

# Organizational communication in Brazil based on postgraduate production

## A comunicação organizacional no Brasil a partir da produção de pós-graduação

*La comunicación organizacional en Brasil a partir de la producción de posgrado*

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**ABSTRACT** | This work is analytical and reflexive in nature, and aims to (re)trace an overview of the field of organizational communication in Brazil. This is done by examining the scientific production on this subject conducted at postgraduate level in this country, based on the surveys conducted by Margarida Kunsch over the last four decades. The methodology, supported by a systematic literature review based on a corpus of eight publications, allowed us to detail the chronology, contours and methodological choices made by Margarida Kunsch, as well as the characteristics evidenced by the author, in order to highlight the changes or transformations in the field of organizational communication, perceived in the 50 years of investigations at the graduate level in Brazil.

**KEYWORDS:** organizational communication; public relations; scientific production; research; postgraduate.

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**RESUMO** | O trabalho, de caráter analítico e reflexivo, visa (re)traçar um panorama do campo da comunicação organizacional no Brasil, por meio do estudo da produção científica em nível de pós-graduação no país sobre esta temática, com base nos levantamentos realizados por Margarida Kunsch nas últimas quatro décadas. A metodologia apoiada em revisão sistemática de literatura, com base em um corpus de oito publicações, permitiu detalhar a cronologia realizada por Margarida Kunsch, os contornos e escolhas metodológicas realizadas, as características evidenciadas pela autora, mostrando as mudanças ou transformações na área de comunicação organizacional, percebidas ao longo de 50 anos de pesquisas em nível de pós-graduação no Brasil.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** comunicação organizacional; relações públicas; produção científica; pesquisa; pós-graduação.

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**RESUMEN** | Este trabajo, de carácter analítico y reflexivo, busca (re)trazar un panorama del campo de la comunicación organizacional en Brasil mediante el estudio de la producción científica sobre este tema a nivel de posgrado en el país a partir de las encuestas realizadas por Margarida Kunsch en las últimas cuatro décadas. La metodología, apoyada en una revisión sistemática de la literatura, basada en un corpus de ocho publicaciones, permitió detallar la cronología realizada por Margarida Kunsch, los contornos y las opciones metodológicas realizadas, así como las características puestas de manifiesto por la autora, para resaltar los cambios o transformaciones en el área de la comunicación organizacional a lo largo de 50 años de investigaciones a nivel de posgrado en Brasil.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** comunicación organizacional; relaciones públicas; producción científica; investigación; posgrado.

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational communication (OC) studies in Latin America have undergone a legitimation process that includes different stages, among which the recognition of scientific production in this field emerges as a key element, reflected in publications (e.g., scientific articles, books, chapters, dissertations and theses, among others). Recent diachronic and chronological studies focusing on the knowledge production of OC in Latin America (Arzuaga-Williams, 2019; Donoso et al., 2023; Vásquez et al., 2022) and specifically addressing the Brazilian scenario (Scroferneker et al., 2016; Oliveira & Marques, 2017; Kunsch, 2019) allow us to look at the evolutionary panorama of a field that is still growing.

Forms, modalities and methodologies for identifying and mapping organizational communication (OC) in Brazil have evolved, leading to a variety of investigations aimed at mapping the OC scenario in Brazil based on graduate scientific productions (Kunsch, 1997, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2015, 2019; Oliveira & Marques, 2017; Scroferneker et al., 2016).

Various researchers have developed this type of approach in recent decades, especially Margarida Maria Krohling Kunsch, who has studied and observed dissertations and theses on public relations and organizational communication published in Brazil since the 1980s. Kunsch's works (1999, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2015, 2019) contribute to sketching an evolutionary panorama of OC by examining the scientific knowledge generated in higher education research to build a chronology that helps to understand the nuances, peculiarities and changes of organizational communication in Brazil.

The first degree programs in Communication Sciences were established in 1972 with the first graduate program (PPG) in Communication Sciences at the University of São Paulo's School of Communications and Arts, but this area is constantly expanding, as evidenced by the approval of recent proposals from the Ministry of Education and the 90 degree programs currently offered (CAPES

– Brazilian Federal Agency for the Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education, 2023)<sup>1</sup>. Although there are numerous PPGs in Communication, only some of these programs offer lines of research oriented to, focused on, or looking at phenomena in Organizational Communication or Public Relations (Kunsch, 2009, 2015).

In this sense, the article poses the question: how can we build a panorama of OC in Brazil based on the scientific production of graduate students? To this end, the study outlines an overview of OC studies in Brazil to highlight the main features that characterize this scenario between 1970 and 2022 by examining Margarida Kunsch's publications on the subject.

Based on the various panoramic studies conducted by Kunsch, we will shed light on the changes in OC from the 1970s to today by analyzing the surveys conducted and published by the author, focusing on academic production.

This is a descriptive, exploratory study based on a bibliographic search, a document search and a systematic literature review of the works published by Margarida Kunsch, which focused on the mapping of organizational communication studies in Brazil. The selection of the analytical corpus was based on the various works published by Kunsch over the last four decades.

In our understanding, the research carried out by Margarida Kunsch for more than four decades without interruption to identify, register, analyze and disclose the scientific production (dissertations and theses) on OC and PR in Brazil contribute to understanding the Brazilian scenario in a chronological and evolutionary perspective. But they also contribute more generally to the study of OC in Latin America by examining the author's findings in the light of the academic needs and particularities of each country.

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1. In Brazil, CAPES is the agency responsible for regulating, monitoring, evaluating and opening new degree programs. The latter is done via an annual selection announcement, which is open to all fields of knowledge. In recent years, eight new degree courses have been opened in the field of Communication: master in Communication at the UFMA (2018); professional master in Communication at the UFMA (2018); master in Communication and Power at the UFMT (2019); professional master in Management and Practices in Communication and Culture at the UFBA (2023); master in Communication at the UNIR (2023); master in Communication and Social Innovation at the UFPE (2023); academic doctorate in Communication at the UFG (2019); academic doctorate in Communication at the UFMS (2023). Information about the APCN calls for the opening of new graduate programs in Brazil can be found on the website: <https://www.gov.br/pt-br/servicos/obter-autorizacao-abertura-novos-cursos-pos-graduacao-stricto-sensu-mestrado-doutorado-brasil-apcn>

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Organizational communication in Brazil and its interface with Public Relations

The particular development of Organizational Communication studies in Brazil has been the subject of various works (Arzuaga-Williams, 2019; Donoso et al., 2023; Vásquez et al, 2022), highlighting the deep professional and academic link between Public Relations and OC in the Latin American scenario, as well as the influence of Brazilian scientific production in the consolidation of OC in the region, where the publications of Margarida Kunsch became an important reference due to their contribution to the specific production of knowledge about the Brazilian scenario (Donoso et al., 2023).

As an academic field, organizational communication in Brazil has developed in conjunction with the so-called entrepreneurial journalism, pioneered by the dissertation developed in 1973 by the journalist Gaudêncio Torquato do Rego, in which he presents the basic pillars of OC based on the practices of the specialized press.

The academic development of Organizational Communication is intertwined with the consolidation of Public Relations or, according to Kunsch (1997), PR and OC can be seen as interfaces of a communication system. Such a view determines the path and know-how of organizational communication in Brazil, separating itself from academic independence and any connection with management-related areas — administration, organizational studies and management engineering— and maintaining its development under the aegis of Communication Sciences and Public Relations.

This convergence and theoretical-practical relationship has shaped the academic production on communication in organizations and the perception of public relations professionals working directly in this field. In a brief excerpt summarizing the opinions of Brazilian public relations professionals about the relationship between OC and PR, Kunsch (1997) crystallizes not only the historical origins of OC in Brazil, but also their related, correlated and sometimes overlapping development:

We asked whether Public Relations in Brazil could be considered a precursor to Organizational Communication. Most answered in the affirmative, pointing out that with the emergence of multinational companies, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, public relations helped to systematize Organizational Communication with the help of specific departments. For others, propaganda and journalism were part of Organizational Communication long before Public Relations. And some claim that Public Relations is Organizational Communication (Kunsch, 1997, p.81).

Originally a Brazilian phenomenon, the association between public relations and organizational communication dates back to the origins of communication practices and organizational contexts in Brazil, but has attracted the attention of international researchers where the fields developed relatively independently. In an interview conducted during a brief visit to Brazil, researcher Dennis Mumby states on the differences and particularities he observed in the Brazilian OC:

“[...] the field is clearly closely linked to Public Relations; in fact, the two fields seem to be conceived as one in Brazil. I was very surprised when I was asked in São Paulo if I wanted to study public relations — a field I knew practically nothing about!” (Mumby, 2009, p. 205).

Mumby’s astonishment highlights the unique connection between PR and OC in Brazil, domains that are notoriously far apart in countries like the United States and that account for a different orientation in the understanding of organizational communication as a field of study, but also of specific professional training.

According to Oliveira and de Paula, Public Relations and Organizational Communication can converge, but do not overlap, because

even if their practices are intertwined, their specificities can be identified so that we arrive at the specific objects of study for each. Simply put, they not only overlap but also intertwine, as they are structurally interconnected and interdependent practices (2005, p.26).

It is clear from the above that the proximity between the fields, especially in the context of practice and research in Brazil, does not mean that the specific characteristics of each field are erased, nor that one dominates over the other. Public Relations, as a profession and as a scientific field, both regulated in Brazil, are at the origin of OC, from the courses offered to the development of lines of research under the aegis of Communication Sciences, and they are also responsible for the training of most professionals in charge of communication of and in Brazilian organizations.

Such proximity may have favored the conceptual exchange between public relations and organizational communication, but as Oliveira and de Paula (2005) point out, this should not be synonymous with overlap, especially with regard to the theoretical and methodological framework underlying academic training in Brazil. Therefore, the study of the conceptual development and progression of Organizational Communication until its consolidation in Brazil as a theoretical field that evolves in dialog and at the interface with other fields of knowledge is of utmost importance (Scroferneker, 2009).

A pioneer in this endeavor was Kunsch, who identified the changes in organizational communication and divided them into eras: “the product era (1950s), the image era (1960s), the strategy era (1970s and 1980s) and the globalization era (1990s)” (1997, p. 57), to which we could add “the relationship era” from the 2000s onwards, which emphasizes the human dimension of OC (Kunsch, 2010).

Throughout these changes and developments, we can observe different terms used in Brazil in relation to OC studies and practices, reflecting both choices and temporal markers, market frameworks or paradigmatic affiliations. From the professional press, which was widely used in Brazilian organizations between the 1950s and 1970s, the term business communication evolved (Torquato, 1986; Nassar and Figueiredo, 1995; Bueno, 2003), which was prevalent in professional and business contexts. According to Kunsch (1997), the term organizational communication gained momentum in 1996 after a lecture by professor and researcher Gaudêncio Torquato, in which he referred to activities previously defined as corporate communication or trade press as OC. The expansion of OC research in Brazil generated new perspectives inspired by interpretative paradigms, stimulating reflections on the relationships and interactions in the routine of organizations and giving rise to a new concept associated with communication within organizations (Oliveira, 2002), a terminology that characterizes the theoretical and epistemological stance of Brazilian communication studies.

Although organizational communication had been practiced in Brazilian organizations since the mid-1950s, it was only with the establishment of undergraduate courses in Communication and especially Public Relations (1967) and later undergraduate courses in Communication (1972) –both created by ECA-USP– that OC developed into an academic field based on scientific knowledge production, bringing practice and theory closer together to focus on the communication phenomena that permeate organizations.

In order to understand the evolution of Brazilian OC based on the creation of Communication studies courses that have allowed for in-depth and informed research into the national reality, we opted for a comprehensive analysis of the various thesis and dissertation surveys on OC conducted by Margarida Kunsch, as she is the only Brazilian researcher to have collected, systematized and published data on the subject since 1997.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, we conducted an exploratory and descriptive study based on a bibliographic and documentary survey and a systematic literature search based on an analytical corpus of works published by

Margarida Kunsch. The selection was based on the following criteria: thematic focus on academic production in OC and PR, graduate course approach, and analytical scope focusing on theses and dissertations on OC.

We opted for a systematic review (Torgerson & Light, 2017; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2020) because this method lends itself to the collection and careful analysis of the extensive existing bibliography on Brazilian communication. In this perspective, the collection of bibliographic data sources is a fundamental step in the systematic review method, guided by the research question How can we build an overview of OC in Brazil based on the scientific production of graduates? Therefore, we established several criteria for the selection of Kunsch's works to be included in the systematic review: a) a panoramic, nationwide approach to Brazilian scientific production; b) a focus on graduate publications in Brazil, and c) that had dissertations and theses on organizational communication as the object of analysis.

As a result, eight works written by Margarida Kunsch that met the defined criteria were identified and included in the study sample: 2 book chapters written by the author, 2 articles published in the *Annals of Scientific Events in Communication*, 2 articles published in indexed scientific Communication journals, and 1 technical-scientific report on the research conducted by the author, as well as a book.

Using an analytical and reflective approach, the study of the selected corpus allowed us to detail the chronology established by Margarida Kunsch, the divisions and methodological choices she made, as well as the characteristics highlighted by the author, in order to show the changes or transformations in the field of organizational communication in 50 years of higher education research in Brazil.

To illustrate this evolution of Brazilian OC based on the master's and doctoral theses studied, classified and published by Margarida Kunsch, we have created a summary table organized by decade — from 1970 to the present — highlighting the socio-historical context influencing Brazilian OC research, the predominant approach or perspective in a given period, and the evident or predominant characteristics among the dissertations and theses studied in each decade.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Academic production in OC and Brazilian graduate studies: a chronological review**

Various researchers have chosen as their methodology the analysis of dissertations and theses defended in Brazil, with a focus on organizational communication (Oliveira & Marques, 2017; Scroferneker et al., 2016; Scroferneker et al., 2017).



These include the work of researcher Margarida M. K. Kunsch, a Brazilian reference in the field of Public Relations (PR) and Organizational Communication (OC), who has been recording and studying Brazilian scientific production on these topics for several decades.

From a systematic analysis of Kunsch's publications aimed at analyzing theses and dissertations on organizational communication and public relations in Brazil, we selected seven works that both demonstrate the author's commitment to monitoring production on these topics in Brazil and provide an overview of the evolution of OC, decade by decade, based on research conducted in Brazilian communication studies courses.

Table 1 shows a summary of the studies selected for this review.

<b>Period analyzed</b>	<b>Margarida Kunsch's publications</b>	<b>Methodology used in the study</b>
1950 to 1995	Kunsch (1997)	Manual data collection (contact with PPG). Search in physical databases (libraries and institutional repositories).
1970 to 2000	Kunsch (2002)	Manual data collection (contact with PPG). Search in physical databases (libraries and institutional repositories)
1970 to 2000	Kunsch (2003)	Manual data collection (contact with PPG). Search in physical databases (libraries and institutional repositories).
2000 to 2006	Kunsch (2007)	Search in physical and virtual databases. Survey on virtual institutional repositories. Research on a national basis of theses and dissertations.
1970 to 2007	Kunsch (2009)	Search in physical and virtual databases. Survey on virtual institutional repositories. Research on a national basis of theses and dissertations.
2000 to 2010	Kunsch (2011)	Search in physical and virtual databases. Survey on virtual institutional repositories. Research on a national basis of theses and dissertations.
2000 to 2014	Kunsch (2015)	Search in physical and virtual databases. Survey on virtual institutional repositories. Research on a national basis of theses and dissertations.
2014 to 2018	Kunsch (2019)	Search in physical and virtual databases. Survey on virtual institutional repositories. Research on a national basis of theses and dissertations.

**Table 1. Studies by Kunsch on scientific OC production in Brazilian graduate studies**

*Source: Own elaboration.*

After an initial review and analysis of the selected texts, we were able to observe the predominant perspectives or approaches by decade, as well as highlight the main features perceived and listed in Kunsch's work on Brazilian academic production, based on theses and dissertations written from the 1970s onwards.

Her work includes the groundbreaking publication in 1997 of the first quantitative and thematic study of graduate scientific production in Organizational Communication and Public Relations. This research resulted in the book *Relações Públicas e modernidade: novos paradigmas da Comunicação Organizacional* [Public Relations and Modernity: New Paradigms of Organizational Communication], in which Kunsch notes the publication of 19 master's theses and four dissertations written between 1950 and 1995. Regarding the topics covered during this period, the author emphasizes that trend press, interpersonal communication, public communication, and college press are the most prevalent in doctoral research; among the master's theses, it is internal communication, trend press, information systems, organizational communication, and technological information (Kunsch, 1997).

This paper also points out the concentration of research in the Southeast of Brazil, especially in the state of São Paulo, coming from ECA-USP (9 master's theses and 4 doctoral theses), the Methodist Institute of Higher Education (four master's theses), Fundação Getúlio Vargas (one master's thesis) and PUC-SP (one master's thesis), as well as dissertations defended at UFRJ (three dissertations), and only one master's thesis from the Midwest, from the University of Brasilia.

This phenomenon can be explained, on the one hand, by the concentration of the population and industrial progress in the Southeast of Brazil and, on the other, by intellectual development, as the first bachelor's and master's degree programs in the field of Communications were created in this region. The School of Communications and Arts and the graduate program in Communication Sciences created in 1972 by the College of São Paulo, a pioneer in the field of communication in Latin America, may explain the large number of master's and doctoral theses on organizational communication and public relations conducted during this period. The ECA-USP also stands out for the pioneering work of two referees who are considered the fathers of organizational communication and public relations in Brazil: the doctoral thesis of Professor Francisco Gaudêncio Torquato do Rêgo, entitled *Comunicação Organizacional/comunicação institucional: conceitos, estratégias, sistemas, estruturas, planejamento e técnicas* [Organizational Communication / Institutional Communication: Concepts, Strategies, Systems, Structures, Planning and Techniques] and the dissertation by Cândido Teobaldo de Souza Andrade entitled *Relações Públicas e o interesse público* [Public Relations and the Public Interest], both of which were conducted and defended at ECA-USP in the 1970s.

Later, Kunsch (2002) published an article with data from a survey that focused on theses and dissertations defended between 1970 and 2000 in five graduate programs (PPGs) in Communication, which at the time had research concentrations in organizational communication and public relations, from the following educational institutions: School of Communication and Arts, University of São Paulo (ECA-USP), Methodist University of São Paulo (UMESP), Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS) and Faculdade Cásper Líbero.

The following year, Kunsch (2003) revisited these data and examined and described details of the themes and approaches used in master's and doctoral research in Communication PPGs focusing on OC and PR, presenting a larger amount of quantitative data.

In publications from 2002 and 2003, whose time frame includes graduate research produced between 1970 and 2000, Kunsch (2003) lists 91 master's theses, 28 doctoral dissertations, and 7 postdoctoral theses that focus on organizational communication and public relations. He also highlights the production of research focused on professional practice, mostly descriptive theoretical-practical case studies, as opposed to theoretical research. The inclusion of existing postdoctoral theses on this topic in the author's review shows the progress that has been made in the field at this time, as well as the maturity and commitment of Brazilian researchers to OC education through academic degrees that match their commitment to the field and make it possible to obtain public funding for their studies.

In 2007, Kunsch published the results of a study focusing on the analysis of Brazilian scientific production in OC and PR between 2000 and 2006. In it, the author emphasizes the difficulty at the time of conducting a bibliographic survey of graduate publications in Brazil and describes the need for a mixed data collection methodology that includes consultation of national databases (CAPES Database of Theses and Dissertations), printed collections, virtual and physical libraries, and national institutional repositories of PPGs in Communication. As in her earlier studies, Kunsch found that the ECA-USP, the UMESp and the PUC-RS play a leading role. They stand out not only for their high number of theses and dissertations on organizational communication and public relations, but also for maintaining specific lines of research on these topics in their graduate programs in Communication. However, unlike previous studies, Kunsch (2007) included a PPG in Production Engineering from the Federal University of Santa Catarina in the 2000-2006 sample because of its large number of publications on organizational communication.

The 2007 survey shows that the focus is on qualitative aspects compared to earlier publications. In the data collection on theses and dissertations on OC and PR defended in graduate programs between 2000 and 2006, clear registration criteria were used — title, abstract, keywords, authorship, institution, year, supervisor — to enable text analysis and other qualitative correlations. Kunsch (2007) identified 217 master's theses and 72 doctoral dissertations that were defended between 2000 and 2006 and dealt primarily with organizational communication phenomena and to a lesser extent with public relations. In both cases, according to the author, the theses specialized in looking at professional work in Public Relations or Organizational Communication from an instrumental and functionalist perspective, which had already been observed in previous studies. Most dissertations examined “internal communication (23), digital communication, the Internet and new information technologies (21), third sector communication and social responsibility (21), and university press and scientific dissemination (16)” (Kunsch, 2007, p. 50). The theses, in turn, used administrative/managerial approaches to communication from the perspective of culture, processes and change in organizations, as well as new perspectives such as complexity, which became increasingly important. Doctoral research focused on topics such as “identity, corporate image, institutional image, reputation, etc.; rhetoric and institutional discourses; social responsibility and the third sector” (Kunsch, 2007, p. 52) as well as an increase in productions in which technology and digital communication played a central role.

In the chapter published in 2009 as part of her collection on Organizational Communication, Kunsch provides an overview of her research on Brazilian academic production in OC, based on data from studies defended in graduate courses. In this publication, the author focuses less on the quantitative aspects raised in her research, but mainly on the differences that characterize Brazilian OC, based on the aspects that emerge in the bibliographic production analyzed since 1970. Kunsch (2009) indicates 33 functional PPGs in Communication, according to the 2008 CAPES data, of which only six presented lines of research focused on or related to organizational communication: ECA-USP, Methodist University of São Paulo, PUC-RS, PUC-Minas, Federal University of Santa Maria and the Catholic University of Brasília.

In a later publication, Kunsch (2011) focused on the period from 2000 to 2010 and selected the scientific production of eight PPGs in the field of Communication that included these topics among their research priorities and were associated with the following institutions: ECA-USP, PUC-RS, UMESP, Faculdade Cásper Líbero, UFSM, PUC-Minas, UCB and UCSC. Kunsch (2011) improves her methodology to take into account the virtual dissemination of theses promoted in Brazil, but notes that “the greatest difficulty of the study was precisely that the production of the years 2000 to 2003 was not available on the Internet; nevertheless, thanks to the

earlier surveys, it was possible to access the abstracts” (p. 475). This fact underlines and demonstrates the importance of the research conducted by Kunsch in Brazil since the 1970s on the academic production of graduates in OC and PR.

Her qualitative approach favors the observation and analysis of differentiated, unique elements in works produced in an academic environment where organizational communication is recognized or supervised by researchers dedicated to this field. In terms of methodological aspects, the analysis of the abstracts highlighted methodological choices while also indicating that in some papers the methods and techniques used were either not described or insufficiently described. Kunsch (2011) found that empirical studies and in particular case studies predominated in the theses and theses analyzed, as well as a small number of theoretical studies based on bibliographic searches.

In 2015, Kunsch published an article with an expanded corpus of publications from 2000 to 2014 that drew on the theses and dissertations of 18 PPGs in Communication and focused on identifying the topics, methods, and gender of researchers in OC and PR, as well as analyzing and reflecting on key trends and perspectives in these fields. The search and selection criteria included papers published on the websites of the selected degree programs, as well as querying the CAPES Theses and Dissertations Database.

In this publication, the author expands her analysis criteria and presents new information on the Brazilian scenario for graduates of Communication degree programs, focusing on research on OC and PR that shows trends and perspectives for the development of these areas (Kunsch, 2015). Of particular note is the quantitative and stratified breakdown by subfield - Public Relations or Organizational Communication — as well as the classification of papers by gender, approach and methodology of the researchers. Between 2000 and 2014, the author found that works on organizational communication — 289 dissertations and 96 theses— - outnumbered those on public relations. According to Kunsch (2015), applied research predominates at both levels, especially case studies and empirical studies. Although case studies have contributed to knowledge about organizational communication based on organizational performance, the persistence or persistence of this method can be problematic if it is not accompanied by theoretical development and the production of critical knowledge about OC know-how.

Kunsch’s (2011, 2015) interest in classifying Brazilian graduate research in OC based on the gender of the author is noteworthy. In this regard, Kunsch (2011) observed “a significant difference and more than double the number of dissertations between male authors (55) and female authors (148)” among master’s dissertations in OC and PR defended in Brazil between 2000 and 2010. An analysis carried out

between 2000 and 2014 confirmed that most of the research papers were written by women, at both levels, but with a greater difference in master's publications (Kunsch, 2015), a phenomenon that should be observed at the national level, in contrast to the studies on the integration of women in the communication labor market in Brazil.

Her most recent publication (Kunsch, 2019) complements the earlier studies and provides data on graduate production in OC and PR between 2014 and 2018, highlighting qualitative aspects that show progress and changes in the approaches of the theses and dissertations analyzed. Kunsch (2019) maintains the scope of graduate productions developed in PPGs in Communication and uses thematic macro-descriptors focusing on OC and PR to select the analytical corpus.

The author highlights the development of theoretical research focusing on OC and PR, especially in doctoral dissertations. In this research, she identified 108 master's theses and 53 doctoral dissertations defended in Brazil between 2014 and 2018, whose topics were related to organizational communication and/or public relations. For the first time in the entire period observed, the graduate program in Communication at ECA-USP was not ahead in the number of research theses produced, but was surpassed by the PPG in Communication at PUCRS in the number of theses (18) and tied with the PPG at UMESP (both with 17 theses).

From a qualitative assessment of the most important theses produced since 2014, the author highlights 12 that, in her opinion, present "innovative theoretical proposals and relevant and diverse methodologies" (Kunsch, 2019, p. 2577). Among the research described, we highlight studies in organizational communication aimed at understanding organizational strategy (Gomes, 2014), theoretical-empirical research on the (in)visibility of organizational strategies in digital social networks (Wander, 2018), theoretical-analytical studies on the organizational discourse produced in processes of organizational communication (Silva, 2018), studies on the appeal to sustainability in organizational communication (Oliveira, 2015; Kaufmann, 2016; Teixeira, 2017), studies on the relationship between organizational communication and memory in/of organizations (Souza, 2018) or the study of organizational communication and levels of recognition and legitimacy in multinational companies (Amorim, 2018).

These topics show an interest in the study of organizational processes, practices and strategies from a communicative perspective based on the analysis of private (for-profit) organizations, as well as theoretical proposals or reflections based on observations or the analysis of empirical cases. This expansion and development trend towards interpretative, analytical and reflexive studies of organizational communication may indicate a new cycle in the scientific development of OC towards the maturity or "consolidation of these fields of knowledge and organizational

practices” (Kunsch 2019, p. 2584). This recent evolutionary process, especially in organizational communication approaches, also seems to have been driven by the creation of the Abrapcorp Award for Theses and Dissertations, which has been awarded by the Brazilian Association of Researchers in Organizational Communication and Public Relations (Abrapcorp) since 2014. The initiative rewards outstanding master’s and doctoral theses in the field of organizational communication and public relations, but also promotes new research and makes it possible to “give visibility to production, promote the development of research networks and improve the dissemination of knowledge in this area” (“Prêmio Abrapcorp...”, 2021, para. 1).

To illustrate and chronologically classify the analyzes carried out by decade, based on the characteristics of Brazilian theses and dissertations on OC listed by Kunsch, we have created table 2.

Looking back at the emergence of Public Relations and Organizational Communication in Brazil, we can see how the view of Organizational Communication initially focused on the effectiveness and efficiency of the communication process (Torquato, 1986) and on the control of techniques, tools and functions (Halliday, 1979), only later turning to original theoretical problematizations that would enable the understanding of communication phenomena taking place in organizations. As Mumby (2009) has observed, OC in Brazil remains strongly focused on professional practice and seems to be late in seeking theoretical foundations that underpin not only observation but also reflection on communicative know-how.

Dennis Mumby’s perception is confirmed by Kunsch’s extensive and continuous research, as in the last four decades of mapping the production of master’s and doctoral theses, the author observed and registered a prevalence of applied, empirical and functionalist-oriented works based on organizational case studies until the mid-2010s. In other words, Kunsch’s chronology shows how interest in the study of organizational communication in Brazil since the 1970s has essentially focused on organizational practices - to the detriment of the formulation of theoretical concepts that support the understanding of this phenomenon.

Some prominent figures in Brazil were pioneers in their reflections on Organizational Communication, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, when important publications on the subject were published (Halliday, 1975; Kunsch, 1985; Torquato, 1984, 1986), but the era of academic growth and abundance, with outstanding theoretical maturity, began in the following decades, with an increase in the number of graduate studies on OC and, more recently (Kunsch, 2019), by the expansion of theoretical and reflective research, indicating the renewal and scientific strengthening of a field that is emancipating itself from public relations in Brazil.

Period	Historical context of OC	Predominant approach/focus in theses and dissertations	Characteristics of graduate academic production
1970s	Creation of the first graduate programs in Communication Studies in Brazil.	Applied (practical) and case studies.	Emphasis on corporate media products. Predominance of functionalist approaches to Organizational Communication.
1980s	Rapid industrialization process in Brazil and investments in science and technology.	Applied (practical) and case studies.	Emphasis on corporate media products. Predominance of functionalist approaches to Organizational Communication.
1990s	Increase in publications in/about OC in Brazil.	Applied (practical) and case studies.	Predominance of research on Public Relations compared with those focused on Organizational Communication. Emphasis on corporate media products. Predominance of functionalist and managerial approaches to OC.
2000s	Creation of <i>lato sensu</i> graduate courses, of scientific institutions and journals specialized in OC in Brazil. Digital publication of dissertations and theses on HEI websites becomes mandatory.	Applied (practical) and case studies.	Thematic diversity. Predominance of themes focused on the market, brands, communication and digital media, but including themes focused on communication social aspects and approaches such as the third sector, social responsibility, etc. Increase in bibliographic investigations with more critical approaches, especially in doctoral theses.
2010s	Creation of the first organizational communication undergraduate courses in Brazil. Creation of the Abrapcorp Award for theses and dissertations in OC and PR.	Applied (practical), bibliographic and theoretical studies.	Development of master's and doctoral research with theoretical and analytical approaches. Functionalist approach coexists alongside interpretive perspectives of Organizational Communication.

**Table 2. Evolution of OC in Brazil based on graduate academic production**

*Source: Own elaboration based on Kunsch (1997, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019).*

## CONCLUSIONS

Scientific production in the field of Organizational Communication in Brazil has developed since its beginnings in conjunction with Public Relations training and practices as part of a genuine Brazilian identity that has conceived these



subfields of Communication in a fruitful intersection. In this context, the work of Brazilian researcher Margarida Maria Krohling Kunsch stands out for her pioneering spirit in exploring convergences, boundaries and thematic overlaps, as well as in observing, collecting and publishing data on Brazilian scientific production related to Organizational Communication and public relations.

This work, which outlines a panorama of Brazilian studies on organizational communication, takes a look at Margarida Kunsch's publications and highlights her contribution to the recognition of Brazilian scientific production in this area. It is based on a review of the master's and doctoral theses carried out since 1970, when Brazil began to offer degree programs in Communication.

Kunsch's research, reflected in various publications and analyzed here thanks to access to articles published in events, articles in scientific journals, book chapters, books and research reports, contributes to outlining an evolutionary chronology of OC knowledge production by examining the theses and dissertations produced in Brazil, while historically delimiting the progress of graduate courses in Communication. Kunsch (2015) registered about 45 graduate programs in Communication in 2015 and their expansion to 56 graduate programs in 2019. In 2023, there were 90 functioning graduate programs in Communication (masters and PhD) in Brazil. This is according to reports from the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education, an institution that promotes and approves the opening of degree programs and evaluates the quality of master's and doctoral programs.

These figures illustrate how quickly the field of Communication has developed in Brazil. But they also show what a broad panorama we are dealing with when we conduct a study of the current state of organizational communication based on academic production. This underlines the importance of the research carried out since the 1980s, especially that of Margarida Kunsch, who was singled out for her contribution to the creation of a chronology of the development of Brazilian higher education research in the field of Organizational Communication and Public Relations.

Since this work is not in a position to comprehensively summarize the entirety of the scientific production of Brazilian graduates in OC, it aims to highlight the remarkable contributions of Margarida Kunsch in this sense and, above all, her contribution to:

1. Historical records and memories of Organizational Communication, especially with regard to the first decades of graduate research, when such data was limited or difficult to access.

2. Chronological and evolutionary understanding of the Brazilian reality of graduate research on organizational communication.
3. Scientific dissemination and visibility of OC education based on the knowledge gained through masters and doctoral research in Brazil.

Kunsch's work shows how Brazilian graduate studies on organizational communication have changed over the years in terms of research areas or lines, pointing to an evident decline, although the development of theses and dissertations on the subject continues. Perhaps the study of Communication has moved beyond a phase of necessary specialization and is now moving towards interdisciplinarity, in which topics, subjects and methods are explored in the light of a common science (Sodré, 2015).

We therefore hope that this study can contribute to the reflection on knowledge production in Latin America by highlighting, based on the overview of the work of Margarida Kunsch, the importance of a chronological record of the scientific history of this field and by showing a methodological path that can be adopted by authors in other countries.

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