BODY, FITNESS, AND ADVERTISING: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCER ACTIVITIES ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

CORPO, FITNESS E PUBLICIDADE: UMA ANÁLISE SOCIOLÓGICA SOBRE A ATUAÇÃO DE INFLUENCIADORA NAS PLATAFORMAS DIGITAIS

CUERPO, FITNESS Y PUBLICIDAD: UN ANÁLISIS SOCIOLÓGICO DE LA ACTIVIDAD DE INFLUENCIADORES EN PLATAFORMAS DIGITALES

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ABSTRACT: In this article, we discuss the fitness discourses produced in the digital era. We aim to analyze how these discourses are configured through the use of digital platforms by the influencer and "fitness muse" Gabriela Pugliesi. Using a semiological approach, we analyze posts from the influencer's Instagram throughout 2020 and highlight how her content moves the fitness discourses and aligns with advertising discourses according to digital imperatives. We argue that the influencer associates the products she promotes with her corporality, using her intimacy and daily life to perform and sell a healthy and happy lifestyle. Thus, the discourses surrounding her corporality, conceived as worthy of desire and coveting, are carried out at the expense of bodies outside the fitness norm, considered suitable for processes of normalization.

KEYWORDS: Fitness. Corporal disciplining. Gender. Advertising. Digital media.

RESUMO: Neste artigo, são discutidos os discursos fitness gerados na era digital, com foco na análise dos conteúdos produzidos pela influenciadora e "musa fitness" Gabriela Pugliesi por meio das plataformas digitais. Utilizando uma abordagem semiológica, foram analisadas postagens feitas por ela no Instagram ao longo de 2020, destacando como seus conteúdos contribuem para os discursos fitness e se conectam com estratégias publicitárias conforme as demandas do ambiente digital. O argumento central é que a influenciadora associa os produtos que promove à sua própria imagem corporal, utilizando sua vida pessoal e cotidiana para promover e vender um estilo de vida saudável e feliz. Nesse contexto, os discursos em torno de sua corporalidade, vista como desejável e aspiracional, acabam por marginalizar os corpos que não se enquadram nos padrões fitness, os quais são submetidos a processos de normalização.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Fitness. Disciplinamento Corporal. Gênero. Publicidade. Mídias Digitais.

RESUMEN: En este artículo abordamos los discursos sobre el fitness producidos en la era digital. Buscamos analizar cómo estos discursos se configuran a través del uso de las plataformas digitales por parte de la influencer y "musa del fitness" Gabriela Pugliesi. Mediante un enfoque semiológico, analizamos las publicaciones de la influencer en Instagram a lo largo de 2020, y destacamos cómo su contenido mueve los discursos fitness y se articula con los discursos publicitarios según los imperativos digitales. Sostenemos que la influencer asocia los productos que promociona con su corporalidad, utilizando su intimidad y vida cotidiana para representar y vender un estilo de vida saludable y feliz. Así, los discursos en torno a su corporalidad, concebida como digna de ser deseada y codiciada, se llevan a cabo en detrimento de cuerpos fuera de la norma Fitness, considerados aptos para procesos de normalización.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Fitness. Disciplina Corporal. Género. Publicidad. Medios digitales.

Introduction

Figure 1 - Fitness soda

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 08.16.2020[3].

The above image, from the Instagram profile of digital influencer Gabriela Pugliesi, alludes to some of the issues that will be discussed in this article. In this image, Pugliesi is seen wearing swimwear while recommending a "100% natural" soda. We can observe how both the influencer's body and the advertised product mobilize fitness body production technologies. Gabriela Pugliesi is 38 years old and has a degree in Industrial Design. She gained prominence on the internet in the second decade of the 2000s, a period when digital social networks gained increasing access due to the popularization of smartphones. In 2013, she began sharing photos of the food she brought to work on her Instagram profile, a fact that gradually led to half a million followers in the same year. Thus, several companies began to negotiate with Gabriela for the recommendation of their products[4].

Gabriela's work involves monetizing her content production, which includes audiovisual posts with the disclosure and recommendation of products sponsored by her on her profiles on

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[3] Instagram profile: @eusouagabi. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/eusougabriela/. Accessed in: 17 Aug. 2023.
[4] Gabriela's trajectory. Available at: PUGLIESI, Gabriela. Réptil; 2014.

digital platforms. This work is carried out by people referred to as digital influencers because they have the ability to influence others to consume the products promoted through their actions in niche markets. However, Gabriela should not be seen as the norm because, unlike most people who seek to work in this way, she is among those who have managed to make it their main source of income and not just an extra income. The influencer currently[5] has 5.7 million followers on Instagram and had 686 thousand subscribers until she deactivated it in 2022 on her YouTube channel.

In this article, we analyze how fitness discourses are constituted when inserted into spaces marked by the intersection between media and advertising regimes through the performance of digital influencers and "fitness muse" Gabriela Pugliesi. We present the analysis of the influencer's Instagram posts carried out through the semiological approach (Eco, 1976) and to interpret the data extracted from this analysis, we discuss the production of corporealities through the socio-anthropological perspective, emphasizing aspects involving bodily discipline, subjective modulation, and gender technologies in the production of bodies and ways of life (Foucault, 2019; Cassino, 2018; De Lauretis, 1987). We also discuss how these disciplines and modulations are updated through the imperatives of the digital platform era, thus producing corporealities in articulation with media, advertising, and pharmacological regimes (Landa, 2009; Preciado, 2018).

Instagram, the primary platform for this analysis, is a digital platform developed in 2010 for sharing photographs among users through their profiles. Acquired by Facebook in 2012, Instagram is currently a very popular platform. According to Datareportal's 2023 research, Instagram is the fourth most used platform in the world. In Brazil, it occupies the position of the second most used platform. Of the 140 million internet users in the country (66% of the population), 79% use Instagram. Another relevant piece of data for this research is that out of the 140 million internet users in Brazil, 99% access the platform via mobile phones, indicating Instagram's success in the country, as it is primarily accessed through mobile phones, as the data suggests.

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[5] This article is the result of research conducted and completed in 2020. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize that the research data refers to the specified time period. Given the fluidity of life and the speed at which changes are captured by digital networks, in this year of 2023, the year of publication of this article, there have been observed changes: (i) Gabriela Pugliesi dropped the surname of her ex-husband Thiago Pugliesi, adopting only Gábi; (ii) The address of her Instagram account changed due to these facts. However, her role as a fitness influencer, as analyzed in this article, continues to be her central activity on digital platforms.

On the Instagram digital platform, users initiate communications through the follow and follow-back commands, meaning interaction occurs through the sharing of profiles. Since its inception, the digital platform has undergone various technical and layout changes. Initially, it allowed users to share photographs in the feed[6]; today, it enables sharing short videos and text in the feed, long videos on IGTV[7], products in the shop[8], photos, short videos, text in stories[9] and real-time broadcasts through lives[10]. Story publications can be accessed through a bar containing the icons[11] of users and followed accounts, and unlike content shared in the feed, these publications are not stored on the user's profile but disappear after twenty-four hours. They are ephemeral publications that gradually began to portray users' daily lives.

In this context, we highlight the role of digital influencers and "fitness muses,"[12] and then emphasize how their performance is promoted in accordance with new forms of work when conducted on digital platforms (Van Dijck, 2016; Baym, 2018). By making evident the influencer's involvement in the market production of fitness, we argue, that Gabriela associates the products she promotes with her corporality and utilizes her intimacy and daily life to perform and sell a lifestyle deemed healthy and happy. Thus, the discourses surrounding her corporality, conceived as beautiful and worthy of coveting, are carried out at the expense of bodies outside the fitness norm, considered suitable for processes of normalization through imparted disciplining.

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[6] The Instagram feed functions similarly to Facebook's timeline. It is the platform's home page; it gathers posts from other users followed and resembles an endless page, as swiping through the page on smartphones provides access to new posts.

[7] A section of Instagram dedicated to long videos.

[8] A page dedicated to product sharing and selling.

[9] Posts with a duration of up to 24 hours.

[10] Live video broadcasting.

[11] Small circular photo used for user identification.

[12] An emic classification that emerged within Instagram itself.

Methodology

The audiovisual content analysis developed by Eco (1976) was adapted and employed in this article for the analysis of the content production of influencer Gabriela Pugliesi on the Instagram digital platform. According to Eco (1976), analyzing communicational events as a system of signs presupposes a sender and a receiver, in this case, Pugliesi and her followers. This approach to content as a system of signs requires that the message be formed by codes that are common to both the sender and the receiver, and that this message be analyzed based on a shared communicational context. The use of codes and subcodes in the communicational process implies not only a process of denotation in which the receiver understands the message with the same intention that the sender wished to convey, but also a process of connotation in which the receiver reinterprets the message based on their context (Eco,1976).

Thus, we analyzed the posts from Gabriela Pugliesi's profile on the Instagram platform throughout the year 2020 using three base codes consisting of subcodes. They are: (1) the iconic code, the image, which is formed by the iconological, aesthetic, erotic, and montage subcodes; (2) the linguistic code, the text, which in turn is formed by specialized jargon and syntagms of acquired stylistic value subcodes; and finally, (3) the sound code, which includes the emotive, syntagms of acquired stylistic value, and conventional value syntagms subcodes (Eco, 1976). The selected contents here illustrate the recurring patterns identified through the analysis and the main discourses condensed into problematized axes throughout this article.

"May we never stop smiling": the production of fitness content

Figure 2 - "New look makes you want to train more, right?"

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04/18/2020.

In this image, Gabriela Pugliesi is in a gym, leaning on a dumbbell rack, standing upright, and wearing workout clothes from the company *Body For Sure*. The photo is captioned: "New look makes you want to train more, right? 😊 @bodyforsure #GoForBody #Summer20". Through the analysis of the iconic code of this image, we highlight the influencer's body as a model for the advertising piece, as well as an idealized model for her followers. In the gym and close to the weightlifting equipment, the corporality and its setting connote that in order to have a body that fits the ideal of fitness slimness, it is necessary to perfect this body, including with the recommended clothing.

The linguistic code present in the image caption then associates the acquisition of the piece of clothing with the "desire to train"; the hashtag[13] "#Summer20" evokes the goal of working out and shaping the body for its best exposure in the summer. Through the montage subcode, we can see that the influencer has her eyes closed, not looking at the camera, but at the weightlifting equipment, which implies seriousness and determination in body improvement. The message uses the imperative function present in advertisements, aiming to convince the receiver that the clothing item from the brand Body For Sure will help them in

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[13] This refers to subjects indexed for consultation on social networks.

their physical activity training, and its phatic function connects the influencer with the receivers through the use of diminutive words and the "emoticon".

Figure 3 - "I DOOON'T CARE"

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04/18/2020.

Figure 4 - Love Without Sugar

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04/18/2020.

In the two images above, Gabriela Pugliesi advertises different food products. In the first image, she is at the beauty salon, eating popcorn from the brand Mais Pura, and in the second image, she is in an outdoor area of her home with chocolates from the brand Kopenhagen, alongside her husband, Erasmo Carlos. When analyzing the images based on the

iconological subcode, we highlight that both demonstrate happiness. The first image does this in the beauty salon even while eating popcorn, as gluten-free, whole, non-GMO, vegan, lactose-free, allergen-free, preservative-free, and trans-fat-free popcorn is allowed. In addition to happiness, the image conveys spontaneity, as if the influencer had been surprised by the camera while eating her popcorn and receiving aesthetic care; therefore, the photo is staged to emphasize Pugliesi's smile, as besides focusing on her face, a filter is used[14] to illuminate the sides of the photograph.

Upon analyzing the photograph and its caption, there is an evident connotation of care for an appearance that involves hours spent at the beauty salon without neglecting the diet considered healthy. In the second image, alongside her husband and the chocolates, it is observed that happiness and love are articulated with the consumption of that chocolate. Both messages use imperative functions as advertising pieces, as well as phatic and emotive functions, using emoticons and capitalized words to convey emotion in seeking connection with the receivers.

Figure 5 - Snow and Protein

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04/18/2020.

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[14] Filters can be added in advance to photographs using specific applications, but the Instagram platform itself also provides them; they alter the colors and focus of the photographs.

Figure 6 - Beach and Friends

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04/18/2020.

In both Figure 5 and Figure 6, Gabriela Pugliesi portrays trips to places that require purchasing power; in the first image, Gabriela is at a country club in the French Alps, and in the second image, at a resort hotel in Itacaré, Bahia. In the first photograph, Pugliesi is advertising for the brand *Souly Feed Your Soul*; in the second, she is sharing her happiness. When analyzing the two posts based on the codes defined by Eco (1976), we highlight that the scenery of the photographs evokes beauty and tranquility, as well as lean and pharmacologically disciplined bodies accessing these spaces. In the first image, there is an association of the food and supplement brand with the influencer's dietary routine, thus suggesting that even outside of everyday life, one should continue with dietary discipline, as well as having the purchasing power to consume products and trips.

In the second image, besides the influencer's body, there are three other bodies that embody the fitness norm, thus reinforcing the connotation that it is those types of spaces that fitness bodies access. Finally, these and other analyzed posts express the same functions already highlighted, as the first one has an imperative, emotive, and phatic function as it is an advertisement presented as a recommendation using first-person language, emoticons, personal language, and advice on how to use the product, and the second image presents the emotive function.

Figure 7 - "Already woke up in full swing"

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04.18.2020.

Figure 8 - "Starting Monday off strong!"

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04.18.2020.

In these posts (Figures 7 and 8), Gabriela is at the gym; in the first image, she advertises an energy supplement, and in the second, she exercises. The second image (a snippet from a video) connotes that to possess a fit body, one must have a routine of exercises; the caption suggests goals and objectives arising from the fitness norm embodied in the body's routine.

Furthermore, there is encouragement for her followers to interact with the post by writing their goals and objectives with the exercises.

Analyzing the second image based on the iconological subcode, where a gym represents exercise, and the first image based on the montage subcode, as the weights and mat were strategically placed in that position for the photo, we highlight both images conveying that the supplement is as necessary as an exercise to achieve the desired corporeality. Thus, the advertising presented as a recommendation indicates that both bodily self-discipline, exercises, and diets, as well as the use of products promoted by Pugliesi, are necessary to have the "low carb" body and lifestyle, as depicted.

Figure 9 - Natural Body

Source: Image captured and adapted from Instagram on 04.18.2020.

However, there is an association between the influencer's body and the natural foods she also claims to consume. In the image above (Figure 9), Pugliesi is in a garden harvesting lettuce, and the accompanying caption says: "Me in my habitat #VeggieLife." Since a garden is associated with nature, the image conveys the meaning that the influencer has a lifestyle based on natural food. Thus, the discourse uttered by the fitness muse consistently associates the fit body with a natural body built through exercise and a diet classified as healthy. Despite the influencer promoting various pharmacological products[15], such as supplements or modified foods, a sense of naturalness, particularly healthy, is performed in the production of her

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[15] Products produced in laboratories are based on chemical substances that interact with the human biological system.

corporality, which is paradoxically reiterated in the fitness market norm, technically modified and the result of uninterrupted self-discipline.

The disciplining of the body through fitness advertising discourse

The social and cultural disciplining through bodily modulation in the internet age portrays fitness corporeality as an ideal of beauty capable of eliciting social desires and aspirations. However, this idea of a slim body is not accessible to all women, as it requires cultural and economic capital for the investment in constant bodily discipline through diets and physical exercises that are articulated with body manipulation produced by technical-scientific products, such as dietary supplements and plastic surgeries. Thus, the ideal of slimness is an unequal ideal that, by selling itself as universally desired, "offers the illusion of fulfilling, through the body, the contradictory demands of the contemporary ideology of femininity" (Jaggar; Bordo; De Freitas, 1997, p. 26, our translation).

Mariá Inés Landa (2009), in a study on subjectivities and bodily consumption within fitness practices, asserts that the fitness discourse originated from North American Puritan religious communities seeking to preserve the physical health of their members. Starting in the 1970s, the fitness industry was established and linked to audiovisual products (VHS tapes) produced by Kenneth Cooper; in these productions, Jane Fonda conducted video classes on aerobic exercises widely marketed in Latin America (Landa, 2009). Thus, the fitness discourse is the convergence of discourses produced by specialized communities as well as by companies aiming to commercialize products in this realm (Landa, 2009).

In this historical context, we emphasize the fitness discourse, which is also tied to its commercial dimension, which is responsible for its constitution. Fitness technologies have brought about central social actors for the discussion at hand, referred to as fitness professionals. These professionals are tasked with internalizing fitness discourses to transmit them to others and, above all, embodying through their bodies the efficacy of the discourse uttered (Landa, 2009).

Thus, the bodies capable of embodying this professional, as well as the bodies present in the advertisements of these companies, are the bodies that embody this ideal of beauty; while simultaneously materializing musculature resulting from discipline and bodily modification, they also undergo subjective alterations through behaviors associated with health and happiness within a lifestyle perceived as satisfactory (Landa, 2009), and that articulates with the class

dimension enabling the subjective and embodied internalization of a series of ontologies, behaviors, consumption of products, and places in everyday life geared towards constant self-discipline.

The fitness discourse thus materializes the norm in the body capable of incorporating it and also defines the deviant body, namely, those corporealities that constitute themselves in opposition to fitness norms. The deviant body is understood and uttered as the body that needs to be normalized, since discursive norms are established in direct relation to deviations from the norm; the existence of a norm implies the existence of that which escapes it (Butler, 2014). The other deviant is also the fat body permeated by narratives associating it with a sick, unmotivated, and unhappy corporality, at the expense of the presumed healthy, disciplined, and happy lean and fit body. Furthermore, the fitness discourse employs the idea that anyone can attain a fitness corporality solely through willpower and discipline, thus positioning the deviant body in a state of potential reversal (Landa, 2009).

Advertising plays a central role in the formation and dissemination of this fitness body, as well as in defining this other without needing to mention it. In the words of Adelman and Ruggi (2007, p. 47, our translation).:

> Susan Bordo (1999) labels this dynamic as the pedagogy of deficiency: advertising is the daily lesson of what we lack, a lesson that simultaneously stipulates the antidote and the poison. According to these authors, the language of advertising is not based on rational argumentation but on the persuasive subterfuge that resorts to – and reinforces – culturally established stereotypes, especially the magnetic ones. Models are the outward face of this process; their bodies are the support for the advertisements, being themselves advertised.

Furthermore, on this matter, the authors add:

> In a study conducted at a modeling school in Curitiba during the years 2004/5 (RUGGI, 2005), we attempted to explore how representations of the body are constructed in the advertising and publicized beauty market. "Model" is, by definition, the parameter – and an excluding parameter at that. Body models, by stipulating what one should resemble, establish a way of being. Beauty mediated through them is regarded by sociological analysis as one of the major causes of the growing dissatisfaction of contemporary individuals with themselves and their bodies. In this sense, the defined, appropriated, and disseminated beauty standards by advertising would operate as mechanisms of control over the "self," enabling the comparison between self-image (that in the mirror) and the socially established hierarchy of appearances (Adelman; Ruggi 2007, p. 48, our translation).

Fitness advertising discourse implies the production of parameters around corporealities. Thus, advertising not only promotes products but constructs social aspirations in those who consume advertising, seeking identification through brands and publicized corporalities; "the body in advertising is fundamental for this process of identification and, most of the time, is associated with gender and sexuality formulations" (Beleli, 2007, p. 193, our translation). Fitness discourse sells a slender female body, linked to the idea that those who possess this body will be happy, and such an association of fitness body with happiness is recurrent in the content production of the influencer Gabriela Pugliesi. To the intertwining of advertisements, bodies, and modes of life worthy of coveting, it is added that the valorization "of light, young, and lanky bodies in advertising composes a standard of beauty that encourages narcissistic femininities as a way to equalize power relations" (Baleli, 2007, p. 201-202, our translation).

Advertising, therefore, is present in all media and makes many brands worth more than the products they market; thus, it does not only sell products but lifestyles and concepts (Beleli, 2005). It is in this sense that Gabriela Pugliesi is not just an influencer recommending products on the Instagram digital platform, but a brand that brings prestige to the products she promotes; for the trend in "communication lies in the fact that, now, influencers constitute themselves as brands and, in many cases, constitute themselves as media vehicles" (Karhawi, 2016, p. 41-42, our translation).

Corporealities and Sociocultural Disciplines

According to Csordas (2008, p. 145), the body is not a natural and immutable evidence, but the "existential basis of culture" (Csordas, 2008, p. 145). The socially constructed body through culture directly engenders the formation of culture itself. Thus, it is both the object and agent of culture, because:

> It ceases to be a mere object of social and symbolic action, a receptacle for the inscription of cultural symbols and an object to be shaped by social and collective representations, and becomes an agent and subject of individual and collective experience, a vehicle and producer of meanings, an instrument and engine for the constitution of new subjectivities and new forms of subject (Maluf, 2001, p. 96, our translation).

In this sense, "cultural experience is embodied" (Maluf, 2001, p. 97, our translation), but instances of power also permeate it. Through social and cultural disciplines on bodies, power shapes and produces subjectivities through norms expressed in social reality (Foucault, 2019). Technologies of power are thus materialized in institutions, discourses, and their practices, and can shape the capacity for action of individuals in various regimes of self-discipline (Foucault, 2019).

To this end, social, cultural, and economic institutions undertake the investment of the body by the power to discipline corporealities according to the norm and, thus, produce docile bodies accustomed to the internalization of behaviors (Cassino, 2018). This discipline is characteristic of modern societies in the post-industrial revolution period. However, in the 21st century, the society of control (Deleuze, 1992) deepens the technologies of the disciplinary society. According to Lazzarato:

> The society of control exercises its power through distance-action technologies of images, sound, and information, which function as machines to modulate and crystallize waves, electromagnetic vibrations (radio, television), or machines to modulate and crystallize packets of bits (computers and numerical scales) (Lazzarato, 2006, p. 85, our translation).

The society of control does not discipline bodies in the same way as disciplinary institutions, but subtly modulates subjectivities through algorithmic technologies (Cassino, 2018). Modulation is thus the internalization of behaviors through the action of algorithms in the digital era in which we are immersed (Lupton, 2014), and can be observed in the way platforms function and are algorithmically organized. This articulates disciplinary power exercised over bodies with the control exerted by modulation, which can also be subjectively internalized and, therefore, shape bodies (Cassino, 2018).

So, while there is disciplinary control and modulation of bodies on one hand, there is, on the other hand, the pharmamedial[16] transformation of the economic system. According to Preciado (2018), in the post-industrial system, biomolecular and semiotic-technical regimes are responsible for shaping people's subjectivities (Preciado, 2018). Science produces tangible realities achieved by supplements that modify bodies to fit the standards also established through digital media. In the author's words:

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[16] We employ this concept as an appropriation of Paul B. Preciado's notion of the pharmacopornographic society, wherein instead of positioning pornography as the primary medium capable of shaping the social imaginary, we work with the idea that all media complement each other in this process.

> Technoscience has established its material authority by transforming the concepts of psyche, libido, consciousness, femininity, masculinity, heterosexuality, homosexuality, intersexuality, and transsexuality into tangible realities, which manifest themselves in chemical substances and marketable molecules in bodies, in human biotypes, in technological goods managed by pharmaceutical multinationals (Preciado, 2018, p. 37, our translation).

Currently, societies are characterized by the ability to modify corporealities through the use of technoscientific products, simultaneously constituting these bodies as desirable; for, "the postmodern body becomes collectively desirable thanks to its pharmacological management and its audiovisual promotion" (Preciado, 2018, p. 56, our translation). On the Instagram digital platform, on the profile of influencer Gabriela Pugliesi, there is a particular manifestation of processes of body disciplining and modulation through pharmamedial management around fitness life. It is important to note, furthermore, that body technologies, which also function as gender technologies, are much older than the discourse of fitness on digital platforms and act on people's bodies, turning beauty into a "particular form of "distinction" and "self-discipline" (Adelman; Ruggi, 2007, p. 42, our translation).

Gender technologies produce men and women who perform "feminine and masculine forms that correspond to them and a whole series of 'other objects,' which includes lesbians, gays, people of ambiguous gender [...] encompassed by the term transgender" (De Lauretis, 1987, p. 42, our translation). And, in this process, they "establish or reproduce particular classificatory notions about the beautiful and the abject" (Adelman; Ruggi, 2007, p. 42, our translation). The referenced gender technologies are disguised as "[...] individually valued or devalued characteristics" (Adelman; Ruggi, 2007, p. 40, our translation); however, these technologies are part of sociocultural systems that imply various power relations that attribute standards about "beauty, appearance, physical strength, fragility, and the quality of being 'sexually attractive' as the norm" (Adelman; Ruggi, 2007, p. 40, our translation). Body and gender technologies, therefore, place feminine corporealities in the position of docile bodies accustomed to external improvement aiming for a certain corporal and culturally constructed beauty ideal (Jaggar; Bordo, 1997).

New digital imperatives and influencers

Advertising has always been linked to media, and this fact is not new in the digital age. However, we seek to reflect on the changes related to the interaction between advertising and the internet of digital platforms. In the words of Castells:

> The influence of the advertising industry on media businesses, through the transformation of people into a measurable audience, tends to subordinate cultural innovation or entertainment pleasure to commercial consumerism (Castells, 2015, p. 104, our translation).

The internet constitutes online environments that foster content creation by users within the parameters established by each digital platform, but such creation is also shaped by the companies that control the platforms and have commercial objectives (Castells, 2015). Thus, as digital platforms like Facebook and Instagram acquired larger audiences, they began selling potential clients in the market (Castells, 2015). In the words of Poell, Nieborg, and Van Dijck (2020, p. 4, our translation), platforms are "reprogrammable digital infrastructures that facilitate and shape personalized interactions between end-users and complementors," and they are organized "through the systematic collection, algorithmic processing, monetization, and circulation of data" (Poell; Nieborg; Van Dijck, 2020, p. 4, our translation).

Instagram, the main platform for this analysis, is a digital platform developed in 2010 for photo sharing among users through their digital profiles on this platform. Acquired by Facebook in 2012, Instagram is currently a very popular platform; according to Datareportal's [17] 2023 research data, it is the fourth most used platform in the world. In Brazil, it ranks as the fourth most used platform, with 79% of the one hundred and forty million internet users (66% of the population) using Instagram. Another pertinent data point for this research is that out of the one hundred and forty million internet users in Brazil, 99% access the platform via mobile phones, thus configuring Instagram's success in the country as it is primarily accessed on mobile devices, as the data suggests.

On Instagram, users initiate communications through the follow and follow-back commands, meaning profile sharing generates interaction. Since its inception, the platform has undergone various technical and layout changes. Initially, it allowed users to share photos in the feed; today, it enables the sharing of short videos and text in the feed, long videos on IGTV,

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[17] Available at: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-global-overview-report. Accessed in: 22 mar. 2022.

products in the shop, photos, short videos, and text in stories, as well as allowing real-time broadcasts through lives. The posts in stories can be accessed through a bar containing the icons of followed users, and unlike the content shared in the feed, these posts are not stored on the user's profile but disappear after twenty-four hours. They are ephemeral publications that gradually began to depict users' daily lives.

It is important to note that it is not just access to Instagram that is growing, but access to all digital social networks. Internet access is increasing at an average rate of 7.41% per year, and access to social networks is growing at an average rate of 10.81% per year. However, it is not only the absolute growth of access that theorists argue indicates that we live in the internet of digital platforms, but also because of interconnection. Platforms are part of a larger structure, an ecosystem of social networks that connect platforms through similar buttons, providing greater ease in moving from one platform to another, as well as quantifying human connection and directing it through algorithms (Van Dijck, 2016). In this sense, each platform forms a microsystem, in which the total platforms form an ecosystem of social networks constituted by social and cultural norms to the same extent that it constitutes these norms (Van Dijck, 2016). These microsystems are in a process of simultaneous evolution, as platforms are sensitive to changes that occur in each other.

Van Dijck (2016) asserts that we live in a culture of connectivity, where sociability on the internet is shaped by platforms, and thus, platforms and social practices mutually constitute each other. And because connectivity is a quantifiable value, which can be observed in the number of followers a person has or the number of interactions a post receives, sociabilities become influenced by connectivity, since "the more contacts an individual has and establishes, the more valuable he will be, as more people will consider him popular and will want to make contact with him" (Van Dijck, 2016, p.31, our translation)[18].

This principle of popularity also influences advertising on digital social networks. Users who have many followers can influence them, and thus, companies create effective advertisements when done by users who have strong influence in a particular market niche, at the expense of traditional advertising targeted at mass audiences (Van Dijck, 2016). User-generated advertising is presented as a recommendation, filtered through the person recommending goods, products, and lifestyles, and consequently, part of the advertising culture is shifted from mass media to the recommendation economy (Van Dijck, 2016), in the era of

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[18] *"cuantos más contactos tenga y establezca un individuo, más valioso resultará, porque entonces más personas lo considerarán popular y desearán trabar contacto con él".*

the internet of digital platforms. In this way, advertising becomes a key element in the organization of platforms, as their operations are structured to favor advertising within the platforms' norms.

Work and Digital Influencers

In addition to the transformation of advertising culture, the internet of digital platforms also implies new relational skills for jobs that require interaction with the public. According to Nancy Baym (2018), the imperatives of the digital society modify relational skills because they create new demands, such as the need for continuous maintenance of daily contact with followers through digital social networks via relational labor (Baym, 2018). This relational work requires, to some extent, emotional labor on social networks so that followers do not lose interest in the individual making the recommendation and invest, above all, in maintaining and creating new relationships (Baym, 2018).

This practice of relational work engendered by digital imperatives makes work ubiquitous, and thus, actions on digital social networks no longer differentiate between spheres of personal and professional life. Regarding this fact, it is worth noting that Gabriela Pugliesi faced "cancellation"[19] on the internet after publicizing a party held in her apartment during the quarantine prompted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The influencer was not working at the time of the stories' publication about the party, but the publication of behavior considered wrong reflected on her professional image and resulted in the loss of contracts and followers. This happens because the new imperatives of the digital society sell professional talent, but also a brand materialized in the professional in question (Baym, 2018). This ubiquity, intimacy, and everyday life are sold as commodities alongside the recommended products.

Influencers are, therefore, those individuals who have some power in "the purchase decision process of a subject; the power to circulate discussions; the power to influence decisions regarding the lifestyle, tastes, and cultural goods of those in their network" (Karhawi, 2017, p. 48, our translation). The prominence of influencers on social networks is due to their ability to filter the vast amount of information present on the internet, as well as possessing attributes that give them credibility (Karhawi, 2017).

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[19] "*Cancelamento*" is an emic term that refers to an action by a user, usually a famous one, deemed inappropriate by various social groups coexisting on the internet; thus, a "canceling" of the person who misbehaves on the internet is organized by unfollowing this user to diminish or even end their influence within the network.

Gabriela Pugliesi filters content related to fitness lifestyles and gains credibility by associating her image, body, and way of life with her content. It is worth noting that, due to automated algorithmic mechanisms, any user consuming content from a particular niche will be directed to influencers who produce content for this niche. Furthermore, these influencers can promote their profiles and thus gain new followers by acquiring this service offered by the Instagram platform.

Final considerations

In this article, we aim to analyze how fitness discourses are constructed when inserted into spaces marked by the intersection between media and advertising regimes through the actions of the digital influencer and "fitness muse" Gabriela Pugliesi. Thus, we emphasize that on the Instagram digital platform, in the influencer's profile, there is a particular manifestation of the processes of bodily discipline and modulation through pharmacological management around fitness life. Her corporality embodies hegemonic discourses about feminine bodies, beauty, and fitness lifestyles that are assumed to be universally desired at the expense of deviant corporealities permeated by narratives associating them with a possible state of reversal. Gabriela Pugliesi acts, therefore, not only as an influencer recommending fitness products on the Instagram digital platform but also as a brand that brings prestige to the products she promotes due to the credibility she associates with her image, her body, and her lifestyle to the content she shares.

It is in the association of corporality and lifestyle with the digital content produced and monetized that we can call Gabriela Pugliesi a digital influencer and "fitness muse." The "muses" act on Instagram by sharing in real-time their bodily construction based on a beauty standard considered slender; they present a methodically disciplined corporality through physical exercises, as well as technically altered both pharmacologically and by the way they use Instagram filters to prevent the presentation of any supposed bodily imperfection despite the discourse of naturalness. As a fitness muse and digital influencer, Gabriela Pugliesi develops ubiquitous work from the media and fitness regimes embodied in the brand she makes of herself for the publicity and sale of a corporality and a way of life understood as healthy and happy, conceived and pronounced as worthy of being desired and, thus, acquired.

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