A New Diet: News on Food Habits and Climate Change

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Abstract

This work focuses on the dissemination of messages on a healthy diet presented by the Eat-Lancet Commission on Food. Published in January 2019, that proposal predicts the benefits towards health, having in mind the climate change context as well as our planet’s growing population. That diet was spread by several international media and some of them used the BBC’s version as their textual source. Supported by the Critical Discourse Analysis this study aimed at finding an answer for the following question: how do these messages convoke people to reflect on climate change from the suggestions of how to change food habits? Despite some criticism, which is already emerging about that model of diet, it is relevant to check the messages which have media impact on topics related to climate change and the role they have regarding the possibility of being credible to be followed. Besides the piece of news on the diet spread by BBC News, two news from The Guardian and three Brazilian publications were also analysed - UOL, G1 and Época Negócios. It was concluded that the complexity lens is essential to understand those discourses and the communicational convocations related to that thematic axis.

1- Introduction

1.1 Background

The theme of food cuts across a range of scientific fields and plays a multidisciplinary role in society. Raised as an issue in different areas and enveloped in an interactional dynamic, it follows pathways that take it beyond its relationship with nutrition, by constructing demands and approaches that permeate complexity theory, as this is defined by Morin (2001).

Under that perspective, it is due to reflect on the different diet patterns recommended in our society, because, besides the fact that a diet is defined by variety, quantity and frequency of food and drinks to be usually consumed, their choice being implicated in the impacts related to health and environment and so interfering with the climate change effects (Stehfest et al., 2009, FAO, 2012; Huyard, 2020). The Territorial Diets bound to geographical particularities, such as the Japanese, the Traditional Nordic plus the New Nordic as well as the Mediterranean one, present themselves as samples, because not only are they associated to health benefits, as well as they are contextualized within the cultural, social, economic and environmental aspects (WHO, 2019).
In turn, many sciences touch on food diets and many others that come into the frame through their involvement in the production and consumption of food, as these relate to the environment. This Communication Sciences study seeks to verify the role that media messages play in relation to food diets when harnessed to issues of sustainability. For Verain et al. (2017), messages pertaining to the relationship between food consumption and sustainability are likely to guide the consumer, an aspect which endorses the approach taken here. That way, sustainable diets involve a complex and challenging approach to withdraw from simplicity and ineffectiveness (Mason & Lang, 2017; Springmann et al., 2018). As Mason and Lang (2017, p. 9) stress it, “Diets are more complex than the simplicity of the word implies”.

Applying Guy Debord’s (2005) model of society as spectacle, Luderer (2013) unveiled the media spectacle that has surrounded food in this century and, making use of Bourdieu’s concept of the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2005), she explained the agents and discourses that move the field of gastronomy. In this context, the discourses on health are to be highlighted, including those relating to the concept of Great Health (Sfez, 1996), in which utopian traits are bound to techno-scientific controls that promise long life and a perfect body. However, sustainability discourses are also emphasised in the spectacle of food, and the voices of specialists become one of the ways of replicating these discourses (Luderer, 2013). As Charaudeau (2002; 2009) states, these voices, together with the images, help create an effect of credibility and of truth in the public eye. Besides the journalistic techniques, it is also worth looking at some of the other tools that the media have at their disposal and that impose on the communication of food themes, as these messages are also likely to drive to the consumption of a sustainable diet.

The challenge for Redclift (2005) is to conciliate the values linked to the tripod of sustainability, as there are conflicts and contradictions of interests for the economy when this is faced with ecological or social interests. It is also necessary to take into account economic and cultural issues, which must be added to the social and psychological traits of those who give the information and of the principles established by the media body. Furthermore, as Charaudeau (2009, p. 17) says, these discourses are generally linked to power, as the media are “used by politicians as a means of manipulating public opinion”.

A diet anchored in the principles of sustainability involves the interests of many sectors, including agribusiness, and the increase in meat consumption is one of the environmental concerns. The media certainly address the issue, but how? According to Lahsen (2017), discourses on meat consumption and its relationship with climate change are notably absent from the pages of the major Brazilian periodicals.

Meat consumption is one of the key points of the Planetary Health Diet (PHD), which sets out a model that values people’s health and that of the planet, as it is likely to be a great concern feeding 10 billion people in 2050 (Willett et al., 2019). Proposed by the EAT-Lancet Commission, which comprises 37 scientists from 16 countries, this diet suggests the consumption of 2500 kcal/day, estimating here 810 of grain, 354 of unsaturated oils, 284 of vegetables, 291 of nuts and, among others, it recommends the daily consumption limit of 30 kcal of beef, lamb and pork, and of 40 kcal/day of fish. (Willett et al., 2019, p.451). The PHD was presented at an event in Oslo on 16 January 2019 and caused quite a stir in the media: “EAT-Lancet has generated over 5800 media articles in 118 countries with over 1 million social media shares” (EAT-Lancet, n.d.). This impact triggered the question: How do these messages take people from thinking about how to change their food habits to a reflection on climate change?
To respond to this, it was decided to study the media discourses that addressed the PHD diet, which was analysed along with selected news items that disseminated this proposition across a variety of media types.

2- Object and Methodology

2.1. Object

According to Charaudeau (2009), the credit associated with an item of information is a key element in the subject’s creation of a relationship that brings them closer to an effect of message truth. The nature of the source of the data feeds significantly into this process. Thus, an informer associated with a specialist entity will be less suspected of manipulative practices (Charaudeau, 2009, p. 53), something that helps to understand the PHD-related media effect.

It is important to understand the agents who were safeguarding the projection of the PHD. Not only was a presentational event set up - a device that engenders the creation of a media event (Charaudeau, 2009, p. 188) – but the diet was also published in *Lancet*, a high-impact and prestigious scientific journal in the field of health. This latter fact turned it into an attraction in its own right, one that garnered attention from peers and the wider press. The profile of the Commission team also came into play. These scientists, all associated with renowned institutions, serve as specialists in the media narratives about the knowledge discourses pertaining to the field of health.

For three years, this team wrestled with the challenge of studying the possibilities for a healthy diet model, which would feed the 10 billion people who will be living on the planet in 2050, and so preserve the environment. This fictional effect about a time that is yet unknown, allied with a high order of greatness, drives the creation of a narrative that is to be presented as an event, as it escapes from the possible order of the global imaginary. According to Charaudeau (2009), an event is born, lives and dies in a dialectic of order and disorder. When there is a state of imbalance, of the rupture of order, one that can be perceived, it is enhanced as a media phenomenon.

2.2 Research Methods

2.2.1 Selection of the Corpus

As already stated, the PHD has been disseminated thousands of times. This makes it necessary to choose a corpus on which to carry out the analysis. As Brazil figures prominently in international media discourses on environmental issues, it serves as the focus geography for this study. Brazil was also mentioned in the PHD, in the part in which the article addresses the thousands of forest hectares that have been lost around the world this century (Willett et al., 2019, p. 468). The country has also been the target of climate change discourse, particularly when this addresses the consumption of red meat. A recent study concluded that “the consumption of red meat is related to [its] productive capacity” (Farsul, 2020). In this regard, Brazil is the second or third largest producer in the world of this commodity and the third largest consumer of the product (24.5 kilograms/capita) (OECD, 2020).
This choice having been made, a search was carried out, using the phrase *Dieta Planetária* (in Portuguese), of Brazilian news from the same date on which the PHD was published and launched. *Google Trends* returned zero records for this phrase, but it was found when searched for along with names of some of Brazil’s leading media outlets, such as *G1* and *UOL*, the country’s most popular online communication portals. These portals are controlled by the *Globo* and *Folha* groups, respectively, who also publish the country’s highest circulation newspapers: *O Globo* and *Folha de São Paulo*. The news was also carried by some of the major weekly magazines, such as *Veja* - not analysed in this study - and *Época Negócios*, also belonging to *Globo* company.

The messages conveyed by *UOL*, *G1* and *Época Negócios* were all linked to the same source, the British news outlet *BBC News*, which thus became a significant part of this work. In Great Britain, the expression Planetary Diet had a high profile on *Google Trends* and there was a specific peak on the PHD launch date.

This data led to looking at other UK media sources and *The Guardian* was selected for closer study. As well as two published stories on the PHD, a significant number of posts on the *EAT Foundation's Facebook* page referenced articles in the newspaper. These pointers indicated that the media was engaged with the PHD causes and, as if were somehow possible for a communication channel to be politically neutral, the newspaper publicises itself as an independent.

### 2.2.2 Data analysis

To make itself heard, the enunciator – the media communication structure- builds frameworks for interacting with the addressee. The responses to their activated summonses trigger other formats of summonses in an environment of semiotic overproduction, showing that the addressee are also inserted into the discourse as summoners (Prado, 2013). In the operative process of creating and receiving these texts, there are discourses that interfere to summon the individual and form a communication contract between the parties (Charaudeau, 2002; 2009).

In the virtual universe, there are devices that can measure this communicative contract between the pairs. *Google Trends* graphs are tools that depict the extent to which internet users have accepted a given theme. There are also resources embedded in virtual communication vehicles that make it possible to check the public’s acceptance of certain news items. The number of likes, comments or shares indicates replies that may be associated if a communication contract has been agreed between the parties. These quantitative data contribute to the results of the study through being compared with the qualitative outcomes obtained using discourse analysis.

The selected news items and the EAT-Lancet’s process for disseminating the PHD were examined along this methodological axis. Part of the work of assessing the effect of these messages’ summoning process involved determining the word of order in the enunciator’s discourse. That is, the signifier constructed in language that captures the addressee’s attention and motivates them to become a faithful follower of consumption models and values. For Prado (2013), the word of order is the hook for summoning the addressee, summing and sustaining a discourse.

To find these devices, the signifiers present in the messages- that gained representativeness in the discourses and could generate a pragmatic response on the part of the addressee - were checked. Thus, word repetition and graphically highlighted expressions were identified, in addition to accents or terms embedded in modalisation discourses, bound to verbs that encourage actions.
It was also necessary to understand the enunciator’s symbolic spaces, who was the Same and the Other in the discourses, because, as Prado (2013, p. 16) points out, “[...] the media construct Sames and Others from their biopolitical modalisation discourses”.

The illustrations were also taken into account, as these are inserted into the narrative structure and help summon the addressee to understand the contract proposed by the enunciator. Thus, semiotic resources were applied to determine the representations of the signs in the images.

Furthermore, it was important here to deal with the future relationship expressed in the PHD proposition and, to this end, consider the dichotomous logic between ideology and utopia presented by Ricoeur (1986, p. 68), who argues that “the linguistic presence of ideology and utopia is by no means the same [...] [and] we have to dig the functions out from under their literary or semantic expression [...]”. In considering the polarisation of these concepts, this study relied on Ricoeur (1986) when checking whether the texts expressed utopia, in messages that tried to replace power with something else, through social poetry, mere dream or desirable fantasy or if they leaned more towards ideology and attempted to legitimise power by contrasting reality and science, seeking what is not real and identifying thought as of the Other.

These analyses were applied in view of the recognition that high levels of complexity are prevalent in media discourses and in the different voices of the agents. And in this sense, it is worth stressing that “social subjects are not merely passively positioned but are capable of acting as agents and amongst other things of negotiating their relationship with the multifarious types of discourse they are drawn into” Fairclough (2008, p. 87).

3- Analysis of the media source

3.1. Dissemination of the PHD by the EAT-Lancet

The Eat-Lancet Commission is part of a series of nutrition-oriented initiatives by the *Lancet*. Their main aim is to draw greater attention to such issues as obesity, malnutrition and climate change. The article on the PHD (Willett et al., 2019), that resulted from this work, caused a stir amongst their peers and attracted the media spotlight at an event held on 17 January 2019, one day after it was published. Oslo, which hosted the occasion, was the right place for endorsement of a proposition that focused on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change, as the city had won the European Green Capital Award that year. The award, organised by the European Commission, was set up to recognise the role and initiatives of European cities that contribute to sustainability (European Comission, n. d.).

Publicising a schedule is important for programmed events, as it marks an advent and the development of social life (Charaudeau, 2009, p. 138). This event was determined to be media-like in nature: it was organised in a space in which there is an exchange about social life between participants, the theme was current and some of the participants were representatives of the media or specialists - including celebrities form the world of academia and important figures who served to endorse the messages transmitted.

The moment was captured by live-broadcast images that created the illusion for the audience that they were witnessing history in the making. Social media contributed to this dissemination. The *EAT Foundation’s Facebook* page, which was first set up as the *EAT Forum* on 26 May 2015, currently has over 37 thousand followers and was one of the channels to live-stream the event (EAT Foundation, n.d.). The live broadcast helped create an illusion of co-temporality, in which the past and the future merge and interactivity creates a simulacrum of contact.
(Charaudeau, 2009, p. 111). The numbers show that there was a good audience for the 97-minute broadcast. The piece was entitled ‘Watch the World’s Most Important Lecture Here’. This phrase, which establishes an action for the addressee by justifying the exuberance of the proposed subject, may have contributed to the 25 thousand views, 191 shares and 90 comments (EAT Foundation, 2019).

After Facebook, YouTube is the world’s largest media channel (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Three days after the event, the video was made available on YouTube under the title “The EAT-Lancet Commission Launch Lecture in Oslo” (The EAT, 2019a). A text accompanied this publication. Starting with the same title as the Facebook broadcast, it was followed by others from which emerged a vocabulary alluding to the positive characteristics of the PHD. They praised the originality of the diet and inflate its temporal locus: “The report has, for the first time in history [...]”. They attribute celebrity status to members of the commission – “Scientific superstars” - and highlight one member of the team as being a knower of a promising future - “share her vision for a better food future”. This text describes a utopia by organising its discourses around fantasies and dreams and these summons attracted 5,668 views.

The YouTube recording was made available on the same Lancet journal page as the PHD article (Willett et al., 2019), but the phrase that announces this video conveys technical issues: “Launch event: Watch the launch of the EAT–Lancet Commission at the University of Oslo, Oslo, on January 17, 2019”. A similar strategy was applied to publication on the virtual platform eatforum.org (EAT, n.d.). Here, where just two members of the Commission explain the diet in a stripped-down 27-minute version, the event is heralded as “Eat-Lancet explained- Co-chairs of the EAT-Lancet Commission, Prof. Johan Rockström and Prof. Walter Willett take you through the ground breaking report.”.

This shorter version was also released on YouTube 12 days after the event, but bundled with another narrative (EAT, 2019b). The title asked a question: “What is a healthy and sustainable diet? The EAT-Lancet Lecture - Johan Rockström & Walter Willett”. The format of the question helps summon a curious public, including scientists, and causes the addressee to leave the field of dreams or fantasies. They are invited to seek a reality underpinned by science and the names of the academics endorse this intention. The summons is aimed at addressees who are more prudent and less receptive to narratives sprinkled with signifiers that escape from the field of the real, by inserting the subject into the context of ideology. Through this title, this version is focused on the representation of scientists, who deliver more contained, considered and technical discourses and expressions when presenting the PHD, thus endorsing an exercise of reflection. The numbers indicate that this form of summons was effective, as the video attracted over ten thousand views.

Although it is not possible to measure with any accuracy the role that each of these PHD dissemination communication strategies may have played, the outcomes were positive. In the year following the launch, the article was discussed in three further Lancet articles (Willett at al., 2019) and cited by over a thousand other articles, according to Google Scholar.

### 3.2 The PHD in The Guardian

Each article in the online version of The Guardian comes with a direct appeal at the end to its readers, requesting financial support. This appeal contains the following phrase: “The Guardian believes that the climate crisis we face is systemic. We will inform our readers about threats to the environment based on scientific facts, not driven by commercial or political interests”. This
would lead the addressee to understand that climate issues are part of the newspaper’s values and that readers for whom these principles resonate are, for this enunciator, in the position of the Same.

According to Statista (2020), “The Guardian online was the third most popular online news brand as of February 2019” and “there were more readers from a middle-class background (ABC1)”. In this decade, this newspaper has maintained an equilibrium among male and female readers and about half of them has a university degree (Statista, 2020; media.info, 2014; The Guardian-media kit, 2019). They have a passion for arts and culture and, besides that, they “are also passionate about good quality food […]”, take care to purchase free range, fair-trade, organic and non GM foods where possible and pay attention to where the food they buy is grown” (The Guardian, 2012).

This idea is key to understanding this communication vehicle’s relationship with the PHD proposition. Firstly, it published two articles on the diet. One was on the day of the event but the other had been published late the night before. Another relevant point is the fact that, over the 14 months subsequent to the launch of the PHD, the Eat Foundation’s Facebook page listed 24 posts referring to news items published in The Guardian. These all had titles alluding to the issues advocated by the PHD and 11 of them contained the word climate.

The articles released the night before the PHD launch event were published in the paper’s environment column. Under the title “New plant-focused diet would ‘transform’ planet's future, say scientists”, and the subtitle “‘Planetary health diet’ would prevent millions of deaths a year and avoid climate change”, this article was shared 14,300 times on Facebook (Carrington, 2019). The single quotation marks in this title accentuate the voice of the scientists, who serve as message-endorsing specialists. The verb ‘transform’, highlighted and in the conditional form, calls the addressee’s attention to the potential of the diet when linked to the planet. The summons is made in the subtitle, where the enunciator lists the beneficiaries: human lives and climate change, a cause embraced by the enunciator.

The accompanying picture, an EAT forum photo showing three plates and other small portions of food, illustrates the suggestions for consumption. Coloured vegetables and greens are on the far right, which is where westerner’s eyes naturally gravitate. The dish showing the permitted portions of meat is on the left, poorly populated and dull in tone. However, the signifier ‘meat’ occurs nine times in the text, linked to technical data and mentioned through the voice of the specialists. The messages are aimed at reducing interest in this type of consumption. In addressing the amount of meat that the PHD suggests to be consumed, one specialist argues that the vast majority of the earth’s population will not have access to this foodstuff. Thus, this enunciator asks the citizen addressee to adhere to an ideology and to care for the planet and for other people.

The second text, published in the food column, was shared on Facebook 2,732 times and attracted 2,002 comments (Sawa, 2019). The title “Seeds, kale and red meat once a month - how to eat the diet that will save the world” prompts voracious eaters to tune their physiological instincts to the survival of the planet. The subtitle endorses this message and indicates a prescription for the problem: “A complete overhaul of what we eat may be the only way to meet the needs of a planet in crisis. So what’s on – and off – the menu?”.

The text is illustrated by an abstract figure created by the newspaper’s design team. The symmetrical figure is composed of grains, fruit, vegetables and fish around a white plate that symbolises the planet. The text starts by addressing the question of the 10 billion people who
will need feeding by 2050. The image’s relationship with the text harks back to Ricoeur (1986, p. 5), who, when speaking of the dialectic between ideology and utopia, states that utopia may be criticised through ideology. The symmetry of the design, with fish jumping out of the representation of a whitening planet and two halves of an avocado that may represent ovaries, that is, procreation, may be representing utopia and, as such, opens itself up to the possible, because, as Ricoeur says (1986, p. 57), “utopia is a dream that wants to be realised”. However, utopia evades being in opposition to reality, because reality is mediated by a process and “reality is always caught in the flow of time” (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 54). And in the first paragraph the reader is compelled to consider a process of changing reality over the next three decades! As for the subjects involved, the enunciator declares their own involvement with the cause and urges the reader to join them by using the pronoun ‘us’ twice in the paragraph.

These challenges of liquid life can be assuaged by the modalisations scheduled by the enunciator, using formulae that guide the addressee to discover how to be and do, without having to make an effort (Prado, 2013). This text made use of this resource, by structuring a diet model that covered all seven days of the week and is based on the PHD guidelines. With this proposition, it reinforces the summoning effect and underpins the reader's willingness to sign up to a communication contract and an interest in climate issues - the word of order of this enunciator’s discourses.

3.3 The PHD on BBC News and the repercussions in Brazil

The article on the UK’s BBC News site was published in its Climate Change section under the title “A bit of meat, a lot of veg - the flexitarian diet to feed 10bn” (Gallagher, 2019a). The contrast of the adjectives ‘bit’ and ‘lot’ emphasises the smallness of the amount of meat and suggests a regret on the part of the enunciator. The term ‘flexitarian diet’ is not used in the PHD proposition but Google Trends shows that it was in use in the English-speaking community in late 2018 and in 2019.

This news item was taken up by a number of other media outlets, including Brazil’s UOL, G1 and Época Negócios. In these incarnations, the title underwent some changes. “Diet for planetary health - the meal plan that promises to save lives, the planet and feed all of us (and all without banishing meat)” was the version chosen by UOL (Gallagher, 2019b) and Época Negócios’ Life column (Época Negócios, 2019). G1’s version “The diet that promises to save lives, the planet, and feed all of us (and without banishing meat)” (G1, 2019) was slightly different. The UOL version stresses the name of the diet and states that there is a model meal plan, whilst G1 generalises these aspects. However, both mention meat at the end of the sentence, without stating quantities, thus creating a semantic repertoire that summons a wider audience, without repelling meat lovers.

The BBC News image depicts a trivial motive: a young, white female with straight black hair, wearing a dress of the same colour and selecting colourful fruits from a display. The three Brazilian media opted for different images but stuck to the same theme: coloured foods from the fruit and vegetable groups. On BBC News, the use of the indefinite article in the caption for the picture - “A diet has been developed that promises to save lives, feed 10 billion people and all without causing catastrophic damage to the planet”- indicates that the PHD is yet one more diet model amongst many others and has a rather presumptuous ambition, as expressed by its order of magnitude. Through these messages, the enunciator signs a communication contract with the reader who doubts these promises. The three Brazilian media only make use of the
second clause in this sentence, replacing the first with the sentence “Scientists have developed a diet that promises to save lives [...]” - thus rescuing the PHD from orphanage and enhancing its value by linking it to scientists.

The format adopted by *BBC News* and the Brazilian media is the same: informative and sparingly intellectualised, it appeals to the reader who is in a hurry but seeks objective questions and answers. For that matter, it is important to think that *BBC* reaches different types of public, among whom the *Worldly Achievers* and the *Culturally Curious* stand out, accordingly to their demographic and behaviour characteristics (*BBC News*, 2018; *IO Technologies*, 2020). In turn, the Brazilian virtual news portals, *UOL* and *G1*, are even accessed by over a 100,000,000 visitors a month. (*G1 Economia*, 2018; *UOL Midia e Marketing*, 2018), and, as was seen in the analyses by Massuchin and Tavares (2015), the public’s interest in those communication media is quite varying every year.

The first question brings by the *BBC News* to the fore the disconcerting change required by the PHD is “What changes am I going to have to make?”. The reply, which follows immediately in the text, invokes lower meat consumption: “If you eat meat every day then this is the first biggie”. The three Brazilian media state this opening question without mentioning the subject: “What are the changes?”. Augmentative expressions are absent from the reply: “If you eat meat every day, then this is the first question”.

The *BBC News* question “Is this for real, or just a fantasy?” was also modified for a Brazilian readership and expressed in a less critical tone: “An illusion?”. The original question legitimises a critique of the diet, which asks one to do something that lies beyond the boundaries of the *real*. This enunciator legitimises the proposition as the Other throughout the text and places scientific approval in play, by subjugating the PHD to the realm of fantasy. Ricoeur’s (1986) dichotomy of utopia and ideology helps to seeing the impasse in which the scientific proposition is critiqued in the enunciator’s discourse, for trying to push forward in the field of the fantasy of the desirable, that is, utopia.

Another *BBC News* question worth discussing is: “Will it taste awful?”. When translated literally into Portuguese, this linearly demarcates an aspect that is highly subjective: taste. Bringing the peculiarity of this debate to a head calls for a reply through the voice of the specialist, one of the professors who head the commission, who exempts himself from having to set out his expectations.

It is also worth pointing out another question, one that pertains to agribusiness. In this case, *BBC News* was quite explicit in addressing the harmful effects of this economic model: “How bad is farming for the planet?”. Once again, the version in the three Brazilian media takes a softer approach and without being incisive about the harmful aspects of the issue, uses the summons “What is the impact of livestock farming?”. This is how they construct a less compromising discourse for a political, economic and social public for whom livestock is of great importance.

One more point worth looking at is raised in the fourth sentence in the *BBC News* version. Here, the enunciator laments the ‘enormous’ sacrifice that will be required of the Other: “Their diet needs an enormous shift in what we pile onto our plates and for us to turn to foods that we barely eat.”. The *Época Negócios* uses this sentence in its subtitle, but without the possessive form ‘their’: “Diet requires an enormous change in what we put on our plate”. *UOL* and *G1* add on another sentence that allows for meat and dairy products to remain on our plates - “This is
the ‘diet for planetary health’ – which does not completely ban meat and dairy products. But it does require an enormous change regarding what we put on our plates”, thus lessening the sacrifice inherent in the change of practice proposed by BBC News.

This difficulty of changing our food habits is put into perspective by the Eat-Lancet Commission - “humanity has never aimed to change the global food system on the scale envisioned in this Commission (Willett et al., 2019, p. 476). The Commission recognises the importance of other social agents in educating and raising consumer awareness: “Civil society groups, the media, and other leaders have an important role in increasing public knowledge of healthy diets from sustainable food systems [...]” (Willett et al., 2019, p. 476). However, as it was seen, there are many complex issues involved if the support of the media is to be assured.

Unfortunately, these Brazilian media texts do not show internet users’ commentaries, so as to legitimately infer the audience’s reception by the PHD. On the other hand, there was a singular participation from a reader, who endorsed the elucidated questions in a text published by Gonzalez (2019), a journalist who fosters a blog associated with G1, where she writes on sustainability and debates themes linked to economics, environment and society. When dealing with the launching of the PHD in Brazil, on 3rd July 2019, Gonzalez (2019) joins the PHD’s proposals and emphasizes the relevance of the public policy on the food distribution issue, which “apart from any party or belief, needs to create limits to prevent the big corporations from feeling at ease to favour profit to the detriment of people’s health, the preservation of biodiversity and the environment.”

That unique and inquiring inference on G1, associated with the PHD, aligns with the data compiled by Loose (2019): the debates presented on G1 and UOL to deal with public policies related to security are still rare, in which concerns the climate changes and the food production system. On the other hand, it was possible to state some criticism related to the PHD goals in other communication vehicles, by agents who showed their taste for meat consumption, although those discourses were not mentioned in the news which were analysed.

4 Conclusion

In practical terms and by dealing with the PHD repercussion in different English and Brazilian media, this analysis has revealed a range of discourse constructions around the theme of climate change. Some of these are more committed to the cause espoused by the PHD. This is the case of The Guardian, which summons a citizen reader. Others aligned with the cause but set their interlocutions at a tangent, to avoid greater commitment to the theme. This was the case of the Brazilian versions. There are also those that are more daring, as is the case of BBC News. Their construction is enhanced by a repertoire of frustrations, questions and doubts regarding the subject and is focused on the prominent disavowal of gluttony.

Thus, these enunciators all apply different devices in their messages to persuade their addressees to reflect on climate change. In specific response to the question underpinning this work, it may be inferred that their discourses on this issue were based on arguments anchored in their premises. Therefore, the words of order and the perception of the Same and of the Other in their messages summoned addressees that were aligned with their arguments. To this end, linking the PHD proposition to the field of Utopia or that of Ideology was part of the dialectical resources employed by the enunciator. These resonate according to their pragmatic interests, which escape from the corporate sphere, spread into the field of power and are better understood
when viewed through the gaze of complexity. Given the above, it is clear that much about these issues still remains to be explored. Fortunately, the Communication Sciences are extremely well positioned to carry out research in the area, be it to confer the media communication convocations around a sustainable diet, or to understand the public policies on that issue, or even to unveil the public’s voice through their expression in various communication means. This way, this work stands for a device to broaden that investigation beam, which may lead to other shifts of political and geographical discussions, and to ascertain the role of the communicational echoes in which climate changes are concerned.

Consequently, it is pertinent to continue this work, checking the media repercussion of the possible advances and proposals dictated by the PHD in the communication vehicles analysed here, as well as in others where those data are to be seen, included those from other countries.

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