

Dialogue on communication and climate emergencies: challenges and transformations

Diálogo sobre comunicação e emergências climáticas: desafios e transformações

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Abstract: The text addresses the relevance of communication in the context of climate emergencies, highlighting the challenges and necessary transformations to confront socio-environmental disasters. Based on a student panel held during the 16th International Communication Seminar at PUCRS (Seicom), the article draws on the topics discussed at the scientific event to explore the need for effective dialogues that take into account the complexity of climate phenomena and their social, economic, and environmental implications. In this regard, it seeks to reflect on how the nuances and multiple roles of communication can be improved and further developed to help mitigate the effects of climate change. The proposal is to consider communication as a strategy to educate and mobilize the public, promoting climate justice and inclusion, especially for groups in vulnerable conditions such as women, indigenous communities, and marginalized populations. Finally, the text offers insights that emphasize the importance of dialogue, gender and racial perspectives, and the ethics of care in building communication strategies that strengthen community resilience and collective action in the face of climate crises.

Keywords: communication; dialogues; climate justice; care; socio-environmental disaster.

Resumo: O texto aborda a relevância da comunicação no contexto das emergências climáticas, destacando os desafios e transformações necessárias para enfrentar os desastres socioambientais. A partir da realização de um painel discente durante o XVI Seminário Internacional de Comunicação da PUCRS (Seicom), o artigo toma como base os assuntos abordados no evento científico para discutir a necessidade de diálogos eficazes que considerem a complexidade dos fenômenos climáticos e suas implicações sociais, econômicas e ambientais. Assim, por meio da metodologia exploratória teórica, busca refletir como as nuances e múltiplos papéis da comunicação podem ser aprimorados e melhor desenvolvidos, no sentido de mitigar os efeitos das mudanças climáticas. A proposta é pensar a comunicação como estratégia para educar e mobilizar o público, promovendo justiça climática e inclusão, especialmente para grupos em situação de vulnerabilidade como mulheres, comunidades indígenas e populações periféricas. Por fim, traz aprendizados que enfatizam a importância do diálogo, da perspectiva de gênero e raça e da ética do cuidado na construção de estratégias comunicacionais que fortaleçam a resiliência comunitária e a ação coletiva frente às crises climáticas.

Palavras-chave: comunicação; diálogos; justiça climática; cuidado; desastre socioambiental.

1. Introduction

“The inability to conceive the complexity of the anthroposocial reality, in its micro-dimension (the individual being) and in its macro-dimension (the entirety of planetary humanity), leads to infinite tragedies and brings us to the supreme tragedy”, as Morin (2015, p. 13) stated. For the French

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philosopher and sociologist, reducing the complex to the simple causes “blind intelligence”, which does not allow one to see this multiple “fabric of events” and “contingencies that constitute our phenomenal world” (Morin, 2015, p. 13). In this sense, thinking in a complex way means understanding that the subject is not merely a “noise”, a disturbance, as traditional science points out (Morin, 2015, p. 40). He is part of this whole, which also constitutes him. Building on Morin, we turn to the floods that hit southern Brazil to consider the blind spots of communication as a complex activity.

The floods and landslides that struck Rio Grande do Sul between April and May 2024 caused 184 confirmed deaths, 806 injuries, and 25 people who remain missing, even in 2025, in addition to environmental, structural, economic, social, and many other immeasurable damages (Defesa Civil RS, 2025). During this period, between 700 and 1,000 millimeters of rain were recorded, corresponding to 40% of the average annual volume expected for the entire state (Paiva et al., 2024). With 478 of the 497 municipalities in Rio Grande do Sul affected, more than 2.3 million people were affected, about 160,000 of them in Porto Alegre alone. In 2023, three other floods in June, September, and November had already caused 55 deaths in RS (G1 RS, 2024).

A sequence of extreme phenomena, such as that recorded in southern Brazil, is one of the main issues raised by the *Global Risks Report* (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2025) and shows that our inability to understand the anthroposocial complexity, as Morin (2015) points out, also leads us to a perception of the lack of risk and crisis communication strategies that consider these disaster scenarios. Thus, this work seeks to bring the following reflection to the research horizon: what can be done to ensure that communication strategies in times of climate emergency are preventive rather than merely reactive?

Conceptually, disasters are considered as point events, “a type of acute crisis, characterized as an emergency situation in which, in a reduced geographical area – seen as a scenario – the material elements and people are understood as being ‘on the brink’” (Valencio, 2012, p. 7-8). However, we adopt here the concept of socio-environmental disaster brought by Koelzer and Bousfield (2020, p. 2), who point out that the term socio-environmental is “a way to avoid the decontextualization of reality, taking into account the social aspect of the phenomenon” and everything it involves, in contrast to the terms natural or environmental.

As Valencio (2012, p. 8) states, the term “natural” obscures “other interpretative possibilities” in which “disasters do not present themselves as something unusual, nor ungovernable, but as a sudden disorganization of the socio-environmental elements that compose a restricted space”.

Morin (2002, 2013) perceives the climate crisis as part of a broader context that requires a political approach based on complex thinking, which unites reason and feeling, science and culture, the local and the global. In

Les Sept savoirs nécessaires à l'éducation du futur (2002), the sociologist argues that complex thinking is essential to deal with the unpredictability and uncertainty of the world. This includes teaching planetary awareness, adopting a perspective in which “economic, ideological, and social processes are so intertwined that they become a true challenge for knowledge”. This does not necessarily reveal the facet of ungovernability of the disaster, “but requires new knowledge capable of civilizing the earth and making it a true homeland”. In this sense, the “political strategy also requires complex knowledge, because it is built in action with and against the uncertain, the chance, the multiple game of interactions and feedback” (Morin, 2015, p. 13).

By highlighting the distinction between information and communication, Wolton (2010, p. 12) emphasized that “Information is the message. Communication is the relationship, which is much more complex”. In his political theory of communication, the French sociologist argues that while information refers to the transmission of data, communication involves interaction and understanding between individuals, becoming a more intricate and challenging process. He emphasizes that the revolution of the 21st century is not just about the dissemination of information through advanced technologies, but about the conditions of acceptance or rejection of that information by various recipients, each with unique perspectives. This complexity highlights the importance of valuing communication as a deep human relationship that goes beyond mere content transmission. From this relational perspective, it is understood that sharing these messages does not enable us to comprehend the facts or have the necessary awareness to promote change.

The communicator here, as suggested by Moraes (2022), possesses instruments of power to confront this context in a clear transition. A scenario in which it is urgent to discuss climate change and its effects, such as population displacements, loss of income, impacts on public health, cognitive and behavioral deficits in the population, among others. By perceiving the agenda as a “weapon of combat” against this type of situation, the author invites reflection on abandoning the idea of neutrality and the “false balance in journalism” (Moraes, 2022), calling for positioning and awareness of the socio-environmental function of communication in times of emergencies.

It is assumed that effective communication about climate emergencies is essential for educating and mobilizing the public to adopt measures that address the crisis caused by climate change. Different experiences, cultural contexts, and common values are involved in the crisis, but their capacity to respond to the unfolding episode varies across multiple factors, including markers such as social position, gender, race, place of residence, support network, and economic recovery capacity.

This is what develops the concept of climate justice: that climate change

should be analyzed and addressed through the lens of holding accountable those who have effectively caused the observed imbalance and who are better positioned to confront it – mainly countries and companies from the Global North – thus avoiding the socialization of climate burdens and the privatization of benefits. In summary, “it means that those who, historically, have benefited and developed from the greenhouse gas emissions accumulated to date in the atmosphere cannot share with others the responsibility for the damages and impacts of climate change” (Louback, 2022, p. 32). This also stems from an awareness-as-a-process, not a demand. “It is a path of many questions, and not a moral path, but one of political responsibility. It is the recognition of something: what do I do with what I know, now?” (Kilomba, G., 2018, as cited in Moraes, 2022, p. 21).

Conditions of socio-emotional resilience, which include behavioral aspects, the ability to move forward, and recovery in the face of uncertainties about the future, add to this list of attributes that impact how each group reacts and communicates in the face of stress caused by climate change crises.

To reframe the lived experience, researchers from the graduate program in Social Communication at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) organized the panel Communication and Climate Emergencies: Challenges and Transformations at the XVI International Communication Seminar (Seicom) in November 2024. The purpose was to foster academic debate and reflect collectively, through dialogue, on ways to exercise communication, deepened by the dimension of reality, and to experiment with mapping discourses in new apocalyptic imaginaries (Armano et al., 2023).

This article, which heavily draws on the concept of dialogue, understands it as the “word that crosses” and as what happens between people, as a continuous process “of new content that becomes common to the participants” (Scroferneker et al., 2016, p. 8-9). Democratic scenarios “call for dialogue as a gesture capable of producing fairer and more legitimate communicational results, supposedly, as a promise of conflict resolution” (Mafra & Marques, 2017, p. 83).

But, whether or not it is a promise, it “appears as a possibility to connect plural subjects, affected by problematic situations in specific contexts”, and not dialoguing is “to override difference, disregarding the value of the other, and to install non-democratic practices of action” (Mafra & Marques, 2017, p. 89). The dialogue can thus be seen as the center of communication processes and understanding of otherness, fostering cooperation, a sense of belonging among individuals, and the establishment of bonds between them and the organization (Scroferneker et al., 2016).

With the presence of professionals who worked on addressing the

floods, the event¹ enabled, through dialogue among these different interlocutors, the construction of an overview of the socio-environmental role of the communicator, which is described in this paper. As previously contextualized, this article aims to map and analyze points of attention raised during the event by the speakers regarding risk communication in the context of the climate emergency. The study approaches encompass concepts that engage with the perspectives of gender, race, climate justice, public communication, organizational communication, socio-environmental journalism, and finally, the perspective of care (Brugère, 2023).

Thus, based on the organization of the speeches delivered at the event, an effort was made to structure priority points to be observed in the construction of socio-environmental communication studies. Given the complexity of the scenario described above, this article seeks to understand the multiple roles of communication as a field of research and professional practice, recognizing its limits and opportunities.

2. Methodology

For the construction of this article, an exploratory theoretical methodology was used through bibliographic research. The aim was to map and analyze the topics raised by the speakers during the student panel of the XVI Seicom, held in November 2024 at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS).

According to Gil (2002), bibliographic research is the stage “(...) developed from already elaborated material, mainly consisting of books and scientific articles” (Gil, 2002, p. 50). Stumpf (2006, p. 51) considers that bibliographic research is “(...) the initial global planning of any research work that goes from the identification, location, and acquisition of relevant bibliography on the subject, to the presentation of a systematized text (...)”.

Through the question “*what can be done to ensure that communication strategies in times of climate emergency are preventive and not just reactive?*”, the points raised by the participants engage in dialogue with authors who propose reflections on the themes, considering the multiple roles of communication and how they can be improved and better developed to mitigate the effects of climate change.

3. Gender, race, and climate justice perspective

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Alto Comissariado das Nações Unidas para os Refugiados [ACNUR], 2024), climate change disproportionately affects different social groups, exacerbating existing inequalities:

1 Student panel organized during the XVI Seicom at Famecos – PUCRS, in Porto Alegre.

In Brazil, the increase in extreme climate events, such as severe floods, droughts, and fires, impacts millions of people annually, altering dynamics of forced displacement. In the Amazon region, severe droughts and environmental degradation disproportionately affect indigenous and traditional communities, limiting their mobility and access to essential services. In the state of Roraima, approximately 12,000 indigenous refugees from Venezuela face additional challenges in accessing their rights and local integration opportunities tailored to their socio-cultural needs. In the state of Acre, vulnerable populations deal with a combination of migratory flows and extreme climate events, exacerbating their risk and social exclusion situation. (ACNUR, 2024, p. 2).

Women, especially in communities in vulnerable situations, often face greater risks and challenges related to the issue. In light of this, it is essential to adopt an inclusive perspective in climate communication and action strategies, ensuring that the voices and needs of all groups are considered. During the flooding episodes in Rio Grande do Sul, the occurrence of harassment and abuse in the shelters set up to accommodate climate refugees was reported by those sheltered and highlighted by the media. These reports led to the mobilization of social and identity groups to create networks to protect women and children, such as shelters specifically for women and children (Plentz, 2024).

Here, the central role of women in emergency situations is emphasized, questioning the duality under which women are viewed in these contexts (vulnerability *versus* resilience). By bringing in the perspective of a culture of care, Brugère (2023, p. 20) notes that there is a “natural” assignment of caregiving to women, rooted in stereotypes that have become gendered identities. In this sense, by paying attention to others, women adopt “behaviors that society does not value, as they do not convey values based on public space and individual success” (Brugère, 2023, p. 32). Therefore, “the perspective of care, unlike the perspective of justice, implies a protection and recognition of women’s voices, especially because, in daily life, it is women who uphold this moral orientation” (Brugère, 2023, p. 49).

In the face of increasingly frequent extreme events, women’s involvement in caregiving challenges is a direct consequence of the new climatic reality experienced more intensely in peripheral regions and third-world countries (Brugère, 2023; ACNUR, 2024). In this regard, Brugère’s studies on the ethics of care from a feminist perspective have been important contributions to this field that articulates the intersection between gender and environmental issues. The movement critiques the domination relations imposed by capitalism, patriarchy, and environmental exploitation. This approach not only identifies gender inequalities and the abuse of natural resources but also seeks to question the structures that perpetuate these abuses.

Brugère argues that the female and feminist perspectives should therefore go beyond mere solidarity with women suffering from climate change.

She proposes a transformation in the ways we think and act in the face of the ecological crisis, offering a new perspective on the relationship between humans and nature. She emphasizes the importance of a care ethics, an approach that rejects the logic of exploitation and promotes a more harmonious coexistence with the environment. In a world where, at any moment, anyone can be or become vulnerable, “vulnerability attests to the fragility and invisibility of real lives not only socially but also vitally and environmentally” (Brugère, 2023, p. 46).

However, with one difference: a chasm is dug every day between those who have nothing – and are susceptible to changing positions (due to unemployment, precariousness, exclusion, floods, and earthquakes in poor or politically unstable countries) – and those who may believe they are powerful and productive. The human being is not only a subject of rights but a person whose life potential or ability to speak and act can be impeded. Vulnerability is a burden that is even greater to bear the more it affects someone without reason, regardless of the subjects’ own capabilities: (...). (Brugère, 2023, p. 46)

When analyzing this perspective of care through the author’s lens, it is important to highlight that the action and mobilization of public communication, as well as the protection actions for people in vulnerable situations during the floods in Rio Grande do Sul in 2024, initially disregarded these specific markers, leading to a more massive and immediate rescue response. Subsequently, only in response to reports were the creation of shelters and reception areas dedicated exclusively to this population considered.

Indeed, climate emergencies reproduce and amplify all inequalities, especially those related to gender, race, and social class, as well as issues of age and disabilities, affecting women more intensely. So much so that ACNUR (2024) states that 85% of the world’s forcibly displaced populations are women and girls. Complementarily, the report from the *Internal Displacement Monitoring Center* (IDMC), titled “*Gender Dynamics in Internal Displacement*” (IDMC, 2023), emphasizes how women are disproportionately affected by internal displacements caused by climate disasters, such as floods. The publication points out that they face increased risks of gender-based violence, loss of livelihoods, and limited access to essential services, such as health and education, during displacements caused by disasters. With the migration of men in search of work, women often take on the role of heads of households, caring for children and the elderly, and managing household tasks under precarious conditions.

In this disproportionate impact, one must consider the violation of women’s bodies and the historical caregiving work, which is greatly intensified in situations of disasters and wars. This situation was evident in the shelters or temporary accommodations set up to welcome flood victims in RS.

As Márcia Soares noted: “*Everything that exists within a vulnerable com-*

munity moves into the temporary accommodations without the protection networks – the abuses, the harassment, the violence” (Famecos PUCRS, 2024, 1h14min31s). This was one of the reports that reached the women’s rights support organization Themis, and it was one of the statements brought by the executive director and highlighted above during the panel held at the XVI Seicom. According to Márcia, “the state’s slowness in addressing the immediate needs of affected populations exacerbates this burden, forcing women to lead the protection and support in the shelters, where the majority of displaced people are Black women”. In this context, support networks emerge among themselves, becoming essential in rescue, violence prevention, assistance during childbirth, and the reconstruction of community life. Regarding the role of the state, the specialist’s view on gender-based violence is that public response plans still neglect this reality, failing to integrate effective prevention and care protocols. Communication, according to Márcia, is a central axis in this dynamic, as information often reaches people through community leaders. It is urgent to diversify dissemination channels – through flyers, social media, WhatsApp – and ensure accessibility in multiple languages, in addition to considering the digital exclusion of populations without cell phones or batteries. “Only an inclusive and structured communication approach can strengthen the resilience of women on the front lines of the climate emergency”, stated the speaker.

Here, we can verify how climate justice is intrinsically linked to the gender agenda, as women, especially Black and marginalized women, face multiple disadvantages in the face of the impacts of climate change. Gender oppression, like other forms of social inequality, such as racism and the marginalization of vulnerable populations, is exacerbated by the environmental crisis. In this context, the concept of environmental justice reemerges as a point of convergence among these issues, highlighting the need for actions that promote gender equity, advance women’s rights, and address inequalities in addressing climate impacts.

According to Louback (2022), the term environmental justice is a movement that originated in the United States in the 1980s from the struggles of grassroots groups to combat the allocation of polluting and hazardous waste facilities, such as landfills, in areas predominantly inhabited by Black and immigrant populations. The affected groups realized that polluting and dangerous enterprises were specifically directed according to the racial characteristics of the communities, hence the term environmental racism. Even Black communities with greater purchasing power were targeted by these facilities, while White communities with lower financial conditions were not usually chosen as destinations for such allocation, demonstrating that income was not a decisive factor. One of the first known cases on the subject occurred in Warren County, North Carolina (USA), in the year 1982. The population of the predominantly Black community of Afton protested against the construction of a toxic waste landfill. There were six weeks of

non-violent marches and street protests, as well as roadblocks to prevent trucks carrying waste from reaching the community. However, the community was unable to stop the dumping of garbage in Afton, and more than 500 people were arrested, marking the first environmental-related arrests in U.S. history. From events like this, the affected individuals, allied with academics, began to research and produce knowledge regarding the unjust allocation of hazardous waste in predominantly Black communities.

According to Dakir Larara Machado da Silva (Famecos PUCRS, 2024), a geographer and one of the panelists, the most vulnerable populations, especially Black women living in high-risk areas, such as hills and slopes prone to landslides, face greater difficulties in accessing prevention and assistance policies. These areas, he states, are historically associated with a higher presence of Black populations and a lack of visibility and adequate public policies, a fact that intensifies the oppression and exposure of these individuals to environmental risks. Thus, climate justice must integrate issues of gender and racism to ensure the active participation of all, especially women, in defining strategies for mitigating and adapting to environmental impacts.

This process of mobilization and awareness, which must include a deep understanding of the climate phenomenon and how it affects different social groups, is essential for building a more just and sustainable future, where the vulnerability of marginalized populations must be considered to guide strategic actions by communicators.

In this sense, creating dialogue spaces between the population and government agencies, such as inter-institutional articulation with universities, is fundamental to increasing community resilience. These spaces should allow for the exchange of experiences and the sharing of information, contributing to the construction of communication protocols that more broadly involve social and political actors. In particular, effective and inclusive communication is necessary to promote understanding of climate phenomena and their consequences for different identity groups, such as coastal populations living in risk areas, lagoons, and along coastlines.

4. The organizations and public communication in the context of disasters

Through the lens of complexity, communication is always a possibility. And “the complex perspective of communication leads us to believe that it is not only in the organization, but is part of it, constituting it and allowing it to exist as such” (Scroferneker et al., 2023, p. 19), revealing its recursiveness as both a product and producer of social reality and reinforcing the importance of communication in organizational environments that promote their self-eco-organization.

Understanding organizations as these complex systems, which simulta-

neously encompass “a normative, functional, rational bias” and, dialogically, all the “subjective, human, symbolic, relational” dimensions that arise from them (Scroferneker et al., 2016, p. 4), organizational communication, therefore, encompasses all communicational interactions carried out in the context of organizations, whether public, private, or in the third sector (Lima, 2008).

In this sense, when we talk about climate change, disasters, and vulnerable populations, a topic addressed in the previous section, organizations play a crucial role. They have the responsibility to develop and implement communication strategies that inform and engage their audiences, promoting more sustainable and resilient behaviors. In the context of disasters, organizational actions occur both at the moment of crisis – providing support to employees, renegotiating deadlines and deliveries with suppliers, and developing impactful actions in the communities in which they operate – and also by incorporating climate risk biases into their operational context. As pointed out in the *Global Risks Report* (WEF, 2025), the climate risk associated with misinformation is among the main long-term challenges for organizations. Thus, public communication in the organizational context has a strategic mission that goes beyond reputation management, preparing these mitigation actions, and communicating in an official and reliable manner.

Revisiting the literature on public communication, we find important points about its potential to foster the creation of an exchange environment where social capital flourishes, attributed by it as a social network of informative interactions that generates debates and participation and ‘promotes values that enhance social cohesion’ (Matos, 2012, p. 57). In this regard, according to the author, public communication represents a collective action aimed at making consensual decisions for mutual benefit.

In its daily operations, this communication in the context of public organizations is responsible, among many actions, for providing information to the public, presenting the administration’s services, making the institution known, and establishing relationships and dialogues (Zémor, 2012). Here, dialogue is again fundamental in our proposal for reflection and can be seen as the center of communicational processes and understanding of otherness, favoring cooperation, the sense of belonging among individuals, and the establishment of bonds between them and the organization (Scroferneker et al., 2016).

And it is through this dialogue that teachers and university researchers, agencies, collectives, and professionals saw, during the floods of May 2024 in Rio Grande do Sul, the need to gather information about the actions of brands and companies and the opportunity to create and gather communication strategies to assist people who found themselves in vulnerable situations (Silva et al., 2024).

The survey conducted by UFRGS on the performance of corporate

organizational communication in the context of the 2024 floods in Rio Grande do Sul revealed the need for rapid responses to provide some type of service. According to Diego Wander Montagner (Famecos PUCRS, 2024), professor and speaker at the XVI Seicom, the experience of living this reality motivated a series of extension projects developed by organizations.

In this context, it was noted that among the forms of support from organizations was the production of strategic content to support impact agents in crisis situations. Here, it is worth highlighting that communication can help minimize the effects of socio-environmental disasters through education, useful information, and emotional support. The production of Quick Guides (Pró-Reitoria de Extensão [PROEXT], 2024) with relevant content for that moment was another example of an initiative aimed at documenting the episodes, supporting with methodologies and recommendations for people working in shelters, considering the context of fragilities and vulnerabilities. In dialogue with shelter volunteers, mostly set up ad hoc, and with impact agents, the group explored the most fragile communication issues, created forms to hear the views in their pluralities, and generated a set of recommendations validated by these agents.

These guides contain directions on: Signage in shelter spaces; Combating misinformation; Managing groups on *WhatsApp*; and Collaborating in volunteer initiatives, for example. The production of materials like these by researchers and communication professionals became necessary in light of the difficulty of accessing solutions, the failure of alerts from public agencies, and the numerous divergences in communication and information management experienced by volunteers and those affected in the emergency context. The delivery, which can serve for future crisis episodes, is a systematized space of relevant documents on the subject and shows, in a real and responsible manner, how communication and communicators can act in disaster situations to help vulnerable communities.

5. Environmental journalism and the press

Just like corporate communication, public communication, and that conducted by community agents, environmental journalism plays a fundamental role in raising awareness about climate change. In a scenario where the environmental crisis becomes more intense each year, journalists have the responsibility to report accurately and in depth on the challenges and solutions related to the topic, influencing public policies and individual and collective behaviors.

More than just informing, media coverage must be contextualized, highlighting the social and economic implications of climate change and amplifying the voices of the most affected communities. According to Rodas and Di Giulio (2017, p. 104), “understanding how the media has reported on issues associated with climate change constitutes an important chal-

lenge for researchers who delve into the triad of science, communication, and society”. Furthermore, according to the authors, the media plays a key role in shaping public perceptions and agendas regarding the phenomenon.

(...) it is possible to observe that the climate issue gained more space in the media starting in 1997, with the drafting of the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty launched that year that proposed a timeline for reducing GHG emissions to the signatory developed countries. The debates surrounding the content and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol among various countries intensified political and academic discussions about climate change (Giesbrecht et. al, 2015), reflecting a greater media attention on the subject (Anderson, 2009 cited in Rodas & Di Giulio, 2017, p. 103).

In Brazil, the media’s mobilization for the environmental agenda gained strength with ECO-92², a moment when the main outlets of the time created environmental sections. These events helped to consolidate the debate on sustainability in the global journalistic agenda. In Brazil, ECO-92 was a milestone in raising the press’s awareness for environmental coverage. According to Trigueiro (2017), during this period, a new perspective on environmental impacts and the need to continuously follow climate discussions was inaugurated.

In this context, the challenge arises to train communicators prepared to address socio-environmental issues with depth and responsibility. According to Trigueiro (2017), it is essential that the socio-environmental journalist is in contact with the reality of the problems they will cover. To this end, the *in loco* reporting allows for experiencing the environmental and social impacts, providing a more humanized and assertive approach. Moreover, it is fundamental that the training professional occupies spaces beyond the central regions of urban conglomerates and expands their presence in the peripheries, where the effects of climate disasters are more severe and often underreported.

Inspired by the practice and theory of Trigueiro and the coverage he conducted of ECO-92, panelist and professor Roberto Villar Belmonte (Famecos PUCRS, 2024) advocates the idea that training communicators who understand the relevance of the climate emergency agenda is as challenging as seeking communication solutions for disaster problems:

As a challenge, for me, what is happening here tonight is the challenge of communication solutions: bringing together all aspects of climate justice to think about communication solutions together. [...] For me, this is the great challenge, because there are various interests at the same table, and building solutions like this requires a lot of effort, a lot of dialogue, and a lot of training. (Famecos PUCRS, 2024, 16min45s).

Among the solutions he mentioned to strengthen socio-environmental jour-

2 II United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, from June 3 to 14, 1992.

nalism, the recurring coverage of the topic through the creation of specific sections on climate and the environment in media outlets stands out. Strategies like this enable continuous monitoring of the topic and ensure greater visibility for climate debates.

In this case, journalistic practice should not be limited to sporadic reports on disasters. It is necessary for it to become a constant, accessible, and engaged coverage in the transformation of society, contributing to a qualified debate and concrete actions in the mitigation and adaptation to climate change. In the *Manual for Journalistic Coverage of Climate Disasters*, the authors Amaral et al. (2024) point out the importance of journalists understanding the complexity of meteorological and hydrological threats that can contribute to the occurrence of disasters. They emphasize the use of modern journalistic tools to inform accurately and accessibly, combating misinformation. They also highlight the responsibility of journalists to give visibility to populations in vulnerable situations, positioning them as allies in the fight for climate justice and strengthening the need for inclusive and strategic communication. Furthermore, it is important to reflect that many of the challenges associated with the circulation of quality information are not only the responsibility of journalistic outlets but of society itself, which often lacks access to or understanding of these issues. More than the model of paid access, the difficulty of making free and relevant content visible amid the algorithmic logic of digital platforms stands out today. In this scenario, media outlets face various obstacles – from limited funding to unfair competition with misinformation. According to surveys such as the *Digital News Report* (Newman, 2024), the primary medium for news consumption among Brazilians is digital. Thus, dialogue among the involved parties is necessary and fundamental for the construction of polyphonic narratives to amplify the voices of marginalized groups. Based on communication techniques and sensitivities, spaces can be created for those affected by climate issues to demand care from public and private entities, express their local needs and demands, and build solutions together with other actors in the socio-environmental context.

6. The perspective of care

As we have seen throughout this article, adopting a perspective of care in communication about climate emergencies implies recognizing the interdependence between humans and the environment. This approach promotes empathy and collective responsibility, encouraging actions that protect both people and the planet. Fostering a culture of care can strengthen community resilience and the capacity to respond to climate crises.

By proposing an ethics of care, Brugère (2023, p. 30) points out that it should be thought of “from the description of tension situations in which protagonists are subjected to great vulnerability”. And when we talk about

ethics or culture of care, we need to discuss, primarily, the act of caring and being cared for, about well-being and the obligation to that well-being (Zack, 2009), in the contexts where individuals find themselves, their social and/or cultural beliefs, their histories, and not just the values, rules, and laws (Brugère, 2023, p. 41).

This commitment, according to Tronto (2008), is not motivated by self-interest but seeks a better world by practicing and being willing to meet needs and provide appropriate responses. Being democratic and not exclusive, the responsibility for others makes care a collective act (Tronto, 2020).

At this point, when we talk about responsibilities, we emphasize that care and attention to people in vulnerable situations are typically attributed to public agencies, as Serra (2007) points out, highlighting that information is crucial in risk situations, especially for organizations that deal closely with disasters:

In fact, in a society where citizens in general and the media in particular tend to attribute the responsibility for their security and protection against all kinds of risks to the political system, the occurrence of a risk situation is immediately blamed by these citizens and the media on the decisions or lack of decisions of the government and administration, especially on those elements most directly linked to public safety. Each occurrence of a risk situation thus represents a problem for the credibility of the political system in general and the government in particular. (Serra, 2007, p. 14).

In this same vein, other points can also be raised when considering that “it is mainly government organizations that possess the material and administrative capacity to effectively prepare for and respond to disasters” (Santos & Serafim, 2020, p. 7).

The political issue is thus completely intertwined with the ethics of care, which “leads to a politics of care and a reform of the Social State, which would have the value of a new consolidation of public policies in light of the major current transformations” (Brugère, 2023, p. 128). If “social and political institutions” – as social structures – “shape our values and our practices”, in the same sense, we can see “the vocabulary of care” as “a mechanism [...] that has the greatest potential to transform social and political thought, especially the way we treat the ‘others’” (Tronto, 2008, p. 16, free translation). As the authors suggest, what we need to face in the new times must emerge from a vision of care as public policy, interconnected with media, community, and both public and private system communications activations.

In the book *Risk Society* (2011), German sociologist Ulrich Beck discusses how modern societies deal with risks, particularly those arising from scientific and technological progress. In his thinking, Beck argues that contemporary society lives in a “risk society”, where dangers are no longer local or natural, but global and created by humans themselves, such as cli-

mate change, pollution, and nuclear disasters (Beck, 2011). In the current process of metamorphosis of the world (Beck, 2018), our views and certainties are in constant change, as a consequence of successful modernization, such as digitalization, cosmopolitanization, and climate risk (Beck, 2018).

Beck (2018) also proposes that the way society deals with risks is closely linked to the need for a new type of responsibility and care. In this sense, he suggests that the concept of care should not be understood only individually, but as a collective and global responsibility. This implies an ethics of precaution, where prevention and attention to the future and to the next generations become a priority, since global risk affects everyone, but in different ways, depending on social class, gender, race, and geographical location.

In the face of the challenges posed by communication in emergency scenarios, it becomes evident that symbolic exchanges and mediated emotions play a central role in engaging the public. More than well-researched, rational information, it is emotions that mobilize responses and actions. Environmental journalism, for example, often does not generate as significant behavioral changes as fake news, which exploits emotions and perceptions about the subject. Therefore, it is urgent that academia accelerates research on the complexity of communication in these contexts, adopting a premise based on care and responsible communication. This communication needs to be intentional, co-created with the involved communities and not determined exclusively by privileged researchers or communicators. This was the vision brought by Professor Rosângela Florczak de Oliveira (Famecos PUCRS, 2024) during the meeting. According to the researcher, effective communication models must emerge from dialogue, ensuring that the messages conveyed are truly functional and transformative.

7. Weavings and learnings

As subjects, in our multiple contexts, “we are producers of the object we know; we cooperate with the outside world, and it is this coproduction that gives us the objectivity of the object”. “We are coproducers of objectivity” (Morin, 2015, p. 111). In this regard, the effective action of socio-environmental communicators points to behaviors of anticipation, entrepreneurship, educommunication, and care, as well as proximity and connection with peripheral movements.

The perspectives presented in the panel of the XVI Seicom, in November 2024, and here brought and translated in light of thinkers of communication in Brazil and the world, contribute to the reflection on the role of the communicator as a producer of meanings, as Morin (2015) indicates. Specifically, the work reflects on the potential of dialogue through communication, which ranges from an academic debate with researchers from different fields to one that highlights the views and aspirations of people in

vulnerable situations, transformed into communication strategies delivered to society. Thus, topics that initially seemed so distant, such as gender, race, climate justice, public communication, organizational communication, socio-environmental journalism, and ethics of care, engage in dialogue and teach us about the power and reach of empathetic communication.

The challenges faced in the present time project a future in which only through intersections and relationships of interdependence can sustainable and consistent communication be constructed. In this era of emergencies, the polyphonic and multifaceted tone ensures that narratives have a more resilient approach. Incorporating gender and race perspectives supports discourses on climate justice, even in organizational approaches or in a specialized media role. This holistic and transdisciplinary approach is fundamental to facing the challenges imposed by the consequences of climate change. Finally, collaborative action in building solutions and discourses proves to be a necessary premise for addressing environmental and climate crises.

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