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A R T I G O

Cidade Inteligente e Inteligência de Dados Análise do aplicativo NOA Cidadão da Prefeitura Municipal de Salvador

Smart City and Data Intelligence Analysis of Salvador's City Hall NOA Cidadão application

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Resumo: *Este artigo analisa a inteligência de dados desenvolvida pelo NOA Cidadão, aplicativo da Transalvador/Prefeitura Municipal de Salvador (PMS), no projeto "Salvador 360". A partir de uma perspectiva neomaterialista (FOX; ALLDRED, 2017), realizamos: a) análise da interface; b) análise de conteúdo dos documentos oficiais e comunicações públicas; e, c) análise de reação dos usuários na plataforma Google Play Store com o auxílio da ferramenta Appbot. Conclui-se que o aplicativo mobiliza uma abrangente rede, articulando dados, processos, instituições, agentes e equipamentos. Concluímos apontando que o aplicativo NOA Cidadão é um dispositivo-rede que depende tanto da disposição do usuário em fornecer dados quanto de outras instituições e dos servidores da Transalvador para funcionar como um aplicativo inteligente.*
Palavras-chave: *cidade inteligente; dados; Salvador 360; NOA Cidadão.*

Abstract: *This article analyzes the data intelligence developed by NOA Cidadão, an application by Transalvador/Municipal Council of Salvador (PMS), in the "Salvador 360" project. From a neomaterialist perspective (FOX; ALLDRED, 2017) we performed: a) An interface analysis; b) A content analysis of*

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official documents and public communications; and c) An user reaction analysis on Google Play Store using the Appbot tool. We argue that the application mobilizes a comprehensive network, articulating data, processes, institutions, agents and equipment. We conclude by pointing out that the NOA Cidadão application is a network device that depends both on the user's willingness to provide data, as well as on other institutions and Transalvador servers to work as a smart app.

Keywords: *Smart City; Data; Salvador 360; NOA Citizen*

Introduction

This paper analyzes the NOA Cidadão app by Transalvador[3] and the City Hall of Salvador (the fourth biggest capital in Brazil4), which is part of the Smart City axis of the "Salvador 360"5 project through the Assisted Operations Center (NOA). Seeking to optimize internal communication with the city's regulating bodies and everyday needs, the City Hall of Salvador developed "Salvador 360" to stimulate the economic growth and de-bureaucratization of the metropolis. The NOA Cidadão integrates the Smart City axis of the "Salvador 360" app portfolio.

NOA is the infrastructure installed at the headquarters of Transalvador, responsible for processing data generated by the equipment and systems that monitor the traffic in Salvador. Through NOA Cidadão, the city hall aims to amplify the capacity of identifying problems in public places through users' notifications. By allowing citizens to communicate directly with Transalvador, the app works as a device for identifying issues in streets and public places (irregular parking, broken vehicles, road problems, damaged traffic signs, among others).

This paper presents the results of research that analyzes the NOA Cidadão app to answer the following questions: What kind of data intelligence does NOA Cidadão produce? How does the network which the app integrates operate? What lessons can we take from this answer for the analysis of smart city projects? To do so, we used a "neo-materialist" methodology under development at Lab404 (Facom/UFBA), executing the following steps: 1. Assembling the app's actor-network diagram (Figure 1); 2. interface analysis. 3. content analysis of official documents and public communication; and 4. analysis of users' reaction on the Google Play Store platforms with the support of the Appbot tool.

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3   Transalvador is a municipal institution of the City Hall of Salvador, which has the goal of managing the municipality's traffic and public parking lots.

4   Available at: https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-sala-de-imprensa/2013-agencia-de-noticias/releases/31461-ibge-divulga-estimativa-da-populacao-dos-municipios-para-2021.   Accessed on 10 November 2021.

5   About "Salvador 360," see: http://360.salvador.ba.gov.br/?fbclid=IwAR3A5m5n-Uig9ICILW_Q-2B7E-jwWnRsckEc8oaZz6qJHwRVtLol2zp08pTI.

About Data Intelligence and Smart Cities

The NOA Cidadão is part of a smart city Project, the "Salvador 360" of the City Hall of Salvador. The term "smart" in this work means the abbreviation of Self-Monitoring Analysis and Technology Report proposed by Rothbertg (2005). That is, we are highlighting mechanisms of data monitoring, analysis, and visualization through computer technologies to produce action models in specific systems. Smart technology (HILDEBRANDT, 2020) can be measured by its capacity for agency and data-driven response to respond to context.

These technologies generate a kind of "ambient digital intelligence" in which sensitive objects and spaces are responsive to the presence of people and other objects (GREENFIELD, 2006). Therefore, smart city projects use data to produce procedural smartness that can vary in the level of independence and agency of their processes. How does this intelligence effectively work? What are its impacts? These projects have many bureaucratic, technocratic, and vigilant biases and problems.

Generally, smart cities are projects that massively use these technologies aiming to equip public management and citizens with digital information and systems that can facilitate urban life. The thesis is that a city guided by data can explore and extract value and meaning from sets of information captured by devices that feel and respond to the environment in an adaptive mode to solve, in an efficient and sustainable way, diverse urban problems such as mobility, infrastructure, pollution, or management (KITCHIN et al., 2017).

Many cities around the world look to implement projects that integrally or partially use information and communication technologies as well as data analysis to support citizens and managers and thus establish anticipatory governance. For this, cities rely on a massive dataset used in predictive policing to assess the likely future in advance. There is no consensual concept of what a smart city is (VANOLO, 2014; HUSAR et al., 2017; FIGUEIREDO et al., 2020; HAQUE, 2012; BATTY et al., 2012; HILL, 2013; BAYKURT, 2020). According to Lemos (2017, p. 80):

> Smart cities are projects currently in vogue in many countries which have as basis ideological discourses for promoting the use of information and communication technologies by companies and governments to improve the management of cities and citizens' lives. The goal is to foster economic growth, innovation, expand forms of environmental sustainability with the more efficient use of urban public resources and citizen participation. Smart city projects are covered by a narrative that mixes corporate innovation, technocratic discourses, and political aspirations for modernization. At the basis of this narrative is the intensive use of big data, the internet of things, and cloud computing.

What type of intelligence does the NOA Cidadão app of the smart cities project of the City Hall of Salvador mobilize?

Neo-materialist Methodology

The methodology for the analysis of apps was based on the pragmatic and neo-materialist approach (LEMOS, 2020). We seek to investigate the research object by understanding its material dimensions and as an object-network from a pragmatic dimension inspired by neo-materialist theories (FOX; ALLDRED, 2017), the actor-network theory, and Latour's (2012) anthropology of the moderns. This approach allows us to verify the concept of intelligence that emerges from the NOA Cidadão app through interfaces, documents, and forms of action.

The methodology of Lab404 starts from the premise that objects are multiple and reveal controversies in relationships with other objects. For example, one could study the NOA Cidadão app to detect data privacy and security problems. However, we are concerned here with understanding which data intelligence is at stake, seen as the app is part of a "smart city" project. Intelligence is frequently associated with processing, response, and interferences created by data analysis, as discussed in the previous section. Here, we argue intelligence is always dependent on a broader network (LATOUR, 2012).

To test this hypothesis, we analyze the app in an immanent way and in its relations. The methodology requires us first to identify the "**mode**,"

that is, the precise location of the problem, the place where the controversy is situated, and the question of interest. In our case, it is the production of "smart" through the NOA Cidadão app.

From the adopted position (the "smart" problem), we need to locate which elements are producing mediations in this mode. We call that constituting the inventory of mediators, which participate by influencing actions, making others do. The "**inventory**" identifies all actors involved and how they express themselves (interfaces, documents, patents, action forms…), describing the network (humans and non-humans) concerned in the issue under discussion. Inventorying actors means looking to understand the forms of mediation, that is, transduction movements that allow us to understand what actors pragmatically produce as action (in the case of users, institutions involved, information system…).

The third phase, "**transduction**," precisely describes these agencies, understanding how they are produced, their meanings, and their strengths. This phase aims, therefore, to open black boxes (unpacking), identifying what things do, what they are made of, and what they make do. The last step is to present the construction of an integrated vision of the controversy through "**reaggregation**." This step proposes a new "black boxing" as the provisional result (which will be a concrete material element of new mediation produced on the object by the research itself), being a propositional dimension with a view to understanding the collective affectation in the redefinition of the problem.
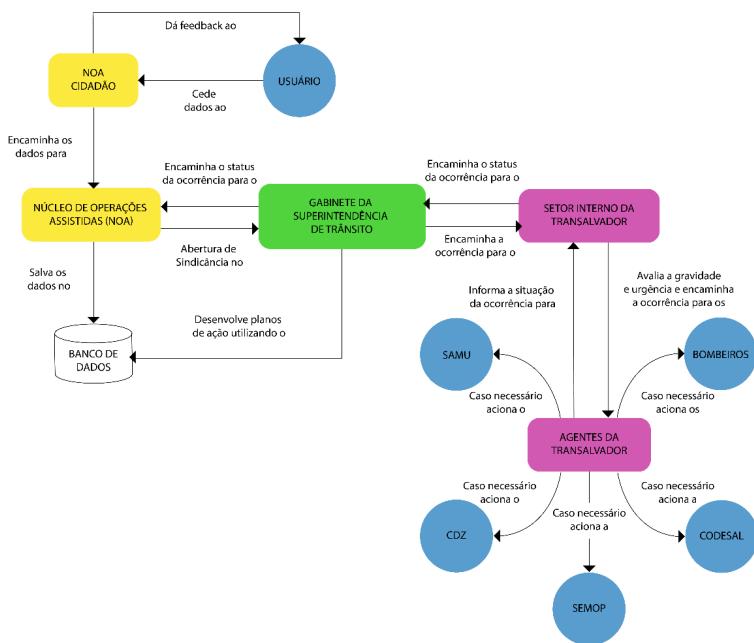
Once we had defined the mode (the controversy around data intelligence in smart city projects), we assembled the inventory with all participating actors (humans, institutions, interfaces, documents, official communications) and how they express themselves, mapping forms of mediation, searching to understand actions, meanings, and strengths this agency produces. Finally, we reaggregated the problem, articulating a new formulation of the data intelligence problem in "smart city" projects through the case of the NOA Cidadão app.

NOA Cidadão actor-network diagram

From the actor-network, we can visualize the action network built around the NOA Cidadão app by the City Hall of Salvador to enable traffic incident reports and provide data for its management. The aim is to build plans to mitigate accidents on public roads and provide more traffic fluidity in the city. The app more prominently integrates with two institutions: the Office of the Superintendence (GASUE) and Transalvador. Therefore, Transalvador, NOA Cidadão, users, the Control of Zoonosis (CCZ), the Civil Defense of Salvador, the Fire Department, the Mobile Emergency Care Service (SAMU), and the Municipal Public Order Department (SEMOP) are intertwined in an interdependent way, as the diagram below shows (Figure 1).

Data provided by users are captured in the app and sent to the Assisted Operations Center (NOA), which opens an inquiry at Transalvador's Office of the Superintendence. The app refers data to Transalvador's internal sector, which assesses the severity and urgency of reports and forwards them, if pertinent, to the agent closest to the occurrence. As soon as the information is in progress or the problem is solved, Transalvador agents inform the situation of the incident to the internal sector, which then forwards the status to NOA Cidadão. This way, the user gets feedback for their report. The Office of the Superintendence uses stored data in NOA's database concerning every notification to produce statistics and reports with the intention of assisting the creation of public policies.

Figure 1 – NOA Cidadão as an object-network

Source: Elaborated by the authors

The diagram shows the flow of data, infrastructures, institutions, and people, indicating the system's intelligence depends on the integration of this network's diverse elements. The app, therefore, is a part of this network and not the place of the system's intelligence since that one is distributed and demands the participation of the entire network, starting with the citizen's information input. The app needs users' collaboration, inserting data that initiates the notification process, returning in the end as feedback or in the moment of the incident, but is equally dependent on the good functioning of other instances involved. Data intelligence is limited to notification information, and it is unclear if the Operations Center uses these aggregated data to generate other types of action besides statistics reports. Good functioning depends, therefore, of diverse agents along the network and does not sustain itself only in the datafication process (data collection and processing).

NOA Cidadão's Interface

The analysis of the app's interface was built in the order in which functions, buttons, and information are presented to users, looking to identify how the idea of intelligence is outlined immanently on the app. Each screen was analyzed as a group to assess functionalities. NOA Cidadão possesses more than 50 thousand installations on Google Play Store, and its last update was in August 2020.

NOA Cidadão works through users' direct claims in nine categories (Figure 2) of incidents in public places and forty-three specific types of distributed incidents (Figure 3). To register the notification, the user must typify the incident based on predefined categories, locate the accident's address through the GPS or manually, and comment if they find it relevant. The only data in the registration that are not mandatory are the address's complement and photo.

The app limits fields of information input to collect data that are of interest to the organization and its agents for sharing information with other institutions. The activity takes place in four areas: a) Accident; b) Infractions; c) Infrastructure; and d) Warning. Figure 3 identifies how each type of incident is typified by the app and the respective institutions referred. However, we do not know how Transalvador organizes and activates its team to respond to reported cases and communication mechanisms between institutions.
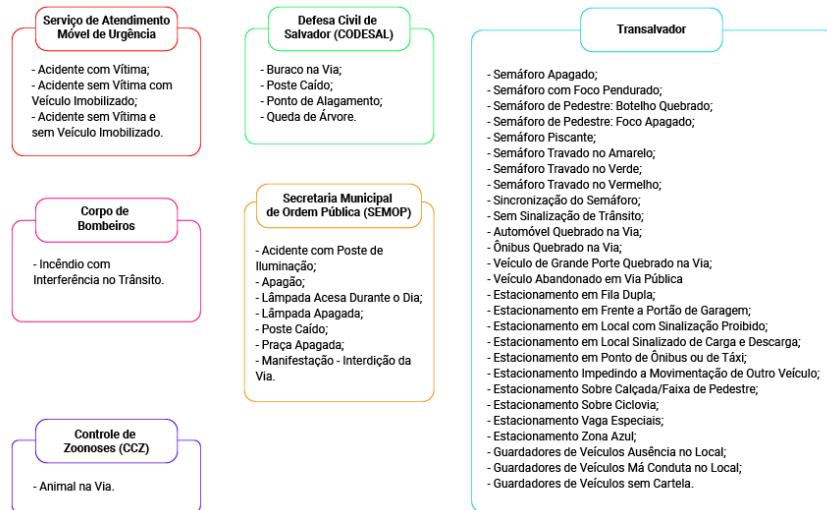
Figure 2 – Notification Screen

Source: NOA Cidadão Google Play (2020)

The types of data registered for each accident enable to locate information distributed to different authorities with the purpose of diagnosing the general situation of the event and identifying the actions and instruments that may help in solving problems on public roads. In the specific notifications for the Mobile Emergency Care Service (SAMU) presented in Figure 3, Transalvador can recognize the gravity of an accident and the need to initiate SAMU's service to aid victims.

Figure 3 – Chart of authorities and notification forwards

Serviço de Atendimento Móvel de Urgência
- Acidente com Vítima;
- Acidente sem Vítima com Veículo Imobilizado;
- Acidente sem Vítima e sem Veículo Imobilizado.

Defesa Civil de Salvador (CODESAL)
- Buraco na Via;
- Poste Caído;
- Ponto de Alagamento;
- Queda de Árvore.

Transalvador
- Semáforo Apagado;
- Semáforo com Foco Pendurado;
- Semáforo de Pedestre: Botelho Quebrado;
- Semáforo de Pedestre: Foco Apagado;
- Semáforo Piscante;
- Semáforo Travado no Amarelo;
- Semáforo Travado no Verde;
- Semáforo Travado no Vermelho;
- Sincronização do Semáforo;
- Sem Sinalização de Trânsito;
- Automóvel Quebrado na Via;
- Ônibus Quebrado na Via;
- Veículo de Grande Porte Quebrado na Via;
- Veículo Abandonado em Via Pública
- Estacionamento em Fila Dupla;
- Estacionamento em Frente a Portão de Garagem;
- Estacionamento em Local com Sinalização Proibido;
- Estacionamento em Local Sinalizado de Carga e Descarga;
- Estacionamento em Ponto de Ônibus ou de Táxi;
- Estacionamento Impedindo a Movimentação de Outro Veículo;
- Estacionamento Sobre Calçada/Faixa de Pedestre;
- Estacionamento Sobre Ciclovia;
- Estacionamento Vaga Especiais;
- Estacionamento Zona Azul;
- Guardadores de Veículos Ausência no Local;
- Guardadores de Veículos Má Conduta no Local;
- Guardadores de Veículos sem Cartela.

Corpo de Bombeiros
- Incêndio com Interferência no Trânsito.

Secretaria Municipal de Ordem Pública (SEMOP)
- Acidente com Poste de Iluminação;
- Apagão;
- Lâmpada Acesa Durante o Dia;
- Lâmpada Apagada;
- Poste Caído;
- Praça Apagada;
- Manifestação - Interdição da Via.

Controle de Zoonoses (CCZ)
- Animal na Via.

Source: Elaborated by the authors

Figure 4 screens show a test we did on the feedback system of the NOA Cidadão app. We generated two notifications, one in the "Traffic signs with a problem" and another in the category "Irregular parking." Only the first notification was solved (though the app did not update the request's status). Regarding the second, the NOA Cidadão app informs the incident was finished because there was no possibility of assistance due to deterrent conditions. However, these conditions were not clarified.

The NOA Cidadão feedback system informs the status of the notification, which may change depending on Transalvador's resolution. General information on the notification's status appears in the answer space if the reported traffic problem could not be solved. Users may not track Transalvador's steps in the resolution of the problem nor send questions about the ongoing incident if they have any or want to object to the authority's procedure.

Figure 4 – Information screens of notifications made

Source: NOA Cidadão Google Play (2020)

Official Documents of the NOA Cidadão

We analyzed official documents and public communications of the institutions responsible for the NOA Cidadão app: FAQ, releases (N=25); interviews or official statements to newspapers Correio da Bahia (N=3) and A Tarde (N=2), videos (N=2), social media posts on Facebook (N=24) and Instagram (N=31); Management Report Fiscal Year 2016-2013; Transalvador Report 2013-2018; portfolio of the "Salvador 360" initiative; presentation in the Seminar of Assessment of the National

Policy for Reducing Morbidity and Mortality by Accidents and Violence of the Transalvador Superintendent; Map of Transalvador Internal Control Processes; and Map of Transalvador Road Safety Processes. It is important to note that the official documents found are generic and make few specific references to NOA Cidadão. The app does not have "Privacy Policy" and "Terms of Use" documents, preventing a complete analysis of the network's functioning.

Based on the app's official documents and public communications from the institutions involved, NOA Cidadão appears as part of a larger project to implement new smart devices in the City Hall of Salvador. The goal is to collect data through the app to enable smarter action planning, better mobility quality in the city, and the improvement of the public institution. The app can thus help to modernize public management and services and meet the needs of both the municipality and the citizens through digital data captured in the use of the networked device.

Official documents and public communications portray NOA Cidadão as a collaborative project that involves citizen participation. Incoming notifications are sorted by priority of assistance, and those considered more severe, such as accidents or situations that can cause trouble to the traffic flow, are solved more quickly. If a team cannot go immediately, the incident is saved in the NOA database, and agents are directed to the place later.
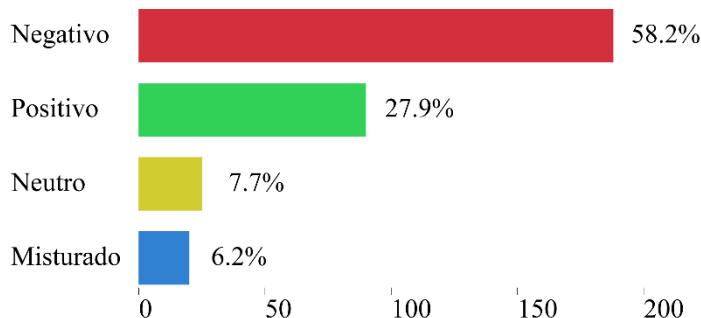
Besides emergency actions, specific operations happen at points with the highest incidence of notifications. The notification is an important factor for the public institution to carry out operations. The typification of the reports delimits data collection to guide Transalvador's action in incidents registered by the user, considering the urgency and the management needs of public agents. Employees of the Office of the Superintendence of Traffic analyze the incident's gravity and forward it to Transalvador agents that manage its equipment (vehicles, breathalyzer) and to supporting public institutions – Zoonosis Control (CCZ), Civil Defense of Salvador (CODESAL), Fire Department, Mobile

Emergency Care Service (SAMU), and the Municipal Department of Public Order (SEMOP) – that assist in the control of incidents.

User reactions on Google Play Store

We used the Appbot tool[6] to carry out the analysis of user reactions. We collected a total of 325 user comments on the Google Play Store on January 13 and 14, 2021. The goal was to learn the perceptions of users on the app and on the management of problems. Comments collected from the Google Play Store expressed spontaneous impressions about the app. Reviews are mostly negative, as Figure 5 shows, resulting in an average of 2.5 stars in the store rating.

Figure 5 – User reactions to NOA Cidadão on Google Play Store

Source: Elaborated by the authors

These negative comments (58.2%, N=188) are related to the device's poor functioning (25%, N=51) and problems in the system for geolocating incidents (8%, N=15). Some users state that, after updating the app, the function for consulting fines stopped working (8%, N=16). With the latest app update, people who do have Mercosul license plates (3%, N=9) can no longer keep track of fines on the app. Some reviews refer to Transalvador's work (6%, N=18) and the institution's ability to solve the problems reported by the app, revealing how the system's intelligence

6   Available at: https://appbot.co. Accessed on January 13, 2021.

is linked to an action network. Positive comments (N=90) are broad compliments (69%, N=62) about the importance of the City Hall of Salvador's initiative (3%, N=3), its public utility, and acknowledgements to the former mayor's management (2%, N=2) and changes made on the app's interface, such as making it more intuitive (2%, N=2).

Some comments raise questions about Transalvador's responsiveness through the app (10%, N= 32). There are reports of user requests left unanswered or that have been considered resolved, leaving users with no response. NOA Cidadão does not aim to be a forum for public debate but a space for direct information about urban issues specifically related to transportation and mobility in the city. Without getting feedback on their notification, citizen engagement seems harmed. Transalvador consults citizens indirectly, asking them to inform problems, but does not have an active attitude in giving feedback about the service's progress or the solution of notified problems. The lack of feedback or a cryptic one can confuse users, especially in systems that depend on emergency actions.

Conclusion

NOA Cidadão works through citizens' predisposition to inform incidents to the public institution's command center. The app's construction rests on citizens' experiences with problematic situations in the road space of the capital of Bahia. Its intelligence is based on data input and citizen participation, referring to data processing and the articulation between diverse municipal authorities. That points to the need to understand "smart" not just as data in computer systems but as articulation strategies between diverse stakeholders.

The app is an object network connecting processed digital data on mobility with the articulation of authorities in the municipal organization. Through users' participation and collaboration informing incidents, the public institution identifies places and types of problems that it must prioritize. This action depends on the existence of communication channels with other institutions to articulate employees and

equipment meant to assist incidents filtered by the command center of the Assisted Operations Center (NOA). As a device-network, NOA Cidadão only works if it articulates data collection and institutions.

In its ensemble, interface, software, and data, the app is just the tip of a broad network that has its effectiveness in the functioning of all the agents involved. Therefore, the neo-materialist investigation of NOA Cidadão, developed through the analysis of its interface, official documents' content, public communications, and user reactions in the app store, allows us to state that its smartness emerges from a network that depends on good reactions from all: users, the app, institutions, and Transalvador agents.

NOA Cidadão combines automated digital systems (app, database) with analog systems (agents, vehicles). That shows that a smart city is not a city of independent data but a device that needs the support of other actors in the process. The app is a fundamental point in this network since it is where the system receives digital data input. However, the app cannot work alone and is not enough to solve identified problems.

There are problems with the app's feedback to users. In the analysis of user reactions in the Google Play Store, comments report malfunctioning problems, incidents that had no follow-up, and delay in Transalvador's response. The app depends on users' actions but does not let them track the progress of their notifications, thus risking losing citizens' interest. In this sense, feedback should be taken more seriously, developing mechanisms that allow users to monitor the incident's solution. There are also interface problems since we identified a lack of mechanisms to speed up communication with other institutions in emergency situations and more efficient ways to identify and hold accountable users who make false notifications.

The content of official documents and public communications indicates that NOA Cidadão allows the expansion of the municipality's capacity to identify problems in public places. The City Hall looks to produce a codified space (KITCHIN, R.; DODGE, M., 2010) that facilitates the monitoring of the functioning conditions of public roads

through the vigilant participation of citizens. Therefore, the device's intelligence is, as in many processes of digital technology use in urban space, a vigilance intelligence distributed between users, command centers, and Transalvador agents. Data are fundamental for the functioning of public policies that may assist in the redistribution of resources and the speed of public agents' actions. However, public power returns little information to app users. The vigilance cycle must improve to provide elements that allow informants to "watch over" the actions of instances involved.

NOA Cidadão materializes itself through action protocols – sending digital data, calling agents closest to incidents, sending accident alerts – carried out by command organizations and implies a specific type of citizen participation. Intelligence is mobilized in a wide network in a process articulating data, the assignment of decisions between the app, the Office of the Superintendence of Traffic, Transalvador's internal sector and agents, and actual actions in urban space.

This way, NOA Cidadão attaches itself to Salvador's smart city project. The app is not an autonomous device and depends on both users' willingness to provide data and the employees of the Office of the Superintendence of Traffic and Transalvador's internal and external agents who filter and respond to incidents. The intelligence is broad and networked. But we do not know if a richer and more integrated form of data intelligence is being made or if it is just a computerized ombudsman that does not use data to generate new actions (for example, types of notifications per geolocation allow one to learn about specific situations in certain neighborhoods, which can lead to precise and "smarter" actions).

In a new research stage, to learn details about how the data is processed, stored, and transformed into action plans, we aim to interview the app's developers and managers, identify every contact point of the device, and explore its practical implications for the municipality's mobility. We will carry out a survey with users to understand how they use NOA Cidadão and their perceptions about the initiative after using the app.

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Consumption, alterity and upward mobility in the @blogueiradebaixarenda profile

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Resumo: *O artigo pretende compreender os sentidos do consumo no perfil @blogueiradebaixarenda nas mídias sociais Instagram e Youtube, considerando suas articulações com dinâmicas de mobilidade social. Trata-se de analisar quais elementos compõem o "lifestyle baixa renda" enquanto categoria nativa, dentro do contexto dos "influenciadores digitais". Através de pesquisa de observação on-line, foram analisadas publicações, hashtags e comentários nas duas plataformas, procurando-se explorar de que modo as práticas de consumo aparecem como mediadoras de dinâmicas de hierarquização social e construções identitárias. Entre os resultados, as articulações entre materialidade e mobilidade social, bem como o papel da blogueira como curadora de consumo e "inspiradora" de trajetórias de ascensão.*

Palavras-chave: *lifestyle; grupos populares; consumo; mobilidade social; blogueira de baixa renda.*

Abstract: *The article aims to understand the meanings of consumption in the profile @blogueiradebaixarenda on online social networks Instagram and Youtube, considering its articulations with social mobility dynamics. It`s about analyzing which elements construct the "low-income lifestyle" as a native category, within the context of the "digital influencers". Through online observation research, publications, hashtags and comments were analyzed on both platforms, seeking to explore how consumption practices appear as mediators of social dynamics and identity constructions. Among the results, the articulations between*

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materiality and social mobility, as well as the role of the blogger as consumer curator and "inspiring" of ascension trajectories.

Key words: *lifestyle; low-income groups; consumption; blogueira de baixa renda*

Introduction

The historical indifference to the consumption of popular groups in the social sciences was partly due to a dominant logic of "lack" and "struggle for survival" that practically removed the phenomenon from its structuring symbolic and cultural dimension. As Barbosa (2004) has observed, the phenomenon of consumption, when structured in Brazil, for a long time appeared more under the lens of "losses and absences" than a perspective of "gains and positive changes" (p. 62).

Differently, the present work agrees with those that seek to understand the behavior of specific social groups as a privileged form of mapping modern-contemporary culture, exploring the interface between communication and anthropology (ROCHA, 1985; TRAVANCAS, 2008; SILVA, 2010; CAMPANELLA, 2012, among others). Specifically, in consumption studies, this means to analyze consumption as a phenomenon that creates and maintains social bonds, classifies identities, expresses subjectivities, mediates society's fundamental values, and, in short, articulates category systems that bear expressive and symbolic functions (DOUGLAS; ISHERWOOD, 1979; MILLER, 1987; SLATER, 2002; SAHLINS, 1979; APPADURAI, 2008).

Therefore, this research participates in a field of studies that proposed to consider consumption acts as significant everyday phenomena of cultural creation (MILLER, 1987). Miller sought to arrive at the meanings and implications of the multiplication of material goods by understanding industrial society as having the specificity of "advancing" through the continuous emergence of external forms in the shape of goods. Through the process he calls "objectification," persons and objects become linked after consumption, where subjects reveal their choices, their worldviews, and aesthetic judgments in their uses of objects. As Kopytoff (2008) also stressed, the object-person separation is very particular and restrict though lived in Western society as if it were a universal phenomenon. Objects, in their relations, always constitute classification systems in which we situate and hierarchize.

Research approaching the consumption of popular groups predominantly observed this phenomenon as an expression of distinction and emulation, supported mainly and respectively by the contributions of Bourdieu (1979) and Veblen (1965). Although these contributions provide important analytical keys, it was necessary to broaden this field of inquiry with research on specific situations that reveal other facets of such a nuanced theme. From this point, studies emphasize the act of consumption as a desire for belonging, as Silva (2010) explores in their ethnography on ways of using cell phone devices to express a form of access to the broader society or a "being-in-modernity." Others showed that poverty of resources was not synonymous with material scarcity (BARROS, 2007; SCALCO; PINHEIRO-MACHADO, 2010; CASTRO, 2016). These works place an emphasis on materiality as a rich source of cultural meanings, revealing budgets that comprise a diversity of consumption items far from the restrictive logic of "livelihood items." Parallel to academic studies, within segments of middle- and upper-strata groups in Brazil, there was moral condemnation against the profusion of "out-of-place" objects among popular groups, as evident in the purchase of expensive cell phones and high-tech TVs. The expansion of material culture is apparently inconsistent with the economic situation of scarce resources.

It is in this context that emerges the interest to analyze the @blogueiradebaixarenda profile as a signal of relevant issues in the field of popular groups' consumption. This social media profile proposes to disseminate the "low-income lifestyle," having consumption as a prominent place.

This paper proposes, then, to understand the meanings of consumption in the @blogueiradebaixarenda profile on Instagram and YouTube, considering its articulations with dynamics of social mobility in an extremely hierarchized society such as the Brazilian. The work analyzes which elements compose the "low-income lifestyle" as a native category within the context of "digital influencers." This latter denomination refers to subjects that build a generally positive reputation in social media, which leads to visibility and a remunerated digital career (ABIDIN,

2015). The research was developed through the analysis of posts in the @blogueiradebaixarenda profile on the Instagram and YouTube social media since the beginning of its online presence till May 2021.

The observation includes hashtags, considering these are native classifications. Besides constituting a form of grouping messages that allow searches for specific content on social media, hashtags are interesting because users themselves create and list them, enabling the observation of agents' classification logic. Hashtags can also express feelings, ideas, or humorous content when the intention is not just to assist in the convergence of topics. They reveal themselves as complex and multifunctional linguistic devices that not only have classificatory aspects but conversational ones too (WIKSTRÖM, 2014).

The procedure adopted in the field was online observation (FLICK, 2018), a type of observation research performed in the digital environment that follows social dynamics in platforms without interacting with users. In hidden observation (SKÅGBY, 2011), researchers do not express themselves publicly, staying anonymous as they follow social phenomena in progress. The selected material for analysis corresponds to photos, videos, and texts composing posts in line with the multimedia aspect of digital research and interactions found in comments.

It was not necessary to camouflage faces in the images included in the text because the @blogueiradebaixarenda profile on Instagram is public, not a private account. From the next section onward, BBR stands for Blogueira de Baixa Renda [Low-income Blogger].

This work does not use the term "virtual" because it implies an opposition with the domain of the "real." Alternatively, the paper adopts the expressions "online" or "digital" as synonymous. As Miller and Slater (2004) have indicated, there is no point making a previous distinction between online and offline neither from a methodological nor from an analytical point of view. The relationship between both domains must be explored in specific situations, observing when and how such distinctions make sense and how they integrate.

According to Ramos (2015), we may classify processes of subjectivization that occur in the online context in terms of identity experience and identity realism. In the first case, there is the possibility of building different personas according to diverse network segments. Through identity experimentation, subjects can structure social relationships, freely modifying their gender and age and creating body shapes, among other possibilities of removing themselves from their offline identity. Differently, in identity realism, there is a correspondence between identities inside and outside social media, between online visibility and the world outside the network, which makes individuals' relationships move through the inner and outer worlds (RAMOS, 2015, p. 66). Offline identity is not more authentic than one online; both are just specific contexts that may exist in more or less convergent ways according to the situation at hand.

The case in the present study is an online context of identity realism (RAMOS, 2015) in which there is an expectation of correspondence between both spheres. This paper understands the Blogueira de Baixa Renda profile as the online experience of the civil identity of its creator, Nathaly Dias, who seeks to express values and worldviews in her social media that she takes as guides in her trajectory. The research focuses on activities in the online environment to analyze structural relationships behind tacit meanings of digitally explicit data.

The low-income lifestyle

The BBR profile present in digital platforms was created by Nathaly Dias, a resident of the Morro do Banco community in the West Zone of the city of Rio de Janeiro. In posts, she tells the story of her upbringing in a family that faced great economic hardships until her admission to an undergraduate course in Business Administration on a full scholarship.

Nathaly acts on the social media Instagram and YouTube[2] as a content creator, aiming, in her terms, to promote the "lifestyle of the poor"

2   Instagram, @blogueiradebaixarenda, 235 thousand followers; Youtube channel, https://www.youtube.com/blogueiradebaixarenda, 288 thousand subscribers. Data from September 2021.

and make her low-income followers – who she nicknamed "baixa rend-inhas"[low-income people] – aware that belonging to that social class does not prevent them from achieving mobility.

In the profile's introduction on Instagram, Nathaly declares she is "(re)signifying influence." According to her explanation in an interview, she realized the universe of so-called digital influencers[3] mostly comprised women promoting luxurious lifestyles with consumption standards that were very far from the everyday reality of most of the population. Hence the idea of approaching the "low-income lifestyle," "(re)signifying influence" in a more realistic tone that matches the experience of the country's popular groups.[4]

The concept of lifestyle has Bourdieu (1979) as one of its principal references, suggesting different classes exhibit diverse ways of living according to the place they occupy in the social hierarchy. "Taste," as an inclination to appropriate objects and practices, appears as a set of distinctive preferences that express themselves in elements such as furniture, clothing, and bodily hexis, among others. This paper takes lifestyle as a native category, seeking to analyze its constitutive elements and meanings present in the BBR profile.

Nathaly started acting as a content producer on the internet when she created the @blogueiradebaixarenda profile on Instagram on October 3, 2017. She had a clear motivation for choosing this social media to begin her activities as a blogger. Instagram is known for the striking presence of luxury and ostentation images in a series of profiles, especially in those of "digital influencers" who promote lifestyles attached to high standards of consumption. The BBR profile explicitly opposes this elitist universe of consumption, offering a self-proclaimed "down to earth" approach that seeks to inject "reality" doses in each post. "Dreaming" is

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3   A digital influencer is a content producer that uses their online channels (especially blogs and social networking apps) to "influence behaviors" both on the internet and outside it.

4   Besides Nathaly Dias, other content producers born in communities in Rio de Janeiro and adjacent neighborhoods have emerged, like Nathalia Rodrigues (Nath Finanças profile), who offers financial guidance to poor people.

also a motif but from the blogger's unglamorous everyday life: "I struggle every day for an internet that I've always wanted to see, REAL."

Low income is an adjective the profile uses to encompass a universe of situations, consumptions, modes of being, sociabilities, and moralities. Posts discuss themes such as "how to travel without spending much," "how to paint your home's walls," "how to shop in a controlled way," "how not to procrastinate," and "how to cook low-income corn" and have hashtags usually formed by the adjective low income – for example, #casalbaixarenda[@low-incomecouple] and #faxinabaixarenda[@low-incomecleaning]. The adjective also expands to identities that gravitate around the profile, like @maridobaixarenda [@low-incomehusband].

Given the success achieved on Instagram, BBR opened a channel on YouTube and started drawing the attention of the corporate market, becoming recognized as the influencer of "C class" consumers. This "target audience" classification refers to how the market named emerging consumers from poorer strata, who experience significant economic ascension during Lula's government. With the improvement in living conditions, marketing professionals elected this segment as a target for their actions, undertaking market research and creating new modes of advertising persuasion (DEPEXE; AMARAL, 2009; MOURA, 2015). At this point, it is worth highlighting Souza's (2010) perspective that, anchored in Bourdieu, duly criticizes the idea of taking income increase as the sole criterion for the constitution of a social class. This scenario of relative change also incited discussions about the circulation of discourses concerning the "mediatization of the new middle class" (GROHMANN, 2014; TRINDADE, 2012), "new representations" of the lower classes in recent television fictional productions (MAURO; TRINDADE, 2012; MAURO, 2012; MOURA, 2015), and the resistance to new consumption standards of emerging groups (PEREZ, 2020). These emblematic issues call attention to reconfigurations and disputes in media representations of popular segments and to the rearrangement of the status of those now called "emerging consumers."

In this scenario, Nathaly Dias appears as a relevant "digital influencer" (native term) close to popular groups, participating in diverse marketing projects for companies such as SERASA Experian, Gol, Superdigital MEI, Editora Intrínseca, and Unicesumar, her *alma mater*. Paid advertising posts – also called "publi" in Brazil and marked in the profile with the hashtags #publi and #publibaixarenda – tend to financial literacy and professional growth within a context of encouraging social ascension.

The profile publishes content with a strong motivational emphasis that seeks to "inspire," like in the following posts: "I came from rock bottom, I got there and couldn't go any lower, and I was able to climb up, I'm restoring myself, building a beautiful thing. Lots of things that will help and stimulate you." "What did you wake for? You woke up for winning!" Or "Let's wake up every day to win and beat sadness away. After all, every day, we wake up to fight." Followers' replies are usually enthusiastic, complimentary – for instance, "you're beautiful," "you're the top," and "the best blogger!" –, and thankful for the motivational messages. There is also the validation of the proposal to promote and represent low-income segments in comments such as "this Instagram is wonderful. I feel represented ❤. "

The Morro do Banco community, where BBR lives, is present in multiple posts, like in the YouTube video *TOUR PELA FAVELA | MORRO DO BANCO*. The title underlines the "effect" of social conditions, circumstances, and constraints on individuals. The emphasis on the physical, social, and human "geography" of the favela as a place of origin expresses the feeling of belonging to a reality perceived as very active in creating aspects such as behaviors, sociabilities, living conditions, and sensuosities. In this latter aspect, videos emphasize the loud sounds in the community, which appear in neighbors' boisterous chatter or in noises such as a motorcycle passing by. "In the low income, it's like this," comments Nathaly in a video as if apologizing for an aspect perceived as unwanted.

The embarrassment revealed in the emphasis on "lacks" that make life in favelas precarious resonates with the construction of these communities as "problematic" places since their emergence in late-nineteenth-century Rio de Janeiro. Since then, grave social problems have been linked to this urban space as the focus of extreme poverty, dirt, insalubrity, housing crisis, and the genesis of social violence (MACHADO DA SILVA, 2002). Precarious living conditions in the community and possible strategies to face and solve adversities are, thus, themes present in the profile.

Though aspects of the "problem-favela" appear in content, this is not the tone of posts that, instead, highlight the perception of a space of morality in which conditions can shape noble values like perseverance and persistence. Posts value the people who live in the community, emphasizing their adaptability to scarce resources – "pobre se vira" ["poor people find a way"] –, creativity, and "warriors" in the "battle" of everyday life profile. In this emphasis, one should not be ashamed of the favela – that is, its social construction as a "problem-place" – but feel proud for belonging, something expressed, for example, in the sayings of a T-shirt that appears in a photo, published on Instagram, with a window view of the community in the backdrop: "Respect my story."

In this context of appreciation of favela residents, BBR presents herself as an inspiring example, emphasizing her trajectory from her poor childhood as the daughter of a domestic worker who raised two children alone to her current moment as a digital influencer who graduated from a higher education institution. The stress is on effort, tenacity, formal education, and honest work to reach a new social place.

The phenomenon of consumption occupies a prominent place in publications. Posts like "Poor people's breakfast," "Shopping for produce with 30 reals," or "Monthly shopping on Guanabara's birthday"[5] represent the low-income lifestyle, in keeping with the proposal of showing "life as it is" for the lower classes. Among the many themes published in
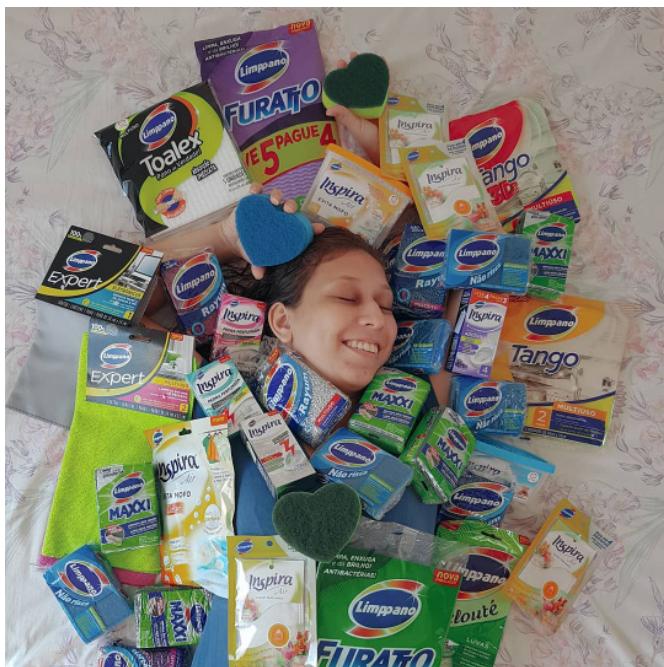
5   "Guanabara's birthday" refers to the birthday of the Guanabara supermarket chain in the state of Rio de Janeiro, which usually takes more than a million consumers to its shops. Images on the internet show consumers filling stores after special offers.

this context, cleaning is quite present, appearing in images of scrubbing activities or through the exhibition of recommended products. Discussing laundry practices in Brazil, Barbosa (2006) showed how notions of disgust and pollution are at the center of the classification system operating in the country. As Douglas (1976) proposed, cleanliness lies at the heart of the symbolic reproduction of order.

Hence, emphasis on cleanliness can be experienced as a way of dealing with the stigmatization of poverty as the pollutant element (DOUGLAS, 1976), somehow loosening class segregations. In the BBR profile, the hashtag #probremaslimpinho [#poorbutclean] and variants like #velhinhomaslimpinho [#oldbutclean] appear. Observing the ensemble of hashtags, we see a profusion related to the themes of cleanliness and domestic work. For instance: #fogaolimpo [#cleanstove], #cozinhalimpa [#cleankitchen], #casaorganizada [#tidyhome], #faxina [#spring-cleaning], #donadecasa [#homemaker], #meuape [#myplace], #meular [#myhome], #limpeza [#cleanliness], #decor, #vidadecasada [#marriedlife], #blogueiradolar [#homemakerblogger], #eletrolux, #vizinhasdolar [#homemakerneighbors].

The identification with the cleaning theme led to the BBR 's first commercial partnership with the Limpanno company, which sent her a basket with its line of products:

Figure 1 – In a sea of products

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/Bk-y0yNlsaf/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Besides appearing as an element that serves a positive identity construction in the dimension of poverty, cleanliness emerges in another context in which the "basic" meets the lifestyle, as in the following post:

Figure 2 – The basic and the *lifestyle*

✹ When the color palette matches the supermarket offer. ✹
My blogger way of being… I can't see laundry detergent without wanting it. #blogueira [blogger] #casaorganizada [#tidyhome] #casalimpa [#cleanhome] #meuape [#myplace] #meular [#my-home] #supermercado [#supermarket] #donadecasa [#homemaker] #faxina [#spring-cleaning] #limpeza[#cleaning] #roupalimpa [#laundry] #lookdodia [#outfitoftheday]
Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/BlTLkPvl88n/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

The hashtags #faxina [#spring-cleaning] and #casalimpa [#clean-home] come next to #lookdodia [#outfitoftheday], highlighting the aesthetic and performative aspects of the dissemination of lifestyles in the online environment that brings enchantment to banal tasks of everyday life. Similarly, the "marmita" [packed lunch], a stigmatized symbol of belonging to the popular classes, appears in a decorated model in another post that highlights the union of a "basic" good with an aesthetic frame.

Thus, a low-income lifestyle attenuates poverty's negative connotation through a conversion from the latter to the former in which the idea of lifestyle points to the act of choice (SLATER, 2002) and to something that one can observe, admire, and emulate.

Other recurrent themes in publications besides cleaning are meals, recently purchased household products, like kitchenware and decorative objects, items and goods photographed in shops as consumer objects of desire, and apartment spaces. In one of the posts, the "real life" dimension blends with a daydream (CAMPBELL, 2001). With the title "THE TABLE I'D LIKE TO HAVE ✖ THE TABLE I'M GOING TO BUY," the post shows two photos: a photo of the table BBR says she can afford and another of the desired product. Besides cataloguing the purchased or donated goods that make up her home, BBR also registers consumer objects of desire in which the dream component mixes with the recorded materiality. Together with purchased and desired objects are non-materialized dream goods, like the "imaginary couch:"

Figure 3 – Imaginary couch

Trying my imaginary couch

I have no idea when I will be able to buy one, but I'm determined, and even if it is not a priority, I have already built everything in my mind.

Have I told you that I never had a couch? To be true, I never had a living room!

That is why I am so attached to the fact of having one. ❤

"Desired" items I want and will accomplish in 2019:

- Couch

- Table

- Headboard and box spring

- Kitchen cabinets

And a television in my living room, who knows? DREAMING IS SO GOOD, I AM ADDICTED TO IT

Obs.: I tagged Magalu just in case it works! HAHAHAHAHA

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/Bocr7CLBLg7/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Whether paid advertising or not, posts showing household items contain information about the retailer and the price, indicating a good buy:

Figure 4 – Consumption curatorship

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/BmbxvizhNW1/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Typical follower comments in this kind of post express enthusiasm with the accessible price or the item's beauty, besides the election of the desired object: "Another thing saved, another store that will have my money at the end of the month… That can't be @blogueiradebaixarenda."

Along with material culture elements, the low-income lifestyle comprises sociabilities, modes of feeling, moral values, attitudes, and postures before events. In BBR's case, the mode of expressing is significantly permeated by humor. Posts portray everyday situations under wry lenses that bring lightness to the scene. Hashtags are also a vehicle for the humorous tone, as shows a post in which BBR, during a work trip, comes out of the hotel swimming pool: #hotel #viagem [#travel] #sp #rj #blogueiradebaixarenda #naoseinadar [#Idontknowhowtoswim] #sereiando [#mermaiding] #diva #acessivel [#accessible]

Financial literacy and upward mobility

A recurring theme in posts is financial literacy, seen as an essential element for achieving a balance in spending and the desired economic ascension. Many posts offer practical guidelines for followers to avoid consumption impulses, not fall into debt, and start effectively controlling expenses, as suggested in hashtags like #SuaContaSuasRegras [#YourBankAccountYourRules]. Recommendations seek to fill a gap in the audience's experience: "We, low-income people, didn't receive financial education. We, low-income people, are not used to talking about money, but we must talk about it all the time. My mom is out of control. She can't have a credit card. But the person was raised like that and has lived like that for 40 years. It's hard to change."

Expense management is elected as the central point in the upward social mobility project, as the post shows:

Figure 5 – Financial literacy

"Financial literacy is the basis for the LOW-INCOME person to prosper.
Let's win for real! Educate yourselves 🫳
Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/B0N34skg3m6/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link".

Financial literacy links to the general management of everyday life with an appeal to rationality and self-control. For fulfilling this life project, BBR presents tools for planning and organizing daily activities, like a weekly planner.

Commercial partnerships follow the ethos of saving and control in financial life. With the Supedigital company, BBR made an ad post promoting a pre-paid physical card with which consumers can only spend what is available in their accounts and thus avoid impulse consumption that does not fit their budget:

> Superdigital prepaid physical card. You spend only what you have in your account and don't go into the red. I LOVED IT! @superdigitalapp take me traveling again? AND LET 2019 COME WITHOUT DEBTS AND LOTS OF TRIPS LIKE THIS ONE 🖤
> #SuaContaSuasRegras [#YourBankAccountYouRules] #publi [#ad] #blogueiradebaixarenda #blogueira [#blogger] #25demarço #compras [#shopping]
> Source:
> https://www.instagram.com/p/Bq8KmTqByMY/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Besides an identity and lifestyle, the low-income qualification indicates a state that can and should be changed:

> You use the credit function, but the money comes out of your account immediately, like debit. This way, it's easier to control the money because we are low-income but want to be high, right? 🖤
> Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/BrTarBABoJk/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

By making a summon with the maxim "Occupy all spaces," BBR encourages her audience to challenge the historical barriers to upward mobility in the country and be present in situations that were previously unattainable, such as traveling by plane or learning languages.
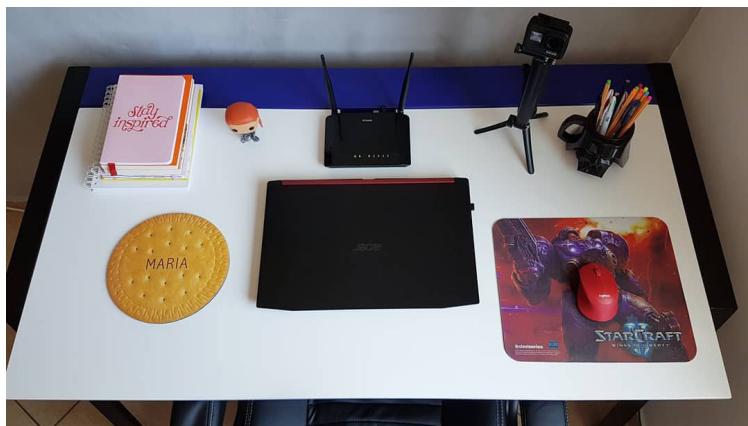
Many markers of mobility appear in the profile, such as living in a place separate from the family of origin, having a bank account or enrolling in higher education. In addition to financial control, prioritizing

formal education is considered a preferred means of transforming the condition of poverty.

The apartment space, in turn, is a very present setting in Instagram posts. When beginning her activities on this social media, BBR had just moved to the apartment that she considers her first "real home," indicating a significant "life improvement" (SARTI, 1996).

Posts track spaces since they were initially empty until filled with objects, utensils, and furniture, bought and donated, which were part of the construction of the household. The family history, projects, the process of social mobility, representations of maintenance tasks, and the organization of the household all appear in the sequence of photos and videos. Elements of material culture are appropriated as a part of the couple's trajectory in the decoration process because these are, according to Miller (2001), a "source and context of mobility and change," like in the following post:

Figure 6 - *Home Office*

A WOMAN WHO SETS UP HER HOME OFFICE WITH MONEY FROM HER OWN WORK DOESN'T WANT TO FIGHT ANYONE 👏
Tomorrow is Thursday and video day on the channel. I shared a little about my beginning on INSTAGRAM and how I spent my first "salary" as a BLOGGER 🤑
👉 Do you remember what you did with your first salary? Tell me in the comments!
Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/Bvh2P5iB1uo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Final considerations

This article showed how the phenomenon of consumption has a central place in BBR's social media profile, appearing in diverse contexts like shopping curatorship, strategies for acquiring goods, and inventories of purchased and desired items. The low-income lifestyle, a native designation, appears in the BBR profile encompassing situations, consumptions, modes of being, sociabilities, and moralities. In the specific domain of consumption practices, the emphasis on "cleaning," one of the most triggered categories, is significant as a classification marker that positively balances the condition of poverty. Acquired goods appear as signs of upward social mobility – evidenced in the accomplishment of the couple's first rented apartment – and show the role of consumption curatorship that BBR takes on for her followers.

Financial literacy points to a new attitude towards consumption, which enables a more "rational" budget organization, the propelling element of socioeconomic mobility. BBR's summon to "occupy spaces" appears in content related to lifestyle, aiming to counterpose the opulence other digital influencers display on Instagram. The stimulus to social mobility opposes the fatalist stance before poverty, present in the hierarchical context of Catholic tradition. In BBR's case, the emphasis is on individual consciousness, rationality, financial control, and proactivity within a more individualist spectrum (DUMONT, 1972).

The "origin story" (ABIDIN, 2015) of digital influencers is invoked in some cases to offer audiences "authenticity" ingredients, informality, and organicity. Abidin (2015) refers to "personalized advertorials" in which accounts of influencers' personal stories suggest that whatever has worked for them may happen for anyone. This would be a fundamental part of their relatability, understood as their capacity to inspire a feeling of emotional connection with their audiences.

Nathaly Dias justifies the beginning of her work on Instagram as a counterpoint to profiles marked by luxury and aspirational consumption. She proposes, then, a "down-to-earth" profile that emphasizes "life as it is." This positioning within a networking app like Instagram,

traditionally marked by the glamorous lifestyle experiences of the elites, broadens the visibility of less economically favored sectors.

This article analyzes a case that reveals a process of construction of alterity (high-income lifestyle X low-income lifestyle) associated with an upward social mobility project. BBR affirms a low-income condition, at an initial level, as the result of a social structure that conditions ways of living. Accepting this place appears as the first step toward recognition. At another level, low income is a state that one must overcome.

Thinking of a broader social context, the expectation of mobility in popular segments increased with the economic rise of bottom-of-the-pyramid groups, especially during the two mandates of President Lula. In this period, from 2003 to 2010, there was an improvement in the level of schooling of children of popular strata families due to public policies for education (MARQUES, 2018). Many such families had a first-generation member accessing university. Compared to previous generations, new university students from low-income families, like Nathaly Dias, tend to have more digital literacy, manipulating technological tools to produce online social media content with ease. Though the horizontality aspect of internet relationships does not lead, on its own, to a reduction of social inequalities (MILLER et al., 2019), it is crucial to observe specific situations, such as the one analyzed in this paper, in which movements of relative social ascension are experienced in performances present in online content.

Material forms are a way of dealing with social stratification. Hence their enormous weight in popular groups (MILLER et al., 2019). Without ever disregarding the weight of the enormous economic difficulties faced by the poorest segments, the relationship with material culture may articulate important dynamics of social change in a country that has a significant hierarchical bias like Brazil.

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Verdade e hegemonia nas estratégias jornalísticas de combate à desinformação

Truth and hegemony in the journalistic strategies to deter disinformation

Thales Vilela Lelo[1]

Resumo: *O artigo examina a pauta de enfrentamento à desinformação proposta pela grande imprensa e pelas agências de fact-checking. Por meio da análise crítica dos discursos institucionais dessas iniciativas, argumenta que eles promovem a despolitização do dissenso democrático apelando a uma concepção autoritária da verdade, dicotomizando fatos e valores e ratificando acriticamente as instituições hegemônicas. Em contraponto a essa formação discursiva, o artigo reivindica uma abordagem pluralista da verdade apta a reconhecer valores normativos discrepantes nas disputas sociais em curso nas democracias ocidentais. Sugere-se, por fim, que as medidas elaboradas para aprimorar as competências críticas dos cidadãos deveriam endereçar as axiologias conflitantes presentes nas peças de desinformação e fomentar uma leitura crítica das práticas jornalísticas.*
Palavras-chave: *verdade; hegemonia; jornalismo; fact-checking; desinformação.*

Abstract: *The article examines the fight against disinformation agenda proposed by mainstream media and fact-checking agencies. By critically analyzing the institutional discourses of those initiatives, it argues that they promote the depoliticization of the democratic dissent by appealing to an authoritarian concept of truth, dichotomizing facts and values, and uncritically endorsing hegemonic institutions. As a counterpoint to that discursive formation, the article claims a pluralist approach to truth, acknowledging discrepant normative values in ongoing social disputes in Western democracies. Finally, it is suggested that the measures designed to improve citizens' critical skills should address conflicting*

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axiologies present in disinformation pieces and encourage a critical reading of journalistic practices.

Introduction

There is growing unrest in public opinion and academic literature with the alleged harmful effects of disinformation on Western democracies since 2016 (FARKAS; SCHOU, 2019; TENOVE, 2020). The authoritarian populists' election in diverse countries, digital platforms' monetization of false content, and the feeling that citizens are ever more suspicious of epistemic institutions (for example, science and journalism) (FARKAS; SCHOU, 2019) motivated the elaboration of wider diagnoses about the present situation. Terms such as "post-truth" and "infodemic", though not coined in the heat of recent events[2,] are being used by commentators from various areas as metaphors (SIMON; CAMARGO, 2021) capable of synthesizing the "spirit of the time."

The evocation of these metaphors in public debate usually comes with the conviction that people have become insensitive to the truth, especially when that truth challenges deep-rooted beliefs (ANDERSON, 2020). Particularly between 2016 and 2019, the reference to "post-truth" focused on the party-political domain and aligned with a sense of perplexity arising from unexpected electoral results (for example, the Brexit referendum, Donald Trump's election in the United States). From 2020 onward, the Covid-19 pandemic aggravated critics' concerns, especially when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared on February 15 of that year (UN NEWS, 2020) that combating SARS-CoV-2 required containing the circulation of misinformation about the new virus. In other words, the consequences of this apparent generalized disdain for the truth would not only have motivated catastrophic political decisions but also exacerbated sanitary risks.

Though this pessimistic diagnosis about the epistemic health of democracies is the object of dispute in the scholarly literature (especially for social epistemology and political communication studies), the fact is that public opinion has convinced itself of the supposed threats of

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2   The term "post-truth" was coined in 1992 to refer to lies told by President George Bush in the context of the Iran-Contra affair (KRASNI, 2020). The notion of "infodemic" was coined by Rothkopf in 2003 to refer to the abundance of false information on the gravity of the SARS epidemic (SIMON; CAMARGO, 2021).

entering a "post-truth" and "infodemic" era[3]. Accordingly, there was an increasing demand for a set of measures to contain the spread of untruths in the public sphere. Such measures would strive to clean up the information ecosystem and encourage respect for the truth and the institutions that express it (WAISBORD, 2018). The present article intends to focus on two[4] propositions of journalistic strategies for confronting disinformation: the factual coverage of the mainstream media and fact-checking.

This work aims not so much to dispute the efficacy of these measures considering the increasing influence of digital platforms in the information ecosystem (SMYRNAIOS; REBILLARD, 2019) but to critically examine the discourse they mobilize when describing their actions and justifying their relevance. In a nutshell, the piece argues the two propositions, despite their specificities, compete to reproduce an understanding of truth as an expression of hegemony with theoretical and political implications. This article alerts to the indispensability of critical thought as a key to a pluralist understanding of truth (VOGELMANN, 2018; FALOMI, 2019; KUUSELA, 2019) to counterpoint such discursive formation. From this perspective, the paper takes into account historical continuities and normative divergences that permeate shared life. That is, instead of lamenting the silting up of truth in public discussion, the article warns that the authority of facts does not always resolve disagreements that characterize democracy.

Though I develop the main argument of this work theoretically, two sources of documents empirically inform the study: 20 editorials published by the three wider circulated newspapers in Brazil (*O Globo*, *Estadão*, and *Folha de S. Paulo*) and 30 institutional articles from three Brazilian fact-checking agencies signatories of the International Fact-Checking Network (*Aos Fatos*, *Lupa*, and *Estadão Verifica*).

3   On Google Trends, mentions to the terms "post-truth" and "infodemic" began rising in November 2016 and March 2020, respectively.
4   Though focusing on two measures, the scholarly literature approaches others, like media literacy campaigns, science information literacy, regulation of digital platforms, and legislative projects on the theme of disinformation (TENOVE, 2020).

Such publications are understood here as a meta-journalistic discourse (CARLSON, 2015) in which journalists explicitly engage in delimiting their practices and the normative principles that inspire them.

The sample includes documents published between 2016 and 2021, a period in which discussions about the adverse effects of "post-truth" and "infodemic" heated in the public sphere. Data was collected through manual research on search engines (via keyword intersections) and the websites of the selected initiatives. Through the critical analysis of discourse (FARKAS; SCHOU, 2019), I look to understand the meanings evoked in these institutional publications, recognizing their symbolic and material inscription in the public agenda. I submit the research corpus to a qualitative textual exam aiming to identify recurrent tendencies between the selected propositions to face disinformation, taking into account their ways of addressing the problem and claiming epistemic authority.

The factual coverage of the mainstream press

In recent years, a parcel of journalism studies started operating as the sounding board of a eulogy to the mainstream media as the truth-arbiter in response to the disinformation issue. It is the case of the extensively cited paper in which Waisbord (2018) laments the collapse of modernity's disciplinary project due to the public sphere fragmentation in digital platforms and the instrumentalization of media's criticism by authoritarian politicians. Facing this situation, the journalism competence to build communities of meaning and to inspect public power would be at stake (WAISBORD, 2018). Notwithstanding, the acritical legitimation of corporate media in times of "epistemic crisis" (BLAKE-TURNER, 2020) emerges in works that affirm the truth disseminated by the field as an indispensable reaction before the escalating disinformation (CREECH; ROESSNER, 2019; CAPILLA, 2021). Many of these studies even slip into Manichaeism, opposing the accuracy of facts reported by the traditional press to lies and deception.

For the media conglomerates, the supposed entry into a "post-truth" and "infodemic" era served as artifice to reinforce their conventional practices now glossed over by the task of fighting disinformation. As an example, in an editorial published by Estadão on April 24, 2017, under the title "The fight for truth," the news outlet reasserts its institutional role amidst the alleged epistemic crisis haunting Western democracies: "The epidemic of so-called 'fake news,' nurtured, above all, by social media, is forcing newspapers and other traditional media outlets around the world to mobilize themselves to defend the most precious value in journalism: the truth of facts." (ESTADÃO, 2017, author's italics).

In chorus with the discursive ethos mobilized by this appeal, Folha de S. Paulo's editorial director, Sérgio Dávila, signs a column on October 15, 2016, in which he expresses his publication's commitment to the correctness of facts in a moment of supposed underappreciation for the truth. Entitled "The importance of professional journalism in a 'post-truth' world," the text unleashes the same litany of complaints against the "enemies of the truth" to reiterate the place occupied by *Folha de S. Paulo* in this dispute:

> In an era defined by the "The Economist" magazine as that of the "post-truth," in which politicians from all over the world say what they want without worrying about reality and in which censorship no longer takes place in the traditional way, by the suppression of content, but by the meticulous publication of lies on social media, it is up to professional journalists to help separate fact from rumor. (DÁVILA, 2016, author's italics)

It should be added that the article launching Folha de S. Paulo's new editorial project, published in March 2017, reinforces the background of the epistemic crisis since its suggestive title: "Professional journalism is the antidote to fake news and intolerance."

The following statement heads the list of editorial principles the publication takes on: "Producers of quality content and historical record such as Folha have the challenge of *making the values of professional journalism prevail amid the digital environment's cacophony* that tends

to confuse information and entertainment, reality and rumor, and news and 'fake news' and that expresses almost everything with equal stridency and disconnected from the original context." (FOLHA DE S. PAULO, 2019, author's italics).

As a counterpoint to this alarming observation, Folha lists its normative commitments with the truth as its guide. Several passages of the new editorial project celebrate the company's journalistic practice for its inclination to the facts: "Time-honored reporting and writing procedures extend critical distancing and *make event descriptions as accurate as possible.*" (*FOLHA DE S. PAULO*, 2019, author's italics); "*professional journalists check the veracity of facts*, show connections between them, and establish a news hierarchy." (*FOLHA DE S. PAULO*, 2019, author's italics).

The occasion of the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbates the spirit of defending the mainstream media as an "antidote" to informational disorder. *O Globo*'s editorial on July 29, 2021, aligns its work to the one of science as a way of containing the "infodemic." Under the eye-catching title "Journalism: the fight against denialism and disinformation guides press coverage in the pandemic" the text celebrates the conglomerate's diligence in confronting through its "continuous effort in clarifying facts." (*O GLOBO*, 2021). Then, the editorial completes referring once more to the issue of truth: "O GLOBO had the *search for the truth*, denying false and potentially harmful narratives to public health, as one of the pillars for its pandemic's coverage." (*O GLOBO*, 2021, author's italics).

During a campaign carried out by the principal news outlets in Brazil on March 23, 2020 (which consisted in reproducing the same cover on all print editions with the slogan "Together we will defeat the virus"), *Estadão* published an editorial exalting its professional fact-checking amid the "infodemic" disseminated by social media and demagogue politicians. Defending what they call "informational hygiene," the text closes with yet another truth-exaltation device: "*It is said the first war victim is the truth. In this war, truth can be the last* if society, scholars, authorities,

and journalist are united – as Brazilian newspaper covers said in unison last Monday – for information and responsibility." (*ESTADÃO*, 2020, author's italics).

Fact-checking organizations

Exhorting truth is also a characteristic of the work developed by fact--checking agencies. Fact-checking, as an editorial subgenre, is generally presented as a movement of "professional reform" (DOBBS, 2012; GRAVES, 2018) that responds to deficiencies in the "fair and balanced" approach of US journalism, particularly in political coverage. For that reason, the first initiatives dedicated to fact-checking in the United States launched in the 2000s, focusing on political discourse (e.g., *FactCheck.org*, *PolitiFact*, *The Washington Post Fact Checker*) under a normative ideology of the search for truth and democratic accountability (DOBBS, 2012; GRAVES, 2018; DOURADO, 2019).

The vulgarization of metaphors that allude to an era of discredit for the truth coincides with a period of global popularization and institutionalization of fact-checking, which the International Fact-Checking Network formalized in 2015 (GRAVES, 2018). The international expansion of this editorial genre also served as an opportunity for the mainstream media to inaugurate their own fact-checking units, seeking to legitimize their conventional practices under the flag of rigorous investigation, which is central to "verification journalism" (LELO; PACHI FILHO, 2021). This validation of press work is patent in the text launching *Estadão Verifica*, the fact-checking service of Grupo Estadão.

> "*For 143 years, we have guaranteed the seriousness and quality of the content we produce,*" said João Caminoto, director of Journalism of *Grupo Estadão*. But that is no longer enough. We must also monitor and expose the flow of fake news that infest online networks and can cause damage to society. *Verifica* will be another service to our audiences in these times in which fake news move and grow quickly on the Internet." (BRAMATTI, 2018, author's italics)

In recent years, researchers and opinion leaders have been praising fact-checking as a crucial agent in the "battle" against disinformation (SPINELLI; SANTOS, 2018; DOURADO, 2019). The activity started acquiring public prestige and establishing important partnerships (SPINELLI; SANTOS, 2018; DOURADO, 2019). As an example, since 2016, platform companies have been hiring several initiatives to verify potentially false messages on social media (GRAVES; ANDERSON, 2020). In parallel, fact-checkers themselves started claiming their centrality in the public agenda. Besides partnerships with "big techs," State authorities have also been inviting fact-checking organizations to mediate the informational ecosystem and participate in the legislative debate. In Brazil, this participation happens predominantly through the interlocution with the judiciary system (for example, Superior Electoral Court) and in parliamentary hearings (for example, fake news parliamentary commission of inquiry).

In their institutional articles, fact-checkers understand their commitment to truth as a form of sanitizing public debate. Initiatives themselves publish editorials that reflect such posture, as expressed once more by *Estadão Verifica*: "the press no longer just reports and analyzes facts but also denies and contains the dissemination of false content potentially harmful to society." (BRAMATTI, 2018). Analogously, in its letter celebrating six years of existence, *Aos Fatos* states that "showing what is fake and what is not as well as investigating coordinated networks of disinformation is a powerful way of contributing to public debate." (NALON, 2021). The "infodemic" generated because of the Covid-19 pandemic only reinforced the discourse on the centrality of fact-checking in the fight against disinformation. In an article republished in diverse newspapers on April 8, 2020 (and signed by six representatives of Brazilian fact-checking enterprises), a narrative permeated by bellicose allegories and exalting the work of fact-checkers amid the "infodemic" stands out:

> Brazil is going through two battles at the same time: one, in the field of medicine, against the spread of the coronavirus, and another against the disinformation it produces. *While the frontline of the former has thousands*

of brave health professionals, the army of the second is made of a dedicated but still reduced group of fact-checkers. Without the authorities' explicit support and commitment to the truth, the country is at risk of losing the war against rumors about Covid-19. (LEAL et al., 2020, author's italics)

It is crucial to indicate that the definition of truth that fact-checking initiatives adopt, as exemplarily described in a publication by *Aos Fatos*, refers to an assertion that corresponds to facts verifiable through "documents, law, a methodologically rigorous study, statistics, previous records." *(*NALON, 2020). *Lupa* adopted this definition as well: "Fact--checking thus constitutes the discourse of verification of public agents and political actors. This means checking *if what people say is true or false* based on public data." (EQUIPE LUPA, 2019, author's italics). In this sense, the conviction that "the more information people have, the greater their decision-making power and the more qualified and transparent the public debate becomes" guides fact-checking *(*EQUIPE LUPA, 2019). That is, fact-checking would configure as an instrument for enlightening the citizen, aiming at the improvement of democratic processes.

Truth as the expression of hegemony

Without losing sight of journalism's historical relevance in the modern democracies' foundation (DEWEY, 2004), it is important to consider the role that fact-checking and mainstream media have played in consolidating authoritarian truth-affirmation policy. A field of critical studies has been addressing this issue underlying the agenda to deter disinformation, also called the "Ministry of Corporate Truth" (ALBU-QUERQUE, 2021), "domination through reason" (KUUSELA, 2019; FALOMI, 2019), or even "the sovereign conception of truth" (VOGEL-MANN, 2018). In short, the common denominator of this scholarly literature is the questioning of the subsumption of truth to the authority of the institutions that produce it. Citizens' inability to recognize facts and their notorious disregard for the truth would justify the guardianship

of experts as a way of orienting preferences according to the available evidence in place of preexisting beliefs (MARRES, 2018; FARKAS; SCHOU, 2019).

Based on the post-Marxist thought of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Farkas and Schou (2019) argue that disputes around the notions of "truth" and "falsehood" that set the agenda of the current context do not aim solely to establish empirical categories capable of determining the accurateness of information that circulates in the public sphere. Such disputes would also be political in so far as they seek to hegemonize the normative bases of social reality, stabilizing the available meanings. For that reason, authors argue the concept of factuality is at the center of clashes for the current hegemony, considering that different institutions (including journalism) legitimize certain discourses to the detriment of others (FARKAS; SCHOU, 2019).

The following sections draw from analytical procedures employed by Farkas and Schou (2019) to decompose the gears of the discourse acclaiming the mainstream media and fact-checking organizations as truth-producing institutions. According to them, discourse analysis "offers a problem-driven research strategy centered on understanding and unpacking specific political and social issues" (FARKAS; SCHOU, 2019, p. 43). In this sense, inferences extracted from examined editorials and institutional publications by the mainstream media and fact-checking agencies allow us to point out four central elements in these organizations' discourse: i) the understanding of truth as correspondence; ii) the dichotomy between facts and values; iii) the acritical ratification of truth-producing institutions; and iv) the circumscription of democratic dissent to the judgment of facts.

Truth as correspondence

The discursive regime proposed by journalistic strategies to face disinformation understands truth as "a relationship between a proposition and the world – a proposition is true if and only if it corresponds to a fact in the world." (BRAHMS, 2020, p. 6). The philosophical heritage

anchoring that definition is the correspondence theory, associated with the thought developed by the Vienna Circle in the early twentieth century (MARRES, 2018). According to that framework, reality and facts are external to human consciousness and, therefore, independent of it.

Throughout history, several epistemological doctrines have relied on this characterization of truth as correspondence, such as the mythology of journalism as a mirror of reality (SCHUDSON, 2005). However, though the press continues to profess faith in the objectivity of facts in most Western democracies (CAPILLA, 2021), studies on news-making (TUCHMAN, 1978) have questioned this premise since the 1970s, understanding the reality portrayed by journalism as a construction, not a reflection.

Therefore, the return to correspondence theories as a response to "post-truth" and the "infodemic" represents a historical setback covered by a discourse that praises the truth. Supposedly exogenous to the opinion disputes between ordinary citizens, journalists and fact-checkers would be responsible for "transmitting" the truth in a way that is understandable to them. Here lies a constitutive asymmetry between those who possess the truth and the audience of fact-checking initiatives. As something external to subjects' perceptions, truth becomes a type of coercion to enlightenment (KUUSELA, 2019).

Dichotomy between facts and values

The return of correspondence theories in the discourse of journalistic strategies to face disinformation often comes with echoes of Arendt's thought about truth, especially the split the author promotes between that and the domain of opinions (proper to politics) (VOGELMANN, 2018). The despotic character of truth, which Arendt made positive in the context of the rise of totalitarian ideologies in the 20th century, was understood as a means of limiting the power of tyrants to rewrite history at will (ARENDT, 1967). Currently, this coercive approach to truth has turned into submission to the facts as a panacea for the supposed epistemic crisis experienced by Western democracies.

Arendt (1967, p. 13) indicates that "facts are beyond agreement and consent, and all talk about them – all exchanges of opinion based on correct information – will contribute nothing to their establishment." That account sets a normative demarcation between voices that enunciate the truth (for example, journalists, fact-checkers) and those incapable of doing it, whether of naiveté, incompetence, or maliciousness. If the truth about contested facts is just one, and the disagreement over it results from an incomprehension about reality, then what journalistic initiatives to deter disinformation are normatively claiming is the suppression of values from the public sphere. Consequently, discrepant axiologies about the ways of existing in common are concealed by appeals to enlightenment and reason (JASANOFF; SIMMET, 2017; MARRES, 2018). According to Backström (2019), the problematic reverse of the dichotomization between facts and values in public opinion is their reification as equally immune to questioning, seen as they would express in words the subject's "inner truth," conferring them the supposed right to pronounce intolerant value judgements about others and the world supported by the "freedom of expression" prerogative. What this tug of war between irreconcilable truths expresses is less a disdain for the truth and more a claim for hegemony in the public sphere, either among those who establish fidelity to evidence as a prerequisite for effective political participation or among those who claim subjection to their values (regardless of the harm they cause to others) as an inalienable right to individuality.

The unrestricted legitimation of journalistic practices

As a consequence of that split between facts and values in the context of "post-truth" and "infodemic," the press and fact-checking are uncritically ratified in public opinion as truth-producing institutions. Throughout history, it is important to remember that journalism not only contributed to the promotion of democratic ideas but also, on several occasions, to the legitimation of political and economic power and the reproduction of inequalities (JASANOFF; SIMMET, 2017;

FENTON; FREEDMAN, 2018; FALOMI, 2019; ALBUQUERQUE, 2021).

By way of illustration, we know media conglomerates for decades have promoted the naturalization of neoliberal capitalism, concealing its inconvenient truths (for example, growing income concentration, intensification of labor precarity, loss of rights, and the persecution of minority groups) (FENTON; FREEDMAN, 2018; BACKSTRÖM, 2019; ALBUQUERQUE, 2021). The nostalgia that emerges from this desire to return to facts, therefore, obscures a latent truth that journalism was never separated from society's moral disputes (JASANOFF; SIMMET, 2017; FENTON; FRIEDMAN, 2018; VOGELMANN, 2018).

When the press and fact-checking situate their interventions in public debate as immune to questioning, the demand is, in other words, for their exemption from responsibility for the present state of affairs.[5] This attitude reflects in the reformist accent of the current measures to combat disinformation, which focus, as Hab-good-Coote (2018) argues, on individual accountability, moral education, and the defense of institutions. Incentives to critical citizen participation comprising demands for the regulation of media conglomerates, public taxation of platform companies, breaking down monopolies, and stimulus to healthy skepticism towards institutions are frequently left aside – especially when they work to normalize forms of "domination by reason" (FALOMI, 2019; KUUSELA, 2019).

Circumscribing democratic dissent

Finally, the circumscription of democratic dissent to the facts' judgement has, as a problematic consequence, the depoliticization of the public sphere. As Jasanoff and Simmet (2017, p. 763) argue, "to say

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5   Cases in which the press favored of disinformation stand out, such as the normalization of authoritarian populists' presidency candidacies as if they were legitimate democrats (ARAÚJO; PRIOR, 2021) and the tolerance of hate speech under the seal of "freedom of expression." (COSTA; MAIA, 2021).

that facts speak for themselves is to live in a 'post-value' world that ignores contention and questioning as the very stuff of a democracy that has always connected public facts with public values." In other words, Western democracies should be discussing today not the authoritarian subsumption of the misinformed to rationality (FALOMI, 2019) but the acknowledgement of the existence of discrepant images of social reality emanating from false and deceitful messages (ANDERSEN; SOE, 2019; CABAÑES, 2020).

Truth is not just correspondence to facts but situationally established according to a discussion context that demands clarification (KUUSELA, 2019). For this reason, a pluralist approach to the truth (BRAHMS, 2020) does not presuppose an information deficit in citizens to be corrected by the arsenal of countermeasures offered by journalism. More modestly, a pluralist approach identifies in the discrepant claims about truth dissimilar normative judgments about regarding shared life that need to be properly understood and elucidated in the circumstances in which they emerge.

Final remarks

Acknowledging the pluralism of truth is not the same as embracing the relativism that all opinions about facts have the same value. Likewise, this acknowledgement does not entail agreeing with intolerant and life--threatening worldviews (for example, climate and health denialism, prejudice against social minorities) and even less the disregard for the disinformation role in the promotion of undemocratic values and the impairment of health campaigns in the context of a health crisis. The argument is in favor of an apprehension of the truth that is not confined from the start by the ongoing disputes for hegemony and capable of understanding them less because of the generalized disregard for enlightenment and more as a consequence of the profusion of discrepant imaginaries about democracy. Such imaginaries underlie the messages we share with each other (regardless of their factual accuracy) and refer

to sometimes dissimilar normative values about how collective existence should or should not be managed (ANDERSEN; SOE, 2019).

Inserted in the terrain of political dissent, measures designed to improve citizens' critical abilities should exercise a careful understanding of which axiology a given false message triggers rather than presupposing different degrees of susceptibility to deception. There are already proposals of the sort in the specialized literature that demand from the press, for example, the exercise of its critical judgment in coverages that involve conflicting values from a citizen perspective (CARLSON, 2018).

The same applies to fact-checking, which claims to go beyond the verification of empirical correspondences towards "the contextualization and clarification of the different normative contents of political statements." (YARROW, 2021, p. 6). Fears evoked by imprecise metaphors such as "post-truth" and "infodemic" have aroused an uncritical adherence to liberal journalism, disregarding the relevance of healthy skepticism also in relation to it. In this sense, the task of those committed to the vitality of democratic citizenship is less of authoritatively clarifying facts but rather raising awareness to the importance of critical thinking (SCHINDLER, 2020) as an instrument for understanding reality and dissident normative values that permeate the public sphere.

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Narcos y El patrón del mal: Quiebras y confirmaciones de una topografía serial[1]

Narcos and El patrón del mal: Disruptions and Confirmations of a Serial Topography

Ernesto Pérez Morán[2]

Resumen: *La resonancia de la serie de Netflix Narcos (que clausuraba en su segunda temporada el relato de Pablo Escobar) desentierra la memoria de otra serie, telenovela en este caso, titulada El patrón del mal y que tuvo no poco éxito en Latinoamérica, con unas estimables ventas a nivel mundial. Un proyecto financiado por varias universidades ha comparado ambas series desde distintos puntos de vista. El estudio del guion y la escaleta, mediante una muestra representativa de escenas que son sometidas a exhaustiva datación, desmonta ciertos apriorismos, pues ni El patrón del mal por ser telenovela es tan simple, ni Narcos exhibe complejidad alguna en sus personajes, mientras que ambas no se diferencian tanto como podría suponerse a la luz de su modelo de producción. Lo que sí las distingue es la nacionalidad, que condiciona el punto de vista y otros muchos elementos.*

Palabras clave: *Pablo Escobar; Telenovela; Serie; Guion; Netflix.*

Abstract: *Netflix TV series Narcos success (which closed Pablo Escobar's story on its second season) brings to mind the telenovela El Patrón del Mal, another TV Hit not only in Latin America but also in the international market. A project funded by several universities has compared both TV series from different points*

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of view: Storytelling and script analysis, through a representative sample of scenes that are submitted to and exhaustive dating, dismantles certain apriorisms, like neither El Patron del Mal for being a telenovela is so simple, nor does Narcos exhibit any complexity in its characters. In fact, they are not that different. What distinguishes them is their nationality, which determines the point of view and many other elements.

Keywords: *Pablo Escobar; Soap Opera; Tv-Series; Script; Netflix.*

Introducción

Pocos éxitos tan descollantes como *Narcos* (2015-) cuenta en su haber Netflix durante sus primeros años como productora de contenidos. Al margen de la deriva de la serie en cuanto franquicia, pasando de Colombia a México en la tercera temporada, en sus dos primeras establece el auge y la caída de Pablo Escobar, recorrido dramático que las emparenta con su más notable precedente, la telenovela *El patrón del mal* (2012) (en adelante, *El patrón)*, serie colombiana de 113 capítulos[3] producida por Caracol TV y que muestra eminentes oposiciones con *Narcos* a pesar de contar la misma historia[4].

Como abocetada contextualización, es conveniente diferenciar las dos producciones. La más reciente se configura dentro del esquema habitual de Netflix durante su primera época: capítulos en torno a 45-50 minutos de duración, diez por temporada y adscritos al género de drama, mientras que *El patrón* plantea un número mayor de capítulos –sin división por temporadas–, menor en cuanto a duración y adherido a la fórmula de la telenovela, entendida esta en cuanto al esquematismo de los personajes y las acciones (MARTÍNEZ MUÑOZ y ASQUETA, 2006; LOZANO *et al*, 2015), algo que no le resta eficacia en cuanto testimonio social y "artístico", aducido desde Colombia (RINCÓN, 2008; LOZANO *et al*, 2015) pero también desde otros países cercanos como Brasil, donde se ha abordado la capacidad de la telenovela de reflejar las

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3   Si seguimos la emisión de los mismos en la cadena, pues posteriormente se editaron *packs* de DVD´s de 73 capítulos, división que luego siguió la propia Netflix en su plataforma.

4   A este respecto, nos interesa especialmente la diferenciación que hace CHION entre historia y relato: "Una distinción necesaria es la que existe entre la historia propiamente dicha (es decir, una cosa tan tonta como 'lo que ocurre' cuando se expone un guion en extensión, según el orden cronológico), y el otro plano, que podemos llamar narración, pero que otros llaman: relato, discurso, construcción dramática, etc., y que remite al modo en que es contada la historia. Entre otras cosas, la manera en que los acontecimientos y los datos de la historia se dan a conocer al público (modos del relato, informaciones ocultas, luego reveladas, utilización de los tiempos, elipsis, reiteraciones, etc.). Este arte de la narración puede, por sí solo, dar cierto interés a una historia carente de sorpresas. A la inversa, una mala narración estropea el interés por una buena historia" (2009, pp. 77-78). La distinción, por supuesto, remite a la establecida por los formalistas rusos entre fábula y *syuzhet*, luego reformulada por GENETTE como *histoire* y *récit* en su influyente narratología literaria de *Figures III* (1972), o por BORDWELL para el cine como *story*, *plot* y *narration*, en el no menos conocido *Narration in the Fiction Film* (1985).

ideas de pertenencia y nación incluso en tiempos del *streaming* (LÓPEZ y LEMOS, 2020; LOPES DA SILVA, 2021)[5].

Eso influye, junto a los modos de producción y la nacionalidad, como veremos, en que una misma historia tenga diferentes desarrollos. *Narcos*, en los 20 capítulos de sus dos primeras temporadas, relata el ascenso de Pablo Escobar aunque enseguida esta narración se alterna con la de Murphy, el agente de la DEA encargado de perseguirle. La caza de Pablo Escobar acaba protagonizando la serie, mientras que la telenovela focaliza su relato en el ascenso y la caída de Pablo Escobar, mostrando incluso la infancia del narco.

Nuestro objetivo principal era desarrollar un análisis comparado entre ambas series para determinar las distintas maneras de narrar en función del país de producción así como establecer una metodología de estudio con un carácter holístico, consistente en el acercamiento analítico desde la teoría del guion y cuyos resultados exponemos en el presente artículo.

Metodología y cuerpo teórico

De esta forma, en un primer momento la unidad de estudio se configuró en torno a la escena y se escogió una muestra que fuera significativa. En cuanto a la escena, la metodología bebe de lo que se ha dado en llamar el estudio 'plano a plano', aplicado por, entre otros, GONZÁLEZ REQUENA (1995) y posteriormente PÉREZ MORÁN (2015), quien analizaba todos los planos de los largometrajes de la cineasta Patricia Ferreira, recuperando a su vez los *decoupages* franceses de los años sesenta, estudios que analizaban íntegramente las escenas de un determinado, tratando de desentrañar los aspectos más relevantes de la narración de una forma exhaustiva. La publicación que hizo de ello una práctica habitual fue la revista francesa *L'Avant-Scène Cinéma*, aunque posteriormente no ha habido apenas desarrollo –ROPARS-WUILLEUMIER (1970); BELLOUR (1979)– de una técnica de análisis

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5   También desde Brasil se ha estudiado, partiendo de diferentes ópticas, *El patrón*, como evidencia el sólido estudio sobre recepción que lleva a cabo ROCHA (2018).

que ahora aplicamos mediante una ficha/modelo de datación con los siguientes campos: conteo y numeración de las escenas, duración y situación de las mismas, espacio y tiempo en el que transcurren, tramas que se desarrollan en ellas, nudos de acción presentes en cada una, personajes que intervienen, acciones que se muestran y tratamiento temporal de cada escena. A mayor abundamiento, y previo a esto, se elaboraron escaletas de todos los capítulos (133 en total).

El criterio para elegir la muestra fue consecuencia, al ser series basadas en hechos reales, de la correspondencia entre los hechos reales y su dramatización. Se eligieron once acontecimientos fundamentales en la historia de Pablo Escobar, que derivaron en la selección de once capítulos de *El patrón* y ocho de *Narcos* (aquellos que ilustran, con mayor o menor profusión, esos mismos acontecimientos). Así, la muestra quedaba –llamativamente equilibrada– en 454 escenas de *El patrón* y 462 de *Narcos*, como objeto representativo desde el cual poder sacar conclusiones de sentido, sin quedarnos en la mera cuantificación de los distintos elementos.

Para apuntalar el sustento metodológico con un cuerpo teórico lo suficientemente sólido se utilizaron diferentes referentes, como la concepción de los nudos que establece ARISTÓTELES en su *Poética*, cuando los llama *avant la lettre* peripecias[6], y que SARTRE reformulase llamándolos aventuras: "un acontecimiento que, sin ser necesariamente extraordinario, se sale de lo ordinario" (2008, p. 143). Para las tramas, seguimos a SÁNCHEZ-ESCALONILLA (2001, p. 103-106) y su diferenciación entre tramas (basadas en acciones) y subtramas (asentadas en relaciones entre personajes); y, en cuanto a la horizontalidad o verticalidad de las mismas es LÓPEZ quien perfila la distinción: "Al contrario que las tramas autoconclusivas, que empiezan y terminan en un mismo capítulo, las tramas horizontales son aquellas historias que tienen continuidad a lo largo de distintos episodios" (2008, p. 39).

Para el diseño de los personajes SEGER (2000) y EGRI (2000) son los principales referentes, autor este último que siempre se posicionó en

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6   Que para él será "el cambio de las acciones en sentido contrario" (2004, p. 58).

contra de ARISTÓTELES, pues este le daba más importancia a las acciones que a los personajes. Nosotros no entraremos en este debate sino que trataremos de aprovechar lo mejor de cada uno.

Mientras *Narcos* hace suyo el esquema de temporadas con capítulos de menos de una hora de duración, la serie de Caracol asume el género de la telenovela o, más concretamente, de lo que se ha dado en llamar narcotelenovela (RINCÓN, 2009), con sus condicionantes culturales y empresariales, de los que dan cuenta MEDINA Y BARRÓN (2010), entre otros, al igual que KERRIGAN y BATTY (2015) estudian el modo en que la industria influye en los procesos de escritura o DAVID HUNTER, SMITH y SINGH (2015) tratan la forma en que se puede aumentar el éxito de una producción desde el diseño del guion.

MARTÍN-BARBERO (1992, p. 46), por su parte, establece dos operaciones habituales en la telenovela: "La esquematización es entendida por la mayoría de los analistas en términos de ausencia de psicología […] La polarización maniquea y su reducción valorativa de los personajes a buenos y malos resulta ser un chantaje ideológico". Por otro lado, MARTÍNEZ, MUÑOZ y ASQUETA parten de la "consideración de la telenovela como generadora de un discurso, unos estereotipos que inciden significativamente en el proceso de desarrollo de las formas de pensamiento y de comportamiento social" (2016, p. 21).

Todo ello se aplicará a dos series que pueden parecer muy diferentes pero que guardan entre sí ciertas similitudes que destacan tras el análisis escena a escena, el cual revela también sus diferencias. Y es que debemos tener en cuenta algunos aspectos previos, asumir ciertos apriorismos y comprobar si se cumplen.

El patrón está destinada a la audiencia colombiana (no necesita contexto) y *Narcos* a un público global que desconoce la historia, por lo que precisa más información. Ello conlleva que *El patrón* se guíe por la fidelidad necesaria para con una audiencia iniciada (también por el hecho de ser, como reza uno de los créditos, una "libre adaptación" de la novela de Alonso Salazar, titulada *La parábola de Pablo* [2001]) y que *Narcos,* por su parte, se tome no pocas licencias; algo que se explica

también por la diferencia de protagonismo (Murphy en *Narcos*, Pablo en *El patrón*) y por unas tramas muy distintas (la caza de Pablo en la primera, el ascenso y la caída de este en la segunda). Demostraremos que es cierta para las dos producciones la siguiente afirmación de MAZZIOTTI a propósito de la telenovela: "Como todo género, está cruzado y tramado por tres instancias: su producción industrial, su textualidad y las expectativas de las audiencias" (1996, p. 13). Ha llegado el momento de comprobar afirmaciones y desmontar prejuicios.

Estudio comparado de ambos guiones

Dos formatos, varios apriorismos resquebrajados

Por lo que respecta al formato, *El patrón* cuenta con 113 capítulos y una duración total de 3.185 minutos (28,2 por capítulo), mientras que los 20 capítulos de *Narcos* se extienden una media de 48,6 minutos (para un total de 972 minutos). La diferencia se debe a que la telenovela –llamada en Colombia, simplemente, novela– maneja una duración estándar de en torno a media hora (aunque los primeros y los últimos capítulos de *El patrón* tienen una extensión mayor) sin limitación de episodios ni circunscripción a *temporadas*, término que responde a una moda anglosajona a la que se adscribe *Narcos*.

En cuanto a la escaleta, *El patrón* cuenta con 3.024 escenas totales, lo que arroja una media de 26,7 escenas por cada capítulo, al tiempo que *Narcos* alcanza las 1.130, 56,5 por episodio, dato que sorprende debido al formato y al mayor ritmo de las producciones estadounidenses: la duración media de cada escena en *El patrón* no supera el minuto (0,94), mientras que las de *Narcos* sí lo hacen (1,16). Si alguien pensaba que la telenovela, por serlo, iría por bloques o pasajes más largos, estaba equivocado.

Tabla 1

	El patrón	Narcos
Número de capítulos totales	113	20
Duración total (en minutos)	3.185	972
Duración media por capítulo (en minutos)	28,2	48,6
Escenas totales	3.024	1.130
Media de escenas por capítulo	26,7	56,5
Duración media de cada escena (en minutos)	0,94	1,16

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Entrando ya en la muestra representativa, y si atendemos al momento en que transcurren las escenas, llama la atención cierta diferencia, pues las nocturnas suponen el 32% en *El patrón*, frente a tan solo un 20% en *Narcos*. Y no deja de ser curioso que haya dos capítulos de la telenovela colombiana que acontecen íntegramente de día: el 80, que recrea el atentado con bomba en el avión de Avianca, y el 81, que glosa tanto la caza de El Mariachi (llamado El Mexicano, puesto que *El patrón* cambia algunos nombres reales para evitar problemas legales) como la bomba en el edificio del DAS; y que haya un capítulo de la telenovela que acontece todo de noche (el 71, dedicado al asesinato de Luis Carlos Galán, en Soacha). Tal concentración no se da en *Narcos*, más equilibrada a este respecto y con una mayoría (80%) de pasajes diurnos.

La producción condiciona, esta vez sí, el número de escenas fragmentadas por montaje, que en *Narcos* apenas supera el 16% y que en *El patrón* alcanza el 24%, debido a que este recurso sirve para aumentar el dinamismo sin incrementar los costes. Así, un mismo pasaje 'parece' que forma varios gracias a la labor de montaje.

En el mismo orden de cosas, la duración media de las escenas arroja realidades sugerentes. Si *Narcos* luce un número mayor de pasajes 'largos' (más de un minuto, es decir, por encima de la media, señalada más arriba), llegando a las 135 –por los 104 de *El patrón*–, la telenovela

de Caracol cuenta con hasta dos de más de seis minutos[7] y dos con entre cinco y seis minutos[8], mientras que el más prolongado de *Narcos* se queda en 4:34 minutos de duración[9]. Así, los pasajes más extensos pertenecen a *El patrón*, lo que no impide que *Narcos* recurra con más profusión a escenas por encima de la media, a pesar de que el carácter de telenovela de la primera podría llevar a deducir lo contrario.

Y aunque no sea objeto de este artículo, citemos de pasada un argumento coadyuvante, pues ese mayor ritmo se ve refrendado por la duración de los planos, que de nuevo se revela a favor de *El patrón*, puesto que muestra una media de 5,1 segundos por plano frente a los 6,2 segundos de *Narcos*, cuando la lógica podría hacer pensar que esta cortaría los planos más rápido. Ello es debido en parte a que la serie de Netflix recurre con avidez a la cámara al hombro y a resolver muchas escenas en una sola toma, lo que alarga una media cuyo valor numérico permite hablar de un mayor ritmo externo en la telenovela de Caracol, por todos los argumentos dados más arriba.

En cuanto a los lugares, el volumen de la producción de *Narcos* podría hacer pensar en una mayor presencia de pasajes rodados en exteriores en la serie de Netflix, algo que no se ve refrendado por los porcentajes, pues al 33% de *Narcos* se contrapone el 36% de *El patrón*, relativa igualdad que se mantiene, lógicamente, en unos interiores que son mayores en *Narcos* (66%) frente a *El patrón* (63%), proporciones que se redondean con un 1% en ambas series de escenas que se desarrollan en interior/exterior.

Del mismo modo, el menor presupuesto de *El patrón* no impide que haya cierta correspondencia en el número de localizaciones: 161 en esta frente a las 154 de *Narcos*, si bien hay notables diferencias que adelantan el distinto protagonismo en cada serie. En la colombiana, los

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7   La decimotercera del episodio 71, que desarrolla el asesinato de Luis Carlos Galán, y la vigesimoctava del 113, en la que vemos la celebración del último cumpleaños de Pablo.
8   La tercera del tercer capítulo, que asiste a la fiesta que da Pablo cuando comienza a ganar dinero, y la vigesimoctava del episodio 108, el encuentro de Pablo con el viceministro de Justicia en la Catedral.
9   Y se corresponde, en sorprendente analogía, con la escena, de nuevo, del encuentro entre Pablo y Sandoval, viceministro de Justicia (escena 28 del décimo capítulo).

lugares que más se repiten son aquellos asociados con Pablo Escobar: su casa (13), su finca (13) y su última vivienda/escondite (21), mientras que en *Narcos* los espacios más presentes se reparten entre los de Pablo –su casa en 13 ocasiones, La Catedral en 19, su finca en 13 y su escondite en 13– y aquellos en los que se mueven Steve Murphy y Javier Peña: 12 veces aparece la casa del primero, 10 la embajada estadounidense y 11 las oficinas de la DEA. Estos parámetros espaciales no hacen más que adelantar la relevancia de los personajes.

Tabla 2

	El patrón	Narcos
Porcentaje de escenas nocturnas	32%	20%
Porcentaje de escenas diurnas	68%	80%
Escenas fragmentadas por montaje	24%	16%
Escenas de más de un minuto de duración	104	135
Duración media de cada plano (en segundos)	5,1	6,2
Porcentaje de escenas exteriores	36%	33%
Porcentaje de escenas interiores	63%	66%
Número de localizaciones	161	154

Fuente: elaboración propia.

Dos protagonistas, a su vez dos antagonistas

El recuento del número de personajes y su presencia no deja lugar a las dudas en cuanto al protagonismo y la variedad de quienes intervienen, pero resaltan oposiciones que podrían no advertirse a primera vista. Los 205 personajes de *El patrón* se ven casi igualados por los 198 de *Narcos*, de los cuales Murphy es el que más interviene, haciéndolo hasta en 215 escenas (el 46,5%), porcentaje elevadísimo y que se explica por su presencia 'en *over*' y su rol de narrador. Pablo, por su parte, aparece en el 28,1% de los pasajes, seguido de Peña con un 18,4%. En el caso de *El patrón*, Pablo es el protagonista, si bien con un porcentaje menor con respecto a su homólogo en *Narcos*: el 37,5% de las escenas son para él.

Puede afirmarse que el punto de vista estadounidense predomina en *Narcos*, más aún cuando en *El patrón* Javier Peña y Steve Murphy son los dos grandes ausentes, paradoja esta que merece ser comentada. A pesar de ser personajes que existieron y cuyo papel fue relevante (Murphy aparece fotografiado con el cadáver de Pablo en el tejado de Los Olivos), ninguno de ellos interviene en la telenovela colombiana, mientras en *Narcos* su papel es protagonista e incluso varios momentos acentúan –falseando– la relevancia de sus acciones. Es el caso del pasaje (escena 53 del tercer capítulo) en el que el agente le ruega a Rodrigo Lara que utilice un chaleco antibalas, algo que este rechaza con la frase "John Wayne solo existe en Hollywood", reprochándole a Murphy su condescendencia horas antes de ser asesinado en su coche. Murphy lamentará al final del capítulo que Rodrigo Lara no le hubiera hecho caso. Y debemos señalar, como otro ejemplo de manipulación de los acontecimientos a favor de EE.UU., que en la escena número 53 del sexto capítulo, Murphy consigue con su terquedad que César Gaviria no suba al avión que poco después explotará en pleno vuelo, otro nudo de acción que carece de veracidad, a tenor de las distintas crónicas existentes.

En correspondencia con el protagonismo de este narrador, podrá deducirse la mayor cantidad de voz *over* en la producción de Netflix, algo que refrendan los datos: hasta el 36,6% de sus escenas cuentan con ella, frente al 16% de *El patrón*, que, a pesar de no contar con un narrador omnisciente –en el caso de *Narcos es* homodiegético–, recurre a esta voz por montaje, sobreponiendo las voces de un pasaje en otro. Como dato curioso, la presencia del *over* en el décimo episodio de *Narcos* se reduce a tan solo tres escenas, debido a que Murphy es secuestrado por el cártel de Cali, lo que hace que, en coherencia, su figura de narrador prácticamente desaparezca.

A propósito de ello, no debemos olvidar el poder que tiene la voz *over* para dotar de autenticidad al discurso, que además en el caso de Murphy se suele reducir a la maniquea distinción entre buenos y malos, lo que genera un diseño de personajes simplista: la mayoría de estadounidenses son inteligentes e íntegros mientras que, con la salvedad de Carrillo

(una especie de Rambo sin correspondencia con la realidad), Gustavo (el hermano de Pablo) y Sandoval (asesor de Gaviria), los colombianos son una recua de sicarios –cuando no personas bastante limitadas intelectualmente– cuyas motivaciones nunca conoceremos: Poison es un asesino sin compasión, El Mexicano, un psicópata "demasiado endurecido por el negocio de los diamantes", los hermanos Ochoa, unas caricaturas sin conflicto ni aristas ("demasiado reblandecidos por la vida de lujo"), mientras que sus homónimos en *El patrón* son personajes más tridimensionales: Chili es un criminal pero muchas veces es zarandeado por conflictos morales; de El Mariachi conoceremos sus deseos (ser enterrado en una iglesia) y en no pocas ocasiones mostrará sus reservas ante la ceguera de Pablo; y los hermanos Motoa –trasunto de los Ochoa– muestran cada uno un diseño minucioso, desde el más prudente Carlos hasta el indiscreto Julio o el inteligente y circunspecto Pedro.

No entraremos, por razones obvias, en el análisis del *casting* de cada serie, pero es obligado mencionar el desdén sistemático de *Narcos* por la veracidad y por el público colombiano, cuando contrata a un actor brasileño (Wagner Moura) para encarnar a Pablo, a un cubano-americano (Maurice Compte) para hacer lo propio con Carrillo o a un puertorriqueño (Luis Guzmán) para encarnar a El Mexicano, al tiempo que *El patrón* se vale de intérpretes 'paisas' (antioqueños) en su mayoría, en una nueva correlación de fuerzas que apoya el discurso colonialista de *Narcos*: sacrifica la veracidad, de nuevo, en pos de la globalidad.

Dos tramas opuestas, más nudos similares

Lo primero que llama la atención es que la trama central es diferente, pues si en *El patrón* la misma es el ascenso y la caída de Pablo Escobar, en *Narcos* es la caza de Pablo, consecuencia de la variación en el punto de vista, ya que en esta la presencia del narrador Murphy hace que 'su' trama, atrapar a Pablo, sea la principal, dejando en un segundo plano el ascenso del criminal. Los datos apoyan esta afirmación: las 215 escenas de la trama centrada en la caza (34%) contrastan con las 128 (27,7%) sobre las andanzas de Pablo. La bomba en el avión de Avianca es la tercera en importancia, ya muy por detrás con 32 escenas (7%). En *El patrón*,

sin embargo, la trama de la caza de Pablo ocupa 108 (23,8%), mientras que la del ascenso de Pablo, a la que hay que sumar la de su infancia y la de sus primeros escarceos con el crimen en su juventud (pues tienen continuidad), se desarrolla durante 124 pasajes (27,3%). También bastante por detrás en importancia aparecen la trama de Rodrigo Lara (8,6%, frente al 1,3% en *Narcos*), la del periódico *El Espectador* (7,7%), que en *Narcos* es inexistente, o la de Luis Carlos Galán (6,8%), que en la serie de Netflix supone apenas un 2,1%.

Se puede corroborar con estos datos, y con el conteo del resto de tramas, que *Narcos* se centra más en el ascenso y la caza de Pablo y desprecia otras centradas en las víctimas, que encuentran mayor acomodo en *El patrón*, pues al estar dirigida a un público nacional, da cabida a hechos que en su momento la gente conoció y sufrió como conmociones nacionales (caso del asesinato de Guillermo Cano, que en Netflix se reduce a cinco planos y seis segundos en el quinto capítulo [escena 25]).

En cuanto a la cantidad de tramas por episodio, ambas series comparten el número variable de las mismas. *Narcos* oscila entre las tres del primer capítulo y las ocho del tercero, con una media de casi seis tramas por capítulo, mientras que *El patrón* se queda en 4,2, desde las apenas dos de los últimos capítulos hasta un máximo de siete en el capítulo 81. Ello es debido a que este episodio desarrolla las tramas verticales de las que serán víctimas de la bomba en el avión de Avianca, como fórmula para identificar al espectador con esos personajes y que luego el impacto dramático sea mayor.

A propósito de ello, analicemos la cantidad y el cariz de las tramas presentes en la muestra: hay 22 durante los 11 capítulos estudiados de *El patrón*, por las 19 de *Narcos* en sus ocho, de las cuales siete son verticales y hay cinco subtramas frente a las otras 14 tramas. Las subtramas serán las que desarrollen las relaciones entre Pablo y Tata, este y su familia, Pablo y Valeria y por otro lado las de Murphy y su esposa Connie y Javier Peña y Elisa. Por cantidad, parece que hay un peso mayor de Pablo, aunque por el número de escenas de cada uno se confirma que existe cierto equilibrio entre las subtramas pertenecientes a cada bando.

Podría asegurarse que no existen en *Narcos* las subtramas verticales, al contrario que en *El patrón*, que cuenta con cuatro, todas asociadas a las futuras víctimas del atentado de Avianca. La telenovela colombiana tiene, en la muestra, cinco subtramas (Pablo y su familia, Pablo y Patricia, Pablo y Regina –Valeria–, Pablo y Yesenia y la que desarrolla la relación de pareja entre Rodrigo Lara y su esposa Nancy), por lo que puede afirmarse la relevancia del protagonista también en las subtramas. Por último, cabe reseñar que de las 22 tramas de la producción de Caracol, solo hay dos verticales puras, aquellas que relatan la caza de El Mariachi y la que da cuenta de la historia del abuelo de Pablo.

Narcos juega también con las tramas verticales pero por razones distintas, bien sea para añadir toques de comedia (la trama del gato de Murphy en el capítulo tercero) o para desarrollar un episodio concreto, como el mencionado secuestro del agente. Ello no debe hacer olvidar que la horizontalidad de las tramas es la constante probada en ambas producciones.

Es sorprendente que *El patrón* tenga más nudos de acción que *Narcos*. Sería lícito presuponer que al ser una telenovela, con más capítulos y un formato necesariamente estirado, esta encontraría menos acciones dramáticamente trascendentes. Los 213 nudos de la serie de Netflix frente a los 251 de la colombiana (según la muestra), desmienten tal apriorismo y denotan el dinamismo narrativo de esta última, refrendado por la cantidad total de las tramas, ya mencionada antes.

Tabla 3

	El patrón	Narcos
Número total de personajes	205	198
Porcentaje de escenas con voz over	16%	36%
Media de tramas por capítulo	4,2	5,9
Número total de tramas en la muestra	22	19
Número de tramas horizontales en la muestra	20	12
Número de tramas verticales en la muestra	2	7
Número de nudos en la muestra	251	213

Fuente: elaboración propia

Tratamientos temporales diversos, presencias aisladas

La personificación del narrador condiciona también las escasas simili-
tudes en cuanto a alteraciones temporales. *El patrón* apenas cuenta con
13 *flashbacks* frente a los 78 de *Narcos*, que se corresponden, la mayoría
de las veces, con las secuencias de montaje que forman las explicacio-
nes de contexto proporcionadas por Murphy con su *over*, y que en *El
patrón* son inexistentes por una doble causa ya adelantada al inicio: no
hay ni narrador ni necesidad de dar esa información a un público que
ya conoce con anterioridad la historia de Pablo Escobar. En *Narcos* esas
contextualizaciones se hacen esenciales debido al *target* global de la
serie y posibles por el narrador, que permite estos saltos.

Algo distinto ocurre con los *flashforwards*, ausentes en *Narcos* y que
sí se utilizan en *El patrón*, hasta en doce ocasiones y todas en el primer
capítulo, que empieza repasando los hechos más sobresalientes de la
historia de Pablo Escobar. Este recurso se explica porque *El patrón* va
a dedicar sus primeros capítulos a la infancia y juventud de Pablo (una
concesión al público colombiano, pues hasta la fecha de emisión eran
los pasajes menos conocidos de la biografía del narco), que tienen una
menor intensidad dramática, por lo que esos *flashforwards* suponen un
aperitivo de lo que está por llegar y sirven para enganchar al espectador.
Narcos, por el contrario, arranca con un Pablo a punto de descubrir la
cocaína como su modo de vida y el pulso narrativo no se ve mermado
por el arranque.

Por último, cabe citar la aislada presencia de una escena con cáma-
ra lenta en *Narcos* (en la 53 del capítulo 20, al ser abatido Escobar)
frente a las once detectadas en *El patrón*, consecuencia del formato de
telenovela, más tendente al uso del ralentí como modo de exprimir las
emociones y regodearse en el dramatismo.

Conclusiones

El modelo de análisis aplicado a las casi 900 escenas permite un conoci-
miento profundo en cuanto a los elementos de guion más característicos,

y corrobora las afirmaciones con datos incontestables, que en este caso han servido para desmontar algunos prejuicios entre las series.

A pesar de contar con esquemas de producción muy diferentes, las principales diferencias entre ambas no se deben a este aspecto: el número equivalente de escenas en exteriores, localizaciones y número de personajes o pasajes revelan que ese apriorismo se quiebra, al igual que el ritmo de *El patrón* mantiene un dinamismo –tanto por nudos de acción como por elementos de montaje– similar al de *Narcos*, cuando no superior, y eso que el formato de telenovela suele tender a estirar las situaciones dramáticamente relevantes…

Las divergencias más tangibles vienen dadas, eso sí, por el país de producción y la audiencia potencial, lo cual condiciona el formato y el punto de vista, lo que a su vez genera variaciones en el carácter de las tramas, en los protagonistas, en la lectura y fidelidad a los hechos, incluso en el tratamiento temporal y en aspectos aun más puntuales como la voz *over* o el menudeo de las secuencias de montaje. A este respecto la ausencia de tramas en torno a las víctimas y el mayor maniqueísmo de *Narcos* revelan tanto su visión colonial como una aproximación a la fórmula esquemática de la telenovela (véase el primer capítulo, en el que Murphy alude constantemente a las palabras "bueno" y "malo"). La serie de Netflix también se acerca a esa fórmula a través de la abundancia de subtramas. Al contrario, *El patrón* se toma más tiempo para delinear personajes y aportar matices y profundidad a sus protagonistas, que en *Narcos* están al servicio de la trama central: la caza de Pablo Escobar.

Incluso en el tratamiento temporal, la audacia de *El patrón* con los *flashforwards* o la profusión de escenas nocturnas la aleja de las fórmulas convencionales de la telenovela, por lo que, junto a lo anterior, si regresamos y contrastamos lo visto con los apuntes bibliográficos que aportábamos sobre la telenovela, *Narcos* cuadra más que *El patrón*, curiosamente, con los rasgos básicos de esta.

Una de las explicaciones más plausibles tiene que ver con el fenómeno del 'maratoneo' o *binge-watching* (LOBATO, 2018; PILIPETS, 2019), uno de los objetivos centrales de Netflix, que pretende fidelizar y

'enganchar' a sus suscriptores con el fin de que consuman horas y horas de su catálogo. Ello puede condicionar que esta haga suyas costumbres de la telenovela y que *Narcos* se comporte más como una serie de una televisión en abierto al uso que como un producto de una plataforma de pago.

Ello lleva a otro aspecto de interés, este es el de la atenuación de lo que MITTELL llamó "Complex TV", cuando planteaba que nos encontrábamos ante un paisaje televisivo "where complex and innovative storytelling can succeed both creatively and economically, while a series with a safe, conventional approach can become a commercial failure" (2015, p. 2). Al contrario de lo que advertía el estudioso, en la actualidad la sobreabundancia de producciones y los fenómenos aquí detectados han llevado a no pocos estudiosos (véase PÉREZ MORÁN, 2021) a hablar de la muerte de la televisión de calidad. Sea cierto o no, todo lo anterior nos lleva a concluir una hibridación genérica entre ambos productos –al menos en lo que se refiere a ciertos aspectos de guion tratados aquí– ya adelantada por URIBE-JONGBLOED y DIEZ (2017), y que a medida que pasan los años se confirma. Sin ir más lejos, *El patrón* ha vivido un nuevo éxito gracias a su reemisión por parte de Netflix, que incluso ha cambiado la duración y el número de los capítulos para adaptar el formato a su audiencia global, lo que por último deja una estimulante conclusión: cuando se supone que el célebre algoritmo condiciona y uniformiza las ficciones de la plataforma estadounidense –y de otras productoras–, observamos que un condicionante aún mayor, al menos en este caso, supone la nacionalidad de las series y el punto de vista adoptado por el relato.

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O consumo da corda do Círio de Nazaré na pandemia da covid-19: experiências simbólicas nos sentidos (i)materiais

The consumption of the Círio de Nazaré's rope in the covid-19 pandemic: symbolic experiences in the (im)material senses

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Resumo: *Este artigo analisa o consumo da corda do Círio de Nazaré, manifestação religiosa e cultural da cidade de Belém, no Pará, a partir das experiências e vivências das interações com esse objeto durante a pandemia da covid-19 (2020-2021). Assim, objetiva-se compreender o consumo simbólico da corda no contexto de procissões suspensas em que ela tradicionalmente se faz presente. Por meio das noções de ritual de consumo como prática cultural e da cultura material que constrói experiências, percebeu-se que a suspensão das procissões evidenciou o caráter constitutivo do objeto-símbolo corda do Círio na experiência dos sujeitos, de modo que a ausência dele nas ruas influenciou na própria percepção e vivência do consumo da festividade enquanto experiência social que costuma ser partilhada anualmente na cidade de Belém.*

Palavras-chave: *Círio de Nazaré; consumo; corda dos promesseiros; cultura material; pandemia da covid-19.*

Abstract: *This article analyzes the consumption of the Círio de Nazaré's rope, a religious and cultural manifestation in the city of Belém, Pará, based on the experiences and interactions with this object during the Covid-19*

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ARTIGO

pandemic (2020-2021). Thus, the objective is to understand the rope's symbolic consumption in the context of suspended processions in which it is traditionally present. Through the notions of consumption ritual as a cultural practice and the material culture that builds experiences, it was noticed that the suspension of processions evidenced the constitutive character of the object-symbol Círio's rope in the experience of the subjects, so that its absence in the streets influenced the perception itself and the experience of consumption of the festivity as a social experience that is usually shared annually in the city of Belém.

Keywords: *Círio de Nazaré; consumption; rope of promisers; material culture; Covid-19 pandemic.*

Introduction

The Círio de Nazaré [The Taper of Our Lady of Nazareth], beyond being an essentially religious manifestation, currently is an event of cultural dimension celebrated in October in the city of Belém, state of Pará. Its beginnings go back to the eighteenth century. The origin myth narrates the discovery of the Original Image[3] of Our Lady of Nazareth by caboclo Plácido José de Souza at the banks of the Murutucu creek in the central region of the present city of Belém. Since then, a series of miracles have been attributed to the Saint, leading to the creation of processions (the first one was in 1793) (IPHAN, 2006), a growing number of devotees, and material elements that characterize the festivity, besides the expansion of participation forms beyond the physical presence, from the first radio and TV transmissions in the twentieth century to the current online interaction possibilities (ALVES, 2002). In 2004, the Círio was registered as a Cultural Heritage of Brazil, a title the Advisory Board of the Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) revalidated in 2021[4].

This paper aims to analyze the consumption of one of the most characteristic material elements of the Círio de Nazaré: the rope attached to the "carro-berlinda" [display case car] that carries the Pilgrim Image of the Saint in both principal processions, Trasladação ["Transfer"] and Círio ["Taper"][5]. The rope became a part of those pilgrimages in the late nineteenth century. At the time, it was hard to move the display case car through the Ver-o-Peso Market area due to the absence of paving to contain the water that overflowed from the Guajará Bay (IPHAN, 2006). In 1855, people who participated in the march had the idea to wrap a

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3   Today, another image circulates in official processions and events of the Círio de Nazaré; it is called the "Pilgrim" and was sculpted in 1969 to replace and preserve the original from natural weathering.

4   Available at: https://www.oliberal.com/para/iphan-revalida-cirio-de-nazare-como-patrimo-nio-cultural-do-brasil-1.458805. Accessed on November 12, 2021.

5   Held, respectively, on Saturday and Sunday of the second weekend of October, the two processions follow the same route but in opposite directions. Thus, they reenact the myth that says the Original Image was taken to the Government Palace at the time but returned to the place where it was found (IPHAN, 2006).

rope around the display car (until then, pulled by a yoke of oxen) to pull it out of the quagmire and guarantee the progress of the procession. However, 13 years went by until the festivity's organizers officialized the rope as an element integrating the Trasladação and the Círio in 1868 (IPHAN, 2006).

However, though a utilitarian function led to its insertion, the rope continues to be a traditional object for religious performance, besides its material properties: the rope became a space for paying promises and demonstrating sacrifice, symbolizing the connection between the human and the divine. Moreover, it is also a cultural space in the sense that "going on the rope" is a certificate of attendance in the Círio de Nazaré, which the pieces of the rope distributed among promisers at the end of the processions testify, an aspect we will analyze later.

Figure 1 – Promisors raise the rope in the 2017 Círio.

Source: David Carneiro/Bradesco. Available at: https://medium.com/bradesco/cores-sorrisos-e-amores-no-c%C3%ADrio-de-nazar%C3%A9-72da086bb0c1.

Such a reconfiguration of the rope's presence over time leads us to think about how this object also became a consumable product. From the point of view of the media logic that appropriates manifestations of popular culture, the Círio de Nazaré is a contemporary Amazonian

spectacle. In Amaral Filho's (2018) terms, the communication strategies elaborated in this type of phenomenon aim to publicize the show as a consumer good of the city where it takes place – in this case, the city of Belém in Pará. However, in the years 2020 and 2021, the possibilities of rope consumption changed due to the suspension of processions in the streets of the capital of Pará. Thus, this paper analyzes the consumption of the rope in the Círio de Nazaré, comparing the possibilities for consuming the object in traditional contexts with those that occurred during the covid-19 pandemic.

This research's concept of consumption is based on the relationship between culture and consumption and on the mediating role of goods defined by McCracken (2007): the circulation of consumable objects transfers meanings that inhabit the culturally constituted world from this symbolic place to the consumer individual. We also understand mass consumption as a contemporary global phenomenon that reorganizes the symbolic production of everyday experiences and practices (FEATHERSTONE, 1995), analyzing the affectivity that permeates the relationships between things and people in Círio by the emotional bases that take hold in society.

Following a netnographic fieldwork approach (KOZINETS, 2014), this study's methodological procedures involved two distinct movements: in the months of May and September 2020, we prepared questionnaires to host in the Google Forms platform, which we applied, first, in the context of the peak of the first wave of covid-19 cases and deaths in the state of Pará and, second, right after the announcement of the suspension of processions and official events of the 2020 Círio. The survey links were available in three ways: i) forwarded via instant messaging app WhatsApp; ii) published on social media[6] in public mode (so they could be shared), inviting whoever felt willing to answer the questionnaire and encouraging its replication to other spaces; and iii) published

6   Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

in digital sociability spaces related to the Círio, especially Facebook pages and groups[7]. In both moments, we obtained 253 valid responses.

Besides the two surveys, henceforth Fieldwork 1 (2020) and Fieldwork 2 (2020), we monitored the official social media accounts of the Círio de Nazaré[8] and the abovementioned Facebook groups from March 2020 to November 2021. In this sense, we interpreted the data obtained through the method of online content analysis, guaranteeing participants' privacy and using only their textual outputs (KOZINETS, 2014) either in the surveys or in the public environment of Facebook pages and groups. We also resorted to one of the authors' participant observations made in previous years as a way of recovering data and impressions regarding the face-to-face experience in the processions.

Hence, the transdisciplinary character of the material culture of the Círio, exemplified in the presence of its immaterial elements, finds an opportune moment to explore the analytical potential of objects and subjects that compose communicational processes derived from the empirical phenomenon in question. And consumption gives us an opportunity to understand the cultural dimension that constitutes the being-in-the-world with other subjects and things, consumer sociabilities, and the symbolic exchanges in practices of production, circulation, and distributions of material goods.

Consuming what is not for sale: symbolic experiences of the rope

Propelled and guided by the Círio and its things, especially the rope, in the present study's case, consumer practices draw attention to emotions attached to materialities and to consumption as a socio-cultural activity since "every culture has meaningful objects imbued with symbolic

7   "Filhos da Nazinha" (https://www.facebook.com/groups/cirio2020/); "Círio" (https://www.facebook.com/groups/CirioDeNazareBelem/); "Devotos de Nossa Senhora" (https://www.facebook.com/groups/238490246194300/); and "família Círio de Nazaré. #FCN" (https://www.facebook.com/groups/339432873713378/).

8   Available at: https:/facebook.com/ciriodenazare/; https://www.instagram.com/ciriooficial/; https://twitter.com/ciriooficial.

significance." (BRAGA; KUREBAYASHI, 2014, p. 117). From a material culture perspective, we can understand consumption as an aspect of it: "people have always consumed goods they or others created." (MILLER, 2007, p. 40).

From our considerations above, we stress the promisors' consumption of the rope is part of a series of consumer practices of the Círio de Nazaré as a brand (L. SANTOS, 2017) that houses diverse elements[9]: objects that are also symbols, such as the Image of Our Lady of Nazareth, the mantle that covers Her, and a poster of Her; the information that circulates about changes in the city's calendar in October; and the events themselves, mediated through massive promotion and/or live broadcasts; besides items for personal use bearing the Círio theme to accomplish popular appeal and boost sales in the local market, such as shirts, posters, and books among many others acquired and displayed by people who participate in the Círio (FIELDWORK I, 2020). Given the intense media coverage around these consumer goods, including by the event's organization itself, the experience with the material culture of Círio takes shape in the mediation of significations between devotees and objects, which act as media devices bearing advertising communication (JUNQUEIRA, 2009).

In the covid-19 pandemic scenario, participants could only attend specific events the Círio's Board[10] carried out remotely, and, perhaps because of that, the festivity's organization invested in more digital presence. Thus, participating in the Círio was an experience mediated by the consumption of information and official events in a series of possibilities of free access to the feast – what had already been happening before but became more evident since 2020 either through the creation

9   Besides the rope, the research from which this discussion emerges also included in-depth analyses of the Images of Our Lady and lunchtime in the Círio as object-axes of the experience that subjects establish with material culture during the festivity.
10   In 2020, the celebrations such as the Presentation of the Mantle, the Original Image's Descent and Ascent in the Sanctuary Basilica, and the Círio's Mass in the Our Lady of Grace Cathedral, had only the presence of members of the festivity's organization. In 2021, these spaces had a 50% capacity limit for devotees.

of new events for online broadcasting or smaller in-person audiences to keep the physical contact between subjects and objects.

From this perspective, the premise is that Círio participants' affectivity in relation to consumer objects, goods, and services is an activity as in the words of Spinoza's theory of affect: "The difference between being active and being passive has to do with whether or not the thing (in this case, the man) is an adequate cause for what happens in it." (JESUS, 2015, p. 165). Miller (2013) indicates that "much of what makes us who we are exists not through our consciousness or our bodies but as an external environment that habituates and incites us" (p.79). We understand the study of communicational processes in the event also involves the recognition of consumption's protagonism and the presence of (im)materialities in the world we live in relative to objects that are part of the Círio and that are constitutive of the people who participate in it, their sensibilities, and their social interactions.

In Fieldwork 1 (2020), the question was: "Is there any image/object that reminds you of the Círio?" The principal answers were the images of Our Lady (48.4%) and the rope of promisors (36.5%). Thus, this research data shows that the rope is one of the Círio's constitutive elements conducive to perceiving the power of agency between things and people; something that, in this object, goes beyond the processions, from ordering the rope, customarily made in the city of Itajaí/SC, to its landing in Belém. It is a complex tracking process reported as a special event[11]. On the other hand, at the end or even during the processions, the rope is divided into fragments to be distributed among the promisors: officially, the rope's unhorsing (when the display car goes on without being pulled by promisors) is supposed to happen in the final meters of the Trasladação and Círio routes under the argument of helping to control the progress of the procession and to alleviate the promisors'

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11 As our fieldwork could verify on the official Facebook page of the Círio de Nazaré. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/ciriodenazare/photos/a.151726304916604/1929116770510873/. Accessed on: August 20, 2021.

physical weariness. Members of the Guard of Nazaré[12] coordinate and execute the cutting of the rope, and the Archbishop of Belém blesses the object's fragments.

In this sense, we notice what Featherstone (1995) indicates about the relationship between consumption and the sacred around a single object, in this case, the Círio's rope: religion adapts to consumer culture while supporting a sacred dimension contained in goods. The rope, consumed as well in the form of mediatized information about its destiny, is a good loaded with symbolism: more than its usefulness, participants consume a web of meanings that cannot be conceptualized as absolutely profane (FEATHERSTONE, 1995). Among the meanings in the abovementioned practices, there is the expectation around something that arrives in Belém for the Círio (metaphorically as a family member) and the material reward for the sacrifice undertaken that, when shared, also becomes a certificate of presence.

However, some people cut the object "in advance": they them-selves take cutting tools with them to help divide the pieces among themselves while still amidst the crowd that walks close to the rope. A dangerous practice, given the proximity between people, but whose prohibition is almost impossible, and it is up to the Catholic Church and the press to annually publicize an awareness campaign for not cutting the rope. In any case, this practice is not just an example of an object's consumption through its destruction but also through its reconstruction: the division of the rope into several parts creates a kind of mosaic of the Círio (SANTOS, L. 2017) with the aim of multiply the magic and enchantment of the object – a dimension brought to life during the processions, and which we will further analyze later. Thus, the creation of strategies to consume what is not for sale in the commercial sense in the Círio de Nazaré confirms what Covaleski (2015) indicates: individuals who act in the communication process contribute to constructing the meanings of

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12   Created in 1974, the Guard is a group formed only by men who act in uniform but unarmed with the function of "avoiding through convincing excesses that may occur in the events, functioning as a disciplining element during the procession." (IPHAN, 2006, p. 63).

the product they consume. The promiser who cuts the rope does so as an active participant in the communicative act.

Figures 2 and 3 – On the left, the promotional media campaigns against cutting the rope in 2019. On the right, young promisors cut and struggle for pieces of the rope in 2014.

Sources: Facebook page of the Guard of Nazaré; Gabriel da Mota Ferreira (personal archive), blurred by the research. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/guardadenazareoficial/photos /a.1586028695055331/2440059112985614/?type=3.

We can also understand the demand for the Guard of Nazaré to carry out the cutting of the rope as an attempt at ecclesiastical control over the consumption of the popular ritual since the cutting carried out by promisors is condemned but not the act itself. Furthermore, the selling of "the rope's pieces" on the internet[13] has raised a controversy about the commercial bias of the practice. One prominent issue is the battle for symbolic control over the rope. The object's sacredness is valued since the Círio's organization acquires it with money from devotees' anonymous donations. However, according to the history, the rope is an object of the people who inserted it in the processions and who have it as an object of their own before being sacred.

13 In 2014, the press reported the selling of the rope's pieces after the procession of the Círio of that year. Available at: http://g1.globo.com/pa/para/cirio-de-nazare/2014/noticia/2014/10/ pedacos-da-corda-do-cirio-de-nazare-sao-vendidos-na-internet.html. Accessed on November 23, 2021.

For survey respondents who have already acquired pieces of rope, this did not occur via commercial transactions: respondents said that they "got" it in processions when they were promisors or that someone had been in the procession "gifted" them (FIELDWORK I, 2020). Once again, our research found evidence of a consumption experience that does not happen in the economic sphere but that participants accomplish by competing for the rope in the streets, keeping it for themselves, or gifting it to someone else. Here, Mauss's idea of gift (2007) is appropriate when thinking about the force of circulation of objects covered with "spirit": the rope itself imposes the need to move on after taking part in the processions.

Given adaptations required by the covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the Board of the Círio (DFN)[14] planned alternative ways for devotees to stay in touch with the celebrations In the specific case of the rope, which was neither on Saturday, when the Trasladação traditionally takes place, nor on Sunday, when the Círio takes place, the experience of face-to-face contact with the object was adapted and restricted to canonical spaces: the organization, which usually divides the 800 meters of rope into two equal parts for each of the two processions, split it into smaller parts and sent those to the 98 parishes that make up the Archdiocese of Belém, where they remained on display during the month of October, the so-called "Nazarene fortnight."

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14   The Board comprises different executive directorships, such as "Evangelization," "Marketing," "Processions," and others. Officially, the DFN is made up of men only (see the official website). However, "the couple carries out the work, and it is up to women to organize various aspects of the ritual." (IPHAN, 2006, p. 62).

Figure 4 – Pieces of the rope at the Official Opening of the 2021 Círio.

Source: Fabrício Coleny/Archdiocese of Belém. Available at: https://arquidiocesedebelem.com.br/bencao-da-corda-para-as-paroquias-da-arquidiocese/.

It is worth noticing how suspending the processions had an impact on enhancing the rope's symbolic value as a sacred object under ecclesiastical control, favoring its consumption by churchgoers, whether local residents or tourists; that is something quite different from the reality built on the streets, where the rope is a meeting space between bodies that perform on the borders of normativity on multiple levels, reappropriating public space to trigger historically silenced cultural drivers (LATIF, 2020).

When it comes to sustaining the rope as an element of the Círio, even during the pandemic, when there were no processions, one can reflect on the creation of new forms of consuming the same product, understanding the culture of consumption as a creator of constant and inexhaustible needs (SANTOS, 2017). Even so, the creation of new possibilities for consumption is not equivalent, as an affective replacement,

to the presence of the rope in the streets: its absence was felt by promise-payers and by spectators who used to watch the processions pass, as reported by interlocutors of Fieldwork 2. Even so, the creation of new consumption possibilities is not equivalent, as an affective replacement, to the rope's presence on the streets. Its absence was felt by promise-payers and by spectators who are used to watching the processions, as reported by interlocutors of Fieldwork 2 (2020).

Therefore, we understand the rope's consumption as a practice of ritual consumption of the Círio itself, following Trindade and Perez's (2014) observation that individuals experience the anthropological and communicational dimensions of consumer rituals through their contact with products and services. Observing that "rituals grant authority and legitimacy when they structure and organize the positions of certain people in more or less clear roles" (TRINDADE; PEREZ, 2014, p. 159), one realizes the rope is a space for the performance of people's consumption of the Círio, created and maintained by their commitment to continue being part of the festivity, exercising their power of consumption through the object. These meanings give the rope a symbolic aura similar to the sacred since it represents the immaterial connection between Our Lady and her children through the eyes of those who see it and the bodily contact of those who pull it.

We understand the rope is a space of bodily consumption of the self and the other, where a struggle takes place for the physical and symbolic existence of subjects who perform, in Latif's (2020) words, a ritual transfiguration of the festive body. The crowd of promisors makes it very difficult for those watching the procession to see the rope itself, the pile of sisal knots. Except for moments when the promisors are encouraged by the crowd around them to lift it, one can only infer the presence of the rope by the changing row of people almost superimposed on each other, whose hands, when they manage to touch the rope, are not always visible as well. The proximity to the display car is another indication that the rope is there. At this moment, relevant aspects of the magical-religious idea of ritual are performed, according to contributions by Van

Gennep (2008) and synthesized by Trindade and Perez (2014): dramatization, sequence, and regularity. Since exhibiting the rope is a way for promisors to show that object to outsiders, the practice occurs with some regularity, more than once throughout the procession, and is part of the sequence of visual scenes that precede the passage of the display car. Such impressions were observed on occasions prior to the suspension of processions.

Figure 5 – The proximity between promisors' bodies in the rope of the 2014 Círio.

Source: Flickr Milene Sousa. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/milenesousa/15583781532/in/album-72157648461020367/.

Figure 6 – The rope in the 2014 Círio.

Source: Gabriel da Mota Ferreira (personal archive), blurred by the research.

The agency caused by absence: the rope that did not go to the streets

One of the answers obtained in the second survey summarizes the most felt absence in the Círio during the pandemic: "the mark of the festivity is the presence of the rope and the people accompanying the saint's route" (FIELDWORK 2, 2020). Expressions such as "human warmth," "energy," and "seeing Our Lady in person" speak of the awakening of physical sensations that permeate the experience of being in the Círio and on the rope. In this case, even though memory gives access to the in-person feelings of the traditional Círio, it is precisely the absence of (im)material and human elements as mediators of sensations described in the public space of the city that compromises the experience of consuming the Círio as usual.

During processions involving the presence of the rope, the moment of its passage is provocative not only for the materiality itself but for the effect of the object that moves, integrated into the context: the work being made right there, in the streets, by thousands of artisan-promisors. According to the notion of consumption experience that Pinto and

Lara synthesize (2011), enchantment is one of the dimensions of extraordinary experiences that influence the consumption process, as well as interaction and involvement, among others. This is what is possible to see in the rope-making process in the procession: artisan-promisors are producers as much as consumers of the rope (in which) they make (themselves).

Those authors also emphasize the symbolic dimension of consumption experiences in the sense that they rise from social interaction. And therefore, consumption practice is a kind of celebration of the connection between consumers and the society of which they are a part of (PINTO; LARA, 2011). One, then, that the rope in the Círio is an Amazonian materiality also produced for appreciation and consumption in the social environment among thousands of promisors. Integrated into a cultural spectacle that enables its immediate production and consumption before spectators' eyes, the rope possesses high cultural value precisely because its utility transcends the one it had initially. Nowadays, the rope represents a need appropriate to a cultural order (PINTO; LARA, 2011) that materially and immaterially weaves relations among people and between them and Our Lady of Nazareth.

When the rope passes in front of people, if it were not for the flags signaling its stations[15] and the moment that promisors raise it, it would be hard to identify where its 400-meter-length starts and finishes. Hence, the rope in the Círio is not just a rope nor just promisors' bodies integrated into each other and Our Lady. The rope is all these things and people together in a ritual performance that manifests the immateriality of relationships (Trindade; Perez, 2014). Since the rope's construction and consumption happen simultaneously, one realizes the communicational potential of symbolic processes that consumption generates, as Trindade and Perez (2014) observe.

15 Five metal structures positioned 100 meters away from the rope help support the pressure that promisors exercise.

Figure 7 – 2018 Círio: from flowerbeds, stands, and balconies, watchful eyes on the rope's promisors while they raise one of the iron structures of the stations.

Source: Gabriel da Mota Ferreira (personal archive), blurred by the research.

Considering that the experience described above was not possible in the 2020-2021 biennium, we understand the power of the rope's agency in the promisors' lives occurs both through the presence and the absence of the object in the context of processions, either whole or in pieces. Moreover, the rope's transference from the streets to churches is a transition of that good's cultural meaning, even if temporary (MCCRACKEN, 2007). For a while, the character of a popular and aggregator space is suspended to "return" to the condition of a not enlivened object that occupies restricted selective places in terms of who possesses/consumes, like religious temples.

The rope is a consumer good that circulates with subjects as a witness that someone was there, either the individual who owns the fragment or someone who gifted it to that person. So, despite being a consumer product, the rope acquired and kept by people goes beyond what Mendes (2018) suggests about the utility of objects in the current spectacle society: they must add ephemeral values with no identity, conforming only to social status. In the practice of acquiring rope fragments, more than its

symbolic cultural value, the object contains sensitive values that emerge from the relationship between subject and object, stretching beyond the consumption moment of the procession. That is why rope fragments exert a fundamental role in the Círio's material culture.

We can return to the question of the rope's aura and its resistance in the midst of so much circulation, especially since it transits in other spaces, in addition to the streets where it becomes sacred. When reflecting on the limits of consumption through an analysis of Han (2012), Perez (2020) states that profanation is the break from exclusive access to everyday things previously reserved for the gods, so that they can return to common ordinary use. According to this definition, the rope would be one of the objects that profane Nazarene sacrality through consumption as it circulates amongst ordinary people – promisors or not, religious or not.

On the other hand, between the definitions of sacred and profane in the Círio de Nazaré, the limits seem to be quite flexible. From the point of view that opposes colonial rationality to decolonize sensibilities (LATIF, 2020), the rope is a phenomenon of consumption and material culture that reveals the existence of multiple subjects, constituted in the affirmation of their bodily presence and that make of the Círio de Nazaré, a manifestation of the people of that person of Pará and Amazonians, in constant negotiation with social actors who claim for themselves the place of possession of material and immaterial things.

Thus, its absence on the streets represents the impossibility of material exposure to the conflicts that constitute the identity of Pará and leads to the suspension of a ritual that allows its consumption (TRINDADE; PEREZ, 2014). Following the transdisciplinary perspective of Trindade and Perez (2014) on the anthropological and communicational dimensions of consumption, we understand that among the consequences of the rope's absence in the processions is the transformation of possibilities of articulation of symbolic practices among the subjects participating in the Círio and the modes of the festivity's presence in the experience of individuals.

Furthermore, the rope that does not go to the streets suspends part of the Círio's "experiential consumption," according to the conceptual differentiation that Pereira et al. (2015) make on the experiences of the act of consuming. For the authors, this notion involves triggering memories about something that has already been lived in a way that sensations inherent to the process make consumption an experience of immersion in the symbolic universe available to the consumer. Thus, without the processions that have the rope as one of their indispensable elements, there is no production of meanings as intense as when in traditional contexts. In the discourses of research interlocutors, these moments of "being close" to others, "seeing Our Lady of Nazareth in person," and feeling "human warmth" are missed the most in the pandemic context (FIELDWORK 2, 2020).

From these statements, we understand that Círio participants refer to the sensations that make the idea of a consumption experience transcend to an experiential consumption, something they cannot live as long as social distancing recommendations prevent their physical contact with other people and with material elements that constitute the Círio de Nazaré. By interrupting a consumer ritual, which is also a form of collectively producing subjectivity (TRINDADE; PEREZ, 2014) through things, the Círio is not an experiential consumption as customary in the pandemic. And the event will only be so again when the rope returns to the streets and join the subjects who built it. Only then the rope will be fragmented by the same individuals who produced it.

Final considerations

This paper brings together excerpts from a master's research project developed during the covid-19 pandemic on the role of objects in the constitution of communication processes in the Círio de Nazaré, considering the impacts of the suspension of processions on promisors' practices of consumption of the rope. So far, we notice that the rope continues to act in subjects' imagination, especially due to its absence on the streets, which both aroused the memory of feelings lived only

during the in-person experience of the Círio and restricted the consumer public of this (im)material good in 2020 and 2021. Thus, the dialogue between temporalities indicated possible discontinuities in the potential of the rope as a cultural object/place, through which promisors experience the consumption of the sacred that constitutes the experience of the Círio de Nazaré.

In this sense, we see consumption as a practice unfolded in the social sphere, which manifests and strengthens subjects' identity markers. Semantic and sensorial meanings of being a participant in the Círio are produced and circulated through the rope, which links and enables intersubjective encounters through communicational processes.

Therefore, the analysis described here sought to observe the mutual arrangements between things and people in the consumption of the rope, which seems to help us in the understanding of objectification in the urban landscape of Belém during October. Finally, with the considerations of this paper and the research of which it is a part, we intended to document the possible practices of consumption of the rope in such atypical editions of the Círio de Nazaré. Thus, the dialogue with material culture is advisable for the study of this object's consumption in the sense that the absence of the rope in the streets reflects how much we are constituted by things, whether they are present around us or in the memory we build (im)materially and socially.

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La dimensión política del consumo: aproximaciones teóricas para abordar problemas contemporáneos

The political dimension of consumption. Theoretical approaches to address contemporary problems

Micaela Diaz Rosaenz[1]

Resumen: *Este trabajo tiene como objetivo presentar desde una mirada crítica los estudios sobre el consumo y su dimensión política, poniendo en discusión el cuestionado binomio 'ciudadano-consumidor'. Los marcos conceptuales más frecuentes se han ocupado de la relación entre política nacional y consumo con sesgos muy marcados: con énfasis en Europa y Estados Unidos a mediados del siglo XX y también como forma de activismo y participación. Aquí se busca revisar estas perspectivas y recuperar aquellas que sean útiles para abordar las particularidades de los procesos latinoamericanos, con foco en Argentina y Brasil. Es, por lo tanto, de naturaleza teórica y tiene como finalidad explicar por qué es relevante estudiar a los regímenes políticos y a la ciudadanía desde la perspectiva del consumo como una forma válida para abordar los problemas sociales contemporáneos en la región.*

Palabras claves: *consumo; ciudadanía; Latinoamérica; politización del consumo.*

Abstract: *This paper aims to present a critical point of view about the studies of consumption and their political dimension, discussing the binomial "citizen-consumer". Conceptual frames in social sciences have busied themselves with the relationship between national politics and consumption with two biases: one spatiotemporal (Europe and United States in mid twenty century) and the other*

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as a thematic one (thinking as a way of activism and participation). This article seeks to revisit these analytical perspectives and to recover theoretical frames that result useful to approach the specificities of the Latin American processes with focus in Argentina and Brazil. It is, thus, of theoretical nature, and aims to explain why it's relevant to study the political regimes and the citizenship from a consumption perspective as a valid way to approach the contemporary social problems in the Latin American region.

Keywords: *consumption; citizenship; Latin America; politicization of consumption.*

Introducción

En las últimas décadas los estudios sobre consumo vienen creciendo desde las ciencias sociales y sus diferentes disciplinas. Son frecuentes los trabajos que ponen el foco en la relación entre consumo, activismo político y movimientos sociales. Esto parece adecuado para abordar la dimensión política del consumo en democracias de larga data y con niveles de bienestar elevados donde el acceso al consumo de bienes y servicios está más democratizado. Sin embargo, estos marcos de referencia que ponen el foco en el activismo de los consumidores (como los *boicots* y los *buycotts*) y los movimientos de los consumidores (relacionado con la promoción y la presión ejercida para proteger y promover los "intereses del consumidor") (GLICKMAN, 2012), son insuficientes para abordar la realidad de la mayoría de los regímenes políticos latinoamericanos.

Mientras que los movimientos de consumidores claman por prácticas más justas de producción y consumo también debemos cuestionarnos cómo es posible combinar proyectos alternativos de producción más sustentables con los gobiernos de muchos países latinoamericanos cuyos modelos de integración social y de crecimiento económico tienen como eje la incorporación de los sectores marginales y excluidos al mercado de consumo masivo. ¿Qué enfoques teóricos son adecuados para dar cuenta de las formas y los medios por los cuales los Estados fomentan y modelan los patrones de consumo y el impacto social que se produce en consecuencia? En contextos donde el incremento del consumo (en especial de los sectores históricamente excluidos) es definido como motor del crecimiento económico, ¿cómo resuelven la "tensión" entre los valores colectivos que supone el ámbito de la ciudadanía y los intereses individuales que usualmente denuncian los críticos de la dimensión material? Para responder a este tipo de interrogantes es necesario extender el campo de interés de los estudios de consumo.

Desde las ciencias sociales, sin embargo, los marcos conceptuales más frecuentes que se ocupan de la relación entre política nacional y consumo tienen dos sesgos muy marcados: uno espaciotemporal y el

otro temático. El primero refiere a la literatura que da cuenta de los cambios sociales y políticos en la sociedad norteamericana y europea de posguerra a partir del florecimiento del consumo masivo (COHEN, 2004; DAUNTON; HILTON, 2001; MCGOVERN; JUDT, 1998; STRASSER et al., 1998; con las excepciones en la literatura argentina de ROCCHI, 2002; MILANESSIO, 2014). El segundo y más reciente, aborda al consumo como forma de activismo y participación política (NEWMAN; BARTELS, 2011; GLICKMAN, 2009; STOLLE; MICHELETTI, 2013; STOLLE et al., 2005).

Este trabajo busca revisar críticamente estas perspectivas y recuperar aquellas que sean útiles y adecuadas para abordar los procesos latinoamericanos. Es, por lo tanto, de naturaleza teórica y tiene como objetivo explicar por qué es relevante estudiar a los regímenes políticos y a la ciudadanía desde la perspectiva del consumo como una forma válida para abordar los problemas sociales contemporáneos en la región. Para ello, se desarrollan las principales perspectivas que han estudiado al consumo desde las ciencias sociales haciendo hincapié en la vinculación entre ciudadanía y consumo. Seguidamente, se hace un repaso por los estudios locales con énfasis en los casos argentino y brasileño. Finalmente, se destacan los enfoques teóricos que resultan adecuados para abordar estos fenómenos en América Latina.

El 'ciudadano consumidor' como categoría analítica

El lugar que ocupó la relación entre política nacional y consumo a partir del crecimiento del consumo de masas de la segunda posguerra ha sido motivo de estudio desde diversas ramas de la sociología a nivel nacional y mundial: por un lado, aquellas orientadas a dar cuenta de las transformaciones económicas, políticas y sociales de este modelo de crecimiento; por el otro, las que se centraron en el impacto cultural y simbólico de esta transformación, especialmente vinculado con la reconfiguración de las identidades nacionales. Lo que comienza a evidenciarse es que hay un cambio respecto de los enfoques sociológicos tradicionales que posicionaban al consumidor y al ciudadano en esferas

diferentes (en paralelo a la distinción entre política y mercado o entre lo público y lo privado). El ciudadano consumidor comienza a ser una categoría donde convergen la ciencia política, la sociología económica y la cultura del consumo. En tanto concepto, considera que el consumo "puede ser el medio a través del cual los ciudadanos vinculan sus necesidades y deseos personales a su pertenencia a las comunidades políticas y a las ideas de moralidad y justicia" (STILLERMAN, 2015, p.164). El ejemplo más nítido en esta dirección es el trabajo de Elizabeth Cohen (2004), que utiliza al consumo como marco interpretativo para analizar cómo el impulso y la expansión del consumo masivo ocuparon un lugar fundamental en la recuperación económica de Estados Unidos después de la segunda guerra mundial. El modelo en condensaba un ideal de democracia tanto política como económica. "El nuevo orden de la posguerra consideró, entonces, que el buen cliente dedicado a 'más, nuevo y mejor' era de hecho el buen ciudadano, responsable de hacer de Estados Unidos un lugar más deseable para todo su pueblo" (COHEN, 2004, p. 237).

La relación entre ciudadano y consumidor se manifestó también a lo largo de este periodo por la puesta en marcha de acciones políticas (como boicots) y la conformación de diversos movimientos de consumidores, con una importante participación de las mujeres y de afroamericanos, especialmente en la entre 1930 y el inicio de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, que demandaban un acceso más justo e igualitario al consumo de bienes y servicios. Lo que se destaca es cómo en el consumo convergieron los intereses individuales y colectivos de los sujetos:

> El interés del consumidor se volvió el interés público y, como tal, también se volvió una fuente de legitimación para grupos formalmente excluidos de la ciudadanía, como las mujeres y muchos miembros de la clase trabajadora. En el cambio del siglo diecinueve al veinte, los movimientos sociales en ambos lados del Atlántico invocaron el lenguaje del 'ciudadano-consumidor' en las batallas sobre emancipación política e igualdad social (SOPER; TRENTMANN, 2008, p. 6).

Glickman (2009) también ve en el activismo de los consumidores oportunidades de rever la relación entre comercio y la ciudadanía:

> El hecho de que tantos estadounidenses no solo sean consumidores ardientes, sino también ávidos activistas del consumo, sugiere que ven el consumo no solo como un placer privado, sino también como un acto público. En un momento en que el cinismo sobre el proceso político es alto —no solo porque se ha vuelto cada vez más comercial— el atractivo duradero del activismo del consumidor es que promete a los ciudadanos, en su calidad de compradores, una especie de poder y responsabilidad que parece en gran medida inviable a través de la política convencional (GLICKMAN, 2009, p. 310).

Claro que la promoción del consumo no significa (o al menos no automáticamente) promover los intereses y el bienestar de los consumidores porque no siempre coinciden las estrategias desplegadas por el Estado para promover el consumo masivo con la búsqueda del bienestar del consumidor. Desde el punto de vista analítico, hacer foco en esto permite atenuar la tendencia que algunos académicos han puesto en la autonomía del consumidor individual o privado, subestimando el marco que los gobiernos establecen en el comportamiento de estos, es decir, en qué medida la "arquitectura política configura las prácticas individuales de consumo" (GLICKMAN, 2012, p. 410).

Desde la academia europea también se adaptó la categoría "ciudadano consumidor" como modelo teórico donde los consumidores son conceptualizados como sujetos políticos. Según Wirsching (2011), el surgimiento de la cultura de masas fue percibido inicialmente en Estados Unidos y conceptualizado como algo positivo:

> Elevar el consumismo sin restricciones a un derecho social básico era subrayar el principio de igualdad democrática en el seno de todas las formas de desigualdad económica, por persistentes que fueran. El consumo era un camino hacia la igualdad cultural que atraviesa las fronteras sociales; dado que permitía a los individuos (¡masificados!) destacarse de la multitud, podía considerarse no solo como un complemento, sino como una garantía de la democracia (WIRSCHING, 2011, p. 13).

Según de Grazia (1998), lo que distingue al régimen de consumo estadounidense de mediados del siglo XX es que se caracteriza por la elección individual en el mercado mientras que el de los países europeos busca la ciudadanía del consumidor mediante la participación social y la redistribución económica a través del Estado. Lo que remarca la autora para el caso norteamericano es la preponderancia del consumo como elemento primordial de la "ciudadanía social", en términos del clásico concepto de T.H. Marshall que refiere a las condiciones mínimas materiales de vida de carácter universal capaces de reducir los efectos de los conflictos de clases. Al referirse a la idea estadounidense de ciudadanía la autora hace énfasis en la diferenciación entre "el bienestar social adquirido a partir del consumo individualista y el adquirido a partir de provisiones colectivas del bienestar en términos de derechos, poder y la definición de buena sociedad" (DE GRAZIA, 1998, p. 61). Esto es fundamental ya que permite asociar este desarrollo conceptual a la noción de "ciudadanía del consumo" para dar cuenta de la importancia que adquiere el consumo como componente esencial del bienestar y en qué condiciones se provee y se incentiva. Según Trentamann (2004), un análisis del modelo europeo que sea integral de la "sociedad de consumo masivo" debe dar cuenta de todo tipo de consumos:

> Los grupos que sufren de exclusión social y bajos ingresos, por ejemplo, pueden muy bien quedar fuera del mundo de los sueños consumistas, pero son, sin embargo, importantes consumidores de otras cosas: el agua, la vivienda social, la educación, la televisión, etc. Incluso para los consumidores más privilegiados, el lugar y la fuerza del consumo masivo (a través de los mercados) seguirá siendo insuficientemente explicado a menos que esté conectado a un estudio de los cambios en la provisión y en la comprensión de los servicios públicos (TRENTMANN, 2004, p. 384).

Este recorrido nos advierte que los formas que adopta el modelo de ciudadano-consumidor no son universales, sino que dependen de los contextos e historias culturales y políticas de cada nación. Con todo, y como sostiene Hilton, el establecimiento de regímenes de bienestar en

Europa y Estados Unidos sentó las bases para el desarrollo de nuevas formas de concebir al consumo, más vinculado al acceso a los bienes materiales como derecho y a la democratización del bienestar:

> El consumo, o el derecho a disfrutar de sus placeres, se había convertido en un derecho para los ciudadanos que habían hecho sacrificios en dos guerras mundiales y esperaban una participación en las sociedades que se estaban reconstruyendo a su nombre a finales de los años cuarenta y cincuenta. La 'sociedad opulenta' tuvo que prometer más opciones para aquellos que pudieran pagarla, pero también más cosas para aquellos que hasta ahora no pudieron […] los consumidores pudieron ejercer su ciudadanía no solo en las urnas sino diariamente a través de su participación en el mercado (HILTON, 2012, p. 8).

La politización del consumo

El consumo como forma de participación y activismo político completa la idea de "consumo político". El punto de partida es la capacidad de los consumidores de seleccionar productos, productores y servicios basados en consideraciones éticas donde la adquisición de bienes y servicios se utiliza como herramienta de expresión política y de lucha (STOLLE; HOOGHE; MICHELETTI, 2005). Los autores sostienen que, además de ser cada vez más los ciudadanos que utilizan el mercado para expresar sus preocupaciones políticas y morales, la adquisición de bienes y servicios es significativa y efectiva en tanto forma de participación. Si bien muchas veces tiene una naturaleza individual incorpora elementos colectivos y valores sociales más amplios y cotidianos. En contra de las interpretaciones que conceptualizan al consumo político como una acción individualizada que desplaza la acción colectiva, las autoras sostienen que estas críticas están en sintonía con una fuerte ideología neoliberal y antiestatista de impronta individualista muy arraigada en los últimos treinta años. En contraste, enfoques alternativos ven al consumo político como un repertorio más entre una amplia gama de estrategias y acciones orientadas al cambio social. Lo que según las autoras está detrás de estos distintos abordajes son tres oposiciones binarias: ciudadano/

consumidor (que opone al comportamiento motivado por intereses comunes al motivado por intereses individuales); colectivo/individual (que opone la acción colectiva en tanto política y solidaria a la acción individualizada y autónoma del consumidor); y público/privado (el Estado representa el ámbito de lo público y el consumidor lo privado) (WILLIS; SCHOR, 2012, p. 162).

Los estudios de consumo en América Latina

Las tendencias metodológicas y temáticas de la producción académica europea y norteamericana se reflejan en la literatura regional. Según Fernando Rocchi en su revisión historiográfica *Consumption in Latin America* (2016), los debates son abordados desde la antropología, la economía y la sociología e incluyen una variedad de temáticas (historia de las mercancías, desarrollo de la sociedad de consumo, marketing y publicidad, cultura de consumo, globalización y activismo político). En sintonía con lo que sucede a nivel global, la esfera del consumo también comienza a ser interpretada como un ámbito de ejercicio y defensa de la ciudadanía, que puede ser identificado a partir de formas alternativas de consumo sustentable o cuidado medio ambiental. Sin embargo, esto no indica que estén saldadas las discusiones que refieren a los ámbitos más "tradicionales" de democratización. Como lo indica Warde (2015), los debates que tuvieron lugar en los países del norte y que colocaron a los estudios sociológicos del consumo en el centro de la escena en la década del ochenta surgieron en respuesta a las disputas por la provisión de bienestar ante cambios del consumo colectivo al privado en contextos de creciente dominio de la economía del mercado neoliberal. Estas disputas continúan siendo un marco de análisis adecuado para los procesos latinoamericanos.

Eduardo Elena (2012) advierte que el estudio de los regímenes de consumo evidencia un sesgo en el que ha incurrido la literatura al adjudicarle cierta excepcionalidad europeo-norteamericana al fenómeno. Esto refleja, según el autor, un escaso conocimiento e interés sobre las características que adquiere el florecimiento del consumo de

masas en los proyectos de modernización de los países del tercer mundo iniciados a mediados del siglo veinte. Sin embargo, esta deuda ha comenzado a saldarse con estudios historiográficos que también hacen hincapié en el rol que ejerció el Estado como promotor del consumo y sus implicancias (ROCCHI, 2002; MILANESIO, 2014; ELENA, 2011 y 2012). Otras etapas de la historia reciente del país son analizadas poniendo el foco en la relación entre consumo, desarrollo y política (PRYLUKA; COVIELLO, 2018; FRIDMAN, 2008; BOOS 2017; DIAZ ROSAENZ, 2017).

El proceso de reformas de apertura económica que la mayoría de la región vivenció a partir de los años setenta, tuvo su correlato en el terreno de la producción académica en un intento por dar cuenta del impacto de este nuevo paradigma en la cotidianidad de los individuos. El trabajo de Baker, *The Market and the Masses in Latin America: Policy Reform and Consumption in Liberalizing Economies* (2009), basado en la aplicación de encuestas en 18 países de la región, le permitió concluir que la mayoría de los ciudadanos respaldaron las políticas de libre comercio y reformas neoliberales (especialmente porque permitió mejorar la cantidad y calidad de bienes de consumo debido a la reducción de su costo), aunque la mayor resistencia se relaciona con la privatización de servicios públicos. Muchas de estas resistencias se tradujeron en la emergencia de movimientos de consumidores, como lo describe Botto (2007) que compara el accionar de las entidades de consumidores en la regulación de los servicios públicos residenciales luego de las privatizaciones en Argentina y Brasil.

El nuevo mileno como bisagra

A partir del nuevo milenio, el rumbo político que adoptaron muchos de los países de la región latinoamericana acompañados por una etapa de crecimiento económico proporcionó un cambio de escenario que colocó a los estudios de consumo en el centro de los debates académicos, pero desde otras perspectivas.

Barbosa y Wilkinson (2017), ponen en evidencia este giro posterior a los años 2000 y ofrecen una revisión que da cuenta de la expansión de los estudios de consumo en Brasil y, sobre todo, en torno a la llamada "nueva clase media" para dar cuenta de las mejoras en los ingresos y el acceso a diversos bienes de consumo. En consecuencia, buena parte de la literatura brasileña se ha dedicado a profundizar la dimensión no solo económica-material sino también cultural y simbólica de estas transformaciones, considerando especialmente que en poco más de una década 20 millones de personas ingresaron al mercado como consumidores[2] (ROCHA; SILVA, 2009). En este contexto:

> La integración en el mercado de consumo moderno se convirtió ahora en un objeto legítimo de preocupación, ya que fue ampliamente interpretada como la transformación de lo que había sido condenado como un privilegio para unos pocos en un derecho para la mayoría de la población, logrado a través de las políticas sociales y económicas del Partido de los Trabajadores (BARBOSA; WILKINSON, 2017, p. 148).

Como lo indican los autores, las críticas respecto a la categoría de "nueva clase media" no se hicieron esperar, generado defensores (NERI, 2010) y críticos del modelo de inclusión social a través del consumo. Mientras que algunos apuntan a la insuficiencia de considerar los ingresos como principal variable de medición y la necesidad de tener en cuenta las condiciones de creciente endeudamiento, de vulnerabilidad y de acceso restringido a servicios básicos de estos sectores (SOUZA; LAMOUNIER, 2010; POCHMANN, 2012; BARTELT, 2013; SALATA 2014), otros más radicales apuntan al carácter conservador y despolitizado de los incorporados al mercado de consumo (RICCI, 2010; GRZYBOWSKI, 2013). Consecuentemente, muchas de las perspectivas -tanto antropológicas como sociológicas- dan cuenta de las "nuevas" condiciones de vida de estos sectores a partir de sus experiencias

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2   La creación de nuevos consumidores también produjo un importante y novedoso interés desde el marketing y los estudios de administración. Existe en concordancia toda una línea de pesquisa que identifica el potencial de lucro en la "base da pirámide" y el rol de las empresas en la reducción de la pobreza.

y prácticas de consumo y del uso del crédito, financiamiento y el creciente proceso de endeudamiento (BARROS; OLIVEIRA, 2014; RANGEL, 2012; SBICCA *et al.*, 2012; MATTOSO; ROCHA, 2009; ROCHA; SILVA, 2009; OLIVEIRA; MOTA GUEDES, 2006; entre muchos otros).

Si la movilidad social ascendente del primer decenio del 2000 motivó una gran producción académica con eje en la relación entre política y consumo, el fin del ciclo de prosperidad económica y los cambios políticos, corrieron el foco de interés. Mientras que se analizan clave revisionista los debates economicistas y sociológicos sobre esa "nueva" clase media de principios del milenio y las consecuencias que tuvo en la contienda político-partidaria (SALATA; SCALON, 2020; COSTA DA SILVA, 2019; MATOS, 2019; KOOPER; DAMO, 2018; SOUZA, 2018;)[3], estos marcos conceptuales perdieron relevancia en la actualidad. Sin embargo, tanto desde la sociología del consumo como de los trabajos producidos bajo la etiqueta de los CCT (*Consumer Culture Theory*)[4] siguen siendo muy prolíferos. Nos encontramos con una amplia producción académica que da cuenta de los significados de las experiencias, las prácticas y los estilos de vida relacionando al consumo con otros factores como los grupos etarios, étnicos, género, alimentación, esparcimiento, migraciones, ambientalismo, etc. (BARBOSA *et al.*, 2021; REZENDE PINTO; MENDONÇA, 2020).

Aunque Argentina vivenció un proceso similar de incorporación de camadas populares al mercado de consumo, las investigaciones han seguido un camino muy diferente al brasileño y la producción académica no se enmarca en una discusión tan clara sobre la existencia y las condiciones de una "nueva clase media" (con la excepción de Boos, 2017), aunque sí comenzaron a dar cuenta de la relevancia de la economía popular en la dinámica económica nacional reciente

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3   Es interesante destacar que en todos estos trabajos que discuten la categoría de "nueva clase media" se consideran datos estadísticos hasta el año 2015.

4   Los CCT refieren a un conjunto de perspectivas teóricas que tienen como eje la relación entre las acciones de los consumidores, el mercado y los significados culturales (ARNAULD; THOMPSON, 2005).

en una corriente que puede ser calificada como "estudios sociales de la economía". Esto incluye los aspectos como la financiación y las características que adquieren la economía popular y las prácticas económicas ordinarias; los procesos de estructuración social y movilidad a partir del consumo; los mecanismos que regulan el endeudamiento, el ahorro y el consumo en los sectores populares y la relación entre políticas sociales implementadas por el estado a través de transferencias monetarias y el consumo popular (WILKIS, et. al, 2021; PLÁ, 2014; HORNES, 2014; FIGUEIRO, 2013).

Con todo, lo que resulta fundamental es que estas discusiones posicionan al consumo como una categoría analítica que incluye mucho más que solo la adquisición de bienes en el mercado y el uso que se hace de estos.

> En la sociedad contemporánea, consumo es al mismo tiempo un proceso social que dice respecto a formas de provisión de bienes y servicios y a diferentes formas de acceso a esos mismos bienes y servicios; un mecanismo social percibido por las ciencias sociales como productor de sentidos e identidades, independientemente de la adquisición de un bien; una estrategia utilizada en lo cotidiano por las más diferentes grupos sociales para definir diversas situaciones en términos de derechos, estilos de vida e identidades; es una categoría central en la definición de la sociedad contemporánea (BARBOSA; CAMPBELL, 2006, p. 26).

Las críticas a la cultura material

José Murilo de Carvalho, en su obra *Cidadania no Brasil* (2015), recuerda un acontecimiento producido en un *shopping* de clase media en la ciudad de Rio de Janeiro tras la invasión pacífica de un grupo de personas sintecho:

> La invasión tuvo el mérito de denunciar de manera dramática los dos Brasil, el de los ricos y los pobres. Los ricos se mezclaron con los turistas extranjeros, pero estaban a leguas de distancia de sus compatriotas pobres. Pero también reveló la perversidad del consumismo. Los indigentes reivindicaban el derecho de consumir. No querían ser ciudadanos, sino

consumidores. O, mejor dicho, la ciudadanía que reivindicaban era la del derecho al consumo, era la ciudadanía predicada por los nuevos liberales. Si el derecho a comprar un teléfono celular, unas zapatillas, un reloj de moda puede silenciar o evitar entre los excluidos la militancia política, el tradicional derecho político, las perspectivas de avance democrático se encuentran disminuidas (CARVALHO, 2015, p. 228).

Este relato no solo tensiona la relación entre consumo y ciudadanía al colocarlas como dos esferas antagónicas, sino que denuncia el desarrollo de una cultura de consumo entre la población, incluida la más pobre, como consecuencia del triunfo de la ideología liberal. El postulado es relevante porque representa el posicionamiento de buena parte de la literatura en la región. Interesa resaltar tres problemas de la interpretación hecha por de Carvalho. Primero, difícilmente lo acontecido pueda ser interpretado como una demanda exclusiva por el derecho a consumir porque incluye reivindicaciones más amplias que tienen como factor común visibilizar la problemática de la desigualdad (que incluye la dimensión material). Como sostiene Miller respecto a las críticas que denuncian al materialismo y la superficialidad de ciertas mercancías "vivimos en una época en la cual la mayor parte del sufrimiento humano es resultado directo de la falta de bienes materiales" (MILLER, 2004: 24). Además, la demanda del derecho a consumir puede confluir con reclamos más amplios (en este caso referidos a la discriminación), por lo que su potencial transformador no debe ser subestimado. Segundo, sobredimensiona la capacidad trasformadora de los espacios políticos convencionales y de militancia tradicional. Como se vio anteriormente, existen muchas formas de activismo (algunas innovadoras y otras de larga data) capaces de operar en el ámbito del mercado e introducir modificaciones sociales. Asimismo, reducir al "triunfo de la ideología liberal" el hecho que el repertorio de acción del movimiento haya sido un espacio privado (un centro comercial) implica no considerar un creciente desencanto respecto de los espacios tradicionales de ejercicio de lo político, lo que puede motivar la emergencia de formas innovadoras de protesta social. En este caso, resulta disruptivo trasladar al espacio

privado demandas de interés colectivo, ya que cuestionan la lógica de funcionamiento habitual en un centro comercial para transformarlo en un espacio de visibilidad y confrontación política. Finalmente, si la demanda se reduce al derecho a consumir, se desmerece la importancia que tiene este reclamo para los sujetos involucrados, denotando una lectura moralista y acusatoria respecto de los valores democráticos de los manifestantes, donde el consumo de ciertos bienes (zapatillas, relojes) es corrosivo para el "avance democrático" y, por tanto, es inferior al ejercicio de otros derechos políticos. Esta lógica está en línea con los postulados críticos del consumo que sostienen que el crecimiento del consumo está vinculado a la decadencia de lo político. Lo que debe considerarse es que el acceso al consumo puede significar vectores de inclusión social y puede generar sentimientos de pertenencia de aquellos históricamente excluidos de la vida material de la sociedad y que, por tanto, sus demandas materiales son también políticas. Como sostienen Soper y Trentamnn "productos específicos pueden convertirse en símbolos de libertad, tanto de autoexpresión personal como de una potencial crítica de la jerarquía pública" (SOPER; TRENTMANN, 2008, p. 8).

Lo útil para la investigación social es diferenciar entre la crítica al modelo de ciudadanía liberal (que supone ante todo que los sujetos deben ser los encargados de proveerse el acceso a los bienes y servicios de naturaleza tanto individual como colectiva) y la crítica a la cultura material (que denuncia un creciente materialismo corrosivo de las relaciones sociales donde los sujetos son dominados por "falsas necesidades" y donde los ciudadanos se interesan por su bienestar individual en detrimento de virtudes colectivas más amplias). Como sostienen Barbosa y Campbell (2006), se debe distinguir claramente entre análisis sociológico y crítica social, diferenciación opacada por el moralismo en los estudios sobre consumo.

Esta crítica moral refleja un gran sesgo intelectual que afecta tanto a las interpretaciones hechas desde la izquierda como las posiciones más conservadoras. Uno de estos sesgos deriva de atribuirle excesiva

relevancia al consumo como elemento de distinción social y estatus en la estructura de clases, lo que puede conducir a explicaciones o justificaciones normativas sobre el consumo de ciertos segmentos sociales (qué y cómo se espera que consuman). El segundo se basa en jerarquizar la noción de "necesidad" de los bienes a partir de los criterios de "básicos" y "superfluos". Desde una dimensión cultural, mientras que los primeros son requeridos para la supervivencia de los sujetos, los segundos deben justificarse moralmente ya que, como su nombre lo indica, resultan prescindibles. Consecuentemente, los discursos que justifican moral y socialmente la adquisición de ciertos bienes atraviesan a los sujetos de todos los sectores sociales. Como lo indica Campbell:

> En la sociedad contemporánea hay esencialmente dos actitudes hacia el consumo. En primer lugar, puede considerarse como una cuestión de satisfacción de necesidades 'genuinas' (de 'provisión básica') en cuyo caso es visto como una actividad legítima por la mayoría de los intelectuales. Alternativamente, el consumo es visto como la gratificación de deseos por medio de bienes y servicios que se consideran no esenciales (lujos), en cuyo caso se considera típicamente un campo de la actividad superficial promovido por motivos éticamente dudosos y dirigido hacia fines triviales, efímeros y esencialmente sin valor […] Cualquier científico social que desee entender el consumo se ve obligado a confrontar ambos juicios morales (CAMPBELL, 1994, p. 504-505).

Además, desde el punto de vista político, la distinción entre el binomio básico/superfluo resulta en un mecanismo útil de poder por parte de ciertos sectores o grupos sociales:

> No se puede olvidar que, por detrás de esta oposición entre necesidades básicas y superfluas, existe la posibilidad de controlar el consumo ajeno —en especial de las clases trabajadoras—, la posibilidad de ciertos grupos sociales y políticos para definir, autoritariamente, lo que se puede o debe consumir (BARBOSA; CAMPBELL, 2006, p. 39).

El resultado de esto, según los autores, es que el consumo de bienes considerados básicos por parte de los más pobres es interpretado y juzgado como digno, mientras que el que supera este umbral de necesidades o

está direccionado a reproducir ciertos estilos de vida, es calificado como inadecuado o irresponsable.

Reflexiones finales

La revisión propuesta con eje al consumo en su dimensión política nos deja algunas pistas para avanzar en la investigación social. Esto requiere de -al menos- cuatro ejercicios: uno, identificar las debilidades de los marcos teóricos existentes. Dos, posicionar al consumo de forma tal que supere dicotomías conceptuales y maniqueas (básico/superfluo; deseo/necesidad; consumidor soberano/consumidor alienado, etc.). Tres, combatir supuestos moralizantes. Cuatro, retomar críticamente los trabajos de tradición norteamericana y europea en torno al consumo para para dar cuenta de fenómenos aún pendiente de reflexión y análisis en nuestra región.

Respecto a este último punto, el contexto latinoamericano invita a poner nuevamente en escena la relación entre producción/consumo/ciudadanía como un elemento fundamental para comprender las particularidades de los modelos políticos. Esto implica no solamente revalorizar el contexto y la política económica como elementos fundamentales de análisis, sino también la relación entre justicia, distribución y acceso a ciertos bienes y servicios y bienestar. La especificidad de los procesos latinoamericanos contemporáneos demanda enfoques y perspectivas teóricas que nos permitan repensar al consumo en su dimensión política, en tanto puerta de acceso a la ciudadanía y como estrategia de validación política. Para ello se debe superar el viejo antagonismo entre el consumo como vinculado exclusivamente al ámbito de lo privado y la ciudadanía como el espacio de lo público. El consumo político asociado a formas nuevas de participación y estilos de vida y las consecuencias políticas de los regímenes de consumo demuestran la estrecha relación entre la esfera del consumo y la ciudadanía.

Como se mostró, las relaciones entre política y consumo adquieren diversas formas y resultan fundamentales para analizar procesos

sociopolíticos determinados y el bienestar de una sociedad. Para ello se debe distinguir entre la crítica a los modelos teóricos conceptuales que oponen la idea de ciudadano a la del consumidor como categorías antagónicas de aquellas que, asumiendo que ambas interactúan, critican o son escépticas respecto al potencial que puede tener.

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Política e jornalismo de sensações na imprensa de referência: as capas do *Estado de Minas no período da pandemia de covid-19*

Politics and journalism of sensations in the reference press: the covers of the Estado de Minas during the Pandemic period of COVID-19

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Resumo: *Este artigo visa refletir sobre a cobertura do noticiário político e sensações presentes no jornal Estado de Minas, uma publicação de referência jornalística. Tendo como base, especificamente, os recortes de 5 capas que tratam do momento da pandemia de covid-19 no Brasil, o texto analisa o modo como um veículo tradicional se vale de elementos da linguagem do jornalismo popular para atrair seus leitores. Com isso, apoiando-se na ótica da Análise do Discurso (AD), é possível entender as escolhas feitas pelo veículo mineiro. Além disso, metodologicamente, busca-se investigar de que maneira as cores utilizadas nas capas conseguem obter o sentido desejado pela publicação. Constatamos que as estratégias discursivas presentes nos materiais demonstram a intenção do periódico em causar impacto no leitor, promovendo sensações e estimulando o questionamento.*

Palavras-chave: *Análise de discurso; jornalismo popular; pandemia; sensações; política.*

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ARTIGO

Abstract: *This article aims to reflect on the coverage of the political news and sensations present in the newspaper Estado de Minas, a journalistic reference publication. Based, specifically, on the 5-cover clippings that deal with the moment of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Brazil, the text analyzes the way in which a traditional vehicle makes use of elements of the language of popular journalism to attract its readers. Thus, based on the Discourse Analysis (AD) perspective, it is possible to understand the choices made by the mining vehicle. In addition, methodologically, we seek to investigate how the colors used in the covers manage to obtain the meaning desired by the publication. We found that the discursive strategies present in the materials demonstrate the journal's intention to impact the reader, thus promoting sensations and stimulating questioning.*

Keywords: *Discourse analysis; Popular journalism; Pandemic; Sensations; Policy.*

Introduction

Visual and graphic layout communicates and carries direct messages to readers. What changes from the sensationalist newspaper to the popular press is the content, as Amaral (2006) observes. That is, while in the 1990s, there was no concern with credibility and the intention was to sell as much as possible, the popular press – represented in publications such as Super Notícia (Belo Horizonte), Extra (Rio de Janeiro), Meia Hora de Notícias (Rio de Janeiro), and Diário Gaúcho (Porto Alegre) – has now abolished fake stories and news in the name of readers' trust and loyalty.

A reflection of these changes is that, over the last few decades, studies in journalism, a field that guides itself by ethics, respect, and objectivity, have shown particular interest in the so-called sensory journalism, a technique that comprises the physical and psychic dimensions, proposing to arouse attention, for example, through the title and lead, and provoke interlocutors' interest through the bias of sensations. In fact, Marcondes Filho (2000) made a precise analysis of the presence of the sensory technique in reference journalism as well. But what differentiates them is the form and mode of presenting the news.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, these characteristics have materialized in books Espreme que Sai Sangue (1996) and O Discurso da Violência no Jornal Sensacionalista (1994) and opened an interesting field of study about what was then called sensationalist journalism. Portari (2013, p. 130) defines sensationalist journalism as an expression of "exaggeration, the use of fait divers, the valuing of emotion, an inversion of form and content, and, very often, the presence of the tragic materialized in violence and death on covers." In this context, one of the greatest exponents in Brazil, until the early 2000s, was the extinct newspaper Notícias Populares, known mainly for publishing shocking photos and headlines that brought situations that bordered on the absurd.

As the years passed, the formula of this type of sensory journalism wore out. However, the journalistic market adapted itself to a new reality. The extinction of this way of doing journalism, often called the brown press, led to the emergence of another type of journalistic production called the popular press, a shift related to publications' search for credibility.

As heirs of a good deal of the sensationalist formula, so-called popular newspapers came to satisfy a market segment interested in that model. Among the legacies they bring, we can mention the interest in police news, sports, and the presence of half-naked women on their covers. In the graphic aspect, popular newspapers continue to apply the organic layout (not organized as in the traditional press), boldface letters, and strong colors. The graphic aspect of the layout is essential in their communication with readers, as their intention is to serve a segment interested in this visual language.

> The print page arranges a multiplicity of codes in the structure that convention calls diagramming or pagination, which enables complex dialogues between its elements. Typographic writing, for example, can be as personalized as oral language. Typographic variations convey much more than a linear and diachronic text sequence, giving rise to representations that had been previously only possible in radio broadcasts: the size, thickness, condensation, expansion, italic, and style of print characters reinterpret the text's reading with diverse marks of emphasis, exclamations, interjections, volumes, and tones. (GUIMARÃES, 2003, p. 67)

One notices the repositioning allowed the popular press to establish itself in the market with publications printing up to 300 thousand daily copies for sale in newsstands or on the streets, differently from the constant falls in the circulation of newspapers regarded as "references," such as *Folha de S. Paulo*, *O Globo*, or *Estado de Minas*.

However, in 2020, the pandemic period, in particular, brought about an interesting shift in this context. "Reference" (or mainstream)

newspapers that traditionally have a more sober layout, focusing mostly on themes of (national or international) politics and the economy (stock market, currency exchange rate, among other information from the capital and stock markets) find themselves in a situation never before experienced: the presence of a disease rapidly spreading around the world that, once in Brazil, made not just the frailness of the health system evident but triggered a political crisis involving denialism, inefficient use of medications, and suspicious negotiations in the purchase of the vaccine.

At the center of this crisis was the President of the Republic, Jair Bolsonaro, and his political position and attitudes towards measures to fight the spread of covid-19 in Brazil, constantly confronting governors and mayors, besides attempting to minimize the disease and the number of deaths that occurred in the country, directly contradicting doctors, scientists, and researchers.

The press then acquired great relevance in the media coverage of the crisis, and, at this moment, reference or mainstream newspapers are applying resources present in the popular press to impact their readers, as we will see ahead. Sensory journalism is prevailing within the traditional media segment, which often projects a higher-income and more educated readership[5].

From this realization, we go on to discuss the political news coverage through five covers of the *Estado de Minas* newspaper selected between the months of April and May 2020. The period defined for the analysis reflects the beginning of social isolation in Brazil. Within this temporal selection, we chose a cover for each week because they present the growing curve of the increase in daily covid-19 deaths in the country. Thus, based on the materials collected for this work, the total number of deaths appears to have tripled in just four weeks, from 5,017 to 17,971 deaths.

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5   Authors such as AMARAL (2006) and AUTOR, COSTA (2016) extensively debate the question of newspapers' projected reader.

Furthermore, our choice is also due to the observation that a traditional newspaper used popular language at a delicate moment of the pandemic in Brazil, combining traditional political coverage with graphic and textual elements present in the popular press. In this way, it is possible to perceive a shift in the usual practice of the vehicle, which sought to innovate the way of presenting its covers to attract and impact new readers.

Reference press x popular newspaper

In this study, we will use the concept of Reference Press, despite being aware that the term reference journalism has been employed in research in Brazil as a space to delimit the object of study. It is important to highlight that these uses must consider research contexts and their relations or oppositions that allow the researcher to access the central concept with which they are working. Zamin (2014, p. 919) identifies researchers that opt for the concept of "Reference Journalism to access the central concept, Popular Newspaper, and others that approach popular journalism to speak of reference journalism; and there are those who employ the expression as if the conceptual framework was contained therein." In this sense, the factors that lead the newspaper to be considered a reference are clippings of the voices authorized to speak in the newspaper, marketing strategies, and the commitment to promote facts of public interest.

Among the main dissonant points of newspapers regarded as popular or sensationalist is the publication's format: while traditional newspapers adopt the standard model (60 cm high x 50 cm wide, divided into six 4.5 cm columns of text and 0.5 cm blank spaces between columns), popular newspapers use the tabloid format (43 cm high x 28 cm wide, usually divided into three text columns, with some variation of up to four columns, maintaining the 0.5 cm blank spaces between columns), as we can observe in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – *Extra* (Rio de Janeiro), May 12, 2020

Source: *Extra* (2020)

The very format of the publication became synonymous with low-quality journalism and is frequently used to discredit reference media because of the origins of the layout and published content.[6]

Among other characteristics of sensory journalism, as opposed to the reference press, is the emphasis on news usually guided by

6   In its origins in the 15th and 16th centuries, tabloid newspapers focused mostly on crimes, mystical events, ghost stories, and other fables. Later in the US, with the adoption of this format, the tabloid turned to information, short texts, and boldfaced headlines. With technological advances, tabloids started stamping large images on their covers. Many images captured heinous crimes, generating diverse "sensations" in readers. Hence the historical association of the tabloid format with low-quality journalism, as AMARAL (2006) and PEDROSO (2001) observe.

"intensification and graphic, thematic, linguistic, and semantic exaggeration." (PEDROSO, 2001, p. 52). Danilo Angrimani adds that this segment is fond of "the appreciation of emotion; exploring the extraordinary, valuing decontextualized content; the exchange of the essential for the superfluous or picturesque, and the inversion of content for the form." (ANGRIMANI, 1995, p. 17).

As noted above, another outstanding feature of the press that serves this segment is its graphic or visual composition, which is always full of colors with less white space and maximum use of the margin area on its first page. The use of color contrast and language that tends to promote a meeting point with its readers (at times, with the use of slang, catchphrases, or even textual orality) are marks also present in publications in this segment.

Popular Journalism also carries editorial differences in relation to so-called reference media, especially when it comes to so-called "News Values," editorial criteria that dictate what that media will deal with primarily. Amaral (2006) illustrates the difference in approach to news values as follows:

> In the reference press, an event has a better chance of becoming news if it involves relevant individuals, impacts the nation, concerns many people, generates significant developments, pertains to public policies, and can be disclosed exclusively. In the popular press, a fact will most likely become news if it possesses the capacity to entertain, is geographically or culturally close to the reader, can be simplified or dramatically narrated, has characters with whom readers can identify (personalization), or is helpful. (AMARAL, 2006, p. 63)

We observe that the principal news values for the popular media are entertainment capacity and the geographic or cultural proximity to their target audience, while for the reference media is the relevance of individuals and impact on the nation. These differences are fundamental to distinguish forms of journalism production and to understand how, at times, the reference press resorts to popular language to convey information to its niche of readers. This is especially evident in the

political crises the covid-19 pandemic triggered in Brazil, reflecting mainly the positions of the President of the Republic that directly contradicted his own Health Ministers (Luiz Henrique Mandetta and Nelson Teich) and even the World Health Organization (WHO).

Estado de Minas and the pandemic's covers

Established on March 7, 1928, the *Estado de Minas* newspaper belongs to the Diários Associados group and is considered one of the most traditional of the state of Minas Gerais. Throughout its trajectory, the daily publication established itself as a reference, costing R$ 2.50 from Monday through Saturday and R$ 3.50 on Sundays. Its main competitor in the fight for leadership in the state's editorial market is the tabloid newspaper *O Tempo.*

Estado de Minas focuses on state news but also highlights national and international news on its covers, especially in the economics and politics editorships. This way, the newspaper maintains a traditional diagramming model in its standard format, as we can see in Figure 2.

The example of Figure 2 demonstrates typical edition prior to the covid-19 pandemic period, about one year before the disease arrived in the country. The cover's focus is on national political news and the topic of reference is the pension reform. Above the main headline, there is a call indicating the Culture and Entertainment news section. The lower half of the cover turns to sports news, emphasizing the two principal teams in Minas Gerais: Atlético Mineiro and Cruzeiro. The cover is filled with headlines on the dangerous of other dam bursts, the state government's debt with the municipalities, gun sales in Brazil, and works to restore historical heritage sights in Ouro Preto.

The cover has large blank spaces, allowing for relief in the reading and a cleaner look, as described by Collaro (2007). The language of the headlines and texts is sober and follows the precepts of journalism handbooks, such as impersonality, objectivity, clarity, conciseness, and so forth.

Figure 2 – *Estado de Minas*, April 4, 2019

Source: *Estado de Minas* (2019)

In 2020, we perceive a constant shift in the publication's language. The arrival of the pandemic and the political crisis caused the newspaper to adopt another tone in its production, as we can see in the four covers we analyze below, involving political authorities and the pandemic.

We note that, due to the atypical moment, the publication abdicates the traditional sobriety expected by its reader and, in doing so, seeks to provoke sensations and impact those who face the news. And this is evident not only through the text but also through the graphic design of the covers selected in this work, which are all in poster format. In the newspaper issues under analysis, we see white spaces replaced by black. The color contrast is between black, white, and yellow. There is

no breathing space. There is only the presence of darkness, grief, and death explicitly mentioned in texts but also implied in the color palette. According to Collaro (2007, p. 74), "each color and its nuances impose a peculiar psychological reaction on individuals, and it is up to those who intend to perform visual works to know these principles to provoke in the receptors the necessary reaction to the proposed objective." In terms of content, the main focus of headlines is national political news. However, the language the publication assumes is different. We must then make an individual analysis to understand the publication's position during these times accurately. Thus, we will follow our analysis in chronological order.

Methodological path

In this study, we examined the covers of Estado de Minas' issues on April 29 and May 9, 16, and 20 through the Discourse Analysis (DA) approach of the French line of research. This segment of analysis comprises a variety of approaches to the study of texts. Hence, there is not just one type of "discourse analysis." But all perspectives of analysis have in common the "rejection of the realist notion that language is simply a neutral means of reflecting on or describing the world and the conviction of the central importance of discourse in the construction of social life" (GILL, 2002, p. 244).

According to Mutti (2003), Discourse Analysis (DA) aims to interrogate the meanings that diverse forms of production establish, be them verbal or non-verbal texts, as long as their materiality produces significations for possible interpretations. Still, for the author, Michel Pêcheux was one of the pioneers of this methodology, defining the relationship between language/subject/history or language/ideology. Hence, this work resorts to the French approach to analyze the covers of the newspaper. Orlandi (2015) explains the proposition of DA is to understand beyond what is said, that is, the text not only in its structural form but also taking into account social and cultural aspects. Discourse

Analysis (DA) is "understanding the language making sense as symbolic labor, part of the general social labor, constitutive of man and their history." (ORLANDI, 2015, p. 15). It is the language in motion, being used by a subject in constant transformation. French Discourse Analysis, following Pêcheux's (1993) standpoint, works with the interpretation of meanings and is, according to Orlandi (2003), susceptible to mistakes, because "even if the interpretation seems clear, there are many definitions in reality, and meanings are not as evident as they seem." (CAREGNATO; MUTTI, 2006, p. 682). The newspaper's chromatic choices draw our attention, especially the extensive use of black as a background for its headlines, as opposed to the traditional neutral color of newsprint. In this sense, we can turn to Guimarães (2000, 2003) to understand the intention of the newspaper from a Brazilian cultural context. In his work on the use of colors in the media and journalism, he applies the semiotics of culture, drawing from authors Iuri Lótman, Ivan Bystrina, and Harry Pross to discuss how we can interpret color codes according to the context in which they are used. In this way, Guimarães intends to move away from the mere color-meaning association (for example, red = love; white = peace) to delve deeper and verify how color communicates with media broadcast receptors. Thus, there is an intense relationship between positive and negative codes associated with colors, depending on the moment of use and the culture in which this resource is inserted. It is important to take into account the cultural context seen as, for example, white is the color of peace in the West and the color of mourning in the East. The author points out that:

> [...] By incorporating positive or negative values to colors, it is possible to transfer such values to specific information, fact, person, or entity (partisan, corporate, social, etc.) identified with these colors. Or better yet, by applying to these information specific colors with symbolic and historical values rescued from determined context, fact, person, or entity, it is possible to transfer such values, positive or negative, to them. (GUIMARÃES, 2003, p. 2)

Estado de Minas' choice of black color connects directly to these cultural contexts. For Brazil, the color of mourning is black. This expression of mourning in the published content is perceived before the texts, as Garcia (1990) observes in an experiment he carried out in the United States using a device called "eye tracker" to trace the itinerary of reading a newspaper page. The experiment concluded the two information the eyes perceive first are photographs and colors; only later do people pay attention to texts.

It is worth stressing the choice for coloring texts in yellow and white, which, as opposed to black, are respectively the two colors with the most luminous contrast. All these deliberate choices communicate in advance what the reader will find in the issue: the production of meaning.

"I am Messias, but I don't perform miracles"

The following cover was published on April 29, 2020 (Figure 3). On the previous day, Brazil had crossed the mark of five thousand deaths in the covid-19 pandemic, exceeding the total number of losses recorded in China, the country where the virus first emerged and whose population is five times bigger than Brazil's.

The publication came out amidst a context of arm wrestling between the Ministry of Health - that was following recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO) - and the President of the Republic, Jair Bolsonaro, who defended the end of social isolation and the adoption of medications of unproven efficacy as a treatment protocol in the country. On that date, 43 days after the confirmation of the first death, Brazil joined the list of 10 countries with the highest number of covid-19 cases and deaths, especially in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Amazonas. In the Ministry of Health's daily press conference, the then minister Nelson Teich admitted – as did his predecessor Luís Mandetta – that the pandemic was far from being under control in Brazilian territory.

In the media coverage, the press insisted, at every opportunity, on questioning the president about the number of deaths and whether he intended to act differently as the pandemic progressed. Many of these interviews were carried out collectively at times when Jair Bolsonaro allowed journalists closer access. When asked about the number of deaths on that date, the answer was emphatic and became *Estado de Minas'* main headline:

Figure 3 – *Estado de Minas*, April 29, 2020

Source: *Estado de Minas* (2020)

By adopting the poster cover model, assuming the language of popular newspapers, and by connecting its main texts (in larger font size), the number of 5,017 deaths, and the reproduction of the president's statement, "So what? I am sorry. What do you want me to do? I am Messias [Messiah], but I don't perform miracles," the newspaper breaks with the tradition of writing headlines – usually journalistic – to make the president's voice its own reproduced in quotation marks.

Moreover, the publication emphasizes a policy that reflects the lack of concern of the country's top leadership in controlling or managing the number of deaths. The explicit phrase "So what?" translates the oral vocabulary used daily by the population to demonstrate insignificance in the face of confrontation and such an impactful reality in the everyday lives of Brazilian families. Connected to the number of deaths, it becomes evident what Achille Mbembe (2016) characterizes as necropolitics: instead of the control over lives exercised by biopower (in Michel Foucault's words), there is a part of politics that stimulates – or does not care about – people's deaths:

> […] contemporary forms of subjugating life to the power of death (necropolitics) are deeply reconfiguring the relations between resistance, sacrifice, and terror. I have demonstrated that the notion of biopower is insufficient to account for contemporary forms of the subjugation of life to the power of death. Moreover, I have put forward the notion of necropolitics, or necropower, to account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximally destroying persons and creating death-worlds, that is, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to living conditions that confer upon them the status of the living dead. (MBEMBE, 2016, p. 29)

In a vast population like Brazil's, where there is glaring social inequality, contradicting medical and scientific recommendations is equivalent to creating a "death-world," as seen with the growing number of deaths as a result of the disease. The choice to make the headline the reproduction of a statement by the president brings the publication even

closer to its readers, using a "textual orality" (MIRANDA, 2009; DIAS, 1996) that is typical of popular journalism.

In the newspaper's "statement-headline," the direct reference to religion with a play on the word Messiah also draws attention. Referring to his own family name (Jair Messias Bolsonaro), at that moment, the president shifts its meaning to say that he is not a savior, the biblical messiah, the one who overcomes death and takes away the sin of the world. The effect used in the president's picture, with dark tones and shadow on his face (unlike the divine light of the savior), is associated with this headline, placing him as a bearer of death by referring to classic representations of the figure of death with a black hood that shows hopelessness and can, at any moment, seek out the living sick.

Assuming this role of "non-savior," the president shows signs that he does not know or would not act to stop the deaths, attributing this condition to a miracle or divine intervention that should have occurred in the country. The discourse of necropolitics, evidenced on the cover of the newspaper, demonstrates the mass destruction of lives is not a problem, while at the same time it tends to impact the reader. That is sensory journalism present in a reference newspaper, the mixing of two languages from different models of journalistic production but which together explain the position of the publication in relation to the drastic and dramatic situation.

"Everyone is invited: 1,300 people at the barbecue"

Ten days after the above issue, the number of deaths practically doubled in the country. And, in its routine journalistic coverage, the press asked the President of the Republic once again about these facts and whether his positions would change in the face of the considerable increase in deaths. The answer to this question was that a barbecue would take place at Palácio da Alvorada on the following weekend (Figure 4), leading the newspaper to make explicit once again the policy of mass deaths by linking a statement the president made in early March – when Brazil

registered the first cases – referring to covid-19 as "a minor flu" to the death toll of the previous day and the presidential intention of holding a barbecue in that moment of perplexity:

Figure 4 – *Estado de Minas,* May 9, 2020

Source: *Estado de Minas* (2020)

The discursive strategy adopted is similar to that of the first page on April 29. However, it is worth highlighting some aspects of this cover-poster. The statement-headlines, as previously noted, are associated with three images. Two photos of the president and another of gravediggers waiting for coffins to bury in Rio de Janeiro complement the word "Zero" in bold and yellow at the bottom of the page.

According to the association of photos, the service of the gravediggers increases at each declaration of the president. And they seem to be expecting an increasingly worse situation as Bolsonaro smiles and announces a barbecue at Palácio da Alvorada (bottom photo). The "minor flu" in the beginning resulted in almost 10,000 deaths (on that date). And the response the population would receive is a crowded party teasing and mocking those who defend social distancing and prevention measures as safe ways to reduce contamination and deaths in the country.

Repeated three times, the word "Zero" in yellow criticizes the president's stance by noting that there was no meeting with victims' families, no visits to the worst affected hospitals, and no meetings with frontline medical teams. The newspaper suggests to its readers the feeling they should have – indignation.

This sensory game is part of the editorial composition, the cover's poster layout, the verbal and non-verbal elements, and the use of irony derivatives on two occasions: "'A minor flu:' mocked by the president, the virus spread quickly and overloaded health and funeral systems," at the top of the page, and "President Jair Bolsonaro said that 'whoever is at the entrance of Palácio da Alvorada will be welcome' in the party and joked about having up to 3,000 guests." This information consolidates the position adopted by the publication as news value: current events, proximity, relevance, and exceptionality relative to the facts.

"Life is made of choices" / "Those on the right take chloroquine, those on the left take... *tubaína*!"

Next, we opted for a double analysis since the publications are only four days apart. The headlines in both issues are also connected directly, creating a narrative for the publication's regular readers. On the left side of Figure 5, we find the May 16, 2020, edition, which shows a more emphatic position by composing the map of Brazil with cemetery crosses. The image associated with the headline "Adrift" clearly objects to President Jair Bolsonaro's stance in the fight against the disease, which had reached the mark of 14,817 deaths the day before. As we have

underlined above, the choice of black color anticipates grief, which can take on two connotations in both publications: the great loss of lives due to the disease or the political crisis the government itself created by letting the post of minister of health vacant while conducting the main issues of the fight against the pandemic. This reading is possible only if we observe two sub-headlines present in the issues: "'We lost a month. Let us pray.' – Luiz Mandetta, former minister of Health," and "'Life is made of choices' – Nelson Teich, former minister of Health" (in the May 16 issue) and "1,179 deaths recorded in 24 hours. And no minister of Health," in the main headline of May 20.

Figure 5 –*Estado de Minas*, May 16, 2020, and May 20, 2020

Source: *Estado de Minas* (2020)

Criticism against President Bolsonaro's exercise of power is also expressed in reference to the adoption of a medical treatment using "chloroquine," a reason for disagreements between the president and the health ministers, which led to Mandetta's exoneration and Teich's resignation. On the cover of the May 16 edition, the newspaper states that "Recent research disapproves chloroquine" in a sub-headline to the left of the map of Brazil. On May 20, another controversial presidential statement converted into a headline, "Those on the right take chloroquine, those on the left take… tubaína [any local soft drink brand]," followed by a photo of the president smiling, calls attention to the moment the country reached the mark of 1,179 deaths in 24 hours.

The newspaper confronts the smiley President of Brazil and his irony towards the disease with another statement, but this time by the President of the United States, Donald Trump, for whom Bolsonaro has declared admiration on several occasions: "I don't want anyone coming here and infecting our people," a phrase pronounced by the head of the US government when announcing the interruption of flights to and from Brazil. The newspaper explores the national-political context and creates tension between the policies the two countries adopted, reinforcing that Brazilian decisions are so harmful that even its main international political partner closed air borders with the strong argument of protecting the lives of Americans from visitors potentially infected with covid-19.

Final considerations

Although the covid-19 pandemic is not over yet in Brazil as we construct this work, exercising an attentive eye on print journalism is important to understand how the media portrays, in real-time, the anguish, pain, and suffering experienced by the entire Brazilian population.

We selected four editions published in April and May 2020, a period when a series of political and public health crises took shape and intensified, to discuss how the reference press assumes a different form from the usual one, opting for frames that mark the strength of

narratives, the colorful layouts that recall the fatalities, and the modes of operating journalism that come closer to the segment called popular journalism.

In this perspective, this research aimed to discuss the covers of Estado de Minas, a mainstream print newspaper, which, facing a pandemic in the country linked to constant political crises, has used sensory journalism to attract its readership and, in a certain sense, innovate its way of doing journalism in such unstable days.

During the period of covid-19-induced confinement, we noticed a change in the graphic design of the covers of the newspaper under analysis. We identified strategies that reinforce these narrative angles, as in the poster cover that associates the photograph of the current president with another of gravediggers waiting for a burial. That is, instead of a sensible attitude from the head of government, each of his statements - "I'm not a gravedigger," "minor flu," "so, what?" -, his party at the Palácio do Planalto, his invitation to crowding, and his mocking of those who recommend social distancing to reduce contagion worsen the situation, increasing the virus' spread, the death toll, and consequently, the services of gravediggers. In this way, sensory journalism invites readers to be careful, attentive, and indignant.

Before social isolation, Estado de Minas articulated the structure of the cover on a white background that alluded to the feeling of lightness, creating the visual perception of the "page's breathing." Differently, during the confinement, the white background is changed to black, pointing to the feeling of death, mourning, confinement, and suffocation that the pandemic imposed on the country.

Another relevant change was the structural one. The covers in the form of a poster were impactful, approaching only the political news, focusing on statements by President Jair Messias Bolsonaro that represented the unpreparedness and neglect with which the executive power dealt with the growth in the number of deaths by covid-19.

The repetition of these graphic elements, combined with the President's statements and the increase in the number of new cases and

deaths, was used as a visual identification strategy to illustrate and draw attention to discrepancies in the executive power's discourse and acts.

At the same time, covers made a hybrid of reference journalism and popular newspapers, noticeable by how they stamped excerpts of authorities' discourses, highlighting the president's statements and confronting them with official sources on the growing numbers of new cases and deaths.

However, statements by the head of the executive power confronted with the escalating numbers of the virus' spread and lethality signaled a natural path to the extraordinary. In view of this, the newspaper adopted a visual strategy inclined to sensationalism.

During the period analyzed for this research, the combination of these elements represented and exposed the dynamics of necropolitics put into effect. That is, the discursive strategies present in the materials demonstrate the newspaper's intention to impact readers, promoting sensations, stimulating questions, and, above all, the ability to feel indignation before the mockery and the pain and suffering of families who have lost their loved ones without having the right to say a dignified farewell.

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Como as mulheres são representadas na publicidade? Avaliando a atitude dos consumidores no Brasil

How Are Women Represented in Advertising? Evaluating consumers' attitude in Brazil

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Resumo: *Este artigo objetiva analisar como os entrevistados expressam suas avaliações sobre as representações das mulheres em peças publicitárias que foram denunciadas ao CONAR. Realizaram-se três grupos focais com um total de 22 participantes e cerca de 180 minutos de material gravado. Para a análise das falas dos participantes, foi utilizado o Sistema de Avaliação (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005). Os resultados indicam uma forte presença de desrespeito, ironia, ofensas, injúrias e constrangimentos nas peças publicitárias analisadas. Este estudo contribui para reflexões sobre as práticas publicitárias, pois mostra que peças publicitárias que apresentam mulheres em cenários de inferioridade e desrespeito tendem a ser rejeitadas pelos consumidores.*

Palavras-chave: *Publicidade; consumidores; atitude; mulheres; Brasil.*

Abstract: *This article aims to analyze how interviewees express their evaluations about the representations of women in advertising pieces that were the object of denunciations to the Brazilian Advertising Self-regulation Council*

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(CONAR). We conducted three focus groups with a total of 22 participants and around 180 minutes of recorded material. For the analysis of the participants' speech, we used the Appraisal System (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005). Results indicate a strong presence of disrespect, irony, offenses, insults and constraints in the advertising pieces analyzed. This study contributes to the reflections on advertising practices, as it shows that pieces of advertisement presenting women in scenarios of inferiority and disrespect tend to be disliked by consumers.

Keywords: *Advertising; Consumers; Attitude; Women; Brazil.*

Introduction

Advertising is an activity carried out to stimulate the consumption of goods and services as well as reinforce concepts and ideas using a variety of resources. In view of its scope and reach, disorderly practices in this area such as misleading or abusive advertising, which pose a risk of harm to society, have required a regulatory function with a view of inhibiting such damages. This function in Brazil is the responsibility of the Brazilian Advertising Self-regulation Council (CONAR). CONAR has computed a growth of 87.5% from 2006 to 2016 of judged cases related to denounced chauvinism in advertising pieces (BEZERRA, 2017).

This context, which is not restricted to the national scope, has not gone unnoticed by academia. The first critical texts related to gender stereotypes in commercial advertising began to emerge throughout the 1960s (FULMER, 1969). In the 1970s, scientific publications focusing on disrespect and abuses with such stereotypes were increasing, especially when it came to stereotyped women (COURTNEY; LOCKERETZ, 1971; GOFFMAN, 1976; LULL; HANSON; MARX, 1977; NAPOLI; MURGOLO-POORE; BOUDVILLE, 2003). In the 1980s, despite some exceptions, women were usually portrayed in advertisements as sex divas, happy housewives, and dependents of their husbands (MCARTHUR; RESKO, 1975; WHIPPLE; COURTNEY, 1985; GILLY, 1988; MOREIRA; FLECK, 2021).

Currently, the image of vulnerable and submissive women is still present in commercial advertising; this reality can be perceived, for example, in commercials related to cleaning products and household appliances. Advertising myopia in the 1980s and 1990s also sought to expose the image of women in other variations such as beverages and goods and services that synthesize status (automobiles, boats and travel). The lack of insight on the part of the advertisers means that they did not realize that the consumers demanded a break in these stereotypes (KAPOOR; MUNJAL, 2019), nor did they ignore the fact that women are not noticed in commercial advertisements (INSTITUTO PATRÍCIA GALVÃO, 2014).

However, we cannot deny the occasional advances resulting from more recent events, such as the Glass Lion: The Lion for Change, at the emblematic Cannes International Festival of Creativity, in 2015, an award established to specifically recognize pieces that challenge gender prejudice, and break stereotypes of men and women rooted in advertising messages (CANNES LION, 2020). Academic research also points to these advances (SCUSSEL; DELLAGNELO, 2018), suggesting that companies are more attentive not to associate their brands with chauvinism and other stereotypes (NEGREIROS, 2016).

Although there have been changes in the representations of women in advertising campaigns, this has not happened in all sectors (MOREIRA; FLECK, 2021), and there is still a long way to go. Starting from the premise that marketing exerts a strong influence on the construction of female beauty standards, Sirqueira, Gomes and Chaves (2021, p. 420) identified that women in general agree that "the female body is instrumentalized in advertising pieces, and is often, treated as an object to meet the demand of the media in the promotion of their products and even to present a certain product".

Our objective is to analyze the way in which the interviewees express their evaluations about the representations of women in advertising pieces that are the object of denunciations to CONAR. This study adopts the evaluation system (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005) as a methodological resource, having the speeches of the participants of three focal groups as an object of analysis. The article is structured in five sections: Introduction, theoretical foundation; methodological procedures; data analysis; and the final considerations.

Advertising and consumption

In the majority of European countries, studies related to the disrespect of women by advertising agencies show that women do not hold command posts at these companies, nor are they involved in the creation of advertisements (AYHAN, 2010). In the United States, this reality is similar, as there is evidence of horizontal and vertical segregation in the

major agencies (BOULTON, 2013). Leadership positions are already thought of as being for men. Thus, from the outset it is not possible to predict the creation from the female point of view (GROW; DENG, 2014). Veiled strategies are created for this to occur when the extended working hours of creation do not meet work-family compatibility (MALLIA, 2009). Therefore, if a woman wishes to occupy this type of position, she knows that she should, even if in an unofficial way, abdicate from maternity even though she will still have difficulties in gaining a directive or creation role in such agencies.

Women account for 56% of the advertising labor market, but only 33% are directly related to the breeding sector while about 10% hold management positions in Spanish agencies (MARTÍN; BELÉNDEZ; HERNÁNDEZ, 2007). Women occupy 76.7% of administrative positions, but only 47% of intermediate/upper management positions (BOSMAN, 2005). In Brazilian agencies, the scene is reproduced in a similar way. To be part of the national advertising universe, many women also end up trying to masculinize themselves and even reproducing a stereotype that discriminates women even more. The following description is a way they find to preserve their careers: they shut up and do not question nor get into any type of logic and simply maintain this behavior (DIP, 2017). This rule is suggested as being present all over the world (PHELAN; RUDMAN, 2010).

Some examples of how this segregating and chauvinist reality is present in advertising are: (a) it does not use actresses or characters representative of Brazilian society, with biotypes that are consistent with national culture (INSTITUTO PATRÍCIA GALVÃO, 2014); (b) it is unaware that times have changed and that women are consuming beer – for every three men who drink it, there is a woman with the same consumption profile; and 10 million of women drink alcoholic beverages once or more per week, compared to 25 million men with the same consumption rate (IBGE, 2013); (c) there is no room in the creative environment for the female audience as pieces with a positive female contribution do not routinely appear (AYHAN, 2010;

DIP, 2017); and (d) it uses a strategy supported by helplessness when it exploits female self-esteem. The idea is usually to suggest physical gains, conditioned to the consumption of some aesthetic product. In related studies that confront common models and women, the self-esteem effect is perceptible through a simple comparison strategy (WILCOX; LAIRD, 2000).

The issue highlights the myopia of the advertising universe, which makes a clear mistake in offending its consumers. To illustrate this, in the period from 2006 to 2016, the denunciations that became legal cases related to chauvinism judged by CONAR grew 87.5% (BEZERRA, 2017).

The massive presence of men in the creation universe prevented advertisers from perceiving opportunities that were often related to women themselves (IVY; VAGNONI, 1997). This myopia brought a series of problems to the agencies. The advertising pieces could be more effective and present better results if they also considered the women´s point of view (BROYLES; GROW, 2008).

This scenario was explored through publications that revealed the abuses related to stereotypes and practices of sexism. The Theory of Ambivalent Sexism indicates that there is commonly a perverse component in sexism, a polarization between hostility and benevolence (GLICK; FISKE, 1996).

When women do not play a traditional role – women at home, dependent on the protection of men, or as a sexual object (ZOTOS; TSICHLA, 2014) – they are perceived as hostile because they represent a challenge to male power. When women are seen as sexy and less competent than men, they are perceived as benevolent. This second view builds a pattern of inferiority and subservience for women (GLICK; FISKE, 1996). In an extended way, advertising discourses present an incomplete woman exposed in parts and without an identity (ZOTOS; TSICHLA, 2014), an aspect that has recently changed as women achieve more representation (GRAU; ZOTOS, 2016).

To counteract the perceived "lack of adjustment" in the activity involving gender marking and leadership, they must convey their ambition and ability to lead. This would be the situation in business when expectations are oriented toward visions of confident, competent male leaders and friendly, people-oriented leaders (EAGLY; KARAU, 2002).

It is worth noting that this issue is related to the prescription of all variants of stereotypes: there is a validity period for how men and women should behave (being assertive, competitive and independent, among others things) (EAGLY; KARAU, 2002). Besides prescribed notions, stereotypes are also outlawed since what counts for one gender is usually censored for another (RUDMAN *et al.*, 2012).

Dominant male traits (controlling and arrogant) are outlawed for women but tolerated for men. Likewise, negative female traits (e.g. weak and naive) are outlawed for men but tolerated for women. The roles of prescribed and outlawed traits for genders were laid as women must have interpersonal sensitivity, gentility, modesty, and sociability, whereas intensified prescriptions and proscriptions for men reflected the traditional emphases on strength, momentum, assertiveness, and self-sufficiency (PRENTICE; CARRANZA, 2002). From these examples, it seems likely that the proscriptions serve to reinforce the intended roles for each gender and also to explain, for example, why competent women should be viewed as socially unattractive (RUDMAN *et al.*, 2012) Additionally, it can serve as a justification for consolidating women's absence at strategic command posts, both in personal life and in organizations.

However, this framework, to a certain extent, changes when repositioned for an internet context in online advertising such as in the case of social networks. The internet has enabled the consumer to play an active role in the context of sending and receiving messages. Therefore, groups considered as minorities have a new 'voice' option, including deliberate about the effects of advertising.

Progress towards breaking with stereotypes of women in advertising has taken place, albeit at a slow pace. Gabriel (2019) analyzes posters for Skol beer, which circulated at different times, finding changes from a sexist pattern to a more feminist pattern; however, he observed that this change was motivated, in addition to ethical and moral reasons, by economic issues. In the same direction, Candido, Lourenço and Sakoda (2022) researched the transformations of female representations in advertising pieces and attributed the changes in the beer industry to feminist critics. The authors observed that feminist critiques had such repercussions that they mobilized supporters not directly involved in the dispute, such as regulatory agencies.

Methodological procedures

This study uses the technique focal group to gather the empirical material and, in a complementary way, considers the videos of advertising articles denounced at CONAR. The research corpus is the result of the participation of 22 people with attributed fictitious names in three focus groups held in June and July 2017 with an average duration of 1 hour in each group. Two groups were attended by seven people and one was composed of eight participants who were not informed that the projected pieces had been the subject of consumer complaints. The sessions were recorded and transcribed, totaling 21 typed pages.

The films were presented in blocks of three commercials reported and at each stage the debate took place. The procedure was standardized for all groups, with the same process of moderation. The videos reported are as follows:

- Schin's homage to the most interesting bars in Brazil;
- Axe – two attractive girls and one lucky guy;
- Bons Business – Compadre Washington;
- BomBril – All Brazilians are divas;
- Fiat Wolverine;
- Old Spice – The Call;

- Tixan Ypê – the power of the multiplication woman and the power of the persuasive woman;
- Crystal – Surnames;
- Dignity Group and Multiple Opus Integrated Communication – Hate Eggplant;
- Quasar, O Boticário – Sniffers;
- New Peugeot 208 – Wacky Race;
- Have your first time with Devassa;
- Axe – The end of the world;
- The São Paulo Daily – Oil Change;
- Top Scenes – Arezzo Mania;
- Gisele Bündchen – Hope teaches;
- Activa – Fruit Nectar.

The advertising pieces presented to the participants of the study were selected from the CONAR website in the category of complaints about respect while considering the temporal cut from May 2012 to May 2017. Our choice is justified due to our objective, which refers to the advertising pieces that were the subject of complaints to CONAR. While acknowledging that there have been changes and advances in the representations of women after 2017, we focus on knowing how the interviewed women express their evaluations about the representations of women in advertising pieces that are the object of denunciations by stereotyped representations.

This category contains 211 reported advertisements, 59 of which include an allusion to chauvinism or disrespect toward women. Of these, 17 were selected for this study as their videos were accessible, which made it possible to project them in the focus groups in order to encourage participants to express themselves regarding the subject.

For the analysis of the participants' speech, a theoretical clipping of the assumptions of the Theory of the System of Accessibility, or Appraisal System (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005) was adopted, which allows for interpretation of the evaluative positions of the speech enunciator.

The Appraisal System is composed of three interactional domains: (i) attitude, allusive to feelings, judgments and evaluations; (ii) engagement, sources of attitude and the role of voices over discourse opinions; and (iii) graduation, intensity of feelings in the oral or written environment. For this study, we focus on the subsystem "attitude", which is divided into three types: affection (linked to emotions, feelings), judgment (moral evaluations) and appreciation (related to the object in its form and presentation). This clipping is justified by the central place that the attitude occupies in the evaluation process as it is responsible for "our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgments of behavior and evaluation of things" (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005, p. 94).

Presentation of results

People, in making their linguistic choices to evaluate other people, objects and situations, express their beliefs, values and worldviews, as well as the ideology and culture of the context in which they live in (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005). In this interpretation, we analyze the speeches of the participants seeking to identify the semantic resources mobilized to express their affective evaluations (emotions), behavior (ethics/morals) and appreciation of things (aesthetics).

The analysis of the empirical material was developed based on the attitude subsystem of the Appraisal System, as shown in Figure 1.

Table 1: Attitude subsystem

Dimension	Characterization	Indicators – Examples
AFFECTION (emotions)	(in) happiness (in) satisfaction (in) safety	Sadness, anger, happiness, love, hate Boredom, pleasure, displeasure Welfare, displeasure, anxiety, fear, mistrust
JUDGEMENT (human behavior)	Social Estimate Social Sanction	Admiration, criticism, self-esteem, normality, tenacity, capacity Norms and standards, moral and religious precepts, ethics, veracity, honesty
APPRECIATION (object)	Reaction Composition Valuation	Impact expectations Balance, elaboration, complexity Innovation, authenticity, relevance

Source: based on Martin and White (2005).

Affection

The analysis of the advertising pieces, in the dimension of affection, sought expressions of the interviewees that indicated positive or negative feelings about the advertising pieces. These expressions are indicative of happiness or unhappiness, dissatisfaction or satisfaction, insecurity or safety and may be explicit (represented at the lexical level by adjectives, verbs, adverbs and nominalizations) or implicit (in ideational meanings) (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005).

In 2014, the advertising piece "Tixan Ypê, powerful as you" carried out a campaign that was denounced by disrespect to the image of women. In their lines, women persuaded (blackmailed) their spouses to do some daily activities. The idea was to show the strength of the woman; "after all, the cleaning product was really powerful" (Debora). Focus group participants assessed that the commercial background was precisely to insert the woman in a pejorative context. Debora's comment reveals her dissatisfaction with the way woman is treated in the commercial.

> I see them putting the woman in the ad with sensational power that the woman really has, but in a very subtle way puts the Tixan Ipê in. In other words, who is the message for? The message is for women. The woman is sensational. It is great so you go there to wash clothes (Debora).

The background of the piece is the power of the woman, but the product is for heavy house cleaning.

In 2015, CONAR also received the denunciation of a BomBril commercial as disrespectful. It was the campaign "Every woman is a diva, and every man is a diva-gar (playing with the word "devagar" in Portuguese, meaning "slow")". The dialogue between the actresses makes it clear that women were born to shine, and the singer Ivete Sangalo comments: "My love, we burn out at work, we are successful all day and we still leave the house shining", and adds that "every Brazilian woman is a diva". Hilda and Debora express their dissatisfaction with the stereotyping that reinforces the sexual division of labor.

> In the BomBril advertisement, I see two things that really bother me. The first is that it refers to how a woman takes better care of the house than a man does. I do not like these terms: a woman is better than a man and a man is better than a woman. And the other thing is that she says that the man helps at home. I do not see any work of the woman when she goes, for example, to the farm and she will develop some activities. For me, it is not help, it is a job, just like the man who develops activities in the domestic environment is not an aid. He lives there in the house just as the woman does, so why is it only the woman who has to be responsible for this and the man only helps [..] (Hilda).

> I think it bothers me a lot because it reaffirms that women do the cleaning much better than men. It reaffirms that women have to do it. And it says that even with all the products, the man will do less, so he does not do it and continues to leave that job for the woman. This reinforces the sexual division of labor (Debora).

The commercials by Axe deodorant are known for their male appeal, and the piece that evokes a Noah harnessing women was no different. Maria expressed her displeasure:

> I have a very big problem with these Axe ads because I think they are all extremely sexist. I agree that it's a delight to see so many wonderful man gathered in one advertisement, but I think that's extremely chauvinist. I'm the type that maybe if I went to a supermarket to buy something for my husband I would not buy Axe because it's chauvinist, this advertisement is ridiculous, […]. They want to reach a male audience so they fill the advertising with women [...] (Maria).

In advertising pieces, humor acts as a 'backdrop' to a veiled context in Brazilian advertising. The veiled disrespect in the form of chauvinism is recurrent in advertising pieces, but it already faces resistance on the part of those consumers who do not identify with this practice, as expressed in Paul´s testimony: "I found that related to Axe deodorant, if I were a woman I would have felt offended because in addition to being sexist, the ad is comparing woman to an animal" (Paulo).

Judgment: disapproval

The judgment dimension is observed in expressions of admiration or criticism, and approval or condemnation. For this dimension, we seek to identify evaluative resources, either positive or negative, that express approval or condemnation of advertising pieces for their suitability (or not) to social norms (ethics and morality). This dimension is subdivided into two types: social esteem and social sanction. Social esteem comprises normality, capacity and tenacity (how resolute people are). Social sanction comprises property (ethics) and veracity (honesty) (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005).

The participants expressed their disapproval with some commercials. Debora, for example, says that the commercials leave a subliminal message that can be seen when one reads "between the lines", which suggests a judgment of honesty.

> All of these commercials have a separatist vision regarding the battle of the sexes. You can see that in the car and beer commercials it is the man who is doing something and in the commercials of Ipê and BomBril it is the woman who is doing something. So even the advertisements, no matter

> how much everybody stays there without prejudice, raising the flag, bring this in their backgrounds. If you read between the lines, it was exactly that; the woman is still to be home taking care of the home, taking care of her husband, taking care of the children and still dresses sexy all the time, wearing lingerie up and down. This is not the case with the man. The man will drink and have a better car. He is the one who understands the car better, so I see this context between the lines as the battle of the sexes. […]. It is the same thing with racism and homophobia (Debora).

From the BomBril commercial "All Brazilians are divas", one can imply that cleaning the house is women's responsibility as men are not able to perform such household chores. Because men are slow, it is up to women to perform the housekeeping activities. This order functions as an "immense symbolic machine that tends to ratify the male domination upon which it is based". It seeks to divide work and assign activities to the sexes, opposing assemblies or markets which are reserved for men while the house is reserved for women; or rather the interior of the house along with the man, the salon, and the woman is with the stable, water, and vegetables (BOURDIEU, 2002). "By saying that women are much better at cleaning, the commercial takes men away from this task and reinforces the stereotype that women should be the only ones responsible for the care of their homes and their children" (FABRIS, 2017, p. 1).

Atália expresses her disapproval with the commercial "Tixan Ypê – the power of the multiplication woman" to perceive another perverse aspect from the point of view of veiled chauvinism: women, in addition to having to wear lingerie to reach their goals at home, have their bills paid by their husbands: "You see that in the beginning she is in clothes and she is not able to achieve anything. Then she goes and takes off her clothes and with the seductive power she gets what she wants". That is, they have not yet achieved financial independence.

Appreciation: Depreciation and devaluation

The appreciation dimension focuses on the object of the evaluation and not the subject that evaluates it. It can be positive or negative and direct or implicit. In this dimension, one can appreciate objects, performances, things, and materials that are not related to feelings, thus not referring to social behavior. It is the appreciation of the form, aesthetics, impact and presentation of the evaluated object. This dimension comprises three variables: reaction, composition and valuation (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005).

Regarding the assessment, the testimonies reveal that the object of evaluation, that is, the analyzed advertising pieces, is inconsistent and unreasonable since it distorts the attention of the product to the protagonist women. This is true for the beer commercials as well, which are known for their high doses of sexist and derogatory appeals in their portrayals of women. It is also true regarding ads for deodorants, automobiles, and so on, which follow the same logic of creating a stereotyped view of consumer genres. In some cases, as in Abigail's statement, the participant's assumption evidences a focus action on the actress's image and not on the importance of the product. "The woman drew more attention than the message itself" (Abigail).

Noemi considered the same for the campaign "Top Scenes – Arezzo Mania" in which the actress Debora Falabella was the "meaningless" protagonist.

> The one of Arezzo even loses the meaning sometimes due to so much movement. Those women that appear, sometimes get away from the objective which was bags or shoes. You miss the meaning and you see the image of the woman dancing all the time, sensual movements, and the goal itself of the product is lost (Naomi).

In 2011, Hope went through a similar situation with the commercial "Hope Teaches" starring model Gisele Bündchen. The evaluation of the participants regarding this ad is one of devaluation of the aesthetic resources used to promote the product. This is because they understand

that the commercial centralizes a situation where women, in order to reach their objectives with their spouses, must take advantage of physical and sensual attributes, especially when their credit card exceeds its limit. "And it kind of goes against the idea. If every woman is beautiful by nature then why do they need to be in panties and a bra? Why can it not be in clothes?!" (Mirian).

Instead of focusing on the attribute of the brand or even on the qualities of the items covered, the commercial abused the actress's exposure in sensual movements, diverting from the qualities of the product advertised.

Discussion and concluding remarks

In this study, we analyzed the expressions of participants from three focus groups on their evaluations of the representations of women in 17 advertising pieces that were denounced at CONAR. The evaluations of the participants regarding the affection dimension showed dissatisfaction with the offenses in the representations of women, a chauvinist and stereotyped view. As for the judgment dimension, the participants expressed disapproval of the commercials, mainly considering that the pieces violated moral and ethical precepts. When considering the type of attitude classified as appreciation, we observed that the participants pointed to the depreciation or devaluation of the pieces because they focused more on women-related aspects than the importance of the products themselves.

The participants´ evaluations point to the myopia of the advertising universe, or even to an advertising strategy of ignoring women as potential consumers. However, denunciations converted into processes can undermine this type of strategy, something that is increasing (DIP, 2017; BEZERRA, 2017). One of the factors to be analyzed on this subject is the findings of Ivy and Vagnoni, 1997 on the massive presence of men in the area of the creation of advertising agencies, which can contribute to the maintenance of sexist and chauvinist advertisements that collaborate on advertising problems (GLICK; FISKE, 1996).

When analyzing the expressions of the participants on advertising pieces targeted by denunciations, this study found that the representations of women refer to a traditional role (being at home, being dependent on men's protection, and being a sexual object) and without identity, corroborating Zotos and Tsichla (2014). At the same time, such representations show them as subservient, according to Glick and Fiske (1996). These representations, in turn, were evaluated by the participants in a negative way, with no dimension of the "attitude" receiving positive attributes.

In this evaluation, it is understood that the "frame" differs from the so-called "mirror" strategy, which reflects the context of material and symbolic culture (HOLBROOK; BATRA, 1987; POLLAY, 1987). Rather than being informative, advertising pieces are a meaningful practice (MCCRACKEN, 1986). The results indicate a strong presence of disrespect, irony, offenses, insults and constraints in the advertising pieces analyzed. In this way, agencies create helpless women, weakening their self-esteem, which can have implications such as boycotts of products and brands.

It is also noticeable that there is a long way to go in adjusting and balancing 'freedom of expression' and 'political correctness'. There are examples of this discourse in recent publications that reflect the advertisers and journalists' points of view, such as the collection 'Pensadores da Liberdade' – Freedom Thinkers in our translation (BUENO, 2015).

When considering the entire context, it is necessary to question the reason that leads announcers and advertisers to use discursive resources like cynicism, sarcasm and offenses which are usually associated with humor. Humor and offenses are able to increase attention and preference for advertising (WEINBERGER; GULAS, 1992), and create a more positive and emotional bond with the brand itself (BATRA; RAY, 1986), especially with low involvement products such as commodities (CHUNG; ZHAO, 2003). However, it is understood that there are limits to these practices and the results presented here suggest that they can be

harmful not only to viewers and spectators, but also to advertisers and their products and brands since advertisements can generate negative reactions from both male and female consumers.

Unlike other studies (CANDIDO, LOURENÇO, SAKODA, 2021), our research focused on women's interpretations of advertisements denounced for reproducing stereotypes, not focusing on the changes that have occurred, although we recognize that feminist claims and their supporters have the capacity to bring about effective changes over time.

This study contributes to the reflections on advertising practices. We believe there is significant progress in identifying specific traits of offenses and disrespect in advertising. They are subtle practices such as hostility, superiority, malice aggression, scorn or depreciation of social content (SHABBIR; THWAITES, 2007) and offensive humor (BEARD, 2008). When using the evaluation system, we point to a very appropriate analysis technique in the marketing area. Thus, we suggest future research use this tool to analyze marketing strategies, advertising speeches and organizational communication strategies.

The time frame of the research may be a limitation, since from 2017 onwards, there were occasional changes in advertising in relation to the representation of women. This field of studies can benefit from the results of research focusing on these advances. Such research could focus on effective changes in advertising, for example, to investigate whether femvertising is effectively capable of deconstructing the aesthetic standards related to the representation of women in advertising for companies in the alcoholic beverage industry.

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