RAE Journal of Business Management

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE
V. 59, N. 3,
May–June 2019

fgv.br/rae

FGV | SAO PAULO SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

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ISSN 0034-7590

EDITORIAL

Translated version
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020190301



Maria José Tonelli
Editora-chefe



Felipe Zambaldi
Editor-adjunto

MARKETING, CONSUMPTION, AND IDENTITY

New times bring new themes. This issue includes three unconventional articles in the marketing field resulting from a partnership with two events: the "International Social Networks Conference" (Isonec) held at Fundação Getulio Vargas, School of Business Administration of São Paulo (FGV EAESP), and organized by Professor Eliane Pereira Zamith Brito; and the "Marketing Meeting" (EMA) organized by the National Association of Postgraduation and Research in Administration (ANPAD). The first article, by Maria Carolina Zanette, Izidoro Blikstein, and Luca M. Visconti, discusses Internet memes and their connections to consumer research. The second article, by Marcos Erbisti and Maribel Carvalho Suarez, deals with the anticonsumption discourse on the Internet; and the third, by Natália Contesini dos Santos and Severino Joaquim Nunes Pereira, discusses masculinity and consumption in new barbershops, showing that, in these spaces, the construction of masculinities occurs in the relationship between clients and service providers.

It is worth remembering the classic book by Paul Du Gay (1996) on this last theme, *Consumption and Identity at Work*, which discusses how goods and services shape identity in the consumer society. The relationship between consumption activities and social status was pointed out by Veblen in 1899 as the consumption behaviors of the "new rich." Authors such as Bourdieu (2007), Baudrillard (1991), and Bauman (1998) have discussed "consumption as a strategy of distinction" (Gambaro, 2012). However, these authors (except for Bauman) neither witnessed nor discussed the rise of the network society, the omnipresence of the Internet, and the dangers of a (un)sustainable society that can lead to anticonsumption and the trend of thrift shops among the youth. However, part of the literature on consumer behavior has been addressing the phenomenon of extending the identity of individuals to the goods and services they consume in the context of a digital world (Belk, 2013), an issue that has been repeatedly addressed by the Consumption Culture Theory (CCT). We hope these articles help clarify these interrelationships at the present moment.

This issue is completed by an article by Hildo Meirelles de Souza Filho, Carlos Ivan Mozambani, and Bruno Varella Miranda, "Mutual Commitments in the Governance of Trade in Vegetables in Serra Fluminense." The Perspectives section discusses the theme of Teaching and Research in People Management in Brazil. It includes an article by Wilson Aparecido Costa de Amorim, Graziella Maria Comini, and André Luiz Fischer, which is focused on people management and human resources, and the article "Post-heroic Leadership: Current Trends and Challenges for Leadership Education," by professors Felipe Sobral and Liliane Furtado, emphasizing the current context and challenges in leadership teaching. In the Book Recommendation section, Valdenildo Pedro da Silva lists several books on the topic "Circular Economy: A New Look for Sustainable Business."

Enjoy reading!

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ISSN 0034-7590

ARTICLES

Submitted 02.26.2018. Approved 10.18.2018
Evaluated through a double-blind review process. Scientific Editor: Eliane Brito
Original version
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020190302

INTERTEXTUAL VIRALITY AND VERNACULAR REPERTOIRES: INTERNET MEMES AS OBJECTS CONNECTING DIFFERENT ONLINE WORLDS

Viralidade intertextual e repertórios vernaculares: Memes da Internet como objetos conectando diferentes mundos on-line

Viralidad intertextual y repertorios vernaculares: Memes de Internet como objetos que conectan diferentes mundos on-line

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ABSTRACT

This work describes the trajectory of Internet memes, their main characteristics, and their relationship with the fields of virality literature and cultural production research. We explore the historical trajectory of internet memes and identify their constitutional features (vernacularism, virality, and intertextuality). We also propose that memes are objects that act as provocateurs; this is because they are carriers of meaning that reflect the repertoires of closed communities. However, they acquire new reflected repertoires in the process of being transmitted intertextually among consumers. As such, this work both clarifies the intertemporal and logical interdependencies between online cultural production and virality, as well as unveil the linking power of vernacular backgrounds and shared expressive practices (in our context, elaboration of common memes) for online consumer collectivities.

KEYWORDS | Internet memes, consumer collectivities, virality, intertextuality, repertoires.

RESUMO

Este trabalho descreve a trajetória dos memes da Internet, suas principais características e suas conexões com os conceitos de viralidade e pesquisa em produção cultural. Nós exploramos a trajetória histórica dos memes e identificamos seus elementos principais (vernacularismo, viralidade e intertextualidade). Também propomos que os memes representam objetos que atuam como provocadores, pois são portadores de significado que refletem repertórios de comunidades fechadas, mas que adquirem novos repertórios refletidos à medida que são transmitidos entre consumidores de modo intertextual. Assim, este trabalho tanto esclarece as interdependências intertemporaius e logicas entre produção cultural e viralidade, bem como revela o poder conector de cenários vernaculares e práticas expressivas compartilhadas para coletividades de consumidores online.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE */ Memes da Internet, coletividades de consumidores, viralidade, intertextualidade, repertórios.*

RESUMEN

Este trabajo describe la trayectoria de los memes de Internet, sus principales características y sus conexiones con los conceptos de viralidad y colectividades de consumidores, bien establecidos en marketing e investigación del consumidor. Nosotros proponemos que los memes representan objetos que actúan como provocadores, pues son portadores de significado que reflejan repertorios de comunidades cerradas, pero que adquieren nuevos repertorios reflejados a medida que se transmiten entre consumidores de forma intertextual. Finalmente, discutimos las implicaciones de las características de este fenómeno.

PALABRAS CLAVE */ Memes de internet, colectividades de consumidores, viralidad, intertextualidad, repertorios.*

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INTRODUCTION

Internet memes are a recent consumer-created phenomenon that has penetrated the "real" world in the past few years. Traditional media and social media debates, in general, emphasized the role of memes in the North American elections (Beran, 2017) as one of the communicative forces responsible for Donald Trump's victory. The debate about Internet memes as tools of advocacy and provocateur objects (Mina, 2017) has led to greater attention being paid to the usage of these digital artefacts, as well as their creation and spread by consumers.

A meme is a concept propounded by Richard Dawkins and later addressed by Susan Blackmore's book *The Meme Machine* (Blackmore, 2000). According to these authors, memes are the cultural parallel of biological genes because they are transferred from person to person; however, they may be modified in this transmission process. In an online context, the term "meme" first appeared when Wired magazine's journalist, Mark Godwin (Godwin, 1994), conducted an "online experiment" focusing on discussion fora to characterize the proliferation of "Hitler-like" arguments.

From a spreadable idea, memes evolved to become complex artefacts that are rich in cultural meanings and popular references. Consumers started illustrating these spreadable ideas with images or videos. Furthermore, specific Internet communities became meme-generators through co-creative consumer environments (Kozinets, Hemetsberger, & Schau, 2008). Internet memes have evolved in parallel with the web itself (Börzsei, 2013).

Given the importance of this phenomenon, it is surprising to note that this theme, has only been scarcely addressed in the consumer and marketing research (Rosenthal, 2014; Wu & Ardley, 2007). This lack of work is surprising when one considers that memes are present in the literatures of two of the most explored theoretical areas in consumer research: (1) consumer collectivities, a term that we here use to address a variety of online social groups usually sharing cultural repertoires that span from fora to communities, and from brand publics to interest groups (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Muñiz & Schau, 2011; Schau, Muñiz, & Arnould, 2009; Schouten & Mcalexander, 1995; Thomas, Price, & Schau, 2012), and (2) the phenomenon of viral marketing and word-of-mouth promotion (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007; Dellarocas, 2006; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Groeger & Buttle, 2014; Kozinets, Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010; Miles, 2014; Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry, & Raman, 2004).

One possible reason why the phenomenon has been overlooked could be that it is only recently that consumer and marketing research have shown interest in phenomena related to language and its complexities, or the linguistic turn in general (Thompson, Arnould, & Giesler, 2013). This article is located at the intersection of the Internet memes literature, which is strongly indebted to media and visual culture studies, and of consumer and marketing research. Thus, its broader aim is to advance consumer and marketing literature on Internet memes, which to date is not only scant but also relatively scattered. We identify two main streams of studies using Internet memes to illuminate relevant and distinct marketing topics. First, researchers interested in Internet memes to sharpen understanding about the underlying mechanisms of online virality, an effect of outmost marketing relevance. These scholars approach memes as a fertile ground to inspect the unfolding of emotional contagion (Guadagno et al., 2013) within online settings, and adapt medical epistemological models to explain consumer behavior (Bauckhage, 2011). Second, consumer and marketing scholars have also dedicated attention to Internet memes since they would help clarify the logics of online cultural production (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017). An additional, more focused aim of this article is to start inquiring about the links between online consumer collectivities and their shared expressive practices (Internet memes being one of them), thus advancing the abovementioned linguistic turn in consumer and marketing studies (Thompson et al., 2013).

In order to pursue said objectives, we relied upon two sources of information. First, an extensive literature review of the three streams that are relevant for the declared purposes: (1) Internet memes; (2) virality literature; and, (3) cultural production research (e.g. contributions dealing with cultural repertoires and vernacularism). Second, two empirical cases of Internet memes, Inbonha and Chola Mais, both retrieved from the Brazilian context. Relying upon these sources, the article traces Internet memes' historical trajectory and identifies their constitutional features (vernacularism, virality, and intertextuality). Within the conclusion and discussion section, we then extrapolate two main theoretical contributions of the work. A first theoretical contribution is to be found in the article's ability of linking Internet memes research on cultural production and on virality together. Our interpretive model accounts for how cultural production precedes (through vernacularism), and follows (through intertextuality), virality. As such, this work sews extant consumer and marketing contributions inspired by Internet memes, by clarifying the intertemporal and logical interdependencies between online cultural production and virality. A second theoretical contribution derives from the preliminary unveiling of the linking power of vernacular backgrounds and shared expressive practices (in our context, elaboration of common memes) for online consumer collectivities. Article's content organization reflects the reported sequence, thus

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bringing the reader through the three streams of relevant literature, to then introduce the empirical cases and derive contributions and implications for consumer and marketing theory and practice.

INTERNET MEMES: THEIR DEVELOPMENT AND MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

The first registered Internet meme was the smiling face (Davison, 2012). It was used as a way of solving problems arising from ambiguity in online fora; its visual cue, composed of a colon and a parenthesis, indicated that a particular post was either ironic or funny.

As technology evolved and Internet access spread to ordinary users, other memes started to appear. Two examples from the 1990s and early 2000s include Bert is Evil and The Tourist Guy. Bert is Evil refers to the picture of a cartoon character juxtaposed with tragic historical events. It spread online circa 1997 through the creation of websites that replicated the meme (Börzsei, 2013). The Tourist Guy, on the other hand, consists of a montage with a photo of a tourist in front of the World Trade Center, right before the airplane crash in 2001. After the picture went viral, consumers started placing the same man in front of other relevant and tragic political events and sending them through e-mail, in a typical "Internet chain" (Börzsei, 2013).

In the early 2000s, technology changes increased access to the web. These changes also altered the web's configuration, creating an environment conducive to the emergence of a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006). Social media emerged as an essential point of convergence for consumers who participated in collectivities that shared the same interests, including brands and consumption communities (Fournier & Lee, 2009; Stratton & Northcote, 2014). These online groups becamethe spaces for the creation of common digital artifacts, shared rituals, and everyday practices (Muñiz & Schau, 2011; Schau et al., 2009). Memes are one type of community-created object that spread to different communities.

Most memes follow a typical pattern of an image juxtaposed with a written caption (both image and text can be modified during transmission), which carries an ironic, politically incorrect, and sometimes grotesque message (Horta, 2015). In that sense, memes are provocateur objects. The elements that compose the object have an impact on the receivers (Benveniste, 1974). This provocative function makes the meme disruptive; it contains an unexpected, subversive element that does not conform to the stereotypes that govern the perception of the community of receivers.

In extreme cases, memes' grounding on provocation and meaning subversion result into trolling practices. Internet Trolling is the act of disrupting online conversations for the sake of doing so (just for the *lulz*), even if it includes harassing people or perpetuating controversial discourses (Phillips, 2015). According to Phillips' (2015) study of Internet trolls, these individuals organize themselves as groups on different social media sites—from obscure discussion fora to Facebook—and plan controversial actions on online communities and in their interactions with other consumers. As such, trolling represents a deviant expression of memes. Further, Phillips states that the trolling culture was fostered in a particular subcultural environment called 4chan.

4chan was a forum created by a person named moot when he was still a teen; it was meant to be a space to discuss anime (a category of cartoons or comics usually related to Japanese culture). Not long after its creation, users opened several boards (consumer-owned fora) for discussing different subjects. Of all the boards that composed 4chan, the /b/ board became the most popular. The main subject of discussion on the /b/ board was characterized as "random," that is, consumers could post about any topic.

Several "classic memes," such as the famous series LOLcats and Advise Animals were created between 2003 and 2011 (Börzsei, 2013; Phillips, 2015; Shifman, 2014). These memes reflected the cultural ethos, or repertoire (Blikstein, 2016), of 4channers because many of them were created or popularized on the /b/board; these consumers created, just for the *lulz*, disruptive and politically incorrect content that would soon go viral. For Phillips (2015), these memes and online actions that generated trolling consisted of juxtaposing death and destruction with pop cultural iconography.

From 2012 to 2015, the 4channers subculture was virtually dissolute, as Internet memes became *mainstream* (most consumers learned to use the object). The occurrence of two events made this possible. First, the platform Know Your Meme was created; this was a community where meme enthusiasts helped institutionalize memes by clarifying the foundational traits of these artifacts and by explaining their meaning and histories. Second, this platform was acquired by "Cheezburger," a commercial website that interfaced online subcultures and companies (Phillips, 2015). Furthermore, the technological skills required to create Internet memes were reduced substantially with the creation of platforms, such as Meme Generator, in 2009; this allowed Internet users without much knowledge of image editing skills to create their memes based on constituted and popular image macros. Figure 1 depicts the Internet memes mentioned so far.

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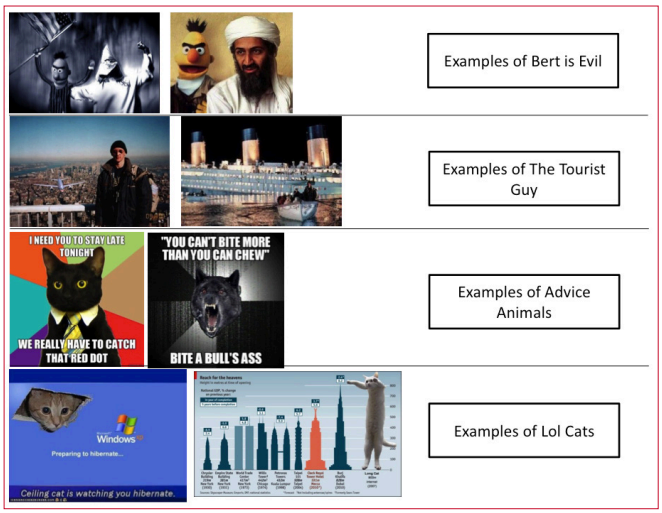
Figure 1. **Examples of Internet memes**



Source: Retrieved from Know Your Meme website: https://knowyourmeme.com/

As previously described, memes were historically created informally and at a specific "location" (closed consumer collectivities); from there, they spread and were modified by consumers. As such, two theoretical elements should be analyzed concerning the nature of Internet memes and their interactions with marketing practice and consumer research: intertextual virality and vernacular repertoires. We will discuss both these concepts in detail in the next sections.

INTERTEXTUAL VIRALITY: REPRODUCTION OF INTERNET MEMES AND THEIR RELATION TO MARKETING AND CONSUMER RESEARCH

"Viral marketing" has become a particular model in contemporary marketing management. According to Douglas Holt (2004), viral marketing is an attempt to connect brand strategy to what is fashionable (in Internet terms, something that is *trending*) at a particular moment; for example, it could be something being discussed on social media at a specific time. Virality is a term used by the industry to refer to these pieces of content, such as advertisements or consumer-created content, which are shared through social media by consumers, and go on to become trends or the most discussed topics at a particular moment on platforms, such as Facebook or Twitter.

Given the amount of attention this term has generated in the area of marketing, several studies have been conducted since the 1980s on consumer behavior and consumer research to understand how the *transmission* of content occurs. However, even before field of marketing took notice of this phenomenon, other social sciences had examined it. Studies such as the one produced by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) in the 1950s attempted to understand information transmission through the concept of personal influence. The authors developed a theory regarding the two-step flow of communication wherein influent people—individuals, with many loose connections, who are central to a network—have a prominent role as gatekeepers of the type of information that will be spread.

Marketing research has mainly sought to understand how this word-of-mouth behavior affects companies. Referrals, the pieces of information that are transmitted among consumers (influential or not), emanate from, and are limited by, the social relations of consumers with one another (Brown & Reingen, 1987; Reingen, Foster, Brown, & Seidman, 1984). The information disclosed by consumers (referrals) seems to have more credibility than traditional communication, that is, information that emanates from the company and is sent to the client (Allsop et al., 2007). Moreover, the effect of this information is more enduring that of media content or business information reports (Trusov, Bucklin, & Pauwels, 2009). The weight consumers give to referrals has led to word-of-mouth being studied in the literature as a driver of buying behavior; it is seen as an element that emerges from the structure of social ties, and is the result of prior consumer behavior (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004). With the emergence of social media and the remarkable influence it had in facilitating the spread of content, word-of-mouth/word-of-mouse marketing has gained even more attention both in the literature and in practice (Allsop, Bassett, & Hoskins, 2007; Watts & Dodds, 2007). To date, research on viral marketing has more focused on the effects of virality (e.g., its impact in terms of engagement, loyalty or sales) than on its determinants. This has resulted into this research field's *unpredictability*; marketers understand the transmission of information but are unsure about *what* type of content makes something go viral (Miles, 2014). *Contagion* in marketing discourses is a consumption-based activity that is characterized by both a challenge and an opportunity for marketers.

These theories of reproduction, contagion, referrals, or word-of-mouth/mouse behavior apply to Internet memes since one of their main characteristics is reproduction. Wiggins and Bowers (2014) state that before an Internet meme starts to be reproduced with modifications (which makes it a meme), it has to become a viral, or, in their terms, an emerging meme. This means that virality is the precondition to reproduction. Through reproduction, the original meme becomes a text of reference to

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be quoted and changed along its circulation, a process known as intertextuality (the implicit quotation of a text in another text, whose meaning becomes richer by referencing to the implicit text).

Intertextuality consists of a linguistic-semiotic process by which the meaning of a text (image, words) is modified, enlarged, or reduced by combining it with other texts (Blikstein, 2016). Thus, in the creation of an Internet meme, the meaning of the original image or text is modified by other texts or images, thereby acquiring new connotations that may be marked by irony, sarcasm, blunt criticism, and so on. As we mentioned earlier, as an object, the meme does not inform; instead, it acts provocatively, subverting an expected response or a predicted text. It is necessary, however, to point out a problem: for the Internet meme to have the impact expected by the consumer who shares or uses it, it must engage in a dialogue with the repertoires of different consumer collectivities.

VERNACULAR REPERTOIRES

In this section, we make the case that these contents are particularly prominent in Internet memes. Other than virality, the consumer communities that gave rise to the most popular memes in the period had specific repertoires (Blikstein, 2016), which Internet memes carried as they spread online through modified reproductions. According to Blikstein (2016), a repertoire is a crucial piece of the communicative process. Repertoires refer to knowledge and to historical, geographic, affective, professional, artistic, scientific, mystical, and religious, references, among others, that are lived by individuals in the course of their lives. This network of references and knowledge constitutes the cultural baggage of individuals, also referred to as their repertoire. However, this network varies from community to community. It is possible to say that different communities create different repertoires.

As such, any type of communication, whether we consider how the message is sent or how it is decoded, will be influenced by such repertoires. Different repertoires lead to different ways of perceiving the world, people, and events. From these differences in understanding, many *noises* begin to infiltrate the communication, jamming its mechanism. The same message is then decoded differently by different repertoires—meaning that individuals within communities that have taught them different repertoires will decode a message differently. Decoding, therefore, depends not only on the knowledge of the code but also on the repertoire of the individual who receives the message.

Linguistically, repertoires are manifested in vernacular language. Briefly, vernacularity refers to an informal production (produced by non-institutional sources) of discourse (Howard, 2005, 2009; Milner, 2013); it can be understood even as the oral traditions of particular communities. The way we use the expression here coincides with its use in folklore studies, a traditional field that focuses on vernacular manifestations (Sims & Stephens, 2011). When viewed through this lens, vernacularity tends to refer to that which is locally produced: local repertoires that manifest in linguistic and discursive tropes or other manifestations that reflect these repertoires. In sum, repertoires reflect cultural characteristics that are manifested and comprehended in a vernacular of these local communities.

However, in the digital world, the importance of geography in defining community boundaries has been replaced by other kinds of "localities." As geographic locations lost significance in the creation of repertoires and consumption gained influence as one of the most important symbolic cornerstones of postmodern life (Stratton & Northcote, 2014), individuals and consumers began to organize themselves in online consumer collectivities, where, through different practices (Schau et al., 2009), they vernacularly create historical, professional, artistic, scientific, mystical, and even religious repertoires (Muñiz & Schau, 2005).

Many of the consumer collectivities that have been studied in the previous literature share some characteristics, such as the constitution of a consumer's identity as deviant because cultural practices in the consumer collectivity are subcultural, the worship of specific consumer objects or brands, and the shared ethos and rituals that take place in this (not necessarily physical) locus (Fournier & Lee, 2009; Stratton & Northcote, 2014; Thomas et al., 2012). These characteristics are typical of consumer collectivities called subcultures.

Schouten and McAlexander (1995) indicate that subcultures represent a distinct subset of society that self-selects, based on a mutual commitment to a particular class of products, brands, or consumer activities. Kates (2004) indicates that a subculture is a way of life that expresses shared meanings and practices, but which also encompasses changes, challenges, and internal opposition so that the participants define their identities by negotiating them with the subcultural aspects, which are "deviant" when compared with the dominant social discourse (Kozinets, 2001).

As we have mentioned during our brief recount of the history of memes, "the golden age" of Internet memes occurred during the year when 4chan, an online discussion board permeated by the culture of trolling, was most popular (Phillips, 2015). The characteristics of 4chan, as an online consumer collective, make it a subculture (deviant character, besides shared ethos and rituals). As such, both repertoires and the vernacular connected to them have emerged in this environment.

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Therefore, once we consider the brief history of memes and the theories that help to explain their functioning, it is possible to assert that these vernacular repertoires, created inside closed digital environments, are re-worked and re-used by consumers as memes go viral, along with the modifications that are made to them. The meme *carries* different repertoires, which are modified by intertextuality, and become provocateur objects when these repertoires are used in various vernacular contexts. Two examples are given in the next section to illustrate our argument.

DESCRIBING INTERNET MEMES AS PROVOCATEUR CARRIERS OF VERNACULAR REPERTOIRES

Procedure for selecting the memes

To illustrate our arguments regarding Internet memes, we will describe two prominent examples of Internet memes that have emerged recently in Brazilian social media among consumer collectivities with different repertoires. We follow similar studies, such as those of Schroeder and Zwick (2004) and Scott and Vargas (2007), who use representative figures, which are analyzed textually (Scott, 1994, 2009), to derive meanings that are representative of theory.

To select the memes that would be analyzed as useful and compelling representations that illustrate our argument, we have used two primary sources. Two of the authors of this paper have been immersed in a long-term project regarding Internet memes and acknowledge the main popular consumer collectivities in which the most popular Internet memes emerge. In the Brazilian context, a Facebook group called LDRV (this is an abbreviation of Lana del Ray Vevo; the group was initially created as a space to celebrate the singer Lana del Rey) is regarded as the "Brazilian factory machine" (Declercq, 2017). LDRV is a closed Facebook group with more than 200,000 members in which consumers post daily doubts, situations, and happenings. As a story from Vice magazine reports, the first Internet meme analyzed here emerged in that particular group. This meme uses images of the popular characters in Brazilian comics, called *Turma de Monica* (Monica's Gang). Considering the popularity of this first Internet meme using Turma da Monica's characters, a search on the Know Your Meme platform was performed, looking for emerging memes based on the same popular characters, resulting in the choice of the second Internet meme analyzed. To choose the particular images to be analyzed, a search of Twitter pictures was conducted using the names of the emerging memes (Inbonha and Chola Mais).

Intertextual repertoires in Inbonha and Chola Mais

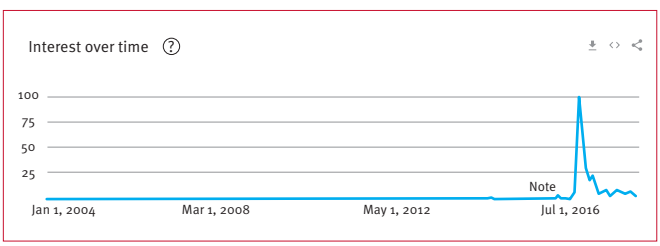
The first meme chosen was "Inbonha." According to Declercq (2017), the "Inbonha" meme emerged in LDRV when a member of the group posted the picture shown in Figure 2. The picture represents a child's attempt to write the names of the main characters of Turma da Monica. However, all of them are incorrectly named. Monica, the most iconic character, for example, is named "Inbonha" in the figure 2.

Figure 2. **The "Inbonha" meme**



Source: Evangelista (2016b)

Graph 1. **Search trends for the term "Inbonha"**



Note: The graph indicates the peak in popularity (100) and proportion of searches.
Source: Retrieved from Google Trends: https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US

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The spread of the meme in social media in general (meaning outside of the particular Facebook group)—that is, its viralization—occurred mainly when two stories on the subject were published on the website Buzzfeed. The first was about the girl who misspelled the names of the characters (Evangelista, 2016b), and the other was about the repercussions of the meme in other online communities (Evangelista, 2016a). Graph 1 illustrates that the search for the term "Inbonha" on Google peaked in September 2016, the month when the stories were published. As such, the Inbonha picture went viral; it became very well-known not only in the community where it first emerged, but also on the Internet in general, thereby constituting an emerging meme. This emerging meme (Wiggins & Bowers, 2014) carried a repertoire (Blikstein, 2016) that reflected the subculture of the LDRV group: ironic, playful, and centered on current pop-culture issues and queer subcultural practices (Declercq, 2017). However, after the Inbonha picture went viral, different manifestations of this meme started to appear.

Figure 3. **Example of intertextuality**

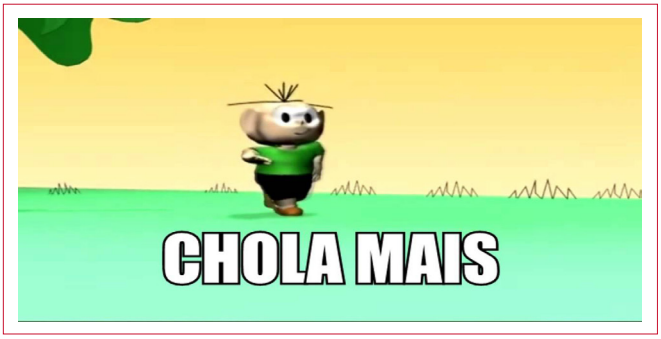


Note: The caption reads, "on a scale of 1 to 12, what is your Inbonha level today?"
Source: Retrieved from Twitter's search engine based on a keyword search for "Inbonha."

Figure 3 provides an example of the intertextual modifications of the meme, where the image can be understood only if the audience has knowledge of three different emerging memes, or viral messages, that were combined to form this image. The first one is Inbonha, as the title of the meme (the written part) suggests by saying "On a scale of 1 to 12, what is your level of Inbonha today?" The second is "On a Scale of 1 to X." This meme refers to the viral practice of juxtaposing pictures of celebrities or other well-known figures depicting different emotions or feelings and attributing numbers to each picture to elicit a response in the picture's receivers ("On a Scale of 1 to X," 2012). The third emerging meme that is referred to in the picture is "Deformed Monicas in School Walls" (Metropoles, 2016), which refers to a Facebook page ("Mônicas Deformadas em Muros de Escolinhas," 2018) that are devoted only to pictures of Monica that do not accurately depict her (painted mainly on school walls). By merging these three emerging memes altogether, the newly created meme joined different repertoires. The audience understands that this highly intertextual meme requires the knowledge that the emerging Inbonha meme will necessarily lead to a mischaracterization of Monica. Second, the scale eliciting reactions presupposes different versions of the Monica character. Finally, by using the poorly drawn Monicas, the meme creates congruence with the cultural repertoire coming from the idea of Inbonha (childish, poorly made, and wrong).

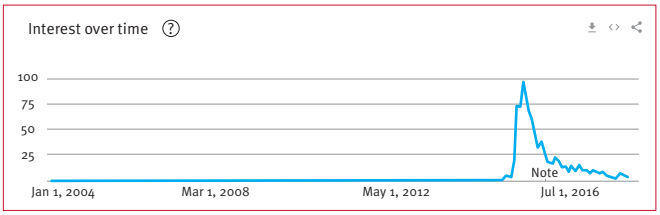
Thus, to understand this last meme, the reader must have previous knowledge of emerging and other memes. Thus, there are two critical points to be addressed. First, the emerging meme carries a repertoire that derives from the vernacular environment in which it was created. Second, the modifications that happen intertextually as the meme spreads add different repertoires to the message. They turn the object into a complex network of meanings, which, to be understood, require different types of knowledge on the part to the receivers.

Figure 4. **The Chola Mais meme**



Source: Retrieved from Know Your Meme website: https://knowyourmeme.com/

Graph 2. **Trends for the search of the term "Chola Mais"**



Note: The graph indicates the peak in popularity (100) and proportion of searches.
Source: Retrieved from Google Trends: https://trends.google.com/trends/?geo=US

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The second meme in this paper is "Chola Mais," which depicts the a poorly designed 3D animation of a character called Cebolinha celebrating a video against Monica with a Japanese anime song remix ("Chola Mais/Cwy Mowe," 2016), depicted in Figure 4. Graph 2 shows the search trends for the term "Chola Mais." As the graph indicates, the peak was in the middle of the year 2015, when protests against former Brazilian president Dilma Roussef, which followed a wave of street demonstrations in Brazil (Castells, 2012; Rosenthal, 2014), were happening around the country and protesters were asking for her impeachment.

Figure 5. **The Chola Mais meme in a soccer context**



Source: Retrieved from Know Your Meme website: https://knowyourmeme.com/

A second search on Twitter shows that the meme is modified with regard to the repertoire it reflects by following two subjects: soccer and politics. Regarding soccer, modifications on the meme occur when a soccer team achieves a critical victory. As Figure 5 illustrates, the meme indicates that the team's victory should make the supporters of the rival team "cry more" since the victory was an irreversible event, and the only alternative for the losers is to lament their defeat. The second context is the political one. The Chola Mais meme has been used mostly by right-wing movements in Brazil, which protested against their Labor Party's policies and leaders, by focusing mainly on an operation conducted by the Brazilian Federal Police to investigate those politicians from Labor and other parties who were involved in corruption scandals (Gomes, 2016).

An exemplary usage of this meme happens when politicians are depicted. A figure found on Twitter, for example, depicts an image-macro (emerging meme) of Brazilian politician Jair Bolsonaro, whose views connect to major right-wing demands, such as opposition to public policies that increase the rights of homosexual, bisexual, or trans people, such as the right to homosexual marriage or public funding for gender transition processes, or calls for creating more strict laws to punish criminals (such as more sentence time) (Grespan & Goellner, 2011; Lins, Filho, & Silva, 2016). In the meme, there is the face of the politician, along with the caption "cry more, left-wingers," a reference to the success of Jair Bolsonaro in the polls and social media (Bretas, 2017). A message similar to that sent after soccer matches is being sent: as the popularity of this particular politician grows, his opponents can only "cry" because a victory is irreversible.

We provide a brief conclusion about the Chola Mais meme. Even though it is not possible to ascertain the particular group from which this meme originated, linking the meme with context can provide cues about the repertoires it carries. The Chola Mais memes were spread mostly in two contexts: the surge in protests against the government in 2015 (the peak) and jokes about soccer. Therefore, this particular meme involves different repertoires around two different subjects. However, what Figure 5 and politician image macros have in common is the aggressive message of humiliation ("you should be crying, you lost") that the meme depicts. As explored as one of the main characteristics of Internet memes in the previous sections, the juxtaposition of funny, innocent, or cute elements with aggressive messages (Horta, 2015; Shifman, 2014) is found in this meme, as it was in the Bert is Evil meme. However, in this case, the meme depicts a direct message to be used in online interactions, that is, as a way to impose a group ideology by the "winner."

Both the Inbonha and Chola Mais memes have some common characteristics. First, both spoof beloved Brazilian characters, which are poorly drawn or misspelled (or both). The characters are also put in unusual situations, thereby subverting their meaning—something that is found in other memes too (Horta, 2015; Shifman, 2014; Wiggins & Bowers, 2014). Furthermore, the use of child characters to depict situations that are not related to the children's universe maintains their provocateur character. Finally, both carry messages that require a specific repertoire to be understood and connected intertextually to provide arguments that will be understood by specific publics engaged in particular conversations (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

With reference to extant research on Internet memes, which we question through the analysis of the two example cases provided, we suggest that the dynamics of these objects, regarding both their production and their circulation, are as depicted in Figure 6. In the first step, memes are created inside a "local" online environment, such as a Facebook group, a discussion forum, or a community of interest, which we named as consumer collectivities, which are mainly online communities with subcultural traits.

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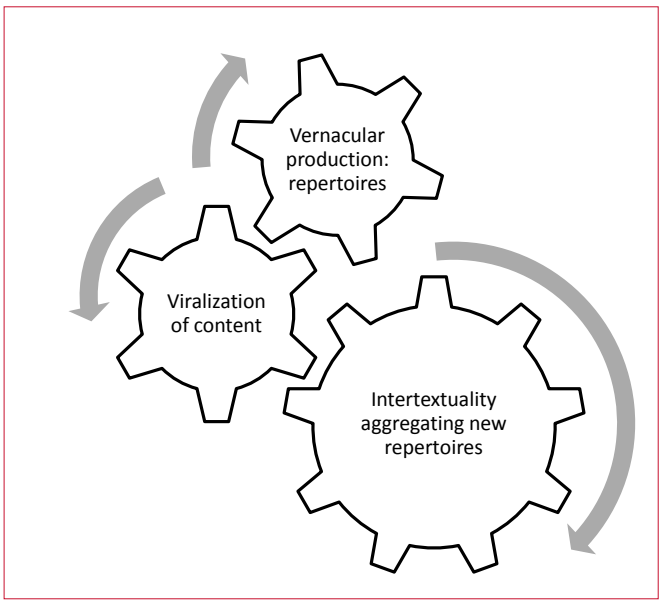
These settings create specific cultural and community practices and rituals, which are reflected in a vernacular lore (Howard, 2008). As such, the experiences, norms, and vocabularies that are developed in that certain digital "locality" become the shared repertoires of their participants, which manifest themselves in, and are perpetuated by, the vernacularity that is also created there (Blikstein, 2016).

Figure 6. **A framework explaining the dynamics of Internet memes**



In a second step, the content that is created and used in these groups will carry some of the linguistic and cultural repertoires of the consumers who participate there. Once spread by members of these groups to a broader audience, these contents will be exporting meanings that are not necessarily understood by other groups of consumers, or other publics (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). In other words, they will carry through vernacular vocabularies the repertoires that were developed within these communities. Once the meme starts spreading, and goes viral, or, as Wiggins and Bowers (2014) put it, becomes an emerging meme, this repertoire also spreads, being "explained" to other groups by network actors, such as Buzzfeed, Vice Magazine, or the Know Your Meme platform. This process usually occurs when searches related to the meme peak. This process is important because it will amplify the understanding of the repertoire of that particular community to other audiences, providing a mass translation of the meaning of the emerging meme. This is an important element that aids in the viralization of emerging memes.

In a third step, intertextuality becomes prominent, with other groups inserting different meanings and references in the meme as they spread it around different online publics (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). Yet, the memes still carry part of the meanings given to them by the vernacular repertoires of consumers in a certain online subgroup. In that process, the intertextual nature of memes will merge different repertoires carried by different emerging memes, thereby requiring the audience to have a more tacit understanding of the juxtaposed images or frames. Different repertoires translated by different visual or linguistic representations will be connected, eliciting original responses from audiences. The intertextuality will draw from the viral processes, which must necessarily precede it; the processes will provide the cues for the audience to react to the repertoires carried by the memes.

One last key point to address is the use of brands as elements of emerging memes. In addition of being a widespread cultural element in Brazilian popular culture, Turma da Monica is a brand that encompasses more than just the comic book series. For example, it is used in several licensed products. Past literature has also understood brands as cultural icons (Holt, 2004). As such, brands became elements of popular culture that, in the Internet age, carry their own meanings, which can be further modified by consumers. How consumers interpret and relate with these cultural icons in their "local" environments is also an important element in the creation of their repertoires.

Implications for consumer research and marketing theory and practice

It is somehow surprising that the pervasiveness of Internet memes in both online culture and communication studies is not as much reflected into consumer and marketing research. This may be partially due to the relative novelty of the phenomenon combined with the long review and publishing periods of academic research (Nooney & Portwood-Stacer, 2014). One additional reason why the phenomenon has been overlooked could be that it is only recently that consumer and marketing research have shown interest in phenomena related to language and its complexities, or the linguistic turn in general (Thompson, Arnould, & Giesler, 2013). A last tentative explanation that we provide is that consumer and marketing scholars may still struggle to identify how to link Internet memes with more established consumer and marketing issues. To date, they seem interested in Internet memes to sharpen understanding about the underlying mechanisms of virality (e.g., through the

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elaboration of epidemiological models of contagion; Bauckhage, 2011; Guadagno et al., 2013) and the logics of cultural production within online settings (Knobel & Lankshear, 2007; Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017). Our study provides two main contributions. First, it connects Internet memes research on virality and on cultural production together. The model provided in Figure 6 accounts for how cultural production precedes, and follows, virality. In doing so, it clarifies the logic and intertemporal interdependencies between these two concepts and the related streams of studies. Second, it also posits a novel way to connect the phenomenon of Internet memes with consumer and marketing research. Namely, this study argues that Internet memes are crucial to also investigate consumer online communities, where social links are derived from affinities in vernacular backgrounds and expressive practices (in our context, the fact of sharing common memes).

With reference to the use of Internet memes in consumer and marketing research to better understand the mechanisms of online virality, our work grounds two orders of conclusions. As the idea of "viral" entered the marketing world, becoming a marketing model (Holt, 2004), marketing rhetoric has reflected on the problem of the "agency" of the viral content (Miles, 2014): if the virality of any content is explained by network dynamics and online interactions generating peaks of interests in a network, marketers' actions will necessarily tend to be reactive. Memes, however, as objects that are carriers of meaning, could be predictors of possible fashions, trends, and languages that will go viral online. As marketers struggle to understand *coolness* and the virality of cool (Warren & Campbell, 2014), memes could be an interesting artifact for accessing the vernacular repertoires of the communities in which they emerge. They could enable predictions and strategic planning that takes into account the "meaning" of coolness and how this coolness will enter conversations.

A second point is how memes, based on the meanings they carry, have directionality (Wiggins, 2016). In this sense, meanings are not neutral; indeed, they are objects acting as provocateurs (Horta, 2015; Shifman, 2014), but the repertoires attached to them have a specific audience. Memes stand for something, whether they are objects to pass a message against an ideologically opposed group or functioning simply "for the lulz," that is, generating disruption and laughter (Phillips, 2015).

With reference, then, to the use of Internet memes in consumer and marketing research to better understand processes of cultural production within online settings, this study shows that memes are potential carriers of meanings and vernacular repertoires between closed consumer communities and consumer publics (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015). Arvidsson and Caliandro (2015) propose the idea of brand publics or consumers who are connected to brands loosely through mediations, such as hashtags. Considering how memes join the vernacular repertoires created in different communities, they enact these different repertoires intertextually. As such, as Arvidsson and Caliando (2015) propose, they are mediation devices in that they are objects carrying these meanings, connecting different repertoires of specific groups, and transmitting directionalities (Wiggins, 2016) and disruption possibilities.

LIMITATIONS, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study contributes to linking the booming phenomenon of Internet memes with consumer and marketing research, especially by clarifying links between virality and online cultural production as much as by suggesting the role of shared expressive practices for online consumer collectivities. However, we limit our empirical analysis to one geo-cultural site, that of Brazil, and to two specific cases of Internet memes. In the interest of findings' transferability, we invite for works conducted on more geo-cultural sites and other types of memes. In addition, while this study sheds light on the use of memes to strengthen and express community links among consumers, we invite more work to dig deeper in the generative links existing between specific memes and given online consumer collectivities. ,

The following are some theoretical avenues that could be pursued. First, the question of materiality (Dant, 2005; Latour, 2007), by investigating memes as material artifacts that have agency in themselves. Second, studying memes under the lens of rhetorical theory, considering their function (Miller, 1984) and their interaction with the Internet as a medium (Lanham, 1993, 2006). Finally, looking at memes as performative objects (Harju & Huovinen, 2015; Thompson & Üstüner, 2015) that have a linguistic function and also reflect tensions that defy/reify power structures found within the prevalent consumer collectivities online.

RAE'S NOTE

A preliminary version of this article was presented at the International Social Networks Conference (ISONEC), promoted by Fundação Getulio Vargas, Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo in 2017, São Paulo, Brazil.

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ARTICLES

Submitted 02.27.2018. Approved 02.11.2019
Evaluated through a double-blind review process. Scientific Editor: Eliane Brito
Translated version
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020190303

AD BLOCKING: ADOPTION DISCOURSES AND ADVERTISING ANTI-CONSUMPTION

Ad Blocking: Discursos de adoção e de anticonsumo da publicidade

Ad Blocking: Discursos de adopción y de anticonsumo de la publicidad

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the discourses on the use of *ad blockers*. Based on in-depth interviews with consumers who have activated blockers, three discourses emerged concerning this new technology: 1) Autonomy and control of advertising effects; 2) Exchanges on the Internet: asymmetry, paradoxes, and search for equity; and 3) Efficiency and convenience. Departing from these results, this study discusses the positioning of anti-consumption studies as the study of "reasons against" consumption. The paper proposes complementary approaches to the anti-consumption research, founded less on the intentional and conscious aspects of consumers and more on the notion of power as an entity disputed by the actors.

KEYWORDS | Ad blocker, anti-consumption, resistance, power, online advertising.

RESUMO

A presente pesquisa investiga os discursos em torno do uso dos ad blockers. A partir de entrevistas em profundidade com consumidores que ativaram bloqueadores, três discursos emergiram em torno dessa tecnologia: 1) autonomia e controle dos efeitos da publicidade; 2) trocas na internet: assimetria, paradoxos e busca de equidade e 3) eficiência e conveniência. A partir desses resultados, discute-se o posicionamento dos estudos de anticonsumo como o estudo das "razões contra" o consumo. O trabalho propõe abordagens complementares na pesquisa de anticonsumo, menos baseadas nos aspectos intencionais e conscientes dos consumidores e na noção de poder como entidade disputada pelos atores.

***PALAVRAS-CHAVE** | Ad blocker, anticonsumo, resistência, poder, publicidade on-line.*

RESUMEN

El presente estudio investiga las narrativas que constituyen el discurso de los consumidores en la adopción de ad blockers. Basados en entrevistas en profundidad con consumidores que activaron ad blockers, se identificaron tres discursos principales en torno a esta nueva tecnología: 1) Autonomía y control de los efectos de la publicidad; 2) Intercambios en Internet: asimetría, paradojas y búsqueda de equidad, y 3) Eficiencia y conveniencia. A partir de los resultados, se discute el posicionamiento de los estudios de anticonsumo como el estudio de las "razones contra" el consumo. El trabajo propone enfoques complementarios en la investigación de anticonsumo, menos basados en los aspectos intencionales y conscientes de los consumidores y en la noción de poder como entidad disputada por los actores.

***PALAVRAS CLAVE** | Ad blocker, anticonsumo, resistência al consumo, poder, publicidad online.*

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INTRODUCTION

In marketing literature, recent studies aim to understand behaviors where consumers distance themselves and, in some cases, oppose companies, categories, brands, and market offers (Kraemer, Silveira & Rossi, 2012; Suarez, Chauvel & Casotti, 2012; Comassetto et al., 2013; Oliveira, Pessôa, & Ayrosa, 2017). According to common sense, the term anti-consumption usually generates associations with movements created by activists against companies and the capitalist system. However, its theoretical definition is wider, including collective, organized, public, and voice oppositions, such as boycotts against companies, as well as more ordinary and even trivial individual actions—for instance, a consumer who ends up abandoning a brand or category. Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) define anti-consumption research as the study related to the "reasons against" that concerns the behaviors when consumers distance themselves from specific acts of consumption motivated by ethical, environmental, and resistance issues, or by symbolic divergences.

Although the anti-consumption concept encompasses these varied possibilities of distancing, research on this theme has historically concentrated on resistance behaviors: on boycotts and actions performed by activists against companies. One of the challenges faced by studies on this theme concerns the fact that in other types of anti-consumption behaviors, occurrences and consequences are harder to be observed (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). While boycotts and protests are visible behaviors, everyday anti-consumption or distancing is not always tangible and observable. In this sense, little has been investigated about more trivial behaviors of anti-consumption, when consumers end up by distancing themselves from an offer in a silent and impassionate way.

The present study investigates the use of blockers (ad blockers) as a way to contribute to the reflections on anti-consumption. Ad blocker represents any technology that allows the removal of ads from a web page. These extensions are available in free versions, which can be installed in browsers in desktops and notebooks, or apps downloaded in smartphones and tablets. As a digital service made possible through direct and indirect economic exchanges within the Internet ecosystem, blockers are a consumption context (Macinnis & Folkes, 2010) that also represents a concrete and visible anti-consumption action against advertising. So, in the present study, we understand that the adoption of ad blockers represents an action to facilitate Internet navigation as well as a way of distancing oneself from advertising, and therefore, a way of anti-consumption. The study of advertising distancing presents itself as a privileged context for the investigation of anti-consumption: beyond a consumption experience per se, advertising is a privileged tool for the construction, modification, and diffusion of tastes, beliefs, and values, which shape other consumptions (Acevedo, Nohara, Campanario, & Telles, 2009).

In addition to the possibility of expanding the comprehension of anti-consumption behaviors, the increasing adherence to blockers must be understood by companies that belong to the Internet ecosystem and depend on digital advertising revenues, including online advertising agencies, announcers and content publishers, and huge players such as Google and Facebook, among others. In February 2017, a global report highlighted the growing adherence to this software: in seven years, the number of world users increased by more than twenty-nine times, jumping from 21 million in 2010 to 615 million in 2017, accounting for 11% of the total number of Internet users in the whole planet (PageFair, 2017). The loss of advertising revenues because of the use of blockers was estimated at USD 21.8 billion in 2015, equivalent to 14% of global investments in advertising during the same year (PageFair & Adobe, 2015).

The present study contributes to the comprehension of this phenomenon by investigating discourses that legitimize the use of ad blockers, and therefore, advertising distancing. Departing from a qualitative approach and based on in-depth interviews with consumers who adopted blockers, we identified three logics that grounded the use of this new technology: 1) Autonomy and advertising effects control; 2) Internet exchanges: asymmetry, paradoxes, and equity search and 3) Efficiency and convenience.

More than mapping the discourse associated to ad blockers, this study analyzes the theoretical work of distinction between anti-consumption and resistance (Galvagno, 2011; Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013; Lee, Roux, Cherrier, & Cova, 2011). As we will argue in the course of this study, anti-consumption research mainly engages in the investigation of motivational, conscious, and phenomenological aspects, rather than broader socio-cultural discussions. As our results suggest, even the investigation of reasons against consumption presents great overlap between functional or symbolic aspects and those of resistance. In this sense, instead of trying to distinguish the origin of distancing, our suggestion is that anti-consumption research contemplates the richness and ambiguity that exist in this behavior.

To delineate these contributions, the study at first presents some fundamental concepts concerning anti-consumption, resistance, and advertising distancing behavior. Then, methodological justifications and choices in the process of data collection and analysis are presented. After the presentation

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of results, implications are articulated from field findings, with a conceptual reflection on complementary perspectives for anti-consumption research.

ANTI-CONSUMPTION AND RESISTANCE

Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) propose anti-consumption as an umbrella term, which encompasses not only the studies that investigate restrictions directly related to consumption but also the so-called resistance behaviors that refer to acts which search to transform domination structures, rebalancing power differences. According to Lee et al. (2011), anti-consumption contemplates several practices, such as rejection, restriction, and claim. Rejection occurs when individuals intentionally and rationally exclude specific goods from their consumption cycle, such as, the act of rejecting a brand for functional, symbolic, or ethical reasons. Restriction happens when the consumption of a good is reduced or limited, because it is not possible to cut it completely, as in the case of water and electricity. Claim represents a broader change in the acquisition, use, and disposal logics. It occurs, for example, when consumers choose to make their own products, instead of buying them in the market.

In spite of suggesting a broad meaning for anti-consumption, as in the "study of reasons against," the framework proposed by Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) keeps the distinction between anti-consumption and resistance, characterizing resistance as opposition to dominant practices in the market, which become antagonistic to consumers' beliefs and interests. Therefore, consumer resistance would always be related to the intention of confronting domination structures and rebalancing asymmetric power relations (Peñaloza & Price, 1993; Lee et al., 2011; Dalmoro, Peñaloza, & Nique, 2014). Paradoxically, resistance does not always manifest itself through distancing, and can be expressed, for instance, through consumption acts, such as when somebody buys a product of a specific brand just to resist the domination of a competitor.

Izberk-Bilgin (2010) differentiates studies of resistance to consumption according to two fields. The first one, called "liberating," is interested in the investigation of movements that challenge market's logic, through the rupture with the market symbolic codes or with the market practices. The second one, called "market bound," assumes the notion that consumers cannot emancipate from market logics. These studies are more interested in the aspects that encourage and enlarge resistance behaviors than in the processes of critique construction and consumption emancipation.

Discursive and ideological aspects, which support resistance behaviors, were explored in several studies, revealing distinct logics that can be based on political (Sandikci & Ekici, 2009), religious (Izberk-Bilgin, 2012), and nationalist (Varman & Belk, 2009; Alden, Kelley, Riefler, Lee, & Soutar, 2013) oppositions, as well as on the construction of differentiated identities (Holt, 2002; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Cherrier, 2009).

ADVERTISING AVOIDANCE

The behavior of advertising avoidance was not invented by the use of ad blockers. According to Duff and Faber (2011), although this is an old behavior, marketing field lacks studies which expand the comprehension of the factors that cause advertising to be ignored, intentional or not.

Fransen et al. (2015) propose the distinction between three advertising resistance strategies: avoidance, contestation, and empowerment. Avoidance can happen in different ways, including behaviors such as getting out of the room during commercial breaks, turning the TV volume down, or using ad blockers; this characterizes what authors classify as physical avoidance. Mechanical avoidance happens when the consumer uses the remote control to change the TV channel or accelerate the TV commercial. Finally, cognitive avoidance occurs when the consumer does not pay attention to the commercial.

Studying specifically Internet advertisements, Cho and Cheon (2004) identified motivations for distancing the perception that ads were an obstacle to the goal of browsing the Internet and the excessive accumulation of advertising and negative experiences, related to the frustrations generated by browsing these kinds of ads in the past. Shin and Lin (2016) more specifically examined advertisements directed by geographic localization. The results also reveal the obstacles to the browsing objectives, the uselessness, and the eventually necessary sacrifices for qualification as aspects that lead to advertising avoidance.

In summary, the present study contributes to anti-consumption research by addressing not only motivations to avoid advertising on the Internet, but also the discourses created to legitimate this behavior. Previous work on this theme focused on the investigation of public and collective resistance movements. Therefore, within marketing literature, little has been investigated about distancing behaviors—anti-consumption and resistance—which are more private and silent, such as everyday adherence to the use of ad blockers. The following section intends to explain the methodological choices of the present study.

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METHOD

Discourses are not the content of an individual's mind; they are created from inter-textual and interdiscursive dynamics, where each narrative is constructed from pre-existent discourses, genders, and records. In other words, discourses exist before and are perpetuated beyond the speech of a specific speaker, providing direction and sense to the experiences lived by individuals (Moisander, Valtonen, & Hirsto, 2009). Discourses are ways of thinking, including ideas, attitudes, and behaviors that combine themselves in the understanding of reality. The perception of reality, in turn, is shaped and influenced by discursive practices and interactions. Therefore, discourses not only describe things, but also make things (Grant, Keenoy & Oswick, 1998).

This study adopted a qualitative approach, where ten in-depth interviews were conducted with users of ad blockers to understand the discourses that legitimize this behavior. In-depth interviews with consumers are a way to obtain deep knowledge about a topic that the informant knows well and is capable of talking about (Belk, Fischer, & Kozinets, 2013). A semi-structured script was created to guide the interviews, beginning with general and broader questions about consumption and Internet, followed by the exploration of specific questions related to blockers. Aiming to generate cultural conversation (Moisander et al., 2009) and release part of the interview from too personal implications, projective techniques were embedded in the script (Rook, 2006), turning the interaction more fluid and dynamic. The shortest interview lasted approximately 25 minutes, and the longest one, one hour and a half. All interviews were transcribed, summing up to about 187 pages of material for analysis.

The participants were selected with the help of Facebook, through a post published by the researchers while searching for blocker users. The main filter for participation in the study was related to the use of ad blocker programs. Although the selection strategy was more inclusive than restrictive, the interviewees profile reflects the profile associated to the initial adopters (Rogers, 1962) of new technologies. In general, all of them are young professionals from classes A and B, are linked to technology, have high socio-educational level, and are potential opinion leaders. The profile homogeneity also relates in part to aspects of convenience in the process of recruiting and to the use of the snow-ball technique (Penrod, Preston, Cain, & Starks, 2003), where each interviewee indicated another potential interviewee for taking part in the study. The total number of interviews was determined by the process of theoretical saturation (Bowen, 2008); in other words, from the moment the informant reports began to repeat themselves and brought forth little perspectives that had not emerged in previous interviews. Following the procedure suggested by Fontanella et al. (2011), Exhibit 1 presents how the occurrence of statements related to the three narratives on the use of ad blockers was distributed. As can be noticed in the chart, each one of the narratives had at least five distinct manifestations, configuring content with enough deepness to substantiate the analysis results and the comprehension of the different logics. The names of the interviewees, presented according to the order in which the interviews were performed, were altered to preserve their anonymity.

Exhibit 1. **Profile of the research interviewees and evidences of theoretical saturation**

Name	Age	Profession	Theoretical Statements/Saturation		
			Autonomy and control narrative	Asymmetries on Internet exchanges narrative	Efficiency and convenience narrative
Fred	31	Engineer		x	x
Fernando	37	*Designer*	x		x
Clara	26	Engineer	x		x
Helena	26	Economist	x	x	x
Clóvis	35	Dentist			x
Alberto	35	Economist		x	x
Neusa	33	Economist	x		x
Enrico	31	Programmer/Professional of Visual Effects	x		x
José	34	Physician	x	x	x
Gustavo	35	Engineer		x	x

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Data analysis followed the hermeneutic proposition suggested by Thompson (1997), where the interpretation of the interviews goes on as a series of interactions between the part and the whole. In this process, special attention was given to the broader dynamics of the "historically established meanings" (Thompson, 1997, p. 442), in the search for describing the social discourse that permeates consumers' texts and identifying the significant structures which legitimize the use of blockers. In practice, the interactive process consisted of two different stages. Initially, all interviews were codified to find recurrent themes in the discourse. Some codes were inspired by the existent literature, while others emerged from the interviews. With the purpose of understanding the holistic context of each interview, summaries were also produced, allowing an in-depth comprehension of each informant. The second stage was inter-textual, where patterns were explored from the different interviews. The generated codes were used in this stage to compare and contrast the interviewees' discourses. From this constant process of contrast, three logics were delineated, which ground the results presented in the next section.

RESULTS

According to Thompson (2004), multiple discourses emerge from the complexity of contemporary societies; interweaving and competing among themselves. Therefore, individuals are never under the domination of an unique hegemonic narrative, and this plurality was found in this study. Three discourses around the use of ad blockers were identified: 1) Autonomy and control of advertising effects; 2) Exchanges on the Internet: asymmetry, paradoxes, and search for equity; and 3) Efficiency and convenience. The following analysis presents the central aspects of these discourses.

Autonomy and control of advertising effects

The blocker is above all an advertising restriction tool, and therefore, it naturally articulates rejection arguments toward advertising. Therefore, our interest is to highlight nuances around this discourse. If the advertisements are being blocked, there is at least one functional divergence concerning advertising: a discomfort related to questions of usage, that is, misunderstandings in relation to the repetitive character, the format, or the quantity of advertisements. In this sense, retargeting, which happens when announcers present ads related to searches made or pages recently visited, is significant cause of dissatisfaction among Internet users, and an important motivation for some of them to use ad blockers.

> Something that bothers me deeply is when you search for a bike, or buy a bike, know that for six months you will see bike banners anywhere you look at in your life. (Fernando, 37, Designer)

> Once I wanted to know how much a ball cost. I did not even want to buy it, I only wanted to know how much it cost. I searched for it, and for a whole month, whenever I entered my Facebook, e-mail, cellphone, or computer, advertisement of balls was all that appeared. I reached a point of buying a ball just to stop looking at the balls ads in front of me. I could not help it anymore. (Helena, 26, economist)

Retargeting allows announcers to show advertisement only to those who expressed prior interest in a certain product or subject. For content producers and distributors, this type of advertisement is interesting, because they can charge more from announcers for visualization, since they are giving ads not just to mere visitors of their site, but also to potential consumers of that product.

This type of advertisement, which arose to increase sales and improve users experience by displaying ads that would supposedly be more relevant, can end up having the opposite effect, when this cycle of ads repetition bothers the consumers and represents a form of privacy invasion.

Within the discourse of autonomy and control of advertisement effects, we found arguments that transcend the functional issue and reach the conceptual aspect of ideas expressed by advertisement, contesting its tactics and even its role in society. When the interviewees point to the slowness caused by advertisement or the interruption in the flow of content reading, they are articulating functional rejection behaviors. Nevertheless, when they affirm that advertisement—through texts, images, and ideas—presses and manipulates consumers, our informants reveal resistance attitudes they recognize in advertisements, market dominance practices, or commercial pressures (Lee et al., 2011).

> On the one hand, it irritates because it retards, it shows me things I am not interested in. On the other hand, the issue with advertisements is that it makes you want to consume things

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> you do not need. Another thing that angers me is advertising to children. I remember there was a time when my little cousin annoyed me for two weeks because she wanted to have a Furby. Children are groups that still can be manipulated by advertising ... There is also the issue of values. There are advertisements that are still clueless, that are not adequate for the XXI century. We see these sexist macho advertisements of beer, it is bizarre. Because it is a tool that is being used to disseminate a product, but it is also disseminating a behavior which is bad for our society. We are having this discussion about the culture of rape, and this type of advertisement is directly inserted in this culture. Advertisement can have a very prejudicial effect on society. (Helena, 26, economist)

In her speech, Helena articulates several arguments to justify the use of ad blockers. Her commentaries conciliate functionality aspects as well as the invasive nature of advertising; its power to manipulate society and stimulate unlimited consumption. Additionally, according to her, "ad blocker can have this effect of making people consume less." In this sense, it is important to emphasize the paradox revealed by the work of Morato, Arcoverde, and Leal (2017), which underlines that the approaches for consumption reduction are stimulated not only by consumers and activists but also by the companies and their campaigns, to reinforce aspects of social responsibility and institutional reputation. In this sense, although they bring aspects of anti-consumption, Helena's arguments align with the perspective offered by certain advertising announcements and other discourses of the cultural industry, as important generating agents of the consumers' discourse (Costa & Pessoa, 2016).

José (34, physician), for instance, already avoided advertising in other ways before using ad blockers. He changed the channel on television, and since outdoor advertisements were visual pollution for him, he developed ways of physically and cognitively avoiding advertisements (Fransen et al., 2015). José has always been taught by his family to not trust in what is being showed in advertisements, because "he who needs to advertise is not so good." At home, her grandmother ripped all pages from *Veja* (a Brazilian magazine) when he was a child, and when finished, she said: "this is the real *Veja*." Family influence shaped José's rejection characteristics toward advertising, and he transposed the behavior learned in childhood to the digital world, through the use of ad blockers.

Roux (2007) states that consumption resistance demands the simultaneous presence of three conditions: that a force is exerted on the subject, that the subject notices it, and that he searches for cancelling its effect. The three conditions mentioned by Roux (2007) are present in the discourses of José and Helena. Both believe that advertising deceives and presses them to consume, therefore the ad blocker arises as an option to cancel this force. According to this perspective, the narratives of José and Helena embed resistance aspects. Discourses such as theirs, however, are also connected with the "reasons against consumption itself," since both consumers also perceive benefits such as efficiency and convenience in ad blockers. José and Helena are consumers who mix more functional aspects with resistance aspects, and this is what makes it difficult to classify them according the distinction proposed by Lee et al. (2011).

The example of José also teaches us that advertising distancing behavior has not arisen with the ad blocker, and it is not an exclusive behavior related to digital advertising. Some tactics, such as changing the TV channel, turning down the radio volume, skipping or ripping pages from newspapers and magazines have been used since a long time, and are displayed in the research as a part of family habits, taught from one generation to another. However, in the Internet context, our research reveals that consumers feel disturbed not only by semio-discursive strategies used by companies to attract clients (Castro, Oliveira, & Muÿlder, 2017) but also by the possibilities created by technology, such as retargeting. Another technical resource created by digital advertising relates to the ability of identifying consumers that avoid it, and the possibility of controlling and punishing these users (Elmer, 2004). As Zwick and Dholakia (2004, p. 31) observe, "the digital consumer is not totally anonymous or private anymore," he is permanently inserted in a regimen of vigilance and observation by the resources, made possible by new technologies and electronic databases. This same systematic monitoring brings the possibility of imposing disciplinary measures (Zwick & Denegri-Knott, 2009), through rewards for those who consume advertising or punishment for those who try to bypass it. For this reason, the "blocking to blockers," when ad blocker adopters are identified by their use and have their access denied in content sites, is a source of dissatisfaction for some interviewees. As we will see next, the access and restriction conflicts generated from the use of blockers reveal a second discourse, which sets under observation the exchange modes on the Internet.

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Exchanges on the Internet: asymmetry, paradoxes, and search for equity

Some interviewees highlight a search for power balance in their speeches, a determinant characteristic of consumption resistance (Lee et al., 2011). Some consumers believe they participate in an unfavorable exchange when they recognize the loss of their privacy from the capture of user data (Zwick & Dholakia, 2004). Companies dominate data capture and often do it against consumers' wish and agreement (Zwick & Dholakia, 2004), who consider themselves forced and oppressed by these companies from the digital advertising ecosystem and find in the ad blocker a tool to rebalance these relations.

Belk (2010) analyzes different ways of exchanges and differentiates between sharing, gift giving, and commodity exchanges. The best example of sharing would be a mother and her newborn son. She offers everything to the baby but expects nothing in return. Sharing would be based on the everyday exchange of goods with little economic value, on a constant basis, and with little or no ritualization. Gift giving, in turn, is apparently not reciprocal, but it is reciprocal in practice. There is a change of property of goods, and the goods offered have financial or symbolic value. There is a ritual, through the ceremony of gifts exchange, wrapping, etc., and there is an expectation, often hidden, to receive something in return, be it another gift with the same level of financial or symbolic value, or intangible gifts such as respect, trust, or friendship. Finally, in commodity exchange, there is reciprocity in the exchange, property transfer, and use of money. It is an impersonal process, without responsibilities among the parties after the conclusion of the transaction. In this study, we will use the distinction proposed by Belk (2010) to emphasize how the expectation, in relation to different ways of exchange on the Internet, supports discourses that legitimize the use of ad blockers.

Fred, (31, engineer) considers that privacy is the main benefit offered by ad blockers. His discomfort comes from the fact that companies have his data and use them to disseminate advertising with the purpose of selling products to him. The interviewee believes that Internet must have free information flow and is dissatisfied when this freedom is disrespected. He always likes to be in control and is bothered with one collateral effect of blockers: to have his access forbidden by some content sites which identify his use of ad blockers.

> With the ad blocker I receive a little privacy. And the fact that some companies need information on Internet access from my browsing records to try to sell me something bothers me. I feel betrayed to a certain extent. I am giving information without knowing what I am receiving in return. It is a one-way street; this bothers me and the ad blocker is a way to cut it off.

Throughout his interview, Fred demonstrates a whole imaginary set of the Internet as something "free," based on "sharing". In this sense, his discourse suggests that ideally companies and individuals should offer information without receiving anything in return, as in a mother and child relationship—the classical prototype of sharing—described by Belk (2010). Nevertheless, companies do not follow this logic, because they need to receive something from Internet users to make their businesses financially viable. Fred is able to perceive that there is a financial exchange occurring in his relationship with Internet content, through direct cash payment for content access, such as in a commodity exchange, or through indirect payment, such as the right to show advertising to Internet users and search for its remuneration by selling this advertising to companies interested in advertising for that public.

In this discourse, the blocker arises as an instrument to stimulate transparency on the Internet exchange ways, intended to turn more evident on what companies and consumers offer each other, to reach reciprocity in the exchange relations and rebalance in power relations. To Fred, information is power on the Internet, and he believes he is taking part in an exchange when he gives his personal information; but he considers this exchange unfair. This point becomes clear in his search for equity. The moment the informant notices that the companies do not follow the current imaginary set of sharing but something more similar to gift giving, that is, Internet users receive content as a gift, but are expected to be exposed to the advertisements which are presented there, the interviewee feels betrayed and frustrated. The ad blocker is then intended to expose the inconsistency in what would apparently be a sharing logic, but is in practice a reciprocal one. We believe that when Fred introduces the ad blocker in the relationship, he not only deconstructs this imaginary set of the sharing and free Internet but also refuses the gift giving, in which he cannot control exactly what he receives, thereby forcing the Internet system toward a commodity exchange, where what is given and what is received become explicit.

Like Fred, Helena (26, economist) defends business models that could finish or at least reduce the discomfort derived from free use of consumers' information. The interviewee believes

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that the freemium model—free access to basic services, paid access to more elaborated services—can be a better option than the "free" model supported by advertising. Paradoxically, Helen positions herself as a user and promoter of piracy and is pleased to explain the tools she uses to download this kind of content for those who do not know them.

For Helena, both the use of the ad blocker and the practice of piracy constitute a form of resistance, a similar behavior to those consumers investigated by Barros, Sauerbronn, Costa, Darbilly, and Ayrosa (2010). At the same time, this attitude seems to be part of Helena's identity project. What she avoids and does not consume, as well as her tactics to deceive the market, which presents itself as powerful and unfair, are a positive reinforcement of her identity, something similar to consumers who decide to fight against certain brands (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004): to join a voluntary simplicity (Cherrier, 2009) or to abandon certain consumption categories, also having the intention to transform the way society interacts with consumption (Suarez et al., 2012). In this sense, the discourse on exchange ways on the Internet is predominantly grounded on resistance, because it articulates the idea that companies are more powerful than consumers, who suffer pressure for commercial purposes and need to react to this pressure to end power asymmetry.

Efficiency and convenience

Together with the discourses related to autonomy regarding advertising and opposition to the ways of Internet exchange, it was possible to verify a third discourse grounded on more trivial and everyday aspects, concerning usability. This discourse explains distancing from Internet advertising through issues like performance (speed of page download), use experience (clarity in content exposition, ease in the use of services, browsing fluidity), and safety in the use of products. Although ordinary and very functional, these discourses can also be considered as anti-consumption discourses, since they constitute "reasons against consumption" (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013). During the interviews, the efficiency and convenience-based discourse was articulated by all informants, who highlighted arguments such as time savings, faster browsing, reduction of visual pollution, fraud and financial risks avoidance, and increase of physical and emotional safety.

Alberto (35, economist) is one of the interviewees who sees ad blocker as a tool that allows him to save time. When questioned about his major worry on the Internet, he asserts that when browsing, it is "not losing time" with something that is not his final purpose, and he believes that the ad blocker solves this problem by avoiding distractions from advertising content. Gustavo (35, engineer) is aligned with the perspective of the ad blocker as a tool to accelerate his content consumption, emphasizing that his objective is not to avoid advertising, but to reach the content he desires in an easier way, without distractions and with an improved user experience.

> The advantage is to see the content in a faster way, without bigger problems. I do not use the ad blocker to avoid advertisements, I use it so that advertisements do not disturb me. A site that has many pop-up ads makes you work more to see what you are effectively there to see. I like to enter the site and see the content.

As suggested in his speech, the use of the blocker is not related to critics or restrictions to the market or to advertising on the Internet. In this discourse, there is no opposition to dominance practices of a marketplace structure or opposition to market values, which would characterize consumption resistance (Lee et al., 2011). The ad blocker makes Internet browsing more efficient and convenient, and this benefit supports its use as something legitimate.

The presence of these three different consumer discourses to legitimize the use of blockers reveals the overlap of practical and functional aspects with those related to resistance, where consumers look to rebalance power dynamics. The following discussion is meant to address gains and losses in the search of finding a solution to the conceptual confusion in the field (Galvagno, 2011, p. 1688), where great "confusion about the differences and similarities between anti-consumption and resistance" would exist, and to think about alternative perspectives for future studies on the theme.

Reflections on complementary perspectives of anti-consumption research

In the present study, we understand the use of the ad blocker as an action to be inventoried by mapping the discourses that justify its use and are constructed around it. Because it extends itself beyond reasons, and analyzes discourses, this study is able to capture the complexity of the advertising distancing phenomenon and demonstrates that more functional aspects and resistance aspects overlap and mutually reinforce themselves.

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Researchers such as Chatzidakis and Lee (2013) and Lee et al. (2011) tried to distinguish what would anti-consumption and consumer resistance be to reduce the conceptual confusion existing between these terms (Galvagno, 2011). These studies define resistance as a confrontation to dominance structures and the search for rebalancing asymmetric power relations. In addition to resistance, anti-consumption according to Lee et al. (2011) includes restrictions on consumption aspects per se, functional or symbolic.

Our analysis demonstrates that the discourses which legitimize the use of blockers bring both functional and resistance aspects. Although some consumers present one of them more emphatically, several interviewees articulate two or three discourses to legitimize the use of blockers. We understand that the distinction of what resistance behaviors would be takes the overlap of reasons for granted, focuses predominantly on motivational aspects, and limits the discussion about the effects that these behaviors have on companies, markets, and society.

In this study, it can be observed, for instance, that even consumers who join the ad blocker for efficiency and convenience aspects can end up altering the power dynamics on the Internet, without having the intention of provoking this social change *a priori*. In the same way, an activist (resistance) can search for support on functionality aspects of the tool to disseminate his/her cause to other users who are less engaged in power issues. To attribute and classify this behavior with the resistance seal would not only be a fruitless task, but would also impoverish the phenomenon.

Next, we present two possible theoretical paths for researchers interested in embracing the anti-consumption/resistance research in an integrative way. The first one suggests the importance of going beyond phenomenological and conscious aspects. The second one is based on the adoption of other notions of power, and thus, resistance.

Beyond aspects of agency and action

Historically, anti-consumption studies have given attention to motivations for distancing and rejection behaviors (Iyer & Muney, 2009; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). However, we emphasize the importance of theoretically distinguishing between the anti-consumption/resistance experience of consumers and the anti-consumption/resistance research. Our argument is that anti-consumption research should not be restricted to "reasons against consumption" (Chatzidakis & Lee, 2013); it should also contemplate dynamics located outside the conscious aspects and the experience of the consumer. When we anchor this definition in the "reasons," and thus, in the rational aspects of this behavior, we end up limiting the phenomenon's comprehension. It must be highlighted that many dynamics that distance consumers from certain consuming behaviors and/or alter power relations are imperceptible and out of the individuals' control. One weakness of anchoring the anti-consumption/resistance distinction in conscious/motivational aspects still resides in the fact that a good part of power relations is not even noticed by the consumer, being a result of the individual development process.

As Hollander and Einwohner (2004) remind us, acts of resistance can have different levels of visibility. If the resistance is easily recognized in the context of the protests, the same does not happen in everyday acts, which—as we have seen—can occur by using the remote control while watching TV, ripping advertisements pages from a magazine, or using a new technology such as the ad blocker. In other cases, acts of resistance are not always interpreted as such; they occur, for instance, with humor and other types of art. Therefore, for them, resistance delimitation would not be limited to situations where the targets or the observers are capable of identifying it. According to them, the discussion related to the actors' intention is equally complex: must the actor intentionally resist some kind of power for the action to be qualified as such?

This question remains the target of many controversies in sociology (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004), but our argument is that resistance delimitation according to intentionality excludes important phenomena from the target. Our study underlines the complexity of characterizing this intentionality. Our results reinforce the importance of investigating the phenomenon from a broader perspective, without previous theoretical boundaries and distinctions between anti-consumption and resistance.

The act of focusing on discourses instead of the agent highlights meaning systems, which channel and reproduce consumers' thoughts and actions that are supported by broadly accepted cultural notions and are anchored in established ideologies. Then, the study brings forth aspects that are not always perceived by the informants themselves. Several interviewees use the ad blocker without even noticing that they are engaged in social changes. Nevertheless, when we detail the discourse around ways of exchanging on the Internet, we are able to glance at a contestation facet of the dynamics around the value of clients' information and its use by the companies. It is still important to emphasize that discourses allow individuals to understand the facts, give meaning to them, and make and

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justify their decisions by negotiating their consequences. In this sense, discourses produce transformations as they generate social consensus and open up the field for innovations to be introduced in the markets.

In summary, we emphasize that the distinction between anti-consumption and resistance is based on a perspective excessively focused on the agent (consumer) and his/her motivational aspects, as the place of intention and power. This perspective would finally restrict the comprehension of the phenomenon and leave structural and contextual conditions aside, which conduct distancing dynamics and affect power relations. The following topic deepens this debate, by discussing how anti-consumption research can be revitalized through a departure from new perspectives regarding power.

Rethinking power

The concept of power is crucial for the definition of resistance behavior, since resistance relates to the intention of rebalancing asymmetric power relations. Denegri-Knott, Zwick, and Schroeder (2006) underline that the concept of power has been discussed, in the marketing field according to three different approaches.

The consumer sovereignty model, usually adopted by anti-consumption studies, understands consumers as sovereigns who guide the market with their "invisible hand." In these studies, power is understood as an ability of free and rational individuals to make their own choices. According to this approach, power would be an entity that is shared between the agents, that is, when one wins, the other loses. Studies that adopt this perspective usually concentrate on conflict moments; their purpose is to understand how consumers' or producers' interests prevail during a certain decision (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006). For the same reason, several anti-consumption/resistance studies end up focusing on boycott cases and direct conflicts with organizations.

The second would be the cultural power model, which rejects the premise that the market is politically oppressive and an authoritarian cultural force, to investigate the ways through which consumers resist the disciplinary forces of the market. According to Denegri-Knott et al. (2006), this approach is inspired by the work of De Certeau (1984), who theorizes consumers as creative and active agents, inventing stratagems and tactics to counterattack the companies' strategies. Then, consumers are able to perceive the market as an antagonist power network. They resist by developing an "art of using what is imposed" rather than rejecting market products. Consumers' power manifests itself through creative adaptations, manipulations, and deviations from uses and meanings that were proposed by marketing professionals. The interest in this approach resides less in power measurement and more in the investigation of everyday tactics used by consumers to navigate, subvert, manipulate, and use the structures created and controlled by corporations.

Denegri-Knott et al. (2006) still present the discursive power model, centered on the understanding of how exchanges and interactions between consumers and producers co-create and reproduce the market. This perspective rejects both the idea of the sovereign consumer and the opposition between the all-powerful marketing and the resistant consumers. Power is understood as a co-created force that structures the interaction and exchange field of free agents. Thus, power resides in the ability to construct discourses, as systems that turn some knowledge possible and other knowledge impossible. The consumer articulates power dynamics when he succeeds in mobilizing discursive strategies to determine what can be done in any field of action.

Denegri-Knott et al. (2006) emphasize that the idea of empowerment fits in the consumer sovereignty model, but it does not make sense, neither in the cultural model nor in the discursive model, since the focus of these two perspectives is not on what is gained and what is lost, but on the resistance stratagems (cultural model) and on the aspects of power co-creation (discursive model). Our suggestion is that the anti-consumption/resistance studies would benefit by adopting different perspectives that go beyond consumer sovereignty and actions aiming at power rebalance.

The present study, for instance, is closer to the discursive model, as it sheds light on the discourses employed by consumers in the process of blocker legitimization. To go beyond motivational aspects enables the study to distance itself from stereotypes of "activist" consumers who fight against the system, or "alienated" consumers who simply integrate the system and distance themselves from the offers that do not correspond to their purposes. What the present study suggests is to look at the phenomenon without imposing previous theoretical labels—anti-consumption and resistance—and thus to comprehend the phenomenon in all its complexity and richness.

As suggested by this research, technologies such as ad blockers have a structuring influence, capable of transforming power dynamics, even if they are not perceived as such by consumers. The discussion of experiences and intentions of consumers restricts and loses the focus on a phenomenon much more complex and broader than the motivational and distancing aspects of certain offers or consumptions.

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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present research inventoried consumers discourses, highlighting three logics that support the use of ad blockers: 1) Autonomy and control of advertising effects; 2) Exchanges on the Internet: asymmetry, paradoxes, and search for equity and 3) Efficiency and convenience. In the conjunction of these three different discourses, consumers combine both functional and resistance aspects. As the present study contemplates this ambiguity and avoids a priori delimitations, we believe that it contributes to the phenomenon's understanding in all its complexity. This comprehension makes it possible to avoid, for example, the activist stereotype as the unique mobilizing agent of changes in power dynamics to include all kinds of consumers, even those who practice an ordinary distancing, are trivial and silent, and are interested in their convenience and functional efficiency. In this sense, the present study contributes to the discussion proposed by Dolbec and Fischer (2015), in their questioning of the differences between consumers who do not have an intentional change agenda and those who pursue an explicit change purpose.

The market is a living system of inter-relations, in which the actions of one part affect the other part. In this sense, it would be valid to investigate the phenomenon from other advertising and online content distribution ecosystem angles, in order to understand the thoughts, positioning, and practices of other stakeholders who interact and constantly influence consumer behavior. This study also underlines the importance of future research in understanding how new technologies represent everyday tools for power dynamics re-articulation. In this sense, a wide field of possibilities open itself for investigating distancing discourses and practices used by consumers and the reactions of organizations in controlling these behaviors.

RAE'S NOTE

A preliminary version of this article was presented at the International Social Networks Conference (ISONEC), promoted by Fundação Getulio Vargas, Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo in 2017, São Paulo, Brazil.

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ARTICLES

Submitted 02.27.2019. Approved 02.11.2019
Evaluated through a double-blind review system. Guest Scientific Editor: Andres Veloso
Translated version
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020190304

BEARD, HAIR, AND MUSTACHE: CONSUMPTION AND MASCULINITIES IN BARBERSHOPS

Barba, cabelo e bigode: Consumo e masculinidades em barbearias

Barba, pelo y bigote: Consumo y masculinidades en barberías

ABSTRACT

Men have been questioning gender stereotypes that establish what they should or should not consume. One example is the increase in the offer of services for the audience at new barbershops. This study aims to analyze how masculinities are constructed, administrated, and negotiated in barbershops. Participant observations were conducted in barbershops as the method and 17 consumers and market agents were interviewed. The study's findings suggest that the symbolic meanings of what it is to be masculine emerge in a dialectic process among consumers, market agents, and barbershops. These symbolic meanings are used to actively build and negotiate their masculinities. This process takes place in three ways: i) differentiation from the female world; ii) a space for relaxation and wellbeing; and iii) a space for men to socialize. The study also presents the academic and managerial implications of the findings.

KEYWORDS | Consumption, barbershops, masculinities, identity, gender.

RESUMO

Os homens vêm questionando estereótipos de gênero que instituíam o que deveriam ou não consumir. Um exemplo disso é o crescimento do mercado de serviços para esse público, como as novas barbearias. Assim, o objetivo deste trabalho é analisar de que modo as identidades masculinas são construídas, administradas e negociadas em espaços de barbearias. Como métodos, foram realizadas observação participante em barbearias e 17 entrevistas com consumidores e prestadores de serviços. Os resultados sugerem que os significados simbólicos sobre o que é ser masculino emergem em um processo dialético entre os clientes, prestadores de serviços e os espaços das barbearias, sendo utilizados ativamente para a construção e negociação de suas masculinidades. Esse processo acontece de três formas: i) distinção do universo feminino; ii) espaço de relaxamento e bem-estar, e iii) espaço de sociabilidade entre homens. O estudo é concluído apresentando as implicações acadêmicas e gerenciais.

***PALAVRAS-CHAVE** | Consumo, barbearias, masculinidades, identidade, gênero.*

RESUMEN

Los hombres están cuestionando los estereotipos de género que instituyeron lo que deberían o no consumir. Un ejemplo es el crecimiento del mercado de servicios para ese público, como las nuevas barberías. El objetivo de este estudio es analizar de qué modo las identidades masculinas se construyen, administran y negocian en espacios como las barberías. Como métodos, se realizaron observación participante en barberías y diecisiete entrevistas con consumidores y prestadores de servicios. Los resultados sugieren que los significados simbólicos sobre lo que es ser masculino emergen en un proceso dialéctico entre los clientes, los profesionales prestadores de servicios y los espacios de las barberías, utilizados activamente para la construcción y negociación de sus masculinidades. Ese proceso ocurre de tres formas: i) distinción del universo femenino; ii) espacio de relajación y bienestar, y iii) espacio de sociabilidad entre hombres. El estudio se concluye presentando las implicaciones académicas y gerenciales.

***PALABRAS CLAVE** | Consumo, barberías, masculinidades, identidad, género.*

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INTRODUCTION

Among several influences in the constitution of masculinities, the increasing participation and diversification of men in the consumption area have been some of the most significant. According to Ourahmoune (2016), men are currently consuming products and services that, until only a few years ago, would have been denied them because they were deemed feminine, such as cosmetics, lingerie, and accessories items.

According to a survey conducted by the Brazilian Association of the Industry of Personal Care, Toiletries and Cosmetics (ABIHPEC, 2016), Brazilians have increasingly questioned social and gender stereotypes that establish what they should consume because they are "male." In the Brazilian market of personal care and beauty that is oriented toward male consumers, products and services associated with the personal care of beards and hair have stood out due to an increase in their consumption over the last few years (ABIHPEC, 2016; Datamonitor Consumer, 2015).

In Brazil, one main retail channel that stimulates the consumption of beauty products and services among men are the new barbershops, a type of barbershop that combines the retro look of old barbershops with modern treatments and additional services, such as offers of alcoholic drinks and entertainment (ABIHPEC, 2017). From 2008 to 2014, there was a 100% increase in the number of barbershops in the Brazilian consumer market, and this number is expected to continue growing in 2019 (ABIHPEC, 2016).

Given that they are environments where only men go, we can consider barbershops as spaces in which masculinities are projected and negotiated. In Brazil, similar to other Latin-American societies, we observe a preestablished order of masculinity, but understanding such an order is no easy task (Gutmann, 2003). This is mainly because gender is mistakenly taken as something that is given to an individual, intimately tied to and determined by his or her biological characteristics (Connell, 2006).

Therefore, social rules regarding what it is to be a man or how a man should behave, once firmly entrenched in society, are responsible for consolidating certain patterns of conduct deemed masculine, thus establishing a hegemonic model of gender. In the Brazilian context, the hegemonic masculinity model consistently required that men exercise vigilance over their emotions, gestures, and the body itself. Moreover, in this society, "to be a man" not only means having a man's body, but also signifies showing oneself as "masculine" and "male" at all times (DaMatta, 2010).

The relationship between consumption and masculinity has been the object of some studies related to marketing, particularly those based on Consumer Culture Theory (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), which is more focused on cultural influence in consumption processes, such as that by Holt and Thompson (2004) on North-American masculinity types and ideologies; Moisio and Beruschashvili (2016) on consumption of masculine spaces in the North-American domestic area; Fontes, Borelli and Casotti (2012) on the male consumption of beauty products and services in Brazil; and Pereira and Ayrosa (2012) on the construction and expression of masculinity among gay male consumers in Rio de Janeiro.

However, few studies have examined the influence of public spaces of consumption considered masculine in the construction, expression, and administration of consumers' gender identities. Thus, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining a consumption environment in which men traditionally participate and the identity tensions and negotiations that take place there. Further, there are also gaps in the literature related to the re-signification and symbolic appropriation of public consumption spaces based on the configuration and re-configuration of the meaning and signification for apparently dual relations, such as masculine and feminine or public and private.

This article analyzes how masculine gender identities are constructed, administered, and negotiated at barbershops. To this end, this paper comprises four parts. First, the theoretical bases supporting the study are presented. Second, the methodology used to carry out this research is discussed. Third, the analysis and interpretation of the findings are discussed. Finally, the conclusions of the study are presented jointly with their managerial implications and suggestions for future researches.

THEORETICAL BASE

This section has been organized into three parts: the first presents the concept of identity and its construction and expression based on consumption; the second references the relation between consumption and gender identity, specifically the masculine identity, and, finally, reflections on masculine spaces of and materiality in consumption are presented.

Consumption and identity

Identity is understood as "a set of criteria defining an individual and an inner sentiment composed of different sensations, such as

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sense of unity, coherence, belonging, value, autonomy and trust" (Medeiros, 2008, p. 34). Once it is elaborated in social contexts, the sense of defining oneself expresses representations, guides choices, and determines the social status of a given individual. The importance of the social context in identity construction is also seen in the creation of interrelated differences and oppositions to the symbolic other because the definition of oneself also involves the definition of the other (Medeiros, 2008). Thus, the concept of identity assumes the function of identification, belonging, and differentiation in a constant process of exchange and negotiation between oneself and the other.

Gender identity is one among several that an individual may possess and is the way in which he or she identifies or self-determines him or herself as masculine or feminine, both, none, or a combination of those (UN Children's Fund, 2014). It is worth realizing that gender identity may or may not agree with the sexual identity of individuals, i.e., with their biological characteristics. Similarly, it may or may not agree with the gender representations established by social norms. In their identity project, individuals evolve from a socially-attributed identity to one that is constructed, and are no longer passive recipients of identities imposed upon them, but are instead the creators of their own identities (Medeiros, 2008).

In this sense, it is important to observe that individuals and groups may identify and differentiate themselves through their possessions and consumption patterns. According to Belk (1998), the identity construction of individuals through consumption is similar to the narratives with which they identify themselves as individuals, members of groups, and as part of a society. That which people consume helps to construct their identity, classifying and enabling them to interact in certain social groups. Some studies reveal this effect of consumption/identity relations, such as that of Kozinets (2001), who investigated how fans of the "Star Trek" series construct their own identity to differentiate themselves socially by stressing their interests and values based on the consumption of texts, images and objects of that series. Similarly, Scaraboto and Fisher (2013) studied how North-American plus-size female consumers and bloggers who are marginalized by the market construct a collective identity and call themselves "fashionists" in order to demand more options of "plus-size" fashionable clothing from the dominant market supply.

In other words, the consumer culture acts as source of mythical and symbolic resources which consumers use to construct their identity narratives (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). That is, individuals use the symbolic and cultural aspects of what they consume to support their intentions regarding the expression and representation of "self" (Slater, 2002). Choosing to consume certain symbolic and cultural elements among the many that circulate prominently in a society in consonance with one's personal narratives help a given consumer to construct and express his or her identity. In this sense, authors such as Holt and Thompson (2004) and Pereira and Ayrosa (2012) advocate that consumption highlights the preferences and priorities of certain elements and values over others, which, within a cultural context, help design and communicate masculine gender identities.

Consumption and masculinity

As a gender identity, "masculinity is the way men behave; it is the way men think and feel about themselves" (Murray, 1993, p. 65). These sociocultural constructions occur according to non-feminine symbols (Alsop, Fitzsimmons, & Lennon, 2002); as such, they are contextual, multiple, and hierarchical.

Connell (2006) emphasizes that social rules about what is to be a man or how a man should behave, once firmly entrenched in society, are responsible for consolidating a certain pattern of masculine conduct. Thus, in all societies, there is a conception of ideal or hegemonic masculinity, i.e., a model that is used as a reference for what it is to be masculine, which dictates the "most honorable way of being a man," and thus establishes the masculine condition as dominant and superior to others (Connell & Messerschimidt, 2013, p. 245).

Within the Brazilian context, DaMatta (2010) advocates that society sets and demands that those born as men should behave as such, with manliness, consistence, poise, and a certain hardness, systematically advocating certain gestures, habits, tastes, and attitudes. Additionally, that which those individuals consume determines the absence or deficiency of their masculinity when, for instance, it deviates from "which should be the shirt, trousers, socks, tie, watch or shown of *a man*" [italics are the author's] (DaMatta, 2010, p. 141). This hegemonic model ensures that representations of masculinity are contained within particular types of conduct. However, most men and boys do not abide by those ideas (Connell & Messerschimidt, 2013).

In industrialized society, which has collaborated on the loss of jobs, female competition, and crises in the world economy, men have experienced their masculinity in different ways (Connell, 2006). Whereas, given the varied forms of experiences lived by men and women and the new social intersections characterized by variable ethnicities, social classes, national identities,

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subjectivities, genders, and sexualities, there is no room to discuss masculinity in its singular form, and discussion must instead center on masculinities in the plural. Thus, different presuppositions regarding the representation of the masculine identity are possible and, generally speaking, will always be "more than a configuration for any order of gender in a society" (Connell, 2006, p. 188); thus, no one version of masculinity is absolute or true.

For the last several decades, one of the most significant influences over masculinities has been the increasing participation of men in consumption and the diversification of what they consume (Ourahmoune, 2016). Although men have historically been little studied as consumers (Östberg, 2012), researches today seek to demonstrate the process of construction, expression, and reinforcement of masculinities through consumption. For instance, in the Brazilian context, Fontes et al. (2012) found that men use elements that are culturally associated with the feminine world to set thresholds and references that determine which beauty practices and types of vanity they are allowed. By studying gay men in Rio de Janeiro, Pereira and Ayrosa (2012) concluded that the men use the symbolic meanings of consumption to differentiate themselves from hetero-normative patterns, thus helping to communicate or signal their gender identity to their peers, hide their homosexuality, or even confront stereotypes of abnormality and the stigma associated with that identity.

In the North-American context, Holt and Thompson (2004) discuss the ways the consumption of North-American men constructs three different models of masculinity: the family man, the rebel, and the hero. They explain that because the family man's masculinity emphasizes the respectability and organized realization of civic virtues, it is determined by his consumption, which prioritizes family and collective values. Conversely, an individual who does not limit his consumption under social pressure emphasizes rebellion and prioritizes self-affirmation, thereby emerging as the owner of a rebel masculinity. The third masculinity, the hero, is an idealized model of masculinity which resolves the weaknesses that are inherent to the two previous models (Holt & Thompson, 2004).

In this area, spaces traditionally considered masculine have been studied in both domestic and public environments. One example is an article from Moisio and Beruchashvili (2016), which demonstrates how consumption in mancaves, the masculine spaces in domestic environments, such as basements, workshops, garages, and barbecue grills, serve as refuges for North-American men, helping them revitalize and strengthen their identities related to work, family, and other men. Östberg (2012) reinforces those findings by highlighting the involvement of North-American men in domestic DIY activities or in restructuring mancaves in an attempt to express a perfect project of masculinity that enables taking control of the feminine space and simultaneously producing objects and spaces for themselves instead of simply consuming that offered by the consumer society. Finally, Jardim (1992) adds to that discussion by examining men's appropriation of public spaces that are socially attributed to the male gender, such as bars and barbershops, to construct their private territories of masculinity.

Masculine consumption spaces

Fukelman and Lima (2012) explain that barbershops have characteristically been spaces attended by men because they offer services involving, specifically and exclusively, hair cutting and beard trimming. Thus, we can say that the barbershops have always reinforced notions of masculine social spaces, given that they are places in which men meet and interact. In other words, analyzing the consumption in barbershops involves not only the exclusive observation of the services rendered, but also an analysis of the set of relationships and interactions among subjects-subjects and subjects-objects occurring therein.

Woodward (2011) says that in the subject-object interaction, some logic governs the transfers of symbols, meanings, values, imagination, emotions, and desires. Conversely, people project particular meanings, fantasies, and desires onto objects and alternatively, the objects are taken, used, elaborated, touched, and eventually worn out by the users. To explain this active exchange of meanings in consumption, Miller (2013) proposes the concept of objectivation to describe the dialectic process through which consumers and objects are co-constitutive as a result of their interaction, such that the barriers between subjects and objects progress beyond the point of diffusing to become inexistent. In the end, the results of the subject-object interaction, if aligned and consistent with an individual's personal narratives, are materialized and incorporated into the projects of a consumer's identity, and the cultural forms are substantialized and materialized by those objects (Ferreira & Scaraboto, 2016).

The space of interaction between subject-object emerges as a "temporary space of cultural possibility and fantasies" through which consumers can make sense of and tie emotions to the goods and consumption practices (Woodward, 2011, p. 375). Following this line of thought, the space of a barbershop can be one of fantasy in which masculinities are projected and negotiated.

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METHODOLOGY

To understand the social interaction among individuals in consumption environments analyzed herein, the ethnography method was chosen because it is characteristically both descriptive and interpretative. It is descriptive, in that it describes the phenomena to be analyzed in detail, and it is interpretative because it seeks to understand the process whereby meaning is constructed by a given group. As stated by Hopkinson and Hogg (2006): "an interpretivist is dedicated to understanding the reality under the perspective of the subjects studied within a specific context, and to exploring the meaning with which they construct the world where they live" (p. 157). Thus, data were collected through non-participatory observation for nine months at barbershops in the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Volta Redonda, in addition to in-depth interviews (McCracken, 1988) with consumers, barbers, and barbershop owners.

Six barbershops were chosen in different districts in these two cities, which met the concept of "barbershops," i.e., those which combined the retro aesthetic of old barbershops with the offers of services, in addition to hair cutting and beard trimming, and with options of entertainment for male consumers (ABIHPEC, 2017). During the observations in the field, the accompaniment and acquaintance established between one of the researchers and male consumers in those spaces were recorded in field notes, pictures, and formal and informal interviews. The barbershops' material culture and interactions with consumers, barbers, and elements present in those spaces were also recorded.

Additionally, 12 consumers from those establishments, three barbers, and two barbershop owners were interviewed. Exhibit 1 summarizes the consumers' profiles. The profiles of barbers and entrepreneurs as market agents are summarized in Exhibit 2. Any information that may be used to identify the interviewees was substituted without modifying the contents or their meaning.

Exhibit 1. **Profile of the consumers interviewed**

Name	Age	Marital status	Race declared	Education
Otávio	28	Single	Caucasian	Graduate
Igor	31	Single	Caucasian	Master's Degree
Valter	32	Single	Caucasian	Graduate
Chico	33	Divorced	Black	Post-Graduate
João	33	Single	Mixed	Graduate
Ricardo	36	Married	Caucasian	PhD
Diogo	37	Married	Caucasian	Graduate
Anderson	39	Married	Mixed	Post-Graduate
Iuri	39	Widower	Mixed	Master's Degree
Pedro	41	Married	Caucasian	Graduate
Paulo	44	Married	Black	Master's Degree
Roberto	45	Single	Caucasian	Post-Graduate

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Exhibit 2. **Profile of market agents interviewed**

Name	Age	Marital status	Occupation
Augusto	28	Single	Barber
Garcia	31	Single	Barber
Léo	32	Married	Barber
Tiago	32	Single	Entrepreneur
Henrique	37	Married	Entrepreneur

The interviews lasted 70 minutes on average and were recorded and later fully transcribed without corrections for language or additional comments. The transcription and field notes were then subjected to the content analysis technique, a tool used to identify regularities conditioned by a certain social context (Bardin, 2011). The activity of systematically comparing the theoretical concepts and "corpus" of the analysis resulted in a codification referential using record units, which enabled the gathering of groups of elements with common characteristics. Those record units were then organized based on their similarities and separated into categories, which represent the meaning of the consumption barbershop spaces for interviewees.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

The data analyzed suggest that, for the research subjects, the symbolic and cultural meanings of what it is to be masculine emerge in a dialectic process among interviewees, market agents, and the active use of barbershop spaces to construct, administer, and negotiate their masculinities. Thus, this section has been split into two parts. The first presents the meanings that consumption in barbershops spaces possess for interviewees, while the second presents the dialectic process of construction, administration, and negotiation of their masculine identities.

Consumption at barbershop spaces

The analysis of the data resulting from the interviews and field notes highlighted that consumption in barbershops is associated with the following meanings: (i) differentiation from the feminine world; (ii) a space for relaxation and wellbeing, and (iii) a space for sociability among men. In the data analyzed, these meanings were not altogether different from each other and one could often be taken for the other; that is, they entwined and merged into each other.

Differentiation from the feminine world

The data analysis indicates that the interviewees go to a barbershop to seek and maintain a positive aesthetic, to care for their appearance, and to exercise their vanity. However, for these particular consumers, this exercise of vanity should take place privately, discretely, and carefully, because excessive vanity may reveal traces of femininity in men, which could pose a threat to their masculinity. It is worth stressing that, for both clients and barbers, or entrepreneurs in that field, the negotiation of the masculine emerges in the data analysis. That fact is illustrated in the lines spoken below by one of the barbers interviewed, who stated that male clients would not feel comfortable in unisex consumption environments, such as beauty salons.

> Here a man is not interested in hair treatment. He [the client] wants to have beer, talk about football and have his hair cut. Sometimes he doesn't even want to know whether his haircut will be fine. He wants to drink his beer and leave the barbershop feeling fine. [...] I see many differences. I would feel that they were not feeling very well there [at a unisex salon]. Usually they seemed uneasy [...] They would not want to sit right at the entrance of the salon, where everybody would pass and see them there. They would always go to the back of the. [...] At a barbershop, on the other hand, they want to be right at the entrance, they want everyone to see them there, kind of a window, drinking beer, flipping through a magazine, watching football. (Augusto, barber, 28, single)

In the statement above, it is clear that while masculine vanity has to be hidden and disguised at unisex salons, it can be freely exposed at barbershops. In addition, the effort to distinguish an adequate environment for men is based on the dichotomous division between two worlds, as demonstrated by the interviewees through characteristics that are oppositional, different, and independent: the "no frills" approach that is typical of barbershops and generally deemed more masculine, and the "with frills" characteristic of unisex salons and, consequently, that which pertains to the feminine world. The definition of an environment "with no nail polish smell, no chat about soap operas" is stated in a beer coaster from one of the barbershops analyzed, and instead claims male themes and distances itself from femininizing practices or references. Similarly, colors and materials in these spaces, such as the magazines, the offer of beer,

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and the predominant presence of men, are used by interviewees to establish the differences between the masculine and feminine genders, thus communicating who is allowed in barbershops:

> I think that it's because everything is brown and black. This is something very masculine, no blue or green. The magazines available there. "Playboy," car magazines, newspapers, news magazines too. Those things refer to men. The unpainted bricks on the wall is something raw, they remind us of men. You can see the electric tubes, which also refers to electricians, to bricklayers, which are male occupations. Similarly, the wood reminds us of cabinetmakers, also a male occupation. There are also artisanal beers, imported ones, the beer they serve for free when you go there to have some service done. (João, 33, single)

The above statement on this topic aligns with the findings of Fontes et al. (2012), in that the feminine consumption of beauty is used as a point of reference to define the threshold between what is "allowed or "forbidden" in masculine vanity. That transfer, which is duly re-signified, of the goods and rituals of the feminine culture into the masculine world, re-defines symbolic gender meanings and endorses a message based on masculine vanity and aesthetic personal care. It helps users feel less concern that their identities will become infected by traces of femininity. Thus, a barbershop environment is a place of contrasts, in which the differences between masculine and feminine are marked, as the lines below illustrate:

> In addition to the fact that there are only men there (at the barbershop), this is also a stimulus to attract more man, not to attract women, the things are very simple. It's fully masculine. There, the environment is so masculine that women are even forbidden. You have beer and also magazines with naked women available together with the newspapers for the guys to stare at. No women can enter there, no way. (Roberto, 45, single)

The cultural meanings attributed to the services rendered and the objects analyzed at the barbershops help communicate the target of the services or who is allowed into this environment. Thus, these spaces of consumption are labeled "guys' places," with "no frills" and "no feminine" treatments, and represent and support (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) the identity of the interviewees as male individuals.

Relaxation and wellbeing

The interviewees also describe barbershops in therapeutic terms as spaces where, in the midst of the chaos of urban life, they have a chance to relax, to "de-stress," and "switch off." For them, the contemporary man's search for relaxation should be natural and unpretentious, since the circumstance in which going to the barbershop raised issues of vanity, if excessive, would represent a threat to their masculinities.

> It isn't so much for aesthetic reasons, because I could shave at home, I could have my hair cut at any beauty salon. I don't have frills about hair and stuff. It's because of the way we are treated. It's like I was going there to have a massage, like I went there for a moment of relaxation. I go there, have some beer, he sits me down on that comfortable, big black-leather chair. I lie down, almost fall asleep. That person shaves me. There is that leather smell in the air. You feel like you are entering a place in the past, see?! It's a super-relaxing moment and, at the same time, it is something masculine, virile, something more natural, more virile. (Valter, 32, single)

The hedonistic meaning of pleasure and wellbeing associated with consumption is justified by interviewees based on the material and sensorial aspects of the shop's decoration. Material elements, such as leather armchairs and wooden walls, as well as its sensorial aspects, such as indirect lighting and neutral colors, are used to objectify (Miller, 2013) the informality, unpretentiousness, and naturalness of those frequenting the barbershop.

As pointed out by Moisio and Beruchashvili (2016), in a study on consumption in masculine spaces in a domestic environment, the space of barbershops enables a revitalizing process of masculinities in places deemed safe by interviewees. These meanings are associated with the notion of privacy that is materialized in those spaces, which helps provide relief, albeit temporarily, from the social pressures and obligations faced by those individuals as men. Correlatively, Östberg (2012, p. 129) advocates the idea that men need to have a haven where they can be "real" "complete men," especially now, when their role of

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family providers seems to be increasingly threatened by women's access to the workplace.

> There you're freer to talk about some subjects, to curse, to talk about women (laughs). You can be single for a while. (Pedro, 41, married)

> [...] And sometimes you just feel like being alone, relaxing, thinking about life, talking bullshit, pornography, talking shit at will without your wife criticizing you, pouting next to you (Paulo, 44, married)

The hedonistic space created during the consumption of and in the spaces of the barbershops analyzed enables the temporary relaxation of the interviewees' masculinities. Like the figure of the hero man provided by Holt and Thompson (2004), the interviewees forge masculine identities based on an ideal of freedom and independence from meeting societal requirements. This illustrates how consumption enables experiencing fantasies, invocating desires, aesthetics, and an identity game, which frequently differ dramatically from consumers' daily realities (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

Space of sociability among men

The interviewees differentiate the barbershops' spaces due to an active relation among their functional characteristics (hair cutting and beard trimming), and their symbolic and cultural aspects. Consumption of and within barbershops' spaces helps interviewees construct and maintain relations with those considered desirable and on track in terms of their gender identity projects. Thus, interviewees' involvement and participation in a network of social relations with other men serve as strategies for constructing and reinforcing their masculinities.

The historical use of barbershops to render solely masculine services, the way those services are rendered, and the behaviors required in those places seem to enable interviewees to perceive and be perceived as masculine individuals. Statements such as, "I go there because it's male stuff, kind of "manly" really, it's just like me" (Iuri, 39, widower), "and I'm already used to it, just men, that's my place, my moment" (Pedro, 41, married), are evidence that the construction of the interviewees' masculine identity is directly bound to interaction with other men and identification with those spaces (Belk, 1998). Thus, constructing the spaces as masculine places emerges in the analysis of the data due to consumers' possession of those environments and their relations with the market agents, such as barbers and managers. Consumers' feeling of belonging in those spaces occurs not only in relation to the objects and elements available there, but also because of the type of experience and involvement with other consumers and service providers (Pereira & Ayrosa, 2012).

Precisely due to the subject of identification with those spaces, the consumers and other market agents presented therein seem to build a certain type of masculine fraternity. Interviewees often reference the barbershop they frequent with an abbreviated name or the barber's nickname, showing proximity, familiarity, or even intimacy with the space of consumption. Ties of friendship that extrapolate the limits of that environment and the masculine fraternal, as well as the familiar charge of those spaces, are equally perceivable in the speech of the barbers interviewed.

> Sometimes we go out of the barbershop to have some beer, there is this closeness, friendship. [...] There [a unisex salon he had worked], no, it was different, I would do the job, silently, and that was it! (Léo, barber, 32, married)

> I see many of my clients on the street and I see that their behavior is fully different then. When they come here it seems that they are entering their living room, they are among friends. We are no longer the client's professional and we become friends, part of the family. [...] and then there is this family environment inside here. It's much more than a salon [unisex]. Here we are family. (Augusto, barber, 28, single)

> [...] many of our clients come here for the environment, how they are received, the conversation, because they identify themselves with us, they trust the professional. I think that's cool. Because it's like this: when they identify themselves with a professional, they won't have their hair cut by another professional. They can't trust. They'll wait for me, if I can't work with them that day, they'll come another day, they'll schedule it via WhatsApp (Garcia, barber, 31, married)

The data analysis suggests that barbers seek to demonstrate and establish the differences among the fraternal ties that occur at barbershops, thus solidifying the feeling of collectivity ("we" of the barbershop) and, concomitantly, to establish distance from

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"the other" ("them," at the unisex salon). This feeling of fraternity also highlights the stability and perpetuation of the relationship of trust between client and barber.

These practices of sociability occurring in the spaces of the barbershops are responsible for configuring and re-configuring meanings and significations through the relations and differences between masculine and feminine environments, home and street, private and public, us and them, and leisure and work.

The idea of recreating a space of sociability around a masculine theme emerged as the main inspiration of an entrepreneur interviewed about the creation of his barbershop space. In his view, the masculine theme attracts consumers who share points of view about the roles and relations of the masculine gender, thus helping to design their masculinities.

> We surveyed how barbershops were in the past and found out that the main purpose of a barbershop was to be a meeting point. Men would meet at the barbershop to negotiate, to socialize. That ended as time went by, didn't it?! Our main inspiration was to re-create that environment: the environment where men with common interests would go to meet and interact. [...] We have here, for instance, many doctors, and it is very common they come on Wednesday, I don't know why, but they usually come on Wednesday, and they soon start talking a lot about medicine, a doctor who sits on a chair talks to another who is sitting on the next chair (laughs). But there is also a small group of lawyers, they root for Flamengo, of poker players [...] It's very nice to see how men make friends easily. (Tiago, entrepreneur, 32, single)

Thus, when we contemplate spaces of male sociability, barbershops evidence the sharing of one representation of common hegemonic masculinity (DaMatta, 2010). The line "here things men like are gathered: drinking, be with friends, chat, have their hair cut, shave" (Augusto, barber, 28, single) evidences the perception that barbershops make the tastes and preferences available for their consumers that a certain type of man "should" have, laying claim to ideas and beliefs, and gathering elements that can summarize and materialize a model of masculinity. Thus, from the interviewees' point of view, the construction and negotiation of gender identity are related to their interaction with other men, as well as their symbolic identification with the barbershop space, which enables them to position themselves socially as men.

Construction, administration, and negotiation of masculine identities

Based on the material elements and social interactions, the analysis of the data highlighted that the interviewees choose spaces they consider representative of their social beliefs and attitudes about what it is to be masculine, thus creating a strong sense of identification and personification with the space and others who frequent it. The reports presented hereinafter suggest the contamination of interviewees' gender identities through their participation in the barbershop spaces : "If you go to a place where only men go, you end up by also turning yourself into a man" (Iuri, 39, widower), "A place where only men go ends up by looking like a man" (Diogo, 37, married). Therefore, a co-construction relation exists between the subject and the space he frequents (Miller, 2013). If, on one hand, the interviewees state that they feel more masculine when going to barbershops, on the other hand, those environments begin to have an increasingly masculine meaning because those who frequent them are men.

Thus, the cultural ideals about what it is "to be masculine" emerge in a dialectic process between the subjects and the elements of and within the spaces of the barbershops, which are actively used by the interviewees to construct, administer, and negotiate their masculinities. We suggest that those spaces, in the words of Arnould and Thompson (2005), "provide consumers with an expansive and heterogeneous palette with which they construct their individual and collective identities" (p. 871).

Those masculinities are strongly bound to and justified by social prescriptions, that is, society is an institution that defines what it is to be a "man" and, consequently, it elicits certain behaviors and stances from individuals. The narratives of socialization – stories and expectations around which individuals are socialized that mirror their social statuses (Shankar, Elliot, & Fitchett, 2009) - emerge in the data analysis as aspects that have been internalized by the interviewees; they influence their consumption and gender identity projects as follows: "To be masculine is to dress like a man, to walk like a man, to talk like a man, to have men's attitudes, to use man's things, to like what men like: women" (Pedro, 41, married).

The idea that masculinity is tied to sex evidences the process whereby social norms and practices related to the body are absorbed, thus establishing it as the main arena of incidence and expression of one's gender. In a study by Pereira and Ayrosa

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(2012), the interviewees consider the body, and its consumption and use in addition to all outward symbols covering it, such as clothes and accessories, as essential in the construction of their masculinities. This social norm regarding the body creates a script that dictates how to act by setting specific behaviors that emerge in interviewees' speech and are labeled as specific to what it means to be "of man."

Although these men's masculinities emerge as an aspect of their persona that is already constituted by social norms, the consumption of objects, places, ideas, and experiences is broadly used to administer those masculinities in the contexts wherein those individuals have been inserted. Moreover, the interviewees evidence the construction and administration of their masculinities through denial, minimization, or statements regarding the inferiority of elements deemed feminine. These symbolic meanings associated with opposition to the feminine are difficult to negotiate, or are even non-negotiable: "A man has no "frills." He can even take care of his appearance, it is important, but without excess. When a guy takes too much care of his appearance, excessively, he becomes kind of effeminate" (Anderson, 39, married).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study sought to understand how masculine identities are constructed, administered, and negotiated in barbershops. The analysis of the data highlights that in these spaces, men must share rules, meanings, beliefs, and stereotypes about how a man should be, behave, and consume, if they are willing to be seen and recognized as a masculine man. The material culture and social interactions occurring in these spaces represent that which is culturally considered masculine, thus resulting in the materialization of the tastes, interests, and desires of those who are or want to be seen as fully masculine individuals. Within the context of the analysis, this topic helps naturalize the ways one may experience masculinity, which renders it impossible for the interviewees to experience and construct a masculine gender identity.

Through consumption, subjects represent themselves and support their masculinities in the same way that they personalize ideas that align their gender identities with the hegemonic ideals of masculinity established in those spaces and society as a whole. Thus, an analysis of the data emphasizes that the masculinities characterizing the spaces of consumption are constructed, administered, and negotiated around three categories: (i) meeting socialization pressures and narratives about what it is "to be a man"; (ii) a system of representations that strongly denies the feminine; and (iii) patterns of consumption of goods and experiences associated with the masculine or, as the interviewees might say, "men's" consumption.

This research illustrates the consumption within and of barbershop spaces as a process of the construction, negotiation, and administration of gender identity, mainly based on the appropriation and use of public spaces of consumption as if they were private. These public spaces (barbershops) are appropriated by consumers and barbers through configuring and re-configuring the meanings and significations governing the relations between masculine and feminine, home and street, private and public, us and them, and leisure and work.

Therefore, this article reinforces the idea of barbershops as spaces of circulation, socialization, and negotiation of individuals' masculinities. Consumers also see these spaces as therapeutic, as places in which they can meet their peers, and as mancaves. In this sense, this study's findings contribute to those found by Moisio and Beruchashvili (2016), as they also propose the notion of mancaves as public spaces of consumption.

Thus, this study contributes to strengthening studies on gender and service consumption from the perspective of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), illustrating the influence of the symbolic and cultural dimensions in consumers' consumption and gender identity projects within the Brazilian context. Moreover, subjects cited by Pinto, Freitas, Resende, and Joaquim (2015) as emerging from a confrontation between the CCT and the field of services consumption are approached in this study as follows: how the processes of choice and behavior in the services are shaped by gender issues and how the system of belief and practices linked to social and institutional structures shapes the experiences of service consumption.

This research offers important managerial contributions by focusing on the behaviors of masculine consumption and the ways entrepreneurs and marketing professionals may efficiently use themes of masculine gender in spaces of consumption or in marketing communications. It also contributes by evidencing the influence of material culture in spaces of consumption on identity projects and the creation of feelings of belonging and self-expression in consumers. Moreover, it offers subsidies to more effectively use the subjects pertaining to sociability in consumption spaces, the symbolic transformation of public spaces into private ones, and understanding Brazilian consumers as individuals with multiple identities and cultural wealth. Finally, the need of those analyzed in this study to maintain gender thresholds through consumption suggests important implications for the market, such as the way products, services, and other

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marketing strategies can help establish borders between genders – particularly when aspects of masculine consumption approximate what is socially established as feminine, as demonstrated in this study, and to minimize or even resolve possible gender identity tensions.

Based on the findings of this paper, we can suggest topics for future studies, such as exploring speech and gender representations in consumption spaces beyond barbershops, and selecting interviewees different from those interviewed in this research, mainly in terms of sexual orientation or transgender topics. In contrast to that suggested by this research, when facing idealized representations of masculinities, consumers may experience situations characterized by tension, including feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability. These scenarios are equally important for future studies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (FAPERJ) for granting a Master's degree to the first author.

RAE's NOTE

This article was presented at the VIII Encontro de Marketing promoted by the Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração (Brazil) in 2018.

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ARTICLES

Submitted 05.21.2018. Aprovado 02.18.2019
Evaluated through a double-blind review process. Scientific Editor: Mário Sacomano Neto
Translated version
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020190305

MUTUAL COMMITMENTS IN TRANSACTIONS OF HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN THE SERRA FLUMINENSE

Compromissos mútuos nas transações de hortícolas na serra fluminense

Compromisos mutuos en las transacciones de productos hortícolas en la Sierra Fluminense

ABSTRACT

This article aims to identify the factors that explain the establishment of mutual commitments between the small farmers growing horticultural products and their buyers in the Brazilian region of Serra Fluminense. It uses the theoretical framework of transaction cost economics to analyze 567 transactions performed by a sample of small farmers in seven Brazilian municipalities. The empirical study starts from previous research to construct a variable that captures two types of transactions; in the first type, the buyer provides inputs or technical assistance to the farmer, whereas no such commitment exists in the second. The descriptive statistics and a logit model show that transactions "with mutual commitment" are associated with a higher level of asset specificity and a broad set of coordination routines. Further, the building of trust emerges as a fundamental coordination mechanism even in transactions that are "without mutual commitment."

KEYWORDS | Economic organization, coordination of transactions, family farming, horticultural products, hybrid forms.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é identificar os fatores que explicam o estabelecimento de compromissos mútuos entre os agricultores familiares e compradores de produtos hortícolas na Região Serrana do Rio de Janeiro. Para tanto, analisa 567 transações referentes a uma amostra de agricultores familiares baseados em sete municípios. A Economia dos Custos de Transação (ECT) é usada como marco teórico. O estudo empírico parte da construção de uma variável que divide as transações em dois grupos. No primeiro grupo, intitulado "com compromisso", o comprador fornece insumos ou assistência técnica ao produtor. Já no segundo grupo, intitulado "sem compromisso" inexiste tal comprometimento de conhecimento e recursos. Estatísticas descritivas e um modelo logístico (logit) binário mostram que transações "sem compromisso" se caracterizam por um maior nível de especificidade do ativo e um amplo conjunto de rotinas de coordenação. Por sua vez, a construção de confiança emerge como um mecanismo de coordenação fundamental mesmo naquelas transações "sem compromisso."

PALAVRAS-CHAVE */ Organização econômica, coordenação de transações, agricultura familiar, produtos hortícolas, formas híbridas.*

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es identificar los factores que explican el establecimiento de compromisos mutuos entre agricultores familiares y compradores de la región serrana de Río de Janeiro. Para ello, se analizaron 567 transacciones referentes a una muestra de agricultores familiares de siete municipios de la región. La Economía de los Costos de Transacción fue el marco teórico utilizado. El estudio empírico usó una variable capaz de identificar dos grupos de transacciones: mientras en el primer grupo el comprador ofrece insumos o asistencia técnica a los productores, en el segundo grupo tal compromiso no existe. El análisis estadístico muestra que transacciones "con compromisos mutuos" poseen un nivel más alto de especificidad del activo, además de un conjunto más amplio de rutinas de coordinación. Por su parte, la construcción de la confianza es un mecanismo de coordinación fundamental tanto para transacciones "con compromisos mutuos" como para transacciones "sin compromisos mutuos."

PALABRAS CLAVE */ Organización económica, coordinación de transacciones, agricultura familiar, hortalizas, formas híbridas.*

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1970s, a modernization process has transformed the agribusiness chains of several developing countries (Reardon & Timmer, 2012). The progressive diffusion of contractual arrangements has supported the exchange of technologies used in production, as well as the sharing of management approaches and risk (Zylbersztajn, 2005). Specialized staff members – either in-house or outsourced – transfer technologies and monitor the activities of suppliers. To some extent, these changes replicate the diffusion patterns of contractual arrangements that are found, for example, in the United States and Western European countries (James, Klein, & Sykuta, 2011). However, it is clear that the ability to replicate a similar organizational architecture in diverse societies is possible only if supported by the institutional framework or adopted by farmers who are fully capable of using such arrangements (Henson & Reardon, 2005; Humphrey, 2007; Miranda & Chaddad, 2014). In this sense, the emergence of novel organizational arrangements between buyers and producers is tantamount to the establishment of particular patterns of relationship. Arms-length transactions, such as those carried out in the spot market that are therefore devoid of long-term commitments, have been replaced by creative solutions that enable the sharing of resources and an economic relationship over extended periods of time (Bijman, 2008; Otsuka, Nakano, & Takahashi, 2016).

In the Brazilian market of horticultural products, the typical relationship between family farmers and buyers has been embedded through strong ties that support the diffusion of relatively strict patterns of coordination (Carvalho, Costa, & Souza, 2014). Given the bilateral dependence between farmers and buyers, which is often asymmetric, the relationship is characterized by the building of trust. Both sides establish a series of routines, such as the sharing of production and management techniques, determining how to monitor quality, setting the price, devising rules for the delivery of products, and so on (Souza Filho & Bonfim, 2013; Souza & Scur, 2011). To achieve these common goals, family farmers and buyers often design hybrid forms in which participants address the fundamental challenge of sharing resources while maintaining some degree of independence from others (Ménard, 1996; Williamson, 1991).

Hybrid forms can take the form of diverse configurations (Ménard, 2018; Martins, Trienekens, & Omta, 2017; Ménard, 2004). In the case of horticultural products, arrangements enable the provision of inputs and technical assistance from buyers – even in the case of middlemen – or a more complex pattern of coordination under the leadership of supermarket chains or processing companies (Bignebat, Koç, & Lemeilleur, 2009; Bonfim, Souza Filho, & Silva, 2003; Carvalho et al., 2014). It is true that most of these arrangements have features that resemble the organizational forms typically found in the spot market. Nevertheless, the consolidation of bilateral dependence ties and commitments to particular transactions have motivated the construction of more complex organizational forms (Ménard et al., 2014). Hence, the research question that inspires this paper is: *what are the factors that explain the adoption of hybrid organizational forms in the transactions between small horticultural producers and buyers?*

This article aims to identify the factors that determine the characteristics of the hybrid forms used in transactions between family farmers from the *Serra Fluminense* region and their buyers. In this sense, this study builds on several recent efforts that allow a better understanding of the organizational complexity that exists in the Brazilian agricultural sector (Chaddad, 2017; Ménard et al., 2014). In the next few pages, we share the conclusions from the analysis of a sample comprising 576 transactions carried out by family farmers from the *Serra Fluminense* region in the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro. The *Serra Fluminense* region surrounds one of the largest metropolitan areas in Brazil, and has a population of approximately 12 million people. Descriptive statistics and a logistic model (*logit*) show that transactions "with commitment," that is, transactions in which the buyer provides inputs or technical assistance to the farmer, are characterized by a higher level of asset specificity and a broad set of coordination routines. At the same time, trust building emerges as a fundamental coordination mechanism, even for those transactions that are "without commitment."

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transaction cost economics (TCE) is the approach traditionally used to explain the configuration of diverse organizational forms in agribusiness systems (Zylbersztajn, 2017; Cook, Klein, & Iliopoulos, 2008; Masten, 2000). According to Williamson (1991), economic agents choose governance structures that are aligned with the features of the transaction to be carried out. Three dimensions are considered: the level of specificity of the assets used in the transaction, the frequency, and the level of uncertainty. The same contribution describes three basic forms of coordination, which are supported by particular governance structures. These are as follows:

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- spot market: option used for transactions without specific assets, in which agents have no intention of maintaining the relationship over time. In spot market transactions, the identity of the parties is irrelevant – therefore, the selection of new partners can occur without major costs. Buyers and sellers do not have a bilateral dependence, adjustments in the terms of the transaction ensue from the powerful incentives furnished by the price mechanism and monetary rewards and the contractual relationship tends to be strictly interpreted according to legal principles;

- vertical integration or hierarchy: this form is used in transactions with highly specific assets. In this case, the transactions are carried out within the boundaries of the firm. Vertical integration provides a flexible alternative for the attenuation of disturbances. The implicit contract that characterizes a hierarchy is that of forbearance: disputes are settled within the boundaries of the firm, since the firm has mechanisms that are analogous to an appeals court;

- hybrid forms: represent a heterogeneous set of arrangements, established to allow the common use of resources that belong to independent individuals or firms (Ménard, 2004). In the hybrid forms, cooperation through the establishment of a contract does not eliminate competition among the parties. For example, farmers might create a hybrid form to support a certification scheme and simultaneously compete in the market (Ménard, 1996). According to Williamson (1991), neoclassical contracts are typically found in a hybrid form, given the growing importance of the identity of the parties. Neoclassical contracts favor the continuity of the relationship and adaptability in case of unanticipated disturbances, thereby enabling ex-post adjustments.

In fact, a central issue in the literature is the role of hybrid forms in the promotion of a coordination action between independent individuals and firms that own diverse bundles of knowledge and resources (Ménard, 2004). The autonomy of the parties requires the establishment of an explicit form of coordination, the authority – that is, the explicit delegation of decision rights to the parties with a greater ability to determine a particular course of action (Ménard, 1996). In this sense, the influence of the price mechanism on the decision-making process in a hybrid form tends to be slower than that of price incentives on a typical spot market transaction. In a hybrid form, choices depend on a complex network of mutual commitments that lead to the distribution of decision rights within the hybrid form.

Contracts in a hybrid form can be formal. In this case, controversies can be evaluated by appeals courts. Nevertheless, hybrid forms can also be embedded in informal agreements, such as tradition and the progressive building of reputation, factors that may reduce the possibility of an opportunistic action (Uzzi, 1997). Although contracts may be based on consolidated legal principles, Williamson (1991) contends that formal agreements are necessarily incomplete. This is because the clauses of a contract cannot anticipate all potential consequences resulting from the establishment of an economic relationship. Together with the pervasiveness of uncertainty, the threat that the parties in a contract might seek short-term interests increases the importance of coordination mechanisms. In this sense, coordination implies the definition and operation of mechanisms – economic, regulatory, and contractual incentives – that efficiently reduce conflicts and contradictions. In other words, the parties should aim to establish governance structures that reinforce the incentives of agents to act in accordance with common strategic goals. At the same time, the maintenance of structures should not imply an excessive burden; that is, governance costs should be minimized.

Several studies analyze the adoption of hybrid structures in horticultural transactions in Brazil. Faulim and Azevedo (2003) identify the broad use of informal contracts between buyers and horticultural famers in São Carlos (São Paulo). The perishable nature of horticultural products, which leads to investments in specific assets by farmers and a high uncertainty level, also demands the building of trust over time for the stability of commercial relationships (see also Carvalho et al., 2014). Given the growing influence of certification on the measurement of the attributes of horticultural products, Cunha, Saes, and Mainville (2015) argue that the features of the institutional framework play a fundamental role in the widespread use of informal contracts in the sector. In an analysis on the exchange of organic iceberg lettuce, Saes, Schneider, and Souza (2014) describe the coexistence of diverse contractual models in the supply chain. The study shows that although a formal contract is rare in the organic iceberg lettuce sector, commitments, such as the promise of purchase, are offered to a set of exclusive suppliers. As a result, buyers aim to increase the predictability in the organic iceberg lettuce market, facilitating the equilibrium of supply and demand.

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METHODS

Sample and data collection

The empirical research of this paper adopts a positivistic approach (Saccol, 2009) based on the collection of information through a survey. The analysis uses descriptive statistics and an econometric model with a qualitative dependent variable. Primary data were collected between May and July of 2015 from family farmers living in seven municipalities of the *Serra Fluminense* region. We use the definition of "family farmer" found in Law n. 11,326/2006, which relies on four elements: the area of the farm should not exceed four fiscal modules; the labor force must be provided mainly by family members; the family income must derive mostly from agricultural activities on the family farm; and the farm must be run by the farmer or other family members. The probabilistic sample comprises 262 family farms, which were randomly selected from a list of family farmers provided by farmers' associations in each of the seven municipalities. We used the criteria of regional stratification to define the probabilistic sample. Table 1 presents the distribution of the sample and the population of the family farmers from each city, according to the Agricultural Census of 2006 (IBGE, 2006). The sample's error is 6.07% if an infinite population is considered, and 5.98% for a finite population.

Table 1. **Number of family farms according to the Agricultural Census of 2006 and sample**

Municipalities	Population*	Sample
Cachoeiras de Macacu - RJ	1,049	31
Nova Friburgo - RJ	1,348	40
São José do Vale do Rio Preto - RJ	329	10
Sapucaia - RJ	486	14
Sumidouro - RJ	2,346	69
Teresópolis - RJ	2,569	76
Trajano de Moraes - RJ	739	22
Total	8,866	262

* Data from the Agricultural Census (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, 2006).

A structured survey was applied to the probabilistic sample of farmers. On-site interviews resulted in the collection of information regarding transactions, buyers, farmers, and the rural establishment. We began with the assumption that farmers could sell the products of their harvest to more than one buyer. Likewise, we assumed that transactions with the same buyer could have diverse features or involve different products. Obviously, such scenarios would imply the collection of a considerable amount of data. For example, a farmer who sells four diverse products to three buyers could have carried out as many as 12 transactions. Given the time constraints for the interviews, we decided to simplify the data collection process. Two decisions were made in this regard:

- For each family farmer, only the information on the two main buyers was collected – considering the period between May 2014 and April 2015. Each farmer identified the type of buyer, the number of years in which the farmer negotiated with the same buyer, the motivations for establishing the negotiation, and the advantages and primary problems of the relationship.
- Only the information on the two most representative products sold to each of the buyers was collected. Hence, a farmer provided information on four transactions at most – two for each buyer. For each transaction, the farmer identified the horticultural product, the percentage of the harvest acquired by the buyer, consignment sales, the timing of the negotiation, the timing of pricing, the payment deadline, and the nature of the contractual agreement – i.e. a formal contract or an informal agreement.

The total number of transactions in the sample is 576, which corresponds to 18,867 transactions in expanded value for the population, according to the weights adopted in the sample design (see Table 2). The sample contains 44 horticultural products, with 11 products representing 70% of the transactions. The most representative products in the sample are lettuce (17.5%), tomato (10.3%), and broccoli (9.7%).

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Table 2. **Number of transactions according to type of commitment and respective groups**

		Groups		
		Without commitment	With commitment	Total
Upfront payments	Expanded	17,448	1,419	18,867
	Sample	525	42	567
Inputs	Expanded	0	1,153	1,153
	Sample	0	34	34
Technical assistance	Expanded	0	499	499
	Sample	0	15	15
Inputs and technical assistance	Expanded	0	233	233
	Sample	0	7	7
Inputs and/or technical assistance	Expanded	0	1,419	1,419
	Sample	0	42	42

Analysis variables

To carry out the empirical analysis, we constructed a dependent variable to identify two groups of transactions. The first group contains transactions in which some degree of bilateral dependence between the farmer and the buyer exists. We assumed that this dependence reflects mutual commitments based on the sharing of resources to carry out the transaction. It is true that every farmer invests resources – land, capital, or labor – with diverse specificity levels in a transaction. In this sense, the establishment of a significant bilateral commitment occurs whenever the buyer allocates specific resources – in particular, knowledge – before the materialization of the transaction.

Data collected in the on-site interviews showed that a set of farmers received inputs or technical assistance from buyers. Hence, a variable that indicates the commitment of resources by buyers was created. We assumed that farmers who received at least one of these types of resources established a commitment with a particular buyer; that is, they deployed other resources, such as capital, land, and labor, to carry out a specific transaction. Consequently, we observe the establishment of arrangements based on mutual commitments, a necessary condition for the emergence of a hybrid form between parties that, although independent, share an intermediate level of interdependence (Ménard, 2004; Williamson, 1991). In turn, the second group encompasses transactions in which the buyers did not furnish inputs or technical assistance. In this case, the assumption was that transactions without a mutual commitment of resources have features that are typical of a spot market exchange.

The dependent variable defined above is used to identify the existence of a hybrid form of governance. This dependent variable is called "with commitment" and assumes a value of 1 if the transaction was carried out with a buyer who provided inputs or technical assistance and a value of 0 in cases characterized by the inexistence of resources or knowledge shared with family farmers. A binary logit model is used to analyze the pattern of adoption of mutual commitments, considering the level of asset specificity observed in each transaction and the socioeconomic data from respondents. The group of transactions without the sharing of specific resources is called "without commitment." Out of a total of 576 transactions, 42 belong to the "with commitment" group; that is, the buyer furnished inputs or technical assistance.

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Descriptive statistics and the binary logit model

The two groups of transactions are compared with the goal of identifying their main peculiarities. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, averages, and hypotheses testing) and a binary logit model are used. Binary logit models are commonly used to explain the probability of a given decision or the occurrence of an event. For instance, several papers that study the organization of transactions in the South American agricultural sector use the same method to explain the adoption of different contractual arrangements, including hybrid forms (Mello & Paulillo, 2009; Souza Filho & Paulillo, 2005; Vinholis et al., 2014). In this case, the choice of an individual, or the probability of occurrence, is explained by a set of factors and the following function (Greene, 2003):

Probability (event j occurs) = Probability (Y = j) = f [determinants, parameters]	(1)

Since the decision parameters are not observable in many cases, one potential approach is to define a latent variable y_i^* for each transaction *i*, as in:

$y_i^* = \beta' Xi + u_i \quad i = 1, \ldots, N$	(2)

where *X* denotes a set of potential determinants or variables to be tested. The observed pattern of choice can be described with a dummy variable, *y*, in which $y_i = 1$ if the transaction *i* is within the "with commitment" group and $y_i = 0$ if it is not. The observed values of *y* are related to *y** as follows:

$y_i = 1$ *se* $y_i^* > 0$ $y_i = 0$, *if not*	(3)

and

$PR(y_i = 1) = Pr(y_i^* > 0) = PR(u_i > -\beta' X_i) = 1 - F(\beta' X_i) = F(\beta' X_i)$	(4)

where *F* is a function of the cumulative distribution for *u* and a symmetric distribution is assumed. The estimates for the parameters β can be obtained with the use of a maximum likelihood approach. In a logit model, the cumulative distribution function is assumed as:

$PR(y_i = 1) = \frac{e^{\beta X}}{1 + e^{\beta X}} = \Lambda(\beta X)$	(5)

where Λ denotes the logistic cumulative distribution function.

RESULTS

Characteristics of farms and farmers

Table 3 presents the average area of land managed by the family farmers in the sample. The information includes both the area owned by the farmer and that owned by others, which is rented or managed in partnership. From a statistical perspective, we can identify significant differences between the average total area managed by farmers from the "with commitment" and those from the "without commitment" groups. Three key points warrant attention here. First, the farms in the sample are small and have a small standard deviation, reflecting the fact that the research has focused on family farms. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that the "with commitment" group encapsulates farmers managing smaller areas, whether it is the owned or total area. Finally, the "with commitment" group is characterized by a higher dependency on land from other owners – in particular, plots that are managed in partnership with others. There is strong evidence that farmers from the "with commitment" group use these arrangements more frequently.

Table 3. **Average area managed by farmers (in hectares)**

	Without commitment		With commitment		
	Average (ha)	Deviation	Average (ha)	Deviation	T-Test
A - Area owned by the farmer	6.53	0.56	2.95	0.39	0.000
B - Owned area rented to others	0.19	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.006
C - Owned area managed in partnership	0.61	0.09	0.55	0.15	0.686
D - Area owned by others	1.63	0.20	1.12	0.23	0.038
E - Rented area	0.94	0.16	0.49	0.17	0.030
F - Area owned by others managed in partnership	0.69	0.13	0.64	0.19	0.615
G - Total area managed by the farmer (A + D)	8.16	0.58	4.07	0.40	0.000

Table 4 presents the levels of adoption for irrigation and harvesting technologies. Irrigation is largely used in horticultural production. Therefore, we do not observe a significant difference between the two groups regarding the adoption of these technologies. In turn, protected cultivation is less common. However, we observe a higher level of investment in technology-intensive assets in the "with commitment" group, such as hydroponics and protected cultivation systems, which may result in differentiation and value aggregation. These assets suggest the existence of investment in assets with an intermediate specificity level, which are an important driver in the adoption of a hybrid form (Ménard, 1996; Williamson, 1991).

Table 4. **Adoption of irrigation and cultivation technologies (in %)**

	Without commitment	With commitment	Total	T-test
Uses irrigation	90.4	82.0	89.8	0.153
Uses hydroponics	5.3	6.9	5.4	0.662
Protected cultivation	14.9	28.9	16.0	0.009

Table 5 shows how family farmers gather information that can be used to determine what will be cultivated. In both groups, the absolute majority of farmers make decisions based on their own experience, a result that is consistent with other studies highlighting the importance of tacit knowledge for agricultural activities (see Curry & Kirwan, 2014). Other sources of information were also cited, such as conversations with technical staff and other farmers. However, the use of these alternative sources of information was much lower than the influence of personal experience on decisions. Regardless, we identified a statistically significant difference between the "with commitment" and "without commitment" groups regarding the use of alternative sources of information for decision-making purposes

Table 5. **Sources of information that guide farmer decisions (em %)**

	Without commitment	With commitment	Total	T-test
Websites on the Internet	1.19	0.0	1.1	0.486
Reads newspapers or magazines	2.58	0.0	2.4	0.302
Conversations with technical staff	20.7	22.0	20.8	0.824
Conversations with other farmers	25.9	47.5	27.5	0.004
Conversations with the buyer	15.6	34.3	17.0	0.002
Personal experience	96.6	95.9	96.5	0.652

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The data reveal aspects that help us differentiate the two groups of transactions. First, we observe a more diversified use of information sources by the family farmers who share a commitment with the buyers of their harvest. More specifically, both the personal experience and a higher level of interactions with other farmers and buyers influence the decisions of this group of farmers. Indeed, the "with commitment" group is characterized by the more frequent use of the buyer as a source of information, which is a potential consequence of the provision of technical assistance. In this sense, the sharing of knowledge is part of an arrangement in which joint decisions determine both the adoption of production methods and the choice of the horticultural products to be cultivated. Mutual commitments suggest the existence of an intermediate level of interdependence, which does not imply the end of independence on either side of the exchange.

Relationship with buyers

Considering the full sample, 86% of the buyers are intermediaries, with no significant difference between the two groups (Table 6). The considerable participation of intermediaries in the exchange of horticultural products is related to the features of this system of production, that is, short cycle, sequential, and diversified production, an intensive use of working capital, and a semi-continuous production and commercialization flow. Hence, family farmers become more dependent on an agent that provides services, such as the aggregation of volume, transformation, and the sale of products, with a frequency of deliveries and sales that is higher than that observed in other temporary crops.

Table 6. **Main types of buyers (in %)**

	Without commitment	With commitment	Total	T-test
Intermediary	85.9	87.6	86.0	0.670
Industry	0.9	0.0	0.8	0.525
Street market	3.2	0.0	2.9	0.236
Retail	7.0	2.6	6.7	0.245
Another farmer	1.2	5.4	1.5	0.056
PAA/PNAE	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.777
Hotel and Restaurant	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.777
Other	1.5	4.5	1.7	0.125

Given the price risk and potential occurrence of opportunistic behavior (Williamson, 1993), the family farmer likely represents the more fragile of the two relationship partners. In response, horticultural producers tend to privilege trustworthy partners. In rare cases, the establishment of prices in advance is possible. In our sample, farmers carried out transactions with the main buyers for an average period of 7.6 years. Both the "with commitment" and the "without commitment" groups are characterized by similar average periods – 7.6 and 7.5 years, respectively – without a significant difference at the 11 percent level.

Additional evidence is found once we analyze the main motivations behind farmers' commercialization decisions (Table 7). By definition, the main reason behind the materialization of a spot market transaction is the price. However, price was cited as one of the main motivations by only 18.1% of the interviewed farmers. For the "with commitment" group, higher prices are even less important (5.3%). In turn, it is noteworthy that the explanation "trust in the buyer" was cited as a motivation for 80.7% of the transactions in the sample, 91% of which were from the group of transactions "with commitment." The inexistence of a clear differentiation between the two groups shows the importance of the construction of one's reputation in the establishment of transactions in the *Serra Fluminense* region.

Table 7. **Reasons for choice of buyer (in %)**

	Without commitment	With commitment	Total	T-test
Pays a higher price	19.1	5.3	18.1	0.022
Trust	79.9	91.0	80.7	0.093
Has no other option	18.4	18.41	18.0	0.535
Other	9.0	7.7	8.9	0.663

Together with the importance of trust, the extended period of relationship between buyers and sellers indicates that the building of reputation ensues from the repetition of transactions. This process is marked by the consolidation of routines and the reduction of potential sources of disagreement. Hence, adjustments may be promoted more smoothly, restoring the arrangement's efficiency. Given the lack of differences between the "with commitment" and "without commitment" groups in Tables 6 and 7, it is important to stress that even those transactions with a limited level of bilateral dependence can be supported by hybrid forms. In other words, the transactions in the "with commitment" group have elements that reinforce bilateral commitments, such as the provision of inputs and technical assistance. Nevertheless, the transactions "without commitment" cannot be classified as pure spot market transactions either.

As explained earlier in this paper, activities such as the provision of inputs and technical assistance allowed us to identify a higher level of bilateral commitment in the transactions in the sample. However, upfront payments are also found in the transactions of horticultural productions in the *Serra Fluminense* region. In 41.5% of the transactions from the "with commitment" group, we observe the existence of upfront payments (see Table 8). Although we may argue that upfront payments increase the level of bilateral dependence, we must acknowledge that the sharing of non-specific resources – e.g. financial resources – does not necessarily imply the establishment of a complex coordination pattern. More specifically, the influence of upfront payments on the decisions of family farmers is subtle. This scenario contrasts with the central role played by technical assistance and the provision of inputs in the determination of the horticultural products to be harvested. Therefore, we decided not to include the variable "upfront payments" among the practices that define the "with commitment" group.

Table 8. **Benefits and services offered by buyers (in %)**

	Without commitment	With commitment	Total	T-test
Money	6.9	41.5	9.5	0.000
Inputs	0.0	81.3	6.1	
Technical assistance	0.0	35.2	2.7	
Harvest and other services	5.2	19.5	6.3	0.000

Transaction features

Respondents shared their perception of the total percentage of sales to a given seller for each product. On average, 66% of the total sales were made to each of the informed sellers (see Table 9). The significant difference between the two groups is noteworthy. In general, we note that the transactions of horticultural producers belonging to the "with commitment" group are characterized by a higher dependence on the buyer.

Table 9. **Characteristics of transactions with the main buyers (in %)**

	Without commitment	With commitment	Total	T-test
Percentage of sales to a buyer (average)	64.9	86.6	66.6	0.000
Commissioned sales	15.4	30.9	16.5	0.010
Negotiation upon delivery	67.0	57.3	66.3	0.131
Negotiation before delivery	33.0	42.7	33.7	0.131
Price set upon harvest/delivery	46.3	39.9	45.8	0.328
Price set before harvest	20.4	17.7	20.2	0.748
Price set after delivery	33.9	42.4	34.6	0.220
Existence of verbal agreement	98.6	100.0	98.7	0.420
Establishment of contractual commitment	1.5	0.0	1.3	0.420

Consequently, commissioned sales occurred mainly between intermediaries and horticultural producers. In this type of transaction, the intermediary transports the horticultural product to another buyer, who is generally a wholesale distributor like Ceasa in Brazil, without striking a previous agreement on prices. Farmers also pay the full transportation costs. Hence, the farmer must address the price risk in the transaction. Commissioned sales occurred in 16.5% of the transactions and we identified a significant difference between the "with commitment" and "without commitment" groups in this regard.

The participation of commissioned sales in the transactions of horticultural products in the *Serra Fluminense* region can be more effectively analyzed if we consider how prices are determined and the risks that are shared. In the sample, the negotiation of the sale had occurred by the time the horticultural product was delivered in 66.3% of the transactions. In turn, in 33.7% of the observations, the negotiations took place before the delivery (see Table 9). The results suggest that most producers assumed – or had no choice other than to assume – the risk of not selling their harvest until the end of the production cycle. It is important to emphasize that the percentage of transactions carried out with a previous negotiator in the "with commitment" group is 43%, which is higher than that for the "without commitment" group. Thus, we observe a higher level of coordination among buyers and farmers within the "with commitment" group, a reality that reduces the risk assumed by producers. The price risk was also evaluated as follows: farmers assumed most of the price risk or assumed it altogether in 80% of the transactions, with no significant difference between the two groups.

Interestingly, the percentage of transactions with formal contracts accounts for only 1.3% of the observations in the sample. Therefore, 98.7% of the transactions were carried out according to a verbal agreement alone. Unsurprisingly, the building of trust is a fundamental coordination mechanism in the *Serra Fluminense* region. In the absence of formal agreements, farmers endeavor to choose buyers who are considered trustworthy. Given the constraints that preclude their access to public mechanisms for dispute settlement, trust ties and reciprocity at the community level are potential instruments that enhance the predictability of behaviors (Greif, 1993). In turn, cases of strict bilateral coordination are rare and are supported by a broad set of commitments and specific routines.

The binary logit model

The logit model allows the evaluation of the role played by three aspects in the adoption of the diverse hybrid forms in the sample: (i) asset specificity; (ii) other commitments; and (iii) trust. The dependent variable is binary and aims to identify the factors that lead to the participation in the "with commitment" group, and is therefore characterized by a higher level of bilateral dependence. Eight independent variables are used (see Exhibit 1).

Table 10 shows the odds ratios for each of the independent variables. The empirical analysis uses the odds ratio (e^{β}) instead of the coefficient β. The results can be interpreted as follows: a positive change in one independent variable with an odds ratio higher than 1 increases the probability that a transaction is from the "with commitment" group. For an odds ratio lower than 1, the effect on the probability that a transaction is within the "with commitment" group is negative. The statistical F-test shows that the variables are jointly significant at the 1 percent level. Likewise, the analysis of the correlation matrix of the independent variables shows no signs of multicollinearity.

Two proxy variables aim to identify the role of asset specificity in the establishment of bilateral commitments: investments in protected cultivation and the intensity of the investments in the inputs. The odds ratios for both variables are statistically significant, revealing a positive effect. Once a transaction involves a protected cultivation, the probability that this transaction is within the "with commitment" group is 155.8% higher than if the same practices were not adopted. Likewise, when a transaction involves higher investments in inputs per hectare, the probability that this transaction is within the "with commitment" group is higher; the probability is approximately 1% higher for each R$ 10,000 of investments. Investments in specific assets increase the potential quality of horticultural products, enabling differentiation strategies and value aggregation. Hence, these investments generally demand both the sharing of knowledge and resources between buyers and farmers and that of scarce resources by the farmer.

We use five variables to analyze the influence of other commitments on the establishment of a high level of bilateral dependency: upfront payments; dependence on a single buyer; partnership; commissioned sales; and shared decision-making. The inclusion of these variables allows us to evaluate the correlation of other routines that help determine the features of the transactions in our sample through the establishment of arrangements with a higher level of mutual commitment. The results show that the odds ratios for "Upfront payments" and "Dependence on a single buyer" are high and statistically significant at the 1 percent level. The odds ratios for "Commissioned sales" and "Shared decision-making," two important factors in the adoption of governance structures "with commitment," are also statistically significant. These results highlight the finding that transactions involving mutual commitments tend to be supported

by a broad set of routines. In turn, the odds ratio for the variable "Partnership," which is significant at the 5 percent level, denotes a positive effect on the adoption of governance structures with commitment. Many family farmers in the *Serra Fluminense* region face constraints in their ability to access land, depending on their cooperation with other members of the community to create value. The establishment of commitments between farmers and buyers may reflect this complex reality, which is marked by the identification of economic opportunities that lead to the establishment of cooperative arrangements among rural producers.

Exhibit 1. **Description and measurement of variables in the *logit* model**

Variables	Description and measurement
Dependent variable	
Hybrid form	1, if the transaction involves the provision of inputs and/or technical assistance ("with commitment" group); 0, if not.
Independent variables	
Asset specificity	
Protected cultivation	1, if the farmer adopts protected cultivation (greenhouses, plasticulture, polytunnels, shading fabric; 0, if the farmer does not adopt them).
Intensity of investments	Total investments (R$ per hectare) with labor, inputs, investments, services, land lease, share of partners and other expenses, divided by the total area managed by the farmer.
Other bilateral commitments	
Upfront payments	1, if the buyer makes upfront payments; 0, if not.
Dependence on a single buyer	How the farmer perceives the percentage of the total harvest bought by the buyer who transacts; the variable has positive values and corresponds to 1 when the buyer acquires 100% of a farmer's production.
Partnership	1, if the farmer and the buyer work as partners in the transaction; 0, if not.
Commissioned sales	1, if the sale was commissioned; 0, if not.
Sharing of decision-making	1, if the farmer talks to the buyer before deciding on what to cultivate; 0, if not.
Trust	1, if trust is an important driver of a buyer's choice; 0, if not.

Table 10. **Odds ratios in *logit* model**

	Odds ratios	Standard error	P>t
Asset specificity			
Protected cultivation	2.55820	1.10328	0.030
Intensity of investments	1.00001	0.00000	0.000
Other bilateral commitments			
Upfront payments	7.32082	3.00915	0.000
Dependence on a single buyer	6.06764	4.42891	0.014
Partnership	2.31842	0.90150	0.031
Commissioned sales	3.61647	1.34628	0.001
Sharing of decision-making	2.05878	0.86105	0.085
Trust	2.33868	1.33317	0.137
Constant	0.00235	0.00244	0.000

Number of observations = 567; expansion for population = 18,867.874; F = 11.39; degrees of freedom of the sample = 560; Prob > F = 0,0000

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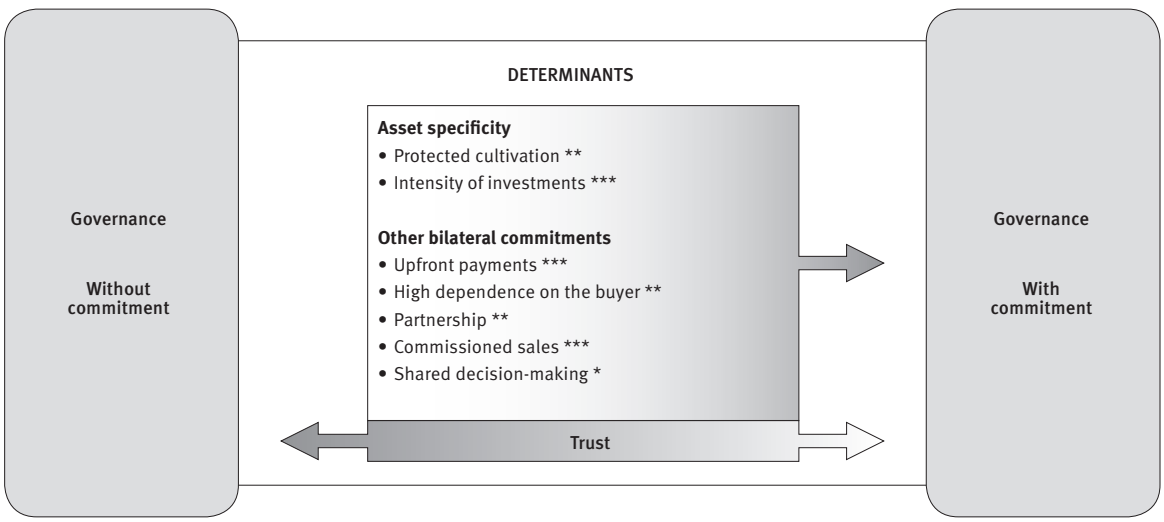
Finally, trust is an extremely important factor for the family farmers in the sample. No significant difference is observed between the "with commitment" and "without commitment" groups. Trust emerges as a relevant governance mechanism in the whole spectrum of hybrid forms in the *Serra Fluminense* region, influencing both the transactions supported by governance structures with features that resemble a typical spot market exchange, and those with a high level of bilateral commitment. Hence, the odds ratio for this variable does not have statistical significance. The pervasiveness of trust in the coordination of transactions has also been identified in other stages of the Brazilian horticultural agribusiness chain (Carvalho et al., 2014; Faulim & Azevedo, 2003). Figure 1 presents a summary of the results discussed in this paper.

Figure 1. **Determinants of governance adopted**



Note: The symbols (***), (**) and (*) represent a statistical significance at 1.5 and 10 percent levels, given the particular econometric model used.

FINAL REMARKS

This paper identifies the variables associated with the existence of bilateral commitments between horticultural family farmers from the *Serra Fluminense* region and buyers. To achieve this goal, we divide a sample of 567 transactions into two groups with bilateral commitments of different intensities. The results suggest the existence of some organizational diversity among the transactions in the sample. We show that the establishment of trust ties and reputation is an important component for most transactions. Given the limited role played by the identity of the parties in a typical spot market transaction, it is clear that even transactions with a limited level of coordination employ mechanisms found in hybrid forms. Amidst the diversity of governance structures, small subgroups are characterized by a stronger level of bilateral coordination, without a loss of independence on either side of the transaction. For example, in some transactions in the sample, the buyer provides family farmers with inputs or technical assistance. Even in this group, we observe the adoption of different complementary mechanisms that support bilateral coordination – e.g. upfront payments, agreement on price in advance, the sharing of decision rights, and so on.

The empirical analysis also shows that investments in assets with a higher level of specificity play an important role in the establishment of bilateral commitments, a result that is consistent with TCE's theoretical principles. However, formal contracts govern only 1.3% of the transactions. Contracts tend to be used to govern only the more complex transactions in the sample, in which bilateral dependence manifests in a series of shared decisions, such as the frequency of delivery, the ex-ante definition of quality standards, particular price formulas, and the sharing of knowledge and resources. In turn, the transactions belonging to the "without commitment" group have attributes

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that resemble a spot market transaction. Overall, the results show that the adoption of technologies to fulfill emerging consumer demands leads to the establishment of a higher intensity of coordination between family farmers and buyers. This tendency is observed even though the rate of adoption for these technologies is still low in the *Serra Fluminense* region.

Therefore, we infer that the relative importance of typical spot market transactions in the horticultural sector should diminish over the next few years, as new production techniques are adopted in the region. Both public policies and private strategies must consider the consequences of these transformations. Indeed, the number of private distribution centers in the fruit and vegetable market, which are generally created by wholesalers and retailers, has grown significantly since the turn of the twenty-first century. These centers are characterized by investments in physical assets with some specificity, thereby supporting the establishment of hybrid forms.

This research is part of a broader goal, that is, to better understand the heterogeneity of arrangements adopted by horticultural family farmers. In this sense, we must highlight the limitations of our work. First, we only collected information on the two main buyers and the two main products sold by each family farmer. Moreover, we limit our analysis to the comparison of two groups. Hence, important nuances may have been lost. Further research is needed to expand the data collection by adding new variables to the analysis or conducting a more extensive examination of the transactions conducted by each farmer. Finally, we recommend the publication of comparative studies that analyze diverse Brazilian regions or agribusiness sectors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors acknowledge the support of Foundation for Institutional Support for Scientific and Technological Development of the Federal University of São Carlos (FAI-UFSCar); Central Cresol Baser; Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – Brazil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001; and São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP, Processo: 2015/01873-3).

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PERSPECTIVES

Invited article
Translated version
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020190306

POST-HEROIC LEADERSHIP: CURRENT TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

The present work context has undergone transformations that have substantially changed labor relations and contributed to the emergence of less hierarchical and more collaborative organizational arrangements. This new environment requires a different approach to leadership (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). The "carrot and stick" approach no longer works as it used to, particularly with the new generation of workers, who are more interconnected and have easy access to information.

The dominant leadership paradigm of the industrial era views the leader as a hero: an active subject, who visualizes the future, defines and communicates the strategy, inspires and motivates those who are led, assigns roles, and evaluates and rewards according to performance (Fletcher, 2004). Followers, on the other hand, are seen as reactive, malleable, and "moldable" individuals. It is not by chance that the term "follower" is often used in the literature to indicate those who are passive under the influence of a leader. The most prominent theories arising from this paradigm include charismatic, transformational, transactional, and visionary leadership. Although these theories have their specificities, they all consider leadership as a unidirectional, top-down influencing process, and draw a clear line of separation between leaders and followers. However, this "heroic" and "romanticized" view of leadership does not seem to fit the complexity of current organizational social life, increasingly knowledge-intensive and dependent on collaboration among people (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Thus, several scholars have challenged the traditional paradigm of heroic leadership and sought a new conception that shifts away from the unique focus on an individual with exceptional attributes and characteristics. In this context, the paradigm of "post-heroic" leadership emerges, highlighting the relational, collectivist, and participatory nature of leadership (Day, 2013; Fletcher, 2004). As the name suggests, these new theoretical currents shift away from the focus on the individual attributes and characteristics of leaders. On the contrary, these theories address leadership as a collective process, a product of interactions and relationships established by groups of people. Interestingly, one of the first authors to challenge this model of heroic leadership was Mary Parker Follet, in her book *The Creative Experience*, published initially in 1924, when she stated that "leadership is not defined by the exercise of power, but by the capacity to increase the sense of power among those led" (Follett, 1942, p. 3).

Despite this change in the conception of the leadership phenomenon, new theoretical perspectives, particularly those on leadership training and development, still find little space

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in the curricula of business schools. In fact, academic and practitioner communities have conducted intense debate, marked by prominent criticisms, which point to the inability of management schools and their respective formal education programs to adequately prepare leaders for the current business environment (Nicolini, 2003; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002; Rousseau, 2012). These criticisms, in general, are based on the claim that business schools, dominated by the traditional paradigm focused on logical empiricism and structured from an economic view of business (Ituassu & Tonelli, 2014), train professionals to use only linear thinking (Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). This implies the training of leaders whose repertoire of skills and abilities does not cover the behavioral complexity required to lead people and manage resources in modern organizational reality (Lawrence, Lenk, & Quinn, 2009).

This essay seeks to present some of these new perspectives that guide the studies on leadership within the paradigm of "post-heroic" leadership, in order to contribute to the consolidation and deepening of a new concept of leadership in Brazil. In general, these perspectives challenge the traditional view of leadership as a vertical, hierarchical phenomenon and monopoly of power or authority. Intending to promote change in the practice of leadership education in schools and organizations, this article identifies the main barriers that hinder the training and development of post-heroic leaders. Thus, we identify some factors that may explain the inefficiency in the training of leaders with behaviors aligned with these new perspectives. In doing so, we aim to encourage and support future research and practical interventions in the field of management education that culminate in the training and development of leadership appropriate to contemporary organizational needs.

THE NEW PARADIGM OF POST-HEROIC LEADERSHIP

First perspective: Leadership as a relational process

Contrary to classical leadership studies, which consider the leader the major driver of change and responsible for the group's performance, the most recent research has increasingly explored the relational nature of leadership, that is, the relationship of mutual influence (bidirectional) between the leader and followers (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). These new relational approaches consider leadership a socio-relational phenomenon, which occurs through social interactions built and developed by the parties involved and that contribute to the construction of organizational reality (Uhl-Bien, 2006). According to this perspective, leadership is not found "in" individual characteristics or qualities, either of the leaders or followers; on the contrary, it emerges "in the space" between them, that is, in the interpersonal relationships and social exchanges between them.

The most prominent relationship-based approach in the literature is the Leader-member Exchange Theory or LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), the central concept of the LMX theory is that leadership occurs when leaders and followers develop effective relationships (partnerships) that result in an incremental type of influence, which culminates in a series of individual and organizational benefits. Thus, according to the LMX theory, the focus of leadership is on the quality of the relationship between the leader and followers, and not on the characteristics of leaders and their followers. By understanding what leads to the development of high-quality relationships, this leadership perspective contributes to the establishment of the necessary conditions for a good working environment, and fosters workers (leaders and followers) committed to and engaged with the organization.

Second perspective: Leadership as an other-centered process

As stated earlier, the traditional view of leadership is dominated by approaches that basically attribute greatness, power, and extraordinary characteristics to the leader. This view is especially observed in the theories of charismatic and transformational leadership (Yukl, 1998). Although many authors do not explicitly define these leaders as ego-driven or self-centric individuals, they portray leaders as heroic figures who can, through their aspirations, judgments, and decisions, determine the fate and luck of groups and organizations (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

However, this image of the leader as someone extraordinary, a visionary hero and the only one who knows the paths that lead to the achievement of goals, is out of sync with today's world (O'Connell, 2014). In this sense, studies exploring the importance of focusing more on followers and other participants of leadership to better understand the leadership phenomenon have gained prominence (Avolio et al., 2009). These studies adopt a leadership perspective called "other-centered leadership." This perspective argues that other members of leadership relationships have an active role and unique influence in the achievement of

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organizational results and therefore need to be "seen, heard, and cared for." In this way, it is a perspective that moves away from the top-down approach and points to a bottom-up view of leadership.

Within the other-centered approach, the theories of humble leadership and servant leadership stand out. Both move away from the heroic view of the leader and attach special importance to those who are led. Specifically, according to the premises of humble leadership, leaders need to recognize their limitations, give space for the free expression of others, and learn from interactions with their followers (Owens & Hekman, 2012). The literature on servant leadership, in turn, suggests that leaders should act beyond self-interest by avoiding selfish behavior or meaningless demonstrations of power. The "servant leader" is guided by the desire to create opportunities in the organizational environment to help those who are led to grow (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002). Despite the differences between the two perspectives, there are many similarities between them.

Third perspective: Leadership as a collective process

The traditional view of leadership emphasizes its hierarchical nature. However, there has been a movement to explore the phenomenon more horizontally. Therefore, emphasizing the social and collective process of leadership construction and development is to the detriment of a view focused on the individuals who participate in it (Pearce & Sims, 2000).

In this sense, the investigations have explored several collective forms of leadership, with emphasis on the so-called shared leadership theory. Pearce and Conger (2003) define shared leadership as "a dynamic and interactive process of influence between individuals in groups" (p. 1) to lead them to achieve the objectives of the group and the organization. This perspective challenges the traditional method of approaching leadership so that leadership is distributed among a set of individuals, instead of being centralized in the hands of a single individual who acts as a superior (Pearce & Conger, 2003). The focus is on the latent leadership capacities distributed across the social networks of the members of a working group. Shared leadership is particularly suitable for knowledge-intensive environments in which complex problem-solving is dependent on a collaborative effort among people with distinct skills, not on the heroic actions of a small set of people at the top of the organization.

Thus, this paradigm shift, from leadership centered on a person's action to one focused on a collective construction process, allows the exercise of leadership by all members of the organization, positively affecting the performance of groups and organizations.

CURRENT CHALLENGES IN LEADERSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAMS

First challenge: Curriculum based on the development of hard skills with little emphasis on soft skills

The curricula of business schools are primarily focused on the development of technical and specific skills and abilities (known as hard skills) (Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007; Navarro, 2008), for instance, finance, accounting, and business strategy. However, despite being an important and integral part of the training of any leader, the acquisition and application of technical knowledge is not enough to train a post-heroic leader. This is because this type of ability, derived from "codified" knowledge, enables leaders to perform the functional dimensions of their work well, but does not enable them to an increasingly relational, collective, and other-centered leadership. In this context, skills that empower leaders to build relationships and establish collaborations become indispensable (Rousseau, 2012). In addition to technical skills, having interpersonal skills, known as soft skills, becomes a *sine qua non* in the post-heroic paradigm of leadership, because the different perspectives that make up this paradigm emphasize the social nature of leadership.

This happens because, when teaching hard skills, schools and universities train specialists who will be recognized as experts because of their mastery of the technique (Laker & Powell, 2011). In the case of other more generic skill types, professionals are less likely to be considered experts. However, universities and organizations should develop programs that specifically target the learning of soft skills to promote the training of leaders. Communication skills, teamwork, conflict resolution, creativity, and problem-solving should be included across the board in curricula and teaching methodologies to train leaders for the current organizational context. Furthermore, specific workshops addressing skills such as emotional intelligence, empathy, self-knowledge, and persistence, to name a few, should be conducted. For example, mindfulness workshops can encourage students to develop a better understanding of their limits and weaknesses,

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as well as improve their empathy with others, qualities that are essential for a post-heroic leader.

Although not directly related to the technical content of a management course, these skills are recognized by practitioners as the main differentials of a modern leader. For example, Daniel Goleman (1998), in his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, presents research evidence that emotional intelligence is a better predictor of career success than experience or IQ, and that emotional intelligence explains twice as much as technical or cognitive skills the difference between better-performing leaders and average leaders.

Second challenge: Mastery of prescriptive approaches and lack of holistic/humanistic approaches in leadership education and training

Many scholars criticize business education programs and curricula for teaching simplistic, model-based leadership that is much more prescriptive than descriptive or evaluative (Day, 2013). In other words, leaders are taught to follow a successful "formula" to manage people and achieve expected results. Mabey (2013) adds that interpretative and dialogical discourses of leadership are under-represented in teaching and leadership development. Whereas large business schools have been moving to change the curricula of Business Administration courses, most of them - and this is the reality of schools in Brazil - still fail to generate critical and reflective thinking about the organizational day-to-day activities, favoring analysis rather than synthesis (Starkey, Hatchuel, & Tempest, 2004).

Despite having a potentially central role in the context of a knowledge society in which the training and development of leaders are central processes of social and economic change, the educational system in management is still based on a recursive process through which theories and images of what leadership is and what leaders should do serve as models and references for the type of leader that students want to be (Petriglieri & Petriglieri, 2015). For many theorists, this process results in a narrowing of the notion of leadership to an activity focused on objectives that can be divided into a set of skills that an individual should possess and that are not affected by any variable (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). However, as previously argued, more and more leaders are expected to be able to look at others, establish positive relationships with the followers, and even encourage a collective process of leadership. A prescriptive and simplistic view of leadership leaves no room to work on the behavioral complexity required for the training of leaders according to the new conceptions of leadership (Lawrence et al., 2009).

Thus, it may be beneficial for leadership education to promote a more holistic and humanistic training of leaders (Waddock & Lozano, 2013), because these approaches seem to have more potential to develop individuals with humble, relational, and collective behaviors. Holistic and humanistic approaches are those that seek to integrate fragmented disciplines into a global understanding of the organization, which foster systemic thinking, and instill a broader sense of business purpose (Waddock & Lozano, 2013). This can be done through multidisciplinary curriculum design and experimental pedagogical practices that enable the materialization of holistic and humanistic principles, for example.

Third challenge: Absence of active teaching-learning methods

Most leadership training and development courses and programs, particularly undergraduate courses in Business Administration, emphasize passive learning methods rather than promoting real, active situations for living leadership in an integral, multidisciplinary manner (Navarro, 2008). Therefore, it is unlikely that there are many opportunities to experience leadership in action, which inevitably impairs the trained professional to exercise leadership in his or her work environment fully. In fact, there is abundant evidence that students do not automate skills when passively listening to lectures or attending presentations without active learning opportunities (Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993).

Analyzing the curricula of the best-ranked business schools in the United States, Navarro (2008) concludes that the passive view of teaching and a kind of "functional silo" (i.e., subjects offered alone) predominate in the curriculum structure of the courses of the top 50 schools, while many schools seemed not to require experiential and active learning elements. This is also the reality of Brazilian business schools (Nicolini, 2003).

It is only possible to learn about leadership through leadership practice, just as it is only possible to learn how to ride a bicycle while riding a bicycle. This "learning by doing" is perhaps the only way to enable leadership development and unlock the organization's leadership potential. Active learning methods address many of these concerns. However, although action learning has become a frequently discussed topic in management education, few academic, research, and practical initiatives have made this approach a primary method for developing leadership skills and improving leadership behavior. Even recognizing the difficulty in implementing active learning methods, it is imperative that management and organization schools invest in less traditional approaches, such as role play, simulations,

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and problem-based learning activities (Salas, Wildman, & Piccolo, 2009). Although they require greater training from all those involved in the education process (educators, schools, and learners), these techniques have proven to be much more effective in training successful leaders.

CONCLUSION

This article aims to present a new paradigm of leadership, the post-heroic leadership, which emerges as an alternative to the dominant paradigm of the hero-leader who decides alone and motivates his followers either through his charisma or rewards. In this way, we identified recent perspectives in leadership studies adopting this new paradigm, as well as the challenges that need to be overcome in the training and development of post-heroic leaders.

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PERSPECTIVES

Invited article
Translated version
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S0034-759020190307

TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN BRAZIL: CONVERGENCE OR DIVERGENCE?

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INTRODUCTION

Conceptually, human resource management (HRM), as it is known today, originated in attempts by scholars from American universities to understand the so-called "labor problem"in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At that time, this issue arose because of the emergence of wage earning following industrialization. Since then, labor conflict has moved into the institutional arena, where union actions and specific legislation to address this issue have created external milestones for organizations when hiring employees.

In this way, large companies began to follow the principles of Taylorism and Fordism. In the middle of the twentieth century, they also incorporated the perspectives provided by the school of human relations. At this point, with interest in the psychological dimension of workers developing as early as the mid-1960s, the inner workings of organizations became increasingly important. The opening of markets and the intensification of globalization in the 1980s required organizations to increasingly focus on identifying both the knowledge required for jobs and the desired behavior of employees based on the organization's strategic direction.

Since then, the human resources (HR) function has been considered necessary for an organization to be competitive. The collective function of labor relations, represented by negotiations with trade unions, has become a secondary focus of HRM. Instead, major efforts have been made to create methods and metrics to gauge organizations and people's knowledge and behaviors and to align them and make them more efficient through competence-based management.

At an abstract level, this path operates in the context of the prevalence of democratic societies in the West, the acceleration of the dissemination of technology for productive processes, and globalization.

At the international level, the need for better HR has led to the dissemination of HRM knowledge not only by scholars but also, primarily, by professionals working for large consulting firms or professional schools. In an associated phenomenon, the consolidation of the professional community across different countries is indicative of the plurality with which HRM knowledge is produced for and flows between organizations.

When this flow of knowledge reaches Brazil, it encounters unique context. This study therefore aims to briefly reflect on the trajectory of the Brazilian experience in teaching and research in people management (PM) given the trajectory of the so-called mainstream thinking in the USA and Europe. Given this purpose, a key to this study lies in the "convergence x divergence" dichotomy of

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HRM teaching and research compared to that produced abroad. The convergence and divergence of HRM policies and practices have been used in comparative studies of countries and regions based on an institutional approach to HRM (Mayrhofer, Brewster, Morley, & Ledolter, 2011).

Thus, following this introduction, this article includes a brief history of PM/HRM in Brazil; a discussion of the sources of PM/HRM in Brazil; perspectives on teaching PM, including a discussion of whether PM is still necessary; and final considerations for the near future of teaching and research in HRM

PM/HRM IN BRAZIL: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FIRST DECADES

We first identify when teaching and research regarding HR emerged in Brazil. As in the developed countries that comprise the mainstream, HR emerged along with discussions regarding labor in Brazil, that is, from the 1970s to the 1980s and so on.

Dissemination of work for salaries and urbanization were consolidated in Brazil after three decades of transformation. During this period, major economic plans were put in place, and, owing to internal market protections, these plans enabled the establishment of a durable consumer goods industry based on large multinational companies and investments by state companies in energy and telecommunications. Furthermore, in the mid-1960s, authoritarian military governments were established, lasting 20 years. Thus, in the early 1980s, companies faced critical situations for at least two reasons: the resurgence of unions and unemployment and companies' internal emphasis on cost reduction. Despite the economic difficulties of this period, democratic advances took place, including the civil government in 1985 and the Constitution of 1988.

The trade union movement was consolidated and became an important player in the field of labor relations during the last eight years of military government. As a result, the HRM of organizations in such sectors as industry and banking considered labor conflicts, which had not been an issue since the first half of the 1960s, to be a real possibility. In a phenomenon typical of labor markets, the demonstration effect was sufficient for managers in other sectors to be cautious. Until then, organizations' HR only considered the labor practices required by law when hiring workers. When they began to use advanced practices, however, they also provided operation training programs restricted to their workers and managers in a procedural way.

Managers were not prepared for the need or possibility of dialogue with an external element outside of the absolute control of their organizations. The academic understanding of this new environment showed that the functionalist approach that formed the basis of research and teaching in business administration did not account for the new components of the political environment linked to labor relations that emerged in Brazil.

At that time, the effort was twofold: to position administration as an applied social science on the academic front and to modernize its practice on the professional front. The professional sphere reacted more quickly, as meetings of the so-called professional groups of managers were conducted to exchange information and experiences related to collective bargaining with trade unions. Inflation and wage policies were the subject of all wage campaigns in the 1980s. The movements for quality, productivity, and reengineering were already acting within companies, although their echoes only resounded throughout the country in the 1990s. In academia, the timing to obtain results was slower, and the movement took at least two directions. The first direction had more evident managerial purposes, and initial studies considered the need to identify a strategic role for HRM. The second direction had a more critical bias, and studies focused on topics related to organizational culture in Brazil to provide a better understanding of the inherent mechanisms of power.

In this sense, the academic challenge was to bring the social sciences closer to business administration and, in doing so, influence management by placing greater weight on labor relations. In both directions of research, the great ambition was to provide an additional line to management policies that included the management of work at its greatest complexity.

With regard to the emergence of structural and large-scale unemployment, the important fact was that, for the first time in 30 years, the dynamism of job creation in the Brazilian labor market suffered significant losses. The first systematic studies of unemployment in Brazil at the beginning of this decade indicated the importance of unemployment as an economic and social issue.

In cyclical terms, the issue of unemployment for HRM is linked to the need to adjust companies to an environment with lower economic growth and greater constraints on labor costs. From a more structural perspective, however, organizations position themselves as contractors in a labor market with an excess supply of people and a high degree of informality. Thus, in Brazil, HR policies and practices, in a way, make less effort to attract and retain workers, which is always reflected in high levels of turnover.

In a nutshell, the consolidation of greater demands on HR performance contributed to the need to train professionals who could also deal with more complex management scenarios. That is, through this line of reasoning, just as the issue of work

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implied a need for the proper conceptual approach that emerged in modern HRM in the USA and Europe, in Brazil, *mutatis mutandis*, the issue of work also necessitated the emergence of HRM as a field of study and teaching in academic and professional circles.

The 1990s reaffirmed this need. Economic openness and globalization imposed a difficult adjustment process on the Brazilian economy, resulting in a definitive drop in inflation. Thus, HR became a sensitive element in organizational management. Many of the adjustments performed by organizations were reactively made possible by the organizations' HR functions through outsourcing processes, turnover, and the gradual introduction of management by competencies associated with the notion of employability. HRM became technically more sophisticated as it aligned with organizations' strategies. At the end of this decade, the gap in specialized training between younger and more experienced HR professionals became evident. This gap enabled the creation of the first MBA courses specialized in HRM in Brazil and created the need to broaden the focus on similar topics in senior management training courses.

At that time, the teaching of HRM for undergraduate degrees in business administration used manuals that reproduced similar works to those used in the USA. Teaching had a very pragmatic focus based on the paradigm of simplicity. As Morin (1991) stated, the focus was to demonstrate the relevance of the HR area to achieve the objectives of companies. Knowledge was based on the supremacy of fragmentation and super specialization; thus, HRM was a specialty for those wishing to follow a certain HR trajectory.

In parallel, it was not easy to reverse the perspective of HRM as a purely procedural, executive, and reactive area in students' mindsets. They concluded that the problems encountered in HRM were associated with a non-innovative area that had great difficulty quantifying its results relative to other areas. In other words, it was seen as beautiful and well-intentioned speech with little proof that it added value to organizations.

Although HRM professors focused on advocacy for the topics of organizational culture, team management, skills development, performance management, and financial and non-financial rewards, their enthusiasm was not enough to overcome the prevailing view that HRM was a "necessary evil" whose value was associated with maximizing worker efficiency at minimum cost. Thus, in the 1990s, researchers were already warning of the need to rethink the HR function along with the redistribution of responsibilities across line managers. However, students considered HRM useful only for training future HR professionals and not for training future managers.

An explanation for this phenomenon is that most undergraduate students in business administration sought internships in large corporations that were precisely at the initial stage of HR professionalization. The first MBAs began to emerge in the early 1990s and, specifically in HR, in 1996. These MBAs already had some strategic bias (focusing on organizational culture and, later, competencies and strategic planning) and less procedural bias. However, the demand for specialized courses in PM and HR in MBA programs only arose in the early part of the 2000s.

Tragtenberg (1999) clearly described the effect of uncertainty on organizations in the late 1990s as "a permanent climate of insecurity, which, in turn, brings inevitable damage to the productivity and health of its members, as it unfolds into disorientation, emotional overload, fear, and stress" (p. 2). In this sense, the author explains the change of focus to teaching and training based on the paradigm of complexity. This paradigm is understood not as one that advocates for recipes or a set of simple ideas but rather as one that stimulates critical reflections and points out creative solutions that can be ambiguous and retrocausal.

In this brief retrospective, it is important to emphasize that the arrival and development of HRM teaching and research in Brazil are both aligned with the country's socioeconomic development. Given that Brazil is a developing economy with many multinational companies, it is understandable that its HRM is aligned with that of the USA and Europe but still lags these countries structurally.

Thus, HRM teaching and research in Brazil incorporate central topics, such as management by competencies, as they converge with the HRM teaching and research practiced and taught in developed countries. The first studies on some topics, such as strategic planning in HR, were published in the mid-1980s. Other topics, such as innovation and organizational change, began to emerge between the mid-1990s and early 2000s. However, they spread with a delay of at least ten years. Nevertheless, over time, and especially after the turn of the century, this gap has been closing.

Interestingly, this movement of alignment and temporal lag reduction has involved some contradictions. In Brazil, the renaming of the HRM field as Human Resource Management occurred in the late 1990s and was seen as an advance by researchers, professors, and even national professionals. Their latent concern was about employees being predominantly treated as organizational resources rather than as humans. This concern was probably linked to the fact that the so-called school of human relations was quickly overtaken by management by competence in Brazil. Another concern may also have been linked to the culture of Brazilian management,

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which is known to be less open to participation. In contrast, as a kind of jabuticaba, or typical Brazilian thing, the expression "people management" and the existing effort toward its dissemination in the academic and professional environment demonstrate divergence from international viewpoints. At first, this expression does not seem to correspond to a similar term in the international sphere, as HR is the main term used to refer to the field and does not imply that foreign researchers have less concern for people.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOURCES OF PM/HRM IN BRAZIL

In the last decade, the globalization process has brought the core sources of knowledge production closer to its users around the world. Brazil and the HRM of Brazilian companies, despite their *jabuticabas*, were not exempt from this dynamic, which may reinforce the idea that Brazil is moving towards convergence.

The initiatives of multinational companies to adopt globalized practices in their subsidiaries and the influence of international consultancies on the definitions of best practices, which are applied indistinctly across organizations and societies, have been homogenizing the knowledge that identifies HR professionals. Such terms as "leadership pipeline," "business partner," "employer branding," and "employee value proposition" are part of the common language that legitimizes professionals in the field. They represent courses of action whose understanding and practical application are accessible in virtual networks and are present in specialized training curricula, particularly in professional graduate schools.

At the academic level, institutions have been globalizing for long time, and the physical or virtual presence of researchers, professors, and even advanced campuses of European and American schools in so-called emerging countries has become normal. This ease of contact has also intensified the participation of Brazilian researchers in international networks, providing more continuous exchanges and engagement in joint research processes and a greater dissemination of HRM knowledge.

This movement provides rich diversity, bringing different perspectives on research topics that were previously discussed only among English-speaking researchers. Moreover, international networks level participants from different countries at the same stage of knowledge, ensuring that everyone involved almost simultaneously shares the advances made by collective production. However, the predominance of international research groups in the institutional teaching and research environments in countries such as Brazil shows that academic topics and interests are clearly converging.

Another characteristic sign of this movement is the criteria for evaluating articles produced by academics. Those who work in this field know that, in recent years, Brazilian researchers have been strongly encouraged to publish their work in international journals. Articles accepted by national publications are much less valued by both employer institutions and the entities that evaluate graduate courses. National journals themselves strive to internationalize and, for this purpose, seek to attract authors from other countries. These academic policy initiatives are more justified because submitting Brazil's researchers and editors to international judgment tends to enable the constant and accelerated improvement of Brazil's research potential. However, it seems evident that this policy guides academic production towards convergence, as it attaches greater importance to topics of global interest, to the detriment of local issues. In the specific case of HRM, local issues, such as changes in employment relations, the institutions that govern work and welfare, and the age composition of society, begin to gain academic status only when they raise the attention and interest of editorial boards composed of international researchers.

These findings seem to determine a unique path for HR teaching and research in Brazil: to become increasingly associated with the major centers of production and knowledge dissemination in the field and to follow its dissemination among Brazilian organizations.

However, in practice, this solution may not address the challenges posed not only for HR teaching and research in Brazil but also for those who work in the field. Frequent reports obtained from experienced professionals indicate that the globalized practices of multinational companies do not always produce the intended results when applied to their Brazilian subsidiaries. Often, these practices are not even fully implemented because they conflict with the institutional, cultural, or even organizational factors that are characteristic of Brazil. Consultancies strive to adapt models that they bring from their experiences in developed countries, but, in some situations, they can even mischaracterize the initial purposes of these models.

This idea leads to a conclusion that the literature on resources, skills, and capabilities reached some time ago. Organizational skills in PM/HRM are dynamic capabilities, which, according to Teece, Pisano, and Shuen (1997, p. 516), can create or reconfigure other competencies. Several authors have shown that dynamic capabilities are not acquired mechanically and immediately; instead, they are path dependent and result from a generally time-consuming and contradictory transition during

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which processes, habits, organizational roles, and relationships are developed. In other words, changes in HR practices, unlike other organizational transformations, always constitute interventions in the social systems of companies and, thus, must engage in a dialogue with this social system to be viable. In this sense, local issues that cannot be predicted or understood by externally produced knowledge will always exist, limiting the simple transfer of practices and knowledge that have proved useful and adequate in other sociocultural contexts.

Thus, it is important to understand how the dilemma of convergence or divergence in teaching and research in the field of PM/HRM can be resolved OK. Authors that compare HRM among different countries from an institutional perspective have come to interesting conclusions that may help identify ways to address this dilemma. They found a tendency for HR practices to converge; among the different countries researched, all are moving in the same direction in terms of the types of practices adopted. However, this convergence is not final. That is, although these practices are all moving in similar directions, there is no evidence that they will reach the same point because they did not start from the same origin (Mayrhofer et al., 2011). The rhythms, speed, and adaptations that are part of the process of adopting practices and models do not indicate that one unique, homogeneous global HRM model will exist in the future. Opportunities for the emergence of national jabuticabas arise.

We consider that much remains to be investigated on the topic to obtain more conclusive findings. Nevertheless, comparative studies indicate that although the various countries researched follow a common direction for HR practice, the institutional and cultural conditions of each country provide a unique character to the applied and accepted practices. In this case, the issue of implementing HR practices, which is not always addressed in these analyses, seems to gain relevance:.

Implementation is a complex process and is often more complex than the development of a practice (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). In fact, implementation is not a direct translation of the practice proposed in the countries of origin but rather is a process of adapting the practice to several local conditions, such as the business environment, legislation, the local organizational culture, and leadership characteristics, among others. These structural contingencies sometimes require a structural reformulation of the original project's vision.

In this sense, implementation is equivalent to providing a new conception of the proposed policy or practice. This process requires the HR community to develop a range of skills and knowledge. Particularly, its two main actors, that is, specialized professionals and managers, must develop these skills. To do so, HR professionals must understand the demands of the business in the specific locality, which can be very different from those in the developed countries where the practice originated. Professionals must recognize and analyze the specific contingent demands that are external and internal to companies, such as legislation, trade union relations, characteristics of the labor market, business strategies, and the cultural and organizational climate. Business and team managers, as the individuals primarily responsible for the effective implementation of practices, should understand HR and the importance of its role and should develop team management skills and conduct organizational change processes.

Based on these analyses, we present an initial suggestion for HRM teaching and research in Brazil. Research should be conducted locally, using and reformulating globally produced theories, because it is important to position Brazil as an exporter rather than an importer of theory, especially because several Brazilian multinationals and unicorns operate in several markets. The aim is to better educate managers and HR professionals who face daily challenges in organizations of all kinds and to focus research efforts on the implementation of policies and practices in companies established in Brazil. Unfortunately, this aim has not yet been met, as academia is far from able to draw a credible picture of the operation of the field of HR in Brazilian organizations.

Knowledge is limited, not cumulative, and is dispersed in research groups that rarely communicate with each other. Moreover, the results of these rare studies on practice in the classroom is very limited in terms of didactic texts, consultancy projects, and even non-academic dissemination. Thus, international studies continue to be reproduced or criticized, but researchers do not have alternatives that can meet the demands of organizations.

According to data from the Ministry of Labor, Brazil had 18,811 organizations with more than 200 employees in 2015. This company size requires some level of HR professionalization. (MTE-RAIS). Forty-eight million people worked in these companies in the same year (Brasil, 2015), and it is estimated that 430,000 specialized professionals are currently working in HR (Program of Studies in People Management — Fundação Instituto de Administração, 2018). More than 100,000 business management undergraduate students graduate each year, as do thousands of HR technologists. Research and teaching need to respond to the challenges of these professionals, as they are ultimately responsible for the competitiveness of Brazilian companies and, consequently, for the economic and social development of the country.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE TEACHING OF HRM: IS HRM STILL NEEDED?

Given this background, undergraduate students in business administration exhibited growing interest in HRM in the second decade of the 2000s. In surveys of expectations regarding the HRM course, students reported wanting to learn how to create a culture of engagement, implement a diverse learning environment, and create organizations that favor autonomy and flexibility. Young people were already putting themselves in the positions of managers and were participating in the construction of a new type of company, guided by solid values.

This situation can be explained by several phenomena of the 21st century, including the intensification of the digital world, increased interest in entrepreneurship, the promotion of start-ups, the growth of social business, and the search for work with more meaning and value. Students and professionals are aware that their careers are no longer limited to one or a few companies and that the possibilities are not bound by certain organizations or even types of activities.

Given these changes in society and the labor market, it is easy to show that the success of organizations depends on good HRM. However, proving the relevance of HRM teaching is less straightforward.

If, in the 1990s, the main modus operandi followed the paradigm of simplicity, it later became imperative to follow the paradigm of complexity. The first fundamental aspect of this new paradigm is to show students that the current problems experienced by organizations have no single correct solution. The appropriate answers are suitable for certain contexts and for a certain time. In the theoretical field, the institutional approach is an important path in this direction. Moreover, environments must be open to testing solutions, with quick reviews if the desired results are not achieved. In other words, the environment must stimulate innovation in HRM. It is therefore important to understand what is currently considered innovative in the field of HRM.

The observation of new organizational formats that have attracted students' attention helps to identify some key elements of teaching in HRM:

- Teaching should reflect on the necessary and sufficient conditions to implement a culture of engagement. To do so, it is necessary to detach from the PM model created in the command-control paradigm and to structure a model of autonomy-responsibility, that is, freedom of action and responsibility for the result.
- Teaching should reflect on ways to create a learning environment that promotes continuous reflection on errors and failures rather than hunting down the guilty.
- Students must be aware of the importance of active communication, including frank dialogue within organizations. People need to feel as though they are part of the dynamics of an organization, and they need to feel connected to something that has a purpose. People stay in environments where they can learn, recognize the importance of their work to achieving collective goals, and trust the group.
- Teaching should be guided not just by benchmarks of success but also by strategies to overcome errors and failures in organizations.
- Students should be trained with a critical and systemic view based on an awareness that HRM is the responsibility of every manager. A good manager can identify and take advantage of people's positive attributes and can enthusiastically convey the value and purpose of the organization.

The challenge of reinventing organizations necessarily involves reinventing management for people who seek more purpose in their lives and who want to experience pleasure not only in their personal lives but also in their professional lives.

AN OPEN-ENDED CONCLUSION

In this essay, we addressed the HR policies and practices observed and studied in organizations in Brazil, described their conceptual evolution for analysis, and indicated what to teach and learn in this field and an appropriate process for doing so. The challenge posed to HR teaching and management is complex, and there is always a need to reconcile opposites. For example, HR must deal with both globalization, by adopting international models and approaches, and national culture, by contemplating the specificities of organizations in Brazil's economic and social contexts. HR must prioritize the feelings and opinions of individuals at work but must also stimulate teamwork. HR must be aligned with the needs and meet the requirements of its organization but must not treat the organization's sustained, responsible contribution to society and the country as secondary.

In other words, Brazil must find a balance between convergence and divergence urgently but carefully.

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In general, we can affirm that patience and tolerance with frustrations within organizations is shrinking, thus signaling a potential for individual action. Thus, the field of HR needs to act doubly, eliminating all possible obstacles to excellent work and good results for people and organizations while also stimulating patience and tolerance, which are essential elements for social life. The pace at which things happen in the world is increasingly accelerating. Thus, the process of convincing through patience and tolerance is not well understood by organizations. Business Schools need, with longer and more demanding time frames and deadlines for reflection and knowledge deepening, must focus on this issue.

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BOOK RECOMMENDATION

Translated version

CIRCULAR ECONOMY: A NEW STANDARD FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS

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In times of environmental collapse and waste, it is essential to adopt a circular economy, focused on reducing, reusing, restoring, and regenerating materials and energy within closed circuits. The current linear economic model is not sustainable and has reached its limit. It is driven by a philosophy of extracting–making–using–discarding products and energy, which threatens the stability of economies and the integrity of natural resources. The circular economy emerges as a new standard for resource extraction and production, through integrated productive chains. This new standard can generate opportunities as well as socio-economic and environmental benefits, both for society and for organizations. Therefore, it can be considered an economy based on a restorative and regenerative use of natural resources. The works indicated here fill conceptual gaps in the circular economy within the field of Administration. They suggest possibilities for research themes and questions on reverse flows of materials and energy, as well as practices of circularity that can be adopted in organizational environments. Such a bibliography can contribute to the formulation of public policies not only directed to waste management, but also to product and system design. This text addresses topics such as the preservation of natural capital, optimization of resources, minimization of environmental risks, and management of finite stocks and renewable flows. Incorporating these themes and practices into the daily routines of organizations can strengthen business through sustainability.



THUNDERBIRD INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS REVIEW

Volume 60, Issue 5, Companies in the Circular Economy, pp. 721–810, September/October 2018

The theme of this special edition of *Thunderbird International Business Review* is business in the circular economy. It critically examines the past, present, and future of the circular economy. The articles discuss the extension of the circular economy to emerging markets, such as Asia and India. Additionally, they present success stories and suggest circular commercial practices in areas such as product design and alternative business models. Together, these elements and cases can inspire business strategies within the circular economy, as an opportunity for renewal, growth, and organizational stability.



A NEW DYNAMIC 2: Effective Systems in a Circular Economy

Hunter Lovins, Ellen Franconi & Ken Webster. London, UK: Ellen MacArthur Foundation Publishing, 2016. 212 p.

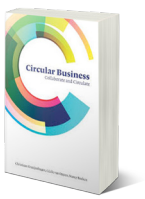
This book, from the *A New Dynamic* series, discusses the need to rethink the current economy using a systemic approach. This work collates contributions from different thinkers capable of seeing beyond their respective areas of expertise to establish the necessary connections to rethink the current development path. It presents a portfolio of 11 articles spanning several areas of knowledge, including architecture, agriculture, design, administration, and engineering, to provide analytical and action-oriented insights that point to a new regenerative structure of economic prosperity. A reading of this work will enable an understanding of the main issues in the circular economy, and may contribute to a transition to it.



ECONOMIA CIRCULAR Y SOSTENIBILIDAD: Nuevos enfoques para la creación de valor *(CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY: New approaches for the creation of value)*

Mauricio Espaliat Canu. Scotts Valley, CA: Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017. 234 p.

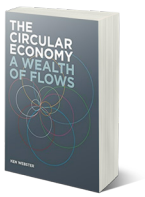
This book, due to its journalistic origins, differs from the typical academic output. This work, which was produced from the author's dialogues with specialists in the circular economy, divulges principles and foundations of this alternative model—for citizens, researchers, business people, managers and decision makers. This is an important bibliographical indication in the field of circular economy, given its contribution in disseminating the idea that products and materials should maintain their value and usefulness for a long time throughout the cycle of production and use. As a consequence, this can generate indisputable advantages, social benefits, and added value for organizations.



CIRCULAR BUSINESS: Collaborate and Circulate

Christiaan Kraaijenhagen, Cécile van Oppen, Nancy Bocken & Chris Bernasco. Amersfoort, Netherlands: Circular Collaboration, 2016. 175 p.

Want to know more about the potential of the circular economy and how it can work in your organization? This seminal book guides the reader through the 10 steps of initiating circular projects within organizations. The work presents illustrative case studies from businesses that have implemented circularity in their operations, including Interface, Patagonia, Vitsoe, Marks & Spencer, Riversimple, Desso, Gispen and G-Star. These organizations implemented circularity by combining technology, collaboration, and an environmentally focused business model. *Circular business: Collaborate and Circulate* is a practical and inspiring guide for organizations and professionals who want to take the important steps in implementing a circular economy. The authors believe in a transition to an operational model in which business and entrepreneurship are central to the circular economy.



THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY: A Wealth of Flows

Ken Webster. London, UK: Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2015. 202 p.

In this work, published by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Ken Webster argues that linear economics is a nineteenth-century concept that can be altered by circularity. Based on principles that subvert the extract–make–discard logic, the circular economy in this work is viewed from the perspective of the non-generation of waste, maintenance of materials in longer use cycles, and regeneration of natural systems. Such sustainable strategies can produce positive effects on production, employment, education, and finance. The book also presents a broad vision of this new framework for the reinvention of economic prosperity.

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