

Black Friday and the logic of hyperconsumption: an analysis of the economic coverage by *Folha de S.Paulo*

Black Friday e a lógica do hiperconsumo: uma análise da cobertura econômica da *Folha de S.Paulo*

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ABSTRACT: *An examination of Folha de S.Paulo's Black Friday coverage reveals an economic journalism that, while reporting, simultaneously informs, guides, and reinforces the dynamics of hyperconsumption. The article presents the results of a qualitative case study based on the analysis of 13 texts published on the eve of and on Black Friday. The findings indicate the prevalence of frames that naturalize rising sales and portray declining consumption as a sign of economic anomaly. The analysis engages with scholarship on economic journalism and is grounded in the conception of consumption as a symbolic system and in the description of the affective and social intensification of hyperconsumption. The study shows that, although information is provided, there is a lack of critical problematization of the promises and frustrations produced by consumer culture.*

Keywords: *hyperconsumption; economic journalism; Black Friday; symbolic consumption; financial literacy.*

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RESUMO: *A leitura da cobertura da Black Friday pela Folha de S.Paulo revela um jornalismo econômico que, ao narrar, simultaneamente informa, orienta e reafirma dinâmicas do hiperconsumo. O artigo apresenta resultados de um estudo de caso qualitativo, baseado na análise de 13 textos publicados na véspera e no dia da Black Friday. Observa-se a prevalência de enquadramentos que naturalizam o aumento das vendas e tratam sua queda como sinal de anomalia econômica. A análise dialoga com autores do jornalismo econômico, para quem o consumo opera como sistema simbólico, e descreve a intensificação afetiva e social do hiperconsumo. O exame revela que, embora haja informação, falta problematizar as promessas e frustrações produzidas pela cultura consumista.*

Palavras-chave: *hiperconsumo; jornalismo econômico; Black Friday; consumo simbólico; educação financeira.*

Introduction

“We take part every year; it’s already a family tradition. Last year we lost our youngest daughter — her head was trampled, smashed — but in her honor we’re going to find another little girl and smash her head this year” (SOUTH PARK, 2013, our translation). The line, spoken by a father interviewed while waiting with his family in line to enter a store during Black Friday, in the episode “Black Friday” from the 17th season of the series South Park, ironically and exaggeratedly illustrates the logic of the hyper-consumerist apotheosis that characterizes the 21st century.

By taking commercial rituals and traditions to the extreme, the episode highlights how consumption can orient everyday life, mobilizing social practices and even extreme behaviors in the name of market logic. The term Black Friday, coined by the Philadelphia police in the 1960s to describe the chaos caused by the flow of consumers during end-of-year shopping, became popular from the 1980s onward as a symbol of the biggest sales day in the United States (ALMEIDA, 2023). From the 2010s onward, the practice was incorporated into Brazil, consolidating itself as one of the main events in the commercial calendar.

Discussions on consumption and well-being, however, predate Black Friday itself. In the 19th century, the utilitarianism of Stuart Mill (2000) defended the pursuit of pleasure and happiness as legitimate principles of social life. In the 20th century, Baudrillard (1995) interpreted consumption as a system of signs oriented less toward the satisfaction of needs and more toward the production of symbolic distinctions. In the early 21st century, Lipovetsky (2007) characterizes hyper-consumerism as a regime marked by seduction, personalization, and accelerated obsolescence, in which desires are constantly updated by a market oriented toward experiences and identities.

In a context shaped by digital platforms, algorithms, and social networks, events such as Black Friday crystallize the peak of this hyper-consumerist regime. Within this framework, the central question of this article emerges: in what way does the journalistic narrative of *Folha de S. Paulo* regarding Black Friday 2025 reproduce or problematize the logic of a hyper-consumerist society?

To answer this question, the study is characterized as a qualitative and interpretive case study, centered on the coverage of the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* regarding the event. The choice of outlet is justified by its national prominence and its representativeness in Brazilian economic journalism. As Martino (2018, p. 152, our translation) observes, when studying a case, “it is possible to gain an idea of what happens in others [...] A case is representative when many others could be analyzed, with similar results.”

The corpus comprises 13 texts published on the newspaper’s website on the eve (November 27th, 2025) and on the day of Black Friday (November 28th, 2025), including reports from the Economics section and one opinion column. The time frame corresponds to the moment of greatest symbolic and economic intensity of the event, allowing for an explicit observation of the narrative framings attributed to consumption.

The analysis was conducted through an interpretive reading inspired by discourse analysis, guided by Baudrillard (1995) and Lipovetsky (2007), identifying patterns such as the naturalization of sales growth, the pathologization of decline, and the celebration of market expansion. A dialogical and reflexive perspective is also maintained (QUEIRÓS; SOUZA, 2025), conceiving the analytical process as a situated encounter between researcher and object, without foregoing the explicitness of the procedures adopted.

From Stuart Mill’s Liberalism to Lipovetsky’s Hyper-Consumerism

In the text *What Is Utilitarianism*, written in the 19th century, Stuart Mill (2000) explains that, from Epicurus to Bentham, the theory of utility operates from the perspective of pleasure as a value in itself and the absence of pain as a condition of happiness. “By happiness is meant pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the deprivation of pleasure” (MILL, 2000, p. 187, our translation). By shifting the center of ethical life to the pleasure-suffering axis, utilitarianism inaugurates a modern reflection that, although it does not address consumption directly, opens space for thinking about the pursuit of satisfaction as one of the driving forces of social life.

Lipovetsky (2007), in turn, observes that the contemporary appeal to consumption is historically related to the evolution of communication media — from the press to radio, from television to digital media — constituting an increasingly mediatized society oriented by incessant stimuli. In this way, a dialogical relationship is formed between the utilitarian conception of pleasure as happiness (and the absence of pain) and the hyper-consumerist logic, in which participating in the game of consumption means integrating into a regime of permanent satisfaction, while exclusion from this arena may be perceived as disappointment or unhappiness. Consumption thus rises in the hierarchy of pleasures. After all, as Mill (2000, p. 189, our translation) states, “it is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others.” Over time, the field of consumption has come to incorporate almost all of these forms of pleasure-material, symbolic, affective, and even those linked to individual well-being.

Before Lipovetsky (2007), this perspective had already been problematized by Baudrillard (1995) in the 1970s, who interprets consumption not as a response to needs, but as the production of signs and meanings. For the author, consumer society is defined not only by the profusion of goods and services, “but by the even more important fact that everything is service: what is offered for consumption never presents itself as a pure and simple product, but as a personal service and as Signification” (BAUDRILLARD, 1995, p. 168, our translation). For the author, there is a personalization of consumption: “It reveals itself as the warmth of gratification and personal comfort that gives it its full meaning; it is not a matter of pure and simple satisfaction. Modern consumers bask in the sunshine of solicitude” (BAUDRILLARD, 1995, p. 169, our translation).

In a certain sense, Baudrillard’s (1995) reading, centered on the transformation of objects into signs and on the personalization of gratifications, finds continuity and updating in Lipovetsky’s (2007) work, which expands this diagnosis by observing that consumption comes to shape not only behaviors, but also sensibilities and normative structures of the individual. According to the author, we live in a post-moralist society, in

which traditional codes of conduct give way to a flexible ethics oriented toward personal autonomy, well-being, and the logic of individualized choice. Such a rupture, moreover, took place through consumption.

The civilization of consumerist well-being was largely responsible for the end of the once-glorious ideology of duty. Throughout the second half of the 20th century, the logic of mass consumption transformed the universe of moralizing prescriptions and eradicated coercive imperatives, engendering a culture in which happiness takes precedence over moral order, pleasures over prohibition, and fascination over duty (LIPOVETSKY, 2005, p. 29, our translation).

In this context, consumption becomes a central vector of self-realization, regulating expectations, pleasures, and ways of life: it is not merely a matter of acquiring goods or signs, but of composing identities, managing feelings, and continuously negotiating one's place in the social world. From the 21st century onward, according to Lipovetsky (2007), we arrive at hyper-consumerism, where there is no longer the option of staying out of the game. "To be in the game means to exist. There is only existence on the screen of events. Every event represents something new. [...]. We have entered a perpetual present. No. We have stopped worshiping the future, but we have not stopped plundering the past" (SILVA, 2007, p. 12, our translation). In this way, being necessarily inserted into the game also leads social subjects to live in a state of perpetual lack — much like a mouse running after cheese on a wheel. "Thus we remain relentlessly distant from a condition of fullness, always dissatisfied, pained by everything we cannot provide for ourselves" (LIPOVETSKY, 2007, p. 23, our translation).

The author also compares the continuous pursuit of pleasure through consumption to a kind of substitute for the desired life, functioning as a palliative for unfulfilled desires and everyday frustrations. As he states, "the more life's disappointments, setbacks, and frustrations accumulate, the more the fever of consumption erupts as a form of relief, of compensatory satisfaction, as a means of restoring morale" (LIPOVETSKY, 2007, p. 30, our translation). In this context, even those who remain on the margins of the formal consumer market are still immersed in hyper-consumerist logic.

In the Brazilian context, this is evident in the high levels of over-indebtedness, in the naturalization of credit as if it were synonymous with investment, and in the proliferation of promises of quick enrichment through online betting or digital scams. After all, as Lipovetsky (2007, p. 12, our translation) observes, “everyone aspires to integrate into the world of consumption, leisure, and famous brands. At least as an intention, everyone joins the ranks of hyper-consumers.” However, for a large portion of these subjects, the concrete experience of consumption is marked more by frustration than by satisfaction, as they end up feeling disappointed, disqualified, and unsuccessful. “Seeking help from others, being forced to cut essential expenses, depriving oneself of many basic things, living in constant anxiety in search of a balance (never achieved) in the budget” (LIPOVETSKY, 2007, p. 12, our translation), all in order to participate in the game of consumption, which is one of the themes addressed by contemporary media through economic journalism.

Economic Journalism: Some Premises

In the 1980s, economic journalist Décio Bazin, who covered the financial market, began investing in the stock market, leveraging his knowledge of the investment sector. “By investing this money, I was always one step ahead of other commentators, on radio, television, and in print publications, who had no practical experience in the field” (BAZIN, 2017, p. 40, our translation). In the hyper-consumerist world, however, investors themselves communicate directly with the public, without journalistic mediation. This raises the question: is there still room for journalism in such a competitive field? According to Ritter (2025), yes, since the vast majority of financial influencers produce content with the aim of attracting potential clients, whereas “investment journalism has a very important social function: to support financial education in society” (RITTER, 2025, p. 58, our translation).

However, in order to be heard, the economic journalist must capture the public’s attention. To do so, as Basile (2002, p. 7) points out, they cannot be dull; after all, “there are no dull news stories. There are dull articles, produced by dull reporters and editors, for dull publications”

(BASILE, 2002, p. 7, our translation). In other words, it is up to the journalist to convey complex information in an engaging and understandable way. Another essential point is credibility. “News organizations depend on credibility; if the reader stops believing in their newspaper, it becomes a strong candidate for failure and bankruptcy” (CALDAS, 2008, p. 29, our translation). Thus, journalism plays a central role in helping the population better manage their own finances in a social environment that encourages excessive consumption.

This scenario is connected to the notion of economic domination discussed by Weber (2009), for whom those who hold specialized information tend to concentrate power. By keeping a large portion of the population without basic financial knowledge, a structure is consolidated in which a few accumulate both technical expertise and monetary capital. The author explains that any form of domination that seeks to perpetuate itself tends to be organized around the restricted circulation of information:

But the specific mechanisms of domination, based on an associative relationship, generally consist in the fact that a certain circle of individuals, accustomed to obeying the orders of leaders and personally interested in the preservation of domination, by virtue of their participation in it and in its advantages, remain permanently available and internally distribute those powers of command and coercion that serve to maintain domination (“organization”) (WEBER, 2009, p. 196, our translation).

It is worth emphasizing, once again, that we live in a society that strongly encourages consumption, but not financial education, which leads many people to spend more than they earn. As Baudrillard (1995, p. 83, our translation) observes, “consumption is a system of signs, in which individuals position themselves in relation to one another, a logic of distinction and social prestige”. This logic drives desires that go beyond the utility of objects, fueling practices of excessive consumption. In light of this, another question emerges: how can journalistic creativity and curiosity be combined with the need to expand the population’s financial literacy? One possible answer is to balance articles that address both macroeconomic and

microeconomic issues. In this regard, Caldas (2008) highlights service-oriented economic journalism. She notes that, in 1981, in the context of high inflation in Brazil, journalist Celso Ming, from *Jornal da Tarde*, created the first service column in Brazilian economic journalism. Entitled “Confira seu Dinheiro” (Check Your Money), the column debuted on July 20, 1981, with a weekly frequency. In the digital context, however, similar initiatives need to be widely multiplied in order to generate significant impact on a population that is still largely financially illiterate.

Thus, we arrive at the object of the present study: the texts published on the website of the newspaper *Folha de S.Paulo* on the eve of and on the day of the date that celebrates consumption in the Western world: Black Friday. The choice of outlet is justified because, according to a ranking published by the portal Poder360 in 2025 (YAHYA, 2025), *Folha* is the most accessed newspaper in the country — both in print and digital formats — with 800 thousand monthly copies. In the next section, the texts published by *Folha* on the topic are first presented in quantitative terms, which subsequently allows for a qualitative and dialogical analysis of how the newspaper approaches the phenomenon.

Between Coverage and Hyper-Consumption: The Hyper-Production of *Folha de S.Paulo* in a Black Friday Climate

In times of hyper-consumption, journalism also begins to operate under a regime of hyper-production, offering a continuous flow of content to an audience immersed in the incessant search for new experiences and stimuli. In this context, the consumption of products — which often provide pleasure only at the moment of purchase or during their initial use, before becoming mere utilities or being abandoned (LIPOVETSKY, 2007) — expands into practices of indebtedness that sustain the infinite cycle of desire.

The hyper-consumerist logic thus extends beyond the act of acquiring goods, reaching the financial sphere, where banking institutions encourage the successive contracting of credit, leading many individuals to spend their lives paying interest, settling one loan only to take on another.

It is within this theoretical framework that the corpus analyzed in this case study is situated, and it is composed of texts published by *Folha de S.Paulo* in its Black Friday coverage. The choice of this date is justified by its emblematic character in the contemporary consumption calendar and by its concentration, within a short time span, of a high volume of specialized journalistic production.

For the purposes of methodological delimitation, the texts published on the eve of and on the day of the event were selected, totaling 13 articles, whose informational intensity reveals not only the magnitude of the event but also the strategic role that journalism occupies in the machinery that drives, guides, and legitimizes contemporary consumption rituals.

In 2025, on November 27, the eve of Black Friday, the website of *Folha de S.Paulo* intensifies the publication of content related to the date, releasing five pieces on the topic throughout the day. The Chart 1 presents the systematization of the corpus, indicating publication time, title, authorship, section, and journalistic format — elements considered in the analytical stage.

In the first text, the narrative of the report presents the lower prices of an auction as if they were part of a promotional event, as becomes clear in the lead: “In a Black Friday atmosphere, the Federal Revenue Service is holding, at the end of this month, a new electronic auction in São Paulo with 216 lots of seized goods. The auction includes everything from video game consoles and cutting-edge electronics to used vehicles and scrap” (CECCHIN, 2025a). The same occurs in the second text, which addresses the opening of a Torra store scheduled for Black Friday. Both texts emphasize low prices, encouraging the reader to take advantage of the date to make purchases.

The same appeal to consumption can be observed in the third text, which highlights food promotions during Black Friday. In other words, an idea is constructed that one does not need to have much money to participate in the consumerist celebration; after all, as Lipovetsky (2007) points out, despite economic differences being at their highest level, in a

certain sense everyone can massively absorb a variety of productions. “We live in a context in which social differentiations are reproduced to the fullest and, simultaneously, fashion aspirations, the ideal of well-being, and multiple forms of leisure have spread across all levels of society” (LIPOVETSKY, 2007, p. 28, our translation).

In the fourth text, which addresses consumer complaints, and in the final post of the day, structured as a photo gallery, a different movement

Chart 1 – Publications Released on the Eve of Black Friday (November 27, 2025)

Time	Title	Author(s)	Section/Format
04:00 a.m.	Federal Revenue auction features cars, smartphones, video game consoles, and laptops; see how to participate ¹	Gabriela Cecchin	Economy / News Report
06:00 a.m.	Torra, a popular fashion retailer, surpasses Zara's revenue and opens a store on Paulista Avenue ²	Daniela Madureira	Economy / News Report
02:53 p.m.	Consumers take advantage even of panettone promotions on Black Friday to get a head start on Christmas shopping ³	Gabriela Cecchin	Economy / News Report
05:49 p.m.	Delivery delays are the main complaint among consumers during this year's Black Friday ⁴	Gabriela Cecchin and Cristiane Gercina	Economy / News Report
11:54 p.m.	Brazilians go shopping on Black Friday 2025 ⁵	<i>Folha de S.Paulo</i>	Photo Gallery

Source: Author's own elaboration.

- 1 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/leilao-da-receita-tem-carros-smartphones-videogames-e-notebooks-veja-como-participar.shtml>. Accessed on: December 1, 2025.
- 2 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/torra-de-moda-popular-ultrapassa-faturamento-da-zara-e-abre-loja-na-avenida-paulista.shtml>. Accessed on: December 1, 2025.
- 3 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/consumidor-aproveita-ate-promocao-de-panetone-na-black-friday-para-antecipar-compras-de-natal.shtml>. Accessed on: December 1, 2025.
- 4 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/problema-na-entrega-e-principal-queixa-de-consumidores-na-pre-black-friday.shtml>. Accessed on: December 1, 2025.
- 5 Available at: <https://fotografia.folha.uol.com.br/galerias/1849999663864266-brasileiros-vao-as-compras-na-black-friday-de-2025#foto-1849999663939463>. Accessed on: December 1, 2025.

can be observed: both move away from a direct appeal to consumption and emphasize experiences associated with the event, offering a journalistic mediation that is more informative than promotional.

On November 28, the date on which Black Friday was held in 2025, an even greater intensification of journalistic coverage was observed, with the publication of eight texts, seven of which were news reports and one an opinion column. The Chart 2 presents, in detail, the characteristics of these publications.

Of the eight texts published, seven are news reports for the Economics section, and one is an opinion column from the blog *Café na Prensa*. This distribution already indicates the centrality of the economic section in the narrative construction of the event. In this opinion piece, a direct appeal to the identity of the target audience is observed, aimed at coffee lovers, while maintaining a tone of consumption accessible to all budgets: “*Café na Prensa* has put together a list with some gift suggestions for coffee lovers. There are options for all budgets, and many items are on sale due to Black Friday” (LUCENA, 2025, our translation). The reading of this excerpt allows the identification of a discursive strategy based on identity segmentation and the universalization of access to consumption (“for all budgets”), highlighting how consumption, beyond its utilitarian function, becomes an identity and symbolic marker, aligning with Baudrillard’s reflection (1995, p. 17, our translation): “The consumer’s relationship to the object has been transformed: it no longer refers to a specific object in its particular utility, but to the entire set of objects in their total signification.”

The seven remaining texts, produced for the Economics section, concentrate on a microeconomic form of coverage, in which “the journalist acts as the great identifier, in the anarchy of everyday life, of what is significant, relevant, unique — determinant, in each singular case, of broader general trends” (BASILE, 2002, p. 83, our translation). In the analyzed corpus, this role manifests itself in the emphasis on performance indicators, sales volume, and consumer circulation, a perspective that raises a question: to what extent is the publication of seven texts about

Chart 2 – Publications Released During Black Friday (November 28, 2025)

Time	Title	Author(s)	Section/Format
04:00 a.m.	Bought something on Black Friday but didn't like it? See the rules for returns, exchanges, and delivery ⁶	Júlia Galvão	Economy / News Report
04:00 a.m.	Coffee Black Friday: accessories and kits on sale make good Christmas gifts ⁷	David Lucena	Blogs / Opinion Column
06:00 a.m.	Generation X has money to spend, but U.S. retailers still prioritize younger consumers ⁸	Kailyn Rhone/ <i>The New York Times</i>	Economy / News Report
11:00 a.m.	U.S. retail expects more shoppers on Black Friday, but lower spending ⁹	Gregory Meyer/ <i>Financial Times</i>	Economy / News Report
11:13 a.m.	See which companies have the most complaints on Black Friday 2025 ¹⁰	Gabriela Cecchin	Economy / News Report
03:18 p.m.	São Paulo sees a Black Friday of empty stores in street retail ¹¹	Gabriela Cecchin	Economy / News Report
05:03 p.m.	Preliminary Black Friday data indicate a 24.5% increase in e-commerce revenue and a possible record ¹²	Gabriela Cecchin and Diego Felix	Economy / News Report
05:09 p.m.	Black Friday sees fake website scams using AI; see how they work and tips to protect yourself ¹³	Cristiane Gercina and Gabriela Cecchin	Economy / News Report

Source: Author's own elaboration.

- 6 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/comprou-na-black-friday-mas-nao-gostou-veja-regras-de-devolucao-troca-e-entrega.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.
- 7 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/blogs/cafe-na-prensa/2025/11/black-friday-do-cafe-acessorios-e-kits-em-oferta-sao-bons-presentes-de-natal.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.
- 8 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/geracao-x-tem-dinheiro-para-gastar-mas-varejistas-nos-eua-ainda-priorizam-publico-mais-jovem.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.
- 9 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/varejo-dos-eua-espera-mais-pessoas-comprando-na-black-friday-mas-gastando-menos.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.
- 10 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/veja-quais-sao-as-empresas-com-mais-reclamacoes-na-black-friday-2025.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.
- 11 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/sao-paulo-tem-black-friday-de-lojas-vazias-no-comercio-de-rua.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.
- 12 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/black-friday-2025-comeca-com-alta-de-245-no-faturamento-do-e-commerce.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.
- 13 Available at: <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2025/11/black-friday-tem-golpe-do-site-falso-com-uso-de-ia-veja-como-funciona-e-dicas-para-se-proteger.shtml>. Accessed on: Dec. 1, 2025.

Black Friday in the same section justified from the standpoint of public interest? The question here is not merely normative, but analytical: it seeks to understand whether such concentration functions as a symbolic legitimation mechanism of the event. Or does such concentration primarily reflect the logic of journalistic hyper-production in the hyper-consumerist society described by Lipovetsky (2007)?

Of these seven texts, two are republications of reports originally produced by international outlets — the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times*. The presence of foreign material broadens the interpretive scope of the corpus, indicating a transnational circulation of consumption framings. The first, authored by Kailyn Rhone, problematizes the target audience of advertising campaigns by showing that older people feel excluded from advertisements primarily aimed at younger consumers. The material derived from the *Financial Times* adopts a tone of lament when addressing the fact that, although there are more consumers circulating in the United States, per capita spending has decreased. In this framing, the reduction in spending is associated with the idea of economic fragility, rather than being interpreted as a possible indicator of greater financial awareness among the population. As the article states, “Executives and analysts acknowledged the tight economic conditions affecting part of the population” (MEYER, 2025, our translation). Thus, a framing prevails that naturalizes consumption growth as a desirable parameter of economic normality. From this, another question emerges: if, one day, most of the population were to become financially literate, consuming less in order to invest more or adopt more conscious practices, would journalistic coverage frame such a scenario as an economic crisis?

This ambivalence dialogues with Kucinski’s (2007) observation regarding the reduction of service journalism to consumerism: “Despite reinforcing the ideology of consumerism among the middle classes, it is a form of journalism that repositions the citizen as a subject of history and an object of journalistic concern” (KUCINSKI, 2007, p. 16, our translation). For the author, “service journalism is at once didactic and oriented toward economic citizenship.” However, such potential is only

realized when the professional has a training capable of going beyond the mere reproduction of the dominant economic discourse. After all, “the tendency toward concentration is almost a natural law of capitalism. When the journalist is able to unravel these mechanisms, they begin to understand the sector’s mechanics” (KUCINSKI, 2007, p. 23, our translation). In the set of texts analyzed, however, informational approaches oriented toward purchase guidance predominate, with little incidence of structural problematization of consumption. In other words, avoiding the uncritical replication of consumption-incentive logic requires theoretical mastery and a structural understanding of economic and social dynamics — elements that appear only marginally in the examined corpus.

Indeed, this need for critical reading becomes even more evident when considering the cultural influence of journalism in the naturalization of consumption. As Baudrillard (1995, p. 19, our translation) already noted:

We have reached the point where consumption invades all of life, where all activities are linked in the same combinatory way, where the channel of satisfactions is already pre-structured, hour by hour, where involvement is total, fully climatized, organized, and culturalized.

The same critique can be extended to two other articles published by *Folha de S.Paulo*: “São Paulo has a Black Friday of empty stores in street retail” and “Preliminary Black Friday data indicate a 24.5% increase in e-commerce revenue and a possible record.” In the analyzed corpus, these pieces exemplify different framings attributed to the same event: the first emphasizes the decline in physical store activity as a negative phenomenon, while the second celebrates the increase in online sales, reinforcing the logic according to which consumption growth is interpreted as a positive sign, and its reduction as loss, failure, or setback. Such valuation, however, is expressed through the statements of sources, as in the sentence by Bruno Pati, CEO of E-Commerce Brasil: “Black Friday is an engineering event. The system only grows with this intensity when forecasting, scalability, and contingency models react at the same pace

as consumer behavior. This year, they reacted” (CECCHIN, 2025b, our translation). Systematic analysis shows that, in this type of approach, there is a predominance of the centrality attributed to the continuous expansion of consumption as a parameter of economic normality.

Such logic updates, in the digital context, Baudrillard’s (1995) critique, for whom “thus, as in the Roman Pantheon there coexisted in syncretism the gods of all countries, in an immense digest, likewise in the Super-Shopping Center, which is our Pantheon and our Pandemonium, all the gods or demons of consumption come together” (BAUDRILLARD, 1995, p. 21, our translation). In the contemporary ecosystem, it can be observed that the metaphorical shopping center shifts to digital platforms, where the cult of consumption remains reorganized, intensified, and continuously available.

The last two analyzed texts fall within what Kucinski (2007) calls service-oriented economic journalism: one aimed at informing which stores accumulate the most complaints during Black Friday, and the other warning about a scam involving fake websites created with the aid of Artificial Intelligence. Although they fulfill a preventive function, the systematic reading of the corpus shows that both remain bound to the instrumental logic of immediate protection in the act of consumption, without promoting a problematization of the forms, excesses, and contradictions of hyper-consumption.

The absence of critique in all the aforementioned texts is particularly relevant when confronted with the issues that permeate hyper-consumerist societies. This finding reinforces the need to categorize journalistic coverage not only by topic, but also by the type of framing and symbolic effect it exerts on the reader. As Lipovetsky (2007) observes, we live in a paradox in which the permanent pursuit of happiness — once positively valued by Mill (2000) within the utilitarian logic — coexists with the intensification of malaise:

This is the paradox of happiness: an atmosphere of continuous entertainment and relaxation, of consolidated well-being that coexists with the intensification of the obstacles to living and the deepening of subjective malaise (LIPOVETSKY, 2007, p. 4, our translation).

In this sense, the journalistic coverage of Black Friday observed in the analyzed corpus ends up merely reinforcing the atmosphere of entertainment, relaxation, and consumption, without confronting the subjective, social, and symbolic effects of this process, identified through the analysis of the selected texts.

Baudrillard (1995) had already warned that consumption becomes embedded in everyday life as a system of signification, going beyond the mere materiality of objects. According to him, the place of consumption is indeed everyday life: “This is not only the sum of daily facts and gestures, the dimension of banality and repetition; it is a system of interpretation” (BAUDRILLARD, 1995, p. 25, our translation). The reading of the corpus indicates that the press, by treating consumption as a naturalized horizon of social life, continuously reinforces this symbolic structure.

It is assumed, however, that consumption cannot be reduced to a purely negative phenomenon: as Mill (2000) recalls, as revisited by Baudrillard (1995), there is historically an affirmative dimension linked to the superfluous, to excess, to that which makes individuals and societies feel alive: “All societies have always wasted, squandered, spent, and consumed beyond strict necessity, for the simple reason that it is in the consumption of surplus and the superfluous that both the individual and society feel not only that they exist, but that they live” (BAUDRILLARD, 1995, p. 38, our translation).

In other words, the present article does not argue that publications focused on consumption should be eliminated from economic coverage, but rather that economic journalism should provide a critical counterpoint, problematizing practices, excesses, and meanings of hyper-consumption, as evidenced in the case study. The central issue, therefore, is not consumption itself, but the inability of economic journalism to critically address its forms, excesses, and contradictions.

As Basile (2002, p. 36, our translation) reminds us, “Commitment to the public, to the public interest, is the best guarantee of credibility,” and a relevant economic press can only be sustained when it effectively performs its role as a critical mediator between economy and society

— something that the analysis of *Folha de S.Paulo*'s Black Friday coverage shows as underexplored. The study demonstrates that, amid informational hyper-production, there was a missed opportunity to offer the public not only market data, but analytical tools to interpret the hyper-consumerist logic that structures everyday life.

Final Considerations

The embedding of technologies into the contemporary social fabric has expanded access to information and consumption. In practice, however, these advances often reinforce inequalities and intensify patterns of hyper-consumption. As Silva (2007, p. 10, our translation) notes: "We have improved a lot. We have gotten much worse."

Returning to the case study of *Folha de S.Paulo*, the central question is: in what way does the 2025 Black Friday coverage reproduce or problematize the logic of hyper-consumption? The analysis of the corpus of 13 texts shows that the coverage frequently amplifies the rhythms of consumption and adopts a utilitarian or preventive tone, but does not sufficiently question the practices, promises, and frustrations that hyper-consumption produces in everyday life.

This gap connects to Baudrillard's theoretical reflection (1995, p. 52), for whom consumer society combines egalitarian principles with the maintenance of privileges, and to Lipovetsky (2007), who describes the affective and social intensification of hyper-consumption. The study shows that the press operates in an ambivalent way: at times informing about risks or procedures, at times reinforcing consumption as a central life goal.

The challenge for economic journalism, therefore, is not to limit itself to reporting promotions, but to denaturalize the system of meanings that positions consumption as the primary response to individual anxieties. Fulfilling the "commitment to the public" (BASILE, 2002, p. 36, our translation) requires offering critical framings that allow readers to understand the social conditions that shape their decisions, transforming

journalism from a mere reflection of market practices into an agent that helps reshape expectations and protect collective well-being, as evidenced by the case study.

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