

# *Connected co-viewing:*

The interweaving of user-generated content and viewing practices in the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre

**PhD Thesis**

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# **Connected co-viewing: the interweaving of user-generated content and viewing practices in the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre**

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## Abstract

Co-viewing refers to the practice of sitting together in front of a TV set, watching and making meaning from television content. The experience of co-viewing depends on the time-space where it occurs, on the company of co-viewers, on the genre viewed and on the materiality involved to be enacted.

Connected media and technologies have largely amplified the possibilities for co-viewing, by allowing people to do it virtually and in multiple screen devices.

Television viewing still retains a position of centrality for understanding what it means to live in a connected environment, as television content also got spread in an array of devices and viewing possibilities.

The objective of this research was to identify and examine the main practices that were interweaving with connected co-viewing and user-generated content (UGC) activities while viewing the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre. Although telenovelas can be considered a melodramatic genre, Brazilian telenovelas have a socio-realistic orientation that is interesting for scrutinizing co-viewing because they are known for promoting political debate on subjects ranging from racism and homophobia to corruption.

Over six months in 2015 (March to August) a participant observation was conducted to understand connected co-viewing practices through three cases studies: two unofficial closed Facebook groups, and one WhatsApp group. Semi-structured interviews and a qualitative survey were the methods implemented in this research. As a new telenovela would air, this period was selected for understanding an ongoing phenomenon from its very beginning, where normativity and procedures are established in the co-viewing practices, until its end when a new telenovela starts, and the groups change. The co-viewed telenovela in these groups had a controversial plot that sparked many co-viewing practices and led to political discussions and prompted debate across the groups, throughout multiple media, and among Brazilian conservative congress members.

For this research, a body of work on social practices, mainly based on Schatzki and other authors of the second wave of practice theory was used. This theoretical-methodological tool was used to explore connected co-viewing activities because practices are considered sets of interconnected and routinized everyday activities

carried out by human agents through the use of a different kind of materiality. Therefore, a practice approach, in all its variety, allows observing human activity through everyday practices and its entanglement with materiality. Additionally, the communicative ecology approach based on Altheide used by media anthropologist such as Tacchi, Hearn, among others was also implemented, as it provides a holistic outline of the context in which practices occur. This approach reveals the materialities, the beliefs, powers, and the traditions involved in the communicative practices of groups and individuals, as well as the reasons for people's connection and role's position in a practice.

By participating in the connected co-viewing within the groups, it was possible to understand that users co-view in those spaces because they can criticize the television network, enact practices that would be constrained by the telenovela producers, such as sharing links, collecting and archiving data without the copyright permissions. Additionally, users seek to belong to a group, where they can extend the ritual of watching telenovela that first took shape in their living rooms, with their families during their childhood.

This study demonstrates that UGC is a practice that always requires the involvement of people, even when it is just for doing dispersed activities such as searching and reading information. It was also revealed that for users who do connected co-viewing on Facebook, the act of giving an opinion or sharing any telenovela content means producing content, and this sometimes affects the content they receive on this platform, as they receive too much telenovela information or information from the users they interact the most.

Furthermore, through different kinds of engagement with UGC and by co-viewing practices viewers considered whether a prime-time telenovela should be pure entertainment or should be mixed with educational purposes. They contrasted and reflected about their own lived realities with the ways the telenovela they co-viewed portrayed the current socio-political events occurring in Brazil during its airing. Thus, demonstrating that the features of the television genre together with the features and agencies of the space where it occurs might shape the way co-viewing engagement happens.

**Keywords:** co-viewing, connected viewing, practice theory, communicative ecology, Brazilian telenovela, online ethnography

## Resumen

Co-visionado se refiere a la práctica de sentarse de manera colectiva frente a un televisor, viendo y dándole sentido al contenido. La experiencia de co-visionado depende del espacio temporal en el que se produce, las personas que llevan a cabo esta práctica, del género visto y de la materialidad es utilizada.

Los medios y tecnologías conectados han ampliado en gran medida las posibilidades del co-visionado, permitiendo que la gente lo haga virtualmente y en múltiples pantallas.

La televisión sigue conservando una posición de centralidad para comprender lo que significa vivir en un entorno conectado, ya que estos contenidos también se difunden en una serie de dispositivos y posibilidades de visualización.

El objetivo de esta investigación es identificar y examinar las principales prácticas relacionadas al co-visionado conectado y las actividades de contenido-generado por los usuarios mientras se visualiza un género de televisión específico, la telenovela brasileña en el horario de máxima audiencia

Aunque las telenovelas pueden ser consideradas un género melodramático, las telenovelas brasileñas tienen una orientación socio-realista que es interesante para examinar el co-visionado porque son conocidas por provocar un debate político sobre temas que van desde el racismo, la homofobia hasta la corrupción política.

Durante seis meses en 2015 (desde marzo hasta agosto), se realizó una observación participante para comprender las prácticas de co-visionado conectado a través de tres estudios de caso: dos grupos no-oficiales de Facebook cerrados y en un grupo de WhatsApp. Entrevistas semi-estructuradas y una encuesta cualitativa también fueron los métodos implementados en esta investigación. Como una nueva telenovela iba estrenar, este período fue seleccionado para comprender el fenómeno de co-visionado en curso, desde su inicio, donde la normatividad y los procedimientos se establecen en las prácticas, hasta el final cuando comienza una nueva telenovela y los grupos cambian. La telenovela co-visionada en los grupos estudiados presentó historias polémicas que provocaron muchas prácticas de co-visionado, llevaron a discusiones políticas y provocaron el debate dentro de los grupo, a través de múltiples medios de comunicación, y entre los miembros conservadores del Congreso brasileño.

Para esta investigación se utilizó un conjunto de trabajos sobre prácticas sociales, principalmente basadas en Schatzki y otros autores de la segunda ola de teoría de la práctica. Esta herramienta teórico-metodológica se utilizó para explorar las actividades de co-visionado conectado porque las prácticas son consideradas conjuntos de actividades cotidianas interconectadas y rutinizadas realizadas por agentes humanos mediante el uso de diferentes materialidades y dispositivos. Por lo tanto, el enfoque en las prácticas, en toda su variedad, permite observar la actividad humana a través de las prácticas cotidianas y sus intrínsecas conexiones con la materialidad. Además, también se implementó el enfoque de la ecología comunicativa basado en Altheide utilizado por antropólogos de los medios como Tacchi, Hearn, entre otros. Este enfoque proporciona un esquema holístico del contexto en el que se producen las prácticas, revelando las materialidades, creencias, poderes y tradiciones involucradas en las prácticas comunicativas de grupos e individuos, así como las razones de la conexión de las personas y la posición y papel de individuos en una práctica.

Al participar en las prácticas de co-visionado conectado dentro de los grupos, fue posible entender que los usuarios hacen parte de estos espacios porque pueden criticar la red de televisión, promulgar prácticas que serían limitadas por los productores de telenovelas, como, por ejemplo, compartir enlaces, coleccionar y archivar datos sin los permisos legales de los productores. Además, los usuarios buscan pertenecer a un grupo, donde pueden extender el ritual de ver la telenovela que tomó forma en su sala de estar, con su familia durante su infancia.

Este estudio demuestra que contenido-generado por los usuarios es una práctica que siempre requiere la participación de las personas, incluso cuando es sólo para hacer actividades dispersas como buscar y leer información. También se reveló que para los usuarios que hacen co-visionado conectado en Facebook, el acto de dar una opinión o compartir contenidos que hacen referencia a la telenovela, implica la generación de datos, y esto, a veces, repercute en el contenido que ellos reciben en esta plataforma.

Además, a través de diferentes tipos de implicación con el contenido generado por los usuarios y por las prácticas de co-visionado, los espectadores consideraron si la telenovela en horario de máxima audiencia debería ser puro entretenimiento o mezclarse con fines educativos. Ellos contrastaron sus propias realidades con las formas en que la telenovela que co-visionaron retrataba los eventos sociopolíticos que ocurrían en Brasil durante la transmisión. Por lo tanto, se demostró que las

características del género de televisión, junto a las características del espacio donde se desarrollan las prácticas de co-visionado, son elementos que modelan esta experiencia.

**Palabras clave:** co-visionado, visualización conectada, teoría de la práctica, ecología comunicativa, telenovela brasileña, etnografía online

## Resum

El co-visionat es refereix a la pràctica de seure junts davant d'un televisor, tot veient i donant sentit al contingut televisiu. L'experiència de co-visionat depèn de l'espai temporal en què es produeix, de les persones que participen en aquesta pràctica, del gènere i de la materialitat que s'utilitza.

Els mitjans i tecnologies connectats han ampliat en gran mesura les possibilitats del co-visionat i permeten que la gent ho faci virtualment i en múltiples pantalles.

La televisió segueix conservant una posició central per tal de comprendre el que significa viure en un entorn connectat, ja que aquests continguts també es difonen en una sèrie de dispositius i possibilitats de visualització.

L'objectiu d'aquesta investigació és identificar i examinar les principals pràctiques relacionades al co-visionat connectat i les activitats de contingut generat pels usuaris mentre es visualitza un gènere de televisió específic, la telenovel·la brasilera en l'horari de màxima audiència

Tot i que les telenovel·les poden ser considerades un gènere melodramàtic, les telenovel·les brasileres tenen una orientació sociorealista que és interessant per examinar el co-visionat perquè són conegudes per provocar un debat polític sobre temes que van des del racisme o l'homofòbia fins a la corrupció política.

Al llarg de més de sis mesos durant l'any 2015 (de març a agost) es va realitzar una observació participant per comprendre les pràctiques de co-visionat connectat a través de tres estudis de cas: dos grups Facebook tancats i un grup de WhatsApp. Els mètodes emprats en aquesta investigació van ser entrevistes semi-estructurades i una enquesta qualitativa. Pel fet que tot just acabava de començar una nova telenovel·la, aquest període va ser seleccionat per comprendre el fenomen de co-visionat en curs, des del seu inici, on la normativitat i els procediments s'estan encara establint en les

pràctiques, fins al final, quan comença una nova telenovel·la i els grups canvien. La telenovel·la co-visionada en els grups estudiats presenta històries polèmiques que van afavorir moltes pràctiques relacionades al co-visionat, van comportar discussions polítiques i van provocar debats dins dels grup, a través de múltiples mitjans de comunicació, i entre els membres conservadors del Parlament brasiler.

Per a aquesta investigació es va utilitzar un conjunt de treballs sobre pràctiques socials, principalment basades en Schatzki i altres autors de la considerada segona onada de les teories de la pràctica. Aquesta eina teòrico.metodològica es va utilitzar per explorar les activitats de co-visionat connectat perquè les pràctiques són considerades conjunts d'activitats quotidianes interconnectades i rutinitzades realitzades per agents humans mitjançant l'ús de diferents materialitats. Per tant, un enfocament pràctic, en tota la seva varietat, permet observar l'activitat humana a través de les pràctiques quotidianes i la seva connexió amb la materialitat. A més, també es va implementar l'enfocament de l'ecologia comunicativa basat en Altheide i utilitzat per antropòlegs dels mitjans com Tacchi o Hearn, entre d'altres. Aquest enfocament permet veure un esquema holístic del context en què es produeixen les pràctiques, revelant les materialitats, creences, poders i tradicions involucrades en les pràctiques comunicatives de grups i individus, així com les raons de la connexió d'aquestes persones i la posició i paper d'individus en una pràctica.

Pel fet de participar en les practiques de co-visionat connectat dins dels grups, va ser possible entendre que els usuaris formen part d'aquests espais perquè poden criticar la xarxa de televisió i promulgar pràctiques que serien limitades pels productors de telenovel·les, com ara, per exemple, compartir enllaços o col·leccionar i arxivar dades sense els permisos legals dels productors. A més, els usuaris busquen pertànyer a un grup, on poden estendre el ritual de veure la telenovel·la que va prendre forma a la seva sala d'estar, amb la seva família durant la seva infància.

Aquest estudi demostra que el contingut-generat pels usuaris és una pràctica que sempre requereix la implicació de les persones, fins i tot quan és només per realitzar pràctiques disperses, com ara buscar i llegir informació. També es va revelar que per als usuaris que fan co-visionat connectat a Facebook, l'acte de donar una opinió o compartir qualsevol contingut de telenovel·la significa produir contingut, i això de vegades afecta el contingut que ells reben en aquesta plataforma, ja que reben massa informació de telenovel·la o dels usuaris que més interactuen.

A més, a través de diferents tipus d'implicació amb el contingut generat pels usuaris i per les pràctiques de co-visionat, els espectadors van considerar si la telenovel·la en horari de màxima audiència hauria de ser pur entreteniment o barrejar-se amb finalitats educatives. Els usuaris van contrastar les seves pròpies realitats viscudes amb les formes en què la telenovel·la que van co-visionar retratava els esdeveniments sociopolítics que tenien lloc a Brasil durant la retransmissió. Per tant, això demostra que les característiques del gènere televisiu, juntament amb les característiques i agències de l'espai on es desenvolupen les practiques de co-visionat, són elements que donen forma a aquesta experiència.

**Paraules clau:** co-visionat, visualització connectada, teoria de la pràctica, ecologia comunicativa, telenovela brasilera, etnografia en línia

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## List of publications connected to the thesis

Pires De Sá F and Roig A (2016). Challenging Prime Time Television: Co-Viewing Practices In The Brazilian Telenovela. *Convergence The International Journal Into New Media Technologies*, 22 (4): 392-407.

Pires De Sá F (2016). An Overview Of Connected Viewing. *Connected Viewing: Uma Visão Geral. Matrizes*, 10 (1): 175-179.

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As this thesis is the product of engaging with inspiring people who participated in this research, I would like to give special thanks to all the participants of the studied groups for their time, trust and interest in my study.

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## **Thesis Structure**

This thesis is divided into six parts with a total of eleven chapters. It is recommended to read it in order.

The first part of this thesis includes two chapters, Introduction and Research Design. In the Introduction Chapter the path to define the research topic, the modifications that had to be applied during the period that the research was conducted, as well as the theoretical and methodological focus of this thesis are explained. In the Research Design Chapter, it is introduced the objectives of this study, the three overarching research questions, and the working hypothesis.

The second part of this doctoral thesis is dedicated to carrying an overview of the literature of the main topics of this investigation: co-viewing and the traditions in telenovela research in Brazil. In Chapter three, co-viewing studies history is presented, and the most recent studies are explained. Additionally, the relation of co-viewing with the viewed genre, audience ratings, social data, filtering algorithms process, and user-generated content is argued. In Chapter four, the traditions of Brazilian reception studies are explained, and the main used authors are presented. It also acknowledges the recent empirical studies about users' engagement with telenovela content in social network sites. Therefore, this chapter forms a basis for pursuing and expanding this area of study, by detecting ways to spur and apply new theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding viewing activities related to the Brazilian prime time telenovela.

The third part of this study comprises Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, which form the theoretical framework of this thesis. Each chapter address relevant theoretical resources for analyzing the co-viewing and user-generated content practices of followers of the Brazilian prime-time telenovela in unofficial and closed Facebook groups and a WhatsApp group. Chapter five elucidates an interpretation of the second wave of practice theory primarily used in the analysis of this research. Chapter six explains the communicative ecology conceptual model applied in the analysis of the studied groups. Chapter seven closes this part of the thesis by explaining the main characteristics of the Brazilian Telenovela, as it was the co-viewed television genre.

Chapter Eight comprises the fourth part of this thesis, the Methodology. In this chapter, the election for the case study methodology and the online ethnographical methods are explained. The ways the studied groups were select are detailed. The specific features related to the research field are specified, such as the decisions taken to get into the field to gather data and the ways for acquiring informed consent. The data collection process is described.

The fifth part of this study embraces three chapters that are devoted to analyze and present the results of the research. In Chapter Nine, the case studies are explained, and, at the same time, they are analyzed. The communicative ecology layers found in all the groups are scrutinized. The co-viewed telenovela and the current socio-political context are portrayed. Chapter Ten inspects the practices related to connected co-viewing and user-generated content practices enacted in the studied groups. Then, Chapter Eleven examines the reflective practices that occur during co-viewing, which were interweaving with the telenovela content and current events happening in Brazil. All of the chapters respond the research questions and confirm the working hypothesis. Nonetheless, Chapters nine and ten are more dedicated to answering the first and the second questions, while Chapter Eleven has its focused more concentrated in answering the third question of this investigation.

The last part of this thesis has only one chapter, which the conclusions of the study are addressed. It starts by elucidating the general conclusions of the study. Subsequently, it points to the limitations of the research process and the opportunities that have risen from these constraints. Finally, future topics of research that have originated from this thesis are indicated.

**Part I.**  
**Introduction and Research Design**

# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 The Path to Define the Research Topic**

This thesis has its origins back in my master dissertation, which had a similar structure of Ph.D. research project but in an extended manner.

In 2013, I started a Master Degree in Social Communications at Pompeu Fabra University, in Barcelona, Spain. From the beginning of the course, I had to decide which would be my research topic. At this time I was very interested in transmedia, as I had been reading some of Henry Jenkins publications and his blog's posts. I was very excited about all of the participatory ideas within what he called 'convergence culture' (see Jenkins 2006). This initial interest was what led me to find what later would convert in the topic of this thesis. Nonetheless, to decide what I would be researching I first had to pass through a long process in which the concept of transmedia was only the initial push to find my research subject, as my conceptions of participation changed over the research process.

As in the following year (2014) it would be held the FIFA World Cup in Brazil, my first thought was to do my master dissertation on transmedia strategies of advertising campaigns. This idea was related to my background, I was born and raised in Brazil, and I was always very impressed with the remarkable campaigns (throughout multiple media platforms) that Brazilian brands of distinct products usually developed.

Some months past, I read more literature and realized that my focus of interest at that moment wasn't the institutional level that usually is more focused on the professional production, often presented in transmedia studies. Instead of it, I was interested in viewers. I aimed to understand what we (ordinary people) do with media and what kind of practices we develop that are intertwined with them. I didn't know yet, but I was interested in doing what Couldry has (2004) suggested, to redirect the attention of my study towards the open-ended range of practices embodied in our daily life rituals, routines and politics (Hay and Couldry, 2011). This redirection included the usage of practice theory as the resource to look at activities related to new media, to old media, and to other cultural artifacts like media texts (texts, photos, videos, and so on.) This approach that Couldry (2012) has been using is opening

possibilities to look at a diverse typology of media-related practices that are useful to understand multiple phenomena that imply sociality in both digital and physical contexts.

As representations also are an important part of the practices (Warde, 2005), even more in digital spaces I decided to change my topic to study user-generated content (UGC). UGC by itself was insofar a too general subject, but it still touched points of transmedia storytelling. As one my supervisors, Carlos Scolari, says UGC can be considered part of the galaxy of transmedia storytelling content expansion (Scolari, 2011). Moreover, by studying UGC practices, I could go beyond the planned narratives of marketing campaigns, due to the possibility to look at users activities in different media platforms.

When thinking about users, it is important to make myself clear to the reader of this thesis. I prefer to use the term ‘user’, ‘viewer’ or only ‘people’, instead of the audience. Though, sometimes I inevitably use the word ‘audience’ because of the common discourse reproduced by academia. As Ang (1991) already pointed out more than two decades ago, the audience is a generic and institutionalized term that makes the everyday practices of different groups of people to get silenced and abstracted for corporative purposes (such as marketing sponsorship for increasing revenues), which is not part of my aim. Nonetheless, as Livingstone (2008) already stated, I am aware of the contradictory meaning of the term user, as it does not have any direct relation to group communication. Instead, it denotes an instrumental individualism marked by the single use of new media devices. Moreover, it is necessary to be aware that the term user also implies a relationship that is usually based on power, where a provider like Facebook is delivering a service that is used in exchange of user’s data. Therefore, pointing towards a utilitarian relationship that power is at stake. Although it is not the ideal notion of user, it is difficult to space from it. Nevertheless, we (academics) are using this term more and more, because it somehow illustrates how new media devices, such smartphones and tablets, became an important part of our daily routines, as they are the technological materiality we use for performing social practices in a digital communicative ecology (Hearn and Foth, 2007).

The focus on UGC started to get clearer at the beginning of 2014. During that January I was taking a lecture on cyberculture, in which I had to deliver an article at the end of the course. While researching literature about UGC to write this paper, I ended up reading many articles about second screen applications, Social TV, and

finally, I got to read about co-viewing. I particularly got motivated when I was reading articles about co-viewing studies. One of the main reasons was because most of these studies had their attention focused on viewers. In fact, co-viewers (people) were at the core of attention of these studies, which have their origins dated from the 1970s. Co-viewing through the years was understood as a set of practices that enhances situated learning with the use of material arrangements. This is because it occurs when two or more people watch media content together while discussing and making meaning of themes, actions, and social issues that are related to what they are viewing. Moreover, it interested me, even more, when I realized that co-viewing gets expanded and reshaped in the actual context where everything is connected (see Holt and Sanson, 2014), in which multiple platforms and infrastructure are getting more accessible and present in our interpersonal communications. People can co-view a media content through many devices, social network sites (SNS) and applications, and do not necessarily need to be present at the same location. Co-viewing is a set of complex practices (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012) that, when developed through connected devices, includes the practices of generating content as well as other woven activities (see more in detail in the Co-viewing Chapter). Thus, I decided to study UGC as a part of the co-viewing experience and the best way to scrutinize such phenomena would be by doing this in a particular context which people followed a unique canon narrative. Therefore, I decided to look at a very special context, the Brazilian context, and its prime-time television.

Within the particular context of Brazil, I choose to study the Brazilian telenovela. First, because in Brazil it is the most consumed audiovisual product (and highly exported to other countries). Second, because the given characteristics of the Brazilian telenovela are peculiar for analyzing co-viewing as they stimulate reflections on particular social issues (social issues form part of the social responsibility agenda of the producers of Brazilian telenovela) (Schiavo, 2006). It has a specific temporality that is interesting for looking at co-viewing. The Brazilian telenovela is the prime time of Brazilian open television. It is a serialized fictional narrative that airs on Globo network (one of the biggest media conglomerates of Latin America). It airs from Monday to Saturday, lasting around 6 to 8 months. A new one with an entirely different story immediately replaces the previous telenovela. It portrays many contemporary social issues that are part of discussions on many media platforms and are incorporated in various social practices. Thus, it is a ritualized event

(Lopes, 2009) (more details about this particular audiovisual product is available in the Brazilian Telenovela Chapter).

At the end of the academic year of 2014 and the end of my Master Degree, I got a grant for developing this Ph.D. research at the Open University of Catalonia (UOC), in Barcelona, Spain. At that moment I had a clear idea that I would be researching co-viewing and UGC textual production in relation to a canonic narrative such as Brazilian telenovela. However, Antoni Roig (one of the supervisors of this thesis) and Elisenda Ardèvol (director of the research group that I am part of – Mediaccions digital culture) helped me to refine the research project and to mature the methodology. It evolved from a more text-centered to a more user-centered research. Before it had a more semiotic orientation that would also include ethnographical methods. Now this thesis focus on social practices and follows a case study methodology that is also based on ethnographical methods, such as participant observation, semi-structure interviews, and a questionnaire, as it is possible to see in the Methodology Chapter.

## **1.2 Changes Along the Journey: Conducting the Research**

During the process of refining the research project, I chose how and where I would be investigating co-viewing and UGC practices of users that followed the Brazilian prime-time telenovela. I opted to do it on Facebook groups, specifically within dedicated groups to the telenovela. This decision came right after reading a study of reception on Facebook developed by Lopes (2012), the member of my thesis committee, a leading expert in telenovela studies, and creator and coordinator of the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction, whereby innovative research on serialized drama are developed. It also was decided after spending several months observing groups that were created to perform the following up of the telenovela *Império* (aired from July 2014 to March 2015) - the predecessor of the co-viewed telenovela of the studied groups of this thesis, telenovela *Babilônia* (aired from March to August 2015). On the one hand, the decision to develop this study on Facebook was attractive because Facebook at that moment was the most used SNS in Brazil (see the Brazilian Media Research of 2015), which included the use for viewing habits. Besides, I was able to see how a practice of watching television together was

transferred and somehow transformed by the use of SNS and other information technologies. On the other hand, it was a difficult choice. Having in mind that I chose to do it on Facebook that has an API (application programming interface) with many constraints to extract data. An API is:

“...an interface provided by an application that lets users interact with or respond to data or service requests from another program, other applications, or Web sites. APIs facilitate data exchange between applications, allow the creation of new applications, and form the foundation for the ‘Web as a platform’ concept... programmers can use screen scraping, a technique for extracting any information, of any type, from any Web page (Murugesan, 2007: 36-37)

Twitter in comparison would seemingly have been an easier choice, as it has most of its data publicly available, easily retrievable, and used frequently by researchers (Tomas, Poell and Van Dijck, 2016). Nonetheless, it would not provide the possibility to analyze groups’ co-viewing activities, as it is possible on Facebook.

As I aimed to do participant observation to understand the user's practices deeper, rather than take conclusions by solely reading their produced content, this study required following some steps for acquiring informed consent from the users (a topic further discussed in the Methodology Chapter). Elisenda Ardèvol’s advice as an expert on ethnographical methods helped me to plan how to proceed to acquire the informed consent within an online environment. Instead of signing forms as it is usually done in non-digital spaces, I had to be constantly informing people and getting their trust because of the constant flux of data and users within the studied groups. During the writing process, when I was reflecting on my methodology, informed consent became an issue again, due to the amount of users that participate in the studied groups. I had doubts about whether I lost control of ethics. During February 2017, I had the opportunity to join as visiting researcher the Digital Ethnography Research Center (DERC) coordinated by Sarah Pink, at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), in Melbourne, Australia. There I did a seminar, in which I could discuss, with experts in qualitative methodology, the ethical challenges of doing research on the Internet. This workshop helped me to understand that all the ethical decision-making of using users’ data that I had to do wasn’t static.

It was an ongoing process that ethics had to be considered not only at the beginning stages of research. Ethics had to be assessed and reviewed throughout each stage of the study i.e. while getting access to the site, talking with users, data mining and storing their posts, interviewing, sending a questionnaire, using quotes in publications and so on). Therefore, I realized that more than a formal document, what was important was my position, as a researcher. Decision-making was done all the time to update the participants and don't harm any of them (see Markham and Buchanan, 2012, for recommendations into ethics on the Internet).

Another adjustment along the path was related to my sample. The selection of the studied groups was at the same time random and intentional. Because I had been observing the groups of previous telenovelas, I saw that before the telenovela *Império* was over, groups were getting formed on Facebook for following the next prime-time telenovela. Therefore, I chose the telenovela users would follow not because of its plot, but because it would be the next telenovela to air right after the approval of my research project. Whereas, the groups I studied were selected intentionally. I chose the ones that had more activity before the first premiere of *Babilônia*. I was not expecting that within one of the studied Facebook groups, a user, would create and invite others to join a Whatsapp group. Thus, I had also to include this group in my research.

When I started the process of participant observation within the selected Facebook groups, I was using a research tool called N capture, from NVIVO (qualitative analysis software). This tool was very useful because it extracted all the publications from these groups, including comments, numbers of like and shares, photos, links and other metadata, which helped me to reflect more on the ongoing practices of these groups. Nonetheless, it stopped to work at the end of April 2015 (one month after *Babilônia* started to air) because Facebook changed its API and made impossible to extract information from closed groups - something that I was not sure until the end of July of 2015. I tried to use netvizz (another Facebook extractor), but it also didn't work. Since then, I had no choice but to create worksheets on an Excel file, copied and pasted the publications that I observed to be relevant to register and don't get lost in the flood of publications that I was already following and taking notes during the airing time of telenovela *Babilônia*. At the end of July, finally came the confirmation that it was a problem created by the API of Facebook. I attended the Social Media and Society Conference that was held in Toronto from 27 to 29 July. There, I participated in a workshop that aimed to discuss the benefit from the

integration of trace data and visualizations of that data into the interview process. Thereby, I tried to use the organizer's application for extracting data from Facebook and other social media (Netlytic app from the Social Media Lab at the Ryerson University). The creators of the app explained to me that it wasn't only an issue of N capture, but with any app that tried to get Facebook closed groups' information because the API of Facebook had changed.

Before starting the process of data collection, I had a very high expectation to look at user generated content (UGC) practices within unofficial and closed Facebook groups that co-viewed the Brazilian prime time telenovela. I considered and still believe these spaces more appropriated for looking at UGC and also to practices of co-viewing, as they are free from the co-option by the producers.

Nonetheless, I could detect that within the groups I studied UGC was not one of the main activities (when looking at them as more complex and sophisticated texts). During three months (July-to October 2015) I had the possibility to do a visiting research stay at the Center for Telenovela Studies (CETVN) at University of São Paulo (USP), in Brazil, and work with my committee member, Maria Immacolata Vassallo de Lopes. While working in this environment and presenting my research project to the CETVN group, I started to change the way I understood my objectives, hypothesis and research questions. The main point of this realization happened when I presented my research project to CETVN group and with their feedback I realized that was fundamental to adjust my research design. When I came back to Barcelona, I had several meetings with the professor Antoni Roig to discuss the changes I should apply in this part of my research.

Another fundamental change of this thesis was in its format. I planned to do it via the compendium of articles. For a while, I worked in the publications that are related to this thesis, and in some portions appear as part the current text of this thesis. I did it as both of my supervisors, Carlos Scolari, and Antoni Roig, advised me to do, to do not depend on external resources such as the publishers and journals schedules.

### **1.3 Clarifications into the Current Theoretical Focus**

The concept of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2003) was necessary for finding my topic. Nevertheless, this study is not focused on texts and expansions of a canonic

fictional world, nor is about the drillability, and spreadability users do for being part of this transmedia universe in commercial social media platforms (Jenkins, Ford, and Green, 2013). Instead, I look at the interconnected practices users do while co-viewing. I am conscious that some of the practices can be considered transmedia expansions, such as creative UGC. However, I don't look at the narrative as the only precondition to such practices to materialize in the format they do. Co-viewing in connected spaces such as Facebook groups requires users to interact with one another, and some norms are established to this to occur, expectations play a significant role, and also others users validate what is important to certain activities to be accepted. Moreover, some practices might even start because of the background of users, and not because of the narrative (telenovela) itself. Nonetheless, I take into account how a traditional genre like Brazilian telenovela also plays a role in the co-viewing activities.

Second, this thesis expands the hypermediations epistemology (Scolari 2008; 2015) because it uses new analytical categories. The practice theory approach, based on Schatzki and authors that have been entitled 'second wave' of practice theorists (Postill, 2011) such as Shove, Warde, Reckwitz, Postill, Roig among others are used. The choice for using these theoretical and analytical resources is aligned to what Buckingham (2017) states. He affirms that practice theory takes a step further by challenging the basic dualist distinction of agency vs. structure, showing that social structure doesn't exist "...out there, which can be considered separately from the practices of human individuals (or 'subjects')" (Buckingham, 2017:15). Or as Hui, Schatzki and Shove (2017) state practices theory moves beyond familiar tropes such as the previous mentioned (agency vs. structure), micro vs. macro, process vs. product, and in my particular case viewing vs. content/medium. Besides, Hui, Schatzki, and Shove (2017) state that practice theory challenges the way we explain all social phenomena. This is because subjects come to existence through social practices that are interconnected with power, institutions, norms, markets, science between other aspects (including materiality and technologies) in which nexus of practices are rooted.

I also use the communicative ecological approach based on Altheide (1995; 1994) and used by media anthropologists such as Jo Tacchi (2006). This framework helps me to understand the co-viewing as a social practice that embraces the materiality, temporality and is intertwined with other practices in a larger ecology in

which power and information technologies are at stake. Therefore, being useful to reach a complete understanding of the communicative processes and the materiality involved within the co-viewing practices. This thesis also has the influence of science and technologies studies (STS), as critical thinking into artifacts and their agency is also considered (Latour, 2005). Moreover, within a wider communicative ecology, in which the researched phenomena occurred (within SNS), some particularities shape people's experiences in these kind digital spaces such as, algorithmically filtering process (Bucher, 2012; 2016) and politics behind platforms and commercial interfaces (Gillespie, 2009).

Third, the way I had looked to participatory culture (Jenkins, 2006) before I started the research process changed. I understood that this euphoria about convergence culture and new media tends to ignore the massive political and economic interests that are at stake, and the several positions people are/have when they perform social practices (Alkemeyer and Buschmann, 2017). Following Couldry (2011), I consider that Henry Jenkins' 'convergence culture' is useful for a starting point to understand new emerging social practices because it provides important clues of their functioning. However, this optimism into the world where connected action occurs has covered key elements that differentiate and stratify processes of convergence and so risks to misreading contemporary media's implications for wider culture and politics (Couldry, 2011: 489). Additionally, Carpentier based on Pateman (1970), sees that a participatory culture is a utopia (Jenkins and Carpentier, 2013). It is because according to Pateman participation would only occur when decision-making happens without power imbalances for all actors involved. Following Carpentier, Roig states that without equal power might be argued that:

“... interaction (understood as the mutual action of different agents) and engagement (understood in subjective terms as invitation, involvement, and empowerment) may favour participation but cannot guarantee or replace it because they do not make provisions for the existing power dynamics...” (Roig, 2016: 2)

Fourth, in some ways, this thesis has influences from audience and television studies previously done by scholars from Cultural Studies (Hall, 1973; Morley, 1980; Ang, 1985; etc.), which have greatly influenced Brazilian reception studies.

Furthermore, the Cultural Studies contributions in less or lower degrees are relevant to any study that touches subjects of viewership, and somehow all may draw from this essential heritage. Nonetheless, it is important to be conscious that the current context, in which this study is part of, is very different than the milieu in which cultural studies related to television occurred. The communicative ecology was different, with fewer devices, lower possibilities of viewing, no World Wide Web, much less information and communications infrastructures, and not to mention the particular social-political context that Britain was living. Nonetheless, Hall's contribution with his seminal work, *Encoding and Decoding* (1973), which introduced the possibility to see the degrees to which users could understand or misunderstand messages, and moved away from the behavioristic model of stimulus-response is taken as a point of departure to understand the co-viewing phenomena in its current format. As well as Brunson and Morley's (1978) study about the Nationwide that advocates the idea that audience interpretations and activities could vary according to different codes shared by people and by their social class, by their communities, their families and so on. Also, Ang (1985) study of Dallas has influence in this work, as it portrayed how viewers could perceive their realities, and somehow understand their gender and identity through a narrative.

As already pointed out by Burgess (2016), the Cultural Studies have often been concerned with the relationship between mass media and the agency of ordinary people. Thus, these studies were particularly marked with works interested in the active audience, and they have been reflected in a particular interest in fans, as they were considered a proof of such activity. Fandom has been used by Cultural Studies to express this mode of engagement with the products of the mass media in contrast to more casual forms of consumption associated with the media viewing. Nonetheless, with the changes in the communicative ecology and the available toolkits to engage with media content, it is possible to find productivity almost everywhere. Therefore, fandom and the status of the fan have been heavily promoted by industry as a commodity and as word of convenience to legitimize practices in the digital environment, and to try to engage a supposed audience that is getting more fragmented with vast possibilities of viewing. It doesn't mean that the category of the fan is not relevant or does not exist. In fact, the fan theories are relevant because they deal with dedicated consumption and user activity. Nonetheless, it is necessary to avoid the confusion between dedicated consumption (following) with the idea of

fandom, even more now that everyone can be part of multiple groups in social media sites and use these spaces as an extension of their everyday practices and routines. Although this research deals with engagement with a cultural product, this study is neither a fan nor a fandom study. In this thesis, I studied groups of people that followed the Brazilian prime time telenovela *Babilônia*. I assume that Brazilian telenovela co-viewing is an everyday media phenomenon and a ritualized type of behavior that was constructed along the Brazilian telenovela and television history (see Brazilian Telenovela Chapter). Therefore, I treat the groups I studied as social spaces and do not classify them as fandoms. Additionally, as already mentioned, many private companies that started to implement new ways of monetizing on SNS trivialize the word fan. Although the conception of audience category still works in television, for profit making, the fan became a category that is necessary to engage viewers that have this array of media and content options. As Ang (1991) says, media industry doesn't have means to coerce people to become a viewer. As an example, before the efforts were put into transforming viewers in an audience, now a lot of effort is put on UGC and user participation. The traditional media industry has been showing a constant need to turn all users into active fans, as it serves as a word-of-mouth to traditional media to be present on SNS and increase revenues (see Benchmann and Lomborg 2012). Additionally, Sapiera (2004) states that television networks have been creating fan pages in SNS to be the formal spaces, which they try to drawn people together and retain control of their audience interpellation. Therefore, this research was carried out in two unofficial and closed groups from Facebook and one group from WhatsApp because they were digital spaces where Globo network did not have any kind of direct control over members' activities.

I also treat the users as followers, not as fans. It doesn't mean that in those spaces there wasn't any fan activity or fans. Notwithstanding, these distinctions I've done contribute to the literature of fan studies, as I have a more nuanced understanding of different fan-like media practices. Gray (2003) and Hills (2015) acknowledge that various studies focus exclusively on the viewing practices of fans, whereas other categories such as non-fans get disregarded. Therefore, I consider my research to be a relevant contribution by taking into consideration the interaction and swapping positions that subjects might have (as fans, non-fans, and anti-fans). I also establish a distinction between fans and followers, based on levels of engagement and emotional investment, and this multiplicity of subject positions and emotional

distances that people might have about media content. Thus, followers may watch and enjoy a show often, but they do not claim a larger social identity based on this kind of consumption (Tulloch and Jenkins, 1995). Translating Giulianotti's (2002) perspective vis-à-vis football fandom to this study, I consider that followers of a specific telenovela can be interested in other telenovelas or another kind of shows or genres. Thus, becoming agents that shift between multiple offers of media content. Likewise, Hills (2015) explains that media consumption habits are not limited to what might be considered fan-texts. Hence, devoted following up of media content does not fundamentally imply full incorporation into the self. Consequently, users that don't identify themselves as a fan still engage in SNS in activities that many consider fans' activities.

Nonetheless, I do not entirely classify this thesis as a traditional audience study because, as Hay and Couldry (2011) state, Cultural Studies always tried to look at practices that happen into a particular medium. However, neither then nor now, we can say, "the media-scape was such that one necessarily had to separate media for purposes of analysis" (Hay and Couldry, 2011: 479). Furthermore, the use of practice theory as the primary resource for analyzing connected co-viewing practices contributes to seeing this phenomenon in a more relational way. As it helps to blur the distinctions between production and reception, because in practice theory sociality only exist in relation to other practices, and is produced through a process of mutual constitution between humans and non-humans agency. Also, because co-viewing studies are not grounded in Cultural Studies, they come from the psychology realm. Moreover, I use resources that come from other fields such as STS (Science and Technology Studies), sociology between others, as well as methods that derived from anthropology. All these different sources of information that I used were necessary to the overall understanding of the practices I researched. Within the actual context, connected media and technologies overlap and are part of many practices in the digital (and non-digital) spaces. Finally, the Ph.D. program I did was interdisciplinary, called Information and Knowledge Society. The interdisciplinarity of this program contributed to my research because I could exchange literature with peers from different backgrounds and I ended up reading various works from other fields of inquiry. Sometimes these works were from different paradigms. Nonetheless, they were used because when delving deeper they had intersecting ideas that complemented each other. Thus, aiding me to understand the object of study.

## **2. Research Design**

## 2.1 The Study Design

From the very beginning, this study was designed to follow the second wave of practice theorists and oriented to understand the organization of the main practices of connected co-viewing related to the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre. As I selected the practice approach, I was able to understand how media-related practices are performed and, at the same time, how they can be subject to change over their enactment and through the materiality used to their performances.

As an example, the design of this study has evolved through time during the research practice. This is because it was necessary to re-adapt continuously through literature review, and the empirical data found in the fieldwork, and through issues imposed by the interfaces where the research took place (Facebook and WhatsApp).

The general goal of this thesis was to identify and scrutinize the main practices that were interweaving with connected co-viewing and UGC activities while watching the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre. In the beginning, I had expectations, preconceptions, and intuitions that played a role in the way I first planned this research. I expected to discover which kind of complex UGC creation such as memes were done while people co-viewed the telenovela, and the reasons they did this sort of activity. Also, I expected to discover, while practicing co-viewing, which kind of intertextual relations users made between the prime-time telenovela, the UGC and the socio-political context in Brazil.

I had expectations of finding a lot of users doing mashups, videos, memes, among others. Although users shared these sort of content during the telenovela airing, these activities were not the most developed among them. When talking with users via Facebook messenger, in informal conversation, and during the interviews I've done through the same application, users affirmed that they do create content. Nonetheless, the way they understood what was to produce content was different from my initial conception, which left me no other choice rather than adapting the research questions and the objectives.

The most interesting point when I was researching the case studies, and applying ethnographical methods, was that unexpected insights occurred and I had to learn by doing the research. In other words, I had to adapt to the reality I was immersed. I planned to use the qualitative data analysis software NVIVO to extract datasets from the Facebook groups I was participating, as it was a way for further

contrasting my notes and co-viewing perceptions. I started doing this by using the NVIVO plugin called N capture. Nonetheless, Facebook has changed its API one month after I started the fieldwork. Thus, leaving no other choice other than to adapt the way I would collect, store and analyze the data. I opted for using Excel for storing the most relevant posts that were later incorporated in NVIVO.

I still used NVIVO to code my categories of analysis and to run some tests that facilitated the qualitative analysis process, such as searching for the most used words, looking words in particular contexts, seeing clouds and conceptual maps. Also, it was used to code the interviews and the questionnaire, facilitating data analysis and visualization of the answers.

Although I studied groups that followed a television genre that have a stable basis for consumption, the phenomenon of connected co-viewing on SNS and instant messaging applications was relatively new, and it had a predictable degree of unexpected events. This is because the phenomenon I studied was not part of a controlled environment, the groups were getting formed, and a new telenovela was followed. For instance, another unexpected event during my research was a formation of a WhatsApp group within one of the Facebook groups I was studying. It led me to investigate co-viewing also within this space, which generated new insights. Besides that, I expected to develop the interviews on Skype, but none of the users used this software. Therefore, these transformations along the path of the study made me look for new literature and adapt the way the research was conducted.

## **2.2 Working Hypothesis**

Although the research design past for a process of update because I was researching a growing phenomenon, the hypothesis I worked during this study remained the same:

Unofficial groups of TV shows (like Rede Globo telenovelas) on Facebook are social spaces where information is created and distributed in a more independent manner in comparison to official spaces. Even though, paradoxically they are places that are part of powerful private platforms. In these loci, users can auto-manage their participation and have more autonomy for criticizing social issues, the producers

(Rede Globo), and the process of telenovela production. Everyone can collaborate and contribute to a collective learning around the discussed issues without requiring the intervention or surveillance of the media group. Therefore, the practices of connected co-viewing developed within these groups can challenge the issues of the narrative (telenovela), consequently transforming traditional viewing practices.

Summarizing it, the working hypothesis was:

- Unofficial spaces within SNS are places that users can escape the direct co-option of the producers and feel comfortable to perform practices that otherwise wouldn't happen.

### 2.3 Objectives

Although my specific objectives and research questions evolved over time because of the process of studying something that was in progress, the main aim remained the same.

**General objective of the study:** To identify and examine the main practices that were interweaving with connected co-viewing and UGC activities while viewing the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre.

The specific objectives have evolved to:

- **First specific objective:** To reveal the organization and integration of the main practices interconnected with co-viewing

This objective involves considering the UGC activities intersected in the unofficial and closed Facebook and WhatsApp groups dedicated to following the telenovela Babilônia.

To achieve this specific objective I had to follow some steps. First, it was necessary to recognize the reasons users co-viewed the Brazilian telenovela within unofficial and closed Facebook groups and in the WhatsApp group.

Second, there was a need to understand which practices were interconnected with co-viewing, and how UGC made part of these activities. Therefore, I had to detect how users conceptualized UGC.

- **Second specific objective:** To detect which co-viewing activities establish the relations between the Brazilian Telenovela and the social-political context of the country during the airing of the telenovela Babilônia

To accomplish the second specific objective it was crucial to detect the leading practices that were intertwined with co-viewing and how they dialogued with the happenings portrayed by the media.

## **2.4 Research Questions**

The same way that happened with my objectives occurred with my research questions. They had evolved according to the time I spent doing participant observation within the groups. Aiming at fulfilling these transformations I encountered at the beginning of the fieldwork, I formulated the three research questions that helped me to continue doing the process of data collection and the data analysis process. Additionally, these three questions helped me to fulfill the general objective of this research.

The first specific research question was developed aiming to understand for what reasons and in which ways co-viewing practices were performed within unofficial and closed Facebook groups and in the WhatsApp group that follow the Brazilian Telenovela (in Babilônia groups to be more precisely).

The second question was done to comprehend how the studied users conceptualized UGC.

Finally, the last question was developed aiming to understand why and in which ways users organized the relations they did between the Brazilian telenovela they were co-viewing and the current socio-political context they were living.

In short, the research questions are:

1. For what reasons and in which ways are co-viewing practices developed within the unofficial closed Facebook groups and the Whatsapp group that follow the Brazilian prime time telenovela?
2. How do these users conceptualize UGC?
3. How do users within their set of co-viewing practices organize the relationships between the Brazilian telenovela that is currently airing and the social-political context they are living in, which are recurrent topics in the media?

## **2.5 Research Outcomes**

The changing nature of the research problem required a case study methodology that followed an ethnographic approach. The general goal of the study required what Stake (2005) have called instrumental cases studies, as particular groups were examined primarily to provide an insight into an issue, in this case, an insight into the connected co-viewing practices of a type of TV genre, the Brazilian prime time telenovela.

The outcomes of this adaptive and evolving research design are the product of flexible techniques for interacting with participants, and working within the fluid environment of SNS platforms. Therefore, in Table 1, I have identified some of the key outcomes of this research in relation to the main objective and the research questions. These key results are briefly presented in this chapter because they will be discussed in depth in the research analysis and the conclusions of this study.

<b>Research aims and questions with the respective outcomes</b>	
<b>Research aim and questions</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<p>The overarching objective of this study was to identify and examine the main practices that were interweaving with connected co-viewing and UGC activities while viewing the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre.</p>	<p>A practice theory approach in combination with communicative ecology model allowed me to highlight important practices in the connected platforms that take shape while co-viewing a genre like the Brazilian prime time telenovela that has a realistic orientation with the inclusion of social issues.</p> <p>Extension of knowledge and concepts concerning the relational aspect of connected co-viewing practices, and the importance of the materiality and digital cultural artifacts when performing co-viewing in instant messaging apps and social network platforms.</p>
<p>1. For what reasons and in which ways are co-viewing practices developed within the unofficial closed Facebook groups and the Whatsapp group that follow the Brazilian prime time telenovela?</p>	<p>Understandings of how users prefer to develop activities without the attempt of control of a television network, as they can develop practices that would be constrained by the television network.</p> <p>Knowledge that users participate in multiple spaces, including the official ones, to get informed and avoid fake information</p> <p>An exponent of how the traditional broadcasting show continues playing a central role in co-viewing practices and other activities beyond the online context.</p>
<p>2. How do these users conceptualize UGC?</p>	<p>A use-centered approach that was collaborative and reflective to participants' perspectives, revealing that users believe that a simple act of giving an opinion, or sharing a piece of information from another source implies to produce content.</p>
<p>3. How do users within their set of co-viewing practices organize the relationships between the Brazilian telenovela that is currently airing and the social-political context they are living in, which are recurrent topics in the media?</p>	<p>An example of how co-viewing practices imply reflection through the lens of perceived media realism. Therefore, leading users to question the effects of television viewing and the role of the prime time show.</p>

**Table 1. Research aims and questions with the respective outcomes**

## **2.6 Remarks**

In this chapter, I exposed how the nature of the object of study marked the evolution of the research design, and how it was necessary to adapt and reflect for following an ‘alive’ subject. I also quickly demonstrated some of the outcomes that came through this adaptive design that will be further explored in the analysis and conclusions of this thesis.

Nonetheless, it is essential to remark that I undertook this study with the aim of contributing to a new knowledge approach to looking at co-viewing activities in a digital context. Therefore, I explored and applied existing knowledge across varied disciplines, and used qualitative methods, as it will be shown in the next parts of this thesis, the part of literature review, theoretical framework, and methodology.

**Part II.**  
**Literature Review**

### **3.Co-viewing**

### 3.1 Overview

Before the use of connected platforms and SNS as we know right now, co-viewing referred to the practice of sitting in front of a TV set watching and discussing a television program together (Pires de Sá and Roig, 2016). Thus, co-viewing is considered a peer phenomenon (McDonald, 1986) that allows viewers to exchange their impressions of a TV show, as well as to enjoy and learn from it. Usually, co-viewing impressions can be grounded on the viewer's expectations about the show they are watching combined with their previous experiences, which may imply debating on related social issues (Pires de Sá and Roig, 2016). Consequently, these discussions lead to an enhancement of situated learning. Co-viewing practices, as I argue in this chapter, are one of the practices that get expanded by the connected environment and are intertwined with practices of user-generated content (UGC). Furthermore, the type of content people co-view within these platforms should be taken into consideration, as they might shape the way co-viewing practices occur.

This chapter begins presenting the origins of co-viewing and contributions of previous studies. Then, it continues with the discussion on co-viewing within the connected context by explaining its main reinventions and featuring some important researches and prototypes that were done to improve this experience. It follows by acknowledging the problematic that audience rating measurement companies are having with the amount of social data co-viewing produce when done online. Subsequently, it is discussed the inherent relationship co-viewing and user-generated content (UGC) have. The chapter continues discussing the double-sidedness of users' experience. On the one hand, users have become active agents that can master their content within connected platforms. While, on the contrary, they get exploited via data mining, profiling, and surveillance from companies that own these same platforms. This discussion gets further expanded when the influence of algorithms in filtering information of social network sites (SNS) is presented. The last section of the chapter discusses the importance of the type of content users co-view while connected. It is done regarding algorithm filtering process but also concerning companionship preference users have while co-viewing something. Finally, as the case studies of this thesis follow a particular genre of show, the importance of the Brazilian prime-time telenovela from Rede Globo (Globo Network) is acknowledged.

### 3.2 Co-viewing Origins

Studies of co-viewing have been primarily developed in the United States within the psychology field, since the groundbreaking report about Sesame Street on the Children's Television Workshop in the 1970s. This report showed how children who watched Sesame Street in a social context, together with their mothers, while discussing the show, improved situated learning skills (Ball et al., 1970). Henceforth, different researches were conducted within a variety of social and demographic settings (see Austin et al., 1990; Dorr et al., 1989; Lull, 1990; McDonald, 1986; Rice et al., 1990; Paavonen et al., 2009; Padilla et al., 2012).

Co-viewing practices can be performed at any age or people's group setting. Despite that, until recently, most of the studies were mainly focused on co-viewing for supporting kids situated learning and enjoyment within households. It was done without giving due attention to other age groups or context settings. Nonetheless, some exceptions looked further than the usual co-viewing configuration that is usually formed by an adult co-viewing a TV show with a child. The study of Haefner and Wartella (1987) for instance, looks at co-viewing between siblings and how older siblings can stimulate the younger ones at the moment of evaluating a plot and its characters. Sang, Schmitz, and Tasche (1992, 1993) studies aim at understanding how the social context of TV viewing could affect the way co-viewing occurs, according to families' configurations and how it could happen differently during the adolescence and the youth. More recent examples are the study of Hendriks Vettehen et al. (2012) and the research of Tal-Or (2016). Hendriks Vettehen et al. (2012) tried to understand how partners with different backgrounds develop co-viewing and how their period of television literacy might have a weight during their adulthood. While Tal-Or (2016) examine how different moods states of an adult co-viewer can affect the enjoyment of the co-viewing experience of other co-viewers regarding transportation into a narrative, and identification with characters.

The core of attention of co-viewing studies are usually children, and they originated from the psychology field, since the 1970s, these studies acknowledged the importance of peers at the moment making meaning while performing viewing activities. Co-viewing Studies as Cultural Studies left behind traditional approaches

that tended to leave the audience as passive or simply not include as a subject of inquiry.

Co-viewing studies from the very beginning pointed out that watching television has always been a complex social activity, as it generates various forms of social engagement. Before the widespread usage of connected screen devices and platforms, engagement around a television broadcast was limited to the TV set and, therefore, to the limits of home or to transitory places like bars, restaurants or within spaces like waiting rooms for doctor appointments. Thus, TV engagement had an ephemeral feature because it was not easily traceable, and viewer's activities materialized mainly in-person. In this way, the role of co-viewing understood as a peer activity, which enhances the viewing experience (Ball et al., 1970; McDonald, 1986), through negotiations of meaning making when people use media together (Stevens and Penuel, 2010), was overlooked. Moreover, at the beginning of the broadcast, Television was a very expensive apparatus with very few options. Gradually, together with technological developments, it had a cost reduction that made TV become popular, spread around different parts of the household, and provide more options of interactivity. As van Dijck states:

“ The invention and wide implementation of VCRs, remote control devices, and cable television not only expanded the range of options for viewers, but also empowered them to interrupt the flow of set programming by means of zapping and timeshifting” (van Dijck, 2007: 9).

It made the conception of mass audience start to progressively change to an idea of having active viewers and consumers (van Dijck, 2007). It wasn't until a broad accessibility to Internet that the activity of viewers started to be more taken for granted. However, co-viewing and other viewing practices are anything else but new. Before wide usage of technologies such as tablets, smartphones, instant messaging applications, and even SNS as we know in their current form, the activities of viewers, such as co-viewing, could be done in person as well as through landline calls or conversations via computer chat systems - i.e. Internet Relay Chat (IRC).

In fact, co-viewing and other activities could be done via IRC, as it was one of the first instant messaging (IM) Internet protocols that have been in use since the 1980s, or by other applications (ICQ, MSN and Yahoo! Messenger). The Internet in

the actual context only got widespread and highly accessible, once people started using social media in large scale through commercial platforms that incorporated and improved previous existent services, but concentrated the control among few monopolies like Twitter, Google, and Facebook. Hence, co-viewing practices can be considered in a constant process of update, which varies according to its agents and to the artifacts available for performing them.

### **3.3 Co-viewing within the Connected Viewing Context**

Although co-viewing is neither a brand-new practice nor the features from the places it might occur are (which includes SNS and instant messaging applications), it is relevant to understand how such practices are evolving and getting reshaped. Mainly, in a context where media content is distributed and consumed in various formats, devices, and intertwined with many social practices.

Holt and Sanson (2014) named the current complex media context ‘connected viewing’. They defined connected viewing throughout a body of researches developed by the Carsey-Wolf Center’s Media Industries Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Through these researches, they described connected viewing as a term that:

“...refers specifically to a multiplatform entertainment experience that relates to a larger trend across media industries to integrate digital technology and socially networked communication with traditional screen media practices’ (Holt and Sanson 2014: 1).”

Television used to be for many decades considered the central appliance for accessing media content. During the past years, because of the connected context, TV has been living a dialectical opposition regarding the viewing activities around it. As Pires de Sá and Roig (2016) say, on the one side, it can be seen as part of a process of decline in relation to its use due to a growing competition of social screen-based entertainment devices that are available in the market. While, on the other side, TV can be considered to be in a privileged position. This is because it triggers many forms of communication and social interaction through its live events, via its content

that is spread across multiscreen and multitasking environments e.g. streaming viewing, on-demand viewing, and forms of social interaction through SNS during traditional broadcasting. For instance, the symbiosis between these new ways of viewing practices, traditional ones, infrastructures, platforms, and devices available in the connected viewing context collaborate to the reinvention of co-viewing. In particular with the usage of SNS and instant messaging applications (such as Whatsapp, Viber, Telegram among others) co-viewing was further facilitated to happen in-between a massive scale of viewers, as these platforms have a mainstream usage. Although a vast part of viewers has access to these different platforms, which facilitate communication between peer followers by engaging with more than one screen and with others online (Doughty, Rowland and Lawson, 2011, 2012; Lee and Andrejevic, 2014), in many countries still prevails inequality concerning Internet access for many (Holt, Steirer, and Petruska, 2016).

Co-viewing in the connected background can happen in various ways more often than before i.e. physically alone but in company with other peers online, both in-person and with other online peers, or in the traditional way in which people (in-person) sit and co-view an audiovisual content together. However, now, in all its possible ways to occur, co-viewing can be materialized in front of a TV set or using other kinds of screen devices and SNS that weren't available in the first years of the Internet. For instance, the study of Haridakis and Hanson (2009) examined co-viewing on YouTube, their results suggested that co-viewing comprises sharing content with others. It also enhances the viewing interaction as well as the post-viewing social activities. Additionally, Cohen and Lancaster (2014) demonstrate two advantages of connected co-viewing within SNS. First, viewers feel a stronger sense of belonging to an otherwise geographically dispersed social group of like-minded people. Viewers have access to other peers and are able to share more information to process together during the televised event. Second, viewers who prefer watching TV alone saw co-viewing via SNS as an alternative way to watch together without the usual distractions of physical co-viewing. Therefore, controlling their viewing context.

Other recent co-viewing studies were dedicated to developing systems to support co-viewing practices and amplify the platforms where it could happen. Oehlberg et al. (2006) developed a prototype of a Social TV (or Smart TV as it is being called right now). This prototype had an equipment of audio and video that

allowed geographically detached viewers to communicate by using an open audio channel – a feature that was recently incorporated into many instant messaging applications. Lee, Heeter, and LaRose (2010) did another experiment using an interactive narrative based on a controller. Co-viewers could make decisions that affected the future of the narrative – an interesting attempt at giving viewers a storytelling control and promoting debates at the moment of doing a decision-making, however, limiting because of the low interactivity offered by remote control. While Pei-Yun et al. (2016) have developed another experiment called ‘co-viewing room’. The co-viewing room is a mechanism that connects remote users via a mobile chat that supports sharing TV content, by pairing the phone with a Smart TV and allowing the insertion of pieces of what people are watching in the conversation flow. Pei-Yun et al. developed this system because they noticed that many co-viewers like to share content while viewing, as it is commonly done within SNS. Therefore, their developed system is an example of how connected co-viewing could be further expanded, and, at the same time, it would increase even more the social data produced by co-viewers.

### **3.4 Co-viewing and Audience Measurement**

Co-viewing exists since Television started to be a household appliance used by family, friends, and neighbors that would gather around this single device, at the time of broadcast to share the experience of watching an event or a TV show. Nonetheless, in the beginning, the ephemerality of these moments was the main feature of co-viewing. As I argue in the following sections, it means that co-viewing in its traditional sense did not leave a trail in the same way it does right now. Data from viewers was not so easily produced as they are within mainstream SNS and on the Internet as a whole. In fact, co-viewing information was available only to few companies that controlled audience measurement methods. These methods derivate from radio industry and were necessary for the establishment of the commercial television market (Ortiz, Borelli and Ramos 1989; Bermejo 2009). It was indispensable for supplying technical and formal knowledge about the audience to program creators and the entire broadcast industry (Ang, 1991). In this way, media

industry was able to try to catch the 'audience', and, at the same time receive sponsorship from advertisers. As Ang (1991) pointed out, to fulfill a large-scale economic aspiration from many television institutions and financial support, plural audiences were muted for the construct of a large category, 'the audience.' This construct was a way of legitimizing an institutional point of view and creating invisible fictions around the viewers as a form imposing economic control. Furthermore, as Livingstone (1998) states, this audience category never represented social groupings. Therefore, ignoring the importance of the viewing context, in which the company of other people might influence the appreciation of a show and the co-viewing experience.

The audience measurement and its categorization are necessary for business, and it usually indicates success or a failure of a show. However, audience measurement without a deeper knowledge of the context in which viewing is inserted, being this within the micro (private realm) and macro (a country socio-political situation) level, might be problematic. Nonetheless, this kind of success vs. failure storytelling oppositions continues to play an important role in the industry in the present days. As well as it remains in the hand of few companies, such as Nielsen, Kantar Ibope Media among others.

Despite the audience measurement companies' implementation of better methods that indicates who is watching the programming, those companies are struggling to maintain their broadcast metering methods as their primary data for audience measurement and sponsorship. It is due to the arousal of many screen devices and kinds of viewing that can be done connected. In order to adapt to the market, these companies opted to try to replicate procedures used in broadcasting for obtaining data of viewing activities into new technologies and devices. As it is possible to see at the website of Nielsen and Kantar Ibope Media, generally statistic methods based on PeopleMeter technologies are implemented, by sampling the installation of this technology in a determined amount of households. It is done to capture information on what's viewed, in which moment, by whom it is watched and by how many people in the house. This same technology was implemented on tablets, smartphones, laptops and computers through the use of a similar system.

Still, audience measurements technics are suffering the threat of obsolesce at the moment of controlling information. A control of data that is getting misplaced for powerful corporations like Google, and Facebook that has access to large datasets

from users and does not need to work with samples. Bermejo (2009) states that while the audience measurement companies have been playing a central role in the operational arrangements of the broadcast industry, they appear to have lost part of its relevance in the online context. To the author, audience measurements don't seem to demonstrate an understanding of the functioning of search engines, nor algorithms that control big data traffic.

Moreover, Twitter has been the favorite SNS for audience measurement companies that developed methods for data mining (Etlinger, Lieb and Szymanski, 2014). Not only audience measurement companies, but also researchers had the tendency of preferring Twitter to other SNS because it presents an easy way of data extraction (Moe, Poell, and van Dijck, 2016). Nonetheless, to understand the viewing activities online Twitter can be rather insufficient in comparison to the number of users that are in other SNS. Etlinger, Lieb, and Szymanski (2014) expose that the rating methodologies and traditional KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) no longer encompass the media ecosystem people have to access and develop viewing activities and different kinds of viewing, in which co-viewing might occur.

### **3.5 Co-viewing and User-generated Content Practices: an Inherent Relationship**

Elsewhere, Sonia Livingstone (2004) has stressed that social consequences of new technologies would be mediated through already existing patterns of social interaction. It is not different with co-viewing practices. In fact, co-viewing, when performed within connected platforms, is just an expansion of its traditional way of materialization. Nonetheless, when co-viewing happens through SNS or instant messaging applications, a considerable amount of content and metadata is created. Therefore, when thinking about connected co-viewing, it is impossible to dissociate this practice to practices of user-generated content (UGC). Given that such platforms like SNS are built for and around users content production.

Before the widespread use of Internet, scholars and media industry use to refer to people that watch media content as spectators, viewers or consumers. As van Dijck (2007) points out, these terminologies were no longer enough for accounting the activity from people that watch television and use different media devices. The term

user serves for those that use SNS platforms for a varied range of activities, which include viewing practices.

Shao (2009) has separated the UGC or as he calls user-generated media (UGM) in three ways that individual people engage with it. These ways are by consuming, by participating (I will call from now on interacting), and by producing.

<b>Three Ways of Engaging with User-generated Content</b>	
<b>By consuming</b>	It includes all activities that occur on the Internet that are information seeking-driven and do not require interacting with other users.  E.g. reading, searching, observing
<b>By interacting</b>	It includes all activities that occur on the Internet that require interaction between users with content and through content.  E.g. chatting, sharing, reviewing
<b>By producing</b>	It includes all the activities that occur on the Internet that imply a sophisticated and creative content.  E.g. making videos, photos, mashups

**Table 2. Three Ways of Engaging with User-generated content. Author own elaboration based on Shao (2009).**

As it is shown in Table 2, consuming happens when individuals watch, read, surf, lurk or view content without interacting or engaging with other users in content creation. Bechmann and Lomborg (2013) add that research has been continuously demonstrating that this type of UGC usage is by far the most common one. Nonetheless, such activities include information seeking that is driven by user's desire of increasing awareness and expertise about a subject, or to be used in a problem solving (Shao 2009; Bechmann and Lomborg 2013). Most of the time, this way of engaging with UGC is seen as passive. However, users remain agents that have to control and master a vast flux of information that they want to find on SNS. Therefore, users when only engaging with UGC by consuming they are also implying an active role. In fact, co-viewing in the traditional and connected manners requires this kind of consumption practices because these activities amplify the viewing

experience, as viewers have access to more information concerning the show they are following.

The most inherent relationship co-viewing has with UGC is by interacting. This is because interacting includes the interaction between users, and among users with the content (Shao, 2009). It includes the intertwined practices with co-viewing such as: sharing content with others, doing wikis, playlists, ranking the quality of content, collecting, archiving, participating in groups of common interests, exchanging messages, between other activities. Not only that, but also this way of usage includes effective uses of SNS and other apps for keeping in touch with family, friends through not that visible channels like chats. Interacting is a way of engaging with UGC that gets further expanded when users join a group. Usually, people who participate in groups share a sense of connection with other like-minded people (Bayam, 2000; Shao, 2009 Bechmann and Lomborg 2013). Therefore, stimulating a dynamic circulation and creation of content. This dynamism within groups is essential for connected co-viewing as users respond to each other through content. When responding to content users might engage by also creating their content.

Content creation, or as Shao (2009) calls 'producing', is the third way of engaging with UGC. Users create content like videos, photos, stories, etc. In some cases, producing can be interesting for co-viewing as this way of engaging with UGC can be highly creative, like meme creations, mashups, recaps and so on (Scolari, 2012). While in others cases as demonstrated by the studied cases of this thesis they can be just ordinary content in the sense of not implying a complex creative work such as commentaries and replies with the usage of phatic language or emoticons.

Bruns (2008) calls these ways of engaging with UGC 'produsage.' It is conceived as a process of blurring the boundaries between passive consumption and active production. This is because of the ability users have to consume and also produce content, whether being aware of this role that they assume or not. The idea of produsage can be problematic because it implies a double perspective, which on the one side, users are empowered productive agents. And, on the other side, because of its technological optimism disguises that users are also subject to the patterns and structure of interaction imposed by the companies, which own the spaces where UGC take shape, e.g. SNS like Facebook and Twitter. Therefore, somehow conditioning the 'path' some practices would take to occur (see Schatzki 2015). Moreover, in all ways that users can engage with UGC they are still producing data, therefore becoming a

target for exploitation and surveillance of companies, which own these platforms (Benchmann and Lomborg 2013; Andrejevic, 2008). Therefore, co-viewing practices are also exposed to this double-sidedness that UGC creates.

### **3.6 Co-viewing, Social Media, and Social Data**

In the past years, co-viewing and other practices that occur online got easily traceable because of the amount of data users create on the Internet, especially on SNS. Therefore, opening a space for varied ways of data usage and data mining. This occurs because specific events, content, and institutions (such as the first episode of a TV show, a football match, a person or even a particular topic) trigger co-viewing practices that happen within SNS. These content and data traffic within connected platforms boost co-viewing.

Benchmann and Lomborg (2013) point out that this traffic of data on SNS is relevant from the user perspective studies as well as from the media industry viewpoint. They also stated that these two perspectives should be investigated throughout a cross-fertilization approach, as the added value these data produce to both perspectives are capable of influencing each other, though in different levels that usually are not equal. From the users' viewpoint, this value comes from users as active, sense-making agents that shape and manage their social realities and their everyday life with the use of SNS (Lomborg and Benchmann, 2013). In which searching for information and trying to acquire expertise is also a way of generating value and activity. While from the media industry perspective this economic value comes from the user networking, whereby users contribute with content that is being constant updated and spread on SNS. It also comes from users who aid with technology development and innovation, and through user's profiling that are sold to advertisers. In all cases, corporations who own the platforms can make profit.

Moreover, in user profiling, content usually serves as bait to lure users who are keen to discuss and share videos, pictures, song ideas, and all kinds of media texts with other peers (van Dijck, 2013). Thus, whether aware or not that users are getting exploited they are not able to escape of doing free labor to these platforms (see Fuchs, 2014; Terranova, 2000). Co-viewing in a connected manner might function in the same way, thereby co-viewers can exchange their perceptions, seek, collect and share

content, as well as actively rate and classify the followed content. However, they might get subjected to tracking their content by cookies (van Dijck, 2013) and other data mining procedures that SNS use for understanding users behavior, and personal targeting without receiving any benefit.

Data mining as defined by Millar (2009) is comprised of pervasive technologies that are part of our information society:

“ They are designed to capture, aggregate, and analyze our digital footprints, such as purchases, Internet search strings, blogs, and travel patterns in an attempt to profile individuals for a variety of applications (Millar 2009:103).

According to Zimmer (2008), data mining is used to collect, to process, and to analyze users' data such as age, gender, location, their list of friends, and so on from user's profiles. Data mining is used in addition to click-through patterns or related websites that users access and applications that they use. As users do many online activities per day, and yet they do not know much about data regulations (Madejski, Johnson, and Bellovin, 2011), nor how SNS usually work in terms of profiling and algorithmically functioning, many times users just agree with terms and conditions and the user license agreements without reading them. This is done by pressing click-to-agree, usually shown when creating a profile in SNS or in website.

Having this in mind, people that might perform co-viewing practices and other viewing activities in unofficial spaces within commercial SNS like Facebook to escape surveillance from broadcasters, might not bear in mind that they are being surveilled by the corporations that own these spaces.

### **3.7 Algorithms and Connected Co-viewing**

Co-viewing when occurring through connected devices and platforms cannot be dissociated from the algorithms material arrangements nexus. According to Bucher (2012), algorithms are used to shape activities online such as sorting, filtering, suggesting, recommending, summarizing, mapping, and listing information and

content with predefined parameters (Bucher, 2012: 17). Therefore, algorithms are able to shape some of our daily social practices on the Internet.

For instance, if we co-view something and search for information about it on SNS, the news and content from friends might appear biased and may change the experience of co-viewing and its intertwined practices. It means that the visibility and relevance of information that will appear will be based on values that depend on algorithms (Araújo and Pires de Sá, 2016).

van Dijck (2013) states that algorithms and big data flow on SNS tend to get clogged in what is called by some theorists 'filter bubbles'. In other words, this means that users can get trapped because of their behavior on the SNS (visited pages, click patterns, interaction with peer and so on), and they might end up always receiving similar information, watching same content and ads, and tending to buy similar products. However, this performative effect of an algorithmic process when co-viewing or developing other social practices online can be related to a 'technological unconscious' concerning how it works and affords users' social practices to occur (Araújo and Pires de Sá, 2016). Even though some people are aware of the presence of algorithms, it is not easy to understand or be sure how they work, as these algorithms are invisible. In fact, algorithmically filtered interfaces seldom make features available to users to understand their proper functioning and practical consequences (Eslami et al., 2015). As van Dijck (2013) points out that Facebook and Google, between other companies are mainly interested in using predictive algorithms to improve the effectiveness of advertisements and the exploitation of users data. Thus, not being convenient to explain proper functioning.

Thus, co-viewing is a set of practices that provides the perfect combination for getting clogged in a bubble of similar information shaped by algorithms agency. This is because of the behavior users have while viewing, such as searching, sharing and creating content around the co-viewed show. This generates metadata, and, consequently users' profiling. Therefore, the content that is co-viewed is also relevant when done online, as it can be part of the stream of information that is delivered to users who perform this set of practices in SNS.

### **3.8 The Importance of the Co-viewed Content**

In both traditional and connected environments, co-viewing enables meaning-making by sharing opinions and interactions while viewing. Thus, the characteristics of a co-viewed show have an important role for such practices to occur. As it was discussed in the previous section, the co-viewed content might interfere with the kind of information users receive in SNS or within other platforms.

Additionally, the kind of media content that is co-viewed could spark different practices related to the process of reasoning around it, and the companionship co-viewers would intend to have. The study of Dezfuli et al. (2011) concerning interpersonal relationships around TV viewing, demonstrated that the same way that happens in-person co-viewing, users who co-view online can classify their social circles to select to whom interact with them depending on the situation and the TV genre. It usually happens because people tend to prefer to interact with others who share common interests. These interests at the moment of TV viewing can be more important than their family and friends (Dezfuli et al., 2011). As Harris and Cook (2010) add, media enjoyment may be mediated by different genre preferences, or situations of viewing companionship, which lead one person to have a great enjoyment of content or to be quite distressed by it. The presence of other co-viewers might be one of the reasons for disruption of the viewing experience, in particular when the co-viewing revolves around delicate contents e.g. sexuality.

In this thesis, I specifically focus on a specific local context of co-viewing practices related to a certain type of show – the Brazilian prime time telenovela within unofficial closed Facebook groups. As it is deeper explained in the Brazilian Telenovela chapter, this unique television format is central for observing co-viewing practices, as it includes social and political issues in its plots that are extended beyond the television set. The Brazilian telenovela has been for decades co-viewed among people that ritually reunited themselves around the Television, and now with SNS this ritual is getting reshaped and more visible through the use of different kinds of digital materialities (Oikawa, Pereira Silva and Alves Feitosa, 2015). The co-viewed telenovela by the groups of this study is called Babilônia (Babylon). Babilônia presented very delicate issues such as female homosexuality in the elderly age, political corruption and so on. All these problematic subjects were part of the

connected co-viewing practices and may have bothered some co-viewers because of the magnitude that these issues achieved. Babilônia's controversial plot led to discussions in the political arena and prompted debate in multiple media. Thus, connected co-viewing is a practice that is also extended to viewers of the Brazilian telenovela, which is the prime time of this country, and have an important role in the way co-viewing might occur because of the particular features of this genre.

### **3.9 Remarks**

In order to clarify how co-viewing is currently taking form, the origins of co-viewing studies and their main features were presented. Instead of emphasizing on radical changes resulted from media technological developments over the years; it was acknowledged that co-viewing is a social practice that is part of a process of constant reinvention. Therefore, it was avoided to use the repetitive rhetoric around new media and technologies that usually present a dichotomy between old and new. This dichotomy doesn't take into account that there are degrees of continuity among different media (See Siapera, 2004), and between social practices that are also performed within and through them.

The attempts to improve the co-viewing experience were also demonstrated, by presenting studies and new materialities that are getting prototyped and experimented – usually based on rituals around traditional television viewing and new media practices. Moreover, the ways viewing activities got amplified with the possibility of having access to a larger pool of information and to peer followers online was illustrated by the social activities users perform during viewing or/and post-viewing audiovisual content. It was also demonstrated by exposing the need for belonging that users fulfill when participating in a social group that co-view the same kind of show, or when connected co-viewing fits the need to avoiding usual inconvenient physical companionship

The importance of the co-viewed content was expressed regarding information users might receive in connected platforms because of the algorithmic filtering process, also in relation to the users' ability to classify their social circles. This classification is usually done according to TV genre, and social issues presented in what is being watched, and the companionship situation. Therefore, I briefly

introduced the particular characteristics of the Brazilian telenovela, as the case studies of this thesis have followed it when performing connected-co-viewing.

As this thesis deals with connected co-viewing related to the Brazilian telenovela genre, in the next chapter, it will be done a review of literature of the Brazilian reception studies, and a historical overview of this field of inquiry. Moreover, it will be done because the scholars from the communication field in Brazil mostly investigated co-viewing as an audience practice

## **4.Reception Studies in Brazil**

## 4.1 Overview

In this chapter, the traditions, continuities, and novelties of the reception studies in Brazil are examined. This is done aiming to demonstrate the importance of this traditional field in today's research. Furthermore, it is done seeking to bring to the fore the most recent works developed within the connected viewing environment by Brazilian scholars. It is also done to reveal the possibilities for continue expanding this area of inquiry with new theories and methodological approaches.

The chapter begins explaining the history and the main traditions of communications studies in Brazil and its constant dialogue with Latin American authors. It continues by discussing the reception studies from the 1980s onwards, and the mediations epistemological turn in Latin American studies. As it follows, the Latin American most used scholarship in the Brazilian telenovela reception studies is acknowledged with the aim of opening a call for research expansion and innovation, by adapting the mediation framework to the perspective of hypermediation proposed by Scolari (2008, 2015). Then, the chapter continues by explaining the characteristics of the actual context where the Brazilian population is getting exponentially more connected and practicing television viewing online. It follows by presenting the state of the art of telenovela studies around connected co-viewing in Brazil and its main contributions, as some Brazilian scholars have been turning their attention and conducting research within SNS platforms, and opening more fields of inquiry.

## **4.2 The Origins of Communication Studies in Brazil and its Dialogue with Latin American Countries**

The path of the audience studies in Brazil cannot be dissociated from the rest of the Latin American countries. Although Brazil has a difference of language with most of the Latin American countries, the similarity between Portuguese and Spanish languages, and the proximity of the countries can be considered factors that helped the consolidation of Latin American communication studies. Furthermore, most of the Latin American countries have lived similar kinds of dictatorial political regimes that started during the 1960s and lasted until the late 1980s. Because of those governments, a significant number of intellectuals and scholars lived in exile in countries of the same region that could be considered safe, like Mexico (Martín-Barbero, 1987). Therefore, ideas were exchanged, and later, networks of studies with similar ideas were created, as well as other events between Latin American institutions (see Mato, 2015).

As Jacks and Menezes (2007) point out, in almost all Latin-American countries that were under a dictatorship, the subject of audience reception was treated later on, usually during the 1980s. Before that, researchers were interested in understanding the ideological messages spread by media, as most of the authoritarian government had the control of mass media, which resulted in the delay of inspection of the relationship and the meaning-making people had with media. For instance, as it is discussed in the chapter dedicated to the Brazilian telenovela genre, the Globo network was created during the dictatorship. Because of its alignment with the military dictatorship (1964 to 1985), it became the leading network in Brazil, and it continues to be until the present day (Ribke, 2011).

Communication studies in Brazil, in its beginning, were surprisingly influenced by both, North American functionalist tradition, and the Frankfurt School viewpoints (Escoteguy and Jacks, 2007). Scolari (2015:1094) adds that most of the Latin American communication studies could be divided into two distinct time periods. The first one, from the 1950s to the late 1970s, can be described as a period composed by the acquisition of hegemonic theories coming from the United States and Europe. According to Martín-Barbero (1987) in this time a Frankfurterian

perspective influenced most of the authors that were not functionalists. Not only by the critical views that this school had spread about the cultural industry but also in debates around it. As an example, most of the discussions around communication studies done by Latin American scholars in its initial stage have denounced the North American imperialism in this continent, and have also considered the viewers as a passive mass. Therefore, following the paradigm of hegemony and dominance of the media industry over the viewers. A model that did not take into consideration the influence of other factors, such as social context, social practices, co-viewers, the importance of institutions like family, school, religion, political system and so on.

Whilst, the second period described by Scolari (2015) can be counted from the early 1980s until now. It is marked by the own Latin American theoretical production that is always looking for a dialogue with the European tradition but at the same time, not excluding a critical interpretation of the production coming from the United States.

### **4.3 Reception Studies from the 1980s Onwards**

In the 1980s the first current of communication studies in Latin America started to change and suffer criticism. As the Cultural Studies, the Marxism influenced by Antonio Gramsci replaced the initial critical orientations that were mostly done in a determinist manner. It has allowed communication studies to trace the relations between social class and culture, and unveil the potential that popular culture has to be intertwined with politics and to constitute identities. Telenovela genre is the best example where this was conceived.

Martín-Barbero (1987), one of the most important names in communication studies in Latin America, explained that telenovelas had a strong relation with oral and narrative traditions. Also, they had the capacity to describe the political processes of the Latin American nations because of the inclusion of folkloric cultures in their stories. In words of Scolari (2015), Martín-Barbero looked to popular culture as part of a never-ending process of construction of the national cultures of Latin American countries. This process involves multiple kinds of social transactions. Therefore, the telenovela is a TV genre that represents a standardized procedure of hybridization between popular cultures and media industries. Telenovelas can represent the

resistance, replication, and resignification from the part of popular cultures (folkloric and national traditions) that media industry always try to phagocytize by attempting to imply homogenization and standardization in its productions for profit purposes. Thus, resulting in a constant tension that contributed to this turn in reception studies.

Martín-Barbero and other authors like Gonzales (1987), García Canclini (1988), Orozco (1991), Ortiz (1985) among others, started to redirect the paradigm used in the researches developed in most of the Latin America countries (including Brazil). They have demonstrated that the real challenge for media and communication studies was not to identify the uncovered ideology of the television shows (particularly the telenovelas). Instead, it was to understand what viewers do with them during television reception.

The inclusion of a new critical perspective interested in the processes of reception and consumption of cultural products was the key features of this new paradigm. Scholars of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, such as Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, Edward P. Thompson have influenced these authors and the reception studies in Brazil. Thus, reverting the focus of these scholars to the consumption and cultural aspect of reception, as well as the mediations used to interpret communicational meanings. Also, later in the 2000s, because of its late translation to Portuguese, Stuart Hall became a major figure that influenced this field of inquiry (Jacks and Wottrich, 2016).

#### **4.4 Latin American Mediation Framework**

Martín-Barbero (1987) used the concept of mediation to explain the process, in which culture is negotiated in the communicational process. He used it not only in the television reception context, but also in many instances and places where communication may occur. When Martín-Barbero developed the concept of mediations in his book 'From Media to Mediation: Communication, Hegemony and Culture' (1987), he tried to explain in historical terms how popular culture and mass media in Latin America was established. The analysis he carried out went from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the year the book was published. He used the concept of mediation to try to explain how society was using the media in political, cultural, and communicative dimensions to live in society. The central idea to

understand the mediations is that Martín-Barbero conceived the communicative process as a relational one, with cultural exchange and political negotiation. When considering television viewing, Martín-Barbero (1987) states that mediations may be places that arise from the constraints, which define and shape the social materiality and cultural expression of the television, spaces where it is possible to comprehend the interactions of production and reception of messages.

In a similar line of thought, García Canclini understood the reception processes as acts of consumption (Frankenberg, Lozano, and Jacks, 2009) that happen not individually but in a set of social-cultural processes that occur among people that change the use-value of products (García Canclini and Sánchez, 1993). Meanwhile, González suggested that audiences had their own interpretations about the meaning of cultural messages, many times diverging from hegemonic ones, subjecting discourses and messages to receive multiple interpretations (McAnany and La Pastina, 1994; Escoteguy and Jacks, 2007).

Whereas, Orozco expanded the mediations' theory explored by Martín-Barbero to the field of television reception. Orozco (1993) attempted to make the concept of mediation in a more concrete manner, as Martín-Barbero applied the idea of mediations in his seminal work in different contexts that implied multiple meanings. Therefore, Orozco inspired by Martín-Barbero (1987), Giddens' Structural Theory (1984), and Lull (1990), proposed the existence of multiple sources of television mediation (Orozco, 1991,1993), in which many institutions like schools and family are part of the process of decoding messages. In his theoretical proposal, he analyzed the interactions between television receptions within television auditorium shows, in which viewers usually are present in the process of television production. For him, the multiple sources of mediations are ways of structuring concrete actions or interventions in the process of television reception. These sources include and are not limited to culture, politics, economics, social class, gender, social movements, institutions, subjects and their emotions and experiences. Orozco (1993: 34-38) divided the multiple mediations into four groups: individual, situational, institutional and video technological.

In Brazil, the idea of mediation used by Martín-Barbero, and further explored by Orozco, was implemented as a theoretical-analytical tool by Lopes, Borelli, and Resende (2002). They did it exploring the viewing experiences of the telenovela 'A Indomada' (aired in 1997 by Globo Network) in four families that were part of

different social classes. These Brazilian scholars adapted the multiple mediations of Orozco to four categories to look at where mediation was taken place: family daily life, subjectivity, genre and video techniques (see Lopes, Borelli, and Resende, 2002: 41-42).

The four categories of mediations created by the Brazilian scholars can be considered interesting ways to validate and innovate with the multidisciplinary methodological approach used by the authors to study the telenovela reception process. Additionally, they attempted to provide a complete overview of the communicative process as previously proposed by Jensen (1987) and used by Orozco (1993) when developing his multiple mediations theory. Moreover, this seminal research has fostered other studies to use an interdisciplinary approach and empirically look at the reception phenomenon from the lens of mediation. Therefore, it was a step forward in the Brazilian reception studies, particularly in the way of doing empirical and following methodological protocols. This is because rigorous methodological procedures were and still are one of the main weaknesses of Brazilian communication research (Schimitz et al., 2015).

#### **4.5 Contribution for a Theoretical-methodological Expansion Through the Perspective of Hypermediation**

After doing an extensive work of literature review of Brazilian communication research. Schmitz et al. (2015) detected that most of the telenovela reception studies in Brazil miss to explicitly explain the theoretical-methodological aspects used in their work. The authors also have acknowledged that Martín-Barbero's Mediation Theory continued to be the most used reference, followed by García Canclini, Orozco, Gómez, and Stuart Hall. It is because those authors were the ones that have driven the shift of focus in the communication studies, moving from looking at media to start looking at the process developed around them. Nevertheless, Schmitz et al. (2015) have pointed that there is a lack of theoretical explanation that is conscious of the applied methodology and protocols in most of these studies, which should be filled in the future studies.

Lopes (2014) states that it is worth reflecting on the importance of technology in the reception studies for the extension of the statute of the theoretical and

methodological aspects of communication research, as the use of digital materiality has been altering the order of knowledge and the modes of social perception. Lopes and her colleagues from Obitel Brazil, the Brazilian network of researchers that are part of the Obitel (Ibero-American Television Fiction Observatory) are the scholars that have been trying to overcome these problems. They've been bringing novelty to this area of inquiry, by paying attention to technological aspects in the reception practices, as it will be shown in the section of Brazilian telenovela reception and connected co-viewing research.

Scolari (2015) remarks that the Mediation Theory was built around the experience viewers had with broadcasting and around the idea of active viewers' responses to mass media products. It was in a time, when the media ecology was founded on analog technologies, which media content was viewed in a linear way and viewers had to follow the television schedule. In contrast, now, it is almost impossible to carry out research on viewers without taking into account the multiple relationships and practices that involve media and digital technologies without understanding their transmedia aspects, as viewers are now users of multiple high-interactive interfaces that go beyond the traditional TV setting (Scolari, 2015).

The Mediation Theory has dealt with television viewing from a research perspective that tried to overcome the standstills that have led in the past to do a fragmented research, and, therefore, to leave behind the reductionist studies in the field of communication (Lopes, 2014). In the same way, Scolari (2008, 2015) has been calling scholars to expand this perspective by carrying on researches that follow what he calls hypermediations. Hypermediations can be considered the proposal to tackle the social reality as a set of socio-technological processes and new media practices without canceling the relevance of the mass media background legacy. Or in words of Scolari:

“...hypermediations do not contradict mediations, they just look at the communication processes from a slightly different perspective that integrates the new experiences and introduces new analytical categories”  
(Scolari, 2015: 1101)

Having this in mind, in this research I follow Scolari's hypermediations proposal (Scolari 2008, 2015), by aiming at recuperating the epistemological proposal

of Martín-Barbero mediations to the currently connected viewing context, which viewing practices, digital media, SNS, multiple platforms, and interfaces are part of a greater communicative ecology. I also look at the viewing practices as a hybrid process, where different kinds of viewing might occur through the use of various digital materialities. Therefore, in this thesis, I contribute to the hypermediation epistemological extension by bringing references from Practice Theory and Communicative Ecology, and by doing an empirical work of connected co-viewing activities related to the Brazilian telenovela genre within Facebook and WhatsApp groups.

#### **4.6 Brazilian Connected Viewing Context**

It is important to be aware of the inequalities regarding Internet use and dissemination to understand the context of connected viewing in Brazil. The 2015 Brazilian Media Research (PBM 2015), released by the General Secretary of the Republic Presidency, shows, that TV has the largest media coverage (95 % of the population watch Television) whereas 49 % have access to the Internet, and mobile phones are the preferred devices for accessing it. The 2014 National Sample Survey of Households (PNAD), developed by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), also states that most of the Internet access occurs through mobile devices, while television and landline phones still hold the widest coverage.

The use of SNS and instant messaging applications covers 92% of the Internet users (PBM, 2015). SNS have served as an entry for many Brazilians to a more connected environment as it was shown in the following surveys: PBM (2015), ICT Households (2014) (done by the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society in Brazil), and in the reports from Kantar IBOPE Media (company that monitors audience ratings and media consumption habits in Brazil). Facebook appears as the most used SNS (PBM, 2015). According to PBM, the main developed activities expressed by the users were searching entertainment information and searching for news.

IBOPE's Social TV study (Kantar-IBOPE Media, 2015) showed that, in the main Brazilian cities, at least 16 million people watch TV and use SNS simultaneously. In this context, telenovelas are the most commented shows – almost

60% of the viewers often comment on SNS about the telenovelas they are following (Kantar-IBOPE Media, 2014). It should not come as a surprise, considering that since the end of the 1960s, the Brazilian telenovela is the prime time of Brazilian open television.

#### **4.7 Brazilian Telenovela Reception and Connected Co-viewing Research**

The viewers of telenovelas are establishing connected co-viewing and post-viewing practices on SNS. They do it via official spaces occupied by telenovela producers, but also on unofficial ones (like pages and closed groups) within Facebook, other SNS platforms like Twitter, and through instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp (that is also part of the Facebook corporation).

Following this trend, since 2009 the Brazilian network of researchers that are part of Obitel Brazil is publishing every two years collections with empirical studies around Brazilian telenovela and serialized drama within new media platforms. Although it is a crucial step for a relatively new field dedicated to online audience reception studies, most of the works emphasize interactivity, expansion, and spreadability of telenovela content that were primary fostered by the Brazilian telenovela producers, which occur in their official spaces. Whereas, only a few studies are dedicated to understanding the practices of the viewers within these environments without focusing on the broadcaster policies and activities for trying to catch the audience, or for trying to transforming people in engaged fans. I do not want to imply here that these studies are not pioneering, nor of no use or relevance. However, it is necessary to see more what people do and try to continue giving a voice to those viewers that for decades the broadcasters and audience measurement companies attempted to mute them.

There are attempts to scrutinize new viewing habits and sometimes co-viewing via SNS (though never called like this). For example, Lopes et al. (2011) studied the reception of social issues in the telenovela *Passione* (Passion, aired between 2010 and 2011) on three SNS: Orkut, Facebook, and YouTube. They detected that within SNS the social issues present in *Passione* were discussed by groups and communities dedicated either to the telenovela and other topics or themes. They also detected that

users from different countries were co-viewing *Passione* and discussing its social issues. At that time, this telenovela only aired on Brazilian television, therefore, acknowledging new ways of television viewing: such as on-demand viewing through the Rede Globo paid subscription, or through YouTube and unofficial online channels that broadcast the telenovela. They also identified that YouTube viewing contributes to the construction of varied meanings through user-generated content, as some users made parody videos of the situations represented by *Passione* storylines.

Lopes (2012) further found *Passione* followers on Facebook related the telenovela's social issues to their own daily lives, a finding reaffirmed by Jacks et al. (2011). This dialogue occurred even among people who did not watch the show.

In comparison, Lopes et al. (2013) found that viewers were less reflective and relied on more emoticons to continue conversations on the Facebook fan page mediated by Rede Globo, suggesting that these kinds of spaces limit user's interaction and engagement.

Ronsini et al. (2015) looked deeply at viewers' SNS discussions of a romance between two female characters in the telenovela *Em Família* (In family, aired in 2014). Users explored multiple sexualities and gender equality on Facebook, using the couple's narrative as way of defending social causes and injustices. They made creative content and practiced online social activism by finding ways to make political issues more visible.

These studies detected essential characteristics in the way people co-view the Brazilian telenovela in connected spaces. Therefore, revealing that through connected co-viewing people can gather to discuss important social issues and even though the telenovela is temporary, users through co-viewing put efforts to promote these themes aiming at making improvements in the society.

Outside of the scope of Obitel publications, there are also some studies dedicated to understanding the simultaneous consumption of telenovela together with Twitter and Facebook (see Depexe 2015; Depexe, Santos and Foletto 2016). These studies contribute methodologically by applying a social network analysis (SNA) approach for understanding key players that can influence discourses in SNS and to identify main used words and indexers (hashtags) while viewing.

#### **4.8 Remarks**

This chapter discussed the history of communication and reception studies in Brazil, demonstrating that Brazil as the other Latin American countries overcame functionalist and critical traditions that had the focus concentrated more on the media rather than process and social activities by using the Mediations epistemological framework.

It was demonstrated that this epistemological way of looking at social reality is reflected in today's research. Nonetheless, it was suggested to expand this perspective by looking at hypermediations, as the current connected viewing scenario is distinct from the period when Mediations Theory has arisen. Hence, the connected viewing context in Brazil was shown.

The recent studies dedicated to understanding the Brazilian telenovela reception and connected co-viewing researches in Brazil were presented. Thus, revealing that there is space for developing and expanding this field. Furthermore, these studies, although not explicitly, fit into the hypermediations perspective because they looked at the process and to the telenovela reception practices within social networks. They implemented new methodologies, used new categories of analysis to explain the expansion of this practice that dates from the beginning of broadcasting in Brazil. In the same way, in the next chapters, I will present the theoretical framework and the methodological procedure used in this thesis to bring new categories and perspectives for the hypermediations research framework.

# **Part III.**

## **Theoretical Framework**

## **5.Practice Theory**

## 5.1 Overview

Practice Theory is an approach that looks at everyday practices as the primary premise to understand social reality. According to Schatzki (1997), the idea of practice has captivated thinkers and rallied controversies since the twentieth century, as most of the intellectuals concerned with it have different perspectives. Some of the principal authors of Practice Theory are Bourdieu, Giddens, De Certeau, Ortner and most recently Schatzki, Reckwitz, Latour, among others. Reckwitz (2002) states that these theorists have a standing point: their epistemological foundations on the philosophy of Wittgenstein and, to a lesser degree on earlier Heidegger philosophical ideas. Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) point that despite their heterogeneity most of the scholars widely accept that situated actions are what constitute social life, which dualisms are not accepted when tackling sociality, and relations are mutually constitutive.

Inspired by practice theory, in 2004, Nick Couldry made a call for a new paradigm in media research that would see “media not as text or production economy, but first and foremost as practice.” (Couldry, 2004:115). Without neglecting the importance of studies of media text or focused on production structures and strategies, he saw on practice theory the potential to understand what people actually do with media in a broader sense. In other words, to comprehend the practices related to media or oriented around media.

Furthermore, by looking at practices related to media, in a time when multiple instances of our social life are connected, it is possible to grasp better unique social processes that are enacted throughout media-related practices (Couldry, 2012) and with the use of artifacts and technologies. For instance, Couldry (2012) has identified some practices that are intrinsic to the uses of new media and SNS. Those are searching, showing and being shown, archiving, keeping-up-with news, commenting to find relevant information within the massive amount we receive every day, keeping all channel opens in multiple platforms, among others.

Some of these detected practices are also present in co-viewing. Co-viewing, as it discussed in chapter three, is a practice that requires the use of media, technologies or at least some kind of materiality. And now it has been extended to happen throughout multiple spaces (digital, non-digital, and both) and in varied temporalities (co-viewing on a TV programming schedule, on-demand, binge-viewing

and so on). Therefore, the interest in practice arises to understand in which ways co-viewing practices and its material arrangements are complex.

According to Bird (2010) and Couldry (2004), earlier media effects traditions and the cultural approach based on textual orientations such as the seminal work of Hall (1980) of encoding/ decoding, although relevant in the past, posed questions that no longer were able to fully grasp our communicative ecology filled with hypermediations. As Bird (2010: 86) states, the relevant issues about media are not anymore “‘What do media do to people and cultures?’ or even ‘what do people do in response to media?’” Instead, they are: What types of things do people do in relation to media? What types of things do people say in relation to media? How are media incorporated into everyday communicative and cultural practices? (Couldry 2004; Bird, 2010). These questions are addressed in this thesis as it follows the practice theory approach. Therefore, this chapter discusses the concepts that are considered applicable for developing a practice-oriented approach while analyzing the connected co-viewing phenomenon.

This chapter starts by situating the reader about what is practice theory. It follows by locating practice theory within other social theories and acknowledging that it is a kind of cultural theory. Then it continues by explaining the main components of a practice. It continues, discussing the field of practices, domains, and constellations and their connections. Subsequently, it describes two general types of practices: dispersed practices and integrative practices. As the chapter goes on three aspects of practices will be scrutinized: practitioners, materiality, and temporality. Thus, demonstrating how practices are intertwined in multiple aspects.

## **5.2 Practice Theory**

Postill (2010) states that it is possible to separate the practice theory in two generations of authors. The first generation includes Bourdieu, Giddens, De Certeau, in which most of the theoretical foundations have emerged. While, the second generation still growing, and Schatzki and Reckwitz work primarily inspire new authors. This current generation is more self-aware because it is testing, contrasting and extending these foundations (Postill, 2010). They are focusing their attention on producing a specific body of theory that is more cross-disciplinary and more oriented

to connect theoretical foundations with empirical work.

In this chapter, I set the focus on the second generation. As still there is some discordance I draw my interpretation based on the central concepts, and later I apply them in the analysis of the studied cases.

Practice Theory offers resources to explain social order and action. According to Schatzki (1996) social order refers to arranging entities that have meaning and place. It means ordering human lives and things, the materiality, and properties that they possess. And action is the condition to all these social formations to happen.

Reckwitz (2002) has positioned Practice Theory, in relation to social theories that explain action and social order, being them, purpose-oriented theories, norm-oriented theories and cultural theories. He framed practice theory as a sub-type of cultural theory, as cultural theories understand the social as shared symbolic structures of knowledge. While purpose-oriented theories are utilitarian theories and explain the action and social order based on the mix of individual drives and interests, and norm-oriented theories place the social as an outcome of normative structures.

However, it doesn't mean that normativity, structure, and individuals are ignored in practice theory. On the contrary, practice theory acknowledges that they are part of the practices but do not “possess the sui generis existence and near omnipotence sometimes attributed to structural and wholist phenomena.” (Schatzki, 2001: 14). In summary, the attribution of order to practices is not only caused by individual behavior or by structures. In fact, practice theory distinguishes itself from other cultural theories and social theories because it “does not place the social in mental qualities, or in the discourse” (Reckwitz, 2002:249). Instead, it places in practices, the smallest unit of analysis.

### **5.3 Practices and its Main Elements**

When researching practices, it is important to understand the meaning of practice within Practice Theory. According to Reckwitz(2002), it differs from some more general uses of the term, as it ordinarily is used as the opposite to theory (action vs. thinking). Therefore Reckwitz uses two German terms to states this difference: Praxis vs. Praktik. The first term is related to this ordinary use that implies the whole human activity (Reckwitz, 2002), or as Roig (2013) explains, it is a term “usually applied to describe specific fields of professional activities.” (Roig, 2013: 2318). While Praktik,

generally refers to the essential components of the social (Roig, 2013). In words of Reckwitz (2002), in one of his most cited explanation, it is:

“...a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understandings, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.” (Reckwitz, 2002:249),

Schatzki (1996) sustains that practices are constituted by sayings and doings. Language and meaning cannot be dissociated outside of practices because they are manifested through bodily/mind types of behaviors. Based on that, Warde (2005) identifies that Schatzki has defined practices in two different ways that complement each other, thus, establishing what a practice is. The first way is a practice as a coordinated entity, while, the second as performance.

### **5.3.1 Two Sides of a Practice: Practice-as-entity and Practice-as-performance**

The practice-as-entity refers to the ways doings and sayings form a practice through organized interconnection (nexus). Therefore, for a practice to occur it must have an organization, certain rules that should be understood by practitioners in order to be performed. Nonetheless to them to be performed they need to be pursued based on aims, emotions, projections and so on. Warde (2005:134) has divided these constitutive elements into understandings, procedures, and engagements. This division was based on an earlier definition of Schatzki (1996). Below, in the Table 3, there are the former first three major elements pointed by Schatzki (1996:89, 96) that also express Warde’s definition.

<b>The Major Components of Practice-as-entity</b>	
1) Understandings	To know how to do something, to comprehend what to say when performing a practice.
2) Explicit rules, instructions, principles and precepts.	The elements that organize a practice, its normativity, procedures, obligations, and duties that relate to human actions and utterances.
3) Teleoaffective - structures	It is what leads practitioners to engage and enact a practice: embracing ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods.

**Table 3. The Three Major Components of Practice-as-an-entity. Author own elaboration based on Schatzki (1996:89).**

The practice-as-performance refers to the enactment of a practice, when the doings and sayings are performed (Warde, 2005). It is by the performance that a practice sustains, actualizes or ceases its nexuses, as a practice to be alive it is necessary to be reenacted (Schatzki, 1996). Thus, time is an essential element of practice-as-performance because timing, sequencing, and scheduling are factors for conducting a practice (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012).

Therefore, practice-as-entity (regulative aspects) and practice-as-performance (components for carrying it on) can be considered two constitutive sides of a practice. However, to a practice to be performed it is important to have practitioners (Hui, Schatzki and Shove, 2017) material arrangements (Reckwitz, 2002a; Schatzki 2002, 2009, 2010, 2015), and time (Shove, 2009). Below there is the Table 4 with the components of practice-as-performance.

<b>The Major Components of Practice-as-performance</b>	
1) Material arrangements (materiality)	All the entities relevant to human practices to happen such as humans, artifacts, place-path arrays, technologies, organisms and things of nature.
2) Practitioners	People that perpetuate and transform the practices through their actions and use of materiality and other material arrangements
3) Time	Endurance of performances happens over time: it includes rhythms and routines of practice.
4) Action	All the action that is part of practices that comes from human and non-humans.

**Table 4. The Major Components of Practice-as-performance. Author own elaboration based on multiple works from authors like Reckwitz (2002a) (Schatzki, 2002, 2010, 2015) Warde (2005) Shove (2009) and Morley, (2017).**

These constitutive elements of the practice-as-performance are what open possibilities for practices to be performed in various ways and to be transformed over time. Thus, revealing that practices are not static, rather practices “contain the seeds of constant change. They are dynamic by virtue of their own internal logic of operation, as people in myriad situations adapt, improvise and experiment” (Warde 2005: 141) with the available resources. Co-viewing, as we saw in Chapter 3, is an example of a practice that has evolved through its enactment, has adapted and expanded through multiple material arrangements.

#### **5.4 The field of practices: connections, material arrangement bundles, and constellations**

After defining what a practice is and its main elements, it is necessary to understand that a practice might also have connections with other practices and materiality. Schatzki (2001) has called the total nexus of intertwined human activities the field of practices, in which:

“...practice accounts are joined in the belief that such phenomena as knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation occur within and are aspects or components of the field of practices.” (Schatzki, 2001:11)

The field of practices offers a universe of possibilities in which scholars following the practice approach can analyze social phenomena. These instances might be the domains of social life (e.g. science) that have many practices entangled with one another and their various material arrangements bundles, their subdomains, and large constellations like political system and economy that are also interconnected (Schatzki, 2017:133).

In any of those instances that the social can be analyzed, practices and material arrangements might have dispersed connections or might overlap in different ways by having different hierarchies' complexities (Schatzki 1996). Thus, Schatzki has divided the practices into two main types: dispersed practices and integrative practices.

### **5.5 Dispersed Practices and Integrative Practices**

According to Schatzki (1996), there are two kinds of practices. One of them is the ones he labels as dispersed practices, used throughout multiple domains of social life. The other he calls integrative practices, which are constitutive to particular domains. They are not mutually excluding, as dispersed practices may be part of certain integrative practices.

As Roig (2013) states, the dispersed practices have their doings and sayings mainly oriented to understandings. Schatzki (1996: 91) divided these understandings into the most common three components: the ability to carry acts, capacity to identify and attribute things to something, and the ability to prompt or respond to something. Some examples of dispersed practice are explaining, ordering, describing, asking, reporting, imagining, examining and so on. Some doings and sayings of dispersed practices like describing, explaining, and questioning appears in most integrative practices.

The integrative practices are more complex practices that Schatzki considers

the collection of doings and sayings that usually but not necessary include some dispersed practices. Some examples are farming practices, business practices, teaching practices, cooking practices, and, in the case of this thesis, co-viewing practices. According to Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) integrative practices can be connected in many ways. Some ways can be by co-location, by notions of privacy and propriety, by co-dependence. When co-location intertwines practices means that they are routinely enacted in similar locations, like offices, kitchens among others. Depending on the co-location these practices may form co-dependence or only co-exists without disturbing one another. The notions of privacy and propriety can delimitate if, how, when, and where a practice takes place. Co-dependence is when “practices do come to depend upon each other (whether in terms of sequence, synchronization, proximity or necessary co-existence)” (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012: 87). Furthermore, Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) add that practices in each scenario involve an interweaving of different practices, and they do not necessary compete, as we can be eating and viewing television, interacting with people, and doing other activities in combination. Moreover, Schatzki (1996) remarks that some integrative practices might break free to become dispersed practices, like the praying practice.

## **5.6 Practitioners**

People in practices theory are considered entities that participate, perpetuate and might transform practices through action (Hui, Schatzki, and Shove, 2017). Through people and with people practices occur.

As Reckwitz (2002: 251) states, practices are sets of routinized bodily performances that are at the same time sets of mental activities. Thus, practitioners are understood as bodies and minds, as people to perform a practice need both bodily and mental patterns of knowledge to carry out a practice. That’s is to say, for performing a practice the body also plays a major role in learning movements, repeating performances, handling certain objects and technologies. Schatzki (2001a: 58) frame practitioner’s behavior as not a sole product of the mind, but instead he classifies it “in practical intelligibility-determining states of affairs that are expressed in behavior.” through the body. Individuals are the unique crossing point of a multitude

of social practices and bodily-mental routines among different institutions (Reckwitz, 2002).

Practitioners pass bodily-mind knowledge to other members of a practice, as they are carriers of practices. In certain situations experienced practitioners define paths that others should follow, while in others novices bring new ways of doing into existence (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012). Additionally, practices come into being throughout different performances, in which the number of practitioners changes over time. Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) state that usually individual practitioners stop performing a practice because tension might arise. It is because practitioners might have different social positions within and outside a practice that might cause conflict and disagreements (Alkemeyer and Bushmann, 2017). Thus, a practice might suffer alterations while being performed, by the creation of new rules when conventions are contested by its practitioners or by generations that try to end with certain obsolescence or with the introduction of new materiality (Warde, 2005).

### **5.7 Materiality and Social Life**

Reckwitz (2002a) includes Latour as a significant contributor to practice theory and states that his works offered an instructive novel conceptualization. He states:

“Latour’s “symmetric anthropology” opened an array of possibilities to see social order not in a reductive manner that dematerializes “symbolic orders and of the material to objects of interpretation.” (Reckwitz 2002a: 196).

Latour (2005), in his Actor-Network theory, embraces materiality as capable of exerting action. He understands agency as what makes actors act, being them human and nonhumans. Therefore, agency and action only occur because of their inseparable relations between all kinds of entities. As Latour, practice theorists also perceive the materiality as one of the components of sociality. In words of Reckwitz (2002a), to include materiality in practice theory is a way of handling or constituting social practices, it is a perspective that:

“enables one to grasp the material not as a social structure or as symbolic

objects, but as “artefacts”, as “things” which are necessary components of social networks or “practices”.” Reckwitz (2002a: 196).

Schatzki (2002) states that practices are comprised by doings and sayings that are linked with material arrangements (bodies, artifacts, living creatures and things of nature). This combination is what Schatzki calls practice-arrangement bundles that organize domains, sub-domains, and constellations of practices and their multiple variations (Schatzki, 2017). Thus, practices are inherent to material arrangements, since, on the one hand, material arrangements are used and become meaningful through social practices. On the other hand, material arrangements are essential for practices to happen or evolve, as they can channel, prefigure, and facilitate the enactment of social practices through relations of prefiguration, causality, intelligibility, intentionality and constitution (Schatzki, 2010, 2015).

Furthermore, a practice usually happens within a place and normally, to get to this place, it is necessary to pass through a path. It is what Schatzki (2009) calls path-place arrays. To exemplify, by rehashing his idea, the practice of accessing Facebook happens in an interface (app or browser), but to reach this place, it is necessary to first pass through a path that leads to it (smartphones, tablets, computers and alike). Thus, this practice requires an entire material setting to be performed (including users and their bodies, programmers, designers and infrastructure and multiple technologies).

Practices can be changed while being performed, by the creation of new rules, or through their subsequent contestation (Warde, 2005). They also can be modified by introduction of new technologies and infrastructures for performing them in a more efficient way, or in a different manner. Morley (2017) states that practices change because of an interplay between practitioner’s performances and materiality. Thus, the interactions between materials entities such as bodies and technologies are elements that should be taken into consideration, as some machines function by themselves replacing some practitioner’s activities (Morley, 2017).

Moreover, materiality and spatiality are a privilege that designers, producers have (Schatzki, 2009) as well as programmers since they can construct, configure and layout settings, places, and paths where certain practices are performed with the use of technologies or through the interaction of people with technologies and other material arrangements.

## 5.8 Temporality in Practices

Reckwitz (2002) states that practice “is a type of behaving and understanding that appears at different locales and at different points of time...” (Reckwitz, 2002:250). Schatzki (2009) and Shove (2009) also acknowledge that time is essential to understand certain social practices, as they might have a constitutive relation. Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) acknowledge that “Yet moments of enactment are not usually continuous: indeed, most are spread out over time.” (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012:128).

The notion of time can create novelty or obsolesce of objects that might interfere whether a practice will continue to be performed and in which ways (Shove, 2009). A practice not only takes time but also might structure time throughout certain kinds of routine (e.g. commuting every day to go work at the same time, always watching a TV show on the television network programming schedule, having dinner at a particular time and so on).

Some practices require complex patterns of synchronization for their effective execution, usually when they require the co-presence of multiple people (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson, 2012). Co-viewing is one of them, as co-viewers need to be co-present to this practice to occur in a specific time. Therefore, co-viewing is also experienced and established through time, as it will be shown in the analysis. Most of the studied group’s activities were marked by the broadcast time, but also the preference for using a device was linked to the idea of saving time.

According to Shove (2009), we have schedules and frequent times that we develop practices, which usually depend on days, months, years or even a lifetime. These schedules are frequently founded in calendars. Thus, people perform certain practices in determined times, and when enacted in a different time disruptions might be caused. Also, practices and activities only exist and have temporalities as long as people decide to perform them (Schatzki, 2009).

Practices might have to compete or co-exist, and be co-dependent because of time (Shove, Pantzar and Watson, 2012). The more practices emerge, the more practitioners have to divide time with previous existent ones (Shove, 2009).

Consequently, the idea of time is also key to understand which moment fits better with users to develop their co-viewing activities on Facebook and Whatsapp, as well as to be aware of some of the possible reasons that precondition this temporality.

Furthermore, when considering the profound transformation in our viewing milieu, to comprehend co-viewing and UGC practices it is necessary to identify the complexities and connections concerning time, space and its materiality, as well as its entanglements with others practices.

## **5.9 Remarks**

In this chapter, my interpretation of the body of work of the second wave of practice theorists was presented. It was done intending to explain the main elements of practice, as they will be the central unit of analysis of this thesis. It was shown how practices are interconnected with each other, that they are constituted by human and non-human elements and that temporality and material arrangements shape practices' performances.

In the next chapter, another approach will be discussed, which will be complementary to Practice Theory to identify and examine the main practices that are interweaving with connected co-viewing and UGC activities while viewing the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre within the studied groups. This complementary approach is called Communicative Ecology.

## **6. Communicative Ecology**

## 6.1 An Overview of Communicative Ecology

This research is framed in the theoretical-methodological metaphor of communicative ecology. Following Scolari (2012a), metaphors are central for understanding what surrounds us, and they play a fundamental role in the scientific realm, as new paradigms and theoretical frameworks use them for starting to investigate different phenomena. Besides, metaphors can establish associative relations by altering or expanding the conceptual content of sign by, similarity, equivalence, replacement or even contrast (Jakobson, 1998). Thus, the utility of a metaphor is that it "... permits inspections which are diverse, complementary, and contradictory." (Eco 1984: 120) of a particular phenomenon, in this case, connected co-viewing activities.

There are many ecological approaches and metaphors used in social sciences, which also includes the communication field that have attempted to articulate an ecological thinking across many disciplines. For instance, I could locate the use of ecological metaphors since 1926. It was when Robert Park talked about using a Human Ecology approach to looking at society and its developments within the city (Park, 1926). From then on multiple ecological approaches have emerged, such as ecological anthropology, political ecology, environmental and ecological economics, media ecology, among others (see Scoones, 1999; Scolari, 2012a). Therefore, those approaches inevitably adopted varied perspectives over time depending on the object of study. These various angles that many disciplines offer most of the time do not dialogue. Nonetheless, when looking at them carefully, they have some touching points, and often they might complement each other. It is what happens within the ecological frameworks that look at media and communication as ecological processes.

Treré and Mattoni (2015) while mapping the ecological approaches in media pointed to the difficulties that can appear even inside a similar field, as each ecological approach have several historical developments. Therefore, the authors consider not possible to provide a straightforward and univocal definition of what media ecologies are. However, like these authors, I believe that each approach on media and communication ecologies bring some interesting points, which are also

useful for analyzing connected co-viewing practices, as well as future reflections concerning social practices and its encounters with media.

I use a communicative ecology approach inspired by the works of Altheide (1994; 1995) and used by other authors that have an ethnographical orientation (see Slater, Tacchi, and Peters, 2002; Tacchi, Slater, and Hearn, 2003; and Hearn and Foth, 2007 among others). It is done because communicative ecology focus on the meaning that comes from a sociocultural perspective and analysis of the local context, which communication takes form with multiple agents who are knotted in various ways. Usually these agents are intertwined by exchanging different mediated and unmediated forms of communication (Tacchi, Slater and Hearn, 2003) that might include attempts of control and surveillance by some of these agents (Altheide, 1995). Therefore, helping to understand the connected co-viewing practices of Brazilian telenovela followers in closed spaces like unofficial closed Facebook groups and a WhatsApp group.

For those readers familiar with the differences of ecological approaches in media it might sound contradictory that I also am inspired by some premises of Scolari (2012a) that follows most of the ideas of Canadian scholars of Media Ecology School. For those that are not familiarized, this contradiction derives from works from media ecology theorists such as Ellul, Postman, Mumford, Havelock, Langer, among others (Postman 2000; Scolari; 2012a), most of them followers of Marshall McLuhan. Many scholars considered these authors along the years media-centered, filled with technological determinism. However, such considerations are not appropriate, as these authors also included the relationships of humans with media in their studies. Moreover, Scolari, as Altheide, is also inspired by McLuhan and considers that media and information technologies could mutually influence communicative processes, the evolution of social practices, and the media.

Furthermore, in the current connected viewing context, where media is pervasive in many instances of our social activities, we use different interfaces as part of our daily routines. The idea of Scolari (2012a: 216) that every media has an interface (human–technology interface), and every media is an interface (technology–technology interface) reinforces and illustrates the complex tensions between subjects, media, and social forces that are present within social practices through the use of media interfaces and technological artifacts.

Having said that, this chapter underlines the fundamental ideas of a communicative ecology approach. It highlights the central mechanisms within SNS ecologies such as interfaces, platforms, algorithms, and buttons. By understanding them, it expands the possibility of scrutinizing the relations of media, information technologies, and society when investigating connected co-viewing practices.

## **6.2 Communicative Ecology**

Communicative Ecology approach does not have a formal cohesive collective of scholars reunited. Still, there are bodies of authors that have been carrying on anthropological studies following this framework, which involves the use of the digital media and is particularly inspired by the theory of Altheide (1994; 1995) of ‘an ecology of communication’ (Wilken et al., 2013).

Altheide (1994) sees communication and social order as consequences of reflexive activities. That is to say, that he understands communication in a holistic way because he looks not only to media effects but also to the expansion of information technologies into multiple areas of social life. The author also uses the ecology of communication as a concept that explains the ways information technology and communication systems operate in particular environments that are intertwined with social practices. In some cases, information and communication technologies add new kinds of social activities. In other situations, they might change the existent ones (Altheide, 1994).

When thinking about co-viewing practices, every time a new medium, software, or interface is launched, and afterwards accepted and incorporated into the daily life of people, these practices get altered. This is because new possibilities for performing co-viewing are created. Furthermore, some of those media and technologies are not initially designed aiming to suit co-viewing activities. Still, people just adapt them to their viewing practices. SNS initially were not created for this purpose. Though, some users started to use them with this aim. The same applies to other practices, and, consequently, it continues in a back and forth process that developers end up also getting influenced by users and by the practices they carry on.

Although Altheide’s book ‘An Ecology of Communication: Cultural Formats of Control’ (1995) was released just a few years after the invention of the World Wide

Web, the ideas presented in his book make sense even with the radical transformations that the Internet and its ecological elements have lived during the past decades. Based on De Certeau (1984) and Foucault (1977), Altheide (1994:1995) considers that ecology of communication has implications in the social order. Thus, resistance and disruptions are usually shaped by practices of surveillance and control, when applying tests and marketing strategies to most instances of the social life. He understands that tests, usually done for authentication or qualification, are forms of control that profile individuals by breaking them “ into parts, attributes and behaviors ...”, and information technologies are applied to put these pieces together, “so to speak, through artful retrieving of an expanding plethora of databases and tracking devices...”(Altheide, 1995:29).

What back then he called tests, today could be called data mining or called by the name of other techniques to monitor and predict users’ behavior. As discussed in the Co-viewing chapter surveillance and data control is a common fact in the current days, they are usually market-driven, and are a pervasive part of our daily life activities.

As Gerlitz and Helmond (2013) state, with the rise of a more social web and SNS, companies realized “that user preferences, habits and affects that had previously only been available through consumer research technics” (Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013:1360) now are subjected to a growing array of social media monitoring services. These services track users by using cookies and third party trackers for advertising people online. However, these ways of control are not sealed from disruption. As Altheide (1995) points out, people can be reflective, resist and even cheat to escape surveillance by having the aim of developing their own activities in digital spaces. They usually do it by using the same material resources, same media, and technologies of institutions. They might appropriate cultural traditions for shaping their practices.

Therefore, in this study of Brazilian telenovela co-viewing within connected platforms, I decided to look at unofficial and closed spaces because I consider them environments that are prone to host disruptive practices of co-viewing and UGC among other intertwined practices. Although Facebook is a private corporation that together with Google is one of the main agents for tracking users’ behavior (Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013), I believe that closed and unofficial groups are created to avoid the direct surveillance and control from the television network (Globo) that airs the

telenovela. In order to understand if such control occurred in the studied groups, as well as to understand the main reasons users co-view in these environments, I had to consider others four aspects when applying the concept of an ecology of communication:

- The word ecology “implies relationships related through process and interaction” (Altheide 1995:10);
- Relational spatial arrangements are subjects that matter, as the implementation of information and communication technologies in many spheres of our daily life gets the attention shifted towards temporary or sequential arrangements. Thus, interdependence, mutuality, and coexistence are part of the ecology of communication (Altheide 1995:10);
- Relations within this ecology are not random or wholly arbitrary, as they have connections with the medium or technology used in different activities (Altheide 1995:10);
- Communicative Ecology is a fluid structure as “there are developmental, contingent, and emergent features of ecology” (Altheide 1995:11).

The relevance of this approach for this study is that it opens the possibility to understand connections between co-viewing practices, UGC, their entanglements with other practices in the larger communicative and socio-political context of followers of the Brazilian telenovela.

Media anthropologists such as Slater, Tacchi, Peter, Hearn, Foth among others, extended the ideas of Altheide and empirically applied them in ethnographical works. These authors called their ethnographical approach, communicative ecology. As ethnography, the concept of communicative ecology, offers a holistic picture of a phenomenon that is inserted in-between communication and information flows in particular localities, practices, encounters and understandings that characterize the places where communicative processes occur (Slater, Tacchi and Lewis, 2002). Tacchi (2006) further explains that the communicative ecology framework is useful because it focuses its attention on communication-related aspects of the contexts in which people operate. It includes social, economic and cultural contexts. A

communicative ecology perspective also includes the subject (individual level), as well as a group setting, and the connection of a person with a group, demonstrating that they are part of a complex media ecosystem that is socially and culturally framed (Hearn and Foth, 2007). Hearn et al. (2014) point that communicative ecology offers to researchers a framework, which we can understand how communication occurs within a group as well as between groups, without focusing exclusively on an individual or a single communication media. They state that communicative ecology provides a broader view of communication, as we can understand how groups of people are connected in their communicative process. It includes SNS applications, peer-to-peer modes of communication, face-to-face interaction with and through traditional and new media (Hearn and Foth, 2007). Foth and Hearn (2007) also suggest looking at communicative ecologies in three levels that are interwoven with each other and mutually influential. These levels are described below in table 5.

<b>Communicative Ecology layers</b>	
Media and technology layer	It includes all the means used by people and groups to communicate. It includes all communication devices, ICT infrastructures that enable communication (including software and hardware).
Discursive layer	It comprises all content present in communication, such as stories, beliefs, understandings and symbols that define people's communicative practices
People layer	It embraces the people and groups involved, their social norms and relationships, as well as social institutions that connect them and are part of their practices.

**Table 5. Communicative Ecology layers. Author own elaboration based on Foth and Hearn (2007) and Hearn et al. (2014).**

The understanding of the communicative ecology approach of media anthropologists, together with the idea of Altheide of an ecology of communication were necessary to this research. This is because the case studies were inspected through the lenses of online ethnography (Kozinets; 2007; Hine, 2010), and the

groups' practices could only be comprehended with a holistic perspective. The communicative ecology also aided to situate how viewing settings within particular digital environments such as Facebook and Whatsapp, are intertwined with materiality, temporal and spatial aspects of a communicative ecology such as interfaces, algorithms, platforms, screen devices, as well as other media. Thus, enabling to expose how all these factors might influence one another, and reshape the viewing experience.

### **6.3 Main Components within Social Media Ecologies: Interfaces, Platforms, Algorithms and Buttons**

Co-viewing practices occur within different kinds of platforms, which have different interfaces, algorithms, and features that are intertwined with online sociality. In order to better analyze the practices of co-viewing and UGC within ecosystems inside SNS like Facebook, it is necessary to understand what kind of digital-material elements are parts of these platforms that might channel the social practices that occur within those digital spaces. Therefore, the terms, interface, platforms, algorithms and buttons are discussed below.

An interface is one of the main elements of SNS ecologies because throughout them most of the user's practices occur, as well as the corporative practices. The interface has its visible items that are connected with invisible features. It means that the term interface is used to explain a bridge between two or more elements during a process (Scolari, 2012a). Therefore, any technological device is a complex interface that integrates different components to be able to function. It is what Scolari (2012a) calls technology-technology interface. For instance, a smartphone is the interface of its hardware that is composed of many elements (microprocessors, memory, battery, between others components) that allow many practices to occur using this single device, such as calling, messaging, using the browser and different apps with Wi-Fi or 4G networks. Nonetheless, a smartphone operational system is another interface that is placed between the device and its user, as well as the interface of an app such as Facebook or Facebook Messenger. These kinds of interfaces can be considered a human-technology interfaces (Scolari, 2012a). Additionally, Scolari points that every media has an interface (human-technology interface), and at the same time, every

media is an interface (technology–technology interface). Interfaces can be considered places that connect humans with media and other people with the use of media. Moreover, interfaces are places where political, social and economic interests play a role, thus affecting the construction of its architecture (van Dijck, 2013; Scolari, 2012a).

According to van Dijck (2013) within the connected context, interfaces of social media applications usually work with pre-established defaults. It means that pre-assigned settings are automatically set-up to structure user behavior by doing a standardization of content and its way of deliverance. Standardization can be understood as a process that is used by corporative SNS that apply the idea of ‘platform’ for approaching both users and advertisers (Gillespie, 2010).

As Gillespie (2010) states, when SNS are called platforms, they have an “egalitarian and populist appeal to ordinary users and grassroots creativity, offering all of us a ‘raised, level surface’” (Gillespie, 2010:358). At the same time, they position themselves as facilitators that make available UGC without making the presence of the advertisers explicit, as traditional broadcast media usually does. Therefore, opening spaces for users to perform activities, and to business to make a profit. Therefore, a process of standardization is useful to facilitate peoples’ connectedness, as they can find UGC quickly (van Dijck, 2013). Nonetheless, the same features of a interface that enable this bond between users, such as buttons, work together with algorithmic processes to design interactions and shape the path of our social practices to occur within the SNS. Additionally, organizing user’s behavioral data for targeting and personalizing advertising (see Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013).

According to Goffey (2008), algorithms represent a fundamental unit that underlays contemporary information society to achieve structured solutions. Algorithms are used as methods for solving computing problems that are formed by a series of steps that act upon a dataset to accomplish a determined outcome (Gillespie, 2014). Their formal solutions are executed with the use of computer language, usually articulated as “logical conditions (knowledge about the problem) and structures of control (strategies for solving the problem)” (Introna, 2015: 21). Nonetheless, algorithms are produced from a social context. It means that algorithms are lived in our social world. In our communicative ecology, they are integrative part as “they are woven into practices and outcomes. And then, we have the recursive processes as

those outcomes are modeled back into algorithm design”(Beer, 2017: 4). Algorithms in a SNS like Facebook works as a filter that ranks and decides what and who will be visible to other users. It is based on users’ social activities that are calculated by some parameters (e.g. the like button and the reactions, sharing, scrolling, chatting with another user, among other tools for gathering behavioral data) (Araújo and Pires de Sá, 2016). On the other hand, as many authors already pointed out (Bucher, 2012; Gillespie, 2014; van Dijck, 2013 among others), algorithms contribute to the way we understand information within a connected world. They somehow administrate the flow of information and have the power to bias our activities.

It is not possible to see these features, such as interfaces, platforms, buttons and, algorithms as outside of communicative ecologies and social practices, as they are part of them. These components of SNS ecologies are also in constant renewal, interoperating between SNS. Private corporations like Facebook change interfaces hardly by chance. Usually, they do it to try new business models or improve the existent ones. As van Dijck (2013) points out, a company configures its platforms knowing that they are part of a bigger ecological system that competes and has to collaborate with other platforms. Within Facebook, for instance, there are similar buttons used by other interfaces, such as share and like, and other SNS content can be shared or embedded into Facebook. Another example could be the recently features that were also available on Instagram that is now part of Facebook, such as the Facebook stories, or the Facebook live that work similar to the Twitter application called Periscope or Snapchat.

Following van Dijck (2013) corporations shape their platforms based on the larger paradoxical constellation of other platforms that compete and at the same time collaborate with each other, including traditional media such as television. Their dialogue with traditional media is important because for many years, watching something in the TV schedule or live was central to our sense of what is happening in the world, and social impulses as those do not abruptly disappear (Couldry, 2012). Co-viewing and other viewing activities find new forms of being performed, and they can be done in SNS with the use of multiple materialities and technologies.

It is important to have in mind that users also compete and collaborate in between and within platforms, and with the use of technologies while performing activities within SNS. This is because of the users’ capability to exchange and share

content. Depending on the space, users may curate which kind of content can be seen and by whom, as happened in the studies groups of this thesis.

#### **6.4 Remarks**

In this chapter, the approach of communicative ecology was discussed, which will be used to analyze the studied groups. It was shown how people and their symbols, media, and technologies are capable of mutually influencing themselves in a communicative process. Moreover, it was demonstrated how humans and non-humans have agency. For instance, it was discussed that users activities are tracked in SNS, and somehow the features of SNS platforms such as interface, algorithms, and buttons can configure the paths of accessing information and performing social practices.

In the next chapter, the Brazilian telenovela genre will be discussed, together with its history, and its key features. It will also be discussed how telenovela is getting part of the connected environment and how users are responding to it. It is done because the studied groups used as their primary discursive element the telenovela they were co-viewing. Multiple social practices had relation to the format of this particular telenovela genre, and its following up also shaped the way users accessed and related to the interfaces the studied groups were part of, Facebook and WhatsApp.

## **7. Brazilian Telenovela**

## **7.1 Overview**

This chapter dedicates to explain the Brazilian telenovela, with particular attention to the prime time of Rede Globo, as it is the co-viewed time slot of the studied users of Facebook and Whatsapp groups. Thus, the chapter begins by presenting an overview of the history of Brazilian telenovela and its developments until the present days. It also explains the key features of this format. Subsequently, it acknowledges how Globo Network (Rede Globo) got established, as it is one of the main responsible actors of the telenovela format and one of the principal producers and key players of the Brazilian audiovisual market. Then, it explains how works the social merchandising strategies of entertainment-education used by Rede Globo to prompt social debate among viewers. The chapter follows by stressing on the notions of perceived media realism present in this kind of televised narrative, as they are interrelated with social merchandising and spread to other media and platforms beyond the television. Moreover, it illustrates the way Brazilian telenovela is present within several connected platforms and emergent media practices, including its presence among online practices of users that follow it within theses connected spaces. Therefore, the chapter ends discussing the UGC within the context of telenovela followers.

## **7.2 The Origins of the Brazilian Telenovela**

The telenovela is present in Brazil since the 1950s when television arrived in Brazil (Hamburger, 2011). In the beginning, it was considered an intellectually low type of product even between its producers (Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos, 1989; Castro, 1994).

At that time, many of the telenovelas aired in Brazil had melodramatic plots because they were adapted from Cuban and American soap operas with their roots on radio soaps (La Pastina, 2001). They were also sponsored by the soaps' industries, such as Colgate-Palmolive and Gessy-Lever (Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos, 1989).

They aired just a few times per week and were oriented mainly to women (Hamburger, 2011; Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos, 1989).

In general, telenovelas were on the air between two to three times per week and they didn't have a well-established time slot. Delays were common due to the lack of standardization, trained personnel and modern equipment (Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos, 1989).

According to Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos (1989), just in 1963 that a telenovela aired with an everyday fixed time slot, by the extinct channel called TV Excelsior (at the moment it was one of the most famous telenovela producers together with the TV Tupi, that also ceased to exist).

The Brazilian telenovela became the prime time because it has acquired a better reputation along the years. The regularity on its running time was fundamental to this to occur. Rather, than merely continuing to follow the standards of soap operas telenovelas started to produce plots with representations of the Brazilian daily life with contemporary issues, that were central to reach such a position in the Brazilian broadcasting scene (see Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos; Castro, 1994; Hamburger, 2011).

According to Borelli (2001), the plots started to show the Brazilian reality with a touch of critical debate on socio-historic issues as well as on the social conditions experienced by telenovela characters. Thus, the telenovela became one of the primary interlocutors in national political debates (La Pastina, 2001).

In addition to this seeking of realism, the introduction of well-known scriptwriters from the theater market was relevant for the awareness of the Brazilian telenovela. Back then, theater and televised theater plays were references of products with high intellectual elevation (Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos, 1989; Castro 1994).

Another crucial fact for the consolidation of the telenovela was the arrival of videotapes and other technologies (Borelli, 2001), which contributed to telenovelas to gain more dynamism. As new technologies allowed shooting a greater quantity of takes, external scenes, to insert special effects, and to include more characters in the plots (Marques and Lisbôa Filho, 2012). Therefore, once again, differentiating from soap operas that didn't shoot external scenes due to their high costs.

### **7.3 The Brazilian Telenovela Format**

It is usual that Brazilian telenovelas are confused with soap operas when referring to them in the English language. Nonetheless, there are some differences between these serialized genres.

One of the main differences, except the fact that Brazilian telenovelas are less melodramatic than soap operas, is that soap operas don't have an expected date to end and can always be extended. The Brazilian telenovelas, on the other hand, last around 180-200 episodes depending on their success.

The Brazilian telenovela can be considered an open work as it begins to air with a few footage material shot. In general, there is footage material for twenty episodes, and the rest is written and produced while the telenovela is airing (Atencio, 2014). The Brazilian telenovelas are usually referred in Portuguese as folhetins due to its similarity to French Feuilleton from the XIX century (Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos, 1989; La Pastina, 2001). This analogy is done because the Brazilian telenovelas are written while running, and changes can be implemented on the go – in the same way, these popular narratives were written and distributed two centuries ago in France. Besides, as the storylines develop the scriptwriters and producers can include feedback from the viewers (Atencio, 2014).

Many Television networks in Brazil produce telenovelas. The actual key players in the open TV market are Rede Record (Record Network), SBT (Brazilian System of Television), and Rede Globo (Globo Network). However, no one usually achieves audience ratings as Rede Globo does. Rede Globo is one of the major media corporations in Latin America and its hegemony was established since the end of the 1960s with the implementation of the American style of TV production and investments in expertise (Ferreira and Santana, 2013). Commonly, when somebody from Brazil refers to a telenovela, he/she is talking about the telenovela from Rede Globo as it was one of the major responsible for the format it has today.

Rede Globo broadcasts several hours of telenovelas per year, they have different thematic and occupy different hours on the programming schedule. Below there is Table 6, which summarizes the telenovelas features according to their time slot.

<b>The Characteristics of Rede Globo Telenovelas per Airing Time</b>	
6 p.m.	<p><b>Target:</b> Usually the telenovela in this time slot is directed at young population, retired people, and housewives. The stories are adaptations from literature or based on historical events.</p> <p><b>Airing days:</b> Monday to Saturday. It lasts approximately six months, and a new one immediately replaces it.</p>
7 p.m.	<p><b>Target:</b> This time slot is filled with telenovelas that have plots with a touch of humor. The plot is commonly represented in the contemporary time with light and romantic stories. It is directed at teenagers, retired, housewives and people that don't work until late.</p> <p><b>Airing days:</b> Monday to Saturday. It lasts approximately six months, and a new one immediately replaces it.</p>
9 p.m.	<p><b>Target:</b> This is the prime time of the Brazilian Television. It is known as the telenovela from 8 p.m. between people from older generations (as it was the original time slot when it started to air). It is directed at men and woman, with different, sexual, social and economic situations. The plot addresses social issues and aims to achieve the largest audience as possible.</p> <p><b>Airing days:</b> Monday to Saturday. It lasts approximately 6 months, and a new one immediately replaces it.</p>
11 p.m.	<p><b>Target:</b> This is an unusual time slot for telenovelas. Normally remakes are done, or new stories are developed with stronger content, showing nudism or drugs for instance. This telenovela targets at an adult audience.</p> <p><b>Airing days:</b> They are not aired the whole year or replaced immediately as the previous ones. When running, it airs four days per week.</p>

**Table 6. The Characteristics of Rede Globo Telenovelas per Airing Time. Author own elaboration based on Ferreira and Santana (2013).**

#### **7.4 Brazilian Prime Time Telenovela**

The case studies of this Ph.D. thesis are two unofficial and closed Facebook groups and one WhatsApp group of users who develop co-viewing and UGC practices associated with the Brazilian prime time telenovela from Rede Globo. To understand the features of this particular time slot is vital at moment of analyzing the co-viewing and the UGC practices that are enacted around it. As we will see later on in this section, the prime time telenovela address social-political issues that incentive situated learning, which is an elementary feature of co-viewing.

Usually, a new prime-time telenovela replaces the previous airing one in the same time slot when it is over. In average, it happens every six months. Each prime time telenovela contains contemporary issues with social-political commentaries but also includes in some of its subplots humor (Lopes, 2009).

All layers of society usually follow the Brazilian prime time telenovela because of the structure of its narrative (Lopes, 2002; Ferreira and Santana, 2013). It has a structure that seeks to represent different social issues in its plots, with conflicts of integration among social classes, ages, families' configurations, sexuality, religion, political points of view, between other relevant topics such as diseases and delinquency. Typically the telenovela revolves around problematic themes and national problems by recasting them as something personal or familiar (Atencio, 2014). It also has a happy ending, which provides an important space for public debate of the acceptance of the multiculturalism within the country. Lopes (2009) describes it as the:

“... peculiar capacity to create and to feed a “common repertoire”, through which people from different social classes, generations, genders, ethnic groups and geographic regions localize and recognize each other ... this shared repertoire is in the base of the representations of an “imagined national community” (Lopes, 2009:3).

Therefore, telenovelas that in its origins were produced driven to women and the low social class, copycatting radio soap operas with dramatic stories and low

quality (Ortiz, Borelli, and Ramos, 1989) became the prime time of the Brazilian Television.

Nowadays, as the Brazilian telenovela evolved, it is aimed at a heterogeneous national public. It is produced with high-quality standards, and when broadcast it provides a space for debating about social and political issues (Fadul, 2000; Lopes, 2002). The prime time telenovela is a unique example of the rise of citizen awareness that appeared in the Brazilian media system, since, it always informs and problematizes the national identity and the ongoing transformations of Brazil (Lopes, 2002). This is possible to occur because in each edition an entirely different story from its predecessor is released, with a different title, different characters, and by bringing a novelty into a debate. When a new telenovela starts a distinguished social issue gets evident, aiming to provoke interest in the public and to generate commentaries (Lopes, 2002; 2009).

## **7.5 Rede Globo**

Rede Globo (Globo Network), the current leading media group of Brazil, started to broadcast in 1965 and until now it has one of the most important roles in the form Brazilian telenovela has today. Globo's productions and its broadcasting centers are the greatest in Latin America, operating in 38 properties in five capitals (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Recife, Belo Horizonte and Brasília) with a total of 26 production studios (Rede Globo, 2016).

Since its foundation, TV Globo positioned as a company that invests in the training of its professionals for obtaining a high-quality audiovisual production (Ferreira and Santana, 2013). This managerial approach, with high investments in know-how and technology, is the result of the period of establishment of Rede Globo, when its ownership was shared with the Time-Life American group (a joint venture) (Ferreira and Santana, 2013). During this time Rede Globo started to convert itself in the primary producer of telenovelas, implementing a series of changes in the production process, focusing on technology investments, training of personnel, and division of labor (La Pastina, Patel, and Schiavo, 2004; Ferreira and Santana, 2013).

Rede Globo also benefited from the military dictatorship (1964 to 1985) to become the leading network in Brazil. It started to broadcast one year after the military coup d'état (Ribke, 2011). During the first years of the authoritarian regime, the network went to trials for having an illegal partnership with Time-Life. It was forbidden by Constitution to have any foreign intellectual decision-making as well as capital investment. Although Globo was considered guilty and had to break the contract with the American group, the network got loans from the military regime for paying the debt with Time Life. Additionally, it received preferential treatment concerning the distribution of broadcast station's licenses, communication infrastructure, and advertising contracts (Ribke, 2011; Atencio, 2014). Consequently, Rede Globo became the leading broadcaster in Brazil, and telenovela became the most important product (La Pastina, Patel, and Schiavo, 2004). As Rede Globo telenovelas usually represent a national imaginary by incorporating elements of an everyday urban life, and using a common language in their plots (Ribke, 2011), it was a convenient product to spread the military propaganda of nationalism (Atencio, 2014).

Nonetheless, the scriptwriters of telenovela had a complex and sometimes contradictory relationship with the regime. Although some of the scriptwriters that were originally from the theater and were against the military government, and even were persecuted in the first years of the dictatorship, they worked for Rede Globo as telenovela scriptwriters under military co-option and censorship (Ribke, 2011; La Pastina, Patel and Schiavo, 2004). However, as La Pastina, Patel and Schiavo (2004) point out, telenovela was a media space, which even under censor control could stretch some of the limits of what was acceptable in this repressive time. Despite the ideological clashes between the scriptwriters and the military, the presence of these telenovela scriptwriters was significant as they represented an improvement in the quality of the telenovela production (Ribke, 2011).

In middle of the 1980s and 1990s started the transition of power from the military to civilians (La Pastina, Patel, and Schiavo, 2004). In this period the prime time telenovelas of Rede Globo could increase the social issues discussed in the plots, shifting from entertainment content with limited (and sometimes censored) social-political discussions to a more educational and political content (La Pastina, Patel, and Schiavo, 2004). Then, the telenovela's scriptwriters started to be able to explore important contemporary subjects such as corruption, elections and even the memory

of the authoritarian period (La Pastina, Patel, and Schiavo, 2004; Atencio; 2014). The possibility of exploring the social-political agenda gave rise to what is known as social merchandising (merchandising social in Portuguese). Social merchandising is an institutionalized practice that can be understood as a form of product placement done by the broadcasters, but instead of a product, a problem, a behavior or social issue is presented within the plots for promoting public debate (Atencio, 2014).

## **7.6 Social Merchandising**

The prime time telenovela of Rede Globo has the power to exert the role of agenda setting, as it can be considered a communicative resource for social-political issues (Lopes, 2009). Thus, it is pertinent to observe the co-viewing and UGC practices related to telenovela, as many negotiations of meaning can be originated from telenovela content. Besides, Rede Globo, since the 1990s officially states having a partnership with a consultancy company (Comunicarte) specialized in social responsibility projects (Schiavo, 2006). This partnership aims to include in the prime time telenovela representations with a media realist approach, as part of Rede Globo's social responsibility strategy positioning. Therefore, such realistic approach makes even more noteworthy to delve into how viewers include and understand it within their viewing practices.

The Brazilian telenovela includes representations of pressuring problems and social issues that are current part of events happening in the country, as well as possible real-world experiences lived by the characters. The inclusion of such representations constitutes part of the mentioned social responsibility strategy of Rede Globo, well known as social merchandising. Schiavo (2002; 2006) says that social merchandising consist of regular premeditated insertions of social issues in the plot of a telenovela, aiming to deliver educational messages to the viewers and prompt reflections between recurrent social problems. Social merchandising is similar to the product placement marketing strategy (Atencio, 2014, La Pastina, 2001). Nonetheless, instead of displaying a tangible product into the plot to receive sponsorship, social issues such as homosexuality, prostitution, corruption on politics, fights for gender equality, diseases awareness, among other important subjects are placed (Atencio, 2014). However, as the works of Joyce (2013), and La Pastina and Joyce (2014) point

out some economic, religious and political groups constrain some issues' representations like gender roles and sexuality. It was only in the past decade that these themes have been gaining attention and portraying the characters and their stories with the multidimensionality they deserve (Joyce, 2013), i.e. homosexual couples started to be represented, though with a lack of kisses or with a large build-up until them to occur. Thus, showing that social merchandising is intertwined with the notion of citizenship because it brings relevant subjects that would be hardly discussed by the population without their inclusion within this popular narrative (Schiavo, 2002).

Atencio (2014) states that the Brazilian social merchandising embraces captivating fictional stories that spark empathy for real-life people suffering some form of injustice. Social merchandising happens due to the role of characters in transmitting the educational messages or model behaviors by blending with the storylines of the telenovela as well as with incorporation of real events (Atencio, 2014). Precisely, because of the social merchandising strategies, the narrative of the prime time telenovela should look natural and be mingled with the actual construction of the plots. Producers try to approach these social, political, ethical, cultural and religious issues with a touch of spontaneity. Nonetheless, as the airing of a prime time telenovela lasts around six months, the discussed and reflected themes cannot be followed for a longer time. Thus, the solutions for the pressuring social problems are usually given through a happy ending.

### **7.7 Perceive Media Realism**

Co-viewing is a practice that is intertwined with many other practices and activities such as reflections, evaluations, and negotiations of meaning concerning the co-viewed media content. Perceive media realism is one of these practices that are interwoven with co-viewing.

Colloquially saying, perceived media realism could be explained as the way viewers evaluate a media content portrayal of the real world according to viewers' different angles (Busselle and Greeberg, 2000; Hall, 2003; Pouliot and Cohen, 2007; Hyunyi, Kari, and Lijiang, 2014).

Perceived reality is also a multidimensional construct (Hyunyi, Kari, and Lijiang, 2014), which is materialized during the viewing and post-viewing practices. According to Alice Hall (2003) media realism is constructed via five dimensions: plausibility, typicality, factuality, involvement by narrative consistency and perceptual quality. By investigating these dimensions, media scholars may observe how co-viewing of social merchandising in the Brazilian telenovela intertwines with viewers' self-reflective practices about reality.

As Hyunyi, Lijiang and Kari (2014) explain, the first three dimensions concern how users can relate a story to reality, while the last two dimensions regard to the coherent structure and the authenticity of audiovisual elements within the content. Below there is Table 7 with the definitions of each dimension.

<b>Perceive Media Realism Dimensions</b>	
<b>Plausibility</b>	The possibility that events and character behaviors in a narrative can, in fact, occur in the real world.
<b>Typicality</b>	The extent to which viewers perceive media representations to be similar to their own present or past recurring experiences.
<b>Factuality</b>	Storytelling that is based on real life events or real people, for example, docudramas or narratives based on the news.
<b>Involvement through narrative consistency</b>	The internal coherence and within a narrative and the congruency of its narrative elements such that even fictional dramas make sense and seem plausible within the diegesis.
<b>Perceptual quality</b>	The quality of audio, visual, and postproduction effects, among other factors that enable the content to be perceived as convincing. For instance, participants of Hall's study perceived the fictional dinosaurs in the movie Jurassic Park as real because of the quality of their representations.

**Table 7. Perceived Media Realms Dimensions. Author own elaboration based on Hall (2003) and Hyunyi, Lijiang, and Kari (2014).**

The practices of perceived media realism were found in the Ang's study (1985) of the viewing experiences of a soap opera with high satisfaction ratings (Dallas). Her study revealed that many viewers enjoy the fictional world because they can disconnect from their real-world routines through melodramatic content. Dallas was a soap opera that contained sensational appeals to private and ordinary situations without traces of social issues critical self-reflection.

In contrast, in the case of the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre, the dimensions of perceived media realism that are materialized through social merchandising try to spark identification, to improve the telenovela viewership and to generate reflections on social problems. This is because the first three dimensions of perceived media realism are implemented in the plots as a way of promoting identification with fictional characters. Also, the characters often appear living similar experiences of real world public figures and common events that can occur in people's personal life. Moreover, the other dimensions contribute to making these realistic representations more attractive and coherent while portraying pressuring social problems. Furthermore, the practices of perceived media realism around the prime time telenovela are boosted not only by co-viewing a telenovela that contains social merchandising, but also because the Brazilian telenovela has larger media coverage on new and traditional media.

## **7.8 The Connected Telenovela**

The prime time telenovela is not an isolated product of the Brazilian television industry. The telenovela has a broad media coverage that goes from print media to broadcasting. From the last decade, it is also present in connected platforms. As Fadul (2000) points out, telenovela is an important type of content and is discussed in various other media. Print media, for instance, tends to initiate debates on social issues arising from a telenovela's plot, as well as radio shows, TV shows from the same or different TV channels. In the past decade, telenovelas are getting connected, by being debated and by having their own spaces on the Internet. According to Lopes (2009), every telenovela has its website, where it is possible to find a variety of additional content. These content are summaries of episodes, short videos for catching

up, information about future events, behind-the-scenes, blog/vlog of characters, actors' curiosities, and merchandise (such as soundtrack, clothes and accessories). Official and unofficial pages, blogs, communities, and discussion groups are also growing in social networks and instant messaging applications such as Facebook and Whatsapp.

Rede Globo, as the main telenovela producer, invests in information and technologies solutions for multi-platform and online voting mechanisms (Rede Globo, 2016). In 2010 Globo started its transmedia division, named New Formats of the Central Globo of Artistic Development (Scolari, 2013). This unit was created intending to try to implement new strategies for increasing its audience base, in particular among the younger audiences. According to Fechine et al. (2013), most of the telenovelas from Rede Globo have tried to implement transmedia (or crossmedia) strategies to expand their narratives from television to other media. Rede Globo from time to time creates for its telenovelas fictional characters' blog diaries, webisodes, official Facebook pages and Twitter accounts (Lopes et al., 2013) to try to catch the attention of its connected viewers. Additionally, Rede Globo has its pay-per view system, called globo.com. Only the subscribers who pay a monthly fare have access to the entire episodes from its telenovelas and other TV content. At the end of 2015, Rede Globo launched what is known as Globo Play, an application for those who subscribe the globo.com to watch it on tablets and smartphones.

Although Rede Globo and other open television channels are losing audience ratings due to different reasons (from fragmentation in a context of cultural convergence to the emergence of connected platforms and pay-TV services), broadcasting continues to be the most common access point for content in Brazil. The Brazilian prime time telenovela remains the preferred time slot for advertisement and sponsorship (De Faria et al., 2013). Therefore, aiming to enhance revenues, Rede Globo is increasingly implementing these online tools and promotional strategies (De Faria et al., 2013).

In this connected context, telenovela followers are using the Internet and its connected platforms to expand and revitalize the significance of their favorite shows (Lopes, 2009). Therefore, the viewers of telenovelas are forming the habit of watching while participating in conversations through SNS and instant messages applications. They are revitalizing the ritual of co-viewing telenovelas that is not only happening within their homes, together with their families or friends, but also with

people that are far away. Thus, amplifying the co-viewing practices that are also constituted by UGC when developed through new media platforms.

## **7.9 User-generated Content and Telenovela**

It was discussed in the Co-viewing chapter that UGC engagement materializes by consuming, by interacting, and by producing (Shao, 2009). By consuming individuals do not interact or engage with content creation, they only view content. By interacting users interact with users as well as with content (Shao, 2009). By producing users create content in different media formats.

UGC can be broadly materialized (such as in wikis, evaluation websites, blogs, social media, instant messaging apps and so on) in different types of format of content (e.g. text, photo, videos, games) with countless purposes (for entertainment, social-political campaigns, for getting updated, etc.). When associated with a narrative, UGC opens a range of possibilities and strategies to expand its storylines through multiple media formats (Scolari, 2012). Brazilian telenovelas are also part of this UGC realm. Furthermore, UGC is also created around telenovela stories. UGC are shared and are integrative parts of users' co-viewing practices since most of these practices are performed through different texts formats, and created with distinct materiality.

Many UGC related to telenovelas start to be produced before the telenovela premiere date. From my observation, whenever there is a press release with information of the upcoming telenovela, users create groups dedicated to it. In these groups, they share news about the future plot, UGC, and have conversations, most of them about expectations regarding the cast and the future storylines. Furthermore, as Lopes (2012) points out, there is a migration between telenovelas Facebook groups when a new telenovela starts. Thus, new spaces for UGC related to the new telenovela are created.

Many telenovelas' UGC are always emerging within these SNS groups. As it was identified previously to *Babilônia* airing, as well as on the go, UGC occurred in the form of conversations between users during viewing and post-viewing activities. They have occurred in the form of reviews and criticisms around the storylines, files

exchange, the creation of summaries of episodes, creation and/or expansion of plots, and memes.

The last three forms of UGC mentioned earlier can be considered remixing practices. According to Markham (2015) remix refers to a widespread practice of doing mashups videos, and to the phenomenon of Internet memes that are typically composed of small elements of cultural information. This includes catchphrases, images, short audios or video clips that get remixed in diverse ways, usually (but not always) aiming to obtain a comic effect. Lessig (2008) describes remix as an inherent part of the digital culture that creates cultural awareness, literacy and a critical interpretation of the multiple media that permeate our everyday lives.

Usually remixing practices assume a memetic characteristic, as they are transformed and spread by the users with the use of satirical commentaries for public debate (see Shiftman, 2013). The concept of memes came from sociobiology, in which Dawkins (1976) use this Greek terminology to explain how cultural phenomena can be widely spread like genes. According to Milner (2013) the remixing practices of creating and transforming memes require from practitioners who produce and reproduce an understanding of representational conventions associates with specific groups, individual and context. Therefore, the only way of a meme to survive is through the enactment of this practice that involves people as carries that constantly distribute and modify these cultural artifacts.

Therefore, the number of users that are content producers is considered small within SNS groups of telenovela followers (see Lopes, 2012) because most of them just replicate content. However, these remixing activities still central to understand how the relations of co-viewing and UGC get integrated within groups that follow the Brazilian telenovela. Even more, when Rede Globo is using hashtags and creating memes that follow the users' language and aesthetics, as a way to promote its telenovelas, as well as to enhance viewer's loyalty to the telenovela format.

## **7.10 Remarks**

In this chapter, the main characteristics of the Brazilian telenovela prime time genre were discussed. It was fundamental to understand part of the communicative ecology

of the studied groups. As it will be shown in the Analysis and Results part, the Brazilian telenovela genre and its viewing tradition are a constitutive element of their co-viewing practices and the groups' ecologies.

By looking at its history, it was possible to understand its current format and detect the main key players in the Brazilian context. It was also possible to comprehend how the inclusions of social issues through the social merchandising strategies contribute to spark perceptions of media of realism.

Furthermore, it was possible to grasp that Brazilian telenovela is a hybrid genre that is getting reinvented and has been evolving over time, occupying spaces that go beyond the television setting. Because of its connectivity, it was also possible to detect that users are engaging with the telenovela within connected environments by co-viewing it and searching for telenovela information in spaces like SNS. Besides, in those spaces, they are also engaging in practices of UGC.

In the next chapter, the selected methodology to develop this study of connected co-viewing in relation to the Brazilian telenovela genre will be discussed. The next chapter will explain the methodological decisions and the steps done for carrying on the data collection and data analysis.

# **Part IV.**

## **Methodology**

## **8.Methodology**

## **8.1 Overview**

This chapter introduces why the case study methodology was selected as the best suited methodological approach to this research. It discusses the features of the case study, and, at the same time, it demonstrates the implications of this methodology for the particularly studied cases.

In this study, I have focused on the co-viewing activities in two unofficial and closed Facebook groups and one WhatsApp group of followers of the prime time telenovela of Rede Globo, *Babilônia* (Babylon), which was airing during the main period of data gathering of this Ph.D. study (March to August, 2015). Therefore, this chapter continues by explaining the previous steps to data gathering, a process of observation. This process was done to understand the greater context (universe) in which the studied cases were inserted, the context of co-viewing and UGC practices within previous Facebook groups dedicated to the following up of Brazilian telenovelas of various time slots.

This chapter describes the process of formulation of the case studies, as the three cases differed in their selection process. It also includes the portrayal of the process of establishment of bonds with group's administrators and users, by using and showing the importance of acquiring informed consent from informants. Therefore, the chapter follows by explaining how the creation of the projects' Facebook page, and by the use of the real researcher profile was essential for acquiring the informed consent, as well as to establish a relationship with the users.

The chapter continues with a further explanation of the data collection process comprised of three complementary ethnographical methods, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and a qualitative survey. It concludes by explaining the process of data analysis on NVIVO.

## **8.2 Introduction to The Case Study Approach**

The justification for the selection of case study as the applied methodology comes from the type of research questions I have done, and from the phenomenon I decided to study, which wasn't something that I could control. Thomas (2016) and Yin (2003)

say that questions aiming to understand how and why are the proper ones to do a case study. It is because through a case study it is possible to look at a subject from many and varied angles that can help us to achieve a better and balanced understanding of our object of study. Also, the case study is adequate to be used when the researcher has little to no control over the events that are under investigation (Yin, 2003).

Flyvbjerg (2006) points out that case study provides to the researcher the closeness to real-life situations for understanding a social phenomenon. Multiple circumstances and details arise during the process of investigation, which is context-dependent (Flyvbjerg, 2006). It means that the case study produces experiential knowledge, as the objects under study are complex and can be marked out by their contexts and through circumstances of the occasion when being studied (see Stake, 2005; Thomas, 2015). Despite their divergences, Thomas (2015), Stake (2005), Flyvbjerg (2006), Yin (2003), among other authors of case study affirm that one of the main strength of using this approach is that it allows the use of various sources and multiple techniques to understand the object of study. Therefore, triangulation of methods allows the case study to obtain more reliability, as during the period of study, descriptions, and interpretations are not done in a single step. Instead, many steps are made in various moments of the research. Thus, leading the researcher to pass through a constant process of reflexivity.

Additionally, triangulation allows for a better understanding of the situation where a case is embedded. In the cases of this thesis, the methodology and its multiple methods had the influence of ethnography, in instrumental and relational terms. In instrumental terms because of online methods that Kozinets (2010; 2002) called 'netnography' (adapted from ethnography) served as research tools to explore the groups that existed in digital platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. In relational terms, it helped to comprehend the complexities of users' activities because of their interconnection.

Furthermore, when doing a case study, a close look at the case's activities provides a proximity and better comprehension of the object of study, which allows the researcher to receive constant feedback from those under study (Flyvbjerg 2006).

By doing a case study, I was able to pass through this process of reevaluation that allowed me to observe whether my propositions were coherent or not and if they should be reviewed. As the cases I studied didn't follow a deductive model, and my approach is closer to the phenomenological paradigm I could understand this process

of reassessment throughout distinct phases of the study and adapt to it. Reminding that I started it with preconceived ideas, objectives and a working hypothesis that had to be adjusted during the process of data collection. These alterations were done because I could have a close contact with the users under investigation, as well with their practices and environment, in which co-viewing and UGC practices occurred. Therefore, the case study helped to learn more about the phenomenon that was being studied and to contrast it with prior conceptions.

Case Study is usually known from using qualitative data. Nonetheless, the researcher is the one who determines which type of data gathering and analysis techniques should be applied to answer the research questions. Thus, case study allows through the process of triangulation the use of qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting data (see Stake, 2005 and Yin 2003), methods such as participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, documents, and so on. It was used a triangulation of methods for better understanding the co-viewing phenomena. As previously mentioned it was applied ethnographical methods, such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and a qualitative questionnaire. This triangulation has aided to do an in-depth analysis of the viewing practices of the groups of users that were selected to be the cases (two unofficial and closed Facebook groups and one WhatsApp group). The in-depth analysis was just possible because of the applicability to real-life and contemporary issues that the case study approach allows when looking at an ongoing phenomenon, such as co-viewing through connected platforms.

### **8.3 Observation: The Pre Step Before Selecting the Cases**

This thesis draws upon empirical material from the study of co-viewing and UGC practices of followers of the Brazilian prime time telenovela *Babilônia* in two unofficial and closed Facebook groups and one Whatsapp group.

As co-viewing happens when media content is being watched/viewed, I considered pertinent to scrutinize these practices at the same time they were going on. Therefore, the co-viewing of the telenovela *Babilônia* was selected, as it would be the next prime time to air after the approval of this Ph.D. project.

Stake (2005) states that it is not possible to understand a given case without knowing others that are part of general phenomena. Thus, before studying the co-viewing practices within Babilônia's groups, an observation of Facebook groups devoted to following other telenovelas was done for several months. The groups for following the previous prime times to Babilônia, called Império (Empire), and other telenovelas from different time slots were observed. These observations allowed to get informed about the creation of Facebook groups that would follow Babilônia. Thus, assuring that new cases were up-to-come.

This process of observation also gave the possibility to participate in earlier moments within the selected case studies, as these moments were the ones which practices, rules and procedures were more visible and less taken for granted through the routine (Roig, 2013). Thus, the first month of the airing of Babilônia was a key moment of this research. At this stage, as Pires de Sá and Roig (2016) pointed out, normativity got contrasted in relation to previous telenovelas and was constructed concerning the understandings and expressions of affectivity that users had regarding the new telenovela. It is what Turner (1969) calls a 'liminal phase,' a moment, which ambiguity and confusion prevail among group participants as their normal ways of performing sociality is changed by others, thus having to adapt and establish new manners. In the case of the Facebook groups I studied, the members had to migrate from the previous group dedicated to following the telenovela Império to a new group devoted to Babilônia. Therefore, they were no longer used with group norms, nor with the participants, or to the plot. In fact, the activities developed within previous groups, as well as the previous telenovela plots were fresh in their memories. Consequently, during the start of Babilônia airing, they had to establish themselves in a new telenovela group, to get used to new rules and to see in which ways they would perform their viewing practices.

#### **8.4 Selecting the Cases**

For the objectives of this study, I have chosen to focus the attention on unofficial and closed Facebook groups and the activities performed within them. Besides, my aim was to see people's activities, and not a constructed idea of an audience or fan

predetermined by institutions. I also preferred to focus on unofficial and closed spaces, as I considered that they would allow the observation of practices of connected co-viewing without a possible interference or surveillance of Rede Globo channel. Of course, it was taken into account that these groups, even being not official, were not the ideal open spaces for debating ‘freely’. Within the Facebook and WhatsApp groups, there were forms of moderation and even kinds of censorship performed by the group owners and administrators, as well as by filtering algorithms that Facebook uses to put some posts in more evidence than others (see Araújo and Pires de Sá, 2016).

Although the groups were part of a private corporation like Facebook, which also owns Whatsapp, users perceived them as more appropriated places for developing particular practices (as you will see later on in the part of Analysis and Results). Therefore, it was possible in to see in these groups the practices of file exchanging and content sharing, reasoning about the function of the telenovela, its technical features and the way it represents reality.

The three studied groups were selected differently. Nonetheless, for this research, I followed the logic of instrumental collective case studies design defined by Stake (2005). I used collective instrumental cases to achieve a better understanding of the connected co-viewing phenomenon. Stake (2005) calls an instrumental case study when: “...a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else” (Stake, 2005: 445). In this research, I was interested in understanding connected co-viewing and UGC practices related to a particular type of TV show (Brazilian prime time telenovela). In order to achieve this goal, the Babilônia groups were studied. Nevertheless, in the same manner I did with these groups, Stake affirms that “The case still is looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized and its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps us pursue the external interest” (Stake, 2005:445).

Many Facebook groups dedicated to following Babilônia were created before Babilônia started to air. They started to arise one month before the previous telenovela (Império) was over, when Rede Globo released the synopses and aired some teasers during the breaks of its programming. Within Império groups, creators and administrators of Babilônia groups started to promote and invite users to participate, which assured that there would have groups to study the co-viewing and

UGC practices vis-à-vis this television genre. They were around ten groups one month before the releasing date of Babilônia (its first episode aired on 16th of March 2015).

To select the cases from this universe of Babilônia's groups, I did a purposive sampling by selecting the two most active groups, taking into account the groups where people posted and commented more often. As Rubin and Babbie (2016) point out, a purposive sample is a technique in which you handpick your cases because they have attributes or perform certain practices that might represent a segment group that is relevant to the study. Hence, this purposive sampling was done to participate in spaces where co-viewing practices would get materialized because of the users' activity. The WhatsApp group, on the other hand, wasn't selected intentionally. In one of the studied groups, the one that I will refer as Telenovela Babilônia Facebook group 2, a Whatsapp subgroup was created, in which, users were invited to participate by leaving their phone numbers in a comment. As it was from my own interest to see co-viewing in a connected way, I did not hesitate in giving my number. Thus, the WhatsApp group selection remitted more to the snowball type of sampling that is often employed to try to "...obtain information on and access to 'hidden populations...'" (Noy, 2008: 330).

## **8.5 Informed Consent and Ethical Concerns**

Research, when done online, can generate significant ethical concerns, especially when doing qualitative research in which the researcher should be sensitive because the online might affect the offline context in which the participants live, and it might harm them (Eynon, Fry, and Schroeder, 2008). The Internet is also an environment that new phenomena and features are constantly raising and it is necessary to be aware of the potential risks to the participants.

This research was done within micro-ecologies of Facebook (two unofficial and closed groups) and in one WhatsApp group, two platforms that are always getting under features' reinventions. Within WhatsApp, the phone numbers of the participants are required to be able to use the services and to speak with peers. On Facebook, users have to register their metadata (name, gender, etc.) in order to have

access to the services. There are discussions whether or not Facebook is a public space. Following these debates, Reilly and Trevisan (2016) looked at the Terms and Conditions and pointed that Facebook might be both public and private, or even a semi-public space, based on the privacy settings. In the case of spaces like Facebook groups, their settings are public, closed, or secret groups. The studied groups had its status as closed groups, whereby only members can post and see each other posts. Therefore, it is not considered a public space, and informed consent was a major issue that was taken into account.

However, in those cases the researcher should be careful, as users might not be aware of data privacy settings and depend on the circumstances research outcomes might outrage participants (Reilly and Trevisan, 2016). Thus, informed consent should always be an issue to have in mind before starting a qualitative research, as online and offline contexts are interwoven. Therefore, to do this research, the principles recommended by the Committee of Association of Internet Researchers written by Markham and Buchanan (2012) to not harm the participants and the community under study were followed. Always having in mind that any decision-making while working with digital spaces involves data that could reveal sensitive information from individual persons (Markham and Buchanan, 2012).

After formulating which would be the case studies, and before starting the process of data collection, a Facebook page was created. It was done to update information on different stages and news related to the research project, as well as to let the participants aware of the general aims of the study, and open a channel for communication. Furthermore, as Hine (2008) points out, it is important for online researchers to have informative web pages, as informants are able check our identity, affiliations and see us as legit scholars when doing a virtual ethnography (netnography). Hence, as it shows in Figure 1, a link that directed to the website of the university I am affiliated was included, which appeared the description of my research group and its members.



Short Description	Pesquisa que aborda as telenovelas Babilônia e A Regra do Jogo, novas formas de assistir televisão e práticas sociais como CGU e co-viewing.
Impressum	Input Impressum for your Page
Long Description	Meu nome é Fernanda Pires de Sá. Doutoranda na UOC(Universitat Oberta de Catalunya). Sou membro do grupo de pesquisa Mediaciones Cultura Digital que é parte do IN3(Internet Interdisciplinary Institute) da UOC. Busco compreender as práticas sociais de Co-viewing (assistir em grupo produtos audiovisuais tanto fisicamente como virtualmente), e as práticas de consumo e de produção de conteúdo gerado pelo usuário. Na minha tese de doutorado analiso estas práticas através dos comentários e textos produzidos por grupos de pessoas que seguem a telenovela Babilônia. Nesta página, com a contribuição de vocês compartilharei a respeito do meu dia a dia, minhas dúvidas, minhas descobertas e desafios durante minha pesquisa. O apoio de vocês, o qual eu agradeço, será fundamental para essa etapa da minha vida e o êxito deste trabalho.
Plot Outline	+ Enter plot outline
Schedule	+ Enter schedule
Awards	+ Enter awards
Starring	+ Enter starring
Directed By	+ Enter director
Written By	+ Enter writer(s)
Website	<a href="http://in3.uoc.edu/opencms_portalin3/opencms/es/recerca/list/mediacions_cultura_digital">http://in3.uoc.edu/opencms_portalin3/opencms/es/recerca/list/mediacions_cultura_digital</a>

FIGURE 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCHER FACEBOOK'S PAGE

The selection to use Facebook as the platform to host this page was based on the idea that the studied users would be using the same SNS they use to access the groups. Therefore, facilitating their access to the page, as they would be already logged in to Facebook.

At the beginning the page was named in Portuguese the corresponding to this English translation “Babylon Project: connected TV and telenovela”. The name was changed when Babilônia finished, which included A Regra do Jogo in the title. This was done because at the beginning of data collection I identified a set of contrasting practices, in which Babilônia was compared with other products, but mainly with the previous prime time telenovela, Império. Thus, revealing the relevance to also follow the period of transition between Babilônia and its replacing telenovela to understand how this connected co-viewing phenomenon would continue.

This page was also a tool that helped me for acquiring informed consent from the group owners, administrators and studied users. It helped me to be clear about the objectives of the study and to explain that the collaboration of the users was voluntary

and not an obligation (see Estadella and Ardevol, 2007; Hine, 2008, Miller and Boulton, 2007 for more information on informed consent).

First, the group owners and administrators were contacted to receive pertinent information about how I intended to develop this research project. Therefore, the Facebook page was fundamental for establishing this contact and presenting the study. Second, after the agreement with owners and administrators several posts were done within the groups, explaining that I would be participating in the groups while studying the users activities (always making reference to this research page and when necessary resolving user's doubts through comments).

The data anonymization was another concern that was always taken into account. It was explicitly said to the informants that their personal information would not be revealed. I acknowledged it within publications, during informal conversations with users, throughout interviews and within the questionnaire presentation. Some users explicitly stated that I could use their real names, however, I opted for not acknowledging their identity. Although, I use the real name of the telenovela they were co-viewing, I don't use the actual name of the groups. Moreover, both groups had their name changed some months ahead of Babilônia finale, thus not allowing the recognition of the studied groups, even more with the large flux of information that they had.



FIGURE 2. FACEBOOK RESEARCH PAGE

The decision of using my real Facebook profile while participating in the groups or talking to users was done intending to transmit trust. Therefore, enabling

the possibility to create solid bonds with the users while involved in the groups' practices, as they would see the researcher as a real person. Besides, as appears in Figure 2, for creating these bonds, within the page of the project a constant update was done showing what activities I was doing, such as attending courses, seminars, conferences, and events.

## 8.6 Data Collection

The data collection of this research can be divided into four stages. These four phases, which not always exclude each other, are presented in the table below:

Stages	Methods	Objectives
Selection of Groups	Observation	To limit the sample by selecting the groups that are more active.  n= 3 (two Facebook groups and one WhatsApp group derivate from one of former Facebook groups)
Participant Observation in the Facebook groups and its sub-group (WhatsApp)	Participant Observation	To understand the co-viewing and UGC practices by identifying the main activities developed by these groups and the reasons why users participate within them.  n=3 groups
Semi-structured Interviews	Online interviews	To contrast the main performed practices by people that co-view the telenovela via online groups, and to understand how they integrated the UGC within their practices by interviewing active users.  n=20 interviewees
Questionnaire	Questionnaire (Google Forms)	To further compare whether the observed practices and outcomes of the interviews appeared among a larger population. Also, to recognize some patterns of co-viewing, and to discover some demographics' descriptive aspects of the population that were under study  n=227 respondents
Second batch of semi-structured interviews	Online Interviews with previous respondents	To expand the understanding of the way these users received information on Facebook based on their viewing activities and the devices they used for performing co-viewing.  n=6 interviewees

**Table 8. Data Collection Stages**

The entire process of data collection of this research is detailed in Figure 3. The main period when the data collection took place was done during the time that the

telenovela Babilônia was airing (from March to the end of August 2015) until the end of the first month of the replacing telenovela, A Regra do Jogo. (September 2015). Half of the participant observation was done in Brazil to get more immersed in the context and also to avoid the time zone difference of five hours between Spain and Brazil, as at the beginning of the data gathering this time difference made the process of participant observation harder.

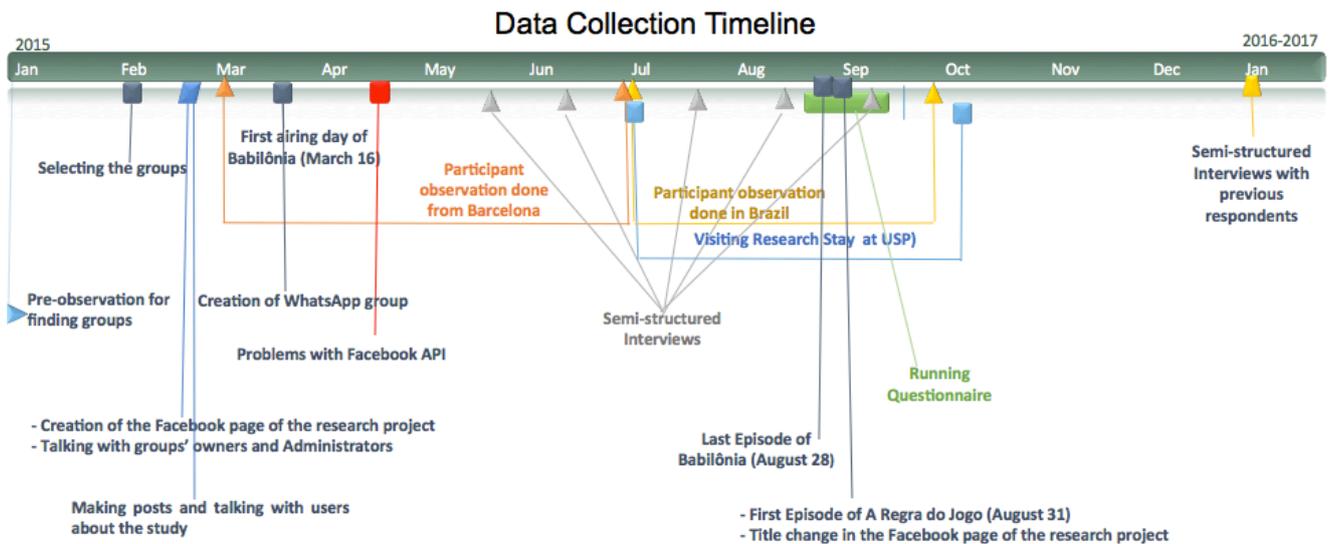


FIGURE 3. DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE

For collecting the data three ethnographical methods commonly used in case studies were applied: participant observation, semi-structured interviews and a qualitative questionnaire.

This study started with a participant observation within two unofficial and closed Facebook groups of followers of the telenovela Babilônia and a Whatsapp group, which lasted until the final episode of Babilônia and during the first month of airing of A Regra do Jogo.

Throughout the process of participant observation within these groups, an interview script was developed based on the notes and perceptions of the main practices developed within the groups. Later, a batch of semi-structured interviews was done with twenty dedicated users. In its majority, the interviews were carried on

via Facebook messenger, with only one exception that was done via Whatsapp. These interviews were first intended to be done via Skype, but most of the users affirmed that they did not use Skype, and would be more convenient to do the interview through Facebook. Some of the interviews occurred at the beginning of the airing of Babilônia, others in the middle of the telenovela (during the visit research stay in University of São Paulo) and others some weeks after its finale (also during my visit research stay).

From the interviews outcomes, the observations, and from a questionnaire previously applied for studying social media co-viewing by Cohen and Lancaster (2014), the qualitative questionnaire of this study was developed. In its majority, it was a qualitative questionnaire, but it had some descriptive quantitative questions. The questionnaire was applied on Facebook during the last week of the airing of Babilônia, and during the first two weeks of the airing of the new telenovela, A Regra do Jogo, to see the overall perceptions of users and their practices about this prime time.

Another batch of semi-structured interviews with six previously interviewed respondents was also done. Aiming at further understanding how their co-viewing practices and UGC affected the information they received on Facebook.

## **8.7 Data Analysis Procedure**

The data analysis has proceeded in a constant process of update and adaptability. During the first month of the airing of Babilônia, after co-viewing the telenovela within the studied groups, it was used the N capture plugin from NVIVO 10 for mining data sets of each day from Facebook.

Every day, in the morning I used the coding feature of NVIVO for establishing and storing relevant data in categories and concepts through what is called node in this software. It was necessary to do it every day because of the high amount of data that was produced. During co-viewing, these data appear to be less, as I was seeing and participating in the activities happening in a sort of synchronic time. Nonetheless, when looking at datasets, it became different, as in NVIVO each post or comment represents a new row in the dataset, even when it only includes emoticons

or single words. For instance, only during the first episode, between both Facebook groups, the dataset had nine hundred and forty-two rows (including posts and comments). Therefore, it required a constant process of selection and categorization of the relevant content. This selection was based on my experience of co-viewing and the notes done during this practice. Furthermore, if I were not part of the groups and were not participating in the co-viewing activities, it would be almost impossible to read all the content.

At the end of April 2015, when Facebook changed its API it was necessary to adapt, as I could not extract the data from Facebook closed groups. The solution found was to create an Excel database with the most relevant activities. This relevance was based on the topics and in the engagement of the viewers. Usually, each saved interaction had at least ten comments or more. This decision has decreased the amount of data I had to store, and changed the process of coding. In the Excel, I included my notes, links and saved the trace of the entire interaction among the users in one row. Therefore, having an average, from May to August 2015, of seventy-one saved activities per month. Those excel sheets were imported to NVIVO and coded once a week. While on WhatsApp, I made notes from the activities and at the end of the participant observation I downloaded a text file and imported to NVIVO.

The interviews were coded after the last one was conducted. They were coded (categorized) in two different ways. The first one was by creating nodes of each question to be able to see all the interviewees' responses together. Second, by including relevant information in the nodes already created during the participant observation.

The questionnaire was used in NVIVO for running queries and tests that were also applied to the data from participant observation and interviews, such as searching for the main used words to contrast with the existent categories, to see a word in a particular context, and so on. Additionally, for the analysis I also could use the results summaries and the graphics that Google Forms provides.

In the beginning, the classification process of the analysis was intuitive, and a large number of nodes were created. After some weeks of airing patterns started to appear and nodes (categories) began to acquire a better shape, consequently decreasing the number of nodes during the process of analysis. It is illustrated in the Figure 4.

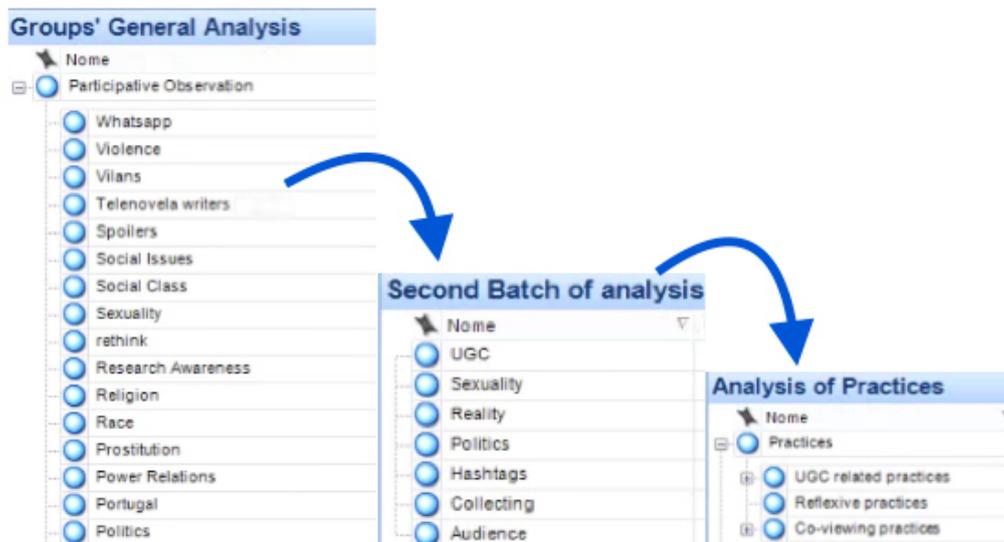


FIGURE 4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE STUDY CATEGORIZATION PROCESS IN NVIVO10

After the end of the fieldwork, the coded data was further analyzed, and common properties and patterns of social practices were found among nodes. Therefore, the nodes were re-classified into kinds of practices that will be discussed in the chapters of the Analysis and Results of this thesis.

### 8.8 Remarks

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology used in the research, the methods and the ethical protocols that were followed during the study. Also, the process of data collection and the data analysis procedure done in the NVIVO were described. In the next part of this thesis, the analysis and results will be exposed in three chapters.

**Part V.**  
**Analysis and Results**

## **9. Groups' communicative ecologies**

## **9.1 Analysis Clarifications**

This part of the thesis is divided into three chapters, including this one. Each chapter is dedicated to answering the research questions in order. Nonetheless, as there is no straightforward answer for the connected co-viewing phenomenon that is intertwined with various practices, there is information in each chapter that partially addresses the questions and confirms the working hypothesis.

Additionally, it is important to mention that this part of the thesis makes use of quotes from the interviewees, from the conversations during the participant observation, and from the questionnaire respondents. These quotes were translated from Portuguese to English.

In order to protect participant confidentiality, real names are not used. As respondent age and gender were acquired from the interviews and the questionnaire, quotes from these data collection methods will be referenced with these social attributes.

The quotes extracted from the participant observation do not have any trace of social demographic characteristics. It is because this kind of information is not always available from research within Facebook and WhatsApp groups. Therefore, pseudonyms are used for quotes from the conversations within the observed groups.

## **9.2 Overview**

This chapter portrays the main characteristics of the communicative ecologies in the three cases in which co-viewing and UGC practices were scrutinized: two unofficial and closed Facebook groups and one Whatsapp group dedicated to following the telenovela *Babilônia* from Rede Globo.

First, the three layers of communicative ecologies proposed by Hearn and Foth (2007) are reviewed: the technological and media layer, the discursive layer and the people layer. As these layers are interwoven and mutually influential, they are not

only explained in the sections dedicated to them, but also emerge throughout the different parts of this chapter.

Second, in order to familiarize the reader with the groups' organization, the main components of the cases are discussed. Therefore, the chapter explains the general differences between the groups, as they vary regarding platform features (Facebook vs. WhatsApp), the number of users, and the life cycle of the groups (keeping in mind that Brazilian telenovelas usually last around six months). As each group had its own particularities, the chapter reviews each group's characteristics, such as administration, moderation, and organization. Additionally, it is explained how the researcher entered the field research. Both studied Facebook groups had the same group name. Therefore, for the research study, one group was named "Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 1" and the other "Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 2". The sections follow by discussing the characteristics of Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 1 and Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 2. The WhatsApp group characteristics are then discussed.

Finally, the co-viewed telenovela and its airing context are explained, as the telenovela Babilônia can be considered as an essential part of the discursive layer of the users' practices. Through Babilônia's social issues, and the country's socio-political situation, users reflected on their perceived reality through the lenses of their own beliefs, understandings, and symbols. Furthermore, some institutional practices, such as audience rating measurement also played a central role in the users co-viewing activities, as they functioned as the narrative of the failure of the telenovela.

### **9.3 Outline of the groups' shared communicative ecology's layers**

During the study, it was possible to grasp some of the shared features of the communicative ecology's layers that were common to all groups' micro-ecologies, which co-viewing, UGC and other interconnected practices were performed. The elements of these layers were identified during the participant observation and were further examined during the interviews and within the questionnaire's responses.

In this section, the three layers of communicative ecology that were encountered in all of the groups are discussed. They will be further analyzed throughout this chapter, as they are key components of the identified practices that were intertwined with co-viewing and UGC activities

### **9.3.1 The Technological and Media layer**

While people were co-viewing the telenovela *Babilônia* and performing other interconnected practices within the studied groups, they made use of a number of different devices. In addition to televisions, the other material devices used were smartphones, computers, and tablets.

Most users affirmed to use these devices to talk to other users during the broadcast of *Babilônia* and also at other times of the day, usually to exchange opinions, to see other points of view about the telenovela's social issues, and to acquire information. Some users acknowledged that they used these devices to interact and make friends, especially with people that were in the groups they participated in (usually from Facebook and WhatsApp). Only a few of the users stated that these devices were used to discuss and search for information about the telenovela within the SNS, solely during commercial breaks, in order not to lose their focus from what was being aired. Additionally, it was acknowledged that these devices were used to acquire information without necessarily having the need to speak to other group members.

Most of the users still use the television as the main device to view the telenovela as well as other types of TV shows. However, some users watch the telenovela on the Internet via unofficial streaming channels or on-demand (via both official and unofficial websites and applications). This is done mainly on computers, followed by mobile phones and tablets.

A few users recorded the telenovela via a set-up box available from their pay-tv services subscription when they did not have time to watch it during the airing time.

Independently of their viewing preference, or device used to access the groups, when questioned why they were part of unofficial and closed groups, users stated that they felt more comfortable to express themselves when participating in

groups with these privacy settings. This preference contrasted with an official entertainment page created on the same platform and mediated by the television network. However, some users still participated in both official and unofficial spaces within and outside of Facebook. Usually, users also participated in the official pages because they considered that the information about the telenovela, and other entertainment products, to be more reliable in these spaces. It is because a lot of information shared within SNS platforms can sometimes be considered to be fake news, when the curatorship is not properly done. Generally, anyone on Facebook and WhatsApp (although not always) can use the features of these platforms to share information without prior pre-approval.

### **9.3.2 The Discursive Layer**

This layer comprises the content present in communication, such as stories, beliefs, understandings, and symbols. The main element of this layer that united the users in the groups was their interest in practicing connected co-viewing around the storylines and social issues sparked by the telenovela *Babilônia*.

Users acknowledged that they participated in the groups for following the telenovelas because they could compare the storylines with their own day-to-day lives and with the lives of others. They also stated that, because of the simple language used by the scriptwriters of the prime-time telenovela, their understandings and beliefs could be contrasted in a simple manner. Users believed that they could easily debate telenovela topics with other group members because anyone could understand (independent of background or level of literacy) the stories and the social merchandising presented by the telenovela producers. Social merchandising refers to the intentional placement of social issues in the telenovelas' storylines to promote public debate about pressing social problems.

The majority of the content found in the groups was information concerning the plots or the social issues present in the storylines. These contents came from multiple media sources, including news websites, specialized blogs by newspaper columnists, blogs by telenovela followers, official news from the Globo conglomerate's web portal, and its official pages on Facebook, Twitter, as well as other unofficial pages, tweets and Facebook posts from users, and so on.

Videos were also a significant resource used by members of the Facebook groups, in which scenes and entire episodes were shared and commented among multiple communicative activities. Links to unofficial spaces were shared with people who had missed the broadcast to be able to watch it, or for those who wished to view it again. The group members also made summaries of episodes or shared them from external sources. Criticisms of actors, technical quality, and soundtrack information were also subjects that held people together. To a lesser extent, memes with critiques to the telenovela plots and its dialogue with the broad socio-political context of Brazil portrayed by multiple media were also present.

### **9.3.3 The People Layer**

Users were connected and formed part of the studied groups because of their interest in following a well-known entertainment product from a powerful institution, the Brazilian prime time telenovela from Rede Globo. Therefore, this broadcast company was, in part, a contributor to the connection of these users and their groups' formation. Besides that, users' interest in interacting, exchanging ideas, impressions, and emotions with peer followers were constituent elements of their connection. As an example of why people do connect co-viewing in these spaces, a questionnaire user said:

*“ It is a good way of discussing the events of the plot. Social media is the extension of the family and a way of maintaining this very Brazilian tradition”* (Male, 27 years old, questionnaire).

Additionally, people were connected in those almost private spaces that are offered by the Facebook Corporation. Thus, this SNS can also be considered responsible for the way the practices occurred and how their normativity was established. It is because the interfaces of the Facebook and WhatsApp platforms have their own design and the structure that impose social norms and particular ways of performing social practices, therefore imposing their logic in the way people connect and receive information.

### **9.3.4 The Facebook interface: blurring of features, distrust in information sources, and perceptions of content filtering**

Users who co-view the Brazilian prime time telenovela on Facebook use the SNS intensively. However, not all of them have a clear understanding of Facebook's interface features and how this platform might shape their choices and activities.

As an example, some users refer to this platform as "Face" (a nickname that many Brazilians call this SNS). Instead of distinguishing between Facebook features such as the news feed from the timeline, or a group post from a group timeline or any other part of the Facebook platform, many users described "Face" as a uniform thing. It is exemplified in the following quote from an interviewee:

*"I prefer reading telenovela information from the Face, as the information comes more direct"* (Male, 22 years).

After questioning the reference of "Face", it was understood that what the user referred to was the news feed. Furthermore, this respondent said that a lot of times he assessed groups and pages of interest within Facebook due to the news feed's ability to deliver information to him.

The understanding of Facebook as a uniform interface ("Face") also tends to obscure the identity and reliability of the sources of information shared within the followed Facebook groups. Therefore, users distrust the UGC that circulates within Facebook.

Users demonstrated a lack of trust in the news or information they receive because it is difficult to distinguish whether it is from a reliable media institution or user. While discussing how they engage with the content of telenovela they follow, one user affirmed to always search outside of the groups, on other websites, like web portals from well-known media institutions. Moreover, an interviewee stated that Facebook (Face) does not always provide trustworthy information. She exemplified it by describing what happened when she searched for information about the telenovela that replaced Babilônia:

*“ If we look further for information we discover that they can be wrong or fake...once, I read on Facebook that one of the characters from the telenovela A Regra do Jogo would be a police officer, when I went in the official website of the telenovela I discovered that it wasn't correct”*  
(Female, 18 years old).

Even though the majority of users did not recognize specific features of Facebook, other users, particularly the group administrators, knew it better. It was because they had to manage this particular ‘space’ in the platform and carefully selected what they would share, because this affected their image and their social position within the groups.

Several users had some idea that the way they performed activities on Facebook affected the kind of content they see. Although they never referred to the Facebook algorithm filtering process, users perceived in a simple way that what is shown in their Facebook news feed depends on whom they interact with, what kind of content and pages they like, and in which groups they participate. As an example, an interviewee said that Facebook seems to show more content from users or groups he comments on more. Additionally, because he was co-viewing the telenovela via Facebook messenger with other users (also members of the Facebook group of the telenovela Babilônia), he realized that the UGC from these users was becoming more evident to him. Thus, from the understanding of his own activities, the interviewee perceived and confirmed that there is an entanglement between intensive use for a specific purpose like connected co-viewing a telenovela and the increase of UGC related to this practice on the Facebook platform.

However, users were not aware that their activities and preferences on Facebook were shared with third parties, most probably because people skip reading the terms and conditions of the platform. For instance, on the Facebook page created for the research project, it was stated that I was doing a course on data mining as part of the Ph.D. training. The second administrator of the Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 1 became concerned. It was previously explained that I would do data mining within the group. However, the administrator only realized that data mining was possible at this moment. Thus, to re-establish trust with this user, we engaged in conversations about Facebook privacy settings and data use. Additionally, during interviews, users seemed to be unaware that data about their activities in Facebook

was used to deliver personalized content to them. However, one interviewee claimed that he became aware of this when participating in quizzes he saw in his Facebook news feed. The user had to allow an external source outside of Facebook (the quiz developers) access to the private data of his account, as often a quiz will not work without these permissions. Based on his data, the quizzes that the user participated in exposed the results of “who are your best friends”, “who is your soul mate”, among other topics. He realized that because he chatted a lot with a friend that also followed the telenovela, most of the time this friend appeared in his quiz results. Although this finding came from a third party, from then on, he started to notice that many friends’ UGC that he would like to see were not highlighted in his Facebook news feed.

### **9.3.5 Place-path Array for Accessing the Facebook Groups**

According to Schatzki (2009), there is an interweaving of time and space (what he calls timespace) that coordinates and aggregates the infrastructure and entities (humans and non-humans) that are part of social activities. As an individual goes through the day and performs social practices, he/she is required to pass through arrays of places and paths that reflect her/his and other people’s doings and sayings in particular temporalities. When performing connected co-viewing, users connect to the Internet, using ‘invisible’ infrastructures, and pass through certain digital-material spatialities in order to be able to perform this set of practices. Although this route is usually taken at an individual level, it is a necessary component for this social practice to occur, as connected co-viewing requires the co-presence of other co-viewers in a particular time and space.

As described in a previous section, the technological and media layer of the communicative ecologies of the studied groups included mobile phones, computers, tablets and televisions as the material resources used for performing co-viewing activities. Interviews were undertaken to further understand the ways in which users received information on Facebook, and how their viewing practices were related to the received content. The interviewees explained that the most common and preferred path for accessing the Facebook interface was via the mobile phone app. From time to time, however, they accessed it via the web browser on their computers. The mobile app was preferred because they could rapidly access the digital shortcuts (short paths)

to access the groups they participated in. This included the Babilônia telenovela groups as well as other groups and pages of personal interest that went beyond the telenovela, because many users affirmed participating in other spaces dedicated to entrainment content.

The preference of this place-path array for carrying out such practices, and participating in a group setting, was related to the users' daily routines. These routines shaped their way of accessing the telenovela Facebook groups, and this SNS as a whole. One of the respondents stated that most of the time she accessed Facebook from the mobile phone because of the rush of everyday life. Therefore, it was a way to multitask and participate in multiple activities at the same time. Another user explained that in general, he accesses Facebook from his smartphone, as often he is doing something else that precludes sitting in front of a computer. This reveals that users use the mobile phone because of the flexibility that it provides to participate in different social practices at the same time, which otherwise would not happen. Furthermore, the respondents praised the convenience of using the mobile phone because it saved time. One interviewee affirmed that he used the Facebook app because he could access the group notifications quickly. He explained that on the computer he would have to go through a longer place-path array to access the groups where co-viewing of the telenovela Babilônia occurred.

### **9.3.6 Temporality, Connectedness and Reading Information**

Path-place arrays are interconnected with time as demonstrated in the previous section. The mobile phone is part of the material arrangements nexus for developing co-viewing practices within Facebook in a more agile way, as it allows users to perform other online and offline practices while staying connected. User carried out co-viewing practices and other intertwined activities on Facebook usually in-between their duties or during their leisure time. An interviewee explained her routine of accessing Facebook and Whatsapp groups that exemplifies how time marks the access to these digital spaces and the alternation practitioners do between practices:

*“As soon as I wake up, while drinking my coffee, I look at Facebook and Whatsapp to see groups and what is new. When I am preparing lunch as well. Also during my work in-between each finished task... I also access it at night when I am preparing the dinner or while I am watching telenovelas ...”* (Female, 50 years).

When further inquiring about this almost rotational and constant connectedness to Facebook, it was acknowledged the agency of some of this SNS interface’s features contributes to users coming back and developing repeated activities. The Facebook News Feed agency and organization was one of these characteristics that helped to prefigure the relationship users had with the information they received from the groups they participated in. A statement by a user gives emphasis to how the auto-refreshing of the news feed (that usually highlights new stories unseen by a user at each point of access, and shows the most liked and commented on posts) shapes the way she searches for telenovela information on Facebook. It also reveals how her practices within this SNS ‘clog’ her in a similar flux of UGC, or as van Dijck (2013) describes it, she gets clogged in a filter bubble because of her digital activities.

*“Look, facing so many options of publications that Facebook offers and delivers to us, remain, little-to-no time for searching it in another manner. When I open my Facebook it looks like a rain of telenovela posts.”* (Female, 50 years old).

In contrast to this prefigurative relation to the interface, during the participant observation within the Facebook groups and the WhatsApp group, a relationship of intentionality was identified. This intentional relationship was performed by users that wanted to help other users to save time and find relevant information about the telenovela they were co-viewing. Couldry (2012) calls these kinds of practices ‘commentary’, that involves remarks from users that help select what they should consume from the immense and easily accessible flux of content generated by digital media and SNS. For instance, within Facebook Group 1, the space dedicated to sharing links to the telenovela episode was always at the top with its own written normativity: “Do not comment on this post, unless it is dedicated to sharing links

from the episodes of Babilônia”.

#### **9.4 The Main Differences between the Studied Groups**

In this section, it will be described the main differences between the studied groups. These differences are also represented in Table 9. By looking deeper into the differences between the studied groups, more information concerning their communicative ecologies will arise as well as help to expand on the social practices that occurred and were constitutive parts of these environments.

The Facebook groups and the WhatsApp group differed in their life cycles because of the features of each platform (technological and media layer). A similar finding was made in the Babilônia groups to what Lopes (2012) uncovered about the life cycle of Facebook groups for a previous telenovela ‘Passione’ (aired between 2010-2011). When the Babilônia groups were created, users arrived gradually. During the months of the telenovela airing, both groups reached more than five thousand users (at their peak). When Babilônia was over, users started a migration process to groups dedicated to the subsequent telenovela ‘A Regra do Jogo’ (The rule of the game) that aired from August 31, 2015, to March 11, 2016. Thus, the number of participants diminished within the Babilônia groups, making these digital spaces almost inactive. In contrast, the WhatsApp group continued to exist and to operate. It just changed its name to ‘A Regra do Jogo,’ as within WhatsApp there was no restriction concerning title modification.

The difference of group continuity on Facebook could be related to the fact that, during the period of the research, if a Facebook group reached more than five thousand users it was not allowed to change the group name until the number of users was reduced. Thus, obliging users who wanted continue co-viewing in the same group to migrate to a new group with a title that made reference to the next telenovela. This points to one of the possible reasons why, for each telenovela, multiple groups are created. It also demonstrates that the technological and media layer can somehow affect the way people get connected (the people layer).

Although the WhatsApp group had far fewer users than the Facebook groups, the activity was greater. This can be attributed to the WhatsApp interface. It is an

instant messaging application that allows the messages to be delivered quickly in comparison to Facebook posts within groups of interest.

As it was mentioned in the Methodology chapter, at the beginning of Babilônia airing, the existence of a liminal phase was noticed, concerning the understandings and expressions of affectivity of the previous telenovela Império (aired from July 21, 2014, to March 13, 2015), as people as entities were neither here nor there. The group members were betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, and conventions regarding the Império groups (see Turner, 1969:95). Thus, a specific research aim was to see whether or not the same would occur during the next telenovela transition (Babilônia to A Regra do Jogo). Thus, Facebook groups dedicated to A Regra do Jogo in the first month of airing were also observed. The same administrators of the Babilônia groups created the new groups and invited the members of the old groups (Babilônia groups) to join. Most of the active users in Babilônia's groups migrated to the A Regra do Jogo groups and continued to interact and co-view the new prime time telenovela. The titles of the Babilônia's groups were only able to be changed some months after its finale when the membership was lower. Their names were changed to another telenovela at a different time slot, thus by now, the groups had their titles modified at least three times. Therefore, both studied spaces became barely recognizable. Moreover, it shows how the Facebook platform features can affect temporality, in which the practices of a particular telenovela occur, and how these digital spaces are also re-appropriated over time by practitioners. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that Facebook group rules about titles and the limits of user numbers, as well as other Facebook platform characteristics, have changed over time. Therefore, it is not guaranteed that they will continue to be the same, as platforms are in a constant process of being updated that sometimes come from a dialogue with user feedback, as pointed by van Dijck (2013).

The main difference between the Facebook groups and the Whatsapp group was that connected co-viewing related to other TV shows occurred within the WhatsApp group. This co-viewing commonly occurred when Babilônia had finished airing for the day, when it was not airing or when users were not engaging with the telenovela storylines. Additionally, within the WhatsApp group, different kinds of chain letters were a common practice that was not necessarily related to the telenovela.

<b>Main Differences between the Studied Groups</b>			
<b>Groups/Features</b>	<b>Facebook Group 1</b>	<b>Facebook Group 2</b>	<b>WhatsApp Group</b>
<b>Moderation</b>			
High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Group continuity after the end of Babilônia</b>			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Titling change</b>			
Immediately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
After a while, when membership was lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Maximum reached number of users</b>			
Higher (more than 5000)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lower (less than 300)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Interface Dynamism</b>			
Higher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medium High	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medium	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Practices related to feelings of belonging</b>			
Higher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lower	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Chain letter activities</b>			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Co-viewing practices related to other TV shows</b>			
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Table 9. Main differences between the studied groups. Author own elaboration.**

This did not occur in the Facebook groups. Additionally, although practices related to the feeling of belonging to a group happened in all the studied spaces, within WhatsApp, they were more remarkable. This can be associated with the fact that WhatsApp enables users to send and receive content (such as images, video, voice-notes, text messages and another kind of files) in real-time, and because users have a shorter path-array to send messages. Users only have to open the app and the

entire individual and group chats are immediately available. Whereas, on Facebook, users have to access the platform, search for the group of interest, go to the reserved space for posts and finally post a message or comment on and existent on in the group's feed.

The WhatsApp group was more dynamic, and at some moments became overloaded with content when compared to the Facebook groups. In the WhatsApp group, people exchanged voice notes the entire day, usually to say good morning, good afternoon and other greetings to the other group members. Whereas, within the Facebook groups, users prioritized the morning and evening periods for sharing information about the plot, summaries, audience rating information, news related to the telenovela and its repercussions, as well as production details. There were far fewer greetings interactions than in WhatsApp.

Similar to the Facebook groups, the WhatsApp group also had variance in the membership levels. From time to time people left the group, while other users were added. However, the number of members was much smaller than the Facebook groups. Both Facebook groups reached more than five thousand users. The WhatsApp started with a maximum of 100 users and did not surpass 130 members. It is important to note that during the period of data collection, the WhatsApp altered its maximum capacity of group members from 100 to 256 people. Once again, this reveals how the features of an interface can interfere with the social organization of digital spaces.

### **9.5 Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 1**

The telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 1 was named like this because it was the first group in which I was accepted as a member. It was necessary to be accepted as part of the groups, as both Facebook groups were closed and had some moderation. Therefore, they were not classified as public spaces.

In the beginning, Group 1 had one owner and one administrator. During the participant observation, it was discovered that the group owner was known to be a Facebook user who creates groups and gives them to others to administrate. Thus, the creator did not participate in the group activities. His demographic information never

became known. However, by his name and his writing, he was presumed to be male. In an informal conversation, via Facebook Messenger, he stated that he has an entertainment blog. He creates entertainment groups on Facebook and gives permission to active users to administrate them as a way of guaranteeing that they would share his blog's publications about telenovelas and other shows within these groups. Therefore, this would generate data traffic to his blog and get the attention of sponsors. For him, this study was not a barrier as long as people continued to read his news.

The first person to manage this space was a 19-year-old male. At the same time that he was very receptive with the research, he also showed his authority. After explaining the research and asking if the investigation could proceed, he affirmed that the group was his, and hence, 'I could do whatever I wanted'. Nonetheless, as I aimed to be ethical in this study, I decided to let the members be aware of the research study. Therefore, through posts, I engaged in conversations with other members, where the research was explained, and I checked if they were comfortable with my presence as a participant observer.

Two months after Babilônia started to air, this administrator passed the management of the group on to one of the most active users that he knew online from other telenovela groups and kept in touch via Facebook. This was done because he was busy with his bachelor studies. This revealed that different practices (like studying, co-viewing and managing a group) might compete, as previously pointed by Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012). It also demonstrates that some variances of co-viewing practices within the group are related to the individual's agenda, as they are at the crossing point of multiple activities and institutions (Reckwitz, 2002), and sometimes they have to choose which practices to perform based on their daily schedules and obligations.

Once again, the new administrator was a young male (18 years old), diverging from the typical stereotype of the telenovela being a type of show dedicated to and followed only by women. As explained in the Telenovela Chapter, the prime time slot is designed for the whole family, independent of their demographics. However, to label the telenovela as a woman's product is still very common among Brazilians, as it was observed during the research stay at the University of São Paulo (USP).

During this stay, it was also possible to meet with the second administrator face-to-face, as he also lived in São Paulo. As we kept in touch via Facebook

messenger and within the group during the viewing activities, I knew that he had academic interests, particularly in television, as he was doing a Bachelor in Communications with specialization in Radio and TV. Therefore I let him know about a seminar by Obitel Brazil that took place at USP and was organized by CETVN, the research group where I was a visitor. We met at this seminar. This moment was essential to increase the connection and trust between me (the researcher) and him (the user and the administrator of the group), something that was noticed in conversations and interviews, as he had more trust after seeing that I was a real person that worked in academia.

This administrator imposed a high level of moderation on this group. It was based on his previous experiences within other groups dedicated to following telenovelas, where people had divergent viewpoints and had arguments. This demonstrates that the memory of body-mind activities can interconnect practices even without a directly interwoven point, usually through practitioners' previous experiences and body enactments. This shape the way practices-as-an-entity might function in different times and spaces.

The administrator used the Facebook platform privacy settings so nobody could post without his previous authorization. Therefore, all the members had to pass to what Altheide (1995) has called a test, where the users' publications have to be controlled and validated. In this case, the second administrator decided what was acceptable in this micro-ecology and embodied the role of test-evaluator.

However, commenting on posts was different. When a post was available, users could express themselves without requiring administrator pre-approval. Thus, the administrator applied a kind of censorship within this group and was the main person responsible for dictating the norms and shaping the co-viewing experiences of other individuals. Furthermore, it indicates that practitioners of connected co-viewing have multiple positions and hierarchies as discussed by Alkemeyer and Bushmann (2017). This occurs even when people perform practices in digital spaces where they do not necessarily know the other participants' gender, class, salary and other socio-demographic factors that would affect a practitioner's role in a group setting. These positions are instead established based on other factors such as sharing information, always being up-to-date, knowing how to manage and organize a group, group leadership experience, among others factors.

The administrator of the group was also responsible for creating and organizing a post that was always at the top of the page (using a Facebook feature that highlights a post), in which people could post links to websites that host the episodes of Babilônia without needing to pay a subscription. This was done because Rede Globo programming is free during the airing time, however, to see a full episode after airing, it is necessary to pay a monthly fee to access the telenovela episodes and other shows.

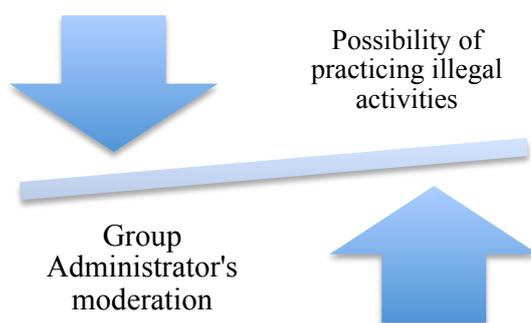


FIGURE 5. CONTRADICTIONS IN AN UNOFFICIAL AND CLOSED FACEBOOK GROUP.  
AUTHOR OWN ELABORATION.

This practice reveals the possible contradictions in unofficial spaces, like those Facebook closed groups dedicated to the follow-up of a telenovela, as shown in Figure 5. On the one hand, the administrators can exert censorship with the use of the interface features where the group is hosted. Therefore, they are not spaces with complete freedom of speech. On the other hand, they are spaces free from the surveillance of the television networks and official producers. Thus, users have the possibility to undertake illicit activities for watching the show, as happened in the Babilônia groups.

## 9.6 Telenovela Babilonia Facebook Group 2

The telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 2 was the second group contacted. It had three administrators, one of whom was also the owner (creator) of the group. Two of

the administrators were female (a 55 year old and a 25 year old), while the group creator was a younger male (31 year old).

Before informing the group members about the research, all of the administrators were contacted and agreed to the study. Since this initial contact, I kept in regular communication with them via Facebook messenger, using my personal Facebook account. Through the same communication channel, multiple dialogues with users from this group (and the Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 1) occurred. Users affirmed to maintaining contact or performing private co-viewing with other group members via Facebook messenger. This shows another space within the platform where people practice connected co-viewing.

The moderation within this group was lighter than in Group 1. Sometimes members were banished after heated co-viewing discussions that touched on topics such as religion, sexuality, and politics. It usually occurred because people started to become aggressive with each other. During an interview, one of the administrators confirmed banning people because users engaged in offensive discussions concerning social issues that were sparked by Babilônia's plot. However, instead of discussing the telenovela plot, users brought the telenovela's themes to their own perception of reality and discussed how the outside world should function, which led to divergent opinions. Therefore, the control exerted by the administrators demonstrates that within micro-ecologies such as a Facebook group, practices can consist of implicit regulative rules. In this particular example, the implicit rules were regarding respectable social interactions. Additionally, practitioners as agents must have certain understandings and know-how regarding the ways of presenting ideas, which are not explicitly said, but socially shared in multiple practices. This includes the notions of respect for the other practitioner's cultural beliefs. These implicit rules might be the key to continued access to digital social spaces that have a closed privacy setting like this one.

As Couldry (2012) identified, archiving is a usual SNS practice that individuals use to store and have access to information in a quick manner. Archiving is also used to manage the informational flow they receive. Thus, exchanging files and links between users was common within this group. However, it was not as well organized as Group 1 that had a highlighted post dedicated to this kind of practice, which was always at the top of the group's news feed, facilitating user's management of time to access information.

Nonetheless, some events were organized during some important episodes such the first episode, episodes that had previous announcements about important happenings, and the last week of the telenovela airing. The administrators created posts that worked as spaces where all the co-viewing commentaries should be preferably done on these particular dates.

In this group, one of the users invited people to be part of a WhatsApp group where people would discuss and co-view the telenovela *Babilônia*. The only requirement was to reply to the post with a mobile number.

### **9.7 The WhatsApp Group**

Within the WhatsApp group there were many administrators capable of adding new members, and very often, other people had this function delegated to them. In other words, the administration was spread over a greater number of practitioners. This shows that control, discipline, and normative behavior were almost auto-managed in this group.

After I was added to this group, I sent messages that explained the research. Ethical concerns were debated with the group, as the mobile numbers of the participants were evident, which could potentially harm their privacy. However, like in the Facebook groups, members demonstrated very positive responses and expressed interest in the research topic. Therefore, this facilitated getting into the field, to observe and participate in the co-viewing activities.

During the research period, no direct moderation was detected within this group. People usually left the group because of their own choice, sometimes without any explanation. Whereas, on other occasions, members left after having an argument with other users, without the need of a sanction like in the Facebook groups. As an example, there were situations in which people were offended because of their religious faith and were mocked for following another telenovela that had a religious orientation (called *The Ten Commandments*, aired from March 23, 2015, to July 4, 2016). As the group did not have a strong moderation regarding unacceptable behavior, in several cases, the mistreated individuals decided to leave the group. This validates that the three layers of communicative ecology (technological, discursive and people layer), pointed by Foth and Hearn (2007), might shape the practices

people are involved in and also have the potential to disconnect, or even exclude practitioners because of their beliefs and relationships with other peers.

This group was dedicated to co-view Babilônia. However, members talked about other telenovelas and other TV shows. Several members co-viewed other TV shows when Babilônia was not airing, or even when (according to some users) Babilônia's storyline was too monotonous. From time to time, a different show was co-viewed. Thus, a common practice was asking whether other members knew of other entrainment program groups and if somebody could add them to these groups. When there were no such groups, some people decided to create them to have a dedicated space to co-view this other TV show.

Every day, before Babilônia started to air, the subject of the group was changed to the name of the telenovela (Babilônia) plus the number of the episode. At other times, the name was only Babilônia. This was done as a way to let members know that the telenovela would begin to air. It was not uncommon to see users asking whether the episode of Babilônia had already begun to air. When not co-viewing the show, users questioned whether or not the episode was interesting and if it was valuable to watch it. Therefore, this demonstrates that some practitioners had the role of commentators and evaluators of the episodes. Consequently their role could affect the viewing activity.

In this group, common practices took place that were unrelated to the co-viewing of Babilônia. For instance, many chain letters and jokes were shared within the WhatsApp group that did not have any connection to the telenovela.

## **9.8 Babilônia: The Co-viewed Telenovela**

*“Babilônia was a telenovela that even with all the problems and rejections that faced had the capacity of confronting the viewers. As it showed themes that are current occurring within the country. It will not be remembered as a success in the future. But, like a telenovela that had the courage of showing realities that are normally hidden or ignored.”*  
(Male, 19 years old, questionnaire).

As described in this quote by one of the questionnaire respondents, Babilônia was a very controversial telenovela. Its plots touched many delicate social issues during the broadcast period.

Babilônia first premiered on the 16th of March 2015 and had its finale on the 28th of August 2015. As usual in the prime time telenovela slot, it was immediately replaced by a new one called “A Regra do Jogo” (The rule of the game). The scriptwriters of the Babilônia telenovela were Gilberto Braga (main one), Ricardo Linhares and João Ximenes Braga. Gilberto Braga is well-known for introducing provocative social issues in telenovelas that promote social debates (Aquino and Puhl, 2011). This occurred in Babilônia as well.

### 9.8.1 Babilônia Audience Ratings

As it is shown in Figures 6 and 7 respectively, Babilônia, during its entire broadcast, faced problems with audience ratings in comparison to previous prime time telenovelas from Rede Globo, and with telenovelas from the network that aired in other time slots (Pires de Sá and Roig, 2016).

However, it continued to be the prime time leader in Brazilian open television. This relative lack of success can be attributed to many factors. Babilônia, as part of its social merchandising agenda, dealt with social issues that were uncomfortable for some people, such as homosexuality, political corruption associated with religion, nymphomania, racial prejudice, prostitution, and infidelity. However, lower television ratings may also be influenced by other types of viewing that are growing in Brazil, such as on-demand viewing, binge viewing, and time-shift viewing that were also practiced by the members of the studied groups.

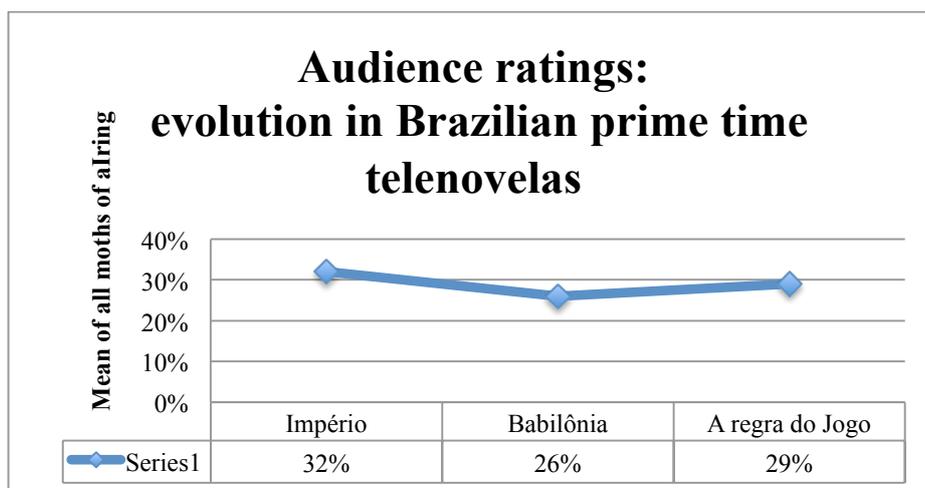


FIGURE 6. AUDIENCE RATINGS: EVOLUTION IN BRAZILIAN PRIME TIME TELENOVELAS  
AUTHOR OWN ELABORATION BASED ON KANTAR IBOPE MEDIA'S AUDIENCE RATINGS  
IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF SÃO PAULO (TOTAL OF 6,711,263 HOUSEHOLDS).

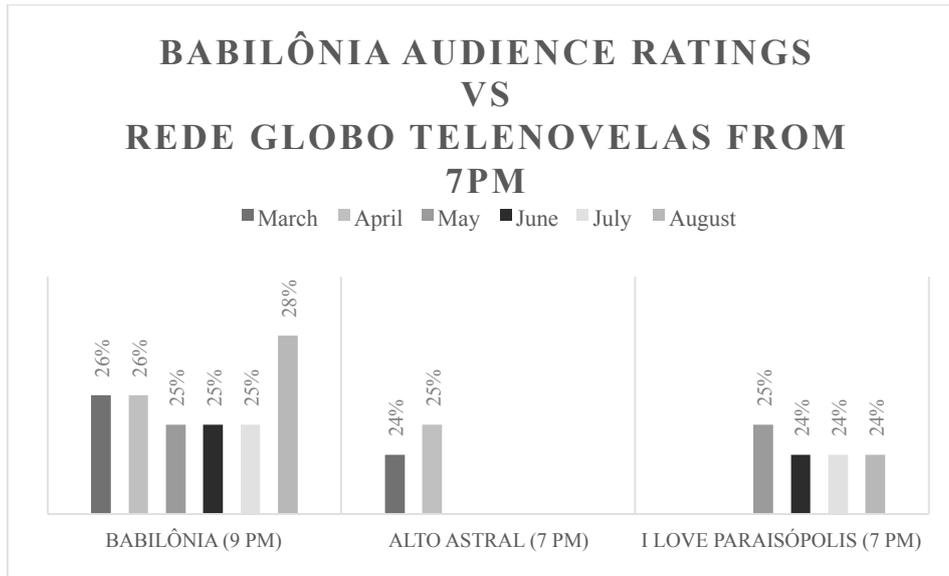


FIGURE 7. BABILÔNIA AUDIENCE RATINGS VS REDE GLOBO TELENOVELAS FROM 7 PM  
 AUTHOR OWN ELABORATION BASED ON KANTAR IBOPE MEDIA'S AUDIENCE RATINGS  
 IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF SÃO PAULO (TOTAL OF 6,711,263 HOUSEHOLDS).

### 9.8.2 Babilônia's Stories and its Entanglement with Brazilian Politics

The central plot of Babilônia was based on the vengeance between Beatriz and Inês, who were friends during their teenage years and met again later in their adult lives. Beatriz lived for many years outside of Brazil. As Beatriz was a famous architect, Inês discovered through newspapers that she had returned and was getting married to the owner of the most powerful construction company in Rio de Janeiro. Strategically, Inês approached Beatriz. However, Beatriz humiliated her. Inês decided to get her revenge. During the airing of the telenovela, it was revealed that Beatriz had a relationship with Inês' father in the past, and this had ruined his life. Inês started her revenge by blackmailing Beatriz with photos that she took of her having an affair with her personal driver at a party. Later on in the story, Beatriz sees Inês talking to her driver and becomes convinced that they are working together to extort her. Thus, Beatriz kills her driver in order to incriminate Inês and get rid of the blackmail situation.

As usual in the Brazilian telenovela, there were several subplots of Babilônia that received widespread attention. One of them was the case of Estela and Tereza.

Estela was the mother of Beatriz. Estela had another daughter that died during childbirth. Her son-in-law later abandoned her grandson. Since then, Estela and Teresa raised him (Rafael) as their own son.

Later on, Rafael starts a relationship with Laís who was Aderbal's daughter, a corrupt politician that had an evangelical electorate and pretended to be moral and proclaimed traditional values. Aderbal had an affair with his maid and gave her money to abort their child, he frequently sought out prostitutes, deviated public funds, and laundered money from public civil construction works. He was not able to accept his daughter's relationship as her boyfriend was raised by a lesbian grandmother and her companion. Additionally, Aderbal foresaw their relationship as a threat to his political campaign, in which his supporters were mainly religious people and right wing conservatives.

The social issues in the sub-plots acquired a controversial status from the very beginning. Homosexuality was one of the most delicate issues because of the intersection with religious and political viewpoints. Tereza and Estela were elderly women that were presented to the public as being in a relationship for thirty years that started when Estela left her husband to live with Teresa. In the very first episode, a kiss took place between these two elderly characters.



FIGURE 8. THE KISS BETWEEN THE CHARACTERS ESTELA AND TERESA. SOURCE: REDE GLOBO. EXTRACTED FROM THE FACEBOOK GROUPS VIA NVIVO10.

Through their dialogue, the public was made aware that they were a couple that had to deal with many situations of discrimination and struggles in the years of

their relationship. However, the public did not see the development of this relationship over time. This build-up was commonly done in previous telenovelas from Globo (see La Pastina and Joyce, 2015) when portraying homosexual couples. In the case of *Babilônia*, the scriptwriters and producers opted to present this issue without preparing the viewers beforehand, which generated public debate through multiple media, UGC, and discussions within families, groups of friends, government, etc.

The character of Teresa was a lawyer that fought for justice for ex-prisoners of the Brazilian dictatorship, for the rights of minorities such as women and black people that suffered from the heritage of slavery history of Brazil, and against political corruption. Her path crossed with another supportive character (Aderbal) not only because of her son's relationship with his daughter, but also because Teresa was investigating cases of political corruption in civil engineering companies that illegally financed political campaigns.

Additionally, the character of Beatriz was revealed to be a criminal and nymphomaniac. She had an affair with and later killed her personal driver, had occasional sex with her office assistant, and with a security guard in a random clothing store, among other men. Later on in the story, it was revealed that when she was a teenager, she had had an affair with Inês' dad, which ended up with his arrest and suicide. She also later had a relationship with the son of her personal driver who was unaware that she was the murderer of his father.

The character of Regina was the daughter of Beatriz's driver. The death of her dad affected her life. She had to leave her studies behind to look after her brother and her sick mother. At the same time, she was dating Luis Fernando, a man that deceived her by omitting that he was married, and left her pregnant and with a family to maintain. Another character called Murilo was a pimp from the high middle class who was involved in drug dealing and tried to coerce his girlfriend to become a luxury prostitute.

Although there were additional social problems exposed in the telenovela *Babilônia*, these were some of the main examples of the social issues presented by *Babilônia* characters. As Pires de Sá and Roig (2016) point out, these issues became the subject of various co-viewing practices within and outside of new media platforms, which culminated in a negative religious and political response.

### **9.8.3 Babilônia: Religion within Brazilian Politics**

Babilônia premiered at a time when Brazil faced several national political scandals. The Supreme Court had started to investigate Congress members connected to a multibillion-dollar bribery scheme with the state-owned oil company Petrobras.

This bribery scandal had consequences for the ongoing economic recession (Boadle, 2015). Gallas (2017) explains that Odebrecht, the biggest construction conglomerate in Latin America, together with many other companies were found to have bribed politicians and other executives in exchange for contracts with Petrobras. Odebrecht executives were arrested and confessed to paying bribes in return for contracts, not only in Brazil, but in more than eleven countries as well. Marcelo Odebrecht, the CEO of Odebrecht, affirmed in 2014 that part of the deviated money was donated illegally to the presidential campaign of Dilma Rousseff (ex-president) and Michel Temer (ex-vice-president and current president after the former president's impeachment) (Galla, 2017). Not only were the ex-president and the current president involved, but many politicians were also part of this scheme, including a growing number of neo-Pentecostal Church members who had been elected to Congress (Robineau, 2015). This scandal generated social discontentment in the population that started to protest and become even more politically divided.

The telenovela dealt with topics that aligned to the contemporary facts of Brazilian politics and economy, such political corruption, and bribery in civil engineering public works, social justice issues, including homosexuality, racial prejudice, and prostitution. Debates around Babilônia appeared even about the title of the telenovela, which religious people associated with Babylon in the Christian bible. Religious people felt offended by the Babilônia storylines, and many campaigns against the telenovela were started, which reached the Facebook groups. However, the title of Babilônia was based on a real place in Rio de Janeiro, a favela (ghetto), called Morro da Babilônia (Babylon Hill) that was the setting where many characters in the telenovela lived.

These negative campaigns occurred not only within SNS, but also in the Congress, where a note of rejection to Babilônia was issued from a religious/political group called the Evangelical Parliamentary Front. This note discouraged people from

watching *Babilônia* because it would damage the values of the traditional family, and also discouraged people from purchasing the products of *Babilônia*'s sponsors. Additionally, Marco Feliciano, a congressman and pastor, requested his two million Facebook followers to boycott the telenovela and its sponsors with the pretext that *Babilônia* would destroy the traditional Brazilian family and impose a gay dictatorship (Fechine et al., 2015). These reactions reveal relationships of interdependence between communicative practices such as telenovela co-viewing, with other wider domains of the society such as politics.

#### **9.8.4 *Babilônia*'s Competitor**

As noted before, *Babilônia* faced audience rating problems. Thus, Rede Globo ordered official focus groups (Braga, 2015) after the first month of airing. Due to the feedback from focus groups, entire episodes and footage material were discarded. Major changes in the plot and audiovisual features were made (Braga, 2015). Kisses between homosexual couples were not shown again until the last episode, while developments of certain characters were modified from the original synopsis of the telenovela. For instance, a sports coach was going to have a relationship with another man. However, after participants in the focus group stated that they would not like to see this actor as gay, it was modified. This was despite 'flirty' scenes that had already aired between him and the other character. Simultaneously, the main competitor of Rede Globo, the Rede Record (owned by the founder of Universal Church of the Kingdom of God) capitalized on the controversy and broadcast a more conservative telenovela in the same timeslot as *Babilônia*. It was the first biblical telenovela produced in Brazil, called *The Ten Commandments* (Thornhill, 2015). This telenovela received relatively good ratings, although still lower than those of *Babilônia*.

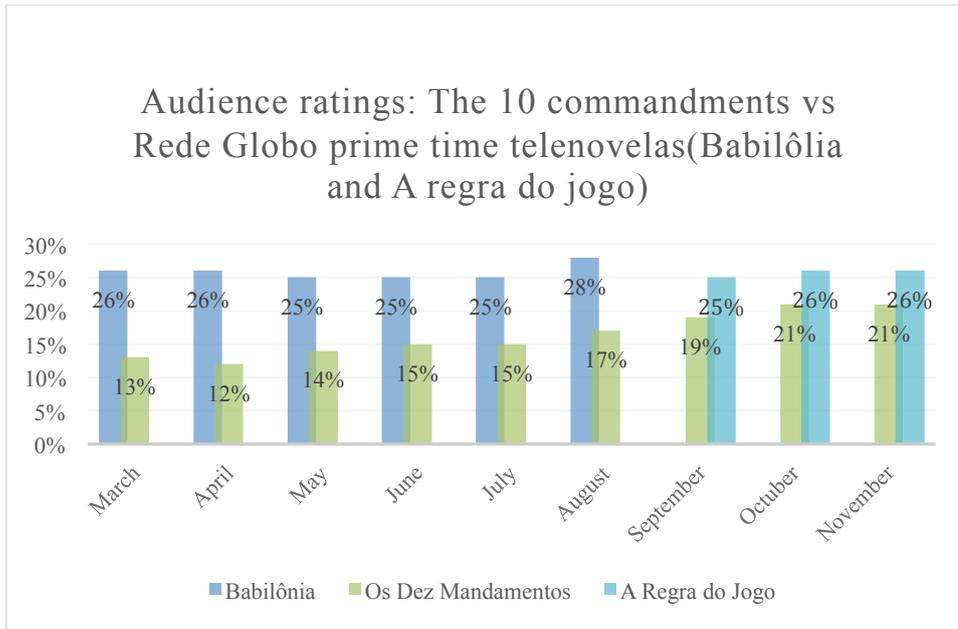


FIGURE 9. AUDIENCE RATINGS: THE 10 COMMANDMENTS VS REDE GLOBO PRIME TIME TELENOVELAS (BABILÔNIA AND A REGRA DO JOGO). AUTHOR'S ELABORATION BASED ON KANTAR IBOPE MEDIA'S AUDIENCE RATINGS IN THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF SAO PAULO (TOTAL OF 6,711,263 HOUSEHOLDS).

The Ten Commandments was on air for nine months, and its ratings grew higher over time as shown in Figure 9. Although Babilônia suffered from the buzz related to this religious telenovela, the replacing telenovela, A Regra do Jogo, had its ratings threatened even more than Babilônia, it can be seen in Figure 9. Nonetheless, the competition of a religious telenovela can be understood as a response to the current political situation in the country that is also part of the larger communicative ecology that the studied groups (micro-ecologies) belong to.

### 9.9 Remarks

In this chapter, the groups' communicative ecologies were analyzed. During the chapter, it was identified that an array of practices is intertwined with connected co-viewing activities with the use of different media and devices. By scrutinizing the communicative ecology layers of the studied groups, it was possible to see how digital artifacts are part of the co-viewing practices and how they have a mutual

relationship that marks the time and space they occur. Additionally, it was possible to see how each group had particular norms and different levels of moderation that were established through the member practices, but also by the features of the platforms in which the groups took shape. It also was possible to show that the Brazilian telenovela was used as an essential element of the discursive layer of these groups and formed an integral part of the co-viewing related practices. Therefore, the controversies, the storylines and the problems of audience ratings Babilônia faced were also explained. This was done to better understand the intersecting practices with co-viewing that will be further analyzed in the next chapters.

## **10. Co-viewing and User-generated Content Related Practices**

## 10.1 Overview

Co-viewing practices are a cluster of different social practices around the activities of regularly watching a specific program. In this study of followers of the telenovela *Babilônia* in two unofficial and closed Facebook groups and a WhatsApp group, different sets of interconnected practices were identified with regard to co-viewing and UGC. In this chapter, those practices will be analyzed with reference to the particularities of each group.

In all the groups, what seem to be long-standing practices were identified that are linked to the historical background of Brazil's TV broadcasting. These practices will be referred to as 'TV consumption-centered practices'. Most of the practices observed in the studied groups were observed and later confirmed by the interviewees and questionnaire respondents.

Additionally, because of the telenovela genre, I expected to observe co-viewing practices associated with the Brazilian tradition of following this television format. This includes practices related to contrasting *Babilônia* with its predecessor (*Império*) and with its successor (*A Regra do Jogo*). Other practices embraced the trajectory of the writers, cast, and social issues raised, and perceptions of quality or success. Another practice identified was the socialization around a shared interest through dedicated groups on Facebook. These practices were detected and took shape even before the first episode of *Babilônia* aired, and could be traced back to previous telenovela Facebook groups, such as those of *Império*, and also continued in the Facebook telenovela groups of *A Regra do Jogo*. These practices will be referred to as 'telenovela-centered practices'.

The chapter starts with a section about TV consumption-centered practices. It highlights the practices of keeping up-to-date, as practitioners usually view the telenovela *Babilônia* (and other prime time telenovelas) at the broadcast time. The reason is because viewers want to be informed and to be able to socialize in multiple situations and institutions where the prime time telenovela is discussed. This is followed by an examination of practices such as collecting and archiving. The users carried out these activities to collect and store episodes, particular scenes, actor

scenes, and the soundtrack. Additionally, some of these practices demonstrate how the institutional practices of Rede Globo and the associated financial implications might lead to illegal practices such as collecting copyrighted content and archiving files.

The chapter continues by discussing the identified telenovela-centered practices. The practices of commentary are explained, in which users judged aspects of *Babilônia* and worked as specialized reviewers. They therefore aided other co-viewers to filter the information that was interesting to them and to decide whether or not to watch *Babilônia* on a particular day.

This is followed by a discussion of audience ratings related practices. Ratings were an influencer of practices due to *Babilônia*'s low ratings in comparison to its predecessor and to telenovelas at other time slots. These practices around audience ratings reveal that there is a strong narrative around audience that plays a fundamental role in people's viewing experience.

The next section discusses the practice of using hashtags. Hashtags were used as more than just an indexing tool, but as a way of expressing feelings and to communicate with other users.

Finally, the chapter ends by explaining the understandings users had about the practices of UCG. For users, producing content can be a very varied activity, from simply giving an opinion, to sharing content from others, to even writing stories.

## **10.2 TV Consumption-centered Practices**

A central practice for co-viewing is related to how and when the actual TV product is consumed. In the previous chapter, it was identified that the broadcast airing time still prevailed as the preferred time for viewing and that the television continues to be the main device used by the studied users. However, there are other kinds of viewing options with digital materiality that, to a lesser extent, are also practiced by viewers.

This section scrutinizes the ways in which and the reasons why co-viewing occurs in this particular manner (broadcast). Additionally, the practices of archiving and collecting that intertwine with the ways of accessing telenovela content are discussed.

### 10.2.1 Keeping Up-to-date Practices

Contrary to what could be argued for other kinds of TV products and practices (for example, binge-viewing through services like Netflix, Hulu, HBO GO, Globo Play), most telenovela consumption revolves around scheduled TV broadcasts rather than through on-demand services. Three main reasons were identified for this consumption practice.

The first reason concerns long-standing family co-viewing practices, as users grew up watching telenovelas with their families. Users affirmed that to watch the broadcast in a group setting (even though it may be online) is part of a tradition that generates a feeling of belonging, as they have been practicing telenovela co-viewing since their childhood. One of the interviewees illustrates this long-standing habit:

*“I believe that watching telenovela is a habit that we carry with us since childhood, I remember when I was a child my family used to get united to watch the telenovela”* (female, 40 years old).

Another user stated that *“It is something that came from home when I was a child, my family stopped everything to watch the telenovela. It was sacred”* (male, 37 years).

The second reason concerns the need to be informed first-hand about the plot as it unfolds. Therefore, users can share a common repertoire with people in different situations and institutions such as family, work, and groups of friends, as well as in the telenovela groups, as the prime time telenovela is a common cultural artifact used in conversations in the Brazilian society:

*“Obviously I prefer to watch it when it is broadcast. It has more emotion, more dynamic, it is in real time, and we can interact with posts and comments. Mainly during the episode everybody watches and comments within the group. Later it is not the same, it is not the same impact as the information is spread around the media”* (male, 18 years old).

The third reason is the need to interact with other users in real time, by talking

to people in the Facebook groups, while the events unfold: *“I watch it when it is transmitted because of the interaction with people on the net”* (female, 34 years old).

As an additional reason, sometimes technical issues were mentioned. One of the interviewees said that he could not watch Babilônia later, via on-demand, because his broadband Internet was not good enough for streaming videos. Nonetheless, he stated that even if he had better broadband access, he would prefer to know what happened in the plot at the time of the broadcast. He would still prefer to watch at the broadcast time to be informed and to be able to talk about it with peers. Technical quality was also a reason why users preferred to watch the broadcast. One interviewee affirmed that he preferred to watch the telenovela on his television because the screen was bigger than watching on the computer, and the transmission signal was excellent since he had installed a digital TV antenna.

This practice of watching Babilônia according to the TV schedule was defined as the practice of ‘keeping up-to-date’. Although following the broadcast schedule primarily illustrates this practice, other activities also intertwined with it. Two interviewees affirmed reading summaries of episodes, critic reviews and other news related to Babilônia, as a way of keeping up-to-date about the telenovela. Another user searched for this kind of information when he missed an episode because of other activities or even when watching something ‘more interesting’. Another interviewee, one of the administrators in a Facebook group, became disillusioned and bored with the changes implemented by the telenovela producers and scriptwriters (after the official focus groups). But, in order to maintain his position as an expert within the group, he still read the news about Babilônia, and from time to time, tried to watch an episode where many co-viewing comments were happening. Another way that users used to keep up-to-date was to access the official and unofficial websites and apps where Babilônia was hosted.

### **10.2.2 Accessing Unofficial Spaces**

Official websites (globo.com) and apps (Globo Play) that offer on-demand services represent the official means that people have to access telenovela content outside of the broadcast time. However, several unofficial (illegal) means also exist.

Users make use of alternative platforms and websites that host telenovela episodes. They do this to “catch up” with other viewers who watch the telenovela at the Rede Globo broadcast time. These unofficial platforms help users to engage in discussions within the online groups they participate in, as well as in offline spaces such as workplaces (as the telenovela plot is a common subject of discussion across social interactions). When users view the telenovela at another period, they have difficulty in investing money for watching a television product, when this type of content was freely available their whole lives on open television. Usually, this kind of unauthorized and illicit viewing cannot be counted in official audience measurement ratings, as they disrupt this media logic. Nonetheless, these viewers generate awareness about the show, as they are up-to-date and can continue to promote conversations around the telenovela plot and its social issues in different spaces. Unauthorized websites usually help users that are frustrated having to pay for a subscription of something that is often free. Therefore, this practice of accessing non-official spaces with Babilônia content was common among users, as they used these websites to keep up-to-date, from recaps to catching up on missing episodes.

Other practices that are linked to accessing telenovela episodes from unofficial websites (that host the content without the copyright authorization from Rede Globo) were the practices of collecting and archiving.

#### ***10.2.2.1 Collecting and Archiving Practices***

The practices of collecting and archiving might take illegal forms within connected viewing platforms, as they became a widespread media consumption practice. Digital content can be easily stored in the cloud, on users’ hard disks, personal computers or even on the servers of hosting websites. As previously mentioned, the linking and sharing of content were standard peer-to-peer practices within the WhatsApp group and both Facebook groups. In the Whatsapp group, the common practice was to share links from YouTube or other domains in order to listen to or download the telenovela soundtrack songs (for free) to user devices and digital libraries. Within the Facebook groups, links to episodes on unofficial sites were shared and files were exchanged with those who could not watch the episode at the broadcast time and wanted to watch it later. For instance, in the Telenovela Babilônia

Facebook Group 2, which did not have well-organized structure to share files, users were often observed asking for ways to find an episode they had missed.

Most of the interviewees mentioned using unofficial websites or the recording options provided by pay TV services (in which Globo was one of the channels included in the bundle). Only one interviewee mentioned using the official video-on-demand service of Rede Globo, because his daily activities coincided with the telenovela airing time during the week. He was only able to watch Babilônia during the broadcast time on the weekends (Fridays and Saturdays) and he did not wish to waste time searching for episodes on unofficial hosts with low quality versions. Most of the interviewees reaffirmed that they did not feel the need to pay for a product that is free on television:

*“If I miss an episode I search for these websites that put the episode up for free ... globo.com is good, but you have to pay and if you don't pay you can't watch the entire episode”* (male, 31 years old).

Some interviewees were dedicated to downloading and creating their own episode databases and thus developed collecting and archiving practices. These databases were mainly dedicated to collect the works of a specific actress or actor whose performance was admired. Interviewees affirmed that this was a long-standing practice and over the years transferred this practice from analog tapes (VHS) to digital disks (DVD) and now to digital files that they store on their devices (PC, tablets, and smartphones) without the need of external physical disks.

### **10.3 Telenovela-centered Practices**

The television genre can also influence co-viewing activities. The characteristics of the telenovela Babilônia, such as the narrative style, duration of episodes, airing time and social issues presented, helped to shape the co-viewing practices. This section discusses the practices interconnected with co-viewing and UGC that were sparked by the telenovela Babilônia.

### 10.3.1 Commentary Practices

In the studied groups, the set of practices that Couldry (2012) calls commentary were identified. These practices implied that user evaluations or reviews helped other users to decide whether they should view an episode when faced with an increasing array of media options and information. Regarding the media economy, these commentary practices are particularly important as they mark perceptions of the product in a way not necessarily expected by the official producers (see Couldry, 2012), as they might result in disruptive evaluations.

In the case of the Babilônia Facebook groups, most of the comments show some sort of affective dimension regarding the telenovela format and a sense of loyalty to a tradition of following Rede Globo productions. The commentaries were seen as a judgment of values based on affectivity and dedicated following. The comments revolved around audience ratings and related telenovela subjects, such as background knowledge on the telenovela as a product embedded in a highly consumed format. Therefore, ongoing commentary built up a sense of expertise and authority.

When the official focus groups of the network were announced in the media, some commentary interventions were related to the notion of authorship. For instance, some followers stated that due to their personal knowledge of the previous offerings by the scriptwriters, it was unlikely that they would change orientation, despite low ratings. Therefore, this resulted in keeping a positive expectation by some co-viewers who were interested in similar works from the scriptwriter (Gilberto Braga) and became engaged with the narrative and co-viewing activities.

Other interventions judged the perceived technical quality of the telenovela: script, lighting, camera movements, graphics, opening intro and cast performance. The practitioners who did these kinds of commentary practices were judging what Alice Hall (2003) has called the perceptual quality of a narrative, in which users could judge aspects of the production of the Babilônia episodes. This also affected viewership engagement.

All of these ‘expert’ commentary interventions helped to establish normativity through authority in the process of building a community of interest. After the Facebook groups were already established, these practices, along with leadership

figures like group administrators who self-legitimized themselves and others as the authoritative ‘reviewers’ of Babilônia helped to maintain these normativity and practitioner roles. Thus, commentary and expertise were factors that enabled the establishment of a practitioner’s position within the Facebook groups. After the focus groups took place and multiple changes were implemented, several ‘expert’ commentaries were written about the costs of production, low audience ratings and how it affects the television network. This was done as a way of legitimizing the changes implemented by the scriptwriters and producers.

This authority within the Facebook groups was also observable in the way in which the final word was given in different discussions or even when banning people from the group: *“I am impartial, I always respect the opinions, but when the things get ugly I don't have another way except to ban”* (male, 31 years old). It was also possible to observe this in the response from an administrator when a user in a comment questioned why he could not make a post in Facebook Group 1:

*“I tried to post something here but I couldn't. It is waiting for approval. Can I know the reason for this?”* (Pedro, May 8, 2015 (9:51 pm).

*“Is it repeated information? In case it is I am not allowing to post. You know, I am doing this pre-approval because there were a lot of arguments, repeated information and people trying to do advertising in the group, and the group is not for that”* (Administrator, May 8, 2015 (10 p.m.).

Both of the situations described above lessen the ideal of these groups as an ‘open space’, as previously mentioned in the Groups’ Communicative Ecologies chapter.

Commentary practices also occurred in the Whatsapp group. However, almost all the evaluations or reviews were related to the audience ratings released by Kantar-IBOPE-Media, the company measuring audience ratings in Brazil. Although users did not discuss how the ratings were measured, when a user asked if somebody watched Babilônia and what their opinion was, usually the answer was based on the ratings. It was common to see users replying that it was good, but that it was the worst telenovela at 9 p.m. because of the audience ratings. When Babilônia started to air,

people stated that it was just the beginning, and because of the memory of Império, the audience ratings were not high, but that they would increase. This was done as a way to maintain the engagement of other co-viewers. Additionally, it was also common to see commentaries about the plot. Users said, for example, that it lacked comedy aspects, as it was too realistic.

### 10.3.2 Audience Ratings Oriented Practices

Audience ratings oriented practices were one of the most recurrent activities within the studied groups. Even before Babilônia started to air, users engaged in practices that discussed the audience ratings. As an example, in the weekend before Babilônia's release, a user from the Telenovela Babilônia Facebook Group 1 sparked this kind of activity by sharing a mashup picture from his blog (Figure 10). In this picture, it was written "Babilônia. It starts on Monday. What will be the audience of the starting day of Babilônia?". These kinds of practices also occurred in the other groups, although without the inclusion of pictures. For example, users were betting with each other whether Babilônia would have good ratings.



FIGURE 10. AUDIENCE RATINGS RELATED PRACTICES ON THE FIRST DAY OF BABILÔNIA'S AIRING. EXTRACTED WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO10 FROM TELENOVELA BABILÔNIA FACEBOOK GROUP 1.

After the first few episodes and the boycott promoted by conservative politicians, users engaged in this sort of commentary practice by trying to understand the reasons for Babilônia's low ratings, sharing ideas of how to improve them and

comparing them to previous telenovelas.

Commentaries about ratings pointed out sensitive issues that could influence audience responses. In the case of *Babilônia*, sexuality became the most pressing issue, leading to different discussions that showcased the connection to everyday life experiences related to the issue (i.e. discrimination, moral beliefs) and the power relations in the groups. As an example, when a user in the Whatsapp group questioned whether *Babilônia* was a good telenovela, one user replied that it was, however, because people were full of prejudice towards the presented social issues, this caused *Babilônia* to have low audience ratings.

In this same set of practices, it is also worth mentioning those specifically oriented to contrasting *Babilônia* with other products, for example, the previous prime time telenovela, *Império*. In one of the interviews, an interviewee highlighted the pleasure of engaging in a conversation around a more successful telenovela (in this case *Império*), in contrast to a not so well-made brand new product. Another example comes from Facebook Group 1, in which a user pointed to the buzz that was generated when contrasting the story and the ratings between *Babilônia* and *Império*:

*“It is hard to leave behind a story that was good (Império) to get in another one that has a completely different and unknown plot, and this new one starts with controversial subjects. If we stop to think about it, we continue talking about it and contribute to it growing”* (Carlos, April 22, 2015 (9:47 p.m.) post on Facebook group 1)

The central role that audience ratings played in the studied groups also gave rise to users comparing *Babilônia* with *The Ten Commandments* and Globo telenovelas at different time slots. These practices again oriented towards building authority and expertise, this time through comparative perceptions of quality based on daily ratings. In all the groups, every day some users shared a comparison of the corresponding *Babilônia* episode ratings with the equivalent episode number of five previous telenovelas. They also compared *Babilônia* ratings to other TV shows that aired that day. Every time these comparisons were released, other users commented and cooperated to create a narrative, where the ratings indicated the lack of success of *Babilônia*. This narrative was also complemented and boosted by the practice of sharing content from other media sources where the headlines talked about the ratings

of Babilônia as a complete failure.

However, the replacement to Babilônia (A Regra do Jogo) had similar ratings to Babilônia when it began to air, while the religious telenovela (The Ten Commandments) at that time had a bigger audience than when Babilônia was on the air. This points towards a possible shift in the ritual of watching telenovelas. Nonetheless, when comparing audience ratings, users were confident that A Regra do Jogo would not be like Babilônia. This demonstrates that even a ‘not that successful’ telenovela such as Babilônia stays in the imagination of viewers during the liminal phase, when one telenovela immediately replaces another.

### 10.3.3 Hashtagging

Another practice that was associated with connected co-viewing was the use of hashtags. Hashtags were used to index content related to Babilônia, which users could have easy access to or search for Babilônia information, as it was done with #Babilônia. It was also used as a way of expressing expectations, emotions, and opinions while co-viewing Babilônia.

Before the start of Babilônia, it was common to see expectant hashtags in the groups such as # Babilônia vem aí, # Vem Babilônia, #faltam 2 dias, #é hoje, #ansioso, #começaBabilônia # Babilônia\_CONTAGEMREGRESSIVA # táchegando #éhoje#BabilôniaprimeiroCapítulo (#Babilônia is coming, #ComeBabilônia, #It is in 2 days # Its today #excited, #start Babilônia #Babilônia\_COUNTDOWN #itiscoming, #Itistoday#Babilôniafirstepisode).

Similar hashtags were also used at the end of Babilônia when the finale was coming soon: #RetaFinalBabilônia, #BabilôniaFinal (#FinishingStretchBabilônia, #BabilôniaFinale). This demonstrates that hashtags about expectations were connected with the most important days of the telenovela. Additionally, when Babilônia aired with lower than expected audience ratings, users included the hashtags #sobeBabilônia (#riseBabilônia) or #ésóOcomeço (#itisjustThebeginning) when discussing the ratings of the telenovela.

During the period of the research in the Whatsapp interface, hashtags were not used as a mechanism for searching for particular content, in contrast to other SNS platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Nonetheless, users appropriated

this kind of SNS feature for practicing connected co-viewing. In April 2015, the synopsis was published for the subsequent telenovela that was due to air six months later, together with the main scriptwriter, João Emanuel Carneiro. In the WhatsApp group, during Babilônia co-viewing, a user decided to discuss the audience ratings of the episode using the hashtag:

#tudoémaiorqueBabilônia (#everythingishigherthanBabilônia).

The user meant that any other TV show had higher audience ratings than Babilônia. Three users replied to this message using other hashtags. The first response used the hashtag #operaçãoEmanuelMaio (#operationEmanuelinMay), as a way of demonstrating disappointment with Babilônia and their hope of replacing Babilônia before the due date. Subsequently, another user said # euApoio (#I support), while another added #dois (#two), as a way to say that he/she also supported this opinion. Therefore, this demonstrates that the practitioners of connected co-viewing re-appropriated the use of this new media feature. The hashtags can be considered digital objects that users make use of to co-view and create a narrative, in which their expectations and judgments around the telenovela are told.

#### **10.4 Understanding Users' UGC Conceptions**

All the co-viewing activities in the studied groups were forms of UGC. It was detected that users mostly engaged with UGC by consuming and interacting with them. Only a little UGC were a result of sophisticated producing practices such as remixing. Nonetheless, it was hard to identify whether users were the actual producers of this more complex UGC, as they took the format of memes that were propagated in multiple digital spaces.

Due to this challenge in identifying users as producers, inquiries were made in the interviews and the questionnaire to see if users produced content and (if so) what kind of content they created. The interview responses revealed that most of the UGC were shared from other sources like blogs and SNS platforms, such as Twitter. Therefore, this demonstrates interoperability among SNS platforms in the users UGC practices. This interoperability was part of what made it so difficult to identify the actual creators of complex content.

When asking users about producing UGC, their understanding of what is to produce overlapped with notions of interacting with UGC and with other users. Almost all of the interviewees affirmed not to have created content, but to know of people, blogs, and SNS profiles that created memes and news related to the telenovela *Babilônia*. Only two interviewees affirmed producing telenovela scripts, but they did not share these with others, as it was a private (dispersed) practice that they did as a hobby.

One of the interviewees affirmed that she was not aware of people that created content. However, this discussion reminded her of content shared during the first few weeks of *Babilônia*, when some religious people managed to join the group only to share content dedicated to criticizing the lesbian couple that kissed in the first episode of the telenovela. When remembering this situation, she expressed disappointment about this kind of attitude, as she felt that religious politicians were encouraging homophobia among the population by promoting these SNS campaigns, instead of taking care of serious issues. Figures 11 and 12 below illustrate this kind of content against the telenovela social issues. These figures were shared in both Facebook groups.

Figure 11 shows the logo of Babilônia with a line across, followed by the written phrases (in Portuguese): “In my home, there is no space for Babilônia. Zero audience!!!”.



FIGURE 11. UGC AGAINST VIEWING TELENOVELA BABILÔNIA. EXTRACTED WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO10 FROM TELENOVELA BABILÔNIA FACEBOOK GROUPS.

Figure 12 says: “Do not give audience to another telenovela that came to destroy the values of the Brazilian Family.” This figure also has the official logo of Babilônia and the logo from the Mixed Permanent Parliamentary Front in Defense of the Brazilian family. This front is a united group of politicians who try to implement public policies. A conservative evangelical pastor heads this group.

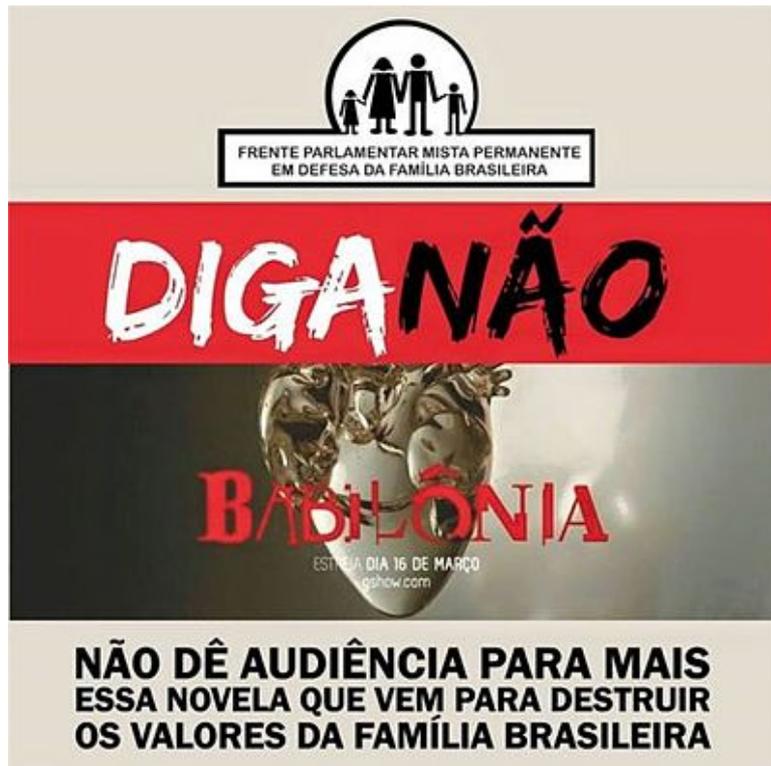


FIGURE 12. UGC FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY FRONT AGAINST VIEWING BABILÔNIA. EXTRACTED WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO10 FROM TELENOVELA BABILÔNIA FACEBOOK GROUPS.

Both figures demonstrate, once again, how audience ratings were key to classify the success of the telenovela among the viewers and non-viewers.

The questionnaire asked whether users produced content and (if so) which kind. The replies revealed that users understood producing to be the same as interacting with UGC. Users assumed that to give opinions, to debate the plot and social issues of Babilônia, to share photos, memes, links with news, summaries, and spoilers of the

telenovela was to produce content. One user that affirmed not to produce content also illustrated the same understanding of producing:

*“I don’t produce content because in certain circumstances it might entail arguments due to different ways of thinking and acting. Therefore, I prefer to be neutral and just search for information”* (questionnaire, male, 24 years).

Another user, when affirming to produce content, said:

*“ Yes, I create content. I always try to interact with the groups, to create social ties and generate more opinions. I create small polls about the course of the characters, soundtrack, among other subjects”* (questionnaire, male, 30 years).

These quotes from the questionnaire responses indicate that the way people deal with UGC is complex and hardly ever framed in one category, as the act of writing an opinion, for them, is to produce the content through which they interact, while others might only read and search for information (consume). Therefore, this reveals that users conceptualize producing UGC in a broad manner and not exclusively as a produsage and remix. Users thus do not feel that only a few users can produce UGC, as many academics portray. To users, to produce content is an essential activity that can start with simple acts such as writing, sharing, commenting, and continue to more complex acts such as making remixed content with photos and videos that sometimes become memes.

## **10.5 Remarks**

In this chapter, various practices were shown to be interweaving with connected co-viewing practices.

First, the TV consumption-centered practices that were mostly marked by the broadcast time were inspected. These practices were established back at the beginning of the broadcast in Brazil and evolved over time with the different artifacts and

platforms available to perform them. For instance, users used unofficial and official platforms that hosted the prime time to watch it. Also, they accessed different kinds of media, and even practiced illegal activities like archiving and collecting as a way of keeping up-to-date with other co-viewers and to get informed about the prime time that is traditionally a subject among multiple situations and institutions.

Second, the telenovela-centered practices were scrutinized. They were the practices of commentary, audience ratings, and hashtagging. Commentary practices helped the selection of content users would consume, and to decide whether they would co-view the telenovela *Babilônia*. Audience ratings practices were intertwined with commentary and hashtagging. The ratings were used as part of the evaluation commentaries and were part of the expectations that users demonstrated through the use of hashtags. Moreover, the hashtags revealed to be more than an indexer. They were used as a language to co-view and communicate within new media platforms, and a way of expressing emotions and reflecting expectations.

Third, users reflected in what for them meant to produce content, revealing that a simple act of interaction to a complex content production means to engage with UGC by producing.

All the aforementioned practices led users to do reflective activities concerning the social issues presented in *Babilônia* and its relations with larger ecologies, such as the political arena and events portrayed by the media. Therefore reflective practices will be analyzed in the next chapter.

## **11. Reflective practices**

## 11.1 Overview

During the process of participant observation within two unofficial closed Facebook groups following Babilônia, an important set of connected co-viewing practices emerged. This set of practices can be referred to as perceived media realism. Users reflected on the role of the telenovela and contrasted it with their perceptions and understandings of reality.

As shown below in Figure 13 real life, reality, and truth, were recurring discussion topics that emerged during the observation of connected co-viewing practices by the followers of a Brazilian prime-time telenovela. The notion of reality recurred in users' reflective perceptions of the Brazilian telenovela Babilônia's portrayals of events.



FIGURE 13. WORD CLOUD WITH THE MOST USED WORDS IN THE BABILÔNIA FACEBOOK GROUPS. AUTHOR OWN ELABORATION TRANSLATED FROM THE PORTUGUESE VERSION DONE WITH NVIVO10.

As discussed in the Brazilian telenovela chapter, Brazilian telenovelas usually have a socio-realistic orientation and are known for promoting political debate in subjects ranging from racism and homophobia to political corruption (Atencio 2014). In this chapter, I demonstrate how the connected co-viewing of Babilônia in SNS

groups provided a space for viewers to engage with and reflect on the social topics present in this traditional narrative genre.

These perceptions of reality were commonly based on the social issues presented in the narrative of *Babilônia* and on current events occurring in the country (as discussed in the media). These practices were less frequently performed in the Whatsapp group, where practices emerged that related more to the needs of belonging to a group and to provide commentary around audience ratings. Hence, in this part of the analysis, I focus on participant observations in the Facebook groups.

This chapter discusses how Facebook users tried to understand whether or not the telenovela was representing reality and whether this should be the role of a prime-time show. They sought to figure out if such representations would have any effect on the behavior of citizens that watched the telenovela. Users tried to demonstrate their expertise by making reference to their own similarly lived experiences and, sometimes, to their knowledge of previous telenovelas they had watched. Frequently, these perceived media realism inquiries were entangled with other practices discussed in the preceding chapters, such as keeping up-to-date, classifying commentaries, and reflective activities.

This chapter begins by illustrating how practices of perceived media realism are a multidimensional construct. The practices of perceived media realism reached a level where users debated the level of reality *Babilônia* was representing, thus referring to the dimensions of perceived realism by Alice Hall (2003), specifically typicality, factuality and levels of involvement. These dimensions are exemplified with different users' reflections on the way *Babilônia* has represented Brazilian events and issues present within its society.

The next section explains how members of the Facebook group understand the role of the Brazilian telenovela, particularly its socio-educational approach done via social merchandising. Finally, it concludes with the concerns users presented regarding reproduction or changes in behaviors because of viewing the telenovela.

## **11.2 Typicality**

The studied users went beyond reflecting on whether the telenovela's events were plausible or typical to happen in the real lives of others, users also reflected on

how they know the realities portrayed in the series exist, but they prefer to ignore them. A fragment of a co-viewing discussion with twenty-one users on the issues of religion, racism, sexuality and political corruption present in Babilônia's storylines demonstrates this:

*"Reality is hard ... Some people prefer to look at particular issues presented by Babilônia as if they weren't truthful...but we see naughtiness and everything else every day... television is inside our home and just shows us what already exists and we are actually trying to ignore"* (Joana, April 1, 2015 (9:19 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

*"I agree with you...this telenovela is just showing the reality. We live in a world where we should adapt to the difference in all the senses because not everything is the way we would like it to be."* (Claudio, April 1, 2015, (9:25 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

Users acknowledged that Babilônia represented recurrent events and social problems that often occur in the real world, as demonstrated in the following fraction of a post-viewing discussion that took place between eleven users:

*"This telenovela at least shows the naked reality and doesn't change the actress that represents a character in the middle of the airing, as they did in the previous telenovela Império, with the story of Cora. Who agrees with me comment on it."* (Jonas, July 17, 2015 (11:07 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

*"I think that people with prejudice like those fake moralist politicians created all the Babilônia cons. Just because there are themes of explicit corruption, they want to pretend that they are not the typical things we see in the day by day of our country. They use homosexuality and talk about traditional family to move the focus out of the rip-off they are doing with the populations' money."*(Aline, July 18, 2015 (0:10 a.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

*“The Brazilian population is very hypocritical. Many watch reality shows such as The Farm and see a lot of degrading content to get entertained. Then, they can’t look at the news because they see all the corruption we are living, the high amount of unemployment and all the terrible and disappointing facts that are occurring. And of course, they can’t watch Babilônia because it shows that gays in fact exist, and to have a religion doesn’t mean to have a good personality...”* (Francesca, July 18, 2015 (2:03 a.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

*“Many Brazilians are wanting to forget about the problems we are living, and they blame the portrayal of the telenovela. These people want to live in Wonderland.”* (Cristian, July 18, 2015 (2:27 a.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

Users’ reflective practices on typicality involved the other dimensions of perceived media realism, such as factuality and narrative consistency.

During the months of participant observation, there were recurrent debates in both Facebook groups concerning the lack of enjoyment when common events were portrayed in Babilônia’s plot. This occurred when users acknowledged the typicality in Babilônia representations of the society in which they live, and in comparison to their daily lives. Babilônia typicality was also contrasted with the repetitive facts that media portray, usually involving sexuality, poverty, crime, political corruption, social injustice, and religious intolerance of minorities. The following debate between ten users from Facebook Group 2 exemplifies it, in which three users affirmed that the Babilônia representations of social issues are not enjoyable when they seem too typical or when they represent harsh situations that they see in their everyday life on the media:

*“I am not following Babilônia much because of the few episodes I watched they were not very motivating. Independently of the evangelist boycott, the plots are not enjoyable because they show problems that we have to face every day in our society. The telenovela is missing to show hope.”* (Jaqueline, March 20, 2015, (8:56 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

*“I agree. People need to get involved in the emotion that the stories tell us. I would prefer to see the good winning, heroes that passionate me, something that doesn’t show these polemic themes that we are tired of dealing with them”* (Hector, March 20, 2015, (8:58 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

*“You just said everything! It has to captivate us and not show scenes that we have to see often in the REAL LIFE.”* (Nadia, March 20, 2015, (9:03 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

As pointed out in the previous discussion, involvement with characters and plots may be disrupted and reduced because users recall traces of repetitive factuality.

The representations of events in Babilônia’s plot were also understood as atypical and, therefore, the narrative was also perceived as inconsistent. Users questioned the likelihood of Babilônia’s portrayals. For instance, one user contrasted the representation of the telenovela lesbian couple by referring to his own life experience and his knowledge about previous telenovelas:

*“I am a homosexual...I must say that the homosexuality reality shown in this telenovela is light years ahead of what in it fact is... it is so beautiful to show 2 elderly lesbian women that are rich and very successful talking about prejudice... As far as I remember, just a few plots from other telenovelas showed the reality of a homosexual the way it actually is, without money, without a place to live, being humiliated in the streets, spanked and dead...In Globo, everything is usually incredibly beautiful”* (Hector, April 11, 2015, (11:56 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

During the study, within informal conversations and during the interviews, users also affirmed that Babilônia and other telenovelas do not show the ‘typical’ reality, because people are unprepared to see on screen the social events that often occur in the outside world.

### 11.3 Factuality

In both Facebook groups, during their perceived media realism practices, users compared Babilônia to the TV news, revealing an interconnection between their perceptions of typicality and factuality, while discussing the role of the telenovela:

*"Babilônia has plots that revolve around pressuring social problems, which the public is used to seeing but prefers to see it with a dosage of humor. People arrive home, from their routines, and want to see something that distracts their minds instead of watching what they show in the news"* (Nilda, April 1, 2015, (11:56 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

The previous quote exemplifies that users see factuality within the telenovela, because the plots are very similar to the news headlines they read or watch on television. The telenovela representations can reach a high level of typicality that sometimes ends up becoming blurred with current facts. However, this does not mean that users do not distinguish real events from what they see in the narrative they are watching. As one user in an interview illustrated, at the end of the day, Babilônia was just a telenovela. Additionally, users referred to political events occurring in Brazil many times when discussing Babilônia. This demonstrates the existence of a dialogue between news and prime time factual representations:

*"On the contrary to what those politicians are saying. The scriptwriters care about the Brazilian family because they show facts. When they show that characters are evil, they are doing that as a way of alerting the people that watch that it exists, and demonstrating what we shouldn't do. Who are really not caring about the values of the Brazilian family are our politicians that since always are corrupt. They continue robbing, and now they are contributing to deviate billions from Petrobras, and we continue paying higher taxes without any return. We don't see investment in education and health. The consequence is that people are getting more ignorant and consequently voting in a fake moralist that doesn't want that*

*telenovela to show the reality*". (Renan, March 19, 2015, (8:32 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

#### **11.4 Involvement**

The involvement with a narrative, as Hall (2003) previously stated, depends on the consistency of the narrative and the perceptual quality. However, an overload of typicality together with factuality may be one reason, for a portion of users, to lose interest in viewing the telenovela. The quote from a user demonstrates that factuality, together with typicality, can be important features that might generate disengagement in co-viewing practices:

*"I stopped watching Babilônia. I got tired. It is missing emotion, entertainment. We want a happy ending, bandits suffering, the magic of the first love, and the innocence of the children. A cruel reality, where bad people always are in a better position than the other, which politicians are using public money and lying to the population, as it is happening right now, this reality doesn't convince me. The only good thing is the GROUP. I will be following the group activities, and if I see from others that the story got better, I will start to watch it again."* (Nadia, April 10, 2015, (7 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

As discussed in chapter 7, the involvement with a narrative can also be related to what Ang (1985) found in her study of the viewing experiences of a soap opera with high satisfaction ratings (Dallas). Her study exposed that the fictional world is enjoyed by many viewers because they can disconnect from their routines while viewing melodramatic content. Contrary to Babilônia, in Ang's (1985) case, the soap opera contained sensational appeals to private and ordinary situations without any trace of conscious or critical self-reflection. Therefore, in comparison with Dallas, Babilônia lacked melodrama in its storylines and this may have decreased narrative and viewing involvement. For instance, while referring to the scriptwriter of Babilônia (Gilberto Braga), a user demonstrated this need for melodrama to achieve disconnection from her lived world:

*“ Gilberto shows the reality that people don’t want to see, as this is all the time airing in the news. People like me want to arrive home and see a nice story, a tale, a lie, anything that deviates the focus from what we are living in Brazil”* (Geraldo, April 10, 2015, (9:34 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

However, some users also became involved with Babilônia because of the characteristics of its genre, which includes a realistic approach with insertions of social merchandising.

### **11.5 The Learning Role of the Prime Time Telenovela**

Users found Babilônia’s plot to be central for creating awareness of social issues in the population. Babilônia promoted acceptance of groups that are usually stigmatized (as they are considered minorities), discussed sexuality and the political corruption at a time when these social issues were overlapping in multiple media discourses around the political scandal occurring in Brazil. Users also considered the educational purposes of the prime time telenovela genre as demonstrated in the following excerpt of a conversation among twenty-three users from one of the Facebook groups:

*“Every telenovela story, as well as other TV shows, should bring some kind of learning to the viewer. Babilônia showed strong and very polemic scenes since the first episode, which caused commotion between the public. Most of the people that watched it got scared because this telenovela treats the reality (which not always occurs) with coherence and without fearing what it would cause”.* (Anderson, March 19, 2015, (8:55 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

On the one hand, in this conversation, some users thought it was positive that the telenovela portrayed real events for educational purposes and considered that it should be a mandatory feature for all telenovelas. On the other hand, other users

believed that the role of a telenovela should not be to educate a population, especially children:

*“I believe a fictional show should be treated as a fictional product. The big truth is just one: the responsibility of transmitting values is only and exclusively from the family. As irresponsible parents don’t want to work on it, they delegate it to schools and television. Then, it happens as it is happening to Babilônia, it is receiving bad feedback. Telenovelas always showed transgressors behaviors and “bad examples” that exist in reality. Even like this, I didn’t become a perverted or something...”* (Hector, March 19, 2015, (9:02 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

*“I also think each parent should educate their children. But I believe that a narrative shouldn’t be seen as real. That’s why I think that these realities are too much...too much of what we see every day. The function of telenovela should be to show the politicians getting f\*cked, going to jail. As it is impossible to see in real life, at least this could happen in the fictional world”* (Julio, March 19, 2015, (9:03 pm.) post in Facebook Group 2).

Although the perceptions and ideas around the role of a telenovela tended to diverge, once again, the need to try to forget about the country’s social-political factuality through melodrama and fictional worlds emerged. This demonstrates how the Brazilian telenovela and its connected viewing practices are useful for a large number of people to discuss social concerns using the telenovela as a material resource.

## **11. 6 Concerns about Changing Behaviors**

Within the practices of perceived media realism, it was not uncommon to see the emergence of concerns about the effect that the telenovela may have on citizen actions. It is because a considerable portion of the studied users sees the prime time

telenovela as a resource for educational purposes. Additionally, the telenovela became a topic of discussion among religious politicians in the Brazilian Congress, who stated that the telenovela could destroy what they call the traditional family.

Users from the studied Facebook groups criticized the politicians' positions. They tried to demonstrate this criticism by performing remixing practices and by stating that their background knowledge was an important factor for not changing their behaviors.

The remixing practices identified in the groups have a memetic quality and they materialized foremost in critical forms. Users from the groups were carriers of these cultural artifacts. They used them to expose how politicians who made a call for boycotting Babilônia were using social issues like homosexuality in a patriarchal discourse to affirm their position in the Congress and to deviate attention away from their fellow politicians involved in the largest case of bribery in Brazilian history. For instance, the catchphrase shown in Figure 14 (translated as “I am not willing”, an expression used by the Beatriz character when she did not want to speak to the Inês character) was used as a form of protest against this kind of discourse.



FIGURE 14. CATCHPHRASE OF THE BABILÔNIA CHARACTER BEATRIZ. EXTRACTED FROM THE FACEBOOK GROUPS WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO 10.

Usually, the image shown in Figure 14 was used when users were reflecting on whether a telenovela was capable of changing behaviors, as a way to show agreement with other users who were unsatisfied with the politicians' attitudes. Thus, it was used as opinion confirming content.

A common occurrence in remixing practices is when a meme is transformed and adapted or spread by users. This happened with the meme in Figure 14 that was adapted in satirical commentaries in public debates on pressing social issues. Figure 15 is an example of this adapted meme, where it was used as a digital artifact for criticizing the posture of conservative politicians regarding Babilônia. The image shows a photo of the actress that played the Inês character (Adriana Esteves) with the words: "He says that the telenovela is destroying the family: But he never sat at the table with his kids to have dinner. I am not willing".

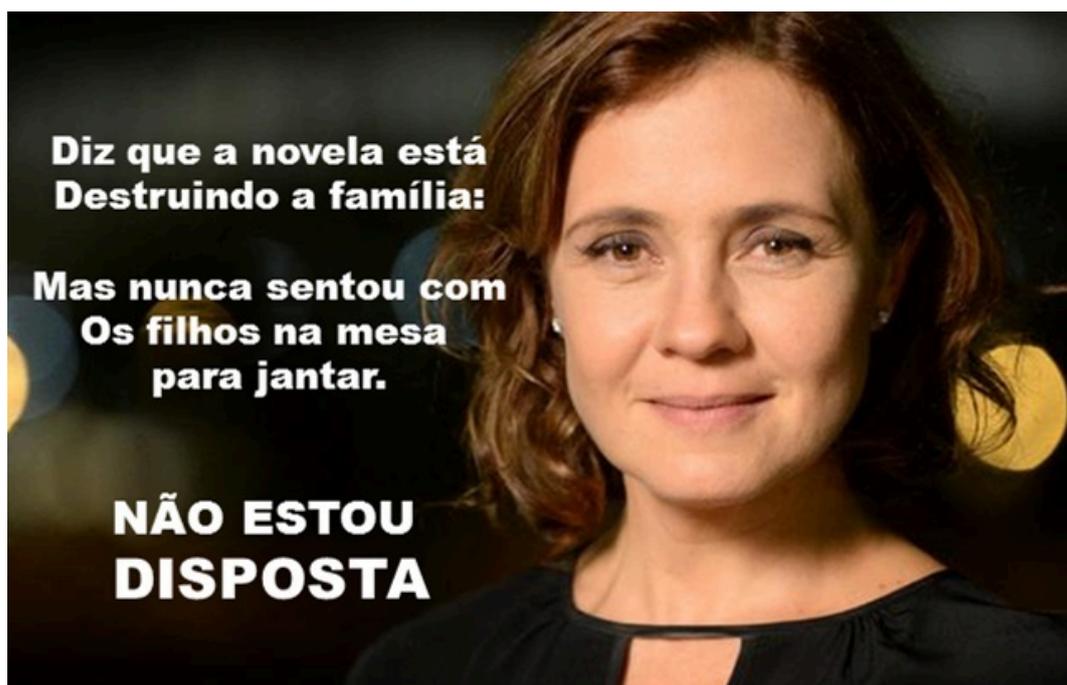


FIGURE 15. REMIX OF THE CATCHPHRASE OF THE BABILÔNIA CHARACTER FOR CRITICAL PURPOSES EXTRACTED FROM THE FACEBOOK GROUPS WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO 10.

Other examples of digital materialities used for criticizing the idea that the telenovela would change behaviors or sexual orientations are shown in Figures 16 and 17. Figure 16 mocked the idea that people who see a kiss between two people of the

same sex in Babilônia would do the same thing just because they saw it on the telenovela. The mocking was done by showing a human being kissing a dog with the following phrase: “Next telenovela from Globo!!!”.

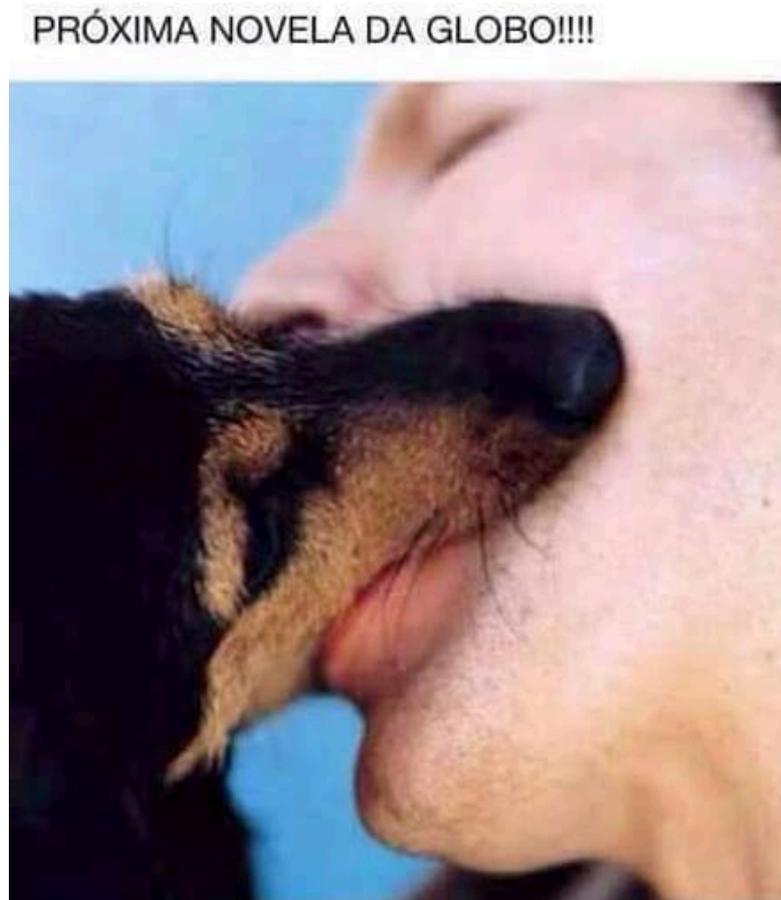


FIGURE 16. MOCKING POSSIBLE TELENVELA EFFECTS. EXTRACTED FROM THE FACEBOOK GROUPS WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO 10.

Figure 17 was a photo shared in both Facebook groups from a Facebook user's post who was not a member of the studied groups. The post says:

“Do not allow your kids to watch Babilônia. They might become gays!!! To those who don't know, I was white and after watching 12 years of slavery I became black. It happened so fast. Do not allow your kids to watch rich women because they might become socialites. NOBODY DESERVES IT. Also, do not let them watch Animal Planet because they

are in danger to become animals. I remember that my mom let me watch the Kiss of the Vampire and now, unfortunately, here I am, with a bat face biting the neck of other people.”

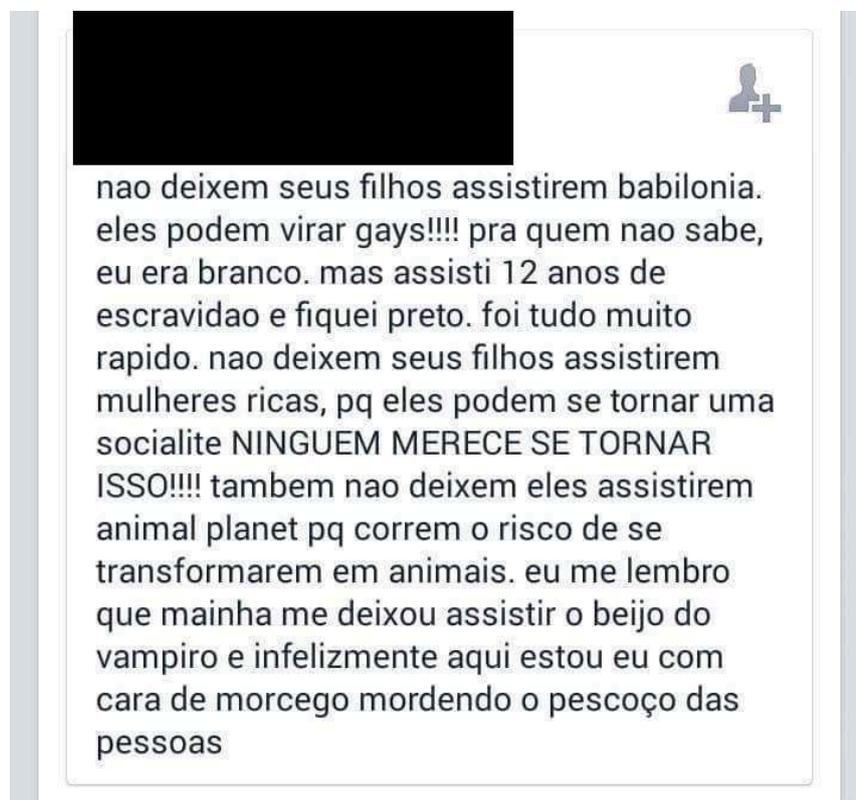


FIGURE 17. POST MOCKING A POSSIBLE TELENOVELA EFFECTS ON VIEWERS. EXTRACTED FROM THE FACEBOOK GROUPS WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO 10.

These remixing practices were shared and used for emphasizing how the religious and conservative politicians insisted on performing practices that reinforced the norms that form and regulate identities and sexuality based on heteronormativity. This reveals that the politicians from Congress, as Judith Butler (2008) has already pointed out, performed heteronormative practices to impose mandatory heterosexuality. They also treated homosexuality as something horrendous that deviated from “proper” conduct. However, other forms of conduct socially considered to be outside of the standard were not criticized by these same politicians. Thus, they used the characters’ homosexual relationship as a scapegoat for deviating public attention away from pressing issues such as the corruption that Babilônia was portraying. The following summary of an episode, shown in Figure 18, demonstrates

criticism of these heteronormative practices. It says that the Inês character broke the legs of a colleague to go to a party in her place. Then, it states that the Beatriz character married because of money and was already unfaithful to the husband before the wedding. Then, it says that the character of Luis Fernando lied to a young woman, made her pregnant, betrayed his wife and almost led his family to ruin. It ends by stating that after all of this, the fundamentalists believe that the love between two women is what destroys the traditional family.



FIGURE 18. AN EPISODE SUMMARY OF BABILÔNIA. EXTRACTED FROM THE FACEBOOK GROUPS WITH NCAPTURE FROM NVIVO 10.

The excerpts of a Facebook discussion below between fifteen users shows reflections that criticized the worries about the possible capacity Babilônia had to change behavior.

*“LOL politicians rob, the majority of the population do not have a decent education, nor public transport, neither good health. And now they and other people say that a telenovela would destroy the family? These politicians need to receive a shock of reality.”* (Natalia, March 28, 2015, (9:33 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

*“People are always trying to find excuses to cover their mistakes. I watch telenovela for distraction, and I cannot believe that a simple story can change the nature of a person, do you agree with me?”* (Henrique, March 28, 2015, (9:34 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

*“Fiction...that reflects reality...If we all think that honesty is boring ...we are all lost”* (Carlos, March 28, 2015, (9:49 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 1).

*“Guys the telenovela doesn’t make scenes of situations to the viewers copycat them, it does to alert us that certain events actually happen...It is hypocrisy to denote it in this way. We all pass through similar situations every day. It is so simple if somebody disagrees with the telenovela content is just to change the channel, turn off the TV...”* (Alex 6, March 28, 2015 (10:14 p.m.) post in Facebook Group 2).

Copying seen behaviors was one of the main worries for some users, who worried about people becoming emotionally involved with those characters who are not seen as heroes or who are different to the social standard of “normality”. This kind of thinking was further described by a situation described by one of the interviewees:

*“... Once, I was in the house of some friends that are evangelists like me, then, I said that I had to go back home to watch Babilônia. They criticized me, saying I would change my behavior because I was seeing lesbians, an evangelist politician that was corrupt and robbed the population. Then I said that this was just a portrayal of reality that, evangelists or not, people do rob. And thanks to God my family taught me to respect the others independently of race, religion, social class, sexual*

*orientation, and there wouldn't be a telenovela that would change it.*

(Male, 22 years).

The interviewee exemplified how the practices of perceived media realism did not only occur within the scope of co-viewing practices. In fact, his example shows how connected viewing, together with the circulation of media content around Brazilian prime time social issues, fostered reflective practices within and outside of new media platforms, which also included non-viewers.

### **11.7 Remarks**

This chapter explained the reflective practices concerning perceived media realism through the lenses of users who co-viewed the telenovela *Babilônia* in the studied Facebook groups.

By scrutinizing the reflective practices that occurred during the co-viewing of *Babilônia*, it was detected that users established the relationships between the telenovela, the UGC they shared and the current socio-political context in Brazil through the practices of perceived media realism. The Brazilian telenovela genre was a fundamental materiality that shaped these relationships users make while co-viewing, as there is the inclusion of social merchandising in its storylines

Moreover, as demonstrated during the Analysis and Results chapters, both closed Facebook groups and the WhatsApp group were spaces where the Globo network did not have any managerial power. Therefore such relationships could be organized and freely expressed through various remixing practices, contrasting practices and other connected co-viewing activities that have been explored in this thesis.

# **Part VI.**

## **Conclusions**

## **12. Conclusions**

## 12.1 General Conclusions

The general aim of this research was to identify and examine the main practices that interweaved with connected co-viewing and UGC activities for users following the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre. Users were observed within two Facebook groups and one WhatsApp group. This aim could only be achieved through an adaptive research design and process, as I was studying a phenomenon that was under development and occurred within platforms that are always in a process of being updated. I could accomplish this goal because I followed two specific research objectives that were necessary to guide this study and yet also evolved over the duration of this research.

The first objective of this research was to reveal the organization and integration of the main practices interconnected with co-viewing. Co-viewing was studied in relation to the Brazilian prime time telenovela because this genre, as shown in this thesis, has specific characteristics that shape this viewing activity. Co-viewing in this genre has a temporality as each telenovela lasts on average only six months. Additionally, the genre includes social merchandising in the plots as a way to promote education by presenting pressing social problems and sparking discussions among viewers. The prime time telenovela is also the most watched TV show in Brazil and has a longstanding tradition of viewing that generates discussions in multiple settings and is intertwined with various social practices.

The second objective of this research was to detect which co-viewing activities establish the relations between the Brazilian Telenovela and the social-political context of the country during the airing of the telenovela *Babilônia*. The social-political context is a recurrent topic in traditional and new media. Thus, the main period of data collection, when the telenovela *Babilônia* was airing (March to August 2015), was essential to detect which co-viewing activities were establishing the relationships between *Babilônia* and the social-political context of the country (as portrayed by the media). Additionally, a three month research stay as a visiting researcher at USP in Brazil was also fundamental. This is because I could be immersed in the culture, understand the current socio-political context of the country, and see how traditional and new media were portraying the events that were occurring

in Brazil. Moreover, it facilitated easier data collection, as I was in the same time zone as most of the members in the studied groups.

In this thesis, three case studies were investigated, based on the working hypothesis that unofficial spaces are the preferred spaces for users to escape the direct co-option of the producers and feel comfortable to perform practices that otherwise would not occur. The cases were two unofficial closed Facebook groups and one WhatsApp group dedicated to following the telenovela *Babilônia*.

Three overarching questions (that evolved over the period of research) drove this research study:

- 1) For what reasons and in which ways are co-viewing practices developed within the unofficial closed Facebook groups and the Whatsapp group that follow the Brazilian prime time telenovela?
- 2) How do these users conceptualize UGC?
- 3) How do users within their set of co-viewing practices organize the relationships between the Brazilian telenovela that is currently airing and the social-political context they are living in, which are recurrent topics in the media?

Keeping these questions in mind, during the research activities, I focused on understanding the users' practices and experiences, marked by the place, time, television genre and materiality they selected for enacting their activities.

The Introduction and Research Design chapters demonstrated that the cases led me to 'learn by doing', as some of my intuitions and preconceptions were changed while doing the fieldwork. This is because connected co-viewing is a practice that is alive and is always evolving. Connected co-viewing depends on the viewed genre, the co-viewers, the path-place array where it occurs, and the technology and materiality available for carrying out this activity. It was found that the interfaces in the platforms (Facebook and WhatsApp) in which connected co-viewing occurs are always being reinvented and have features that shape this experience. Thus, when studying a 'live' phenomenon such as connected co-viewing, it is necessary to be flexible.

The Co-viewing Chapter discussed co-viewing within the context of connected viewing. This was central to the research, as co-viewing has gone through a process of reinvention with the use of digital materiality in connected platforms such as SNS, instant messaging applications, and new screen devices. As connected platforms are usually made for users and promote user content creation, the chapter discussed how co-viewing practices establish a relationship with UGC. This pointed out that all co-viewing activities are actually forms of UGC, which was confirmed later in the Analysis and Results part of this thesis. This discussion was done in a non-techno-deterministic manner, as acknowledged by the double-sidedness of UGC. The ways in which people can engage with UGC (by consuming, interacting and producing) were revealed and also contrasted during the research. It was shown that engaging with UGC requires activity from users, even when done very simply, such as searching for information about the co-viewed show. Chapter three also pointed out that, on the one hand, UGC benefits users as they can be perceived as active agents that manage their online social activities. Whereas, on the other hand, a drawback for users is that UGC engagement leaves behind trace data and subjects users to data mining and surveillance from the corporations that own the platforms where these activities happen. The usage of user data, and how users receive their information on Facebook also emerged during the study, as users affirmed to perceive receiving more information related to the telenovela they were co-viewing and from their peer co-viewers.

As this research was based on the co-viewing of a Brazilian telenovela, chapter four introduced the main approaches to study television viewing in Brazil since the 1980s. Thereafter, recent studies on SNS concerning user activities in relation to the Brazilian telenovela were discussed. This review of the literature was also fundamental to establish my research in this area. This also contributed to the expansion of the hypermediations perspective, as it was possible to identify the most commonly cited references in this field of inquiry. This expanded the possibilities for innovation and the application of new methods, theories, and categories of analysis, such as the Practice Theory and Communicative Ecology approaches.

Chapter five presented my interpretation of the research works of the second wave of practice theorists. The selection of the works by these authors was essential for conducting the analysis, because they follow a cross-disciplinary approach and are more oriented to connect theoretical foundations with empirical work. These theories

were used as the primary tool for exposing the relationships between co-viewing and UGC practices that were interweaved with everyday activities. This chapter demonstrated how the practice theory approach elucidates the ways human activities take shape and operate within different contexts over time. It was shown how practitioners, material objects, and technological artifacts play an important role in producing social life. Therefore, it was central to carry out the analysis and to establish how co-viewing practices are produced, reenacted, and changed within connected platforms.

Chapter six explained the Communicative Ecology, another central theoretical-methodological tool for the analysis. This chapter demonstrated that the Communicative Ecology is a relevant metaphor for analyzing how media technologies play a role in human activities. However, it was demonstrated that media and technologies are not the only factors that shape sociality and cannot be studied apart from the context in which they are used. Therefore, this chapter opened the path to looking at the communicative ecologies in the studied groups in which co-viewing occurred. This revealed how co-viewing activities are intertwined with multiple media and technologies: with the users' connections and social relationships, and with their beliefs, stories, symbols and content used in social practices.

This study looked at the connected co-viewing practices for a specific television genre, the Brazilian prime time telenovela. Therefore, chapter seven discussed the characteristics of this genre. Discussions about the features of the Brazilian telenovela such as broadcast time and duration were fundamental to understand how they marked the timing of connected co-viewing practices. Telenovela features contributed to shaping the activities within the studied groups. This chapter also discussed Rede Globo's intentional inclusion of social-realistic messages in their telenovelas, which are called social merchandising strategies. This discussion contributed to analyzing how users established relationships between the socio-political context of the country and the plot of the co-viewed telenovela throughout their perceptions of lived reality. Additionally, this chapter explained how the telenovela practices are becoming connected, showing that UGC and remix practices are constitutive activities regarding the Brazilian telenovela in the connected viewing context.

Chapter eight explained the methodological aspects of the study, the steps and the ethical decisions taken during the research. This chapter was important for three

main reasons. First, it provided relevant information to help the reader to understand how the research process was carried out. Second, the methodological decisions in this study contributed to the relatively recent field of inquiry regarding user activities on social media platforms within Telenovela Studies. The methodological approach used in this study followed an ethical procedure for doing participant observation and collecting data in SNS with the informed consent of users, which is not a common practice among these types of studies in Brazil. Therefore, this created a space for debating the importance of the ethical treatment of the subjects under study who use SNS. Furthermore, the need to address the research problem consciously is made explicit, because the way data is treated might affect the daily lives of users, regarding issues such as data privacy, discussed social themes, illicit activities and so on. Third, this ethical decision-making formed part of the adaptive research process, as the object of study was under development. This confirms that conducting ethical research in the connected environment requires the researcher to make sensitive decisions during the entire process, as it is not possible to control the research setting.

Chapters nine, ten and eleven reported the analysis and findings of the case studies. The process of observing connected co-viewing practices in the two unofficial closed Facebook groups and one WhatsApp group during the broadcast of the telenovela *Babilônia* provided the answers to address the first research question. It was possible to determine the reasons and the ways in which connected co-viewing practices are developed within unofficial spaces like the studied groups. This study demonstrated that users organize co-viewing by practicing interweaving activities such as keeping up-to-date, collection and archiving, following audience ratings and hashtagging related activities. These activities are enhanced through peer-to-peer relationships, fostering dialogue about the ongoing broadcast of the viewed telenovela. Furthermore, they are marked by the time of the broadcast and through a follow up that went beyond specific airing times with the catching up of an episode a few hours later through the peer-to-peer sharing of links and files within the studied groups. Although there are many possible options for viewing, this study revealed how live-viewing habits and traditions continue to play an important role in co-viewing practices and also shape the ways users participate in these closed spaces. Moreover, the co-viewing ritual of watching the Brazilian telenovela was enhanced with the use of SNS, instant messaging applications, and second screens. This revealed that users joined these groups because they can fulfill a need of belonging to

a group. Users could connect with distant interest groups that extended their living room spaces and, thus, perpetuate a practice that took shape in their childhood. The reasons why users participated in these unofficial spaces confirmed the working hypothesis. As demonstrated in the Analysis and Results chapters, users preferred to perform co-viewing activities in these unofficial digital spaces because they could undertake activities that otherwise they could not develop in a space mediated by the television network. Therefore, it was possible to focus the attention on certain practices such as keeping up-to-date, peer-to-peer collecting and archiving, social debate and reflective practices, without the potential interference or co-option by Rede Globo. However, these groups were not ideal open sites for debate. When scrutinizing the groups' ecologies, unofficial closed Facebook groups were not found to be free from strict moderation. They are spaces that have forms of censorship from group owners and administrators, as particularly demonstrated in Chapter nine and ten.

This study could also answer the second research question. It was possible to understand how users conceptualize UGC activities and how UGC practices were inherent to the co-viewing activities. These practices were expressed through different levels of engagement, by consuming, interacting and producing. However, for the users themselves, producing content also refers to interaction activities, such as giving opinions, sharing telenovela information and remixed content, and commenting on a post. These simple activities are complex in the eyes of users, as they have to pass the judgment of other practitioners. These UGC productions are also activities that determine the roles of users within the groups. For instance, administrators and users who were more productive were seen to have the position of experts.

The intense use of Facebook for a particular purpose, like co-viewing, has enabled certain users to become aware that their practices, the content they engage with, and the people they interact with, somehow contribute to the kind of UGC they see in their news feed. This points towards a possible (unconscious) awareness of the filtering process by Facebook algorithms. Furthermore, it was shown how these Facebook features together with other technological materialities like smartphones, the Facebook app, and the WhatsApp app also shape the timespace of co-viewing practices in the connected viewing context. They shape the co-viewing practices by enhancing constant connectivity and the perpetuation of similar activities. For instance, the mobility and flexibility of mobile phones allow users to continue

engaging in the practices related to co-viewing, because they can combine these activities with offline practices.

This research has witnessed how the sayings and doings in these spaces are oriented to the expression of different forms of authority, to showcase expertise and to contrast users' perceptions of living realities. These spaces also provided the data to answer the third research question. The groups' closed and unofficial features shaped the relationships users established between the telenovela *Babilônia* and the social-political context in which they were living. This social-political context was portrayed in the media. These groups seem to be perceived as more open spaces for the sharing of content and having discussions about delicate issues such as moral and sexual conflicts, the role of conservative and influential politicians, social and religious groups and private corporate power. Even when such practices, paradoxically, took place within a powerful private social media platform like Facebook and an instant messaging application like WhatsApp (which is owned by the Facebook corporation). In fact, most interviewees and questionnaire respondents identified unofficial groups as their preferred space for conversation, because they could auto-manage their membership and have more autonomy for criticizing the current social-political context, prevailing social issues, Rede Globo and its decision-making process around the telenovela. Even when different views arose about the role of telenovelas as a (deformed) reflection of reality, these groups acted as sites for social-political debate in a way similar to news forums. The WhatsApp group lacked strict organization and moderation, which contributed even more to users performing activities without restriction. However, this absence of strong control implied a potential threat of harm to the participants.

By researching those spaces and participating in the co-viewing activities, it was determined that the features of WhatsApp and Facebook play a significant role in the way in which those spaces are organized and how the co-viewing practices take shape within the groups. As an example, the Facebook groups could not perpetuate their activities when a telenovela was over as the limit of users constrained changing the title of the group. Furthermore, moderation took on different forms because group administrators and owners could use Facebook settings to define and select whether to use a stricter or less strict moderation. Finally, the closed status of the Facebook groups provided users the opportunity to practice activities not well perceived or accepted in official spaces.

Within co-viewing practices, users organize the relationships between the current Brazilian telenovela and the social-political context they are living in and seeing in the media portrayals through their reflective practices concerning the perceptions of media realism. Their reflections contrasted and negotiated know-how, normativity and affective relationships connected to their previous experiences and personal beliefs towards social issues. These practices have challenged social norms, as well as moral values, viewing traditions, and expectations about the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre. Users created and shared content while carrying out these activities. UGC were significant cultural artifacts used to criticize the current context of a political and economic crisis, as well as the way some politicians used the telenovela as an excuse for deviating media attention away from the ongoing bribery scandal.

This research demonstrated how the dimensions of perceived media realism might be a constitutive part of co-viewing practices, as meaning-making is an inherent feature of co-viewing. To make sense of what we watch, we usually tend to contrast what we are viewing with our lived experiences, exactly as the users in the studied groups did. Additionally, because of its format, the Brazilian telenovela is an example of a narrative that can stimulate discussions around current social issues. Therefore, this study contributes to the understanding of how the features of a particular television show and its genre can spark reflections during co-viewing. *Babilônia* contained melodrama in its plot, but the socio-realistic orientation provided by social merchandising strategies prevailed. This caused discomfort for some viewers who were dissatisfied with the world outside of the telenovela storylines.

Additionally, a common narrative emerged about Rede Globo's struggle against lower audience ratings, which included the introduction of production changes 'on the go' and ultimately the dilution of the original and controversial plot. This narrative also linked to the competition from a religious telenovela on a rival network and increased hate speech towards the social issues presented in the co-viewed telenovela. These issues provide a hint towards a deeper socio-cultural change in the viewing of telenovelas. Co-viewing, through mutual engagement via connected technologies and SNS, became more visible as this telenovela was controversial and generated tensions, which resulted in many practices related to demonstrating expertise and discussions about quality. These pressures leave some room for disruptions and challenges that make for a relevant case analysis on how the practice

of connected viewing is embedded into a traditional television format such as the Brazilian prime time telenovela genre.

It is important to emphasize that in previous studies revolving around notions of realities or user interpretations, the concerns around television effects and its educative or persuasive role arose from researchers' concerns around audience activities. This can be related to a historically institutional point of view within academia and industry, which, for many reasons, regarded viewers as passive, alienated or couch potatoes (see Ang 1991). Despite current excitement about new media and user activity, the same concerns around audience prevail. Therefore, this study has also contributed to show that users interrogate what they view and have the same concerns media academics do, demonstrating that through co-viewing, viewers can reflect around what they consume.

Once again, it is valuable to highlight the informed consent procedures undertaken while doing this research and when participating in user activities. If I had not followed these methodological protocols and did not engage in user practices, I would only have developed a superficial understanding of the connected co-viewing practices and the intertwined activities that occurred in these kinds of spaces. I would not have been able to engage in conversations with users and get a closer and deeper perspective of the connected co-viewing phenomenon as I did when engaging with other co-viewers. Thus, I probably would have maintained the initial preconceptions I had when I first designed the research. Again, it must be emphasized that most of these practices could be studied only because they occurred within a space that was not established by the producers. Although official spaces can be convenient for researchers to delve into viewing habits, this study indicates that sometimes selecting unofficial spaces for observation can be fruitful for discovering practices that would never be seen in official ones. Furthermore, Facebook and WhatsApp were revealed to be platforms used for the follow-up of live TV activities. However, for data collection, Facebook was found not to be an easy platform for data extraction and many times, the researcher had to adapt to the new updates of this platform. Also, in WhatsApp, many ethical considerations were found. Nonetheless, by carefully following the ethical steps for engaging with users, as done in this study, these spaces could be further explored, as many viewing practices occur within them.

## 12.2 Limitations to Findings

The procedural and contextual aspects of the research process may have limited the findings and contributions of this study. However, they also created opportunities for better understanding the context and the path-place array in which the study occurred.

As explained in the introduction of this thesis, one of the constraints of this study was the technological restraints of the Facebook platform API that stopped working for mining closed group datasets. This required me to collect the data for future analysis by hand. However, this limitation was also an opportunity for developing a deeper understanding of the material-arrangement bundles in which the practices of connected co-viewing took place. It was possible to understand how Facebook and other SNS and instant messaging applications are in a constant process of being updated. This affects the research practices, which requires researchers to be flexible and continually reviewing their research processes. Additionally, this limitation provided the opportunity for in-depth contact with the participants, to take notes and only select and save the most relevant viewing activities that occurred within the groups for future analysis.

Another challenge experienced in this research study was the need to use multitasking skills for the simultaneous use of more than one device to coordinate several actions at the same time during the co-viewing process. However, performing these multiple activities in various groups was also a way to understand how users do it, as some of them participate in different groups for practicing connected co-viewing.

As the study was developed online, it could be considered to be less time-consuming than other studies. However, time zone differences were a complication during the data collection. Half of the data collection was done in Spain, when the Brazilian time zone is five hours behind. This revealed that doing research online for a phenomenon like co-viewing that is marked by time (broadcast time and time zone) can also be time-consuming, depending on the physical space where the researcher is placed.

Because of the excessive number of members in the Facebook groups and the many users in the Whatsapp group, it was not possible to get to know all the co-viewers involved in these practices. Nor could the researcher be sure that all the studied users were aware of the study. This is because the groups' membership grew

over the months of the study. However, this was an opportunity to understand that ethical decision-making about informed consent, when facing a vast volume of people and information, comes from the posture and decisions that the researcher does. It depends on the position the researcher assumes, by striving to protect participants from harm and not looking at the SNS content as only text but as part and property of the human participants.

### **12.3 Future Research**

Future research would extend the themes and methods explored in this study. The research approach and applied methods should be explored in similar and different contexts of viewing. For example, it would be interesting to research co-viewing in other television genres or within other types of viewing that are not marked by the broadcasting time. Further research could include how users from on-demand subscriptions platforms like Netflix and Globo Play (or even unofficial platforms) perceive how these systems provide recommendations based on their viewing choices.

Additionally, four crucial implications for further research arise from this study. First, in future works, UGC engagement should be further explored through the lenses of user's textual production. Second, more research is required about the role of algorithmic filtering processes in social media platforms and how this affects viewing and UGC activities. Third, this study was almost entirely developed online. However, users affirmed performing connected co-viewing while co-viewing with people in-situ. Furthermore, users also affirmed to practice co-viewing and to perform post-viewing activities on the move while carrying out their daily routines. These activities were often performed at the same time as undertaking other practices. Thus, future research will include the exploration of co-viewing practices on the move in both digital and physical contexts. Fourth, another theme that can be further explored is how the co-viewed genre and content can spark practices concerning gender or sexual equality. This theme was not explicitly addressed in this thesis. However, because Babilônia included social merchandising strategies about subjects that included sexuality this topic arose frequently and many practices for debating and improving gender equality occurred. Therefore, there is enough data available for exploring such an important topic in the near future.

## **12.4 Final Remarks**

In conclusion, this research has generated a significant advance in studying co-viewing as a techno-cultural practice related to a co-viewed genre that can be reshaped by multiple elements of communicative media ecology such as, interfaces, algorithms, users, UGC, and so on. Also, this study has applied fundamental developments in methodological aspects for empirically studying co-viewing in SNS platforms and instant messaging applications while using a qualitative approach that followed the ethical protocols of informed consent. The original and significant contributions of this study will be further explored to better understand our expanding connected sociality.

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