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ARTIGO

Educomunicación en la era de la hiperconectividad: Educación libertadora para fomentar la ciudadanía crítica

Educommunication in the era of hyperconnectivity: Liberating education to promote critical citizenship

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Resumen: *Vivimos en una sociedad hipermediatizada e hiperconectada, en la que sufrimos una infoxicación tecnológica que demanda la formación en competencias mediáticas para promover una ciudadanía crítica. La educomunicación supone una herramienta idónea para abordar el uso de las TIC dentro de las aulas, fomentando el pensamiento crítico. Se realiza un recorrido por las definiciones asociadas a la alfabetización y educación mediáticas, buscando contribuir a la construcción de significados en una era marcada por constantes cambios tecnológicos. Además, se traslada la praxis freiriana a la realidad contemporánea, colocando el diálogo y reflexión crítica como mediadores en las relaciones con los medios de comunicación en el entorno educativo. La metodología se basa en una revisión bibliográfica sistemática realizada a partir de las bases de datos Scopus, Dialnet y Web of Science.*

Palabras clave: *Educomunicación; alfabetización mediática; educación mediática; diálogo; pensamiento crítico.*

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Abstract: *We live in a hyper-mediatized and hyper-connected society, in which we are impacted by a technological infoxication that demands developing media skills for promoting a critical citizenship. Educommunication is presented as an ideal tool to address the use of ICT in education, developing critical thinking. This article walks through the definitions of media literacy and media education, in order to contribute to building meanings in an era marked by constant technological changes. Besides, Freire's praxis is transferred to contemporary reality, placing dialogue and critical reflection as mediators in relationships with the media in the educational environment. The methodology is based on a systematic bibliographic review carried out from Scopus, Dialnet and Web of Science databases.*

Keywords: *Educommunication; media literacy; media education; dialogue; critical thinking.*

Introducción

Vivimos en la era de la hiperconectividad (REIG; VILCHEZ, 2013), en una sociedad hipermediatizada (ÁLVAREZ GANDOLFI, 2021) en la que recibimos estímulos en todo momento. Nuestras actividades diarias se fundamentan en una conexión constante, ininterrumpida (MARFIL-CARMONA, 2014) y los estímulos que nos atraviesan dan forma a las relaciones que establecemos en sociedad (MATEUS, 2021).

Con la aparición de Internet, los medios online se han convertido en una fuente universal de información y, en consecuencia, de la formación de opinión (ROBERTSON *et al.*, 2022). En esta época de sobreabundancia informativa, la infoxicación que sufrimos, que la Organización Mundial de la Salud ha llegado a calificar como una infodemia (WHO, 2020), acaba siendo mucho más tecnológica que reflexiva (MARFIL-CARMONA, 2014), pues la velocidad a la que recibimos las diferentes informaciones deja poco espacio para establecer un diálogo sobre las mismas.

El uso generalizado de las tecnologías digitales es cada vez más común y su omnipresencia en nuestra vida diaria es incuestionable (GUTIÉRREZ-MARTÍN; TYNER, 2012), pero por sí mismas no contribuyen a formar sociedades más justas e igualitarias (MESQUITA *et al.*, 2022). A pesar de la abundancia de dispositivos e información que permean nuestra vida pública y privada, queda poco espacio para la mediación dialógica de los contenidos que nos alcanzan. En este sentido, los/as jóvenes representan el público más entusiasta, pero también el más vulnerable frente a los medios de comunicación (DE LEYN *et al.*, 2021).

Nos encontramos en un contexto hiperconectado, pero no necesariamente empoderado (AGUADED *et al.*, 2020, p. 13) que demanda la formación en competencias mediáticas para promover una ciudadanía crítica, una formación integral que pase por el "acceso, selección, producción y consumo de información, mensajes y contenido" (ÁVILA-MELÉNDEZ, 2020, p. 271). En las últimas décadas, la alfabetización mediática ha pasado a ocupar un lugar central en la agenda pública (CORSER *et al*., 2021) y se han debatido conceptos y propuestas directamente asociados a ella como la educación mediática, la educomunicación y, en general, las nuevas dimensiones de la alfabetización (GUTIÉRREZ-MARTÍN; TYNER, 2012).

Este artículo aborda el concepto de la educomunicación, asociándolo a la pedagogía freiriana y la educación libertadora como promotoras de la ciudadanía crítica, y presentándola como una rama del conocimiento que propone usar el contenido mediático y el diálogo dentro de las aulas con fines educativos, así como hacer de los medios de comunicación un espacio pedagógico.

Por tanto, el objetivo general de este trabajo es elaborar una revisión bibliográfica sobre el concepto de la educomunicación y su relación con la alfabetización y educación mediáticas, destacando los aportes teóricos existentes sobre la lectura crítica de la comunicación, predominante en América Latina y haciendo énfasis en las contribuciones de Paulo Freire y su pedagogía libertadora al ecosistema educomunicativo.

Para la elaboración del artículo se ha realizado una revisión bibliográfica sistemática, escogida por su capacidad de asegurar la validez y la fiabilidad de los trabajos científicos (CODINA, 2020). El contenido analizado se ha extraído a partir de las bases de datos Scopus, Dialnet y Web of Science, con la intención de priorizar las publicaciones recogidas en índices de alto impacto y asociadas al enfoque de la lectura crítica de la comunicación.

Las palabras clave más efectivas para las búsquedas fueron educomunicación, alfabetización mediática, educación mediática, diálogo, Paulo Feire y educación popular. Estas se combinaron de diversas formas para alcanzar los resultados esperados. Las búsquedas se realizaron en español, portugués e inglés. Además, a la hora de seleccionar las publicaciones que sirven como fuente bibliográfica, se han priorizado los trabajos más relevantes de los últimos 15 años.

Educomunicación, alfabetización y educación mediática: hacia una conceptualización

La comunicación y la educación han dialogado a lo largo de los siglos de forma puntual, a pesar de su proximidad natural. La educomunicación nace en los movimientos populares de América Latina, a partir de la experiencia práctica de educadores-comunicadores populares como Freire, Kaplún, Martín-Barbero y Prieto Castillo, quienes entienden que en la relación entre comunicación y educación surge un campo de actuación crítica y transformadora (TOTH *et al.*, 2012).

En la década de los 80 comienza a tomar forma este término, acuñado por el argentino Mario Kaplún en su libro A *la educación por la comunicación* (2001), quien basándose en la pedagogía freiriana quiso hacer referencia a un nuevo campo de intervención social.

Inicialmente, la preocupación de Kaplún (2001) estaba centrada en los contenidos de los medios de comunicación y el modo en el que podían contribuir a la formación crítica de las clases populares. Así, inició grupos de comunicación donde existiese la oportunidad de reflexionar y discutir/debatir sobre el contenido de los medios y sus mensajes, y donde el público pudiese articular sus propias palabras y, a través de ellas, sus ideas, creciendo como emisores de mensajes (KAPLÚN, 1985).

Por su parte, algunos años antes, el pedagogo brasileño Paulo Freire trabajaba también la educomunicación sin hacer referencia al término de forma explícita. Desde 1946, Freire (1965) trabajó con grupos populares, alfabetizando a decenas de millares de trabajadores en pocos meses, a través de los círculos de cultura, en los que la palabra y el diálogo guiaban la alfabetización y el aprendizaje del grupo.

Según Freire, las palabras y el diálogo que emergen a partir de la realidad vivida de los alfabetizandos construyen el conocimiento sobre la misma. Considera que el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje es indisociable y que solo a través de la comunicación y el diálogo se puede hacer consciente a la población (FREIRE, 2011). Para él, no existe educación sin comunicación, ya que el diálogo es intrínseco a todo ser humano y este es un ser relacional por su propia naturaleza.

Ante la emergencia y constante renovación de la era tecnológica, se hace necesario adquirir competencias cada vez más específicas, que han sido definidas con términos como "educación para los medios, alfabetización audiovisual, digital, multimodal, alfabetización mediática, informacional, competencia digital, etc." (GUITÉRREZ-MARTÍN; TYNER, 2012, p. 32). Y esta misma necesidad de dar nombre a las competencias necesarias para vivir en la sociedad actual dio origen a la educomunicación.

La educomunicación atiende a un detalle importante pero olvidado con frecuencia: "la comunicación posee una intención educativa" (GUÉ-MARTINI, 2020, p. 680), supone la búsqueda del diálogo entre la comunicación y la educación (SOARES, 2011) y continúa siendo un área en constante reformulación. Diversos autores en todo el mundo han investigado directa o indirectamente sobre este concepto y, según Aparici, es en Latinoamérica donde encontramos más aportes en relación a esta visión, que abarca "la formación del sentido crítico, inteligente, frente a los procesos comunicativos y sus mensajes para descubrir los valores culturales propios y la verdad" (APARICI, 2010, p. 9).

La educomunicación trata dos cuestiones fundamentales. Primero, aproxima los medios a los espacios educativos, haciendo que los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje los consideren, transformando la escuela un espacio dialogal y abierto a los intercambios a través de los medios (ALVARENGA *et al.*, 2014). Por otro lado, la educomunicación trata de garantizar que la comunicación mediática, prácticamente omnipresente, sea también educativa, promoviendo que los mensajes e información que consumimos puedan contribuir a la formación crítica del individuo. Así, la educomunicación tiene el potencial de generar espacios para el diálogo educativo y constructivo sobre las diversas formas de comprender la realidad (CARIAS-PÉREZ *et al.*, 2021) y, hoy en día, tiene la responsabilidad de atender a cuestiones cruciales, promoviendo la "conciencia crítica ante los nuevos escenarios que crean los medios" (MESQUITA-ROMERO *et al.*, 2022, p. 48).

Se distinguen dos ramas principales en el ámbito de la educomunicación. Por un lado, el campo anglosajón, conocido como *media literacy* (LIVINGSTONE, 2004) o *media education*, basado principalmente en el uso de los dispositivos y soportes de comunicación en el entorno educativo (RODRÍGUEZ GARCÍA, 2017). Este sería el campo más cercano a la *educación en medios* o *educación con los medios* (MATEUS, 2019) que prevalece en Europa (CARIAS-PÉREZ *et al.*, 2021) y que pretende acercar la comunicación a las aulas en su faceta más técnica y tecnológica. A finales de los 90, la definición más habitual para definir la educación en medios se centraba en los medios de comunicación masivos y la pedagogía. En las últimas décadas, se ha insistido en la importancia de reconocer la cultura participativa (JENKINS, 2009) y el empoderamiento de los usuarios como prosumidores (MATEUS, 2021).

Por otro lado, encontramos el campo latinoamericano, cuya protagonista es la lectura crítica de la comunicación, un término usado desde la década de los 70 y 80 (CARIAS-PÉREZ *et al.*, 2021). Sería esta la *educación sobre los medios*, que los aborda desde dimensiones políticas, históricas, sociales, comunicativas y culturales (MATEUS, 2019). Es la rama de la educomunicación que coloca el diálogo y la reflexión crítica sobre la comunicación como núcleo de las investigaciones. Este campo también es conocido como educación en materia de comunicación, didáctica de los medios, comunicación educativa, alfabetización mediática o pedagogía de la comunicación (RODRÍGUEZ GARCÍA, 2017).

A pesar de las diferencias entre ambas vertientes, las principales corrientes actuales, alejadas hace años de una visión meramente instrumentalista y tecnológica, conciben la educomunicación como una actividad dialógica, participativa y crítica (BERMEJO-BERROS, 2021, p. 112).

Gutiérrez-Martín y Tyner (2012) exponen las dicotomías que han surgido a lo largo del tiempo en relación a los términos usados para designar estos campos. Detallan la prevalencia de "educar <<con>>

medios” sobre “educar <<sobre>> medios” de forma generalizada y destacan la importancia de distinguir los matices entre la alfabetización mediática (*media literacy*) y la educación en medios (*media education*).

Tal y como señala Buckingham (2013), la educación mediática es el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje sobre los medios, mientras que la alfabetización mediática es su resultado: el conocimiento y las destrezas que el estudiantado adquiere.

El Centro para la Alfabetización Mediática (*Center for Media Literacy*) (2018) la define como “la capacidad de acceder, analizar, evaluar y crear mensajes mediáticos en diversas formas”. Por su parte, el Grupo IC MEDIA, que forma parte del Grupo de Expertos en Alfabetización Mediática de la UE (*Media Literacy Expert Group*) hace referencia a “todas las capacidades técnicas, cognitivas, sociales, cívicas y creativas que permiten a un ciudadano acceder a los medios, tener un entendimiento crítico de los mismos e interactuar con ellos”.

Por tanto, se considera que la alfabetización mediática aumenta el conocimiento sobre los medios y los efectos de los mismos, así como capacita a la ciudadanía para que distinga el realismo de la representación mediática de la realidad en sí misma (JONES-JANG *et al.*, 2021).

Es cierto que en una sociedad profundamente marcada por los constantes cambios en el surgimiento, uso y consumo de las tecnologías, las posibilidades para referirse a este campo se presentan casi como infinitas. Los términos alfabetización mediática, alfabetización informacional, alfabetización informativa y alfabetización digital han recibido una mayor atención en los últimos años (JONES-JANG *et al.*, 2021).

De Abreu *et al.*, (2017) defienden una transición de la alfabetización en sí misma a las multialfabetizaciones, mientras que Gutiérrez-Martín y Tyner (2012) hacen hincapié en la importancia de que, en lugar de hablar de nuevas alfabetizaciones, hagamos referencia a nuevas dimensiones, siendo la alfabetización del siglo XXI necesariamente mediática, digital, multimodal, crítica y funcional.

En América Latina también puede apreciarse escasa precisión a la hora de denominar la educación mediática, pues "se traslapan conceptos como el de pedagogía de los medios, alfabetización visual, mediática, informacional o digital, o más recientemente competencias para el nuevo milenio o transmediales" (MATEUS *et al*. 2020, p. 447).

Es fundamental abandonar cualquier enfoque puramente tecnicista para elaborar sentidos sobre los procesos mediáticos (MARQUETTO, 2021) y, a partir del diálogo y la pedagogía crítica, educar para una ciudadanía mediática como "un modo de empoderar a la ciudadanía en sociedades plurales y democráticas hipercomunicadas" (GOZÁLVEZ; CONTRERAS-PULIDO, 2014).

Además, la educación mediática debe ser un ejercicio basado en la libertad y en la responsabilidad desde el punto de vista político (MATEUS *et al.*, 2020). El análisis crítico de los medios debe introducirse en los contextos culturales, sociales y políticos (KELLNER, 2020), dirigiendo el proceso educativo hacia la transformación social y hacia la sensibilización sobre la existencia de una sociedad basada en desigualdades de género, raza y clase y discriminación (KELLNER; SHARE, 2007).

A pesar de que los medios pueden representar, desde una postura conservadora, una amenaza para la sociedad y en especial para aquellos/as jóvenes que no sepan hacer un uso adecuado de los mismos, también pueden suponer una herramienta para su empoderamiento cuando son usados de manera creativa y proactiva (DE LEYN *et al.*, 2021). Así, la educomunicación que nace de la "alfabetización crítica, dignificante y liberadora" (GUTIÉRREZ-MARTÍN; TYNER, 2012, p. 32), se opone a una simple formación del estudiantado como usuarios de dispositivos tecnológicos.

Pedagogía de la comunicación en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje: el legado de Paulo Freire

La educomunicación, entendida desde la perspectiva de la lectura crítica de la comunicación, propone salir de una pedagogía basada meramente en la transmisión de contenidos, de forma vertical y jerárquica y tomando como detentor y dueño del conocimiento a la figura representante del profesorado, y partir hacia una visión interdisciplinar de la enseñanza (SOARES, 2011). Esta última se refiere a un tipo de mediación dialógica de los procesos educativos que propone salir del libro -sin abandonarlo- y utilizar otras herramientas comunicativas y la tecnología para que los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje sucedan; es decir, una pedagogía necesariamente orientada al proceso, más que al contenido (KENDALL; MCDOUGALL, 2012).

La enseñanza dialógica se presenta como un método para "enseñar y aprender con, a través de y para el diálogo" (MIN-YOUNG; WILKINSON, 2019, p. 70). Consolidando la reflexión crítica y el diálogo como prácticas pedagógicas, una de las grandes potencialidades de las estrategias educomunicativas es la formación crítica de la ciudadanía a partir de la observación y análisis de la realidad mediática. Entramos en el campo de la educación libertadora, también conocida como educación popular, que busca que los sujetos se asuman como actores políticos (MENDES, 2022).

Mesquita-Romero *et al.* (2022) defienden que el mero uso extensivo de los medios no garantiza las competencias digitales y mediáticas que la ciudadanía del siglo XXI necesita, por lo que deben desarrollarse competencias para crear formas beneficiosas de relacionarse con los medios de comunicación (ARENAS-FERNÁNDEZ *et al.*, 2022).

A nivel educativo y social, formar para el futuro se suele asociar al uso y manejo de las tecnologías. Pero no podemos olvidar que, detrás de cualquier dispositivo y medio, existen seres humanos con intenciones, ideas y valores, que son a su vez productores, consumidores o simples observadores de aquello que circula en forma de mensajes en todo tipo de soportes. Los medios "proporcionan versiones selectivas del mundo, en lugar de un acceso directo a él" (OSUNA-ACEDO *et al.* 2018, p. 33). Por ello, se hace indispensable formar a la ciudadanía, a través de la educomunicación, sobre la conciencia de que los medios y sus contenidos en ningún caso son neutros, sino que más bien "están al servicio de alguien y con algún propósito" (FREIRE *et al.*, 2013, p. 48).

Paulo Freire contribuyó de forma fundamental a pensar en una educación basada en la reflexión crítica y mediada y lideró una gran transformación a nivel educativo y social en Brasil, un país que hoy es referencia en materia de educación popular y educomunicación gracias a su legado.

Freire defendía que la educación y comunicación van de la mano, y que, al ponerlas en práctica, no solo se obtendría como resultado un aprendizaje o la alfabetización en sí misma, sino que se estaría formando a sujetos críticos y conscientes. Planteó el diálogo como el "eje estructural de la educación para la práctica de la libertad" (JACKIW *et al.*, 2021, p. 13).

Uno de los conceptos clave que acuñó este autor es el de la superación de la educación bancaria (FREIRE, 2011). Esta se caracteriza por ser unidireccional, vertical y jerárquica, y en ella el educador, en lugar de comunicarse, transmite comunicados (FREIRE, 2012) que serán replicados por el estudiantado.

Freire (2012) defiende que la formación del individuo, así como del grupo, deben pasar necesariamente por la curiosidad, la reflexión crítica y el diálogo. Propone cultivar una educación problematizadora en la que la curiosidad epistemológica (que trasciende la curiosidad ingenua) conduzca a la búsqueda del aprendizaje. A través de la curiosidad epistemológica nace la voluntad de conocer y se abre espacio para reflexionar de forma crítica sobre la realidad (FREIRE, 1965). De esta forma se supera el carácter forzado, obligatorio e incluso opresor que pueden llegar a promover los modelos de enseñanza tradicionales.

Ubicando el diálogo como mediador, las/os participantes de los círculos de cultura serán conducidas/os por la construcción del conocimiento crítico, reflexivo y con conciencia de clase (FREIRE, 1965). Se ha demostrado que la adopción de una actitud dialógica por parte del/a educador/a contribuye a que el estudiantado desarrolle sus propios procesos de creación de significado (RAPANTA *et al.*, 2021). Así, este será un proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje sostenido en el compartir los saberes que van emergiendo del grupo; y los aprendizajes obtenidos deberán aplicarse a la realidad, generando transformaciones sobre las condiciones de opresión e injusticia (PERUZZO, 2020).

Aydemir y Demirkan (2021) defienden la necesidad de ir más allá de simplemente reconocer y analizar el contenido mediático problemático y orientar al estudiantado para convertirse en productores de medios responsables y efectivos, capaces de contribuir a la transformación social. Para ello, es necesario que los/as educomunicadores de hoy rescaten la figura del educador popular, que solía estar bastante alejado de la academia y actuaba en medios comunitarios, movimientos sociales o políticos (KAPLÚN, 2019) y la lleven a la educación formal, transformando la pedagogía desde la educación popular.

Las relaciones que Freire propone se centran en la educación problematizadora que promueve la igualdad, la horizontalidad y la construcción de una realidad compartida, a partir del diálogo (FREIRE, 2011). Esto se asocia directamente a la educomunicación que, más allá del análisis crítico de la comunicación, propone generar verdaderas transformaciones a la hora de pensar, consumir y construir los medios.

Si trasladamos la praxis freiriana al escenario actual, donde las tecnologías son prácticamente omnipresentes, debemos considerar que el simple hecho de usarlas no garantizará que el aprendizaje suceda a través de ellas. Pues utilizando las tecnologías sin una mirada crítica y sin diálogo corremos el riesgo de replicar el modelo educativo bancario (CROVI DRUETTA, 2018), esta vez mediado por dispositivos.

Las/os educadoras/es pueden escoger usar o no las tecnologías para fomentar el diálogo y la reflexión crítica en sus aulas, pero no podrán desarrollar ciertas competencias fundamentales simplemente a través de la tecnología: se hace necesario el factor dialógico, comunicativo y humano. En ningún caso se trata de rechazar la introducción de las tecnologías en el sistema educativo, sino de usarlas conservando una postura curiosa, crítica y dialógica frente a ellas (FREIRE *et al.*, 2013).

Trabajar con recursos que están más allá de los muros de la escuela contribuye a la inserción del estudiantado "en el mundo y su medio de forma crítica, activa y proactiva" (INOCÊNCIO; FERREIRA, 2021, p. 287), mientras que usar la tecnología con una intención dialógica permite que educadores/as y educandos/as compartan, interpreten, argumenten, critiquen y reformulen ideas públicamente, utilizando el lenguaje y otras representaciones simbólicas (MERCER *et al.*, 2019).

Según Kendall y McDougall, el trabajo docente en la alfabetización mediática crítica es el de "facilitar y estructurar la narración auto-etnográfica de los estudiantes y aceptar y abrazar los más inexplorados espacios de aprendizaje que emergen" (2012, p. 7). Encontramos casos como el Currículum Alfamed de formación de profesores en educación mediática (PÉREZ-RODRÍGUEZ *et al.*, 2021) que plantea de forma específica las competencias transversales que cualquier educador/a debe tener para hacer frente a la sociedad digitalizada.

Así, y en busca de construir autonomía (en relación a las tecnologías, pero también en relación al aprendizaje en sí mismo), Freire propone algunos puntos sobre los que los/as educadores/as deben apoyarse para construir y ofrecer procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje basados en el diálogo y la reflexión crítica. El autor fundamenta su trabajo en aquello que considera que la enseñanza exige: rigurosidad metódica, investigación, respeto a los saberes de los educandos, criticidad, estética y ética, la corporificación de las palabras a través del ejemplo, riesgo, aceptación de lo nuevo y rechazo a cualquier forma de discriminación, reflexión crítica sobre la práctica y el reconocimiento y la asunción de la identidad cultural (FREIRE, 2012).

Conclusiones y discusión

Los medios de comunicación juegan un papel fundamental en la creación y transmisión de conceptos e imágenes al público receptor (GÓMEZ-QUINTERO *et al.* 2021). Atribuyen significados a los sucesos con el objetivo de establecer formas socialmente aceptadas de entender el mundo y actuar sobre él (SCHANDER *et al.*, 2019, p. 162). Por ello, "la interacción con las tecnologías y los contenidos digitales requiere una actitud reflexiva y crítica, aunque curiosa, abierta y avanzada respecto a su evolución" (CONSEJO DE LA UNIÓN EUROPEA, 2018, p. 9).

La educación en medios debe superar el paradigma tecnológico y asumir e integrar su importancia e impacto en la cultura (MATEUS, 2021). Esto es, el uso de los medios de comunicación dentro de las aulas no se debe limitar a los beneficios como herramientas para innovar en las propuestas educativas, sino también debe servir para mejorar las relaciones entre educadores/as y estudiantado y sus relaciones con el mundo a través de la mediación dialógica y no solo tecnológica. El acceso a las tecnologías no alcanzará su potencial transformador si no se realiza desde un nuevo paradigma que atañe a la educación (MATEUS, 2021).

Revisar y analizar el concepto de la educomunicación ayuda a entender las posibilidades de integrar el diálogo y las Tecnologías de Información y Comunicación (TIC) dentro de las aulas, en busca de la formación del pensamiento crítico.

Asimismo, es fundamental definir, delimitar y diferenciar los conceptos de alfabetización mediática y educación mediática para entender la importancia de abordar tanto los procesos (educativos) como los resultados esperados (alfabetización), en relación al consumo e interacción con los medios desde el entorno educativo. En este sentido, la educación basada en el diálogo y la pedagogía crítica se presentan como esenciales para la formación del pensamiento crítico.

Es necesario otorgar a la alfabetización del siglo XXI nuevas dimensiones, pues cualquier alfabetización a nivel social, cultural, educativo y político debe buscar integrar el diálogo, las tecnologías y las herramientas para el uso y consumo de los medios de forma funcional para los individuos y la sociedad. El diálogo debe ser el principal mediador de todas las relaciones -entre los individuos, individuo-instituciones e individuo-TIC- de forma que los medios de comunicación sean vistos no como simples herramientas externas para la ciudadanía (MATEUS, 2021), sino como una herramienta para provocar potenciales transformaciones desde el entorno educativo.

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ARTIGO

La organización de eventos responsables en España como técnica de relaciones públicas

The organization of responsible events in Spain as a public relations technique

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Resumen: *Este trabajo se centra en averiguar si una selección de organizaciones privadas españolas, tienen en cuenta criterios de sostenibilidad a la hora de organizar sus eventos. Para esta investigación se ha utilizado una metodología cuantitativa, en la que, a través del análisis de contenido, se verifica si los eventos que realizan estas organizaciones siguen criterios de sostenibilidad. El análisis se centra específicamente en los informes no financieros o memorias de sostenibilidad, que estas empresas elaboran y difunden de manera pública.*

Palabras clave: *Eventos responsables; informes no financieros; organizaciones españolas.*

Abstract: *This work aims to find out if a selection of spanish private organisations, consider sustainability criteria when organising their events. We used a quantitative methodology, in which, through content analysis, it is verified if the events carried out by this organizations, follow sustainability criteria. The analysis is specifically focused on the non-financial reports or sustainability reports, which are drawn up to be prepared and disseminated by large companies.*

Keywords: *Responsible events; non-financial reports; spanish organizations.*

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Introducción

Corporate social responsibility (hereinafter CSR) is a form of management that has been incorporated into organisations on a voluntary basis as an instrument at the service of transparency and the promotion of the corporate image. In the middle of the 20th century, Bowen (1953) laid the foundations for the current RSC. The author indicated that organisations not only have economic responsibilities, but also labour, environmental and social ones.

This voluntary management scheme has become, in some respects, mandatory for certain organisations. In Spain, there is a regulation on the application of CSR when it comes to the management of organisations. On the one hand, the Transparency Law 19/2013, which aims to regulate and guarantee access to information on public activity. On the other hand, a Royal Decree, law 18/2017, which obliges organisations that meet a series of requirements to disclose their non-financial (economic, social and environmental) and diversity information.

Public Relations, which is a part of the activity of organisations, have also been incorporating CSR into their actions, as is the case with events. The organisation of events is an extremely valuable Public Relations technique. It allows the positive promotion of the organisation's image to its stakeholders and has also incorporated standards and criteria on CSR and sustainability.

In general, an event could be described as sustainable according to the United Nations Environment Programme - UNEP- as one "designed, organised and developed in such a way as to minimize potential negative environmental impacts, and leave a beneficial legacy for the host community and all those involved" (SUSTAINABLE EVENTS, 2022). On the other hand, a standard for the organisation of sustainable events also exists, ISO 20121. Said standard establishes certain characteristics for an event to be considered sustainable such as inclusivity, integrity, responsibility, and transparency (ISO 20121, 2013). That is why this work aims to check whether organisations use criteria of responsibility and sustainability when organising their events.

Theoretical framework

Definition of Events

In its third meaning, the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy defines an Event as an "important and scheduled occurrence, of a social, academic, artistic or sporting nature" (DRAE, 2021). If we turn to specialised authors in this field, we find more detailed definitions. Rosario (2014) links it to the concept of happenings. According to this author, events are organised happenings that bring together several people to share common activities with similar purposes.

Along these lines, Otero (2011) states that the term event belongs to the field of happenings, understood as a form of communication in which it is necessary to take into account the types of media to be used, the type of audience to be addressed as well as determining the variables to be applied in each case, depending on the circumstances and the organisation that promotes said event.

Fuente (2004), in addition to defining the term, explains the basic parts that compose it, equating the concepts of events and activities. For this author both consist of the development of a function aimed at fulfilling objectives. They are divided into four parts: a start or welcome, the development of the main objective, a meeting of a social nature and a farewell.

When talking about the event as a happening, Xifra (2003) also insists on the need to have an extremely well-defined theme around which the organisation will revolve, this author believes that this is the first requirement that must be fulfilled. Furthermore, a specific theme must be created and the space to be occupied must be considered. The physical, professional, commercial, economic, or sociocultural level also needs to be considered.

Bassat (2008) goes even further by stating that an event can be the essence of a brand's communication, as the character of the brand is intrinsic to the character of the event.

Other authors stress the rapid evolution that events are undergoing in recent years. Gandiaga (2017) indicates that companies and brands are looking for audiences that are more emotionally involved. For this reason, a 360-degree organisation, which allows them to connect more directly and authentically, is needed. This evolution makes it possible for new technologies, lighting, image design, programmes, augmented reality, and other factors that enhance its appeal and communicative capacity to gain importance.

The value of organizing events to improve the communication of an organisation with its audiences is clear, but to what field of communication does the organisation belong? Clearly to Public Relations. Sánchez-González (2016), relates the organisation of events as a communicative strategy that enables the purpose of Public Relations to be fulfilled. This is achieved by selecting the public and organising and distributing all the elements of that event, which allows to direct a certain message to specialised audiences: the stakeholders. Therefore, the current understanding of event organisation considers the staging of events to be an important Public Relations technique.

The organisation of events as a PR technique

Di Genova directly relates PR to events, defining them as “a strategic management system that allows events to be understood from the point of view of the multiple interactions that characterise them” (DI GENOVA, 2012, p.12). Moreover, he further insists on the value of events as a key element to establish the strategic planning of public relations that enables the effective access of the organisation to its audiences.

Additionally, Salla García and Ortega Soriano, describe the organisation of events as another activity of the public relations professional, who has the goal of “publicising the organisation in a calculated way, so that it becomes news and projects a positive image to the media as well as the public.” (SALLA; ORTEGA,2008, p. 169)

Di Génova also sees the organisation of events as a tactical management tool for Public Relations. Events have a double impact for organisations, as they make it possible to achieve benefits both for the pursuit of commercial or social objectives as well as for communicational and institutional ones. He also insists on the strategic value of events when stating that "due to the nature of the issues with which events deal –image, connection with the public, business, interpersonal relationships–, an event generates a series of actions that have an impact on organisational goals, short, medium and long term." (DI GENOVA, 2012, p. 203).

Xifra (2003), does not hesitate to define them as a PR technique, emphasising their value when it comes to drawing attention and making publicity with the aim of creating news. Pulido also affirms this categorically by referring to the organisation of events as one of the main and most effective public relations techniques that organisations of various kinds use to deliver messages to their audiences, " aimed at producing a favourable environment for the strategic development of their goals and objectives" (PULIDO, 2012, pp, 227-228).

Types of events

There are a wide range of bibliographical references that classify events in highly diverse way. According to Otero, when classifying them, we should consider that any type of event must provide the organising entity with credibility and trust and "provide it with a relational value that constitutes an organisation that is firmly established in the community" (OTERO, 2011, p.32).

Furthermore, Jiménez Morales and Alonso Panizo (2017) categorise events according to their dimension, their content, and the target audience, differentiating between the types reflected in the following graph.

Figure 1: Types of Events.

Source: Jiménez-Morales, 2017, p. 33

The President of the MICE Forum, Luis Gandiaga (2017), also adds that depending on the type of event, its format will be different, distinguishing between a press conference, an open day, and a convention. According to him, what matters is to create a unique experience with an emotional effect that links the attendee to the organisation in order to ensure that the message effectively reaches the public.

After a detailed analysis of the main authors, Campos and Fuente (2013) provide an extremely precise classification of corporate events, which we found to be ideal for the analysis of the events in this research. Specifically, and taking into account the objectives of the companies, they make the following distinctions:

1. Celebration events, such as an anniversary, commemoration, or party.
2. Training events, such as conferences, conventions, meetings, and congresses.
3. Motivational events, such as conventions and/or meetings, product presentations, etc.

4. Recognition events, such as awarding prize(s) and/or recognitions.
5. Institutional events, such as inaugurations, open days, visits to facilities.
6. Corporate events, such as a shareholders' meeting or meetings of the board of directors.
7. Commercial and product launch/presentation events. Fairs would also be included in this category.
8. Promotional events, such as brand positioning events; travelling, road shows, street-marketing, samplings.
9. Protocol events, attended by official authorities, both nationally and internationally.
10. Incentive events, such as incentive trips or other types of events that incentivise participants.
11. Responsible/solidarity events which, according to the authors, must take the corporate responsibility policy into account when they are designed and seek to transfer the company's commitment to society.
12. Sustainable Events/Green Events. Events which pursue the objective of respecting and caring for the environment.
13. Cultural events. Those that belong to the leisure and culture industry, which can be distinguished as cultural versus musical events.
14. Sporting events, related to sporting activity or competition.
15. Sponsorship Events. Events financed in part or in full by a company.
16. Other events and formats. Those that are not included in the previous categories.

For this research, we believe it is necessary to place special emphasis on the category of sustainable events, which we will focus on. In this sense, this type of event will be defined in more detail, relating it to the ISO 20121 standard, which establishes the criteria that events must meet to be considered sustainable.

The ISO 20121 standard for the organisation of sustainable events

Strictly speaking, the most accurate way to define a sustainable event is to relate it to the norm that regulates said event and which establishes the standards for its organisation. In this way, a sustainable event could be defined as one that incorporates principles of or for sustainable development in all its management phases and activities. Therefore, a sustainable event is one that is conceived, designed, planned, executed, and reviewed under the scope of an ISO 20121 Event Sustainability Management System. (CAVALA, 2021).

Origin of the ISO 20121 standard

As Bakos (2019) details in his doctoral thesis, the interest in creating ISO 20121 dates back to 2004 and London's bid for the 2012 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. At a promotional event for this venue, in July 2005, David Stubbs, the London Organizing Committee (LOCOG) Head of Sustainability, proposed innovative ways to offer a sustainable event. As Bakos points out, during this time the events industry in general was becoming increasingly aware of the need to integrate more sustainable practices when organising events. This growing need, coupled with London's bid for the 2012 games as a catalyst, led to the creation of the British National Standard BS8901 in 2007. This standard specified the requirements for a sustainability management system that could be adopted by any event management company.

In order to facilitate the management criteria for users, a second version of BS8901 was published in 2009. This new version was well received internationally by organisers of high-profile events such as the UN Copenhagen Climate Conference. As Bakos (2019) details, in response to the momentum the standard was gaining, in 2008 a joint proposal from the standard's originator group, BSI, was submitted to Brazil's national standards body (ABNT) to develop the national standard into an ISO standard. After much deliberation, the final vote on ISO 20121 took place on 30 May 2012. After receiving approval, ISO 20121 was officially launched in the summer of 2012 to coincide with the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Criteria covered by ISO 20121

ISO 20121 determines the requirements, with user recommendations, necessary to consider and include sustainability criteria in the management of any event throughout all stages of the process: design, organisation, planning, execution, development, review, and post-event activities (ISO 20121, 2013)

On the other hand, this standard was highly necessary, given that events have a considerable environmental impact on the areas in which they take place, in addition to the economic and social impact that must be taken into account when organising them. This range of impacts occurs from the initial design of the event to the actions that take place after the event, so the inclusion of sustainability criteria throughout this process is essential (ISO 20121, 2013).

And what are the characteristics that a sustainable event must meet according to ISO 20121?

1. Inclusivity. Understood as the practice of fair treatment and meaningful participation of all stakeholders in the sustainable event. Inclusion refers to all stakeholders, regardless of race, age, gender, colour, religion, sexuality, orientation, culture, origin, income, disability (mental, intellectual, sensory, and physical), or any other form of discrimination.
2. Integrity. Adherence to the ethical principles of honesty, transparency, and adequate behaviour according to international standards of accepted behaviour.
3. Responsibility. Responsible commitment to sustainable development through the environmental, social, and economic footprint of a sustainable event. Also, the social progress and the value contribution

it provides to individuals, organisations, communities and competent authorities.

4. Transparency. Degree of openness of an organisation about the decisions and activities that affect society, the economy and the environment, and its willingness to communicate said decisions and activities in a clear, precise, timely, honest, and integral manner. Transparency also includes openness about the results of decisions and activities (CAVALA, 2022).

Therefore, a sustainable event in the strict sense of the word is one that meets these characteristics. The next question would be whether the companies that are considered more responsible in our country organise sustainable events. To determine if this is the case, this research will analyse whether the events organised by the companies rated as the most responsible in Spain according to the ranking of the corporate reputation business monitor MERCO meet the characteristics defined in ISO 20121.

Methodology

The main objective of this work is to verify if the most responsible organisations in Spain take into account criteria of social responsibility and sustainability when organising their events. To this end, the following specific objectives are established:

1. Accurately define the concept of a sustainable event.
2. Analyse the types of events carried out by the most responsible Spanish organisations through their non-financial information reports.
3. Determine, through this analysis, which organisations carry out sustainable events and check whether they have any specific certification.
4. Identify if the events analysed follow some of the criteria and characteristics of inclusivity, integrity, responsibility, and transparency that are contemplated in the ISO 20121 Standard on sustainable events.

To carry out the work, a quantitative methodology is used in which, through a pilot study, a content analysis is conducted to verify if the events carried out by the most responsible organisations follow sustainability criteria. Content analysis allows us to accurately measure the social reality (GARCIA; BERGANZA, 2005), and in this specific case, the reality of what is stated in the non-financial information reports (sustainability or social responsibility reports) of the most important responsible organisations in Spain.

The starting hypothesis is the following: the most responsible organisations in Spain are aware of the value of the adequate organisation of events for a suitable corporate image and, in this sense, they comply with the characteristics of inclusivity, integrity, responsibility, and transparency in the organisation of their activities, following the indications included in the ISO 20121 standard.

In order to verify this, the analysis focused on the most responsible private organisations. To make the selection, the latest ranking prepared by MERCO on companies with the best responsibility and corporate governance in Spain, that of 2020, was taken as a reference. MERCO was chosen since it is one of the rankings with the most complete methodology (CARRERAS et al., 2013). Specifically, it evaluates 40 variables on social responsibility in organisations based on more than 10,000 surveys of twelve interest groups. In addition, it was the first ranking in the world to have its processes audited by an external body, specifically by the consulting firm KPMG, and the first to meet the criteria of the ISAE 3000 standard, a standard to guarantee the non-financial information of organisations (MERCO, 2022).

As it was a pilot study, the first 41 organisations were selected for analysis, out of the 100 included in the ranking. The pilot study allows testing the reliability of the methodology for a future analysis on a larger scale (DÍAZ-MUÑOZ, 2020). Despite this, a selection of the representative sample was made, with a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of 10%.

Once the organisations had been selected, the content published in the non-financial information and diversity reports was analysed. This document was chosen as it is the one that contains all the information on sustainability that the organisations provide. Specifically, it compiles the following information:

- Environmental issues: This should include information on pollution, circular economy, waste management, sustainable use of resources, climate change and biodiversity protection, among others.
- Social and employee issues: This should include information on figures and measures taken in relation to employment, work organisation, health and safety at work, social relations, training, accessibility, and equality.
- Respect for Human Rights: This should include data on their application, as well as complaints about cases of violation and compliance with conventions, among others.
- ight against corruption and bribery: This should include information on the measures adopted.
- Society: This should include information on sustainable development, subcontracting and suppliers, consumer complaints and tax information, among others.

According to Law 11/2018, these reports must be drafted and published on the website of all organisations with more than 500 employees or that are of public interest, among other requirements (this is the social responsibility or sustainability report that some organisations voluntarily published before the law). These requirements are met by all the organisations included in the MERCO ranking (MERCO, 2022) on companies with the best corporate responsibility and governance in Spain in 2020. In addition, as indicated in the law, organisations are obliged to publish the reports on their websites, which facilitates and ensures access to information.

In the analysis, the latest reports published by the organisations were selected. As indicated above, these reports are mandatory for organisations that meet the requirements established in Law 11/2018. However, despite this, during the analysis it was detected that not all organisations had made said reports accessible. In those cases, the last published report was analysed.

In order to carry out the research, a coding protocol was created to specifically analyse the non-financial information reports. The following keywords were used to search the reports for all information related to the development of events:

- Event: The documents were searched for the word event, as well as for similar terms such as happening, forum, or activities.
- Certification: A search for this term was also carried out in order to detect whether any certification is applied for the organising of sustainable events. Therefore, the names of the most relevant certifications in the field of events such as ISO 20121, Eventsost certification and Biosphere certification were included in the keywords.

In total, 8 keywords were proposed to meet the objectives set. In addition, in order to collect the data, an analysis sheet was designed in which the following variables were included:

- Identification and location: in which the name of the organisation, its position in the MERCO ranking (MERCO, 2022), the sector of activity (information provided by the monitor itself) and the website of the non-financial information report analysed were indicated.
- Event type: The classification of events was based on the proposal by Campos and Fuente (2013), developed within the theoretical framework, which can be summarised as follows: celebratory, training, motivational, recognition, institutional, corporate, commercial and product launch/presentation, promotional, protocol, incentive, responsible or solidarity, sustainable or Green

Events, cultural, sporting, sponsorship and other events and formats that are not included in the categories above.

- Sustainable event: To determine whether it was a sustainable event, it had to meet at least one of the criteria included in the ISO 20121 Standard (ISO 20121, 2013) on inclusiveness, integrity, accountability, or transparency (developed in the theoretical framework). These criteria were not taken into account when they were only included in the theme of the event. Therefore, only events that took these criteria into account for their elaboration were considered as sustainable.
- Certifications: Finally, whether they held any event organisation certifications such as the ISO 20121 Standard, Biosphere and Eventsost certifications or other similar certifications was checked.

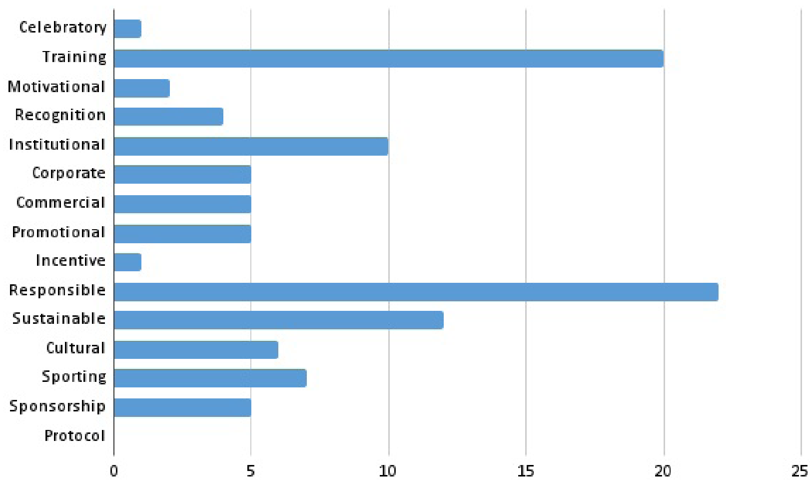
Once the data analysis sheet was completed, as recommended by Wimmer and Dominick (1996), a preparatory session was held to train the coders. In said session, after resolving possible discrepancies between the researchers, a guidance document was drawn up with the main guidelines for carrying out the analysis. This ensured that the coding protocol had a high degree of reliability.

Results

The main result of this research indicates that only 11% of the most responsible organisations in Spain carry out events with the sustainability criteria set out in the ISO 20121 Standard (ISO 20121, 2013). According to their type, the events that the companies analysed organise the most are those with a responsible or solidarity theme and training events, with 21% and 19% respectively. Institutional events also account for 11%, and in the 6% to 4% range we can find cultural, sporting, sponsorship, promotional, commercial, corporate and recognition events.

Events with a less significant percentage of organisation are motivational events, with 2%, and celebratory and incentive events, with 1% each. The only type of event that is not reflected are the ones that are considered protocol events. The following graph shows the results of the types of events organised by the most responsible organisations in Spain according to the MERCO ranking.

Figure 2: Events classification.



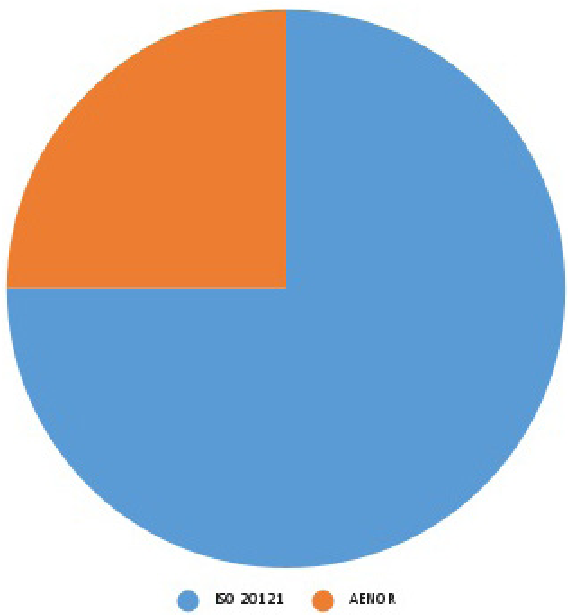
Source: Compiled by author

During the analysis it was also detected that, due to the pandemic, organisations have chosen to organise some of their events virtually. On the other hand, the COVID 19 crisis caused many organisations to substantially reduce the organisation of events.

If we focus on sustainable events, as can be seen in graph 3, it can be seen that the main criterion followed is responsibility. Specifically, 50% of the companies that organise sustainable events have taken into account aspects of environmental impact. Integrity was the next most considered criterion, accounting for 25%. The organisations have contemplated ethical principles such as honesty and adequate behaviour according to international standards for the organisation of their events.

Another of the most valued criteria was inclusiveness. 18% of the organisations which carry out sustainable events analysed have contemplated aspects such as fair treatment and the participation of all the public involved, regardless of their sex, sexual orientation or disability, among others, for the organisation of their events. Regarding transparency, only one organisation, 5% of the total, has used this criterion for the organisation of its events.

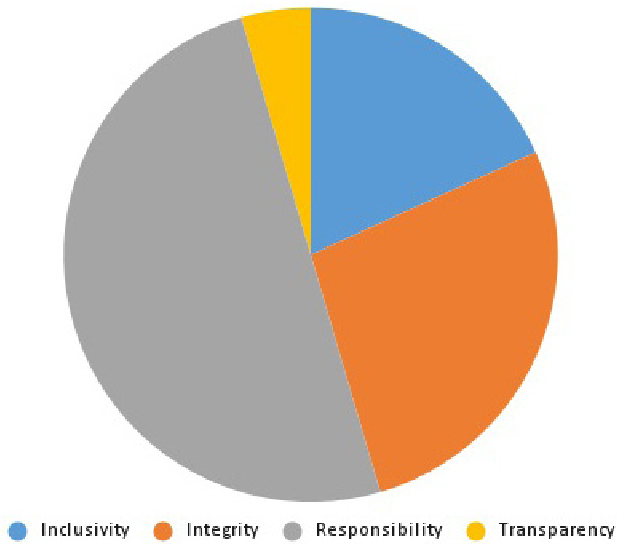
Figure 3: ISO 20121 Sustainable Events Criteria.



Source: Compiled by author

Finally, as shown in graph 4, only 4 of the 12 organisations that carry out sustainable events have external certification. Of said organisations, three have chosen to certify their events with ISO 20121 and one with the AENOR certification. Specifically, the organisations that have obtained a certification are the insurance company Mapfre and the electricity company Iberdrola, which have followed the ISO 20121 Standard, and Banco Santander, which has obtained a double certification for its sustainable events, both by the ISO 20121 Standard and by AENOR (Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification).

Figure 4: Certifications sustainable events.



Source: Compiled by author

Discussion and conclusions

One of the main conclusions of the work is that, despite the fact that the organisations examined are making considerable efforts in the field of sustainability and social responsibility, being aware of the value of this technique in their communication policy with their audiences, they are not integrating it in the management of their events. It is noteworthy that the ISO 20121 Standard on event sustainability management systems is scarcely applied in the most responsible organisations in Spain, despite being in force since 2013.

In short, few of the organisations which are considered more responsible in Spain are aware of the value of the correct and sustainable organisation of events for an adequate corporate image. Consequently, they do not meet the criteria of inclusivity, integrity, responsibility, and transparency in their organisation.

For this reason, the starting hypothesis of this research is clearly refuted. In it, it was indicated that the most responsible organisations in our country are aware of the value of the correct organisation of events for an adequate corporate image and, in this sense, they comply with the characteristics of inclusivity, integrity, responsibility and transparency in their organisation following the indications included in the ISO 20121 certificate.

Based on the results obtained, the starting hypothesis is far from being validated. However, it is noteworthy that most of the events organised by the companies analysed were responsible or supportive. Nevertheless, despite this, most of the sustainability criteria included in the ISO 20121 Standard for its preparation had not been considered.

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ARTIGO

Effectiveness of a digital media literacy program for Brazilian older adults

A efetividade de um programa de alfabetização em mídia digital para idosos brasileiros

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Resumo: *Este artigo apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa quantitativa realizada com 347 pessoas com mais de 60 anos, via estratificação proporcional ao tamanho da população brasileira de idosos, cujo principal objetivo foi o de verificar se elas alcançaram melhores condições para lidar com a desinformação compartilhada nas redes sociais, após realizarem um curso por WhatsApp em 10 dias. Os respondentes foram observados em dois estágios. Em cada estágio um instrumento diferente foi aplicado e os respondentes precisavam avaliar se as notícias eram verdadeiras ou falsas. Como resultado, podemos citar que o curso de letramento digital aumentou a proficiência do idoso em detectar a natureza da informação após dois meses da conclusão do curso.*

Palavras-chave: *Desinformação; educação midiática; leitura lateral; pós-verdade; WhatsApp.*

Abstract: *This paper presents the results of a survey carried out with 347 people, over 60 years old, via proportionate stratified random sampling of the Brazilian population of older adults, whose main objective was to verify if they*

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reach the best conditions to deal with disinformation shared on social networks, after taking a 10-day WhatsApp course. Respondents were observed in two stages. In each stage a different questionnaire was applied, and the respondents needed to evaluate if headlines were true or false. As a result, we can mention that the digital literacy course increased the older adults' proficiency in detecting the nature of information after two months of the course's completion.

Keywords: *Desinformation; Media literacy; Lateral Reading; Post-truth; WhatsApp.*

Introduction

In 2022, the Comprova Project started in Brazil a free media education course, via WhatsApp, for people over 60 years old. The course aims to help people in this age group identify suspicious content and verify their verity since they are very exposed to this type of content (BRASHIER; SCHACTER, 2020; HARGITTAI et al. 2019). The course is a Portuguese version of *MediaWise for Seniors*, an adult media education program developed by Poynter Institute, a nonprofit organization in the United States, made to "enable all nations to begin working towards a media and information literate society while developing stronger educational, economic, health and technological infrastructures." (GRIZZLE *et al.*, 2016, p. 62).

The course has journalists Lillian Witte Fibe and Boris Casoy as mediators and lasts 10 days. In this period, participants receive daily lessons over WhatsApp with guidance on detecting deceptive content that circulate on the web, social media, and messaging apps. Several authors have been studying how the chances of individuals detecting false information increase as their literacy does (GRIZZLE, et al., 2016; JONES-JANG et al., 2021; MOORE; HANCOCK, 2022). Moore and Hancock (2022) were pioneers investigating the benefits of this course in a North American context. In the study, the authors used real and fake news based on the United States' political polarization; that is, they used news with a democratic or a republican bias and, finally, a non-partisan one. They concluded the *MediaWise for Seniors* course could develop participants' skills in detecting the nature of the information.

In Brazil, the course did not use the bias of political polarization in either false or truthful content production, seen as the goal was to verify if the media illiterate elder would be capable of detecting the nature of the information regardless of political bias.

To this end, 347 elders participated in the experiment, carried out between May 5th and August 18th, which aimed to evaluate whether these people achieved better conditions to identify the false or truthful nature of information after completing the course. For this purpose, AB Evne, a research solutions company based in São Paulo, collected data in the first stage of the study (with the selected group of elders), monitored the course, and collected data after its end in the second stage.

Another characteristic that differentiates the current study from Moore and Hancock's work (2022) is that it uses, through stratification, a sample proportional to the population size and specific characteristics of Brazilian society to guarantee it would be representative of people aged over 60 (60+) in the country. In this sense, the main limitation of the data collection method was the company's lack of offices in some of the Brazilian state capitals. Hence, the stratification process used public data from 18 state capitals and the Federal District.

Disinformation in the post-truth age

The spread of disinformation is a phenomenon that triggers serious problems in societies around the world. Especially through social media and digital platforms, millions receive untruthful content, information altered or created to deceive people (BENNETT; LIVINGSTON, 2018, JONES-JANG et al., 2021). Most of this content is elaborated with a high degree of sophistication due to manipulative technological resources, particularly when using images and voices. However, even before any media communication existed, fake news circulated in other ways. In an interview with journalist Fabio Victor, published in the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper (2017), American historian Robert Darnton, Professor Emeritus at Harvard University, stated that fake news dates back to ancient times, more precisely, at least to the 6th century. Darnton cites the case of Procopius, a famous Byzantine historian of the Justinian empire, who wrote a text called "Anekdota," spreading fake news and completely ruining the reputation of emperor Justinian in a way quite like what happened in Donald Trump's recent American electoral campaign. In this perspective, Otávio Frias Filho (2018, p.42) states fake news in itself is not a novelty but the emergence of an instrument capable of reproducing and disseminating them with unprecedented range and speed.

Some measures have come up trying to curb the spread of false content. In Brazil, the lower house of Congress has a fake news bill, which proposes measures to reduce the dissemination of false information, including raising the chances of punishing those responsible. There are also projects by organizations, fact-checking agencies, and media education courses that seek to help counter disinformation under circulation, especially regarding political matters.

In 2022, the AFP news agency (Agence France-Presse) [4] launched the first digital verification course for journalists and journalism students with the goal of offering them tools and techniques to fight disinformation and false allegations that spread on the internet (AFP, 2022). The Comprova project materialized in 2018 as a collaborative and nonprofit initiative coordinated by the Brazilian Association of Investigative Journalism (Abraji), which gathers diverse communication vehicles. According to data on its website, the project aims to "identify and weaken sophisticated techniques of manipulation and dissemination of deceitful content that appear in hyper-partisan websites, messaging apps, and social media." (COMPROVA, s/d)[5]. Also in 2018, the G1

4 Available at: https://www.afp.com/pt/agencia/comunicados-imprensa-boletim/afp-lanca-curso-de-verificacao-digital-livre-para-jornalistas-e-estudantes-de-jornalismo#:~:text=Iniciativa%20foi%20elaborada%20pela%20premiada,apoio%20da%20Google%20News%20Initiative.&text=A%20AFP%2C%20ag%C3%AAncia%20de%20not%C3%ADcias,jornalistas%20e%20estudantes%20de%20jornalismo. Accessed on October 12, 2022.

5 Available at: https://projetocomprova.com.br/about/ . Accessed on October 12, 2022.

website of the Grupo Globo media conglomerate launched a Fact or Fake section, a service for monitoring and checking dubious content, clarifying what is fake or real in messages spread through cellphones and on the internet (G1, July 30, 2018)[6]. Among the specialized fact-checking agencies, Brazil has Lupa, created by Cristina Tardáguila in 2015, and Aos Fatos, created by Tai Nalon, Rômulo Collopy, and Carol Cavaleiro in the same year (LUPA, 15 abr. 2015).

Although several efforts to combat false information are in place, there is still much to do to increase the number of people who can identify what is fact and what is a lie. However, in this context, truth is in crisis, as Eugênio Bucci points out (2019).

It is a crisis installed in the so-called era of post-truth, a term used for the first time in a 1992 article by Steve Tesich, published in the American magazine The Nation, about the first Gulf War. In 2004, Ralph Keyes applied the term in the title of his book The Post-Truth Era. Bucci (2019, p. 11) states blogger David Roberts may have coined the expression 'post-truth politics' on April 1, 2010.

On September 10, 2016, The Economist weekly published a cover piece, "Art of the Lie," that called the world's attention about the deception that the British experienced when voting for Brexit, like did the Americans during Donald Trump's campaign for president (THE ECONOMIST, September 10, 2016)[7].

The *Oxford Dictionary* declared the term post-truth as the word of the year in 2016 and qualified it with an adjective referring to the circumstances in which objective facts are less influential than personal emotions and beliefs in public opinion (FABIO, 2016).

Though the term post-truth is not new, social media is boosting the crisis brought on by the proliferation of disinformation as opposed to the trueness of facts. If, on the one hand, these social media have collaborated to give voice to the citizens and the public debate, on the

6 Available at: https://g1.globo.com/fato-ou-fake/noticia/2018/07/30/g1-lanca-fato-ou-fake-novo-servico-de-checagem-de-conteudos-suspeitos.ghtml. Accessed on October 12, 2022.

7 Available at: https://www.economist.com/leaders/2016/09/10/art-of-the-lie. Accessed on October 12, 2022.

other hand, they have also been used by those who are not committed to the common good but to their own good and that of power groups with other less noble goals that do not correspond to the democratic environment. Years before this crisis, Ignacio Ramonet (2012, p. 64) stated, "due to its explosion, multiplication, and overabundance, information finds itself contaminated, poisoned by lies, polluted by rumors, alterations, distortions, and manipulations."

Unquestionably, social media have become an instrument that enables information and disinformation sharing in the post-truth era. However, it is interesting to mention that smartphones, on their turn, have become the basis for anyone to share from any part of the planet.

Given this scenario, it is also relevant to draw attention to the words of Michiko Kakutani (2017), who recalls that there is not only fake news but fake science, such as those of anti-vaccines, false history, like those of the Holocaust revisionists, fake Facebook profiles, like those created by Russian trolls, and fake followers and likes, such as those generated by bots on social media. Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, which broke in 2020, it is worth stressing the phenomenon acknowledged by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an "infodemic" caused by excessive information, some precise and others not, which made it hard to find reputable sources and reliable guidelines.

Kakutani (2017, p. 11) points to the term "truth decay," used by the Rand Corporation think tank to describe "the diminishing role of facts and analysis in American public life." However, many other expressions currently designate what is more popularly known as fake news.

Claire Wardle (2020), director and co-founder of First Draft, a nonprofit organization created in 2015 with Harvard University, specializing in finding strategies to combat disinformation, is one of the most renowned scholars on the subject. The researcher distinguishes between disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation to understand information disorder.

> Disinformation is content that is intentionally false and designed to cause harm. It is motivated by three factors: to make money; to have political influence, either foreign or domestic; or to cause trouble for the sake of it.
>
> When disinformation is shared it often turns into misinformation. Misinformation also describes false content, but the person sharing doesn't realize that it is false or misleading. Often a piece of disinformation is picked up by someone who doesn't realize it's false and that person shares it with their networks, believing that they are helping.
>
> The third category we use is malinformation. The term describes genuine information that is shared with an intent to cause harm. An example of this is when Russian agents hacked into emails from the Democratic National Committee and the Hillary Clinton campaign and leaked certain details to the public to damage reputations. (WARDLE, 2020, p. 10)

Media education

Media education is one of the most relevant barriers against disinformation that circulates among people in any age group. Media education gives citizens better conditions to verify information and develop a critical reading of media content, collaborating to citizenship development. Furthermore, it "increases the understanding of different points of view and the sharing of responsibility" for shared content or even "reduces intolerance and increases understanding across political borders and between ethnicities and religions." (GRIZZLE, *et al.*, 2016, p. 150).

Hence, as Renee Hobbs (2010) observes, children, adolescents, adults, and over-60 people benefit from the opportunity to develop digital and media education skills. The researcher discusses these benefits for different age stages. Hobbs mentions that seniors are heavy television consumers and can be vulnerable to messages that are considered persuasive, such as in the health area: advertisements for prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and nutritional supplements. According to her, improving these people's digital and media literacy will help them to evaluate information better while having the benefits of information sharing and social connection available through social media.

Grizzle et al. (2021) present a curriculum developed by Unesco, which educators can apply in developing literacy skills. In this sense, Soares (2014) indicates it was within the scope of the debate around the development of Latin America that Unesco began articulating action attempting to bring communication and education closer together in the sphere of public policies.

> The organization promoted a meeting in Mexico in December 1979, bringing together the Ministers of Education and Planning from the countries of the continent to examine the fundamental problems of education in the context of the general development of the region, creating, for this purpose, a common plan, called the Major Project of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. (Soares, 2014, p. 20)

For the researcher, there is a growing willingness for a more solid collaboration between agents working with media education in Brazil. Currently, several non-governmental organizations collaborate in the development of media education. In 2017, media education became part of the Brazilian common core curriculum, Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), for secondary and elementary education.

Thus, the hypothesis formulated in this research is that the literacy course offered by *WhatsApp* will increase the abilities of elders to detect the nature of information, regardless of the social and demographic characteristics of the participant.

Methodology

To conduct a two-stage randomized longitudinal study, researchers from a Journalism and Business Administration course designed a probabilistic sampling scheme and partnered with a data collection company in Brazil. The research provider company collected the data in the two phases of the experiment and monitored the participants throughout the course. Data collection began on May 5^{th} and ended on August 18th, under the supervision of researchers and analysts.

Data collection took place in 18 capitals[8] and the Federal District. IBGE projections for the year 2020 provided the number of inhabitants per location. The numbers published by the Center for Social Policy of the Fundação Getulio Vargas, which has an online platform[9] capable of displaying percentages in places where the research company has an office, provided the rates of the population over 60 in each location.

Based on this, we calculated the number of people aged over 60 per location so that, with a confidence level of 95%, the margin of error for calculating the percentage estimates was no more than 5.32% on either side. These calculations led to a sample projection of 340 elders in the first collection round of the experiment.

Thus, the data collection company used its reference system with contacts of elders selected according to a representative entry protocol constructed to represent Brazilian society. The elders received a link to the questionnaires prepared using the Gandia Integra tool[10]. If a participant had difficulties answering the survey or during the course, the company contacted them and helped them to clarify their questions.

Still, the entire questionnaire was self-completed by participants, and the company only provided support over the telephone. Finally, the company sent the collected data to the researchers who had no contact with the participants and did not receive any information that could identify them.

Data collection was structured to take place in two stages. In the first stage, the team applied an instrument to characterize the sample and describe the interviewee's contact with the digital environment and their exposure to technology.

8 The demographic census will be updated this year. So, the most recent projected data refer to 2020.

9 Panorama dos Idosos Brasileiros - Quem são? Onde estão? O que fazem? Como chegar até eles? - Available at: https://www.cps.fgv.br/social/4/evolucaoBRATOTHIBcodpanorama/visualizacao/tudo.

10 For more information, see: https://www.tesibr.com/.

In the first stage, respondents received six news items based on the structure of a survey conducted by Stanford University (MOORE; HANCOCK, 2022). Some headlines were a false construction on purpose, and others were genuine news clippings. The news appeared in random order. Each respondent had to assess the tendency of each news piece from definitely false to definitely true.

For ten days, subscribers received a short class with an excerpt of content and a short video via WhatsApp. The course content was interactive and focused on digital literacy tools and tips on social media, such as lateral reading, click restraint, algorithms, and reverse image search.

Even if interactive, participants could review the ten-day course as much as necessary. So, this form of literacy favored the autonomy of elderly students during learning. Other highlights of the methodology are that the video lessons remained stored on students' WhatsApp, and this audience sees the chosen presenters as charismatic, which shows mastery in conducting teaching.

Two months after the course finished, the same interviewees who carried out the first six assessments and completed the classes were shown another six randomly ordered news pieces. Figures were inserted in all the news to check if any interviewee would resort to the reverse image search technique.

Results and discussion

The final sample had 347 people due to the existence of a sampling plan and a weighting on sex, race, religion, and economic class. Regarding the sex and race of respondents:

- Sex: 54% female.
- Race or ethnic group: Black (8%); Brown (38%); White (52%); Asian (1%); indigenous groups (1%).

Moreover, it was necessary to control the percentages for religion and income for the sample to represent different strata of the Brazilian population according to these demographic criteria.

For religion, our study used the percentages informed on the G1 portal (G1, 13 Jan. 2020) based on a survey carried out by the DATAFOLHA Institute from the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper. Frequency distributions for predominant religion were:

- None (10%); Catholicism (51%); Protestantism (29%); Spiritism (5%); Buddhism (1%); Afro-Brazilian religions (1%); others (2%); and atheism (1%).

To control the different economic classes, Neri (2019) discusses the subjectivity in traditional Brazilian economic stratification instruments and draws from the literature on the concept of social well-being. As known, income criteria in Brazil only consider the situation of the economically active population and sometimes exclude the over-60 population, which includes pensioners.

In this scenario, our study adopted the following income ranges to stratify the over 60 population, adapted from the methodology used by the Center for Social Policy at FGV Social:

- E Class: up to one minimum wage; that is, R$ up to 1,212.00.
- D Class: one to two minimum wages; that is, from 1,212.01 to R$ 2,424.00.
- C Class: two minimum wages to the current INSS pension limit; that is, R$ 2,424.00 to R$ 7,087.22.
- AB Class: above the current INSS pension limit; that is, more than R$ 7,087.22.
- Hence, we obtained the following percentages for the different monthly family income ranges: E Class (3%); D Class (12%); C Class (63%); and AB Class (22%).

Since access to information requires some education level, the analysis corpus of the research did not include illiterate elders. Hence, education worked as a filter in this research. Finally, we obtained the following percentages for the different education levels:

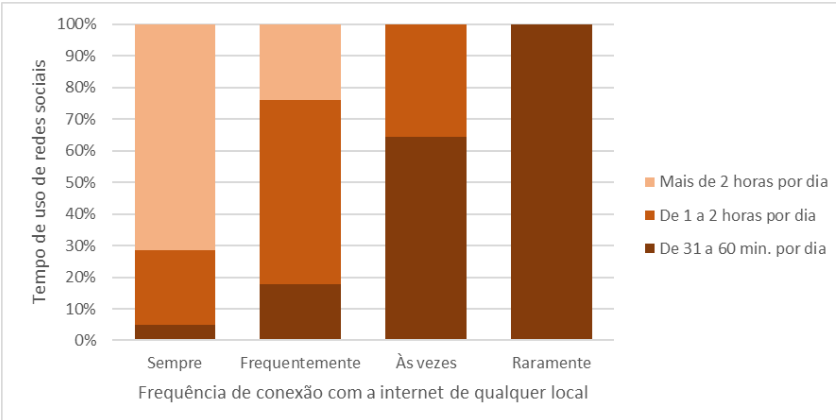
- Elementary school, from the 1st to 5th years (3%); elementary school, from the 6th to 9th year (14%); high school (44%); higher education, incomplete (9%); higher education, complete (24%); and graduate education (5%).

We adapted the questionnaire applied before the course to the Brazilian reality, drawing from Moore and Hancock's (2022) study. To measure the exposure of Brazilian elders to technology and the digital environment, interviewees indicated how frequently they surfed the internet from anywhere (at home, work, commuting, or any other place). The result was that 236 of the 347 interviewees (68%) said they "always" used the internet. 175 of the 347 respondents (50%) said they remained actively browsing social media such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram for more than two hours on average.

Figure 1 reveals the possible association the interviewee established between the frequency of connection and the time spent on social media, given the time spent on social media increases as the frequency of connection to the internet from anywhere increases.

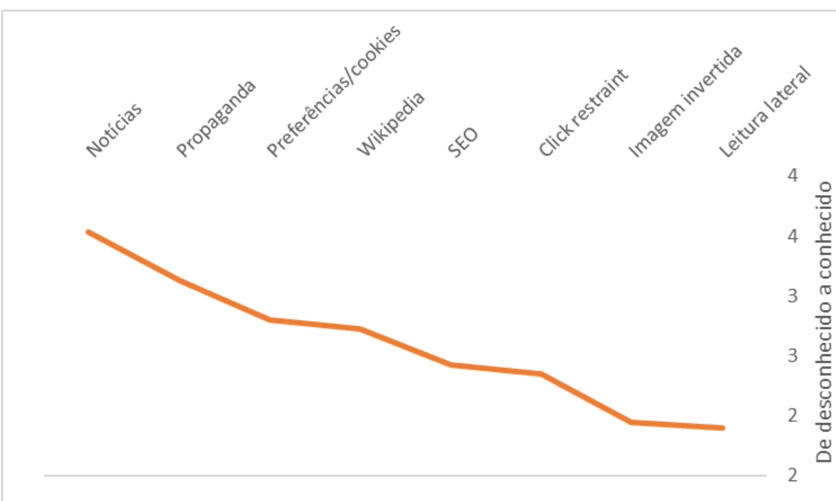
We used the chi-squared test to check the significance of this association. First, we eliminated "rarely" from the internet connection frequency categories since we had no observations of social media usage time for the others. This way, the study applied the chi-squared test to examine a possible association between the frequency of connection and time spent on social media, obtaining a value-p (<0.001) favorable to the association between these two measures. This result indicates elders who access the internet are more frequent social media users and vice-versa.

Figure 1 – Connection frequency and time spent on social media



The over-60 population also needed to assess their knowledge of some digital techniques. SEO, click restraint, reverse image search, and lateral reading techniques were part of the digital media literacy course content offered to interviewees in the study's second stage.

Figure 2 – How familiar are you with these themes?



The techniques present in the course were the least known to the Brazilian 60+ public, as shown in Figure 2. This result alone justifies the knowledge gap and the need for a digital literacy program for the over-60 population in Brazil.

These results corroborate the studies by Machado et al. (2019), who mapped and analyzed the digital competence of 24 elders aged 60 or over who participated in a digital inclusion course offered by the Digital Inclusion Unit (UNIDI) at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). The authors considered the elders still have many limitations in knowledge and skills of digital literacy and fluency but take attitudes in search of solutions to these barriers. The authors argued for creating and applying new pedagogical strategies to solve these difficulties, such as using digital educational materials.

Regarding the need for this inclusion, Gil (2019) states that digital literacy should be associated with elders so that they feel digitally included and, thus, socially included. From this perspective, Slodkowski et al. (2021) comment on the importance of elders building digital skills to fit in and act in society.

Araújo da Silva and Behar (2019, p. 26) state that a digitally competent subject should understand enough technological resources to "know how to use information, be critical, and be able to communicate using various tools."

Figure 3 – Assessment of the nature of information before the course

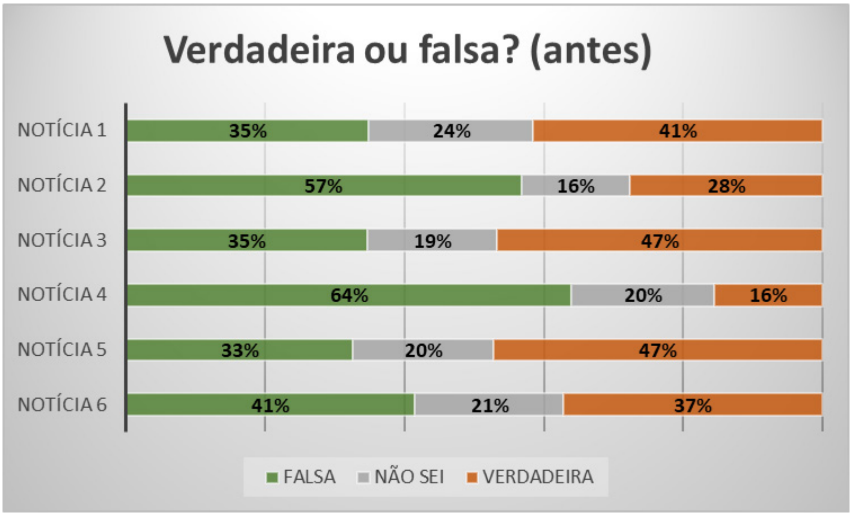
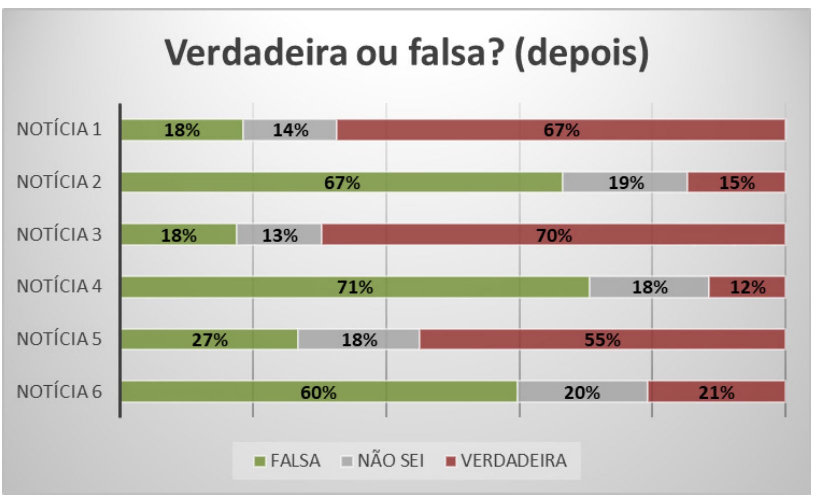
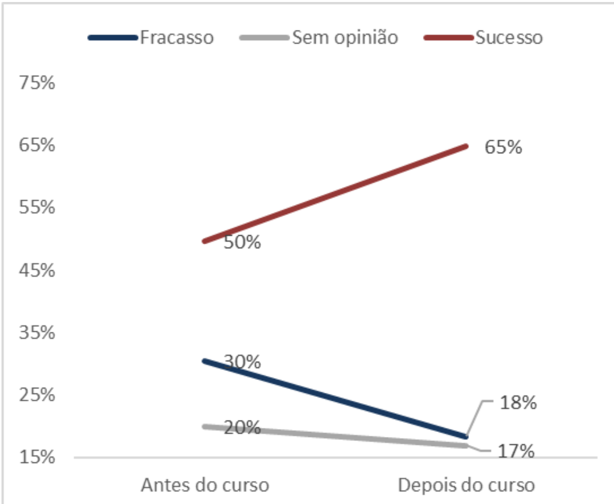


Figure 4 - Assessment of the nature of information after the course



Figures 3 and 4 present the results of the assessments of the six news before and after the course. Based on these percentages, we obtained the averages for correct, wrong, and undecided assessments, as Figure 5 shows.

Figure 5 – Boost in digital literacy skills



From Figure 5, we can infer how much elders learned with the course. On average, before the course, 50% [43.3% to 54.9%] of respondents correctly assessed if the news was real or fake, while 20% [14.7% to 25.3%] could not tell, and 30% [25.1% to 35.7%] made wrong judgments.

It is interesting to highlight that this result obtained before the course shows the complete randomness that could exist in determining the nature of information. As a news piece can only be real or fake, half of the respondents successfully identified the nature of the assessed news.

After the course, this percentage had a 15% increase, indicating a significant improvement in respondents' ability to identify the nature of information, for, on average, 65% [59.5% to 70.2%] of them were successful, 17% could not judge, and 18% [13% to 23.6%] made wrong assessments. Lateral reading was the mechanism they used the most to check the nature of information. That leads to accepting the hypothesis that the course improved elders' skills.

The analysis with a margin of error of 5.32% reveals a significant increase among those who could assess whether the information presented was real or fake after completing the literacy program offered by *MediaWise*. The lower rate of incorrect assessments of the nature of the information compared to the results obtained before the course reinforces that result.

Moreover, the correct evaluation of information could potentially reach 70.2% (at the margin of error limit) of the population with the digital literacy program elaborated by *MediaWise*. A statistical tie only appears in the percentage of those who could not comment on the verity or not of the information.

Final considerations

The research showed the over-60 group is unfamiliar with digital literacy tools such as click restraint, reverse image search, and lateral reading. Even after taking the course, they made little use of the reverse image search technique. However, respondents' familiarization with lateral reading began to make a difference in determining the verity of most news since they searched for the original or related texts.

The digital literacy course fulfilled its purpose since elders improved their chances of recognizing the true or false nature of the presented news after completing it, which means our hypothesis is valid.

A point worth highlighting is that the historical moment of elections in which we carried out the research ended up contradicting the t*ruth-default* theory established by Levine (2014), which indicates that people tend to interpret received information as truth. When we delved into the 50% that successfully assessed the news before the course, we found that, on average, 45% were right about the true origin of the information, and 54% were correct to judge the information was false. It is as if they were looking for fake information, given the percentage that identified it was nine points higher than the portion that detected the correct nature of truthful information.

After the course, among the 65% who successfully assessed the nature of the information, 66% were successful in determining fake pieces, and 64% were successful in determining truthful information. Despite the statistical tie, the percentage of those who believe the information is false is numerically higher than the proportion of those who judge it to be true. Therefore, carrying out this survey in a year of presidential elections in Brazil may have increased Brazilians' skepticism toward information.

On the other hand, this study corroborates Moore and Hancock (2022) since the digital literacy course increased the proficiency of elders in detecting the nature of information.

The advantage of our study compared to the two referenced above is that the process of sampling stratified by proportional allocation of sex, race, religion, and economic class ensured that it is possible to extrapolate the improvement in digital literacy beyond the limits of this sample, given the instrument is valid for all of Brazil with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5.32% on either side.

Finally, we can stress that Moore and Hancock's (2022) study collected data for the second stage immediately after the conclusion of the course. Differently, our study collected data for the second phase two months after the end of lessons, which allows us to state that the elders had memorized their learning two months after taking the course.

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Self-employed and connected: development of communication skills and presence of professionals on digital platforms

Autônomos e conectados: desenvolvimento de competências comunicacionais e presença de profissionais em plataformas digitais

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Resumo: *O objetivo deste ensaio é explorar o uso de mídias digitais por profissionais autônomos como estratégia para gestão de suas marcas online. A partir de revisão de literatura e observação de três casos empíricos, identificamos as habilidades comunicacionais em jogo neste tipo de atuação, contribuindo para uma melhor compreensão da importância da comunicação (e competências de comunicação) em uma sociedade midiatizada.*

Palavras-chave: *Comunicação digital; produção de conteúdo online; branding; plataformização do trabalho.*

Abstract: *This essay explores the use of digital media by self-employed professionals to manage their brands online. Based on a literature review and observation of three empirical cases, we identify the communicational skills at play in this type of performance, contributing to a better understanding of the importance of communication (and communication skills) in a mediatized society.*

Keywords: *Digital Communication; online content production; Branding; Platformization of labour*

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Introduction

Social media are important for professionals who depend on their credibility and reputation to attract clients, like physicians, psychologists, lawyers, dentists, and nutritionists. These platforms allow these professionals direct contact with their public (KOLMES, 2021; TUZZO; BRAGA, 2012). A professional online presence can significantly impact operations and businesses, even on small companies (JONES *et al.*, 2015). Hence, in recent years, new professions connected to digital communication emerged with the goal of training and amplifying the digital presence of their clients, like content producers, social media specialists, and business intelligence[3] professionals. These professionals frequently work in house organs[4] or internal communications teams of large companies and brands or agencies that fulfill such tasks for multiple clients.

However, self-employed professionals, unattached to societies, cooperatives, or companies generally lack access to a comparable promotion structure. At the same time, these professionals need to constantly expose themselves in the media to build their personal brands (SCHWEBEL, 2009) and raise awareness[5] in an ever-more saturated market for their businesses (EDMISTON, 2014). Though they recognize the need to invest in their online brands, they do not always have enough financial resources to hire dedicated press offices, as Tuzzo and Braga propose (2012). In many cases, these professionals resort to

3 Business intelligence is a process that helps organizations to gather and analyze information to predict the behavior of various factors in the corporate environment, such as competition, clients, and markets. Its goal is to use this information on informed decision-making that help organizations to survive and succeed in a global economy (JOURDAN et al., 2008).

4 House organs are print media (today, ever more digital) that bring information on the organization and are traditionally used for internal communication (BUENO, 2005). With the advance of innovations in digital communication and organization marketing, house organs are changing.

5 Brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand at the point of purchase and when thinking about product categories. It has a significant impact on consumers' choices, making brands familiar and turning them into options in the act of purchase (ALMEIDA E SOUZA et al., 2022).

agencies specialized in social media, outsourcing the management of their online presence.

Given the importance given to authenticity in digital culture, whether considering it a performance (KARHAWI, 2022) or not, outsourcing the online presence may not be effective in bringing professionals closer to their audience and may even harm them. Therefore, we find important that doctors, psychologists, and other professionals develop communication skills to make their work more visible on social media and improve their brand (LABRECQUE et al., 2011). For communication professionals, this reality can open a new field of action.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss, theoretically and through three empirical cases, the importance for self-employed professionals to acquire digital communication skills to manage their online reputation and interact with small audiences. We looked to map the necessary skills in this context and how communication professionals can act as enablers and consultants. We also aimed to understand the current scenario, the practices and skills developed by self-employed professional using social media, considering the centrality of communication in a mediatized society (HJARVARD, 2014). This theme is relevant because it connects discussions on transparency, authenticity, and intimacy in social media and the contemporary demands of diverse publics to professionals who have always depended on their image.

In the next section of this paper, we will discuss the importance for self-employed professionals to incorporate digital presence, drawing from a theoretical review. Then, we will present three cases of professionals with diverse audiences who use social media to promote their businesses to understand which skills they need to have an appropriate digital presence. In the third section, we will debate ten skills we consider applicable for these professionals to manage their online reputations. We will also discuss the learning itinerary that Communication specialists can develop. Finally, we present some considerations on the importance of studying the digital production of self-employed professionals and the possible role of Communication specialists in training them.

Professional digital content production

The bibliography on online businesses and image management in the digital environment has focused mostly on large companies, leaving little space for self-employed professionals. In the commercial context, social media are important for enabling direct contact between businesses and their publics, which was not possible in the one-to-many mass media, especially, mass advertising model. Although social media allow for the disintermediation of contact between businesses and their public, this does not mean demedialization. Social media characteristics enable the appropriation for sociability, based on the construction of the social space [in the digital] and interaction with other actors (RECUERO, 2008). However, the reach of these publications and content is driven and constrained by each platform's algorithmic mediations, which complex online data trails feed (D'ANDRÉA; JURNO, 2017). Though digital communication has a decentralizing potential, the major digital platforms (Instagram or Twitter) generate a new centralization around actors that reach massive audiences – the influencers (KARHAWI, 2020). Influencers are individuals who take advantage of their cultural and social capital on social media to shape the shopping opinions and decisions of others (WELLMAN *et al.*, 2020). They perform online identities strategically to construct their popularity (SENFT, 2008) and project their celebrity status by treating friends and strangers as fans (MARWICK, 2013). Influencers see themselves as brands for consumption and as self-enterprises (DUFFY, 2017), building a strict relationship between their personal brand and their followers (ABIDIN; OTS, 2016).

Self-employed professionals who use social media to promote their activities have an online presence resembling digital influencers, since both undergo a "process of building and maintaining reputation" (KARHAWI, 2017, p. 59). Both influencers and self-employed professionals present themselves online as brands for consumption, even if the products they offer differ. For influencers, they offer themselves before the products endorsed by them through advertising contracts. For self-employed professionals who use social media, the product is their occupation, like psychology, medicine, and law, among others. While influencers aim to influence their followers' opinions, self-employed professionals use social media as a strategy to persuade and convince their followers to choose their services over those of their competitors. They do not aim to project their celebrity status through their online presence, though enhancing their popularity is desirable for potentially broadening their prospective client base. Though their followers can engage with personal aspects of their digital presence, their services mediate their relationship with their professional profiles, not the individuals.

Similarly, journalists, researchers, and science communicators use social media to consolidate and amplify their professional reputations and offer a service that is not exactly their selves. The performance of journalists as influencers in the digital context, in their interactions with audiences on social media, can be a possible form of recovering credibility amidst a crisis in journalism, based on the construction of a closer relationship between them and the public (VASCONCELLOS, 2020). Researchers and scientists also use social media to promote their work and establish a closer rapport with audiences. Social media have become a space for public debate on scientific contributions and can expand the understanding of the importance of scientific processes for society. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified direct contact with the audience, especially during the first months when information disorder reached high levels (ALMEIDA-FILHO, 2021; CINNELI *et al.*, 2020).

Regardless of the purpose of digital presence, be it influence, credibility, or participation in the public debate, all profiles work to build a personal brand based on individuality. Tom Peters (1997) popularized the concept of personal branding with the paper "The Brand Called You", which argued that each person is responsible for maintaining their brand and that good management of that brand could lead to career success. In the digital age, "self-branding" strategies involve creating and maintaining personal profiles on social media and the use of

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) techniques to make information easily accessible (LABRECQUE et al., 2011). For "self-branding" specialists, the process is similar to developing a brand identity for a product (SCHWABEL, 2009); it is necessary to define a brand identity to communicate and position it actively. However, the personal brand in digital environments presents unique challenges such as context collapse (MARWICK; BOYD, 2010) – the flattening of different audiences in the same environment, making the personal profile (supposedly private) inseparable from the professional (supposedly public)

Therefore, self-employed professionals should control the presentation of themselves (GOFFMAN, 1985) as a mechanism to create and manage their online brand identity. That implies, on the one hand, explaining what they do professionally by creating content that enables users to perceive the relation of these occupations with everyday issues and needs. On the other hand, they also have to make their approaches, values, and professional ethics explicit to potential clients. Such exposure merges the public and private dimensions of life – the foreground and the background of the presentation of self (GOFFMAN, 1985) – as occurring in their social media, seen as their business names are their own. That is even more significant in constructing the online presence of professionals who work in areas dependent on social capital (BORDIEU, 1989) since the occupation becomes an integral part of the persona of these contemporary subjects. The entanglement between the professional and the personal turns the appreciation of personal and intimate aspects into a professional distinction. On the one hand, by showing their "human" side, professionals create empathy with their audience, presenting themselves as good in their work. On the other hand, by making lifestyle a symbolic attribute for self-promotion, it appears that what they sell is both the individual and their professional skill.

Initially, during the transition to the digital environment, individuals tended to separate their personal and professional profiles (LEBRECQUE et al., 2011; KARHAWI, 2020). Today, the merger between personal and professional profiles acts as a form of connecting with target audiences, guaranteeing their exposure to the product – in this case, the professionals themselves. As Karhawi (2020, p. 44ss) notes, in the current media visibility regime, the distinction between the visible (what is on the media) and the invisible (everything else) means that refusing to expose oneself on social media or the inadequate use of these tools can harm one's business and professional reputation.

The perception that professionals who share aspects of their private and social lives are more qualified is related to the issue of authenticity, a concept that resonates on all social media (DUFFY, 2017). For Karhawi (2022), authenticity is a performance aiming to express attributes like sincerity, verity, and originality. The more influencers show they are intimate, relatable, and vulnerable on social media, the more they seem authentic. So, authenticity results from enunciative forms used by individuals, "constitutive marks […] that connect to the process of legitimating the subject through discourse." (KARHAWI, 2021, p. 10).

The combination of interaction with the public about specific professional topics with the authentic narration of life philosophies and personal stories creates a feeling of closeness between the communicator and the public. Creating a consistent positioning in the digital environment starts from constructing a personal narrative disseminated through professionals' diverse communication platforms. The narrative personifies the advertised product (professionals themselves), creating a series of identifications with possible clients. From the point of view of those following these professionals, a transmedia narrative unfolds (SCOLARI, 2011).

Methodology and case analysis

In this work, we analyze three cases of self-employed professionals who use Instagram for their work outside the digital environment. Drawing from observations of content, strategies, and the struggles these professionals face, our goal is to understand the diverse communication and media skills involved in social media activities. The three selected cases include a nutritionist from São Paulo with one million followers, a physician from Blumenau (SC) with 12 thousand followers, and a psychologist from Sarandi (RS) with 500 followers. Below, we explain the methodological procedures for selecting the sample and collecting and analyzing data.

To select cases, we established some preliminary criteria. First, we looked for self-employed professionals who exclusively or predominantly use Instagram accounts to communicate and interact with potential clients. We chose Instagram because it is a highly visual platform with ever-growing resources, especially through its stories tool, which requires textual and visual skills, besides good direct communication to establish a connection between professionals and the public. That allowed us to observe how self-employed professionals apply these skills in their communication. We selected public profiles that produce authorial technical content, that is, explain aspects of accumulated knowledge on their work field, professional philosophy, and related topics. We also selected accounts with different reach levels, that is, small, medium, and large audiences, and diverse content production frequencies so we could analyze the use of communication skills in processes of different scales.

To make this selection, we started with the physician case, which first drew our attention to this research theme and that we take as a medium-sized case. We chose the second case, the psychologist, as a small-sized case because we provided her with consultancy services on communication abilities for digital platforms. That allowed us to understand the communication skills and difficulties involved in that kind of media production. Finally, we searched for a large-sized account with the pre-established characteristics to complete our analysis. We selected the nutritionist case because she openly approached the importance of digital platforms as a communication space between a professional and their potential public, besides fulfilling the established criteria. In this sense, we built the sample according to an intentional process (FRAGOSO *et al.*, 2012, p. 58).

At least one of the authors observed each profile intermittently. Observation of the physician's professional Instagram started in August 2020 and ended in late 2021. Most informal conversations about the process of producing and acquiring skills took place in 2020. We carried out data updates and systematization between September and December 2022. For the psychologist's case, most observations took place during the consultancy service between October 2020 and January 2021 while additional observations happened over the two following months and throughout 2021 and 2022. In December 2022, we collected more data for updates. In the third case, the nutritionist, the observation occurred intermittently over more than four years, starting in 2019. The period considered for the analysis was from July to December 2022.

In the psychologist's case, besides data on the account's content production, we rely on observations made during the professional's training process. This training was conducted through regular meetings via Zoom and follow-ups via WhatsApp. Below, we present and detail the analyzed cases.

Presentation of cases

The first case concerns Lara Nesteruk, a nutritionist who started using public social media profiles on Snapchat, creating an initial audience that migrated to Instagram. Ever since graduating in nutrition, Lara Nesteruk used social media as the principal way to promote her work, starting on Snapchat in 2015. She gradually achieved visibility on Instagram through informative posts about nutrition and diet, with clear writing and cards with a customized visual identity. Her account grew due to the frequency and quantity of content produced and her ability to systematize complex information and communicate it directly to her public, answering the main questions and challenges she observed in her practice and in the interaction with her Instagram community.

Lara is an extreme case, as she became an influencer without forming partnerships with brands and maintaining her work as a nutritionist, whether in the office or by offering free courses on the topic.

Furthermore, her Instagram has also become a resource for storytelling about her personal life, both current and past, through photos, lives, videos, and stories. That creates a kind of hero narrative (CAMPBELL, 2007), highlighting her journey to overcome various adversities before becoming successful. After years of working on Instagram, the nutritionist recently made her content (paid and free) available through her app. Throughout her work on Instagram, Lara acquired new communication skills, such as editing videos and photos, and improved her relationship with the public and ability to understand the dynamics of the digital platform through practice[6]. Some of these skills were later shared with followers in free or paid content, as is the case, for example, with videos produced about photography or content about image editing.

Figure 1 – Nutritionist Lara Nesteruk, on her Instagram

Source: image made available by the authors

6 We can mention, for example, the production of a large amount of daily content, which is important for Instagram's visibility regime. Furthermore, the professional changed the spelling of words that could fall into the platform's automatic filter, leading to the blocking or removal of the content.

The second case presented is that of a doctor called Carlos[7], who is related to one of the researchers and drew our attention when he decided to assume the production of his social media content and manage his online presence and reputation after dismissing his social media employee. That led the authors to identify a potential niche market: media and communication education for self-employed professionals, for instance, through workshops and consultancies. The third case is a psychologist who received the consultancy service. The third case studied is that of a psychologist who received the authors' consultancy services, allowing us to observe first-hand the communication skills necessary for these self-employed professionals and the process of acquiring them.

Both the second and third cases correspond to profiles of self-employed professionals on Instagram who live in cities outside the central axes and use their networks professionally. Just as in the case of nutritionist Lara Nesteruk, we cannot characterize these medium and low-range profiles as strictly influencers (KARHAWI, 2020) since the purpose of their online presence is not just self-promotion but rather the dissemination of their work outside the digital environment. It is possible to observe a gap in knowledge and practical assistance for these professionals who, in the cases of the nutritionist and the doctor, learned on their own the skills necessary to manage their online image.

The physician from Blumenau, who had a professional profile on Instagram since 2018, decided to dismiss his social media support because he was not satisfied with the quality of the text material produced for his account. In the plastic surgeon's view, the contents were inadequate in terms of correctness, clarity, and didactics and did not reflect his personality[8]. In other words, the doctor realized that, besides communication skills, his specialized knowledge was essential to produce adequate content. After dismissing the communications professional, he took over the day-to-day management of his social

7 We do not use the real names of the medium and small-sized professional profiles as they do not qualify as public figures despite their work on Instagram. Therefore, we chose to preserve their identities.

8 Personal accounts to researchers.

media accounts, which now are an integral part of his work as a plastic surgeon. Although he already had some basic knowledge of video design and production, he needed to improve his writing skills, communication strategy, and understanding of the logic of the digital platform used, which he achieved through courses, readings, trial-and-error learning, and practice in his profiles[9].

From the analysis of interactions with his public, the physician from Blumenau began including content related to his professional philosophy: the values and perceptions that guided his work[10]. The physician mixed specific content and spaces of interaction with the public in his online presence, incorporating elements of his everyday life like his participation in conferences and moments with family and friends. Despite that, he does not use storytelling as a basis to connect with the public, making only a shy narrative of his professional trajectory through the #tbt hashtag. We understand that he could use aspects of his education and personal life to generate a stronger bond with the public. However, his connection with the public comes especially from his approach to plastic surgery and aesthetics, which brings in people with similar views through more reflexive posts.

9 Personal accounts to researchers.
10 Personal accounts to researchers.

Figure 2

Source: image made available by the authors

In the third case, we have the example of Janaína[11], a psychologist from the city of Sarandi, upstate Rio Grande do Sul, who contacted us seeking guidance on using social media to publicize her work and attract new patients. In this case, her work on digital media began after our consultancy in late 2020. When we analyzed her social media, we realized that she focused mainly on promoting her private practice through Instagram. Based on the analysis of her communication goals, existing profiles, and skills, we suggested she include her everyday life narratives as a psychologist and psychoanalyst under training. We also proposed she produce specific content in her area but an adequate quantity to her work routine and production possibility. The main difficulties encountered by the client were related to the production of short and direct texts, besides the aesthetic composition of the posts. Nevertheless, she was familiar with recording videos and mastered basic editing skills.

11 We do not use the real names of the medium and small-sized professional profiles as they do not qualify as public figures despite their activities on Instagram. Therefore, we chose to preserve their identities.

Besides producing specific content about psychology, the psychologist started including elements of her ongoing training in psychoanalysis on her Instagram profile. Thus, she began posting about participation in events, seminars, and conferences, readings, and small personal reflections. This mix of personal and professional posts personalizes and professionalizes the profile, maintaining a paradox that is the mix between the backstage and the facade, as discussed by Goffman (1985). We also observed that one of the main difficulties was that she had been using social media exclusively for personal purposes without any identification, making it hard to create a professional. Since Janaína only appeared in group photos, there was no identification point with a potential public. Furthermore, the messages published on her profile were unclear and did not provide any contextual elements for the photographs, which hindered their intelligibility.

Figure 3

Source: image made available by the authors

During the consultancy, the narrative of this self-employed psychologist's everyday life, especially in the professional context, helped to personalize and professionalize her profile, generating a bond with the public. These changes had an impact on her professional performance and digital resourcefulness, expanding her network of contacts. Although on a small scale, her case indicates that digital presence can have positive effects on professionals' positioning and projection. However, there was no time to teach and implement storytelling techniques related to the psychologist's life story and work philosophy, which could have further enhanced her connection with the public.

An itinerary for Communication

The way the professionals in the cases studied build their media visibility shows how difficult and unproductive it is to outsource communication services in digital environments because identification with the subjects and valued personal brands, such as authenticity and transparency, are relevant factors in the logic of communication on social media that only individuals themselves can effectively produce on a small scale. The cases also indicate the need not to limit media education to traditional media training clients, such as politicians, businesspeople, or medical doctors, that is, elite professionals established as expert news sources due to their notoriety. When approaching social media use to create and maintain a personal brand, we are talking about individuals who do not have prior fame. Without access to media training (which is training to respond to journalistic practices), these professionals are left to their own devices to acquire and develop communication and media skills.

Media skills are often assumed innate to digital natives. Even in cases of digital influencers, their skills necessary to navigate the digital environment generally come off as congenital (KARHAWI, 2017, p. 59). The belief that communication skills are innate and not acquired perpetuates the idea that people who communicate successfully on digital media express their "talent" and do "what they love" (DUFFY, 2017). These conceptions prevent the understanding that communication skills can be acquired and are, therefore, teachable.

The literature on educommunication, media education, and media literacy provides a starting point for thinking about the role the acquisition of media skills can play not only as a "prerequisite for citizenship and participation in society" (FERRARI et al., 2020, p. 19) but also for professional qualification. References on media education consider media literate citizens to be those individuals capable of critically evaluating the information they obtain from the media, who effectively use the media as tools of self-expression, and who interact ethically and responsibly with the information environment (FERRARI et al., 2020). Generally, that understanding of media education focuses more on information consumption in mediatized networks and the ability to recognize misinformation or biased information. These references equate "digital fluency" with "maturity and responsibility to navigate the busy paths of the information environment" and discern "what is valid, relevant, and reliable in an ocean of ideas, news, images, videos, narratives, audio recordings, and opinions" (FERRARI et al., 2020, p. 17). However, we are interested in emphasizing media education for individuals' self-expression, providing them with communication skills that allow them to be autonomous as communicators in their professional activities.

Adding communicational and promotional skills to occupation-specific skills points to "communication as a late basic science" (SIGNATES, 2018), implying Communication in the basic training of professionals from different areas. Signates (2018) proposes shifting Communication from an applied science concerned only with interventions into reality towards basic sciences. He criticizes the current understanding of the area in Brazil, which often sees it only "as applied knowledge (in the sense of applying multiple and poorly defined knowledge)" (SIGNATES, 2018, p. 3). Instead, the author defends communication as an autonomous knowledge capable of expanding our understanding of reality based on its theories, hypotheses, and concepts. In this way, the applied knowledge of the area must be subject to its basic theoretical knowledge. In other words, besides mastering a set of concrete skills that allow self-expression, one must also have basic (theoretical) knowledge of Communication and communicational acts to support such skills.

Communication would contribute to understanding reality and provide the theoretical foundation for its practical applications.

In that spirit, we aim to develop a training itinerary for self-employed professionals. Based on the reported cases, it is clear there is a recurring demand for communication and media skills for self-employed professionals to use Instagram as a platform for promoting and creating a personal brand. Professionals, thus, must master the following ten different skills to achieve success in that endeavor: a) understand how platforms work, including user habits and languages and technical issues; b) understand who the public is, their interests, and the best way to communicate with them; c) plan messages they will convey strategically; d) write texts clearly and concisely; e) communicate verbally with fluency and establish empathy with the public; f) explain complex ideas and concepts in a way that is understandable to a non-specialist audience; g) master fundamental aspects of audiovisual language and editing; h) have knowledge of visual design and technical skills in image editing; i) apply storytelling to everyday practices and life stories, bringing the public closer to them; and j) have a critical ability to evaluate and refine communication strategies according to platforms' quantitative metrics and the qualitative feedback from audiences.

We observed that the skills relate to different specialties in the field of communication, such as digital media, textual, imagery, and audiovisual production. Also, the ability to synthesize complex ideas and concepts clearly and objectively for their audiences is one of the principal skills developed by journalists that these professionals employ in their digital media spaces. Furthermore, the theoretical framework of communication, which aims to understand different aspects of communication acts, also provides support for professionals' decision-making and understanding of the communication scenario surrounding them.

In short, to be a good communicator in the online context, it is essential to have communication and media skills and understand the media platforms used and the logic of interactions and cultures established in each digital environment. That requires knowing the media and their operating sense and taking communication as a basic science. For a professional to be fluent and autonomous in their online communication and capable of creating and managing their brand competently, they must have this skill set. Furthermore, the support and training in digital communication of self-employed professionals open interesting work possibilities for communicators who have received training in different technical, interpretative, and critical aspects of that process. Therefore, it is the responsibility of professionals trained in communication to develop curricula that equip self-employed professionals in different areas with this set of knowledge.

Final considerations

Digital media presence is essential for promoting the activities of various occupations that aim to attract and retain customers. Self-employed professionals increasingly need to include the labor of social media communication in their routines, understanding digital dissemination as an integral part of their work activities. That leads us to believe that communication skills and knowledge of Communication as a whole should be considered fundamental for professionals from different areas of activity.

We observe the high value attributed to authenticity and transparency in the contemporary digital context, both for individuals and institutions. These values mean that the professional communication of individuals and small businesses necessarily mixes with their characteristics, personal journeys, and everyday life stories, which have the potential to create identification with the public. This combination of exchanges with the public on specific subjects, permeated by personal accounts of professionals' philosophy of life and individual histories, builds, on the one hand, the idea of closeness between the public and the communicator but, on the other, makes it difficult and unproductive to outsource services for communication in digital environments (such as hiring a "social media" professional). Outsourcing this communication, which should be direct and personal, can hinder the identification process, one of the main strengths of this type of communication.

From observing three profiles of self-employed professionals with audiences at different scales, we could map a set of ten essential skills for good communication performance in digital media. We believe skills like writing texts, producing videos, and fluency are not innate but techniques that one can and should learn. Frequently creating quality content and establishing effective communication methods with your audience are fundamental elements for building a professional online presence (KARHAWI, 2017). That demonstrates there is a market niche for communication professionals to offer training and consultancy to help self-employed professionals acquire media skills and communication abilities.

Finally, we point out the need to expand studies that aim to understand the new communication skills required of subjects (in their professional activities or not) when producing, consuming, and disseminating content in digital environments. We acknowledge that the observation we carried out focuses on three cases, analyzed qualitatively, and does not represent the totality of professionals who use communication tools, making further studies necessary for a more comprehensive understanding of this scenario and the potential market niche for communicators.

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ARTIGO

"Tá, tá movimentando": The Publishing Industry and TikTok in Brazil

"Tá, tá movimentando": a indústria editorial e o TikTok no Brasil

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Resumo: *A partir da comunidade literária booktok, esta pesquisa busca compreender como a apropriação da plataforma TikTok impacta a indústria editorial no Brasil. O objetivo é atentar como booktokers atualizam o conceito de leitura compartilhada na era digital repercutindo no consumo literário e em novas práticas de popularização da leitura. Metodologicamente, o estudo é exploratório de viés qualitativo, com inspiração na netnografia. Foram monitoradas as hashtags #fofocaliterária e #booktokbr, no período de dezembro de 2021 a julho de 2022, com a coleta de vídeos classificados pela plataforma como de maior relevância. Os resultados apontam para a diversidade de conteúdos e o papel de influência dos booktokers como agentes importantes para o mercado editorial.*

Palavras-chave: *Booktoker; booktok; Tiktok; Leitura Compartilhada; mercado editorial.*

Abstract: *This research intent to unterstand how booktok community, through the TikTok plataform apropriations made by the users, impacts Brazil's publishing industry. Our purpose is to attempt at how the booktoker readers update the concept of shared reading in the digital age, the impacting on literary consumption and on new practices of popularization of reading. Methodologically, was made an exploratory study with a qualitative bias, inspired by netnography. The*

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hashtags #fofocaliterária and #booktokbr were monitored from December 2021 to July 2022, with the collection of videos classified by the platform as most relevant. The results point to the diversity of contents and the influential role of booktokers as important agents for the publishing market.

Keywords: *Desinformation; Booktoker, booktok; TikTok; shared reading; publishing industry.*

"Tá, tá movimentando" (meaning something like "Yeah, it's shaking") is part of a chorus that went viral on TikTok, accompanied by a choreography. However, in this text, we will not delve into music and dance but how TikTok is shaking the publishing industry in Brazil, ranging from commercial publishers to independent publications. We see TikTok as a platform currently playing a significant role in promoting titles and authors through content created by so-called *booktokers*.

The platform of short and viral videos (ABIDIN, 2021) is fostering the publishing market by building a community of recommendations and discussions about books called *booktok* (MERGA, 2021; GUIÑEZ-CABRERA; MANSILLA-OBANDO, 2022) like what happens on YouTube with the *booktube* (JEFFMAN, 2015) and on Instagram with the *bookstagram* or bookgram (VIEIRA; CIRINO, 2021). The dynamism of TikTok lies in the circulation of creative trends and the use of hashtags connecting videos from different producers on the same topic. In the case of literary content, the relationship is positive for Brazilian publishers, given the sales increase for books with lots of views on the platform. Some bookshops even have created spaces to display books trending on *booktok*.

Algorithmic logic that seeks to keep users increasingly connected and engaged governs the circulation of content on TikTok (SMITH, 2021). Unlike the usability of platforms like Instagram and Facebook, TikTok has a high delivery rate, a dynamic highlighted by Abidin (2021) when investigating the navigation processes that favor the reach and can, therefore, make the content go viral. Given this, we ask: How did TikTok become a space that encourages reader interaction and, consequently, the promotion of books?

People's interaction with digital media creates links and new niches for producing social and cultural meaning (WINOCUR, 2009) and provides readers with a collective and deterritorialized act (CANCLINI, 2015), updating the dynamics of socialization of reading (CHARTIER, 1998). Thus, this work aims to explore how Brazilian *booktokers* update the concept of shared reading in the digital age, reflecting on literary consumption and new practices for popularizing reading.

Methodologically, the study is exploratory with a qualitative bias inspired by netnography (KOZINETS, 2014). We monitored the popular *booktok* hashtags #*fofocaliterária* (#*literarygossip* in English) and #*booktokbr* from December 2021 to July 2022, collecting videos classified by the platform as most relevant. Furthermore, we recorded our observations about the workings of TikTok in a field journal.

As initial results, we highlight the participation and creation of literary trends, production of reviews, recommendations of LGBTQI+ books, and high circulation of books with erotic (hot) themes, especially those published by Kindle Unlimited platforms and by independent authors. These indicators help us reflect on the relationships that readers are building as a way of experiencing, promoting, and consuming literature.

Reading market

The publishing industry encompasses a constellation of actors. Following Bourdieu's (2008) distinctions within the field of production of cultural goods, these actors are not only companies that publish and sell books but also authors, writers, translators, proofreaders, and illustrators, among other professionals, who work closer either to the commercial side or the cultural side. In publishing practices, distinctions within the field correspond to the conception of different business models, the first being that of traditional publishers, generally medium or large, and the second being that of small publishers and independent publishers. Thompson (2013) and Lalli and Schöndube (2012) indicate that the denial of profit due to the cultural and creative quality of works is a fundamental point of differentiation reinforced by small publishers. However, the apparent opposition between commerce and culture is present in the editorial product, as "the book, an object of two faces (economic and symbolic), is both merchandise and meaning." (BOURDIEU, 2018, p. 222).

When we understand that books are objects of consumption and, thus, cultural goods, we place the publishing field as part of the creative economy, in which symbolic value is essential to generating economic value (FIGUEIREDO, 2014). We agree with Canclini (2012) on the need to observe the links between the economy, social development, and cultural innovations, given the conditions of production, circulation, and access offered by recent technologies. From this perspective, we will seek to articulate how reading and, by extension, book sales have been encouraged on the TikTok platform despite the crisis scenario that has plagued the publishing field in Brazil for years.

The fifth edition of the *Retratos da Leitura no Brasil* survey, released by Instituto Pró-Livro, revealed the loss of more than 4.6 million readers in the Brazilian market, dropping from 56% to 52% from 2015 to 2019. The survey focuses on readers who have read an entire book or parts in the last three months. Considering works read voluntarily by interviewees, the average number of books read is 1.61 and drops to 0.81 if counting only works of literature. The general reading rate, including didactic works, is 2.60 books read. Children and adolescents are among the biggest consumers of literature in Brazil. However, this number decreases as children get older and relative to the literary works recommended by the school (INSTITUTO PRÓ-LIVRO, 2020).

The data indicate that "mandatory" reading in the school environment appears to be an obstacle to maintaining the habit of reading. Silva and Sanfelici (2015) report that some young people use spaces outside of school to read that are in line with their literary tastes. "Apparently, and quite simply, we can say that this occurs given the mismatch between the interests of the school and those of adolescents" (SILVA; SANFELICI, 2015, p. 193). Correa (2010) reinforces that reading "for pleasure" needs to be encouraged in the school environment and that there is an important role of the school in training new readers, as "reading does not yet have a secure place in this society" (CORREA, 2010, p. 284).

The data indicate that "mandatory" reading in the school environment appears to be an obstacle to maintaining the habit of reading. Silva and Sanfelici (2015) report that some young people use spaces outside of school to read that align with their literary tastes. "Apparently, and quite simply, we can say this occurs given the mismatch between the interests of the school and those of teenagers" (SILVA; SANFELICI, 2015, p. 193). Correa (2010) reinforces that reading "for pleasure" needs to be encouraged in the school environment and that school has a significant role in training new readers, as "reading does not yet have a secured place in this society" (CORREA, 2010, p. 284). On the other hand, the growth of reading communities mediated by digital platforms is noticeable. As Chartier (1998, p. 104) explains, "It is necessary to use what the school norm rejects as a support to provide access to reading in its fullness."

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Brazilian publishing market shows the complexity of analyzing reading in the country. The *Retratos da Leitura no Brasil*, released monthly by the Brazilian National Union of Book Editors (SNEL), showed the book sector increased in the first months of the pandemic, remaining active in 2021 and slowing down in 2022. Although the beginning of the period of social isolation hurt physical bookstores, e-commerce, digital bookstores, and stores that started selling online helped increase sales during the pandemic (CRUZ, 2020).

Besides commerce, the relevance of the internet lies in bringing book consumers together with an emphasis on the relationship between readers and content producers. In 2019, 3% of respondents in the *Retratos da Leitura no Brasil* survey chose a book to read based on recommendations from *booktubers*, *bookgramers*, and *booktokers*. This index rises to 28% in 2022 in the version of the survey carried out during the 26th São Paulo International Book Biennial. Although the scope of the two surveys is relatively different, it is notable that 52% of respondents point to digital influencers as motivators for interest in books. Therefore, considering the niche of readers in an event that promotes reading, the role of the internet is undeniable. Although the scope of the two surveys is relatively different, it is notable that 52% of respondents point to digital influencers as motivators for interest in books. Therefore, considering the niche of readers in an event that promotes reading, the role of the internet is undeniable (INSTITUTO PRÓ-LIVRO, 2020, 2022).

According to a report published by the newspaper O Globo, the 26th São Paulo International Book Biennial revealed the impact of TikTok among readers with sectors dedicated to books that were successful on the platform (GABRIEL, 2022). Publish News, a portal dedicated to the publishing market, presses such as Seguinte, an imprint of Companhia das Letras, declared that the best-selling books at the event resulted from TikTok recommendations (FACCHINI, 2022). It is clear, therefore, that platforms are significant for encouraging reading as a potential space to promote debates and provide exchanges not found in school environments, as discussed by Sanfelici and Silva (2015, p. 194):

> In other words, if several friends read the same work out of free interest, they can create the opportunity, in their space outside of school, to discuss their identification with the character or plot, their feelings about reading and the issues addressed, and other subjects habitually silenced in the classroom.

As Canclini points out in an interview, "There is always society in reading. That is much more evident when we see that there are social situations, such as the book fair, in which we gather around reading, reading groups, YouTubers, book critics, the multiple media and intermediations that exist between texts and readers" (MAZER, 2017, p. 7). From the data presented so far, it is possible to perceive the complexity of processes and contexts that constitute the publishing industry in Brazil, which the sociability surrounding the act of reading permeates.

Michele Petit (2009) elucidates the importance of reading and sharing to produce a sense of belonging for the reader. This exchange is a way of connecting with others because "Reading does not isolate oneself from the world. Reading introduces a world differently" (PETIT, 2009, p. 45). Reading makes it possible to open up to others, not only through the forms of sociability and conversations that take place around books, because, according to Chartier (2011, p. 20), "each reader, based on their references, individual or social, historical or existential, gives a more or less singular, more or less shared meaning to the texts it appropriates."

In this way, the reading experience is not limited to just an individual and silent relationship (CHARTIER, 1998). Just as acts of consumption reveal sociocultural processes (CANCLINI, 2008), it is possible to think of shared reading as a fundamental part of the relationship dynamics between the reader and the reading experience. Therefore, we should "not just ask readers what they read and how much time but observe their exchanges" (CANCLINI, 2015, p. 12).

According to Canclini (2014), readers comment and interact through blog posts or social media. These actions give clues not only on how to publish but also on how to display and choose titles, demonstrating readers do not read alone but as part of reading communities. The act of sharing, a characteristic of platforms, makes the reader also share what they read. When interviewing Latin American *booktokers*, Guiñez-Cabrera and Mansilla-Obando (2022) highlight that the motivations for producing literary content connect to the passion for books, the possibility of sharing the same tastes, and creating bonds. Therefore, platforms become a place for meetings, dissemination, interaction, and identification among readers, who find collective ways to approach and popularize reading on TikTok.

By appropriating digital spaces to talk about books, readers act as mediators, creating engaged communities that interact, replicate, and remix circulating content through hashtags, audio recordings, and collaborations. More than making readers part of the digital environment, the sociability found on platforms like TikTok turns them into people who act critically in promoting reading through videos, reviews, and trends.

Methodological indications

The popularization of TikTok began with videos of users dubbing songs and audio, becoming a sensation in the music industry with viral dance posts. However, the variety of content on the platform is increasing constantly, building large and different niches, ranging from mysticism and Tarot readings to a variety of ASMRs[3] and videos of home organization and cleaning.

According to Smith (2021) and Abidin (2021), TikTok presents a random set of videos without a specific order in the first access and then "learns" what the user likes, making the content more personalized over time. According to Walker (2022), this algorithmic operation is known as a "content graph," meaning it is structured based on what the user watches and not on the popularity of accounts or number of followers, making it possible for any video to reach a considerable range.

The application's main navigation method is a tag system that compiles the content, making it findable through the search tool. For this reason, most videos published on the platform use tagging, subtitles, and trending features to accumulate engagement and appear on For You, TikTok's home screen, where users have contact with the content most relevant to them in that social media. This section is not the same for all users: "Although different people may find some of the same featured videos, each person's feed is unique and tailored to that specific user" (WALKER, 2022, p. 92).

In addition to using the traditional format of tagging using the hash or tic-tac-toe symbol (#) together with a keyword, as was popularized by Twitter and Instagram in their navigation systems, TikTok also uses resources such as audio and a stitch tool as navigation tags to organize content with similar themes. According to Abidin (2020), audio clips would fall into a category called templatability, a resource to engage in the popularization and virality of memes. Users can find these audio clips in the platform's original library or add, edit, and mix them. Abidin considers audio clips one of the app's most innovative features. Audio clips are also essential tools for the narrative construction of a video or for consolidating a viral trend and can come with "transitions," which are video editing effects. Another factor that sets TikTok apart from other

3 Autonomous sensory meridian response refers to sounds that provoke a feeling of relaxation.

apps and audiovisual social media is the practicality with which users can create and edit content.

To develop this exploratory work, we used netnography, following the precepts of Kozinets (2014). The choice of netnography proved to be efficient as a methodology for exploring and analyzing the functioning of TikTok from the user's navigation perspective, as it allowed us to understand the dynamics of discovery, circulation, and virality (ABIDIN, 2021) of literary content in an algorithm that seeks to maintain the user increasingly connected and engaged (SMITH, 2021).

We organized the investigation in three main phases: 1) observing content circulating on TikTok on literature topics and understanding how the platform works, 2) data collection, and 3) interpretation based on ethnographic inspirations. We recorded our observations of the platform in a field journal. According to Martino (2018), a field journal serves as a document that, when consulted, allows you to find information that can be enriching for the development of the research.

From December 2021 to July 2022, we established observation periods and collection criteria. Subsequently, we organized the data for content analysis. We systematized the process as follows: 1) Creating profiles; 2) Beginning observations; 3) Collecting the first ten videos classified as "Most Relevant" and "Most Liked" on TikTok, manually using the platform's download feature on the last Friday of each month; 4) Break period; and 5) Return for observation and coding.

Developing the methodology for mapping TikTok, Merga (2021) used a profile created solely for observations so the preferences of an existing personal account would not influence data collection. We applied the same choice in this research. However, for comparative purposes, we decided to use a personal account, which had been active for longer, too. The monitoring of these two profiles did not start simultaneously. As one of the profiles was a new user account with automatic settings provided by the application, we monitored it slightly longer to observe the algorithm learning process. A short period of inactivity was enough for the platform to "unlearn" the user's preferences, returning to random mode again, a fact also reported by Abidin (2021). It was, therefore, necessary to access the platform more frequently for the algorithm to record browsing preferences. That no longer occurred when we personalized the account with a username, photo, and name; that is, a similar configuration to the personal profile also used in the research.

We used TikTok's literature niche as a research focus to understand how the resources and navigability of the platform contribute to popularizing and strengthening sociability in literary communities. We, therefore, begin entering the field by searching for the keyword "book" in the app search bar. At first, there is no need to push the search button for suggestions to appear, as TikTok immediately recommends some tags in a suggestions tab. However, when pressing search, we are directed to a page compiling videos on the literary universe and suggesting profiles with the exact keyword or a variation in their usernames, bios, audio clips, etc. Besides this content, there is the presence of more popular hashtags. Due to the amount of content found and the extensive period stipulated for the observation and collection phase, we decided to use the most relevant and viewed section as a filter and limited ourselves to collecting the first ten videos in that category. From the perspective of a qualitative exploratory study, we outline below evidence and reflections on the ways of appropriating TikTok and, in particular, the *booktok* literary community.

Exploring booktok

As discussed previously, the notion of shared reading refers to conversations about books, the interaction among readers, and, consequently, the promotion of works with a positive impact on the publishing industry. We identified, a priori, the tag #*booktok* or the Brazilian versions #*booktokbr* or #*booktokbrasil* as the principal hashtags that signal literary content on TikTok. Soon after, the hashtags #*bookstan* and #*fofocaliterária* emerged with the highest number of views.

We note the growth in views of videos containing the #*booktok* tag from the beginning of the research until now. According to data presented and captured on the platform in December 2021, the hashtag accumulated 30.8 billion views and reached 63.3 billion in July 2022. In December 2022, we recorded a volume of 96.1 billion views. These indices corroborate the relevance that TikTok has acquired in promoting works and encouraging reading, as we have already explained with data on the Brazilian market.

In floating reading, the circulation of content in the *booktok* community includes various videos and themes, which may or may not represent viral trends, humor, memes, remixing, and interaction strategies, such as requests to follow the profile, comment, or like the video. Recommendations for works, in general, can be seen in review format or specific trends such as "*five books that made me cry*," "*books you must read*," "*books to read in 24 hours*," etc. We also find reading vlogs, Literary Marathon challenges, and tips on how preserving and handling books. The POVs[4] of characters and scenes from books often signal *booktokers*' dedication to producing scripts and improvising characterization with clothes and wigs without losing the homemade tone. There is also room to approach literary diversity with LGBTQIA+ books and works with Black representation among authors and protagonists of narratives.

The content focused on teaching digital reading tools, such as the Kindle, reinforces the expansion of the notion of books beyond the materiality of paper and serves as advertising for the Amazon e-reader. Likewise, promoting independent works on the Kindle Unlimited platform alludes to internal disputes in the publishing field. On the one hand, that demonstrates the strength of the Amazon conglomerate, which enables publishing without the need for a press, escaping the commercial side of the editorial logic (BOURDIEU, 2008, 2018). On the other hand, it serves as an incentive for self-publishing, asserting independent ideals: *booktokers* believe in the symbolic value of what they produce, contributing to greater literary plurality (LALLI;

4 On TikTok, the acronym POV indicates actions or speeches that happen from the point of view of characters or readers, whether real or the result of the creativity of TikTokers inspired by the plots of narratives they read or their experiences as readers.

SCHÖNDUBE, 2012). Independent authors, in turn, see in TikTok and in linking to hashtags the possibility of advertising their work, becoming known, and participating in the publishing market. It is worth mentioning that most of the independent recommendations on *booktok* refer to erotic novels, the so-called "hot" books.

Merga (2021) describes the importance of understanding hashtags, especially given how the booktok community uses them. Despite much research into the social and political contexts involving hashtags, the terminologies TikTok's literary community uses in hashtags and its value relationships in building the community have been little explored. From this perspective, besides the notes made in general about *#booktok*, we focused on evaluating what circulates with the tag *#fofocaliterária*.

In December 2022, *#fofocaliterária* had around 214 million views and became a viral trend on TikTok between 2020 and 2021. The videos published with the hashtag have as their main structure presenting book plots as if they were gossip told to friends. The trend boosted the dissemination of literary titles, from new releases to books published some time ago and classics. Among the titles highlighted in gossip on the platform are young adult literature such as *Liars* (2014)[5] and *Blood Red, White and Blue* (2019), the recovery of classics such as *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and *The Outsider* (1942). The video published by a literary profile presenting the work of Albert Camus has accumulated more than 800 thousand views, causing an increase in demand for the book, according to the National Union of Book Editors (SNEL).

Like the publications they comment on *booktok*, content producers also gain prominence with the hashtag. A literary profile with the most viewed videos in the category presents books like *Later* by Stephen King (2021) and *It Ends with Us* (2016) by Colleen Hoover, one of the most cited authors among *booktok* participants. The videos have an easy and relaxed language, arousing TikTok users' interest in reading. This dynamic is a significant part of the reader identification process,

5 We are referencing the original publication date of these books to show the temporal variety of titles circulating on TikTok.

as it recognizes in the producer someone who shares the same universe of interest. After all, the *booktoker* is a reader. According to Merga (2021), hashtags are responsible for building and establishing a positive relationship with reader identity and helping more people with a common interest recognize themselves as part of this community.

Among the most recurrent readings and authors in *#fofocaliterária*, we note foreign titles that already have some popularity. Among the most viewed videos are *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue* (2020) by V. E. Schwab, The *Unhoneymooners* (2019) by Christina Lauren, and books by author Colleen Hoover, as previously mentioned. However, in the Brazilian literary world, TikTok brings recommendations such as *Dom Casmurro* (1899) by Machado de Assis and more contemporary titles, such as books by Raphael Montes. Among his most popular are *Jantar Secreto* (2016) and *Uma Mulher no Escuro* (2019), which received the Jabuti Award for Best Entertainment Novel in 2020.

Merga (2021), in a survey carried out with non-Brazilian participants in the Booktok community, found that 40.5% of the most recurring themes in videos are recommendations, 24.1% are related to experiences shared by readers, and 14.6% deal with the emotional response to reading. We found a similar dynamic in this research when observing the hashtags *#fofocaliterária* and *#booktobr*. Most of the analyzed videos have literary recommendations as their primary intention, and for this, they use narrative resources such as storytelling and the perspective of establishing a form of reader-to-reader conversation. According to Merga (2021, p. 5), "one of the documented attractions of TikTok is its capacity to facilitate knowledge sharing."

The sharing dynamic activates a diversity of resources. The platform's native audio clips, keywords, and editing strategies help capture the reader's attention. Another relevant aspect: the videos that stand out seem looser and less scripted, prioritizing extroversion and generating the feeling that there is a direct exchange between the producer and the user at whom the video aims. This more stripped-down aesthetic follows what was said by How (2022): ninety percent of the content that goes viral is authentic and natural (in WALKER, 2022, p. 90). According to Merga (2021), social media plays a fundamental role in the socialization of participants. Therefore, it is necessary to learn the language norms among *booktokers* to interpret the cultural aspects of the online community.

Merga (2021) states that linguistic norms generated in TikTok communities translate to offline communities. This literary niche has its expressions to refer to books and other elements of readers' everyday lives. Some of these expressions have been popular since the first literature communities formed on the internet, while others have had their meanings adapted to the language of TikTok. Therefore, some clues allow us to observe an initial path to understand how reader communities operate and organize themselves on *booktok* based on monitoring the platform uses. Furthermore, in an overview of the Brazilian literary community, it is possible to understand its specificities, the influences inherited from the dynamics of foreign readers, and which interaction characteristics are part of the *booktok* as a whole.

Final remarks

In response to the initial problem, we adopt an exploratory perspective on how Brazilian *booktokers* appropriate the TikTok platform and highlight the particularities that technologies bring to the processes of reading and literary dissemination. We agree with Canclini (2012) that economic and cultural development are not separate from the technological apparatus. And we see in the *booktok* community another broad and deterritorialized space to talk about books, just like *booktube* and *bookgram*. To a certain extent, these spaces update the primordial forms of socialization of reading, which recall reading aloud in groups, as Chartier (1998, 2011) illustrates. Furthermore, if traditional means of training readers, such as schools and libraries, face difficulties of various kinds, knowledge shared on the internet shows other ways of encouraging reading in the current century, whether by influencing the discovery of a diversity of authors and themes, by indicating support for digital reading, or by revamping literary controversies, such as questioning if Capitu betrayed Bentinho or not to promote *Dom Casmurro*.

The readings shared on TikTok constitute both conversational dynamics and social exchanges, as proposed by Canclini (2014, 2015). Videos share impressions about classic and contemporary works, national and foreign, in the format of reviews or recommendations. The trends observed and, in particular, the narratives involved in #*fofocaliterária* incite readers' curiosity and encourage the habit of reading, feeding *booktok* itself. After all, the content producer is also a reader. Furthermore, videos impact the search and purchase of titles and authors, as we can attest through data from the publishing market.

We consider the role played by *booktokers* is worth reflecting on. These "reader-producers" do not cease to occupy the reader's place from which they speak, paving the way for identification with other readers. When exerting influence, they become, as Bourdieu (2018) says, a kind of tastemaker, like an influential critic or a personality with power in the publishing world and, therefore, agents who do not have official status but intervene in the functioning of the field. Thus, the logic of promotion and circulation of platforms also drives the publishing industry.

Finally, the netnographic experience enriched the research, as it elucidated connections inside and outside the internet. The presence of readers on social media not only expands the debate about literature but also reflects on the attendance of readers in physical spaces, such as the Biennial. Besides observing the hashtag #*bienal* on *booktok*, the record attendance at the 2022 event, social media personalities as attractions, and TikTok book recommendations among the best sellers corroborate the impact of the platform in the publishing market. We observed that sharing purchases and promotions with the hashtags #*bookfriday* and #*primeday* fosters consumer relationships and that independent authors can promote their works and reach new readers. The broader ongoing research intends to delve deeper into these aspects in tension with the symbolic relationships of interactions encouraged by the *booktok* literary community in Brazil.

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Broadcast TV and free streaming: SBT's offer of Video on Demand

TV aberta e "streaming" gratuito: a oferta de vídeo sob demanda do SBT

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Resumo: *Este artigo tem por objetivo refletir sobre a oferta gratuita de TV sob demanda, a partir de estudo de caso das opções de Video on Demand do SBT, ambas gratuitas: o site SBT Vídeos e o canal no YouTube SBT Online. Iniciamos com reflexões sobre os riscos e as vantagens da oferta gratuita via YouTube. Em seguida, analisamos as duas iniciativas e suas especificidades, que apontam para estratégias e públicos distintos, especialmente no que diz respeito às opções de navegação, à forma de distribuição dos conteúdos e às possibilidades de interação dos usuários. Entre os principais resultados, destacamos a necessidade de olhar crítico sobre a distribuição de conteúdo digital na sociedade de plataforma, a particularidade do site SBT Vídeos de individualização do consumo e os canais do SBT no YouTube como possibilitadores de interação e experiência coletiva.*

Palavras-chave: *Video on Demand; TV por streaming; SBT; televisão.*

Abstract: *This article aims to reflect upon the offer of VoD television, based on a case study of two free streaming platforms from the Brazilian TV channel SBT: the website SBT Vídeos and the YouTube channel SBT Online. We start with considerations about the advantages and risks of the free offer via YouTube. Next, we present a brief description of the two initiatives and their specificities, which point to different strategies, especially concerning modes of navigation,*

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content distribution and user interaction. Among the main results, we highlight the need for a critical look at digital content distribution strategies in the platform society and strategy adopted for the SBT Videos website as less interactive and more individualized, while the possibilities of interaction offered by YouTube for the SBT online channels allow greater interaction and collective experience.

Keywords: *Video on Demand; streaming; SBT; television.*

Introduction

Technological evolution brings an increase in television viewing possibilities and stimulates cultural changes, such as the consumption of video on multiple screens and on-demand content. The offer of video on demand (VoD) became popular on streaming platforms and gained prominence in discussions in the audiovisual market and academic circles. Open TV channels in Brazil joined this dynamic, seeking, each in its own way, to offer television content through different strategies, including subscription services or free offerings, production of exclusive content, interaction proposals, and data collection from user navigation. In this context, this paper aims to reflect on the free offer of on-demand TV, based on observations of SBT's (Brazilian Television System) content distribution strategy via streaming. To reflect on the technological and cultural transformations that the supply of television content is undergoing, we highlight media, cultural, and ethical issues when approaching the on-demand content strategies of SBT.

The theoretical framework draws on research and studies on streaming (LOTZ, 2017; BUONANNO, 2019), audiovisual transmediation (JENKINS, 2009; WOLFF, 2015), the digital environment, and platform society (VAN DIJCK, 2013; COULDRY, 2019; LEMOS, 2021). The methodology is a case study with descriptive and interpretative analysis of the observed data. Inferences from the case study focus, especially, on aspects of the supposed free cost and, further on, on specific characteristics of each initiative, which suggest different strategies and audiences, namely, the user's navigation options, the form of making content available, and interaction possibilities. Analytical reflections are qualitative, descriptive, and interpretative.

We chose the SBT channel because, among national television networks in Brazil, it presents two consumption options via streaming: its SBT Videos website, which makes available all the broadcaster's recent content, and the SBT Online channel on YouTube, which brings together subchannels with programs shown on TV. Despite owning the SBT Videos website, SBT inserts its content via a link to

YouTube, the platform that stores all the network's videos, as we will see in detail later. Thus, both the SBT Videos website and the SBT Online channel have YouTube as their video storage. But they have specific content arrangements and forms of consumption that, besides aesthetics or function, provide the user with slightly different experiences.

After a brief theoretical contextualization of the media convergence scenario and the transformation from traditional to digital media, we continue to reflect on the gratis nature of SBT's streaming services. Unlike international VoD portals (Netflix, Amazon Prime, or Disney Plus) or even national portals (Globoplay or PlayPlus), SBT's streaming options are free both on the official SBT Videos website and on the SBT Online YouTube channel (even though YouTube has a paid subscription option, as we will discuss later). The network's choice to provide options without a monthly subscription brings reflections on free streaming, which corresponds to the traditional economic logic of free-to-air TV and leads to greater democratization of access. On the other hand, operating on a big data company like YouTube has implications for users, such as the nebulous processing of their data. Finally, in empirical analysis, we sought to understand the network's strategies, taking into account three main aspects: the differences in navigation between the SBT Videos website and SBT Online (SBT's YouTube channel), the possibilities of interaction between users, and the forms of consumption that both provide.

The "streaming" era

Like any cultural artifact, television has undergone several transformations since it arrived in Brazil, ranging from color TV to HD image quality, from the emergence of remote control to access to information about the program through its commands (synopses, schedules, credits, etc.), from audio options (SAP button) to the surround system, from the emergence of cable-TV channels to video-on-demand offers. The public, the entertainment industry, and academic research constantly debate such changes.

TV is part of the flow of cultural symbols and traditions that, as we know, are not impervious. The context of culture changes; thus, experiences and the meaning of its symbols change. As Arantes (1990, p. 22) warns, “It is possible to preserve ancient dances, expressions, and objects, but it is not possible to avoid the change in meaning that occurs when altering the context of production of cultural events.”. Canclini (2006) goes further, stating that cultures not only transform themselves but coexist and intertwine, becoming hybrids.

Thus, the television schedule today coexists with TV on demand. The habit of children in the 1990s, who eagerly waited for the airing of their favorite cartoon, is now gone with the alternatives for watching content when it is most convenient. This change happened due to technological advances, online data transmission, and the arrival of streaming.

The consumption of on-demand shows has become increasingly popular, often leading to questions about the end of traditional television. It is worth remembering that the same fear was expressed concerning radio or cinema when TV emerged. However, today, we know that different media transform and coexist or converge, culminating in what Jenkins calls convergence culture (2009). Jenkins (2009) argues the emergence of new media will not lead to the disappearance of traditional media, as they tend to coexist. This same media convergence helps explain the change in how the public relates to the media.

The creation and development of communication technologies have increased, and so have the possibilities for disseminating information and cultural products. For a long time, showing entertainment to a large number of people was the responsibility of broadcasters holding formal public concessions, such as radio stations and TV networks. Today, these media share space with computers, cell phones, and tablets. Wolff (2015) states that platforms like Netflix are transforming shows and television values, such as the previously supposed passive audience, towards active and interactive consumption on computer screens.

Even though they feature different transmission technologies and enable individualized consumption habits, the programs maintain the production standards of the television market (LOTZ, 2017). According to the author, what changes is the form of distribution. The internet has expanded the ways of distributing audiovisual products and, consequently, the means of accessing them. Initially, users engaged in laborious searches for downloading films and series through peer-to-peer file-sharing software, such as Winamp, eMule, and 4shared. The practice, once very common in the early and mid-2000s, raised discussions about piracy, besides presenting problems, such as corrupted files.

With the arrival of broadband internet and data bundles, it was possible to reach streaming, which interfered with how we consume music, films, games, and TV, as the download becomes a package transfer of a file in the cloud. The principal example is YouTube, the most accessed streaming platform in the world. Launched in 2005, YouTube catalyzed a significant change in how we consume videos by introducing us to on-demand consumption, in which the viewer decides what, how, and where to watch, changing the habit of having an exact time and place to consume audiovisual content.

Since then, several streaming services for films and series have appeared, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Apple TV+, Hulu, etc. In Brazil, the major television networks also joined, with Globoplay, SBT Vídeos, Record PlayPlus, and Bandplay. These services confirm the convergence that Jenkins talks about, as networks saw in streaming the possibility of expanding or retaining their audience, constituting what Lotz (2017) calls television distributed over the internet through websites (focusing on audiovisual content) and digital platforms (also recognized for their interactive nature).

In line with what Jenkins (2009) says about new media, Cannito (2010) states that television will not change or lose its identity but will become increasingly specific. Free-to-air and general network TV offers a vertical and horizontal program to serve diverse audiences in different age groups, social groups, and cultural groups. Streaming platforms, in turn, fuel the movement of audiovisual productions aimed at niche audiences.

> Digital will not destroy television; it will contribute to its natural evolution, enhancing its characteristics. The best technological solutions, therefore, will always be those developed in dialogue with the needs of the public. (CANNITO, 2010, p. 213)

Fidler (1997) presents a similar thinking. The author uses the term mediamorphosis to reflect on the technological transformations of the media, considering the possibility of the traditional and the new existing simultaneously and evolving together.

Studying the communication system as a whole, we see new media do not rise spontaneously or independently – they emerge gradually from the metamorphosis of old media. And that when newer forms of communication media emerge the older forms usually do not die – they continue to evolve and adapt. (FIDLER, 1998, p. 57)

The expansion of TV to the streaming model occurs in this context of media metamorphosis and convergence. Today, we do not believe it is possible to talk about the disappearance of TV or even the end of serials. Television programming coexists with the distribution of videos on demand, causing changes in forms of consumption and even in television formats and genres, as Buonanno (2019) indicates, analyzing the decline of North American soap operas, not the disappearance.

The assumption that different technologies complement each other is evident in that streaming has included television elements in its programming. Portals such as Amazon Prime, Star Plus, and Disney Plus have started providing “live” shows such as sports programming. In turn, TV channels are not only making their scheduled programs available but offering exclusive content for their online portals. That demonstrates that audiovisual content flows are convergent, dynamic, and cyclical.

This logic includes SBT and its on-demand content distribution sites: SBT Videos (its own website) and SBT Online (YouTube channel), which offer exclusive content and specific editions at the same time as "live" broadcasts, that is, aligned with the television schedule. Programs in diverse formats coexist and present specificities that, more than different ways of consuming audiovisual content, configure distinct television broadcasting and consumption strategies.

The Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão (SBT)

SBT is a channel known for presenting programming aimed at economic classes C, D, and E, most of which are shows with a live studio audience (MARTINS, 2016). Given its burlesque shows with audience participation and unpretentious settings, Hergesel (2019) stresses the channel has a telepoetics, which he calls an "SBT-like style." Silvio Santos, the network's owner and main host, has a history of importing Mexican soap operas and the habit of suddenly changing the schedule. The style of its shows, the importance placed on the viewer, Silvio's almost eccentric charisma, and even its disorganized program give the channel a solid fanbase: the so-called SBTist. Despite having viewers who have followed SBT's journey since its analog times, the community of SBTist fans has gained strength, meeting in online forums and expressing itself on blogs and social media since 2005 (MARTINS, 2016).

Silvio Santos Group's forays into the technology market are not recent. In 1997, the company that owned SBT created the internet provider SOL (Sistema SBT OnLine), extinguishing it in 2001. In 2004, SBT returned to the internet access market with ISBT, the free dial-up internet access provider, in partnership with Telefônica.

The network also invested in hypermedia content, such as the partnership with Terra and Uol to broadcast live footage from cameras inside the house of the reality TV show Casa dos Artistas in the 2000s and the Troféu Internet, a kind of offshoot of Troféu Imprensa, which rewards artists and shows based on popular jury votes cast by internet users. The channel also created "SBT na Web" to compile internet events, memes, celebrity posts on social media, and self-references to the channel and the universe of Brazilian entertainment.

Another curious fact was the relationship between SBT and Netflix upon its arrival in Brazil. Silvio Santos praised the streaming platform's content on several occasions, leading Netflix to offer a lifetime subscription in return for the host's spontaneous promotion and advertising. SBT shows have also been successful on Netflix. At the beginning of 2022, among the ten most-watched shows on the platform were four SBT productions: *Carinha de Anjo*, *Chiquititas*, *Cúmplices de um Resgate*, and *As Aventuras de Poliana*.[3]

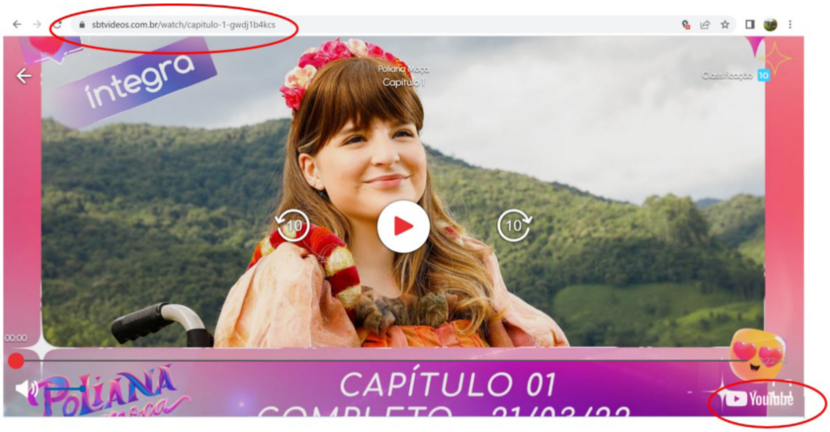
Free streaming: the price of gratuity

The SBT channel does not have a streaming platform with a subscription fee to access its television shows. It is worth mentioning the broadcaster is a partner, in association with Rinaldi Faria (creator of the Patati Patatá clown duo), of the subscription channel FunKids, which provides content aimed at children. However, the offering strategies of the television channel's various content do not include a subscription policy. Instead, the broadcaster chose to make its catalog available via YouTube. Besides the channel on the Google platform (SBT Online), videos from the SBT Videos website are available via a YouTube link.

In short, SBT uses YouTube as a storage and distribution hub, that is, as a video archive. SBT Videos website publishes shows using YouTube links but arranges them in a particular way for navigation. Image 1 shows the YouTube icon in the *Poliana Moça* episode, accessed through the SBT Videos website.

3 Source: https://observatoriodatv.uol.com.br/colunas/paulo-pacheco/rebelde-carinha-de-anjo-e-maria-do-bairro-sbt-domina-ranking-de-netflix-e-globoplay. Accessed on December 6, 2022.

Image 1: YouTube logo on the episode of "Poliana Moça" on the SBT Videos website



In the image, note that the access link to the website is sbtvideos.com.br. However, the red arrow inside a white circle, the familiar YouTube logo, appears in the center of the episode's thumbnail image. The preceding ad also displays the YouTube logo in the bottom right corner.

Therefore, before delving into the particularities of each website, we must bring critical reflections on the advantages and disadvantages, especially for the user, of using a big data company like Google to stream a national and free-to-air TV broadcaster.

According to the broadcaster, SBT is the most-watched TV channel on YouTube worldwide. The company recorded over six billion views, nearly 700 million hours watched, and 53 billion impressions in 2021. In the information provided to the Meio e Mensagem portal,[4] which covers news on the advertising and media industry, the network stated it publishes an average of 56 videos online per day. From January to November 2020, 64 videos accumulated 10 million views. The broadcaster is among the 12 channels with the highest reach on the platform. The audience is predominantly young, 50% women and 50%

4 Source: Meio e Mensagem. As estratégias de conteúdo do SBT no YouTube. Disponível em: https://www.meioemensagem.com.br/home/midia/2022/01/21/as-estrategias-de-conteudo-do-sbt-no-YouTube.html. Accessed on June 23, 2022.

men. According to network's official information, the SBT Online channel

> reached the mark of 4 million subscribers, surpassing the English broadcaster BBC in number of followers on YouTube and becoming the largest TV channel in the world on the platform. SBT has 9 plaques of 1 million subscribers, more than 20 active channels, and 26 million users who can consume all its programs for free on the platform.[5]

Channels with a large viewership flow and a high number of subscribers have multiple forms of monetization on platforms such as YouTube, especially after Google took over management in 2007. Google itself has tools to boost the monetization of videos or blogs, such as Google AdSense. Amaral (2009, p. 243) explains that Google AdSense is "a system that aggregates ads on blogs and generates financial returns for the blogger proportional to the number of times their readers click on ads, which Google defines according to the content posted on the blog."

Silva (2017) points out at least six different types of ads: graphical (to the right of the video, above the list of suggestions), overlay ads (semi-transparent ones displayed above the video), skippable ads in videos (occupy the users' screen while watching the video and offer a skip button after five seconds), non-skippable video ads (videos the user cannot skip, which precede or appear in the middle of what they are watching), short ads (that occupy the main video screen but do not exceed six seconds) and standardized cards (click buttons that appear as teasers in the top right corner).

The possibilities of monetization by using a big data platform partially justify the free access for users. In this way, by not charging a monthly fee, SBT differentiates itself from other TV networks that offer subscription-based streaming services. Although YouTube also has options with benefits for subscribers, access to the content is open,

5 Source: SBT. Available at: SBT se torna o maior canal de TV do mundo no YouTube - SBT. Accessed on June 23, 2022.

giving it the idea of a gratis service. In the subscription-free model, the platform operates with a monetization option based on advertising insertion (AVOD □ Advertising Video on Demand). Subscribers to paid plans on YouTube can watch videos without advertisements.

However, it is worth remembering that Google is the largest search engine on the internet, with countless recommendations and advertising suggestions related to the user's profile. Google retains information about users to build its database, inserted in the logic of datafication, typical of what Van Dijck (2013) calls the culture of connectivity. In this culture, our possibilities to access content would increasingly be subject to commercial interests and the operation of platforms, constituting what D'Andréa (2020) calls a *platform society* (2020).

The *platform society* emerges from the phenomenon of immersion of cultural, economic, and social practices in digital infrastructures organized through the systematic collection of user data subjected to algorithmic processing, monetization, and circulation. This system allows entrepreneurs to transform practically all instances of human interaction into data (DIJCK, 2020; LEMOS, 2021). According to Couldry (2019, p. 77), datafication "should be understood not only as a development of capitalism but also as the beginning of a new phase in human history that rivals in its importance the emergence of data colonialism."

When interpreting a dataset to generate others, algorithms instruct new logic for selection, hierarchization, recommendation, and control of informational flows. Thus, they manage knowledge regimes that appropriate available data to identify patterns and trends and, increasingly, make predictions (D'ANDRÉA, 2020). Lemos (2021) called this phenomenon the datafication of life, which is the transformation of all our actions into trackable and quantifiable data. Zuboff (2018), in turn, claims that we live in a new form of capitalism, surveillance capitalism, based on the logic of data (ZUBOFF, 2018).

Google observes, records, and collects data on every search users perform and every website they visit. The search engine uses a deep learning system, which uses artificial intelligence to make the system analyze large amounts of data to learn on its own to generate the best possible recommendation for each person (including cases of anonymous users). In the case of regular users who follow specific content, the referral system's work becomes easier as the chances of finding videos with similar themes increase. According to Santaella (2018), customizing filters

> present biases that significantly affect access to information, as they lead the user to narrow points of view that prevent exposure to ideas contrary to their prejudices. (SANTAELLA, 2018, p. 17)

It is the price paid for gratis access. Users allow the company to collect personal data and sell it to advertisers to display ads that potentially will catch their attention. The same happens with other Google tools and big tech companies. Platforms such as Netflix or Globoplay also collect their users' data, as highlighted by Rios (2022) and Braghini and Montaño (2019). However, the data provided by users in these cases concerns the personal data provided during registration and navigation and assistance with audiovisual productions available within the streaming platform. Differently, Google's mapping collects data beyond YouTube uses and captures users' movement through several other websites and social media, leading to personal data collection on an immeasurable scale.

SBT Videos, as required by the General Data Protection Law (LGPD), offers information about the use of data in the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy[6]. The document informs that SBT "will collect essential and indispensable information to provide and personalize the user experience in this tool." The website collects "essential information" when the user likes (thumbs up image) or dislikes (thumbs down) videos or marks something they watched as a favorite. Another point informed in the SBT Videos Terms of Use and Privacy Policy concerns consumer activities:

6 SBT VIDEOS Terms of Use. Available at: https://www.sbtvideos.com.br/termos-de-uso. Accessed on: June (day), 2022

> SBT may also use information about your identified consumption and purchasing behavior [...]. We may use the collected data to improve the Website and Application services and display personalized advertisements and content according to the User's interests. (SBT VIDEOS TERMS OF USE AND PRIVACY POLICY)

We believe it is imperative to debate the topic of personalizing experiences when accessing online. Artificial intelligence algorithms mediate this access or experience and provide us with suggestions. At the same time, algorithmic mediation means apps hide or stop offering products that artificial intelligence deduces we may not like. Besides displaying advertisements, this automated intervention filtering and limiting the available content raises questions about the supposed free access. The company offers viewers access to its content without financial transactions, but they pay a price for the assistance, for the value of their viewing.

The purpose of collecting user data is not to explore coincidences but to identify behavior patterns. The identification of patterns does not necessarily draw from predetermined searches. Artificial intelligence used by the platforms collects as much information as possible to build a database that can generate connections other than those predetermined for the algorithms.

> Before Big Data, our analysis was usually limited to testing a small number of hypotheses that we defined well even before collecting the data. When we let the data speak, we can make connections we had never thought existed. (MAYER-SCHÖNBERGER; CUKIER, 2013, p. 14)

Besides collecting data to map user behavior, SBT Videos informs that it may make indiscriminate use of certain information. At the end of the Terms of Use and Privacy Policies (after all the clauses that we usually do not read when accepting terms of access to online services), the document states: "Any interaction with SBT, in the sense of suggestions or compliments, is not considered confidential, and the

User authorizes SBT to use them free of charge and without restriction." (sic) (SBT VÍDEOS, 2022, *online*).

All that leads us to reflect on the role of algorithms and their obscure role in what we consume online. Though media management institutions select all of our cultural consumption, even in the so-called mass media, the abstruse actions of algorithms and the insufficient clarity regarding the use of our data worsen the lack of control and power of choice over what we consume.

The issue becomes more complex if we think beyond the restricted core of the website and the SBT Videos app since the network, besides offering its shows on its website, has made content available on YouTube. We will now delve into the analysis of the particularities of each SBT streaming initiative.

SBT Videos x SBT Online: specificities and strategies

As we have seen, the SBT network offers two consumption options via streaming: the SBT Videos website and SBT Online, a YouTube channel that combines subchannels with the broadcaster's shows. Although both initiatives use YouTube as a player, they present differences in content arrangement and encourage specific forms of consumption.

The distribution of television content via streaming on more than one channel is not necessarily new. For example, besides offering paid content on the Globoplay app, Globo network makes excerpts of its shows available free of charge on the Gshow website. Thus, viewers who wish to watch a program after it has aired on television can choose between watching episode fragments with ads on the Gshow website or paying a subscription to watch the episodes in full and without commercial breaks on Globoplay. Therefore, what draws attention to SBT's content offering is not just the redundant distribution of on-demand content but the cost-free nature of both options and the particularities of each.

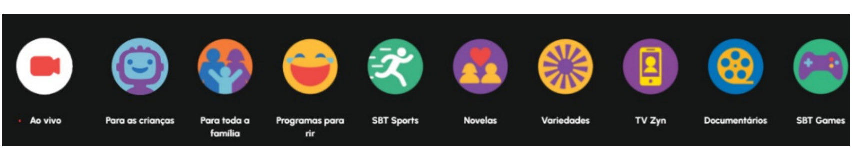
For the case study, we analyzed SBT's video-on-demand strategies based on systematic observation of the two websites in June 2022, paying attention to the content available at the time, the navigation tools, content arrangement, and the possibilities for interaction. It is worth highlighting how ephemeral these platforms or portals are due to the constant updating and changes in catalogs. Hence, our goal is not to outline a rigid evaluation of websites but to consider characteristics that suggest different proposals and models for the user. We highlight below the main qualitative insights.

The SBT Videos portal was launched in April 2020, distributing the network's television shows, such as soap operas, films, and exclusive content. The website has a simple, intuitive interface like that of well-known companies such as Netflix.

When accessing SBT Videos content, the first page shows a photo carousel highlighting varied shows and products. Below the carousel appears the last shows the subscriber watched. The website also features a live option through which people can watch the network's television programming in real-time online, or they may wait 48 hours to stream the content on the website.

One of the peculiarities of the SBT Videos website is the categorization of shows by icons. All shows have icons that represent them (Image 2). They appear in the top right corner, indicating the category of each content.

Image 2: Show categories on the SBT Videos website



Source: Screenshot of the SBT Videos website, 2022

Content categorization makes it easier for users to navigate and search for shows that interest them. The icons are exclusive to SBT Videos. There is no such option on SBT Online channels on YouTube. More than a playful element, these icons shape *the navigation options of users*. They change the viewer's movement on the website and the search options for content, determining the choice by theme ("for children," "for laughs," and "for documentaries," among others). Thus, the individual's taste guides navigation on the SBT Videos website. Differently, the main navigation possibilities on YouTube are the number of views, posting date, and relevance of content (determined by the algorithm based on collective history).

The website also has a "Most Viewed" section, which gathers the productions with the most hits. On this topic, it is noteworthy that all the ten most-watched programs are soap operas. On SBT Online on YouTube, the show with the highest audience is "The Noite com Danilo Gentili" (talk show with comic features). The second subchannel with the highest number of subscribers is "Câmeras Escondidas" (a show that brings together pranks on supposedly ordinary people, filmed by allegedly hidden cameras). The third is "Poliana Moça," which exhibits the children's soap opera's chapters.

The fact that the two main shows on YouTube are comedic demonstrates a different audience profile than the SBT Videos website, which, as mentioned, has only soap operas among its "Most Viewed" titles. That reveals a difference between possible audiences, indicating that YouTube viewers appreciate talk shows or comedy shows, while the SBT Videos website has a strong audience of those fond of soap operas.

The content arrangement or the insertion of chapters or episodes is also different. On the SBT Videos website, shows are available with full episodes and chapters. The YouTube channel fragments the exhibition into 30 specific channels (or subchannels) for each show. Furthermore, the SBT Online channel on YouTube offers full shows and re-edited excerpts of the best moments. This last way of offering content in short excerpts is a strategy to encourage sharing on social media. For content to go viral, the broadcaster itself publishes videos with the potential for distribution on social media. Once again, the YouTube channel amplifies the potential for content dissemination, while the SBT Videos website prioritizes the individual experience.

Finally, another relevant difference concerns the possibilities of interaction. The SBT Videos website restricts user interaction. We can only like ("I liked") or dislike ("I didn't like") a production and add a product to the favorites list. On YouTube, besides liking, disliking, or favoring, it is possible to comment and share content on social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter). The comments tool on YouTube allows more interaction not only between users and the broadcaster but also between users. Furthermore, the number of comments influences the ranking of videos by relevance. As a result, SBT's choice to use YouTube as a streaming platform expands the possibilities of interaction between users and the company, unlike what happens with other better-known streaming companies (Netflix, Globoplay, Amazon Prime, etc.).

These different ways of presenting and categorizing content influence how users navigate and interact with the platforms. On SBT Videos, icons allow for a more individualized search based on the viewer's intention to watch a specific type of show. Although the website emphasizes the most watched shows, which represents a collective criterion, the way it displays content has, in the first instance, a customized appearance for the individual. Differently, on YouTube, selection criteria tend to be collective, hierarchical, and offered to the user through algorithms.

In general, the distinctions between the SBT Videos website and the SBT Online channel are in line with the characteristics that Lotz (2017) defines as a "portal" or a "platform." According to the author, a portal offers television content in a non-linear but more static way with a central focus on the audiovisual product, functioning as a content curator and distributor. On the other hand, platforms are today recognized not as media but as technologies, messaging systems, and data collection practices, focusing on personal communication services and not necessarily on the intellectual property of production.

In our analysis, we found equivalence between such definitions, as it is evident that the SBT Videos website functions as a portal due to its emphasis on content and little collaboration and interaction between users. In turn, SBT Online, on YouTube, plays the role of a platform for its opposite setup.

Final considerations

SBT uses Google's streaming platform as one of the main on-demand consumption options, with robust content and a high subscriber count. That makes us think about how YouTube works and how SBT used it besides its streaming, SBT Videos. We observed the issue of free access to SBT Videos is related to data collection for advertising use, which leads us to consider the use of our data and how much control we have over what we consume. The obscure performance of algorithms and the lack of clarity regarding the use of our data worsen the lack of control and power of choice over what we consume. Pasquale (2015) warns about the "black box" of data collection by companies like Google, as every click, shortcut, or discount that big data platforms offer imposes other costs, data, or tracking that we are aware of.

Beyond the purpose of monetization through data collection, the streaming options offered by SBT have different functions and approaches despite being similar in their goal of providing shows on demand to the network's viewers. On the SBT Videos website, we noticed users have more individualized navigation options using icons that classify shows by genre, but their possibilities for interaction are limited. We also observed how the website arranges content in a way closer to that of free-to-air TV and that soap operas stand out, occupying top positions among the most-watched productions.

On SBT Online on YouTube, video selection criteria draw from the number of views or algorithmic recommendations based on the user's search history. Fragmented content enables sharing on other social media and interactions with the broadcaster and between users in the comments below the video. It is worth mentioning that the re-editing of shows into short fragments increases the chances of monetization for SBT, as each video displays ads.

In short, based on the observation of forms of navigation, interaction, and consumption, we conclude the SBT Videos website appears as an experience more focused on the individual and that SBT Online on YouTube tends to focus on the dissemination of content, which acquires collective contours.

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Fashion, thinness, and female empowerment: cigarette consumption as the modern woman's lifestyle in the US

Moda, magreza e empoderamento feminino: o consumo de cigarros como estilo de vida da mulher moderna nos EUA

Aliana Aires[1]

Resumo: *Nosso objetivo é verificar a atuação da comunicação publicitária como uma convocação biopolítica para a magreza corporal, e para um estilo de vida que associa magreza, moda e empoderamento feminino por meio do consumo de cigarros, entre as décadas de 1920 a 1990 nos Estados Unidos. Para isso, analisamos um material empírico composto por anúncios de cigarros voltados para mulheres de três marcas estadunidenses (Lucky Strike, Max e Virgínia Slims), veiculados em dois períodos (1920-1930 e 1970-1990). Como procedimento teórico-metodológico, nos guiaremos pelas reflexões sobre biopolítica (FOUCAULT), convocações biopolíticas (PRADO), corpo feminino, beleza e pressão estética (BORDO e FEATHERSTONE), e estigma ao corpo gordo (FARREL e FRASER). Esses anúncios evidenciam uma biopolítica que atua sobre o corpo da população feminina em dois momentos, primeiro para o corpo magro, na década de 1920, e depois, nas décadas de 1980 e 1990, para o estilo de vida moderno. Também evidenciam um paradoxo em "escolher" engajar-se em práticas que, em última instância, reforçam as normas do corpo, indo contra a liberdade e igualdade de direitos que as mulheres haviam conquistado até então.*

Palavras-chave: *cigarros, corpo magro, neoliberalismo, biopolítica, feminismo.*

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Abstract: *Our objective is to verify the performance of advertising communication as a biopolitical call for body thinness, and for a lifestyle that associates thinness, fashion, and female empowerment through smoking, between the 1920s and 1990s in the United States. For this, we analyzed an empirical material composed of cigarette ads aimed at women from three American brands (Lucky Strike, Max, and Virginia Slims), aired in two periods (1920-1930 and 1970-1990). As a theoretical-methodological procedure, we will be guided by reflections on biopolitics (FOUCAULT), biopolitical calls (PRADO), female body, beauty, and aesthetic pressure (BORDO and FEATHERSTONE), and stigma to the fat body (FARREL and FRASER). These ads show a biopolitics that acts on the body of the female population in two moments, first for the thin body, in the 1920s, and then, in the 1980s and 1990s, for the modern lifestyle. They also evidence a paradox in "choosing" to engage in practices that ultimately reinforce the norms of the body, going against the freedom and equal rights that women had earned.*

Keywords: *cigarettes, lean body, neoliberalism, biopolitics, feminism.*

Introduction

Fraser (2009) states that, between 1880 and 1920, thinness had risen to the status of body ideal in the United States, especially for women. Farrell (2011) also locates the origins of the cult of thinness in 1920 as an influence on that fashion period, when women wore short, sleeveless dresses, exposing arms and legs. Directing his view to a broader context, Vigarello (2012) corroborates these authors, identifying a significant change in Western societies throughout the first decades of the 20th century in the scope of customs that would have been decisive for the valorization of thinness in women.

> The transformation of the female condition suggests a new thinness, further eliminating breast and chubby references. A new technological imagination also points to more fluidity and nervousness, accentuating what is agile and slender at the same time as the desire for control and self-affirmation grows. (VIGARELLO, 2012, p. 287)

This process of change in taste, from a society that worshiped a larger body to an appreciation of thinness, was possible thanks to the existing mass communication vehicles of that time, such as newspapers and magazines. The intense dissemination of texts and images, especially ads, which presented the thin female body as healthy, beautiful, and successful in media outlets in the United States, had the potential to persuade the population to appreciate the slim body. In this way, it was decisive in guiding the lifestyle of modern women.

Farrell (2011) emphasizes that, although ads for weight loss medicines already appeared in the United States before 1920, only from that decade on did the consumer and advertising industries start to solidify and reinforce anxiety about body fat. During this same period, there was a development of consumer society and the feminist movement in the global social context, especially in the United States, the country we will focus on in this article.

This scenario constituted fertile ground for the American cigarette industries to turn their strategies towards winning over the female public, associating smoking with the search for body thinness and freedom. Previously associated with the male universe, “cigarettes ceased to be a practice restricted to men in the 19th century and became appropriate as a symbol of female freedom in the early decades of the 20th century” (LEAL; FREIRE FILHO; ROCHA, 2016, p. 51). Smoking comes to represent, for the female public, a transgressive act and a kind of passport to gender freedom. “The movement to occupy spaces previously restricted to men gave female smoking an aura of revolution in that period” (LEAL; FREIRE FILHO; ROCHA, 2016, p. 50).

Thus, during the first feminist wave in the USA, between 1920 and 1930, which mainly demanded the political equality of women with the achievement of the right to vote, cigarette smoking was introduced to the female public. We can observe how advertising rhetorical strategies promote a new feminine subjectivity, influencing women to build a lifestyle centered on consumption, in which smoking, being thin, using fashion trends, and gaining independence from men go hand in hand. During this same period, Hollywood cinema, often sponsored by cigarette brands, started showing scenes of female characters smoking (LEAL; FREIRE FILHO; ROCHA, 2016), which helped glamorize the practice and connect it to women’s freedom and weight loss.

Women’s achievements in the male-dominated job market and changes in their social roles contributed to them seeking to lose weight as the fat body was associated with the reproductive ideal and, thus, with their previous condition in society as wives and mothers. Furthermore, having a thin body offered women more agility, freedom, and modernity. Feminist aspirations, in this sense, played a significant role in strengthening the ideal of body thinness. It is interesting to notice paradoxes in this process because women end up subjecting themselves again to an ideal body shape by associating freedom with the body.

This paper analyzes some advertising pieces from three famous American cigarette brands (Lucky Strike, Max, and Virginia Slims), published in two specific periods: the 1920s and 1930s and from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. These ads promote smoking as part of the "modern woman's lifestyle," linking it to autonomy, success, and thinness. Advertising campaigns encouraging smoking offer interesting material to investigate media calls (PRADO, 2013) for thinness in the USA from the 1920s onwards.

Therefore, by examining cigarette ads for women, this paper aims to verify the role of advertising communication as a biopolitical call for body thinness and a lifestyle that associates slenderness, fashion, and female empowerment with cigarette consumption. The theoretical-methodological framework that guides the analysis includes reflections on biopolitics (FOUCAULT, year), biopolitical calls (PRADO, year), female body, beauty, and aesthetic pressure (BORDO, year; FEATHERSTONE, year), and the history of stigmatization of the fat body (FARRELL, year; FRASER, year).

The valorization of female body thinness: neoliberalism, consumption, and Protestantism in the USA

Farrell (2011) notes that, until the late 19th century in the United States, fat was the prerogative of a few with wealth and health. However, throughout the 20th century, cultural changes, specifically those related to the intensification of capitalism and the development of consumer society and liberalism, reinforced the ideal of thinness in the United States. According to the author, from 1900 onwards, magazines and daily newspapers around the country began intensely disseminating ads for weight loss, which promised what became known as "the cure for obesity." In 1912, commercial products sold as weight loss medications already constituted an industry to the point of worrying the American Medical Association, which began to denounce these medications and their potential dangers and side effects.

For example, Fraser (2009) brings two testimonies from the American doctor Woods Hutchinson (professor and former president of the American Academy of Medicine) in 1926 and 1984, respectively, positioning himself against what he called the "new weight-loss fashion."

In 1926, he wrote for a women's magazine advocating for body fat. In short, he stated that adipose tissue is benign and gives women beauty and that diet and exercise would not be able to reduce more than 10% of someone's size. Thus, fat women would remain fat, and thin women would remain thin, despite all efforts they made to modify their bodies, proving that both enjoyed health, each in their way.

In 1984, the doctor repeated his discourse defending the fat body, but, in this case, against fashion. Hutchinson tells the readers of the Saturday Evening Post magazine that, unfortunately, the trend seems to have the support of some doctors, physical trainers, dieticians, and even insurance companies, which united in convincing and encouraging women to lose weight. He regretted that girls were now hiding their bodies, ashamed of their fat, and warned that doctors were prescribing very restrictive diets to girls and women, risking their health to make them appear thinner by the current aesthetics. In the end, he extended this warning to future generations.

Fraser (2009) supposes that one of the reasons that drove the admiration for the thin and slender body during this period was the cultivation of this ideal in Europe. This process began on European land between the 18th and 19th centuries, when many poets and artists acquired tuberculosis, which gave them a pale and thin appearance. Members of high society began to spread the belief that having tuberculosis and being thin indicated that the person had a superior, delicate, and intellectual nature.

As a result, North American women, who saw the old continent as the ultimate symbol of fashion, class, and sophistication, soon began to seek body weight loss at any cost. However, Fraser (2009) emphasizes that, over time, Europeans adopted more moderate attitudes toward weight loss than people in the United States, who developed the cult of thinness more intensely.

As a result of this process of upholding the thin body, its opposite extreme, the fat body, became stigmatized and associated with several negative meanings. One of these meanings was political corruption.

Since fat was, for a long time, linked to wealth in the imagination, notions about capitalism also became attached to the fat body. Farrell (2011) exemplified that with several cartoons representing rich and powerful men with bulky bodies and associating these characters with the ills of the capitalist economy, such as the constitution of monopolies or exploitation of child labor.

Farrell (2011) also draws attention to an association between fat people and the middle class. Ridiculed and cast as excessive consumers who lacked the refinement to discern what they consumed, middle-class individuals supposedly could not control themselves and deal with the pleasures of modernity in moderation. As the author reflects, the fat body expresses ideals of neoliberalism and consumption, demonstrating an individual's inability to manage the resources and prosperity the modern world brings.

The author highlights this as a significant change compared to the previous understanding of fat as a sign of belonging to a higher social class. "In the late 19th century, dietary gurus and Protestants such as Fletcher and Kellogg emphasized the superiority of the thin body, as it showed restraint and control in the face of the excess of urban and commercial life" (FARRELL, 2011, p. 45). Negative views about the fat body helped to construct thin individuals as superior.

In this way, according to Farrell (2011), the fat body becomes an emblem of concerns about excessive desire and consumption, which intensified during the Depression, an economic recession that began in the USA in 1929. It is worth noting the American consumer society that developed in the 20th century, while promoting consumption as a way of accessing freedom and cultural pleasures, also recriminated excessive consumption, identified as a testament to the individual's inability to maintain discipline and self-control.

A relationship between body weight, capitalism, and Protestantism began to emerge. In this context, having a thin body became a sign not only of class but of morality. There was a long tradition in North American culture condemning excessive appetite as immoral, sexual, and sinful. Fraser (2009) highlights that this view was strongly associated with Protestantism and religious puritanism. Farrell (2011) also shows that fatness is associated with an uncivilized body and thinness with a civilized body, a connection verifiable since the 19th century but has been little explored in studies of the modern period and the history of fat and diets.

Farrell (2011) presents reports that show the appreciation of the fat body among supposedly "inferior" cultures, such as Africans and the aborigines of Australia, while the modern English and Americans, individuals considered "more civilized," would have high standards and, therefore, did not admire body excess. The author also observes that the stigma of the fat body appears weaker among people of African descent and people of color who live in the United Kingdom and the United States, highlighting the relationship between racial identities and corpulence and how discourses of depreciation of the fat body were related to cultural, religious, and political meanings.

In the 19th century, studies on the natural evolution of humans as stages of civilization articulated according to gender, sexual, and racial hierarchies gained strength along with the construct of superior body types. The thought of 19th-century philosophers and scientists, particularly evolutionary scientists, already designated the fat body as inferior in the typography and descriptions of human classificatory schemes. In other words, being fat also meant not being white. "A fat body, then, was a primitive body, lower on the scale of civilization and highly sexual." (FARRELL, 2011, p. 68).

From the end of the 19th century, white Protestants increasingly perceived the fat body as deficient, a sign of gluttony and poor relationship with God, while the thin body was closer to God. So, "with Protestant thought established as dominant in this period, fat became a sign of a deficient body, a body that did not sufficiently demonstrate the containment and control God requested" (FARRELL, 2011, p. 45).

This perspective, which locates the beginning of the stigmatization of the fat body with the development of Protestantism, capitalist economy, and consumer society, finds resonance in the theory proposed by Campbell (1940), who sought to explain what were the conditions that led to the growth of consumerism as we experience it in contemporary times. For him, although the Protestant reform, together with Puritan ideals and asceticism, did not aim to establish a new economic order but rather a moral one, it began to support the formation of modern capitalism.

This thought, which locates the beginning of the stigmatization of the fat body with the development of Protestantism, the capitalist economy, and the consumer society, finds resonance in the theory proposed by Campbell (1940), who sought to decipher what were the conditions that led to the development of the consumerism as we experience it in contemporary times, observing the advent of Protestantism as a determinant for the formation of modern capitalism. For him, although the Protestant reform, together with Puritan ideals and asceticism, did not aim to establish a new economic order but rather a moral one, it began to support the essence of the capitalist system.

To prove this, the author resorts mainly to the classical theories of Veblen, McKendrick, and Weber, writing a detailed work to correct the theoretical deviations that neglected the importance of the 18th-century romantic movement and religious Protestantism in the development of capitalism and consumer society. In this way, we could also associate Protestantism with the development of the standard of body beauty that elevates the thin body to the position of an ideal, pure, civilized, and divine body.

However, the demand for a thin body in the USA, the depreciation of the fat body, and the imposition of meanings on it affect women much more than men. Susan Bordo (1947) reminds us that between the late 19th century and the early 20th century, a relationship between body and soul emerged, in which the female body became an object of aversion, while the male body was associated with rationality. According to the author, the prevailing cultural idea was that women lacked sufficient rational qualities; they were weak, could not control their wills, and, consequently, could not contain themselves in the face of the appeals of the consumer society.

Thus, having a fat body meant a greater transgression for women than for men. For men, a fat body was even positive, meaning they had violent impulses, sexual desires, and an appetite for food; that is, they had not weakened with modern life. As for women, they should maintain the line of cultural civilization not only by controlling their impulses but also by ensuring that the impulses of their husbands and children are also under control. Furthermore, there was a process of emphasizing beauty as an essential value for women and an association between beauty and body thinness.

> As cultural anxieties induced by the processes and excesses of modern life became fixated on the body, the first advertising industries found a perfect new niche of products and services to sell, designed to shrink bodies to a size that would not cause any recrimination. (FARRELL, 2011, p. 58)

Therefore, at the beginning of the 20th century, female fat became less and less associated with health, fertility, attractiveness, or sensuality and increasingly undesirable. Farrell (2011) assesses individuals, doctors, and industry quickly assimilated the stigma that emerged regarding the fat body, articulating it back to consumers and exacerbating the cultural fear of fat.

The habit of smoking in American society in the 1920s: biopolitical calls for the consumption of thinness

Foucault (2001) considers that powers do not come from a single source, such as the State or the dominant classes (macro-power), but from various directions, daily, on multiple scales, and interconnected with each other. Micropower spreads throughout productive society in a network of people internalizing norms, ideologies, disciplines, etc. Bringing the notion of a microphysics of power, the author invites us to investigate different forms of exerting power in everyday life, as is the case with advertising communication, which we will analyze in this paper.

Foucault (2009) observed how capitalism invests heavily in the biological dimension of the body and builds a micropolitical technology for the normalization of society, identifying and characterizing the performance of mechanisms for managing life, which he calls biopolitics. "Biopolitics, therefore, designates this entry of the body and life, as well as their mechanisms, into the domain of explicit calculations of power" (PELBART, 2011, p. 24).

To understand the constitution of capitalist society in terms of the production of truths and subjectivities, Foucault identified that capitalism promotes disciplinary power, whose main function lies in making the individual body docile and ready for production. For Foucault, biopower emerged in the second half of the 19th century with disciplinary techniques directed at the body of the population. According to Pelbart (2011), if disciplines aim at the man-body, biopolitics aims at the living man. The "making alive" that Foucault refers to, characteristic of biopower, takes two principal forms: discipline and biopolitics.

Training the body for discipline and optimizing its strengths and integration into control systems means conceiving it as a machine (machine body) subject to political anatomy. The second form, biopolitics, mobilizes another strategic component, namely, the management of life with a focus on the population as a species (PELBART, 2011, p. 57). Biopolitics aims to manufacture, organize, and plan the regulation and government of the population's life (FOUCAULT, 2008, p. 21).

However, in the 20th century, it is possible to observe transformations in neoliberal capitalist society with the intensification of consumption, which indicates biopolitical action at the micro level. During this period, cigarettes were introduced as a facilitating element in obtaining and maintaining a slim body, becoming fundamental to the construction of the modern woman's identity.

In ads for the famous North American cigarette brand Lucky Strike, manufactured by the American Tobacco Company, we can see advertising acting as a disciplinary power that calls on women to control and lose weight. The ads in Figure 1 are part of the successful campaign launched in 1928 by Lucky Strike with the slogan "Reach for a Lucky - instead of a Sweet," which mostly showed female figures.

Figure 1: Lucky Strike cigarette ads, 1928

Source: Available at: https://www.vintag.es/2021/03/lucky-strike-instead-of-a-sweet.html. Accessed on December 21, 2022.

The campaign slogan suggests exchanging sweets/fat for cigarettes/thinness. The emphasis on using cigarettes for weight loss is evident, promoting the replacement of sweets with cigarettes. The tobacco industry, whose product is addictive, suggests a depreciation of sweets (sugar) in favor of cigarettes (nicotine). Sugar consumption is frowned upon, as it would harm the female body, causing weight gain, while nicotine appears beneficial and healthy, as it produces thin bodies.

Thus, the Lucky brand uses knowledge and power to legitimize thinness as healthy and smoking as a formula for achieving it. We also verified knowledge production about health in the ad's statement that the brand's cigarettes, when toasted, would not cause throat irritation or coughing.

In the ad on the left (Figure 1), we see a female illustration and, next to it, an advice/ invitation: "I know an easy way to keep from getting fat: Light a Lucky instead of eating sweets." Below the advice, a long text states many women are losing weight with this recipe. Hence, the ad presents smoking as a medicine or formula that would lead women to lose weight, as if it were a dietary prescription to achieve this purpose.

In Figure 1 still, the piece on the right side shows images of three Hollywood celebrities of the time inside stars with the title: "We know our Luckies. That's how we stay slender." With the endorsement of personalities admired by women of the time, Lucky Strike ratified its strategies for controlling the female body/desire. We observe the production of female subjectivities and, mainly, knowledge expressed in advice that has the power (discipline) to shape behavior and direct women's actions towards consuming cigarettes to avoid sweets and, consequently, fat. Discipline is "a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a physics or an anatomy of power, a technology" (FOUCAULT, 2001, p. 177).

In Figure 2, we present two more advertisements published in 1928 by the same cigarette brand. In the ad on the left, we have a female illustration and the title "Light up a Lucky and you'll never miss the sweets that make you fat", with the handwritten signature of a woman called Constance, described as the star of a film. Prado, when characterizing media calls, observes that personalities are presented and function "as attractors that model success narratives" (PRADO, 2013, p. 58), in this way the celebrity's weight loss is attributed to smoking to inspire women to copy strategy in order to achieve success.

Figure 2 presents two more ads published in 1928 by the same cigarette brand. The advertisement on the left has a female illustration and a title, "Light a Lucky and you'll never miss sweets that make you fat," with the handwritten signature of a woman called Constance, described as a film star. When characterizing media calls, Prado observes that personalities are presented and function "as attractors that model success narratives" (PRADO, 2013, p. 58). This way, celebrity weight loss is attributed to smoking to inspire women to copy strategies to achieve success.

The emphasis on "avoiding" a fat body shows how the advertising narrative helped to construct the thin body as superior and the fat body as inferior. As Prado (2013) states, the biopower exercised by media devices calls us to be successful people, building narratives of transformation that provide body-shaping maps fueled by slogans that privilege some discourses and negativize others (PRADO, 2013).

Figure 2: Lucky Strike cigarette ads, 1928

Source: Available at: https://www.vintag.es/2021/03/lucky-strike-instead-of-a-sweet.html. Accessed on December 21, 2022.

Below the title, on the left side of the ad, a long text aims to convince the reader, presenting "proof" that cigarettes are capable of causing weight loss. We highlight the following excerpt:

> For years, this has been no secret to those men who keep fit and trim. They know Luckies do not clip their wings or harm their physical condition. They know that Lucky Strike is the favorite cigarette of many prominent athletes who must stay in good shape. They respect the opinion of 20,679 doctors who say that Luckies are less irritating to the throat than other cigarettes. A reasonable proportion of sugar in the diet is recommended, but the authorities are overwhelming that too many fattening sweets are harmful and that too many such are eaten by the American people. So, for moderation's sake, we say: "reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet."

Constructing Lucky Strike cigarettes' weight-loss and health-boosting potentials involved endorsements from successful athletes and more than 20,000 doctors. On the other hand, doctors are concerned about the harm to health that sugar can bring. Thus, authorities exercise the power to prove the association between cigarettes and health (truth). Power, therefore, institutionalizes truth, "We are subjected to the production of truth through power, and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth." (FOUCAULT, 1999, p. 28).

The ad on the left uses the same production strategy of knowing about weight loss. In it, a woman, Billie Burke, whom the ad describes as a popular actress in the US, advises, "To stay slender, reach for a Lucky – the most effective way to get a trim figure," and signs below in her handwriting. These ads also structure their discourses based on a logic close to that of the immunological device described by Han (2017).

The author tells us that the 20th century was an immunological era for establishing a clear division between inside and outside, friend and enemy. This immunological scheme went beyond the biological field to the entire social sphere. Thus, the object of immunological attack is foreignness. Even if this stranger does not represent a real threat, the organism's defense eliminates it due to its otherness.

Sweets, which fatten the female body, as the ad says, represent strangeness, the target of attack, and negativity. Therefore, women should eliminate sweets in favor of smoking, which, by promoting weight loss, serves as a strategy to defend a thin body shape, understood as positivity. Defense removes everything foreign due to its otherness. Thus, every immunological reaction is a reaction to otherness (HAN, 2017).

Thus, Lucky Strike's consumer narratives construed the fat body as otherness or something every woman fears. Sweets are guilty of producing fat (resistant) bodies. So, women should eliminate them in favor of cigarettes, which make thin (docile) bodies: smoking cigarettes is an immunological reaction to the negativity represented by fattening sweets. From a Foucauldian perspective, we can understand cigarettes as a disciplinary device that acts inside a woman's body, controlling her body weight to obtain a thin/obedient body, as the control/consumption society desires.

Figure 3: Lucky Strike cigarette ads, 1929.

Source: Image on the right: Available at: https://stanford.io/2u1yxDv. Accessed on December 21, 2022. Image on the left: Available at: https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2012/02/27/torches-of-freedom-women-and-smoking-propaganda/. Accessed on December 21, 2022.

Figure 3 presents two more Lucky Strike ads published in 1929. The ad on the left shows the campaign slogan at the top and an illustration of a modern female figure below it. The ad on the right shows a woman smoking with the text "To keep a slender figure, no one can deny..." and the campaign slogan highlighted in a circle, "Reach for a cigarette instead of a sweet."

It is worth highlighting the statement no one can deny, reinforcing the truth constructed in the brand's discourses about cigarettes □ its weight loss potential is irrefutable. Therefore, we see an evolution in the brand's advertising discourse. In 1928, Lucky Strike was committed to producing the truth about the benefits of cigarettes for women's health and weight loss through testimonials from authorities and long, persuasive texts. In 1929, ads had less text and only reaffirmed the truth already constructed and legitimized.

Figure 4 shows two Lucky Strike ads published in 1930. In the ad on the left, the title says □ "Is this you five years from now? When tempted to overindulge, reach for a cigarette instead." Below, an illustration shows a slim woman wearing swimwear in a diving pose and, behind her, a shadow of her but with a fat body. The fear of fat is evident in this advertisement, which also contains a short text advocating moderation □ 'Be moderate, be moderate in everything, even smoking. Avoid that future shadow by avoiding over-indulgence if you would maintain that modern, ever youthful figure. "Reach for a Lucky instead".' Finally, the ad stresses, 'We do not say smoking Luckies reduces flesh. We say when tempted to over-indulge, "Reach for a Lucky instead".'

Figure 4: Lucky Strike cigarette ads, 1930

Source: Available at: https://brian.carnell.com/articles/2021/lucky-strike-ad-1930-is-this-you-five-years-from-now/. Accessed on: December 21, 2022.

In this ad, the brand admits, for the first time, that cigarettes do not in themselves make you lose weight but could be a way to fight the desire for sweets that make you fat. If, on the one hand, it seems to adopt a more responsible stance, on the other, it creates even more powerful meanings that associate cigarettes with thinness and the fear of fatness, bringing the frightening image of a shadow of the fat future.

The same happens with the ad on the right, which features the face of a thin young woman with a fat shadow behind her. The text says, "First a shadow, then a sorrow. Avoid that shadow in the future by refraining from over-indulgence if you would maintain the modern figure of fashion." Once again, the brand has a text explaining that, though smoking Luckies will not lead to weight loss, it helps to avoid the lack of control that leads to overeating and making one fatter.

By suggesting that smoking cigarettes can help women control their urge to overeat, ads from 1930 subtly emphasize a relevant aspect of disciplinary society, which is surveillance. For Foucault (2001), surveillance is the main gear of disciplinary power: it contributes to automating and de-individualizing power while individualizing the subjects under its influence and generalizing discipline. For the disciplinary device to fully exercise all its effects, it is enough for those subject to it to know that they are being monitored or could potentially be. The potential of surveillance, its possibility alone, is sufficient for exercising disciplinary power precisely because an actual subjection arises from a fictitious relationship with it.

Thus, ads from 1930, by evoking the fear of a fat body in the future, mentioning sorrow, and suggesting moderation in eating, trigger a fictitious surveillance on women, which has real effects. By proposing women internalize the discipline, ads help produce subjects/women who increasingly seek ways to maintain a slender body and consume more cigarettes to that effect. Another difference noticed in the 1930 ads is they do not repeat the entire campaign slogan, only "Reach for a Lucky instead." That indicates the strengthening of the brand, whose slogan had already become popular and internalized.

Therefore, in the ads analyzed, the association between cigarette consumption, body, and thinness is clear, while the association with fashion, although it exists, remains in the background. However, the ad in Figure 5 from the same campaign produced in 1929 emphasizes the association with fashion. The ad, with a black and white aesthetic, features a famous fashion designer of the time, Paul Poiret, signing a message in his handwriting: "If you want to keep slender - and who doesn't these days - avoid sweets and smoke Lucky Strike."

Figure 5: Lucky Strike ad, 1929

Source: Available at: https://stanford.io/2u3tDWy. Accessed on: December 21, 2022.

With the stamp and signature of a respected expert in the fashion industry, the ad links cigarette consumption to fashion and a slender body – the fashion body. Once again, the ad has a biopolitical call, as defined by Prado, for consumption. In the fashion designer's recommendation, "if you want to stay thin, and who doesn't these days," lies an assumption that having a slender body is the ideal everyone wants, placing Lucky Strike as a formula to achieve it. Thus, "the media not only act to inform but to provide cognitive/semiotic maps to their readers, packages for the reader to live in the globalized world, situate themselves in it, act in it according to specific directions, aiming to have success and pleasure." (PRADO, 2013, p. 107).

The sphere of advertising communication educates women on consumption and makes the female body docile for its entry into the job market alongside men (the thin body is superior, light, agile, and civilized for consumption, as it controls your weight/cravings). Thus, they achieve empowerment conditioned by a way of living characterized by consuming cigarettes, fashion, and a thin body. Only through consumption, they can enjoy their independence and autonomy in society.

Therefore, media communication exerts power over modern women, either subjecting them to lifestyle standards, clothing norms, and behavior prescriptions or as the very life force they need to feel free. In other words, ads promote cigarette consumption as a mechanism of subjection and freedom at the same time. Although women seek freedom, by associating it with the body, they end up imprisoning themselves again in an ideal body shape and a way of achieving a thin body. Therefore, advertising contributes to producing two forms of subjection: to the standard of beauty and the consumption of cigarettes.

Evolution of women and cigarette consumption in the USA: from the 1970s to the 1990s

British sociologist Mike Featherstone (1991) and American philosopher Susan Bordo (1993) are among the academics who linked the presence of a discourse of the body directly to the functioning of capitalism in the 1980s and early 1990s. In their respective works, they explored the body in the context of consumer culture, recognizing and discussing the effects of capitalism on body image and maintenance and the gendered social construction of the body. Thus, capitalism (especially neoliberalism) is strongly associated with body politics in the context of consumer cultures.

Nos anos 70, no anúncio da marca de cigarros Max é identificada uma intensificação na associação entre consumo de cigarros, moda, magreza corporal e feminismo em relação aos anúncios da década de 1920 e 1930, embora ainda se mantenha a lógica discursiva. No anúncio adiante (Figura 6), uma mulher, usando vestido da moda, está sentada numa pose confortável, com aspecto livre e feliz, e acima o *slogan: "Vista um Max hoje" (tradução nossa), sugerindo que um cigarro possa ser vestido como uma peça de roupa, o que revela a* íntima relação entre consumo de moda e de cigarros. Em outras palavras, o anúncio reforça a necessidade de a mulher moderna adotar um estilo de vida voltado ao consumo nessa nova configuração social.

Figura 6: Anúncio cigarro da marca Max, 1977

Fonte: Disponível em: https://bit.ly/2XQQHWo. Acesso em: 24 fev. 2023

In the 1970s, advertising for the Max cigarette brand intensified the association between cigarette consumption, fashion, body thinness, and feminism, which existed since the 1920s and 1930s, maintaining the same discursive logic. The ad in Figure 6 shows a woman wearing a fashionable dress, sitting in a comfortable pose, looking free and happy. The slogan on the top, “Wear a Max today,” suggests the cigarette is like a piece of clothing, which reveals the intimate relationship between fashion and cigarette consumption. In other words, the ad reinforces the need for modern women to adopt a lifestyle focused on consumption in this new social configuration.

The ad also makes a clear anatomic analogy between the cigarette and the female body - “Great looking. Great taste too. Long, lean, all-white, Max 120s” - affirming the body standard that represents the ideal woman model valued in that period – long, lean, and white. Thus, as an advertising appeal, the cigarette form acquires the power to regulate and determine the ideal body for women and their behavior and autonomy in society. Implied in this advertising strategy is the negative meaning attributed to the opposite body type of what the cigarette shape represents, a fat, short, and black body, which is unapproved as the path to the rise of modern women.

However, the Virginia Slims cigarette brand is probably the most successful in associating cigarette consumption, fashion, thinness, and autonomy. The brand established itself in the North American imagination through a series of ads that ran since the 1960s and lasted for several decades, celebrating the rights and independence that women had achieved with the slogan “You’ve come a long way, baby.”

Most ads in that campaign present two images in different planes as if comparing them. In the background, a smaller image showed aspects of women’s submission in previous decades. In the foreground, a bigger contemporary image showed a model with full make-up dressed in the latest fashion trend, posing with an independent and free attitude and holding a cigarette.

Figure 7: Virginia Slims cigarette ads in Vogue magazine, New York, 1976 and 1990.

Source: Available at: https://bit.ly/2EUx8Ut. Accessed on March 11, 2023.

Figure 7 shows two ads for Virginia slims cigarettes, produced in 1976 (piece on the left) and 1990 (piece on the right). The 1976 piece shows an old newspaper ad in the background asking married men if they felt ashamed when their wives smoked. As a solution to the problem, the ad offered a mask to be placed on the wife's face, imprisoning her and, thus, preventing her from smoking. In the ad piece on the right (1990), the background image shows a woman in 1960 hanging the laundry out to dry.

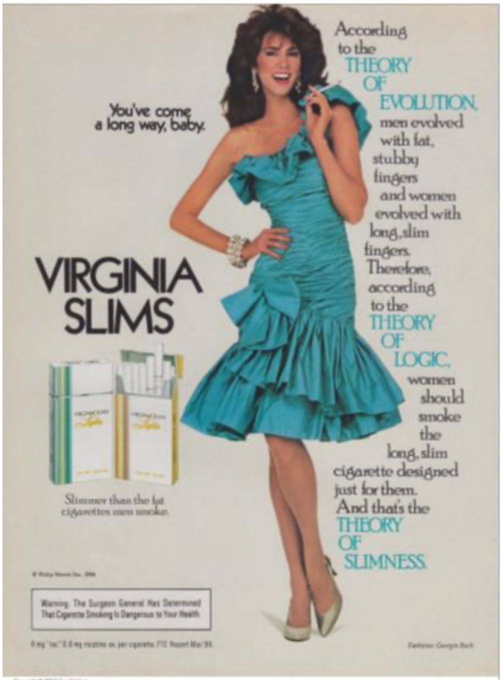
In the foreground of the two ads appears the photographic image of an empowered and beautiful contemporary woman, made up and dressed in the latest fashion trend, holding a cigarette. By showing that contrast, the Virginia Slims brand aimed to associate the evolution of women and their social role with cigarette consumption, which acts as a practice that mediates autonomy, freedom, beauty, and identity evident in this new woman. Thus, Virginia Slims' advertising rhetoric sells a lifestyle for the modern woman. "What is sold to us all the time, if not this: ways of seeing and feeling, thinking and perceiving, living and dressing? The fact is that more than just goods, we consume life forms" (PELBART, 2011, p. 20).

From this perspective, consumption becomes an essential element in forming the subject's identity (CANCLINI, 1996). "Considered the hallmark of contemporary society due to its condition of constituting subjectivities and identities" (BACCEGA, 2010, p. 30), consumption becomes an articulator of biopolitical strategies in the management of subjects' bodies and lives. There is an invitation for the female public to enjoy a "positive" lifestyle (HAN, 2017) with a focus on consumption. In other words, women can gain independence as long as they are consumers, which includes participating in the consumption circuit of products such as cigarettes and fashion clothes. Thus, ads sell us a lifestyle, and the fashion system operates by helping the public to realize or enable the experience of lifestyles.

Companies no longer produce commodity objects only. They produce worlds. So, companies need to sell a world before selling things. "Consuming is no longer reduced to buying and 'destroying' a service or product, as political economy and its criticism teaches, but above all means belonging to a world, joining a universe" (LAZZARATO, 2006, p. 100). These worlds affect the body, feelings, intellect, that is, the whole of subjectivity. Advertising "ceases to be an ideological assessment and becomes an incitement, an invitation to share a certain way of dressing, having a body, eating, communicating, living, moving, having a gender, talking, and so on."

Hoff (2010) indicates we can understand consumption as a biopolitical strategy if considering its action as a reordering of life, as it proposes ways of belonging, identity construction, and existing. The management of life – something along the lines of "self-care," updated for the conditions of late capitalism – through consumption experiences is at the base of power relations in contemporary times.

Figure 8: Virginia Slims cigarette ad in *Vogue*, New York, 1984



Source: Available at: https://bit.ly/a2F6BXv6. Accessed on December 21, 2022.

In the ad above, published in 1984 (Figure 8), the emphasis on thinness is noticeable again in the analogy with the cigarette's shape itself, which now appeared in an even longer and thinner version, accentuating the ideal characteristics of the female body (tall, slender, and white). The image shows a model with hair and makeup styled according to the latest fashion, wearing a haute couture dress. Next to her, a text says:

> According to the Theory of Evolution, men evolved with fat, stubby fingers and women evolved with long, slim fingers. Therefore, according to the Theory of Logic, women should smoke the long, slim cigarette designed just for them. And that's the Theory of Slimness.

Once again, the ad compares the shape of the cigarette to the woman's, explicitly referring to her finger but implying that it extends to the whole female body, which must also be long and slim. Furthermore, the text reiterates gender binarism, describing specific bodily characteristics that supposedly differentiate women from men: women must have a thin and elongated body structure, and men must have a broad and stubby body structure. In this way, the ad associates the fat body with the masculine universe and the thin body with the feminine, corroborating the stigmatization of women with fat bodies.

As Farrell (2011) observed, since the 19th century, fatness has been associated with an uncivilized body and thinness with a civilized body. Following that line of thought, the ad for Virginia Slims links evolution, consumption, and femininity with slenderness, which implies that those women whose bodies are fat do not know how to control their consumption desires and, therefore, would not be adapted to live in the capitalist world and enjoying a modern lifestyle. Besides the depreciation of the fat body, we also observe moral disapproval of consumption in line with Protestant ideals, as already discussed.

We can see the same meanings in the Virginia Slims ad published in 1985 (Figure 9). In it, the model, aligned with the body and fashion standards of the time, says: "Take that, all of you short, fat cigarettes. Now we're even longer." The statement is not only a way of subjugating all other cigarette brands and praising the Virginia Slims brand but also of devaluing and stigmatizing fat women since all pieces compare the brand's cigarettes to the female body.

Figure 9 New Virginia Slims ad, 1985.

Source: Available at: https://bit.ly/2Ht2yEn. Accessed on December 21, 2022.

Thus, the ads presented make clear the established gender norms for acceptable body sizes and heights. According to Bordo (1993), deviating from those norms can lead to terrible consequences, from discrimination to outright harassment and even violence. We also identify marks of neoliberalism, mainly in the emphasis on individual choice, as women who have a fat body are blamed for their physical appearance, indicating they are not "choosing" to engage in supposedly beneficial practices, opting instead for "wrong" methods to produce their body, taken as a project of the self.

Given this perspective, the fat woman's lifestyle appears negative. Featherstone (1991, p. 171) suggests that, "in consumer culture, concern with appearance has the effect of reducing one's acceptability as a person, as well as indicating laziness, low self-esteem, and even moral failure" (FEATHERSTONE, 1991, p. 186). It is this negative meaning that the Virginia Slims brand attributes to the fat body in its advertising pieces.

This government of the self promoted in consumer culture is an illustrative example of neoliberal governance. The body becomes something changeable and part of a personal "project," a matter of choices made in market systems, as is the case with smoking, which ads for American cigarette brands show as a path to obtaining a slim body.

Cigarettes begin to exercise discipline over the female body for consumption practices. As a disciplinary device, the cigarette works within women's bodies by making them lose weight and in their behavior, giving them attitude and voice to no longer accept a position as male objects, relegated to the private environment of their homes and apart from social life. On the other hand, they are subject to body norms and the biopolitical control exercised by the consumption of brands. There is an apparent paradox between "choosing" to engage in practices that ultimately reinforce body norms and go against the freedom and equal rights that women have achieved.

Therefore, while in the 1920s and 1930s, the Lucky Strike brand sought to build an association between cigarettes, health, and weight loss through persuasive discourses and endorsements of various professionals, in the 1970s and 1990s, there was no longer a need for the testimonials of personalities, as women consumers had already internalized control and discipline. Advertising strategies revealed the sophistication of biopower, and we see the emphasis on building slenderness as a lifestyle, which was not so evident in the 1920s and 1930s.

Smoking inserted itself into a neoliberal logic of the performance society, whose modal verb is unlimited power, "project, initiative, and motivation instead of prohibition, commandment, or law" (HAN, 2017, p. 24). Thus, while playing their role as consumers, women gain freedom, a form of empowerment conditioned on consumption. That is how cigarette and fashion consumption merge in ads for Virginia Slims, expressing a modern lifestyle where women can be free and happy as long as they adapt the "correct" consumption practices.

Final considerations

The body consists of an experience of the self, and consumption builds on individuality or in a process of individuation, in which brands and signs seek concreteness in the body. Thus, the body is a place that connects individuals in their daily lives to consumer cultures, becoming a central element in the structuring of consumption practices and experiences.

Advertising for American cigarettes presented here sells the thin female body, a central element that connects fashion and cigarette consumption practices and materializes the modern woman's lifestyle. Media calls for the consumption of modern women were, in large part, responsible for associating freedom, empowerment, and success with work on the body, promoting the idea that women with slim bodies tend to be more successful and dominate all the spheres of life in society since market logic permeates everything in a neoliberal economy. Therefore, a woman who seeks freedom needs to have the body desired by capitalism and subject herself to the norms of body standards. In this sense, domination and liberation are two sides of the same coin.

Prado (2013) observes that calls from communication devices, at first, confront us with a given situation. Next, we embody and experience the constructed discourse. Finally, we always return to an imaginary world built by the media. We observed this evolution in the ads of American cigarette brands. In the 1920s and 1930s, ads drew attention to the weight-loss potential of cigarettes, educating and encouraging women to consume them. In the 1970s and 1990s, ads began to sell a modern/thin lifestyle, enabling the construction of a consumer experience lived through women's bodies and minds.

Therefore, the analysis of the ads reveals media communication as a biopolitical strategy that acts on the body of the (female) population in two moments, first for the thin body in the 1920s and then for the modern/slim lifestyle in the 1980s and 1990s. Images of women in the 1920s, the 1970s and 1980s, and today are very similar, which shows how the dimension of biopolitics (which acts on the body of the population) is present in the development of consumption practices.

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ARTIGO

Meme: analyzing the traces of a discursive micro-action

Meme: análise dos rastros de uma microação discursiva

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Resumo: *O objetivo deste artigo é descrever o meme como uma das microações discursivas articuladas na mediação da realidade, cujo efeito subjetivo específico é o contágio. Recorremos a uma análise comparativa entre os riscos de fabricar o mundo digital assumidos pelo homo digitalis e os riscos de fabricar o mundo subterrâneo assumidos pelos indivíduos de Fragmentos de uma história futura, obra literária de Gabriel Tarde (20143). Assim, sob a orientação da teoria ator-rede (LATOUR, 2019), defendemos que o meme, longe de ser uma postagem, uma imagem, uma piada ou o remix disso, embora atravesse tudo isso como uma rede homogênea, é um continente do discurso; é uma resposta da linguagem para um problema referente à criação e manutenção de grupos nas condições sociotécnicas das relações digitais.*

Palavras-chave: *Homo digitalis; meme; modo de existência; produção de subjetividade; teoria ator-rede.*

Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to describe the meme as one of the discursive micro-actions articulated in the mediation of reality, whose specific subjective effect is contagion. We resort to a comparative analysis between the risks of fabricating the digital world assumed by homo digitalis; and the risks of fabricating*

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the underground world assumed by the individuals in Fragments of a Future History, a literary work by Gabriel Tarde (2014). Thus, under the guidance of actor-network theory (LATOUR, 2019), we argue that the meme, far from being a post, an image, a joke, or the remix thereof, though it crosses all these as a homogeneous network, is a continent of discourse; it is a language response to a problem concerning the creation and maintenance of groups in the socio-technical conditions of digital relations.

Keywords: *Desinformation; Media literacy; Lateral Reading; Post-truth; WhatsApp.*

Introduction

Often, we hear that "An Internet meme is a piece of culture, typically a joke, which gains influence through online transmission" (DAVISON, 2020, p. 144). Such a piece can be shared by thousands and "reproduced with any text-editing computer program" (CANI, 2019, p. 252). Therefore, "remixing is the process of construction/elaboration of this textual materiality, while the meme ends up being the finished product that circulates on social media" (LIMA-NETO, 2020, p. 2257). But what product is this? What social media are we talking about? We argue that the meme, far from being a post, an image, a joke, or a remix of all that, even if it is part of all of that, is, in fact, a container of the act of chatting.

The term meme refers to the invention of something that does not seem quite finished yet, that can be confused with jokes, pranks, the post itself, images, or opinion. However, instead of analyzing funny posts that go viral in digital relationships resulting from infinitesimal associations always capable of subverting classifications, we propose studying this phenomenon through its discursive effect. Given the multitude of agents it can mobilize, the important thing is the effect the meme causes; it is an increase in social quantity, the birth or expansion of a group. That discursive technology, however, suffered adaptation to problems relating to creating and maintaining groups in the digital world. Like any world, the digital world depends on discursive actions to exist. Hence, we start from the analogy between the risks of fabricating the digital world assumed by homo digitalis[3] and the risks of making an underground world taken by the individuals of Underground Man, a literary work by Gabriel Tarde (2014).

We find the analogy on the need to reinvent ourselves as a group, that is, to save society in the face of adverse conditions. Like the individuals in Underground Man, homos digitalis also need to reinvent themselves to save social life in the digital world, following opposite paths but

3 Homo digitalis is the inhabitant of the digital world, individuals whose relationships are foreign to spatiality. They do not come together physically. In broad terms, they have a digital profile and strive vehemently to optimize it (HAN, 2018).

necessarily shuffling socio-technical resources to guarantee the crossover of values that maintain the groups. Bruno Latour (2002) explains that social creations suggest the fullness of something ready and given, which would, theoretically, explain the residual aspects of relationships between individuals. However, Latour advises us to think about social issues strictly in the opposite direction. Under his approach, we start from the understanding the digital world is made up of each residual aspect that comes together in its favor. That is not an easy task, given it requires articulation between networks. After all, "a leak in a pipeline forces the operator to close the valves, a displacement of three meters in the Wi-Fi area, and goodbye, the connection is lost" (LATOUR, 2019, p. 38). However, Latour advises us to think about social issues strictly in the opposite direction. Under his approach, we start from the understanding that the digital world emerges out of each residual aspect that comes together in its favor. That is not an easy task, given it requires articulation between networks. After all, "a leak in a pipeline forces the operator to close the valves; a three-meter displacement in a Wi-Fi zone results in a lost connection" (LATOUR, 2019, p. 38).

Without the shelter of the real world, there is no way for a group to exist. The actor-network theory emphasizes the necessary fabrication of this shelter, highlighting that there is more than one type of network following the previous one, giving continuity and overlapping. Moreover, the term network refers to the heterogeneity of available devices4 (smartphones, cables, a cat, caves) and the crossover of services or values (discourses), the latter inevitably made possible by the former. Establishing material and artificial conditions for reality articulates these two types of connectors. That said, we argue that the meme is a discursive technology inherent to the need to survive as a group in the face of digital conditions, which crosses over by heterogeneous associations (network as a process) and happens as a service or value (network as a result) dear to associations between individuals.

4 The actor-network theory technically calls it a hybrid network, the gathering of unpredictable elements in which everything can associate with everything to sustain a social event (LATOUR, 2019).

That implies the meme's definition depends on its specific tone or contrast relative to other services or values emphasized in the discourse. However, perceiving this contrast is difficult due to the obsessive effort of moderns to keep practice away from theory, the object from the subject. It is as if the reality in which modern people live depends on their completely unmade condition: suddenly being faced with the exuberance of a fully ready group or social event. However, all human activity requires intense work that allows the truth of facts and spirit mediated by hybrid networks, which set the world of things in motion, and homogeneous networks that, in turn, put modes of discourse into action. [5]

To underscore the difference between the two types of connectors mentioned above, we draw attention to the difference between what is displaced and the displacement, realizing that "an oil pipeline is no more made 'of' gasoline than the Internet is made 'of' e-mails" (LATOUR, 2019, p. 38). We can replace the word e-mails with posts without loss in meaning. So, we begin to discuss a process that measures the quality of interactions between individuals through how they deliver discourse. The effect of memes' action on this process becomes evident once we fragment discourse until reaching what we call speaking memetically, as it is an action added to other discursive actions driven by beliefs and desires.[6] Therefore, talking is a process made of many elementary actions combined, articulated in the effort to make and remake groups, in which contagion is the effect of the meme.

The "catastrophe" of "homo digitalis"

Making and remaking groups in the digital world corresponds to a collective challenge to some extent like the experience lived by the

5 To highlight precisely the articulation of this movement and action, Latour (2002) suggests the term factish to think about the fabrication of reality. This combination of fact and fetish aims to show modern people are comparable to the "others" of so-called primitive cultures.

6 For Tarde (2003), beliefs and desires are forces of the soul and have a quantitatively variable character, starting from the lowest propensity to believing and desiring up to the apex of certainty and passion.

victims of the planetary catastrophe narrated in Underground Man. In it, the author thinks about the future of humanity after a disaster that radically changed the availability of material devices for human existence: the extinction of the Sun. Such adversity had forced all individuals who wanted to survive to reorganize themselves in underground life. They had to look for a place to live in the center of the Earth. Fortunately, they managed to preserve most of the knowledge produced during life on the surface of the Earth, finding ways to improve the quality of social relationships, as the narrator living around the 31st century tells.

This science fiction corresponds to a mental experiment in which Tarde (2014) exposes his sociological theories, stressing the essential character of social life:

> It consists in the complete elimination of living nature, whether animal or vegetable, man only excepted. That has produced, so to say, a purification of society. Secluded thus from every influence of the natural milieu into which it was hitherto plunged and confined, the social milieu was for the first time able to reveal and display its true virtues, and the real social bond appeared in all its vigor and purity. It might be said that destiny had desired to make in our case an extended sociological experiment for its own edification by placing us in such extraordinarily unique condition. (TARDE, 2014, p. 578)

But how can we imagine this experience? It starts from a core idea, from an imaginative and eloquent mind, from the capacity for seduction and perseverance, or better yet, from a leadership driven by passions. The character who embodies this leadership is Miltiades:

> He had no trouble in proving that, on condition of burrowing sufficiently deep into the ground below, they would find a deliciously gentle warmth, an Elysian temperature. It would be enough to excavate, enlarge, heighten, and extend the galleries of already existing mines in order to render them habitable and comfortable into the bargain. The electric light, supplied entirely without expense by the scattered centres of the fire within, would provide for the magnificent illumination both by day and night of these colossal crypts, these marvellous cloisters, indefinitely extended and embellished by successive generations. With a good system of ventilation,

> all danger of suffocation or of foulness of air would be avoided. In short, after a more or less long period of settling in, civilised life could unfold anew in all its intellectual, artistic, and fashionable splendour, as freely as it did in the capricious and intermittent light or natural day, and even perhaps more surely. (TARDE, 2014, p. 413)

Miltiades defends the idea that civilization, its few survivors, was destined to return to the caves. Showing sketches, calculations, and plans, he vehemently says:

> For ordinary drinking purposes we first of all shall have melted ice. Every day we shall transport enormous blocks of it in order to keep the orifices of the crypts free from obstruction, and to supply the public fountains. I may add that chemists undertake to manufacture alcohol from anything, even from mineralized rocks, and that it is the A.B.C. of the grocer's trade to manufacture wine from alcohol and water. ('Hear! hear!' from all the benches). As for food, is not chemistry also capable of manufacturing butter, albumen, and milk from no matter what? Besides, has the last word been said on the subject? Is it not highly probable that before long, if it takes up the matter, it will succeed in satisfying, both on the score of quantity and expense, the desires of the most refined gastronomy? And, meanwhile.... (a voice timidly: 'Meanwhile?') Meanwhile does not our disaster itself, by a kind of providential occurrence, place within our reach the best stocked, the most abundant, the most inexhaustible larder that the human race has ever had? Immense stores, the most admirable which have hitherto been laid down, are lying for us under the ice or the snow. Myriads of domestic or wild animals—I dare not add, of men and women (a general shudder of horror)—but at least of bullocks, sheep and poultry, frozen instantaneously in a single mass, are lying here and there in the public markets a few steps away. Let us collect, as long as such work is still possible out of doors, this boundless quarry which was destined to feed for years several hundreds of millions, and which will well suffice, in consequence, to feed a few thousands only for ages, even should they multiply unduly, in despite of Malthus. If stacked in the neighborhood of the orifice of the chief cavern, they will be easy to get at and will provide a delightful fare for our fraternal love-feasts. (TARDE, 2014, p. 426)

Miltiades' proposition is similar to the myth of Noah's ark, trying to salvage all that was most precious. However, in Miltiades' words,

> "But we, in our new ark, mysterious, impenetrable, indestructible, shall carry with us neither plants nor animals. These types of existence are annihilated; these rough drafts in creation, these fumbling experiments of Earth in quest of the human form are for ever blotted out. Let us not regret it. In place of so many pairs of animals which take up so much room, of so many useless seeds, we will carry with us into our retreat the harmonious garland of all the truths in perfect accord with one another; of all artistic and poetic beauties, which are all members one of another, united like sisters, which human genius has brought to light in the course of ages and multiplied thereafter in millions of copies: all of which will be destroyed save a single one, which it will be our task to guarantee against all danger of destruction. We shall establish a vast library containing all the principal works, enriched with cinematographic albums. We shall set up a vast museum composed of single specimens of all the schools, of all the styles of the masters in architecture, sculpture, painting, and even music. These are our real treasures, our real seed for future harvests, our gods for whom we will do battle till our latest breath." (TARDE, 2014, p. 464)

Driven by their passion for the original idea, the survivors immediately began efforts to save knowledge from collections of all genres produced up to that point to save the future of civilization.

> With infinite precautions they were lowered one after another, bale by bale, into the bowels of the earth. This salvage of the goods and chattels of humanity was methodically carried out. It included all the quintessence of the ancient grand libraries of Paris, Berlin, and London, which had been brought together at Babylon, and then carried for safety into the desert with the rest. The cream of all former museums, of all previous exhibitions of industry and art, was concentrated there with considerable additions. There were manuscripts, books, bronzes, and pictures. What an expenditure of energy and incessant toil, in spite of the assistance of inter-terrestrial forces, had been necessary for packing, transporting, and housing it all! And yet, for the greater part, it was useless to those who voluntarily this task imposed upon themselves. They all knew it. They were well aware that they were probably condemned for the rest of their days to a hard and matter-of-fact existence, for which their lives as artists,

> philosophers, and men of letters, had scarcely prepared them. But—for the first time—the idea of duty to be done found its way into these hearts, the beauty of self-sacrifice subdued these dilettanti. They sacrificed themselves to the Unknown, to that which is not yet, to the posterity towards which were turned all the desires of their electrified spirits, as all the atoms of the magnetized iron turn towards the pole. (TARDE, 2014, p. 480-496)

For these individuals, the extinction of the Sun implied a situation in which there was a simplification of the socio-technical means available. However, they also experienced an intensification of intellectuality as knowledge became the only thing one could have more than others. That implied, for future generations, the possibility of aesthetic activity surpassing utilitarian activity and the suppression of the producer/consumer relationship by the valorization of artistic and scientific knowledge. Then, drawing from the exchange of admiration, criticisms, and favorable and unfavorable judgments, this underground world changed its old ideal: people no longer used each other. They used themselves. They no longer sought individual enjoyment and satisfaction. They sought to produce for the delight of others. In other words, by living with the minimum, they could produce the maximum amount of reflection and consideration.

Using imagination, then, Tarde (2014) talks about what, in his view, is the purest social life: "social tonics" dosed by handshakes, conversations, and other reflex exchanges.

> The problem, in a way, was to learn, what would social man become if committed to his own keeping, yet left to himself—furnished with all the intellectual acquisitions accumulated through a remote past by human geniuses, but deprived of the assistance of all other living beings, nay, even of those beings half endowed with life, that we call rivers and seas and stars, and thrown back on the conquered, yet passive forces of chemical, inorganic and lifeless Nature, which is separated from man by too deep a chasm to exercise on him any action from the social point of view. The problem was to learn what this humanity would do when restricted to man, and obliged to extract from its own resources, if not its food supplies,

> yet at least all its pleasures, all its occupations, all its creative inspirations. (TARDE, 2014, p. 578-591)

Victims of a planetary "catastrophe" of another order, homo digitalis also risks facing the need to review the values that must circulate to maintain relationships and, thus, establish a world that survives the new conditions. But, instead of sociotechnical simplification, homo digitalis deals with the entry of new actors into the social scene and the expansion of these networks, which also requires transformations in the quality of associations. In that case, it is a question of knowing how the social animal can survive being physically distant from other individuals with whom it needs to group. The digital world was conceived and delivered to store accumulated knowledge; it is a world made up of reflections and intense exchanges, whose extension, however, exhausts time and increases contradictions.

Tarde's catastrophe was the extinction of the Sun. However, individuals in his story developed ways to survive that allowed them to gain time to improve values and exchange reflexes. The catastrophe of homo digitalis, in turn, is the extinction of time and physical proximity. From another perspective, while individuals in Tarde's imagined catastrophe managed to save knowledge on life on the Earth's surface and, thus, save human civilization, the individuals in the digital catastrophe managed to accomplish an even greater feat: making widely available the knowledge built in life essentially constituted by people's physical contact, improving technical reproducibility and social expansion.

A huge conversation

The ontological condition of the meme means the existence of a specific space that needs filling in the process of manufacturing reality. Without this action, there is a hiatus in the task of regrouping the social. Therefore, it is essential to think about the new needs and possibilities that the socio-technical conditions of the digital world create. When entering the digital environment, it is usual to come across posts that have an impact because they are absurd or impressive, content that generates curiosity and the desire to tag a friend, comments that reveal what others think, and interactions that show what they like. In this regard, we must note the meme is not a post that conveys an idea that the people who share and like it identify with. It is not an image/video with a caption shared by a given audience. The meme is, first and foremost, content that somehow meets a discursively created condition of happiness. Research may even underestimate the mediation memes provide because it is so well hidden, subtle, and necessarily disguised. But their effect is perfectly palpable. As active in establishing reality as they are confusing in their delimitations, memes have mobilized classificatory efforts, from the classic definition by Richard Dawkins (2007) to perspectives more linked to content creation and sharing, demonstrating a widespread concern to establish categories, like longevity, fecundity and copy fidelity (DAWKINS, 2007), humor, intertextuality, and anomalous juxtaposition (KNOBEL; LANKSHEAR, 2007), and content, form, and stance (SHIFMAN, 2013).

In Dawkins (2007), the concept of meme aims to indicate that cultural evolution occurs in a way analogous to biological evolution through a minimal agent that he classifies by the three aspects mentioned above: longevity concerns duration in time, fecundity corresponds to continuity through replications in successive brains, and fidelity concerns the level of similarity of such copies. Michele Knobel and Colin Lankshear (2007), focusing directly on the digital world, point to three patterns that contribute to the fecundity of the meme: humor, ranging from the peculiar and unusual to the eccentric, the bizarre, and parodic; rich intertextuality, making multiple ironic references to different events, icons, and phenomena from popular culture; and anomalous juxtapositions, mainly of images.

Limor Shifman (2013), in turn, proposes thinking about memes, not as isolated ideas or formulas that spread easily but as a group of content items created with mutual awareness and that have common characteristics. Based on Dawkins' (2007) concept, which understands the meme is a unit of imitation, Shifman suggests isolating three dimensions: content, referring to the ideas and ideologies conveyed; form, meaning the physical incarnation of the message perceived by the senses; and stance, which is the information the meme transmits concerning its own communication.

These understandings are lost in border areas. They feel the effect of the phenomenon they seek to understand but fall into thought traps that separate the world of things and words, object and subject, exteriority and interiority, matter and spirit, practice and theory, fact and fetish, or rather, are too modern. The point is that the action of the meme crosses hybrid networks and intersects with other values, but its effect characterizes it. We should note that posts generally called memes are difficult to classify, as they can be edited in infinite ways. Moreover, these edits can serve any group. In other words, the same image, phrase, or video base of a given post can, through quick editing, be used by left- and right-wing political groups. For example, Catholic, Protestant, or Umbanda religious groups can use the same image without compromising the act of speaking memetically. In short, there is no left or right meme. Since the truth of the meme precedes the group itself, it does not serve a specific opinion. Its commitment is not with what is said but how it is said.

By way of clarification, it is convenient to dispel the common notion that confuses a meme with a post. A post consists of establishing a conversation with physically distant people. Therefore, forming groups requires an entirely mental cohesion, what Tarde (2005) called public, a type of human grouping whose growing importance comes from the invention of the printing press. As a gift to researchers of the future, Tarde discussed the strength of the public, the ways of feeling and acting of a type of social aggregate that does not essentially require the proximity of bodies, which, once sheltered in the digital world, found an environment suited to its nature. The post is its form of expression par excellence.

However, the digital world still requires adaptations and experiments on the transformation in the quality of associations. After all, the not-so-subtle detail of it consists in the fact that reaggregating the social requires more sophistication of discursive values to delimit itself, mediate interests, and deal with new and small gaps, solutions, and flaws in reality. Finally, we can say with Tarde (2005) and Latour (2019) that establishing social reality is conversing. Therefore, the digital world is an immense conversation of unprecedented length and speed. However, we are still learning how to talk, and time is not as abundant a resource as in the Tarde's tragedy. Groups require much more effort to be made and remade. Without something as valuable as time, a problem arises: how can we learn what links physically distant people? How can they know they are connected and notice their common interests?

The hiatus

If the hybrid network's maintenance is up to date (cell phone, internet, images), we must think about the articulation of the mechanisms responsible for keeping the group alive. It is precisely in the effect of how it is said that lies the trajectory of the discursive action and where we must assess the quality of the connection. Where there is a hiatus, there is also an articulation. Where we can define antecedents and consequents, it implies the existence of meaning. However, modern people's fixation on the idea of perfect and pure information hides the fact that "mediators are reason itself, the only means of subsisting in being" (LATOUR, 2019, p. 133). This negative view of mediation places the notion of construction in opposition to truth, even though mediations are the only ones capable of maintaining the continuity of networks. Modern thought always seeks to look behind the institutions of truth, beauty, goodness, and wholeness for multiple dubious manipulations, translations, and metaphors, that is, transformations that invalidate their value as if there were an already given and, therefore, true and pure substance that remains unaltered (LATOUR, 2019).

To the extent that it committed itself to the impossible task of hiding mediation, modern language assumed the mission of hiding the traces of practice, operating a suture between theory and practice. Hence, the moderns always live in ruins: "The ruins they have just toppled, the ruins they had put in place of the ones they toppled, ruins that others, for the same reason, are preparing to destroy" (LATOUR, 2019, p. 43-44). In the digital (and, yes, real) world, the principal factish is to ensure bonds for assembling groups between physically separated individuals. As a result, victims of the scarcity of time develop techniques to measure the temperature of passionate interests or, better yet, measure the cohesion of spirits that do not necessarily see each other and do not vibrate by looking each other in the eye.

Passionate interests guarantee the bonds of any group in any world built to be inhabited by humans. However, in digital circumstances, discovering that you like the same things, admire the same leader, and agree with the same ideas requires updating values, ways of changing, and factishes, in short, the mode of talking. This physical distance from individuals, which prevents the transmission of magnetism, the penetration of the gaze directly, and contagion through physical proximity, delimits the hiatus in reality to be filled by the micro-action of the meme. Based on Tarde's theory of contagion (2005), the lively curiosity of individuals is trapped in the unconscious illusion that their feelings are common to many spirits[7], and the lack of interest is sudden upon noticing that they are the only ones there. This arrangement encourages the establishment of skilled beings capable of helping to fill the gap that arises in the process of forming groups in digital environments.

If organizing and populating this world is desirable, adapting to the hiatus created by its socio-technical conditions is imperative. Furthermore, as the object is neither enchanted nor a cause, it is essential to activate factish or slightly autonomous beings who surpass their creators to a certain extent and, in this way, possess them. In this way, the act of speaking memetically manufactures its beings linked to

7 If the same feeling is imbued in many individuals, they are on the verge of forming a group.

prestige[8] so that they articulate and plot together in the arduous work of keeping a group alive in the digital world. They are the temperature gauges of common interests, such as likes, emojis, reposts, and favorable comments.

Meme: "We have common interests. We are linked!"

The action of the meme has its own hiatus to risk coping with the arduous task of fabricating the real: not knowing the temperature of passionate interests. Because undertaking and promoting beliefs and desires in the digital world requires adapting contagion to physical distance and the tragedy of lack of time. So, if, as Latour (2019) states, a passionate interest is a mediator par excellence that comes between two entities that, before that interest arose, were unaware they had a link, the meme is a kind of messenger of the digital world sent to warn "we have common interests. We are linked!".

The message, however, no longer relies on the timbre of the voice, penetration of the gaze, or magnetic transfers of gestures. The adaptations of such aspects are closely related to the choice of the appropriate record (image, phrase, audio, video) because, as already pointed out, the meme occurs much less when someone identifies with the beliefs and desires conveyed in any post that speaks memetically than when it manages to invite, mediate a sense of belonging, and signal: "you are the recipient of this message because we have common interests." The subtlety that camouflages this is that the specific action of the meme ceases when the message reaches the recipient, transforming it into a frozen image or a reproduction. That means it is not about "what is the meme" but "when is the meme."

The meme occurs when a lapse of negativity or a stop interrupts the flow of positivity in the digital world. That lapse is timely amidst what Byung Chul-Han (2017) calls the tyranny of visibility because it reduces the intended message to a dimension empty of meaning, from which

8 Perhaps it is more appropriate to think of "being" as an ongoing process instead of "beings" as conditions.

new meanings can arise. And the meme continues as speech guarantees the certainty of the bond. When it begins to circulate as posts created to serve the opinion of a group or a particular thought, the repeated record is frozen by its reposting, posting countless times, or echoing on various digital platforms. In brief, since the continuity of the record consists in its ability to betray any uttered idea-suggestion, it is not the meme that serves the group but groups that serve the meme factish gods (likes, replies, favorable comments) as a kind of cult to stay alive.

It is still necessary to allude to the cunning inherent in the meme, used not necessarily to enchant others, as the individuals did in Underground Man, but to start a conversation and change the other or infect and gain social quantity. Just like individuals in Tarde's tragedy, *homo digitalis* needs, in the face of their tragedy, to "Mutually ape one another, and by dint of accumulated apings diversely combined to create an originality is the important thing" (TARDE, 2014, p 609). However, this paper is dedicated only to the traces left by the meme: a hiatus in reality, the factish beings established to assist in the creation of something that goes beyond individuals and, finally, in the condition of happiness of this action: offering a path of beliefs and desires to be imitated.

The ontological condition[9] of the meme comes before reaching the condition of happiness because the group or opinion resulting from it is not ready. So, what matters (the trajectory that constitutes the ontological condition of the meme) is what happens because the meme is social; it is a movement constituted by all the actors involved in its performance. Its trajectory carries the hidden message of contagion but also reflects the disturbing instability a group must face to exist in the digital world. *Homo digitalis* even managed to bring with them the knowledge produced, like the Tarde's survivors of the extinction of the Sun. However, far from having time to benefit from this knowledge and improve conversations, *homo digitalis* accumulated so much information, contradictions, and conflicts that, to guarantee their possibility of social life, they depend

9 A condição ontológica do meme será desenvolvida em outra oportunidade, este artigo foca apenas nos rastros dessa ação.

much more than any other people on invoking beings capable of influencing.

The transformations in the conditions that govern the social environment require plotting and germinating a work of adaptation to mediate reality. In the digital world, by some distant intuition, this work was called a meme because it is "funny," "silly," "playful," and "repetitive." However, the meme is funny, silly, playful, and repetitive because it is a profound regression to the elementary conditions of social life.[10] Such regression is arbitrarily necessary in the face of tragedies that compromise the articulation of hybrid networks, be it the extinction of the Sun or of time and physical proximity. It is necessary to update social values and the way of talking.

In the extinction of the Sun, the individuals who survived this tragedy desperately needed to save the articulations of hybrid networks. In the extinction of time and physical proximity, individuals desperately need to ensure that they can imitate, oppose, and adapt, that is, talk. In it, the meme is not a technology that appears out of nowhere; it goes back to the experience of contagion through physical contact, though it cannot be confused with the contagion of face-to-face relationships or with other discursive technologies because it has its hiatus, factish beings, a condition of happiness, and a specific effect. Conflict surrounds the digital world; there is no way to escape it. So, the digital world needs to learn to deal with it to offer a path to imitation. In short, to speak memetically is challenging: "Will we be able to stay together in this world?"

The meme is one of the actions to maintain social reality, whose effect on relationships between individuals is crucial to regrouping the social in the hostile circumstances of physical distance and time scarcity. The meme corresponds to a restoring action or, if you prefer, a restoring discourse. Though its practical dimension is hidden, we can feel its specific patch because it fills a space in the break between theory and

10 Tarde (2011) defines three categories as elementary conditions of the social: imitation, opposition or conflict, and adaptation.

practice, subject and object, even if mixed in the heterogeneity of the elements that come together in its favor. In short, modern people create fetish languages capable of forging any "being" (an event) that goes from creation to action, such as deities, deeds, works, etc., which help them establish artificial conditions of existence (LATOUR, 2002). And the meme is one of those factish languages that precede the formation of individuals, groups, institutions, or identities.

Final considerations

According to Tarde (2000), any creation starts from a memory. The creation of the discursive technique of the meme starts from the memory inherent in the capacity of human social groups to guarantee the continuity of their sets of ideas essentially through physical contact. Given the new socio-technical conditions in the digital world, groups need to guarantee the continuity of their sets of ideas remotely to exist. It is no longer possible to use expressive face-to-face techniques, whose effect is the imitation of beliefs and desires or a certain level of psychic cohesion. Besides physical distance, the existence of groups does not have much time to create and remake itself; its procedural consistency is even more fragile because "external" quality and fleeting bonds have replaced "internal" quality and long-lasting bonds for the benefit of the rapid emergence and expansion of groups.

The continuity of sets of ideas is composed of an immeasurable series of smaller, distinct, and discontinuous ideas. Mediation work is essential to aggregate these smaller ideas, and the meme is part of this work. Overall, this paper states the meme is a type of connector, a way of changing, whose trajectory will be developed on another opportunity.

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