CONSUMPTION AND SOCIAL DISTINCTION IN THE DIGITAL SPACE

CONSUMO E DISTINÇÃO SOCIAL NO ESPAÇO DIGITAL

CONSUMO Y DIFERENCIACIÓN SOCIAL EN EL ESPACIO DIGITAL

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ABSTRACT: Assuming that consumption - as one of the main ways in which habitus can be expressed - carries a distinctive dimension, insofar as it indicates symbolic boundaries and bonds of belonging between social groups, this article seeks to contribute to the reflection on some dynamics of distinction in the contemporary Brazilian social configuration. In order to do so, it takes as an empirical universe two spaces cut out in social networks: a Facebook group related to the purchase and sale of products on 25 de Março, a famous popular shopping street in the city of São Paulo, and the Instagram profile of a digital influencer. from the fashion and style area, Maju Trindade.

KEYWORDS: Anthropology. Consumption. Social medias. Social class. Distinction.

RESUMO: Partindo do pressuposto de que o consumo - como um dos principais modos pelos quais o habitus pode ser expressado - carrega uma dimensão distintiva, na medida em que indica fronteiras simbólicas e elos de pertença entre os grupos sociais, este artigo busca contribuir para a reflexão sobre algumas dinâmica de distinção na configuração social brasileira contemporânea. Para tanto, toma como universo empírico dois espaços recortados nas redes sociais: um grupo de Facebook relacionado à compra e venda de produtos na 25 de março, famosa rua de comércio popular na cidade de São Paulo, e o perfil no Instagram de uma digital influencer da área de moda e estilo, Maju Trindade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Antropologia. Consumo. Redes sociais. Classes sociais. Distinção.

RESUMEN: Asumiendo que el consumo -como una de las principales formas en que se puede expresar el habitus- tiene una dimensión distintiva, en la medida en que indica fronteras simbólicas y lazos de pertenencia entre grupos sociales, este artículo busca contribuir a la reflexión sobre algunas dinámicas de distinción en la configuración social brasileña contemporánea. Para ello, toma como universo empírico dos espacios recortados en las redes sociales: un grupo de Facebook relacionado con la compra y venta de productos en 25 de Março, famosa calle comercial popular de la ciudad de São Paulo, y el Perfil de Instagram de una influencer digital del área de moda y estilo, Maju Trindade.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Antropologia. Consumo. Redes sociales. Clases sociales. Distinción.

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Introduction

Pierre Bourdieu's recognition in the social sciences can be understood both by the thematic breadth and fertility of his works, as well as by his ability to articulate the three classic matrices (Marx, Weber and Durkheim), formulating an innovative theoretical-methodological proposal in a moment of paradigmatic crisis in the field of social sciences. In *Distinction* (2007), Bourdieu starts from extensive research on taste in the French context, seeking to understand its social constraints and its distinctive characteristic, as it is expressive of social, hierarchical and hierarchical classifications, operated by different class fractions.

The reflection raised by the author on taste and lifestyles is the starting point for the discussion proposed in this article, as it shows ways in which much more can be extracted from them than individualized and individualizing analyses. That is, as Bourdieu demonstrates the ways in which taste is socially shaped, he also shows that it is not indisputable and pertinent exclusively to the domain of individuality, but rather as something constructed by the trajectories of agents in social fields.

> Why do we like what we like? Why do we reject what we reject? The answers to such questions reveal the tension between opposing conceptions about the formation of taste, sometimes understood "as a creative, spontaneous engagement with a cultural object", sometimes seen as "something whose result is predetermined" (Stewart, 2013, p. 3). This tensioning element structures the debates in Social Sciences which, contrary to the commonsense notion according to which taste is not discussed, has sought to thematize the social determinants of taste and its place in the processes of production of inequalities, in the construction of social borders and symbolic and in the formation of groups. A quick look at the recent sociological debates on the subject indicates that there is a profound disagreement between the approaches regarding individualization or, on the contrary, the persistent differentiation and stratification of tastes and lifestyles (BERTONCELO; MIRA, 2019, p. 19, our translation).

In this sense, tastes represent, beyond what is only visible and apparent (what is deposited and arranged in bodies), a way of expressing the social field in which agents are inserted and the *habitus* they carry.

The relevance of the concept of *habitus* is emphasized here, which can be understood as a "structuring and structured structure", which operates as a matrix of perception and action, generating strategies for practices and which tends to guide the actions and conduct of agents, and, simultaneously, is produced or formatted by capital acquired from the beginning, during the trajectories of individuals.

> The concept of *habitus*, central to Bourdian reflection, was formulated in search of overcoming the dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity, a central concern in the construction of his theoretical framework, as pointed out by the author himself (BOURDIEU, 1987) and commentators of his work (Ortiz, 1983; Peters, 2013). In his formulation, Bourdieu considers the subjective filter of the agent, pointing to it as structuring, without, however, disregarding the objectivity of the social structure that shapes it (CASTRO, 2019, p. 54, our translation).

> [...] the *habitus* constitutes a structuring structure that organizes practices and the perception of practices, the *habitus* is also a structured structure; the principle of the division of logical classes that organizes the perception of the social world, is in turn the product of the incorporation of the division into social classes (BOURDIEU, 2007, p. 164, our translation).

In this perspective, the agent is not a mere reproducer of fixed structures, nor is he the bearer of an autonomous conscience to coordinate actions without rules and strategies previously arranged in his social trajectory. This leads us to realize that social actors are both products and producers of the social structure, in a constant dynamic of feedback.

Culture, therefore, is understood in this view as a privileged dimension for understanding hierarchization processes, power disputes and distinctions between classes, bearing in mind that the economicist view alone would not support the analysis of the symbolic aspects of the actions of individuals who they are the product and producers of the social structure.

In Bourdieu's conception, distinctions organize the symbolic system, which is demonstrated in tastes, in lifestyles, in the way in which agents dispose and deposit cultural objects that express positions and relationships in their bodies. In this sense, based on the assumption that the understanding of the relationships and dynamics that configure the social world cannot be reduced to the economic, the author elaborates the concept of "cultural capital", highlighting the emphasis on the symbolic dimension, understood as essential for the reflection on classes and hierarchies:

> One of the main legacies of Bourdieu's work is the conception of Culture as a capital, susceptible of being accumulated, transmitted and converted into other capitals, being, for that, the resource in the fights around the (re)production of social and symbolic frontiers (LAMONT; MOLNAR, 2002). Originally used by Bourdieu (1982b) and collaborators in their research on education to explain the differential rates of school success among children from privileged social backgrounds (as a function of the family transmission of the dispositions and competences that facilitated understanding of the pedagogical language, the satisfaction of the demands of evaluation and appropriation of school contents) the concept of cultural capital came to be used later both as an autonomous principle of social differentiation alongside economic capital (multidimensionality of social space) and as provisions for (understood as) legitimate appropriation of goods and more legitimate

practices (that is, what is seen as worthy of being appropriated) (BERTONCELO; MIRA, 2019, p. 24, our translation).

In this sense, consumption - the way in which the *habitus* can be expressed, as well as the cultural and economic capital can be made explicit - carries, among others, a distinctive dimension - if we take as a reference that all practices delimit our space within the social field - and taste is the way in which objects are transformed into distinct and distinctive symbols (generally driven by *habitus*). As a result of this aspect, taste – evidenced, mainly, by the universe of consumption – is what ends up symbolically expressing our *habitus* and our class characteristics.

> The idea of taste, typically bourgeois, since it presupposes absolute freedom of choice, is so closely associated with freedom that it is difficult to conceive the paradoxes of the taste of necessity: either by its abolition pure and simple, transforming practice into a direct product of economic need - the workers eat beans because they do not have the resources to buy another food - and ignoring that, most of the time, the need is only satisfied because the agents have a propensity to satisfy it because they taste what they either way, they are doomed; or by its transformation into a taste for freedom, forgetting the constraints of which it is the product and, thus, by its reduction to a pathological and morbid preference for things of - first - necessity, a kind of congenital indigence, pretext for the practice of a class racism that associates the people with what is fat and greasy, with strong red wine, with huge clogs, with heavy work, with thunderous laughter, with jokes, with somewhat rudimentary common sense and coarse jokes. Taste is *amor fati*, a choice of fate, albeit forced, produced by conditions of existence that, by excluding any other possibility as if it were pure daydreaming, leave the taste for the necessary as the only choice (BOURDIEU, 2007, p. 169, our translation).

In the Bourdian analysis, the taste of the subaltern classes would be guided, above all, by the sense of need, would lead to a feeling of resignation, to a "lack of care for themselves", expressing a functional aesthetic sense attached to the urgencies of everyday life, with which the popular classes would potentially start to prioritize "being" over "seeming" at the moment of consumption.

> [...] And the inversion of the importance attributed to food and clothing in the popular classes - which consecrate the priority to being -, while the middle classes manifest the concern with the appearance, is the indication of a reversal of the whole vision of the world. The popular classes transform clothing into realistic use or, if you prefer, functionalist. By privileging substance and function over form, they want due compensation, so to speak, for their expense, choosing something that "can last a long time" (BOURDIEU, 2007, p. 190, our translation)

Canclini (2009), based on the work of Grignon and Passeron (*apud* CANCLINI, 2009), attenuates the idea that subordinate classes, driven by need, would not impart an aesthetic sense to their choices.

> Even if the subordinate sectors do not have the time or the economic resources of the bourgeoisie to dedicate themselves to a stylization of their lives, they do not live a life without style [...] The theory of cultural legitimacy, which reduces differences to faults, alterities to defects, it fails to see the stylization that is printed to different parts of the house, everything that popular teenagers cultivate in the decorations of their bodies, in clothes and cosmetics, in their cars and motorcycles, in the atmosphere of their rooms or fun places (CANCLINI, 2009, p. 90, our translation).

Given the above, it is worth looking back at the contemporary Brazilian social configuration and questioning the ways in which groups seek distinction, establishing symbolic boundaries and creating links of belonging to each other. To do so, we will take as an empirical universe two spaces cut out in social networks: A Facebook group related to the purchase and sale of products on *25 de Março*, a famous street of popular commerce in the city of São Paulo, and the profile of the influencer Maju Trindade.

Methodological considerations

Proposing ethnographic research in digital environments poses several challenges. The first is to choose which digital "environments" would be the most conducive to the research objectives. To do so, we take as inspiration the work of Leitão and Gomes (2017, p. 42, our translation), who suggest:

> treating digital platforms as 'environments' was a decisive step, considering the fact that an environment is defined as such because it is associated with the very idea of life, making it inevitable to define the kind of life we would deal with.

Based on this argument of digital platforms as "environments" related to ideas and genres of life, we sought to find platforms that at the same time demonstrate consumption practices (buying, selling, disclosures and the like), as well as the discourses on these actions. Social networks, in this sense, fit the parameters of the most appropriate field for carrying out the observations. Instagram and Facebook were the platform choices for opening up spaces for both large advertising campaigns and small advertisements, purchases and sales of the most diverse goods and objects, as well as for discussions and forums in groups and niches of profiles and people on specific and varied subjects.

The concepts of "wandering", "accompaniment" and "immersion" (LEITÃO; GOMES, 2017) also served as the basis for the ethnographic work, since the extent to which the observed actors (influencers and their followers on Instagram and profiles who interact in Facebook groups) are not fixed to a single platform or page, it was necessary to monitor the transit between environments to better understand the speeches and discussions raised by them.

An example of this was the need to watch videos on the YouTube platform, linked to the profile of the influencer Maju Trindade, followed more systematically by her profile on Instagram. In addition, interactions via "follow", "likes", "clicking" on links, "saving posts" and "viewing", were also ways of enabling follow-up.

In view of the dimensions of research in a digital environment and the difficulty of directly contacting some actors (such as major influencers or administrators of large pages), the method of capturing speeches and their contents was indirect. That is, just based on what was publicly posted. Therefore, continuous follow-up using different means was of great importance so that it could be observed from different angles. For this purpose, an account (a profile) was created on the Instagram platform, to follow and interact with the previously selected profiles. To enter groups on the Facebook platform, a personal profile was used to facilitate access permissions to the content posted there.

To choose the influencers who would be followed on Instagram, a list of around 15 profile names was made. The number of followers, description of the profile, which niche it belongs to (fashion, lifestyle, cosmetics and makeup, comedy, music and others), history and partnership with brands, channels and profiles on other platforms and their reach, as well as news and reports about influencers were researched and placed in a list divided by categories ("Influencers in the beauty category with low cost cosmetics", "Influencers in the beauty category with low and high cost cosmetics", "Influencers who link their image to products high-cost brands", "Streetwear fashion influencers" and "Conscious fashion influencers"). Based on the data listed, three profiles were chosen to start the follow-ups. They were HypedContent, MajuTrindade and ViihRocha.

For the purposes of this article, we will focus specifically on the profile of Maju Trindade, an influencer linked to fashion and lifestyle, who began to be successful with her posts of short videos about everyday life on Snapchat and Vine platforms, as well as "vlogs" on Youtube and Instagram posts. She currently has 6.1 million[3] followers on Instagram and had

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[3] Available: https://www.instagram.com/majutrindade/?hl=pt. Access: 22 July 2022.

around 17 million views on her videos on her YouTube channel*[4]*. In addition to being an influencer, Maju is also a model.

As for Facebook groups, the choice was made by keywords and number of participants. Groups such as "*Lojas do Brás*" (9.4 thousand members), "*Maquiagem 25 de março*" (3.8 thousand members) and "*Cosméticos em atacado no Brás e 25 de março*" (4.4 thousand members)[5] were found. With permission to access the contents, the first group proved to be more conducive to observations since it contains posts more focused on dissemination, buying and selling, unlike the others that end up containing posts of other types mixed with sales content (such as religious posts and others).

The analysis, therefore, was developed from the observation of the posts, comments and interactions that appear, both by the members of the groups and by the influencers and their followers on Instagram. Screenshots of the posts and comments made were taken as a way of recording the data. In addition, relevant aspects in the speeches and details of images are recorded in a field diary for a better understanding of the data and information collected, as well as to assist in the formulation of research reports.

Rua 25 de Março in Facebook groups

Regarding questions about consumption and its symbolic dimension and the analysis of the subject in the digital environment, it is necessary to understand that social networks and the internet are spaces for symbolic exchanges, whether through goods and objects or ideas and images. Conceiving, therefore, the digital environment as an environment that enables the analysis of the meanings of consumption is also understanding it as "associated with the very idea of life" (LEITÃO; GOMES, 2017).

As a result of this notion, it is necessary to understand how "life" is governed in the digital environment, especially regarding the central theme of this research, which are the meanings of consumption in contemporary culture.

The observations carried out in the Facebook groups related to the purchase and sale of products on the famous *25 de março*, in the city of São Paulo, point out that even if the popular classes seek the lowest cost consumption spaces, there is always a search for the brand (even than in a replica), for the image and even for the ostentation. We noticed the massive

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[4] Available: https://www.youtube.com/c/majuthings/about. Access: 22 July 2022.
[5] Available: https://www.facebook.com/groups/1252936514819847. Access: 22 July 2022.; Available: https://www.facebook.com/groups/886799731740423. Access: 22 July 2022; Available: https://www.facebook.com/groups/187218858489222. Access: 22 July 2022.

dissemination of pieces that bear the names of brands and brands such as *Givenchy, Louis Vuitton, Versace, Gucci, Dulce & Gabbana, Adidas, Nike, Vans, Fila, Tommy Hilfiger*, among many others that demonstrate the search for products related to goods of consumption legitimized by the upper middle classes, reproducing the logic of distinction. In this sense, we identified discourses such as "looking rich", being "fine and rich", among others, indicative of the intention to express a social place or an image associated with dominant groups, supposedly carriers of "legitimate taste". As Bourdieu pointed out, spending on appearance – alongside food consumption and cultural consumption – is one of the main strategies for denoting distinction and the analysis of the material raised points in this direction, remembering that, especially in Brazil, the desire for acceptance Social includes personal presentation, aesthetic dispositions, clothing and the use of cosmetics.

Furthermore, still thinking about counterpoints in the modes of social classes in the Brazilian context in relation to the French context analyzed by Bourdieu, it is interesting to bring to mind the so-called "cosplay of poor people" (ALANIZ, 2018). The word "cosplay" is a combination of the word "costume" (fantasy) and "roleplay" (acting, acting, playing), and is popularly used among anime and manga fans to define a type of entertainment in which some people spend to dress up as characters they like in events related to the themes. The idea, however, of the term "cosplay of poor people" does not connect with the universe of anime and manga – although there is a similar term within it that represents precariously making costumes, the so-called "*cospobres (cospoor)*" or "cheap cosplays". The term "poor's cosplay" is popular among low-income students who have entered Brazilian public universities, especially those who depend on student permanence policies, to designate students (mostly from the middle class) who are supported by the income of their parents, who choose to "play the role of the poor" through clothing (designer clothes with an aged or frayed appearance) and other aspects as a way of complaining about the "financial difficulties" of university life and as a way of suggesting supposed "solidarity" with the difficulties of the less affluent classes.

Therefore, what can be noticed is that in each context different senses and meanings are given to what is consumed. The symbolic character of consumption practices changes depending on which actors and, mainly, which social space is observed. The desire for imitation occurs between classes and the distinction is placed in the ways presented in the disposition and consumption of goods. And, as much as the popular classes seek to approach the higher classes, there is always something distinctive, whether in cultural, economic and/or social capital - the latter being so relevant in Brazilian social relations.

The observation of the groups, on the Facebook platform, aimed at advertising, buying and selling the most popular products linked to the shops on Rua 25 de Março are more explicit in their objective of selling products. That is, buying and selling posts that try to sell an idea before a product are rare, most of the time the products and their values are exposed, the ways to acquire them and possible contacts so that orders can be placed. In the groups, it is possible to notice the existence of different posts of different clothing and cosmetics products, always with this structure pattern.

The distinctive intention expressed by the purchase is evident in the interest in the replicas, massively publicized in Facebook groups and, known to be a trademark of consumption spaces such as 25 de Março in the city of São Paulo. In these groups, the posts are direct, exposing the products and their prices, without content that refers to behavior or lifestyle, supposedly due to the fact that Internet users who access these environments seek the expression of a distinctive style in the acquisition of the product itself. The identification with a certain group or lifestyle would be materialized by the possession of the product, in this case, the replicas of clothing and accessories from brands.

In this sense, there would be no need to guide the construction of lifestyles in that space, focused only on exchange. It may be that at times the name of a celebrity is mentioned who was very recognized for using a certain piece with the intention of boosting sales. Even so, this action is aimed exclusively at the sale of clothing, accessories and cosmetics.

In general, in the Facebook groups related to the interest in commerce on *Rua 25 de Março* and *Rua do Brás*, the posts usually have descriptive captions about the products and the ways in which they can be purchased. In the images of the products, counterfeits and replicas of renowned brands can be seen, evidencing the search for symbolic markers linked to the consumption of certain goods. Observation of posts indicated interest in lower cost replicas and counterfeits. The figure below illustrates this idea:

Figure 1 – Publication of products withdrawn from the Group "*Lojas do Brás*"

Source: Facebook group "*Lojas do Brás*"

If in facebook groups the members expose themselves directly, posting images and comments horizontally, spaces like Instagram and Youtube presuppose the figure of the digital influencer, who will play a role of symbolic mediator between consumers and the brand, performing both a role " pedagogical" in the "education of tastes", as a "sales promoter", in the dissemination of brands and products. In these spaces, with the presence of influencers, the dissemination of images, goods and objects, in most cases, is not done explicitly and directly, being characterized by being more subtle and indirect, as we will demonstrate in the next topic.

Digital influencers: the case of Maju Trindade

The role of digital influencers is of paramount importance for understanding the dynamics of consumption in contemporary culture, as it is from these actors that much of what happens related to consumption on the internet and outside it is shaped and takes on meaning. Influencers can be understood as "new professional profiles that reorganize dynamics in the Communication market - from journalism to advertising" (KARHAWI, 2016, p. 41, our translation). These professionals have ways of acting and disseminating actions, goods, tastes and styles so that those who "consume" the contents created by them attribute value and meaning to what is disclosed. Extremely dependent on their own image, influencers monetize

for what Karhawi (2016) calls "I as a commodity", that is, from the transformation of the individual ("I") into a commodity.

The role of these actors in the meanings attributed to consumption in general is linked to their advertising efficiency, their ability to influence consumers, since their personal discourse and proximity to those who consume their content makes them to be seen as more reliable than celebrities in traditional advertisements. Karhawi also demonstrates the possibility of interpreting the construction of influence, reputation and trustworthiness of digital influencers from the Bourdian perspective.

> Another theoretical perspective to understand the construction of reputation in the digital environment is based on Bourdieu's studies on social, economic and cultural capital. Pedrone identified, in the Italian fashion blogosphere, that "bloggers use the cultural capital accumulated by formal education and self-education" (2015, p. 189, our translation); that economic capital is related to the possibility of sustaining oneself or not just with blog earnings. Social capital completes the triad '[...] as a factor that strengthens one's power in a field. It consists of the agent's [blogger] relationship networks and his social group" (PEDRONI, 2015, p. 190 apud KARHAWI, 2016, p. 44-45, our translation).

Furthermore, thinking about what was said about the construction of their own image by influencers, reflecting on the construction of the appearance of both these actors and others (such as followers and consumers) is a relevant factor.

As Jordão and Mendonça point out (2016, p. 149, our translation):

> Appearance is the first - and sometimes the only - information you can get about an unknown person in a public space. We can think that it is divided into two aspects: the immediate, which is the aesthetic image of the person, which involves skin, hair, clothes, accessories, in short, consumed objects; and conduct, which concerns posture, gestures, the way of speaking, walking etc.

In this sense, to seek the meanings attributed to consumption in the digital environment, it is essential to think about the role of influencers in social networks and their relationship with the ways of consuming goods/objects and lifestyles.

The digital influencer analyzed here, Maju Trindade, started her work on digital platforms at a very young age and, in addition to being an influencer, she also works as a model. When it comes to the style of posts, clothing and the like, the influencer does not differ from the approach style of other figures in her field, despite always looking for a different style within the field of mass fashion on social networks.

The influencer seems to be inspired by music celebrities such as rap and indie rock, for example. This aspect is demonstrated in the way she dresses, as she ends up wearing many

pieces in more neutral tones, with prints that are more specific to a romantic and urban style and that demonstrate a more Street Wear/casual trend.

When making observations about the influencer Maju Trindade's profile, what became more evident was the behavior typically corresponding to her profession. The subtlety in the way of publicizing products and brands in everyday moments, layout of posts with photos and videos that bring engagement - not only for the advertised product or for the brand that sponsors the "post", but mainly for the posture, eloquence and the characteristics of the influencer that end up bringing her closer to her followers.

The influencer is also a model and her trajectory as a model seems to have a lot of influence on the molds of the photos and videos she takes on social networks. Most of the posts found on her Instagram profile are very well "kept", that is, the setting, lighting, poses, spatial distribution between the influencer figure and the product(s) to be disclosed are millimetrically organized to at the same time demonstrate professionalism and proximity to those who interact due to the "simplicity" of the post. On the aspect of proximity and credibility Karhawi (2016) points out:

> This point is crucial when thinking about reputation and digital influencers: the Self. The difference between a digital influencer and a celebrity is precisely the subject, the Self. The digital influencer, digital influencer, or whatever current name it may be, is a subject who preserves her Self. While a celebrity is far away, under the spotlight, tracing a path of success that seems far away from those who watch them in cinema or television, digital influencers are on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, in other spaces occupied by 'common people' with whom they dialogue on equal terms. It is for this reason, too, that magazines and websites of traditional media vehicles do not have the same reputation as digital influencers. The proximity of these subjects to their audiences, their network, based on intimate writing, the use of the first person (in the case of blogs, Instagram, Twitter) and personality, creates an approximation between the content creator and their audiences. It is in this support that the symbolic capital of bloggers is built and, very strongly, of fashion bloggers who are seen as the best friends of their readers (KARHAWI, 2016, p. 46-47, our translation).

The way to advertise in the field of digital influencers is by demonstrating uses in everyday life, which means that it is not enough to mention the name or brand and the value of the product, it is necessary to demonstrate the influencer's choice by that particular product, how you usually use it and your impressions. As a result, what ends up happening is the creation of content that serves as product and brand reviews, "stories" and "posts" with a subtle presentation of products and unboxings.

The observed influencer's Instagram profile and YouTube account contain several posts that mainly cover the last two types of advertising mentioned above. By placing content in a

more subtle way and being sponsored by more valued brands, the influencer conveys an idea of a "finer" lifestyle, despite being an influencer who was also known for creating humorous videos at the beginning of her career in digital platforms.

As previously mentioned, there is a typical mode of dissemination of more traditional digital influencers that is based on a subtle way of showing products and brands in the actions of everyday personal life, a strategy that is very popular with brands that seek advertising partnerships and is advantageous for influencers, since "showing the day-to-day life" and their opinions about products during use can generate more engagement than more traditional advertising (the presentation of the product by the product/by the brand).

Maju Trindade, in this sense, proves to be a typical digital influencer who promotes products and brands in her daily life, inducing the consumption of certain goods and objects due to their "quality" (be it beauty, brand status, resistance and durability of the product). product and others). Figures 2, 3 and 4 illustrate this idea:

Figure 2 – Post of exercising in NIKE clothing on 11 January 2021
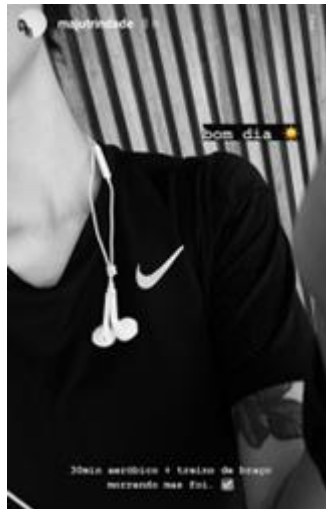
Source: Instagram profile of influencer Maju trindade

Figure 3 – Post of exercising in NIKE clothing on12 January 2021

Source Instagram profile of influencer Maju trindade

Figure 4 – NIKE-branded exercise practice post on 13 January 2021

Source: Instagram profile of influencer Maju trindade

In the three images, the influencer shows the NIKE logo on her clothes to do physical exercises. In these specific images, at no time is there any type of tag or hashtag indicating the brand, but the demonstration of the use of the brand is recurrent. Other brands used by the influencer are marked by the usernames of the Instagram account or by hashtags, but they are usually not marked with large letters, but small ones. In other words, it is a subtle promotion of products and brands, highlighting the difference in the way goods and objects are disclosed on

these platforms, compared to facebook groups. However, the distinctive intention, revealed by the exposure of recognized brands and by the behavior and lifestyle tips, is also clearly perceived in this digital environment.

Final considerations

This article sought to contribute to the reflection on the consumption of symbolic goods related to the construction of appearance in a perspective that put into play the relations between classes, within the virtual environment, social networks and digital platforms. The observed profiles and groups were able to reveal characteristics of the classes and groups to which they belong, as well as revealing rules and standards specific to the field in which they operate on the internet.

Digital platforms and openness to the formation of groups based on common interests configure a space in which Internet users, when participating in these environments, are inserted in an atmosphere totally focused on the indicated interest. In this sense, it becomes fruitful to think about the ways in which tastes are also influenced by the network itself that articulates the profiles directing them by keywords, types of content, engagement and reactions, and not just by the figures of influencers and/or product advertisements.

> Studying social networks, therefore, is studying the patterns of connections expressed in cyberspace. It is to explore a structural metaphor to understand dynamic elements and composition of social groups (RECUERO, 2009, p. 22, our translation).

Finally, it is worth highlighting the relevance of Pierre Bourdieu's contribution to understanding the mechanisms of distinction. However, it is necessary to pay attention to the ways in which the trajectories of these agents are shaped in a context that is different and much more complex than that observed by Bourdieu, especially when we take into account the rise of social networks and the lifestyles that derive from them.

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