand, the research area is more integrated than in other centers. The faculty has, for example, the group

“Communication, Education, and Documentation”.

This situation, as we have reflected in the previous section, is also shared in the other Spanish centers that hybridize Communication with Documentation. That is, they have integrated research more developed than academic offer. Perhaps, the fact that they were born as Faculties of Documentation or Library Science and Documentation and that the union with the discipline that we analyze is motivated by structural causes, is one of the reasons.

Concerning this, E3 recalls the good positioning of this Faculty: "In the rankings, for example that of Shanghai, Granada is the best placed, by far, in Spain, the third in Europe and the sixth in the world".

E2 explains, given the difficulties of integrating research from different areas, the problem of departmental hierarchy, "which tends to make researchers always work with colleagues from the same area."

By changing the teaching model at CEU and mainstreaming it, teachers are called to review their knowledge and seek alliances. Thus, from teaching, a very interesting research current has been generated. For example, projects have emerged between Literature and Photography that review the micro-story in the image or between History and Art that observe the image of power in painting (E2).

Another difficulty, in this case external, has to do with the fact that “the evaluations continue to be structured in area panels that may not understand interdisciplinary projects or that do not consider merit in different areas to be of the same value”, maintains E2: “In the end, they force you to box yourself in when the trend is different. If transversality spreads, the Agencies will have to reevaluate their processes”.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Since 1971, the faculties of Communication in Spain, which have their origins in the School of Journalism of El Debate (1926), have undergone different transformations. The first 40 years have been fruitful, taking into account the growth of specialized centers, the increase in academic offers, the interest of students, and the progress of research. In the last decade, the paradigm shift driven by digitization and accelerated by the economic crisis has led to a re-adaptation of Communication faculties that seek a new position that differentiates them from the abundant competition of degrees.

In the context of transmedia production, multi-media distribution, and exploitation of big data with informative, advertising, and even entertainment-related interests to discover, based on an algorithm, the interests of the audience, the review of study plans are mandatory if you want to promote employment.

Communicators with a technical profile are needed, capable of leading the network society; with a humanistic and social base, to have conceptual richness and critical thinking the adequate interpretation of the data. It is also necessary for the

professional to be transversal since communication is globalized and cuts across all areas of activity; that it be versatile since the successive economic crises and the search for a new business model generates the reduction of jobs and the sum of functions in a single position. Likewise, the creation of interdisciplinary teams in newsrooms, agencies, corporations, and production companies means that the hybridization of knowledge and the provision of comprehensive training is the solution for all these needs.

In Spain there are 40 faculties of Communication, of which 14 (35%) follow a classic model centralized in the main discipline and 26 (65%) include different fields in their denomination, promoting, a priori, the hybridization of knowledge.

Of the 26 hybridized faculties, 57.6% merge Communication with Social Sciences (nine Communication and Social Sciences faculties, three with Documentation, two with Business, and one with International Relations). In general, there is little departmental representation and in degrees in the field of Communication and this is used more as a complement than as the main area. The degree that is mostly offered in this area is the Degree in Advertising and Public Relations due to its connections with the business, commercial, and management fields.

42.3% of the hybrid centers combine Communication with Humanities (seven faculties of Communication and Humanities, two with Art, and two with Philology). In this group, there is a dominant presence of Communication and the program that is most offered is the Degree in Audiovisual Communication, given its connections with art and culture.

These faculties promote, above all, the hybridization of profiles based on double undergraduate degrees, which connect the disciplines of Communication with Business Administration, Tourism, Business, or International Relations, in the case of Social Sciences, seeking a graduate profile with a global vision and communicative skills that will help you understand the revolution in your field of activity and establish integrated strategies that welcome all audiences and through different media. In the case of the Humanities, it educates, among others, journalists based on history, actors with audiovisual skills, and advertising creatives with training in design. The aim is to create a more complete professional capable of professional growth in a greater range of options.

Besides double degrees, degrees and master's degrees are beginning to be created that already hybridize the two disciplines. If this is a positive point, universities should work more on hybridizing their research, as a basis for the growth of faculties and support the creation of innovative and integrating professional profiles.

For their part, the deans of the hybrid faculties encounter three conflicts when it comes to innovating within their approaches: difficulties in updating the study plans, either due to the standardization of the process or due to the classic conception of Communication studies, economic limitations contrary to the investment necessary to adapt spaces and equipment to the needs of digitization, and mandatory teacher

training.

The correct training of new communicators goes through experiential teaching, the theoretical-practical combination that gives them, on the one hand, a conceptual base and critical sense and, on the other, the acquisition of professional skills; global vision, international experience, and interdisciplinary capacity. Hybridization is once again a correct training strategy and a differential engine.

Hybridization can thus favor the employability of graduates, their adaptability to different work scenarios, and the expansion of their skills and knowledge, which qualifies them for different professional niches.

The causes of the hybridization of the Communication faculties go through three stages: economic-structural reasons and reorganization of the universities, search for a window of opportunity, and innovation in the search for new positioning of the center.

Once the structure has been built and the study plans have been revised, the challenge is to achieve a real hybridization in the centers and that the students and teachers do not live in parallel universes. In the case of students, the tactic is to generate shared activities where the transfer of skills is real and by opening the option to exchange areas of knowledge. In the case of professors, the goal is to generate research groups and projects that combine different specializations. The first of these challenges, based on the study carried out, is in process, but, on the other hand, the second is at an early stage. It is convenient here to remember De-Moragas (2005), who indicated that the correct education in Communication passed through interdisciplinary research. Research as cause and effect.

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The hybridization of the Spanish communication faculties: economic crisis, digitalization, and new academic approach

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