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Articles

The operationalization of the concept of culture in communication journals: a systematic literature review

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Abstract

This article examines how the concept of culture is used in 148 scientific papers of Communication Sciences published between 2017 and 2021 in 30 Brazilian journals. To this end, a Systematic Literature Review and Content Analysis were carried out with a quantitative-qualitative methodological approach. In addition, the KH Coder software was used. A broad lack of conceptual delimitation was detected, as well as the use of culture for the composition of derived concepts. Identity and consumption are the most frequently used concepts in conjunction with culture. The reference made to cultural studies as the hegemonic current for the conceptualization of culture in communication research today also stands out.

Keywords: Culture. Communication. Systematic Literature Review. Content Analysis. KH Coder.

Introduction

This article summarizes the results of a study carried out as part of the Postgraduate Program in Communication and Society (PPGCOM) at the Federal University of Tocantins (UFT). Its **goal** was to examine how the concept of culture is constructed in scientific articles in the field of Communication Sciences published between 2017 and 2021 in Brazilian journals.

In this investigation, we started from the **hypothesis** that there is no conceptual delimitation of culture, as well as no explicit epistemic framework in these publications.

To compose the *corpus*, papers were chosen from scientific journals in the area catalogued by the National Association of Postgraduate Programs in Communication (COMPÓS, 2022), selecting those with the best ratings in Qualis-Capes, 2013/2016¹ quadrennium. The scope of the research includes journals with a broad approach and a more limited scope, as well as journals that give culture a prominent place. Based on a systematic survey and screening, the *corpus* was set at 148 papers published between January 2017 and December 2021 in 30 open access journals. This selection process will be detailed in the following section.

In this investigation, we have adopted two **methodological procedures**: the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and Content Analysis (CA). The search protocols was established by SLR, with criteria for including and excluding documents. We have used the CA to organize, categorize and interpret the data collected in the review, with the help of the natural language processing software KH Coder, a computer tool for visualizing and creating graphic representations of the data generated by manual coding. We then move on to the topic in which these aspects are explored in greater depth.

Methodological processes and procedures

The systematic literature review should not be considered as a literature review in the traditional sense, but as a research project, as it addresses a specified research problem, using existing studies, following structured search protocols and having reproducibility as a criterion (GALVÃO; RICARTE, 2020).

The formulation of the research question (“How does the construction of the concept of culture occur in scientific papers in the area of Communication Sciences, published between 2017 and 2021, in Brazilian journals?”), arose at the intersection between the relevance of the cultural theme for Communication Science and the inspiration for meta-research initiatives using explicit and systematic criteria. According to Sousa *et al.* (2022), RSL is an emerging method in the large area of Communication and Information, with a focus on initiatives in Information Sciences, but which has been growing in Communication.

The selection of journals was based on the list of active journals in the field of communication, made available by the National Association of Postgraduate Programs in Communication (COMPÓS, 2022), using the three best ratings (A1, A2, B1) in the Qualis Capes in force at the time of the data collection, the 2013-2016 quadrennium, as the inclusion criterion. The result was: no active national journals with the highest rating A1, six (6) titles with an A2 rating and twenty-six (26) journals rated B1. Of the latter, *Brazilian Journalism Research*

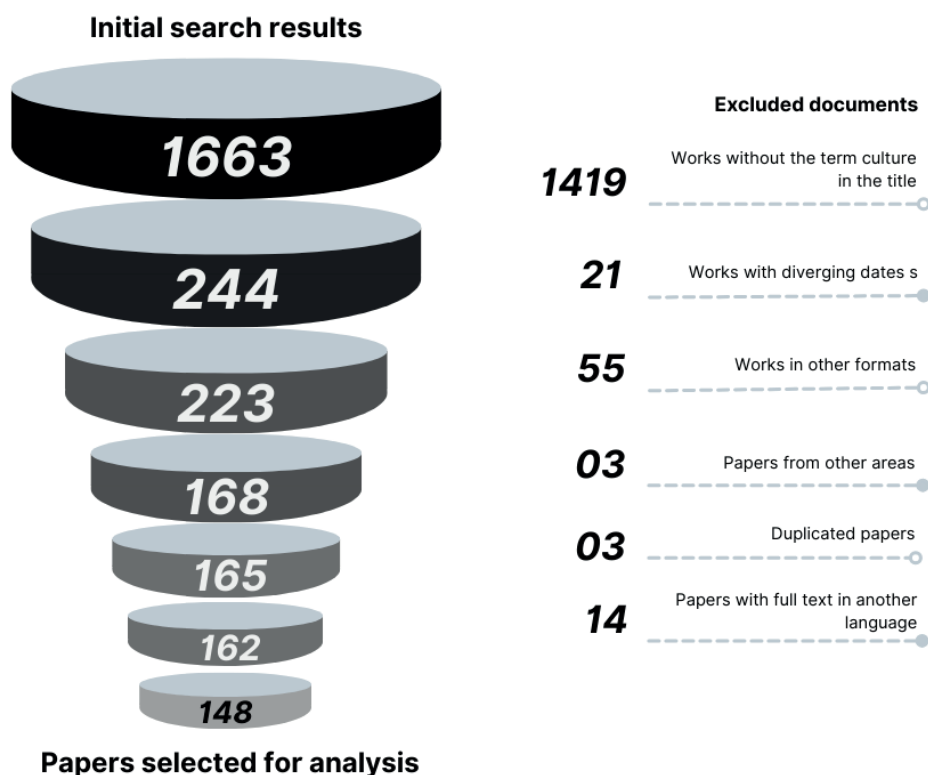
¹ Throughout the research, the 2013/2016 quadrennium was in force. However, at the beginning of 2023, a new evaluation was published for 2017/2022, which was not covered in the research.

was excluded, due to the impossibility of using the search criteria in the archives, and *Devires: Cinema e Humanidades*, because its publication has been suspended since 2017². In this way, the corpus of analysis was made up of papers published by 30 different active journals in the field.

The delimitation of the period of analysis considered the resources and time available, as well as the broad objectives of the review. As the focus was to examine how the concept of culture is currently constructed, papers published over a five-year period between January 2017 and December 2021 were selected.

In order to ensure the comprehensiveness of the results, a crucial factor for the quality of systematic reviews, according to Pahlevan-Sharif *et al.* (2019), the word “culture” was used as a marker for the search. By using the word without quotation marks, it was possible to include texts with related terms in the results, such as: cultures, acculturation, culturality, technoculture and cyberculture. Given these criteria, the inspections were carried out in June 2022 and the initial result was 1663 papers, which were submitted to the screening process detailed in the figure below.

Figure 1 – Screening flow chart



Source: Authors' elaboration (2023).

² This check was carried out in June 2022.

Since the survey was carried out individually in the archives of each journal, the screening process was carried out in two stages. First, a database was built in the journal databases using Microsoft Excel software, with the following information: journal, title, author, abstract, keywords, year of publication, and access link or DOI³.

The methodological support of Content Analysis (BAUER, 2002; BARDIN, 2016) served to explore the material, code, and process the results. This process was aided by the natural language processing software KH Coder to process and visualize the data. Among other software, the KH Coder was chosen because it is free and has a low computational cost, operating on personal machines with basic configurations.

This tool was used both to help visualize and create graphical representations of the data generated by manual coding and to generate data by crossing variables and mining the texts of papers. In addition, the software allows access to the context in which words are used in different parts of the sample, making it possible to check the contextual meanings of various terms of interest.

The complexity of working with an extensive amount of data in an analytical effort that goes beyond numerical indicators is highlighted. Although scientific papers have a basic structure, the variability of production is a striking feature of the field of Communication, and indicators such as objects, methods, or theoretical strands are challenging, as the inherent plurality of research translates into a non-standardization of classifications, which generally adds difficulties to the analysis process.

Having explained the methodological processes and procedures, we now move on to the results achieved from their implementation. They are combined with a qualitative analysis, with a view to achieving the main objective of this research.

Results

As already mentioned, investigate the current theoretical trends was the priority. For this reason, we have chosen a recent time frame, diversifying the sources and covering thirty journals active in the area, which published 148 papers containing the term “culture” in the title between 2017 and 2021.

Only papers that refer to culture in their title were selected for the sample, as this denotes the importance of the concept for the research. If the articles that mention the term and its derivations in the abstract were taken into account, there would have been more than a thousand articles published in the same period in the same journals, making the research unfeasible given the time available. This data draws attention to the widespread use of the idea of culture in the various areas of the Communication Sciences today.

³ The data relating to the corpus of analysis is available at the following link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VW60XbP6LDhrMiiCVPu8x2CHNASSY7IZ/view?usp=sharing>

For Calhoun (2011, p. 1485, our translation⁴), as a field of research and teaching, Communication has an irremediable heterogeneity, but it is still divided “between the embrace of scientific universalism and humanistic focus on contexts and cases, between the pursuit of quantitative precision and interpretative depth”, a duality that should be overcome. Looking specifically at the research analyzed here, this dualism is not representative. On the contrary, the focus on the context, the cases and the interpretative depth sought, but not always achieved, by the qualitative approach are predominant, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Approach used

Approach	Amount	Percentage
Qualitative	135	88.5
Mixed	15	10.1
Quantitative	2	1.4
Total	148	100

Source: Author’s elaboration (2023).

There are areas of social life and communication phenomena for which the qualitative approach can generate more accurate understandings and interpretations since they are situated in the universe of intersubjective values and meanings. However, this vast disparity suggests a gap, which indicates the need to expand quantitative research and to triangulate data in mixed approaches.

Quantitative and mixed approaches have their limitations, but they can be valuable tools for investigations interested in the macro-social implications of communication phenomena, in measuring indicators with better potential for generalization, or in establishing models for comparative research between different geographical, historical, and social contexts.

In this sense, the papers “*Consumo cultural e midiático dos jovens face às mídias sociais: Uma experiência no nordeste brasileiro*” (BRAGA; FELIZOLA; MARQUES, 2021) stand out in the sample. Drawing on ethnographic inspiration, the analysis uses data from 100 interviews with young people living in the micro-region of Propriá, in Sergipe, to map their media consumption habits. The text presents the partial results of a national research project, which brings together institutions from the North, Northeast and South of the country. It is an example of the benefits of combining analytical breadth and interpretative depth, as well as providing a theoretical-methodological model with the potential to be replicated in other contexts.

⁴ All the references originally written in Portuguese have been freely translated.

Pragmatism and empirically-oriented practice are founding characteristics of communication research, which was born out of emerging phenomena and became a field of knowledge throughout the 20th century (BRAGA, 2011). The results of this research show this trend (Table 2).

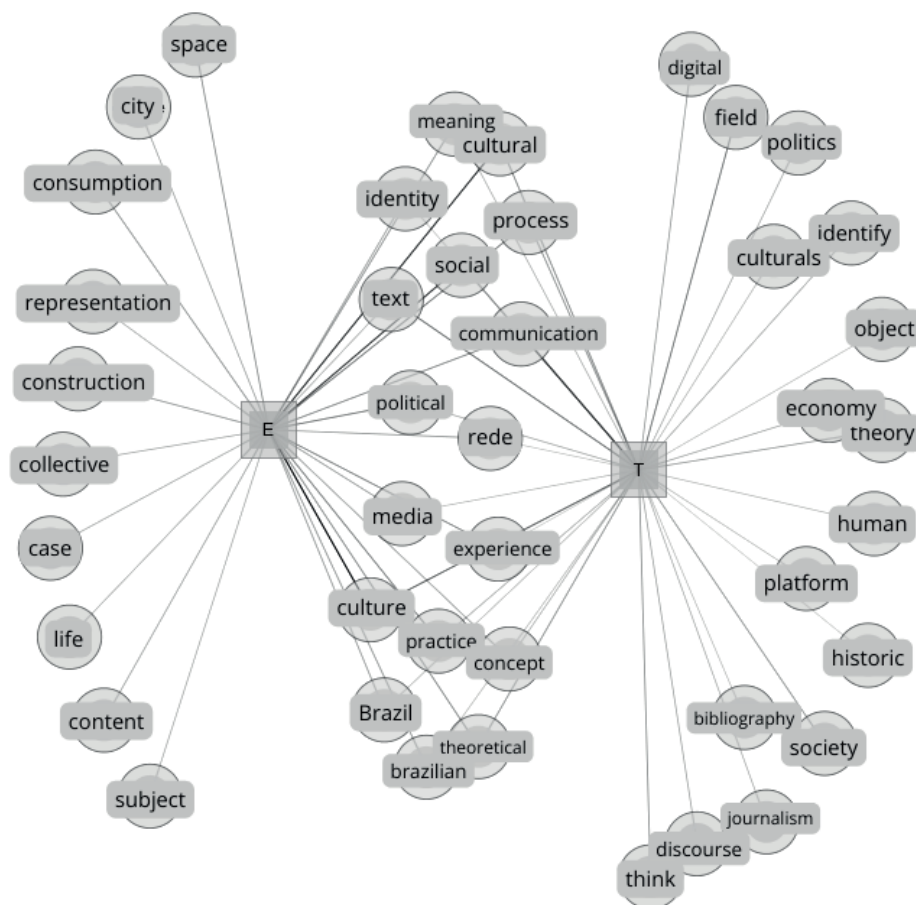
Table 2 – Nature of the research

Nature of the research	Amount	Percentage
Empirical	104	70.3
Theoretical	40	27.0
Experience Report	3	2.0
Methodological Proposal	1	0.7
Total	148	100

Source: Author's elaboration (2023).

Considering data from other systematic investigations, 27% of theoretical studies is a significant proportion, albeit a minority. By way of comparison, in a longitudinal investigation into the characteristics of communication research that interfaces with gender studies, Tavares *et al.* (2021) point to 90% of empirical research, compared to only 10% of theoretical elaborations.

As described in the methodology section, the KH Coder text mining software was used to generate graphic visualizations of the networks of words used in the titles and abstracts of the papers under analysis. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the most frequently used words in relation to the empirical (E) or theoretical nature of the papers (T).

Figure 2 – A network of words between empirical and theoretical studies

Source: Author's elaboration (2023), with the aid of the KH Coder software.

Empirical studies are meaningful because they connect the academic field to social reality, as unveiled by the position of the words: Espaço (Space), Cidade (City), Vida (Life) and Caso (Case). They can also contribute to the prospect of new theoretical approaches, intertwining concepts in their explorations, such as: Consumo (Consumption), Representação (Representation), Conteúdo (Content) and Sujeito (Subject).

The stage of the communication process on which the empirical analysis is based was also investigated, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3 – Stage of the communication process investigated in empirical research

Stage	Amount	Percentage
Multi	45	43.3

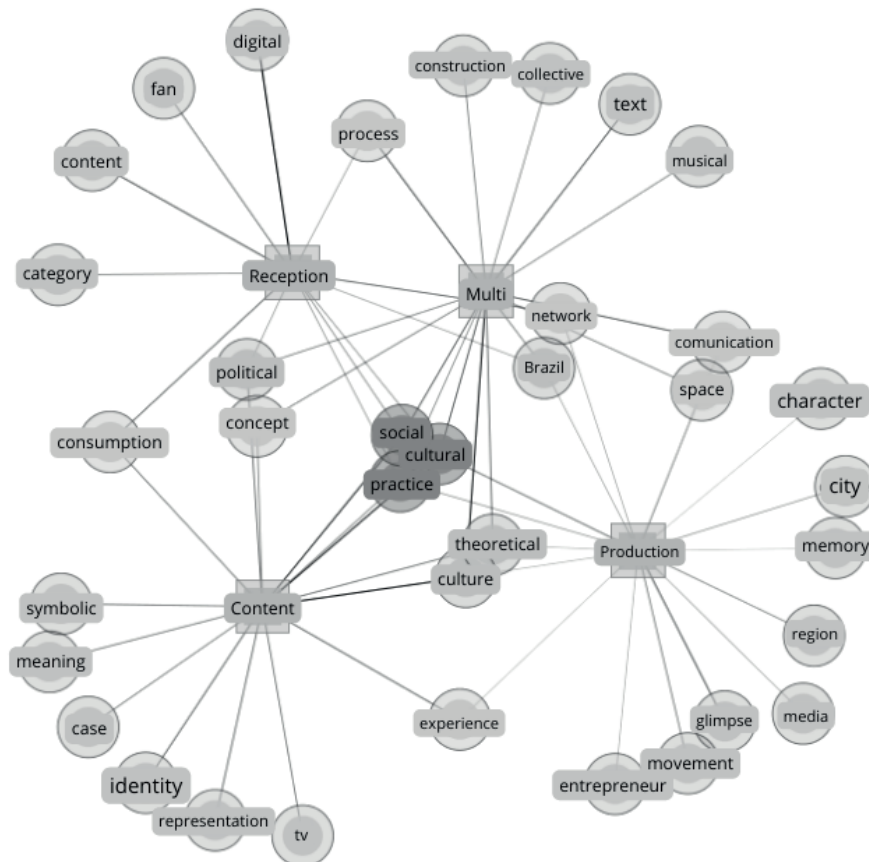
Stage	Amount	Percentage
Content	38	36.5
Reception	15	14.4
Production	6	5.8
Total	104	100

Source: Author's elaboration (2023).

Research has aggregated the various dimensions involved in its objects, linking the analysis of content to its reception, the contexts of production with the derived content and the influences of audience reception on changes in the context of production and derived content. However, the focus on content is pressing, even in research that addresses more than one stage (Multi).

The most common terms related to each category for the stage of the communication process explored in the empirical investigations, are expressed below:

Figure 3 – Word co-occurrence network by stage of the communication process



Source: Author's elaboration (2023), with the aid of the KH Coder software.

For Peruzzo (2018, p. 50), the predominance of empirical studies requires the “challenge in make more complex the object definitions, the methodologies used and the analyses”. At this point, the papers analyzed are valuable because, from the point of view of communication, they translate the multiplicity that culture embodies and the transformations that contemporaneity brings about. In addition to the classic object definitions, such as journalistic content, social groups, cultural products and events, there were texts that focused on interactions, content, and their dynamics on digital platforms.

On the one hand, the diversity of cultural objects expresses a certain methodological complexity, but on the other, there is a complete or partial omission of the techniques and methods used in some papers, a common problem in research in the area, according to Peruzzo (2018) and Lopes (2010).

For example, in “*Mandume: a oralidade e a memória cultural*”, which analyzes a video clip by rapper Emicida, an initial theoretical framework is presented to contextualize rap, based on the “historicity of representational violence that marked the constitution of Latin American national identities and the formation of their popular cultures through orality” (FURTADO, 2018, p. 145). However, in moving on to the empirical effort, the paper does not present a methodological foundation, nor does it describe the technical and analytical procedures carried out to reach the conclusions listed. It stops at the following statement:

For the purposes of this work, the verbal and visual language of the narrative constructed by the “Mandume” music video and two interviews that contextualize the launch of the work will be observed, in an analysis guided by the forms of representation in the reconstruction of black identity, by the types of behavior highlighted in the interactions between subjects and through the forms of knowledge valued discursively (FURTADO, 2018, p. 155).

It is noteworthy that the list of references includes Bauer’s classic text on content analysis, which was not even cited throughout the paper. This is just one example that expresses the need to advance methodological foundations and descriptions of the procedures carried out in communication science research.

In the papers that present their methodologies, in addition to the usual techniques (such as Content Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Frame Analysis, Semiotics and Ethnography), what is seen is an eclectic *modus operandi*, which combines different techniques and approaches to the objects and subjects in question. Among the contributions presented are: Analysis of the construction of meaning in digital networks; Analysis of social discourse by Agenot; Enunciative analysis; Textual analysis of audiovisual material by Casetti and Chio; Structure of feeling by Raymond Williams; Maps of mediations and cultural mutations by Jesús Martín Barbero; Historical method; Methodology of frames; Methodology of Software Studies; Generative Path of Meaning; Semiotics of Culture by Iuri Lotman; Actor-network theory by Latour; and Theory of recognition by Axel Honneth.

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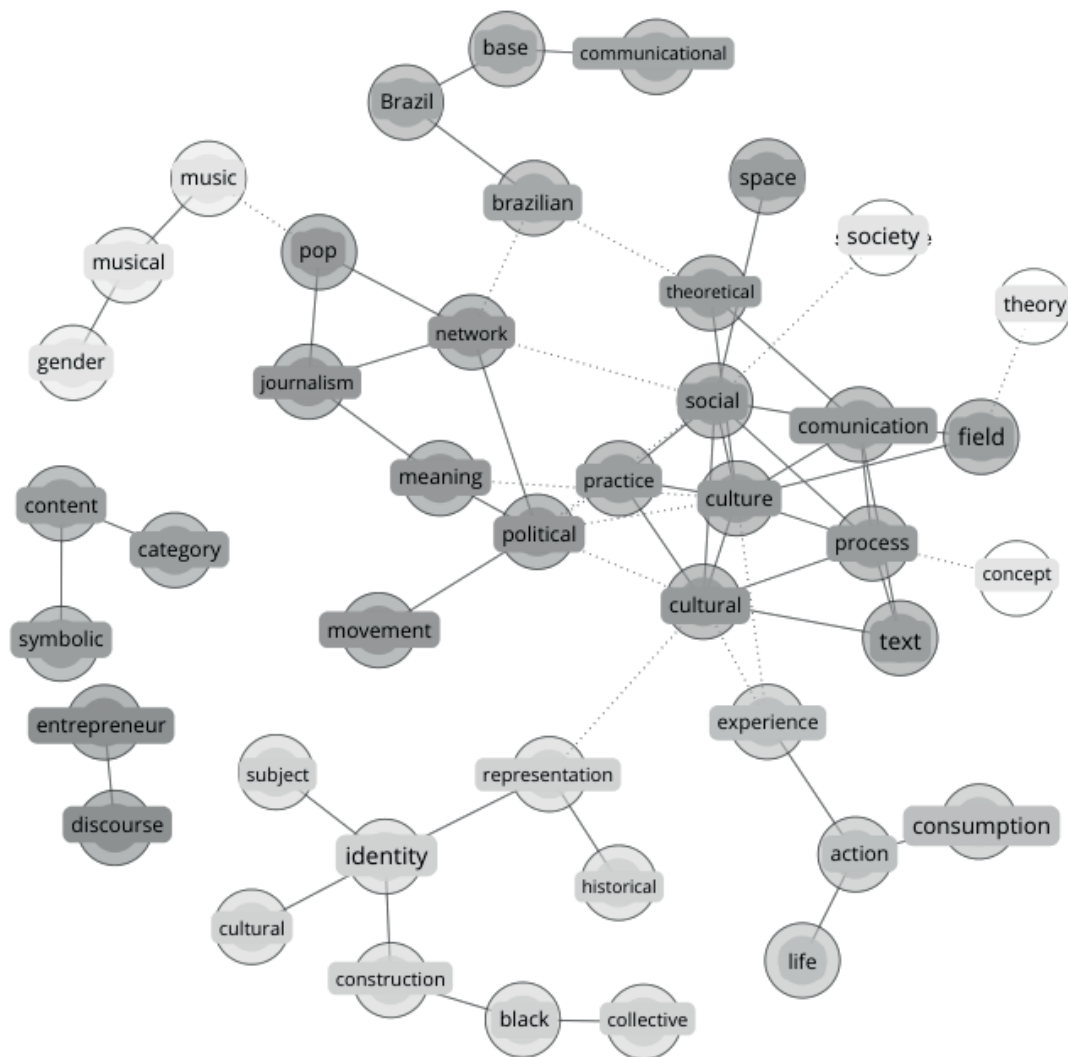
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the Humanities and Social Sciences. It is not possible to talk about consumer culture without understanding the current process of mediatization, its impact on the representations that form the imaginary and how these aspects operate in the processes of identity development, considering concepts such as mediation, hegemony, and ideology.

The analysis of the word co-occurrence network, shown in Figure 5, exemplifies the semantic field into which the research investigated falls. The word “identity” is directly linked to *sujeito* (subject) and *construção* (construction). In addition, this node is linked to culture (noun) through what is cultural (adjective) by means of “representation”.

Figure 5 – Co-occurrence network of words used in the abstracts



Source: Author's elaboration (2023), with the aid of the KH Coder software.

Consumption, on the other hand, goes through *ação* (action) to connect to *experiência* (experience), which is the key to culture and the cultural. The graphic proximity of these networks is indicative of their analytical inseparability, but it is important to point out that, in the papers analyzed, consumption is necessarily linked to a constitutive dimension of identity, to varying degrees, according to the framework adopted and the empirical objects in question. On the other hand, the discussions that use identity are not necessarily linked to the idea of consumption.

As exemplified by excerpts taken from papers in the sample, which explore, respectively, the role of subjectivity in the construction of the journalistic text, cultural aspects, and power relations in Twitter posts (nowadays, X), and the manifestations of culture and identity, in media documents from financial institutions:

Understanding the relationships between journalism and subjectivity from cultural studies and for us, therefore, means understanding the relationships between subjects and their social and political actions. It also means understanding that the places from which we recognize ourselves as individuals are constructed for us by a broad network of power relations, cultural traditions, representations of identities (ARAUJO, 2017, p. 36).

The recognition that struggle and contestation have a central point in the cultural construction of identities, in a diversity of contexts, elevates the importance of representation systems, such as media (MALTA; COSTA; MEIRELLES, 2019, p. 38).

Considering the construction of one's image through the construction of discourse is giving a voice to institutions and social actors. To this end, the enunciator constructs a presentation of himself through the enunciation of his speech (SANTOS; FREITAS, 2017, p. 281).

There is an emphasis on the subjective and discursive aspects of identity construction, both in individual and collective terms. Even so, the material conditioning of these processes is central to the analysis, mainly due to the influence of cultural studies. The work of Stuart Hall has been an essential reference for the question of identity and representation throughout the analysis.

On the other hand, starting from theories of language and semiotics, Hall assumes a conception of representation associated with practices of signification, crossed by power relations as a key element of culture (SILVA; PIEDRAS, 2018, p. 99).

Here, Hall (2003) once again contributes by stating that, in diaspora situations, "identities become multiple" where there are "links that connect them to a specific island of origin", but also "other centripetal forces" (HALL, 2003, p. 28) (CURI; BRIGNOL, 2021, p. 19).

By “representation”, we also understand the constructionist form given to a symbolic relationship established between object and image, both here referred to in a broader sense (HALL, 1997) (PEREIRA, 2017, p. 6).

The subject of Brazilian cultural identity was not very significant in the sample. It was the central topic of only one paper: “*Crise política e conflitos discursivos em redes sociodigitais: emoções, cultura e identidade no Brasil contemporâneo*” (OLIVEIRA; COELHO, 2019). There was, however, a change in the number of papers when it came to interest in aspects linked to regional identity and culture, which was present in 17 of the sample.

In order to better understand the consumption-identity binomial, it is necessary to remember that, throughout the first phases of the Industrial Revolution, culture was established as a critical tool against Enlightenment principles and the negative results of the advances in the modernization of societies. Slater (2002, p. 17) stresses the contradictory nature of consumer culture as a system in which “cultural reproduction is generally understood as something to be accomplished through the exercise of personal free will in the private sphere of everyday life”. Therefore, in the current mediatization of everyday life, it is the commodification of experiences that best translates contemporary consumer culture.

Like the British authors Slater and Daniel Miller, the French authors Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) are cited throughout the sample

to contextualize the contemporary scenario and understand the relationships between capitalism, entrepreneurship and communication, based on what the authors call “the spirit of capitalism”. The two authors point out the need to develop an ideology that justifies commitment to capitalism (...) (ZANFORLIN; AMARAL, 2019, p. 7).

The *modus operandi* of this engagement is the subject of papers investigating the practices of cyberactivism and online cancellation, as well as those interested in identity consumption.

Sometimes, this type of “militancy” works as moral support for the positioning of consumers within their circles of interaction. After all, in the current spirit of the times, forms and contents arising from consumer and entertainment cultures constitute distinctive social markers mobilized in this peculiar and ambivalent communicational manifestation of these consumer-citizens (POSTINGUEL; GONZATTI; ROCHA, 2020, p. 8-9).

This practice is also linked to the exercise of citizenship, and it takes place in a support process in which black consumers seek to strengthen the actions of individuals who share a culture close to theirs, creating a collaborative network

that aims to consolidate economic, social and cultural aspects of blackness. Afroconsumption is a citizenship action loaded with political symbolism that aims to confront the logic of racism (CAROLINE, 2020, p. 66).

With a few exceptions, a descriptive tone recurs throughout the sample, eschewing a more critical stance. The idea of consumption as an exercise of personal free will, from the private to the public sphere, does not represent a celebration of individual rights and social achievements, but an erasure of macro social conditioning, which shapes the unequal constitution of reality.

One exception stands out: “*Conservadorismo e masculinidade tóxica na cultura gamer: uma aproximação a Magic: The Gathering*” (FALCÃO et. al., 2021) draws on ethnographic inspiration to correlate the particular socio-technical contexts of geek culture and the mechanics inscribed in the game’s design and experience with the reinforcement of conservative values in the community surrounding the card game. The paper not only describes the expressions of toxic masculinity, but it also investigates its conditions of existence and how material variations influence the expressions of conservative values.

In this way, it is possible to see that consumption is presented throughout the sample as an analytical tool used to describe the ways in which we relate to cultural products and consumption practices, which transcend the possession of material goods and are increasingly linked to experience and representation, in their identity character in contemporary times.

Culture as a Category

We started from the understanding of analytical categories as concepts structured as theoretical-methodological resources, evoked to grasp the particularities of empirical phenomena and their reflections, whose understanding depends directly on their socio-historical context of elaboration and theoretical handling (SCOTT, 1995; ALVES, 2008). In the case of the concept of culture, this context was detailed in chapter 2 of the full research and related paper, and this discussion is not included in this publication.

In order to investigate whether culture has been constituted as a category of analysis, the presence and absence of conceptual descriptions for the notion of culture adopted by the papers in the sample was verified. It was found that only 25% ($n=37$) of the papers presented an explicit definition of the concept of culture used, while 75% ($n=111$) used the term without conceptualization.

The proportion of the result corroborated the initial hypothesis that there was a lack of conceptual delimitation of culture in scientific papers in communication sciences. Similar results were found by Sommier (2014) in an analysis of international articles published between 2003 and 2013.

Clearly presenting the concepts used is important so that they can be effectively used as a theoretical and methodological resource. Especially in the case of culture, the omission of its

description and linkage to a given theoretical context can mean that its meaning is emptied and its scientific use trivialized.

Throughout the sample, there are extreme cases, such as the paper “*Desafios e dilemas da institucionalidade cultural no Brasil*” (RUBIM, 2017), in which the term *culture* is used around 250 times, without, however, presenting a description for it or assuming an explicit theoretical affiliation. The following excerpts stand out:

Culture and its institutionality do not have an exemplary history in Brazil. Despite the nation’s discourse affirming, hegemonically, since the 1930s of the 20th century, Brazilian *culture* as resulting from the mixing of white-Western, indigenous and black *cultures*, institutionality does not express, even today, such harmony (RUBIM, 2017, p. 58-59, our highlight).

After a brief passage on the context of violence, which has devastated both “native cultures and peoples”⁵ and “black cultures”⁶, Rubim (2017, p. 59) goes on to say that “the persistence of the manifestations of these peoples in Brazilian culture derives more from their ability to resist and create mechanisms of symbolic affirmation than from any cultural support and institutions”⁷. In this sense, it is worth asking: what is the author referring to when he talks about Brazilian culture?

Mérodine Sommier (2014) points to an international tendency in media studies to associate the ideas of culture and nation, and stresses that the use of national contexts to personify cultures can be problematic, as it propagates a homogenized and reductive image of culture, even if it attempts to make manifestations of marginalized populations visible.

Another extreme case that emerges from the sample is the paper “*Desafios extremos da internet e contágio psíquico: sintomas da cultura do espetáculo*” (CONTRERA; TORRES, 2021). In it, the culture of the spectacle, despite being a central interpretative key to the discussion, is taken for granted and not described. The term *culture* itself is not used once throughout the paper, which is superficially anchored in Guy Debord’s (2007) concept of the society of the spectacle.

The use of culture in the composition of derived concepts is recurrent throughout the sample, especially in papers that do not present an explicit conceptual description of the term. In these, culture appears as a prefix for a certain type of practice or specific socio-historical context. In addition to concepts such as culture industry, organizational culture, culture war, mass culture, popular culture and pop culture, the following compositions stand out: aural culture, civic culture, digital culture, sports culture, entrepreneurial culture, gamer culture,

5 In the original: “as culturas e os povos originários”.

6 In the original: “as culturas negras”.

7 In the original: “A persistência das manifestações desses povos na cultura brasileira deriva mais de suas capacidades de resistir e criar mecanismos de afirmação simbólica do que de quaisquer apoios e institucionalidades culturais”.

material culture, media culture, nerd culture, participatory culture, therapeutic culture, visual culture, connectivity culture, convergence culture, inspiration culture, intolerance culture, archive culture, fan culture, meme culture, video game culture, cancellation culture, click culture, consumer culture, spectacle culture, rape culture and ideology of culture.

It is worth mentioning that among the 37 papers that present explicit conceptual descriptions for culture, there are good examples of structuring the concept as a theoretical-methodological resource. Such as the paper “*Culturas juvenis, identidades e estilo de vida: sentidos do ‘alternativo’ no Baixo Augusta/São Paulo*” (PEREIRA; PONTES, 2017), which seeks to understand the construction of identity linked to an “alternative ethos” among young people who frequent the region. The authors use a framework connected to British cultural studies and adhere to a concept of culture that encompasses the dimensions of dispute, appropriation and negotiation that exist between different social groups and their collective experiences and expressions.

The different temporalities existing in each cultural formation proposed by Williams (1979) are present here. Dominant, residual and emergent appear as temporal elements fighting for hegemony and in a constant dynamic within cultural circuits like the ones we analyze here. (...) In this fluidity that articulates elements of mass and hegemonic culture to those that are more innovative and out of the norm (in fashion, lifestyle or musical scenes), this “alternative-ethos” is being created among youth groups in the Lower Augusta (PEREIRA; PONTES, 2017, p. 123-124).

It is possible to see that the authors use culture as a theoretical key to analyze the elements of the production of meaning in the environment investigated through the axes of fashion, music scene and lifestyle, focusing on the construction of the alternative in a complex relationship with the hegemonic, not in a simplistic opposition, but in a flow of constant negotiation, appropriation and resignification.

Another interesting example of how to operationalize the concept can be found in the paper “*Jornalismo e ideologia da cultura: os conflitos entre indígenas e ruralistas em Mato Grosso do Sul*” (SILVA; RAPOSO, 2021). From the perspective of framing analysis, culture is presented as a stock of primary frames activated in the communicative process, in which

it is understood that the primary referents have their origin, meaning and resignification in symbolic articulations that dispute the meanings of the world and are expressions of the differences and inequalities of sociocultural reality: such as the issue of the ideology of Mato Grosso do Sul culture, addressed in this study (SILVA; RAPOSO, 2021, p. 253).

The study investigates the framing adopted by opinion pieces in the regional press in relation to the narrative of conflicts between indigenous people and rural producers in Mato Grosso do Sul. The focus is on demonstrating the representations, values, ambiguities, contradictions, and tendencies, as well as the characters and the roles they play in such narratives, correlating them to the ideology of Mato Grosso do Sul culture, a regionalist narrative that has discursively constructed what would be the ideal formation of this people in relation to others, external and internal. This construct has been used by local economic elites as a social demarcator since the 1930s.

In this sense, it is asserted that the use of culture as an analytical category can be performed from a variety of references and does not necessarily require a historical contextualization of the concept nor an extensive description. In a brief way, it is possible to locate the study within the horizon of possibilities that the concept of culture provides and demonstrate, in a practical way, how it will be used as a theoretical-methodological tool in the analysis in question.

The examination of the construction of the concept of culture in scientific papers in the Communication Sciences, in Brazilian journals, is then concluded, with a time frame between 2017 and 2021. We then move on to the final considerations based on what has been identified in this analytical topic.

Final considerations

In view of the main objective mentioned previously, this research went through methodological decisions that contributed qualitatively to the results achieved. The choice of scientific papers was the right one, as their short length allowed for a complete reading of the sample and thus analyze it in greater depth. The conceptual delimitation restricted to culture made it possible to understand the fundamental basis of current identity developments, an aspect that was corroborated by the results of the previous topic.

Based on the combination of a Systematic Literature Review and Content Analysis, with the help of the natural language analysis software KH Coder, it was possible to gather data that proved to be diverse in terms of theme and methodology, as well as the field of communication itself.

The analysis showed that the concepts most used in conjunction with culture were *identity* and *consumption*, which, mobilized as analytical categories, are part of a broader semantic field of cultural issues developed by the Humanities and Social Sciences. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about consumer culture without understanding the current process of mediatization, its impact on the representations that form the imaginary and how these aspects operate in the process of identity development of certain groups, considering concepts such as mediation, hegemony, and ideology.

Consumption was an analytical tool used to describe the ways in which we relate to cultural products and consumption practices, which transcend the possession of material goods and are increasingly linked to experience and representation, in their identity character in

contemporary times. The concept is necessarily linked to a constitutive dimension of identity, according to the framework adopted and the empirical objects in question in the sample analyzed. However, discussions dealing with identity are not necessarily linked to the idea of consumption. There is an emphasis on the subjective and discursive aspects of its construction, in individual and collective terms.

With regard to the conceptual description and the status of the category of analysis attributed or not attributed to culture, the data showed that only 37 papers (25%) presented explicit elaborations of the concept in its analytical articulation. The proportion of the result corroborated the initial hypothesis that there is a lack of delimitation of this concept in scientific papers in communication. At the same time, the use of culture in the composition of derived concepts was recurrent in the sample, especially in papers that did not present an explicit conceptual description of the term.

In them, culture appears as a prefix for a specific type of practice or socio-historical context. It is important to explicitly present the concepts used, so that they can be effectively used as a theoretical-methodological resource. Notably in the case of culture, which has a long and diverse epistemological trajectory. Such an omission of its description and link to a given theoretical context tend to mean that its scientific use is emptied of meaning and trivialized.

Examples taken from the sample show how it is feasible to use culture as an analytical category, even from different references, and do not necessarily require a historical contextualization of the concept nor an extensive description.

Of particular note in this context is the extensive reference to the work of Raymond Williams, as well as other authors characteristic of cultural studies, both British and American, Latin American and Brazilian. These references have consolidated Cultural Studies as the hegemonic current for the conceptualization of culture in current communication science papers.

It is fearful that when dissonant positions are used in the corpus analyzed, they are generally to, superficially and quickly, cite conceptual constructions from the past that have long since been overcome or to look for parallels and intersections between different semantic fields. With a few exceptions, the more critical theoretical approach is scarce. In this sense, the aim is not to question the value of the theoretical contributions of Cultural Studies to the Communication Sciences, but to point out its current peculiarities as an instance of consensus-building in the face of a hegemonic discourse. This gives rise to an effort to place the current elaboration of the concept of culture under erasure, in the manner of Stuart Hall himself.

The results of this investigation, as well as its limitations, open the way for new studies based on contemporary research in communication sciences, such as analyzing the appropriation of Raymond Williams' work, investigating the construction and theoretical articulation of the concept of identity, examining the dynamics involved in the emergence of theoretical currents in the Brazilian context, or even the use of the idea of culture in the different media of journalistic narrative.

The conclusion is that culture remains as complex as it is present. It is also a fertile concept for the Communication Sciences in times of neoliberalism and in the face of the changes imposed by socio-technical networks.

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Data that support the research are available in a public repository, with or without DOI.

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