



EXTRAORDINARY EXPERIENCE OF THE BRAZILIAN NFL AUDIENCE: A NETNOGRAPHY ON TWITTER INTERACTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Brazilian viewers of the National Football League (NFL) has been encouraged to replicate its games in social networks, since interactions between consumers change their perception about their experiences. Thus, the aim of the present research is to analyze how NFL viewers in Brazil express the extraordinary experience of consuming in virtual interactions set during the broadcast of its games.

Methodology: We adopted the netnography method to investigate consumer cultural practices taking place in online environments. Our study covered three NFL seasons, from 2016 to 2019. Research *corpus* comprised all tweets associated with hashtags suggested by ESPN Brazil channels to reverberate its league broadcasts.

Originality/Relevance: The research presents how a sports league of worldwide mediatic repercussion provides extraordinary experiences to its audience, not only due to its contents but also to the online interaction among fans on social media.

Main results: Results show two categories of extraordinary experience: one presents media character and regards the way NFL provides an uncommon consumption experience to the sports' viewers in Brazil, whereas the other highlights a sports modality that lies on features, somehow, unusual for sports consumers in the country.

Theoretical/methodological contributions: The research points out how the consumption of a sports modality by a virtually mediated audience mimics the emotions and the sense of collectivity expressed during face-to-face experiences, although they require spectacles.

Keywords: NFL. Extraordinary experience. Fans. Prosumption. Netnography.

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EXPERIÊNCIA EXTRAORDINÁRIA DA AUDIÊNCIA BRASILEIRA DA NFL: UMA NETNOGRAFIA NAS INTERAÇÕES DO TWITTER

RESUMO

Objetivo: Os telespectadores brasileiros da National Football League (NFL) são incentivados a repercutir sobre os jogos nas redes sociais, uma vez que as interações entre os consumidores mudam sua percepção sobre suas experiências. Assim, o objetivo da presente pesquisa é analisar como os telespectadores da NFL no Brasil expressam a experiência extraordinária de consumo a partir de interações virtuais definidas durante a transmissão de seus jogos.

Metodologia: Adotamos o método netnográfico, elaborado para investigar as práticas de consumo cultural que ocorrem em ambientes online. Nosso estudo cobre três temporadas da NFL, de 2016 a 2019. O corpus de pesquisa é composto por todos os tweets relacionados às hashtags propostas pelos canais da ESPN Brasil para reverberar suas transmissões da liga.

Originalidade/Relevância: A pesquisa apresenta como uma liga esportiva com repercussão midiática mundial propicia ao público uma experiência extraordinária não apenas pelo seu conteúdo, mas também pela interação on-line dos fãs através das mídias sociais.

Principais resultados: Os resultados evidenciam duas categorias de experiência extraordinária: uma apresenta caráter midiático e diz respeito à maneira como a NFL fornece uma experiência incomum de consumo para os telespectadores no Brasil, enquanto a outra destaca uma modalidade esportiva que se baseia em características um tanto incomuns para consumidores de esporte no país.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas: A pesquisa indica como o consumo de uma modalidade esportiva por um público virtualmente mediado emula as emoções e o senso de coletividade expressos durante as experiências presenciais, ainda que requerendo a noção de espetáculo.

Palavras-chave: NFL. Experiência extraordinária. Fãs. Prosunção. Netnografia.

EXPERIENCIA EXTRAORDINARIA DEL PÚBLICO BRASILEÑO DE LA NFL: UNA INTERACCIÓN DE NETNOGRAFÍA EN TWITTER

RESUMEN

Propósito: Se ha animado a los espectadores brasileños de la Liga Nacional de Fútbol (NFL) a replicar sus juegos en las redes sociales, ya que las interacciones entre los consumidores cambian su percepción sobre sus experiencias. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de la presente investigación es analizar cómo los espectadores de la NFL en Brasil expresan la extraordinaria experiencia de consumir en interacciones virtuales establecidas durante la transmisión de sus juegos.

Metodología: Adoptamos el método netnográfico, elaborado para investigar las prácticas culturales de los consumidores que ocurren en entornos en línea. Nuestro estudio cubre tres temporadas de la NFL, de 2016 a 2019. El corpus de investigación consistió en todos los tweets relacionados con hashtags con el propósito de los canales de ESPN Brasil para reverberar sus transmisiones de la liga.

Originalidad/Relevancia: La investigación presenta como una liga deportiva con repercusión mediática mundial permite a su audiencia una experiencia extraordinaria no solo por sus contenidos, sino también por la interacción en línea de los fanáticos a través de las redes sociales.



Resultados principales: Los resultados muestran dos categorías extraordinarias de experiencias: una presenta el carácter mediático y considera la forma en que la NFL proporciona una experiencia de consumo poco común a los espectadores de deportes en Brasil, mientras que la otra destaca una modalidad deportiva que se basa en características, de alguna manera, inusuales para los deportes consumidos en el país.

Contribuciones teóricas/metodológicas: la investigación señala cómo el consumo de una modalidad deportiva por un público virtualmente mediado imita las emociones y el sentido de colectividad expresado durante las experiencias cara a cara, aunque requieren espectáculos.

Palabras clave: NFL. Experiencia extraordinaria. Aficionados. Prosunción. Netnografía.

Introduction

Sports itself is featured as an emblematic representation of society, given the fact that they are manifestation of cultural entertainment (Davis, Fodor, Pfahl, & Stoner, 2014; Keaton & Gearhart, 2014; Walker, Hodge, & Bennett, 2017). Such characteristic can be observed through sports expressions adopted to inform daily ordinary situations, since it is quite common using sports jargons that well-represent cultural features and highlight social scenarios (Wenner, 2012; Whannel, 2014). Thus, sports can be divided in two categories: media and practice. The difference between these two categories lies on how they are widespread: media sports are established by broadcast in the media and by their consequent repercussion among viewers; on the other hand, practice sports are relevant due to their large number of practitioners (Whannel, 2014).

Media sports present relevant participation in different cultures around the world, therefore, they can be seen as a global phenomenon. However, although they are broadcasted in many countries around the world, some of them did not become global, because they did not reach the status of practice sports in some local cultures; their rules and performance are too exotic for these cultures (Ruddock, 2010; Whannel, 2014). American football, which is the most popular sports modality in the United States, is an example of a modality that did not become global, since it does not cause too much commotion in most countries where it is broadcasted, regardless of the growing number of viewers in these countries, mainly of NFL viewers.

The consumption of the main American sports modality has been changing, given NFL's evolution and the understanding that it is a media entertainment product – viewers who go to the stadiums to watch the games no longer belong to the group of target consumers, which



is now formed by supporters who watch the games on the TV (Spinda, Wann, & Hardin, 2015; Wenner, 2008). No wonder, the Super Bowl, which is the game that closes the NFL season, is one of the biggest global entertainment mega-events (Spotts, Purvis, & Patnaik, 2014; Wenner, 2014), since its broadcast breaks audience records every year in the U.S.A. and in some other countries (Capital Mexico, 2017; TSN, 2016), including Brazil (ESPN Brasil, 2017). For almost twenty years now, advertisements during Super Bowl intervals are the most expensive TV advertisements worldwide (Real, 2013). Even novelties of mainstream brands in the pop culture are launched during Super Bowl intervals (Wenner, 2012; 2014). Moreover, the halftime show in the final game counts on concerts with famous international singers and bands (Wenner, 2008, 2014). Thus, it is easy to understand the great economic (ESPN Brasil, 2016; Ozanian, 2017) and cultural value (Davis *et al.*, 2014; Wenner, 2012, 2014; Whannel, 2014) of the NFL brand.

Nowadays, Brazil ranks the second greatest NFL audience outside the United States (i.e., almost 20 million viewers) (ESPN Brasil, 2015), whereas Mexico, which houses league games since 2005, ranks the first position. Brazil has also broken records in the number of interactions with consumers through social networks, which are encouraged by discussions launched by ESPN channels in the country. These channels broadcast the NFL games, besides discussing about and promoting the modality in a country that does not have the culture of playing American football (ESPN Brasil, 2015, 2017).

It is important highlighting that the relationship established between viewers and the consumed media text is not limited to the act of receiving the messages (Guschwan, 2012; Jenkins, 2008). When consumers get closer to the culture they consume, they also have active participation over the received media text, they develop the will to be part of the process adopted to widespread the consumed content (Jenkins, 2008). Consumers of a media product help to widespread and expand the reach of the culture they consume (Arnould & Thompson, 2007; Sandvoss, 2003), they become productive for a certain culture, mainly due to their engagement to social networks (Jenkins, 2006).

Based on the concept that the consumption activity assumes some level of productivity, fans can be understood as prosumers when they play the role of productive consumers (Collins, 2010; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). These consumers end up adding information to the understanding about the object that unifies them by helping others to understand the participative culture (Woermann, 2011); although, according to the dualistic model of



production and consumption, this task uses to be on the hands of producers (Ritzer, 2014). On the other hand, when consumers continuously exercise a productive reception they evidence their focus on the will to change, multiply and recycle the consumed content. Therefore, consumers become part of the production process by establishing an intense relationship with the content they would initially only consume (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Xie, Bagozzi, & Troye, 2008).

Experiences resulting from the act of consuming express the modern culture. Sports are one of the objects reflecting the culture they belong to and indicate how consumers can be observed based on the analysis of their sociocultural, experimental, symbolic and ideological aspects (Sainam, Balasubramanian, & Bayus, 2010). The consumption experience exceeds the concept of passive reception, since it is featured by individuals who live it, because such experience actually defines the value given to the event or to the experienced situation (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014; Lemke, Clark, & Wilson, 2010). Consumers' sense of experience can be attributed to a flow of fantasy, feelings and fun, once these categories are linked to the act of consuming a cultural good (Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009; Holbrook & Thompson, 1997). Thus, the consumption experience is inherent to individual singularities (Arnould & Price, 1993) and generates emotional results substantiated by interactions between consumption *momenta*, which are the determining point to establish the importance attributed to it.

Holbrook and Thompson (1997) highlight two types of experiences: the ordinary one, which is defined by daily experiences; and the extraordinary experiences, whose occurrence is based on experiences that scape daily routines. Moreover, these experiences can be usually lived through limitations that are not controlled by consumers themselves (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014; Carú & Cova, 2003). Therefore, the extraordinary experience can be understood as the one that exceeds the ordinary act of consuming (Carú & Cova, 2003; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) and that is directly associated with hedonic consumption - which encompasses multi-sensorial, imaginary and emotional aspects (Fiore, Jin, & Kim, 2005; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011).

Part of Brazilian NFL viewers seek the consumption experience, likely understood as extraordinary, by consuming an uncommon product for their culture and by looking for social networks in order to interact about NFL information. Thus, we introduce the following investigative question: **How does NFL viewers in Brazil live the extraordinary experience**



of consuming through virtual interactions established during the broadcast of NFL games?

The research follows the netnographic approach to answer the aforementioned investigative question. This methodology is acknowledged by the marketing field as appropriate for research focused on assessing consumers in their online cultural environments (Guesalaga *et al.*, 2016; Kozinets, 2010). The present research was based on a semi-deductive logic, since it suggested the articulation of concepts associated with the consumer research field in order to investigate how the experience of consuming a worldwide sports media league works. Accordingly, the study takes into consideration part of the perception that media sports (Whannel, 2014) such as the one shown in NFL games not only leads its Brazilian audience to welcome its content, but also to act as fans who take ownership of the available technologies to complete their consumption experience through virtual interactions (Jenkins, 2006), which are capable of completing game broadcasts and of increasing their reach on the Web (Andrews & Ritzer, 2018). Therefore, the present research approaches an interdisciplinary topic to investigate how fans' practices make such a consumer experience so extraordinary.

The study is justified by the growing importance of the consumption experience lived by sports viewers, by the development and consolidation of the fans' culture and by the intense use of social media in consumption practices. On the other hand, the research becomes more relevant when it addresses how sports consumption intrinsically related to a foreign culture gets its meaning from Brazilian viewers. Finally, the study is in line with, and contributes to, the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) field.

The productive consumption of the fans

The concept of productive consumption has gained relevance in consumer research through the concept of prosumption: a phenomenon according to which consumers assume tasks and functions that are part of the production chain (Cova & Cova, 2012; Hartmann, 2015), mainly due to consumers' productivity in the Web 2.0 context (Cova & Cova, 2012; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). It happened at the time prosumption was understood as an action through which individuals get involved in choosing, spreading and even on creating content for products they consume to enhance their individual skills (Kurylo, 2018; Ritzer & Miles, 2019). Thus, some studies have associated such a productivity with fans' behavior – specialized consumers are an active part of the culture they are part of–, be it by taking ownership of technologies



available, or in convergence to resonate cultural objects consumed by them (Andrews & Ritzer, 2018; de Souza-Leão & Costa, 2018).

Market dynamism and the way new technologies have changed social functioning, including the way consumers relate to each other and their consumption profile, opened room to a new understanding about consumers' behavior (Arnould & Thompson, 2007). Consumers became an active and spontaneous part of the consumer culture (Cova & Cova, 2012). Nowadays, by using the technologies available, consumers reconfigure the way they consume based on practices established by the participative culture (Jenkins, 2006).

Consumers are no longer limited to the act of receiving messages, because the participative culture makes them absorb and respond to technological changes in the media. They now file, give meaning, take possession and reproduce media content in an innovative way (Jenkins, 2014; Tomblinson & Wolf, 2017). Accordingly, there is no clear definition about where the cultural commerce and patterns start or end, because such commerce and patterns are exercised through the consumption experience based on the participative culture (Guschwan, 2012; Jenkins, 2006).

The way to experience most consumption practices triggers feelings towards the consumed items in a specialized type of consumers known as fans (Tumbat & Belk, 2011). Jenkins (2008) defines these fans as the most active part of viewers who consume media texts, since they struggle to be part of the process that was set to widespread the content they have access to. Practices performed by fans can be understood as a rational action aiming at experiencing a consumption capable of providing knowledge about the consumed culture (Hills, 2013).

When fans, based on their knowledge about the culture they are part of, make the option for recreating the consumed media text they exercise a resistance tactic against such culture (Guschwan, 2012; Sandvoss, 2005). This is the main difference between practices performed by fans and those performed by common consumers; fans make the spontaneous decision to change their consumption experience (Sandvoss, 2005). Consumption changes triggered by fans themselves are often promoted by fandoms, which are social spaces where fans exercise their practices, the consumed culture and the consumption experience itself (Guschwan, 2012; Hills, 2013). Fandoms are groups of fans who meet in order to feel closer to their equals, they develop collective practices and redefine the space they are inserted in - fact that turns these fandoms into small communities (Jenkins, 2008).



Because fans become responsible for their consumption experience, their productive ability takes them closer to the sense of prosumption (Collins, 2010; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Prosumers seek to widespread the content they consume by taking pro-active and dynamic actions, by sharing their viewpoints about the experiences they have lived and by overcoming experiences they are used to face (Ritzer, 2014; Xie *et al.*, 2008). Sports fans, in particular, are natural prosumers, since they are productive towards the performance of their teams (Santomier & Hogan, 2013). They support such teams *in loco* and in the Web 2.0, besides generating monetization for individuals who have the right over franchises and other sports leagues (Andrews & Ritzer, 2018). No wonder, the interaction between prosumers in Web 2.0 has impact on consumption experience and on how it can be improved. Such possibility is one of the main motivations of ordinary consumers to prosume a consumption experience that is hard to be accessed (Ritzer, 2014).

Extraordinary experience in the consumer culture

Consumer experience has been a common topic in consumer research studies (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014; Carú & Cova, 2003). Based on the differentiation between ordinary and extraordinary consumption experience, different market agents observe how different consumption stages are mutually affected by consumers and producers' actions (Jiang, Luk, & Cardinali, 2018; LaSalle & Britton, 2003). Consequently, it is worth exploring how consumer experiences are perceived in order to better understand how previous research examined consumers' happiness and satisfaction with these experiences (Lanier & Rader, 2015; Tezer & Onur Bodur, 2020).

Consumption experiences lead to the polymerization of a system involving feelings, values and thoughts that somehow affect the interpretation of social life. Experiences determined by practices linked to the act of consuming are determining factors to establish the consumer culture (Askegaard, 2014; Cova & Cova, 2014). The most broadly adopted definition of consumption experience was presented by Holbrook and Thompson (1997); according to them, this experience is the consequence from consumers' reasoning about the different symbolic meanings, hedonic perceptions and aesthetic criteria observed in a certain culture. Thus, the consumption experience is influenced by many values and feelings, such as dreams, imagination, love, passion, hate, affection and hedonic pleasure, that consumers carry even before they experience them. These values and feelings have direct impact on the perception



about the experience of consuming a cultural good (Brakus *et al.*, 2009; Tseng & Balabanis, 2011).

The link among culture, consumption and experience gets tight as consumers give meanings to consumer goods in order to express cultural principles and categories, maintain life styles, perpetuate or create ideas and the sense of right or wrong, and to survive social changes (Cova & Cova, 2002). The experience lies on the interaction observed in the consumption *momentum*, although it is experienced at individual level and encompasses hedonic responses, symbolic meanings and even aesthetic criteria (Brakus *et al.*, 2009). Thus, the experience is not limited by feelings deriving from a passive reception, it is formulated in the subjective aspects perceived by individuals experiencing it (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014; Lemke *et al.*, 2010).

There is a typology that unveils the consumption experience as the outcome of actions taken by consumers themselves (Ryynänen, Joutsela & Heinonen, 2016). Lanier and Rader (2015) point out four categories to represent the ways the consumption experiences are perceived: a **performance** that cannot be compared to that consumers are used to; a **liberating feeling** resulting from the experiences lived through life; a **stochastic moment** that indicates a new experience; and the possibility of living an **adventure** that gives birth to a new experience. Consumers live an extraordinary experience when the premises of these categories are combined - this process turn consumers into co-creators of the lived consumption experience (Addis & Holbrook, 2001).

Cooney *et al.* (2014) advocate that the extraordinary experience have two consequences: the first, and more direct one, lies on taking advantage of what was chosen; the second consequence, which is less obvious, is the one capable of changing the perspective of individuals who do not consume this way, and of changing the way this perspective is seen by other individuals. Holbrook (2000) addresses the trigger that differentiates the ordinary consumption of an extraordinary experience: personal interaction, or the sense of communion between people who consume a certain good or service. Consumers who live an extraordinary experience spontaneously share the sense of communion; therefore, they are free from common social rules, bond to a sense of belonging, and of devotion, to a group that shares the same taste for a good or service (Arnould & Price, 1993; Tumbat & Belk, 2011).



Methodological procedures

The present study followed the netnographic method, since it is often used to understand cultural phenomena observed in virtual environments based on investigations involving communications, and informal and social connections (Guesalaga, Pierce, & Scaraboto, 2016; Kozinets, 2010; Ruddock, 2010). The aim of this methodology is to show how organizations and online cultural forms work, as well as the way they are perpetuated and transformed (Underberg & Zorn, 2013). It analyzes how systems of meaning are changed, shared among different communities and cultures, transmitted by participants, and incorporated to behavioral rituals (Arvidsson & Caliendo, 2015; Kozinets, 2002); mainly, netnography has been used to investigate consumers of media sports (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015; Næss, 2017).

We adopted the propositions by Kozinets (2002; 2010; 2015), who have enhanced and widespread the method in the marketing field, although such method is often used in social sciences. The netnographic steps are explained below based on their definitions and in our research.

Cultural *entrée*. The aspects and particularities of the investigated culture are incorporated by researchers in order to naturalize them, as it happens to other members of the observed community. Researchers in the present study belong to the group of Brazilian NFL viewers since 2009. One of them has been playing American football in Brazil for 7 years. He is a member in the assessed community, since he uses his Twitter account since 2011 to send messages about the NFL games he watches.

Data collection. Online interactions in the investigated community must be identified and filed, as well as field observations can be elaborated to complete the collected primary material. The four hashtags launched by ESPN, became the main interaction about NFL broadcasts in Brazil among its viewers, were monitored on #TudoPelaNFL, #PlayOffsNFLnaESPN, #SuperBowlnaESPN and #NFLnaESPN. The first three hashtags refer to the 119 games broadcasted in Brazil during the first observed season and the last one refers to the 141 and 138 games broadcasted in the second and third season, respectively. These posts were saved and filed. During the 2016/17 and 2017/18 seasons, one of the researchers did it in real-time. For the 2018/19 season the social network was monitored by a specific software to this purpose. The software files all posts on the hashtag observed and yet provides information on peaks of interaction. A total of more than two million tweets were collected from the four hashtags



during the period of May 15, 2016, when the NFL training camps began – official dates for teams begin to prepare for the next season –, and May 28, 2019, the day after the completion of the NFL Draft – a process in which teams select new players from the college league according to their performance last season. Yet, references and interactions from ESPN broadcasts were recorded in order to help contextualizing the data analysis.

Data analysis and interpretation. The grouping of analytical procedures must be made in stages: coding, reflection, abstraction, comparison, verification, refining, theoretical generalization and (likely) theorization. Procedures followed three steps: we temporarily fixed codes, classifications and hierarchies among the observed meanings; next, we filtered the messages in order to identify the clearest relationship capable of revealing broader categories that used to encompass the previous codes; finally, we interpreted the categories based on the literature. The conducted analysis counted on an inductive side (data about the first season were openly analyzed and used the literature as reference) and on a deductive one (data about the second and third seasons, which was used to understand the findings of the first period as relevant for the identification and saturation of standards, although they kept the process open to the identification of new codes and categories).

The quality criteria of netnographic research indicated by Kozinets (2015) were adopted throughout the study. These criteria regard data saturation, theorization of interpretations about findings, rigor in method application, axiological questions limited by the cultural *entreé*, researchers' reflexivity and respect to the observed *praxis*. Besides these criteria, we triangulated the analysis (Farquhar & Michels, 2016; Stavros & Westberg, 2009) and, despite the space limitation to elaborate a manuscript, we presented our results through a clear, elaborated and detailed description (Goulding, 2005; Stewart, Gapp & Harwood, 2017).

Results presentation

The netnographic analysis identified 16 codes divided in two categories, which are presented in Table 2, along with their respective titles and descriptions.



Table 1 - Research categories and codes

Extraordinary media aspects of NFL	
NFL presents media particularities uncommon for sports consumers in Brazil.	
[01] NFL has fantastic promotional and innovative broadcasts	NFL promotes promotional and innovative broadcast actions to value its brand and products like no other leagues– watching NFL games is seen as a singular and ludic experience by Brazilian fans.
[02] NFL Game intervals are surprising	The quality of advertisements and the brands presented during the game intervals surprise the fans in Brazil and boost their appreciation for the league.
[03] Super Bowl intervals are special	Super Bowl advertisements are a special attraction during game broadcasting. Brazilian NFL fans highlight their expectation about advertisements during the last game of the season. It happens given its tradition of presenting new products during the Super Bowl, mainly novelties of the pop culture.
[04] Super Bowl's halftime is a great media event	Super Bowl's halftime always counts on a concert of great repercussion in the global media. Brazilian fans were impressed with the chosen artists and with the production of a concert produced for an interval of a ball game.
[05] Super Bowl has more repercussion than any other sports event	The final annual NFL game is in the mainstream of the global media industry; it exceeds what Brazilian fans are used to see in other sports events.
[06] Super Bowl is the best way to be introduced to the NFL	According to Brazilians, it is common to have the first contact with NFL during the Super Bowl – which is the game presenting the broadest audience in the global media. This game amazes new viewers who often become fans.
[07] Brazilian ESPN teaches how NFL works	ESPN channels in the country adopt a pedagogical approach about the rules in order to call the attention of beginners in the modality. Such strategy involves the Brazilian audience, which uses hashtags to answer to doubts throughout the transmissions.
Extraordinary sports aspects of NFL	
NFL presents a sports modality unusual for consumers of sports entertainment in Brazil.	
[08] The American football played in Brazil seems like other sports modality in comparison to NFL games	Brazilian NFL fans who watch the games of local tournaments know that games of the main American league are so superior to others that it seems to be a different modality from that played in Brazil.
[09] Watching NFL is better than watching football association	Brazilian NFL viewers compare American football games to football association games in Brazil. NFL games are seen as superior due to the competitiveness between teams, players' athletic skills and the technological quality of NFL broadcasts.
[10] NFL players have amazing athletic skills	Brazilian NFL viewers highlight the athletic skills of its players, mainly in comparison to top athletes in other sports modalities.
[11] American football has impressive tactic complexity	NFL fans in Brazil get impressed with the mental and tactic aspects of this sports modality, mainly when they check on its statistics, since the first impression about the modality can make it seem brute.
[12] The games have many exciting moments	Brazilian fans report how exciting it can be to watch NFL games, given the several excitement peaks throughout the game (such as unexpected ball possession switch, clock control at the end of the game, challenges faced by coaches about the outcome of a move), which are not limited to game scores.
[13] Score changes make NFL games super exciting	Brazilian NFL viewers highlight how scores can change fast, sometimes in the last minutes of the game.
[14] Balance between NFL teams makes the league an exciting entertainment	Brazilian NFL fans think about the way new teams win the tournament every year, because its rules in and outside the field allow technical balance between teams.



<p>[15] Tom Brady is one of the greatest athletes in history</p>	<p>Brazilian NFL viewers say that Tom Brandy is one of the greatest athletes in the American leagues. They point out the positive impact of watching him playing on future consumption of league games, since new viewers will always remember to have seen one of the best players in history.</p>
<p>[16] Each new season shows historical moments to NFL</p>	<p>Brazilian NFL viewers show how amazing it is to watch emblematic games every year - new records are broken and new scores reached, fact that makes these games a historical milestone.</p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Bellow, we write about the described codes, which are substantiated by empirical data highlighted in the analysis. This description is divided in two sub-sections, which correspond to the presented categories.

Extraordinary media aspects of NFL

The way NFL is widespread highlights media aspects that were not found in similar sports entertainment productions. Code 01 shows how Brazilian fans identify themselves with different commercial and innovative contents about the league. Tweets depicted below give two examples to illustrate such contents: color rush, which is an action referring to the use of new monochromatic uniforms by teams playing in Thursday-night games; and Skycam transmission, which is an aerial camera responsible for the angle used in the main videogames of the league.

It's very cool watching NFL. IT'S MUCH MORE COOL WATCHING NFL WITH COLOR RUSH #TudoPelaNFL (October 13, 2016)

#TudoPelaNFL Best thing on thursday night is the color rush... and very cool these uniforms #espn #goseattle #goRams (December 15, 2016)

What a great camera! COME TO ME, SKYCAM! #NFLnaESPN (November 16, 2017)

A resource to improvisation for the story? NBC can introduce a new NFL broadcast standard given the use of SkyCam, the “Madden Camera”, in today's game as the official camera #NFLonNC #NFLnaESPN #NFLBRASIL (November 16, 2017)

The oval ball flew at Lucas Oil Stadium! With the right to use skycam, the tactic camera that you respect, let's go with TNF in ESPN! Go Broncos! #Broncos County #NFLnaESPN (December 14, 2017)

On the other hand, Code 02 describes how Brazilian fans value the advertisements broadcasted during the intervals of NFL games, since they introduce the novelties of brands and outstanding products at global level. Such factors make game intervals on TV a particular experience that ends up valuing NFL itself. Some examples showing such acknowledgement are presented in the lines below.



NFL is good by itself and yet there is this interval thing. Hey Bro, it is impossible not to love #TudoPelaNFL Within a few minutes, in the NFL interval, ESPN will show unpublished content of Doctor Strange (October 24, 2016)

Ifood advertisement YES. But showing food to make us want it IS TOO MUCH! #PlayoffsNFLnaESPN (January 07, 2017)

Almost 11:30 p.m. and I spent 4 hours watching @iFood's advertisement on #nflnaespn. What am I going to do? Ask for food! I was influenced... (January 21, 2018)

Yet, about advertisements in NFL intervals, the ones broadcasted during the Super Bowl are a particular case, because pop-culture fans wait for them – they wait to watch the new previews of successful movie and TV series (Code 03). Accordingly, the concert in every Super Bowl's halftime is analyzed by Brazilian viewers as an amazing media event, mainly due to the quality of its organization and production, regardless of the singer or band (Code 04). The next texts illustrate such aspects.

Code 03:

Pirates of the Caribbean previews now in the Superbowl. #SuperBowlNaESPN (February 05, 2017)

Each preview is better than the last one. #SuperBowlNaESPN is bad ass. Unbelievable. Complete event (February 05, 2017)

Guardians of the Galaxy 2, Ghost in the Shell and now Pirates, Even SB intervals are cool!!! #RiseUp #SuperBowlNaESPN (February 05, 2017)

WHAT ABOUT THIS FUCK AD NFL DID? #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowlNaESPN (February 03, 2019)

The 100th anniversary celebration of the NFL has begun, and the ad is sensational! #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowlNaESPN (February 03, 2019)

Code 04:

Super Bowl makes fun during the halftimes. I don't like Lady Gaga but the production of the concert was great #SuperBowlNaESPN (February 05, 2017)

#SB51 #SuperBowlNaESPN has started, but I want to see the halftime, which is awesome LOL (February 05, 2017)

It doesn't matter who will be in the concert, it is always great! I mean, there wasn't any of that 10 minutes ago on the field. #SuperBowl #SuperBowlNaESPN (February 04, 2018)

The experience of watching the Super Bowl is emblematic, since it concerns two more codes. The repercussion of the event in the media is a matter of involvement and commotion among Brazilian NFL fans (Code 05). Such repercussion calls the attention of viewers who do not watch NFL games, but who end up becoming new fans after they watch the Super Bowl - which is the main door for new NFL fans in Brazil (Code 06). The following tweets highlight such aspects.



Code 05:

The Super Bowl party is quite exciting #SuperBowlnaESPN (February 05, 2017)

I'm a great MLB fan, but it is impossible not to get amazed with NFL's great event, which is #SuperBowl #SuperBowlnaESPN #GoFalcons (February 05, 2017)

#SuperBowl It is worth reflecting on how Americans know how to combine sports and entertainment. The event is remarkable to the TV, and the experience for the fans is incredible. The sports market thanks #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowlnaESPN (February 03, 2019)

You may not like the NFL, but you cannot disrespect the Super Bowl #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowlnaESPN (February 03, 2019)

Code 06:

I just decided to learn more about American Football at the day of the greatest game of all times! Now I'm a fan" #SuperBowlnaESPN #SB51 #SuperBowl (February 05, 2017)

I'll watch the Super Bowl for the first time! Here in Recife! Cool ESPN. #SuperBowlnaESPN (February 04, 2018)

Finally, Code 07 evidences the experience of learning about the game during its broadcast, since this process makes game transmissions richer for viewers. Following the league for some years makes Brazilian fans to consider themselves specialized in NFL content. Next, one can find tweets published by viewers who use social networks to point out questions about this sports modality or about the league's functioning.

What is the difference between Strong Safety and Free Safety? #TudoPelaNFL (October 03, 2016)

#NFLnaESPN Eva, which means the stars close to C in jerseys of some players #GoHawks (November 09, 2017)

The funny thing about the NFL is that the guy who has been watching for 3 years already feels important enough to call "rookie" those who started this year. #SuperBowlnaESPN #NFLnaESPN (February 03, 2019)

Brazilian ESPN commentators use to answer to many doubts of viewers during game broadcast, but they also use their personal profiles in the Twitter to present details and statistics, as well as to explain NFL rules. The following tweet by Everaldo Marques, who is the main NFL commentator in Brazilian ESPN, depicts an answer to questions from viewers.

In 2014, the last year before the extrapoint rules were changed, there was eight mistakes in the season, in total. Just today, there were 11 #TudoPelaNFL (November 20, 2016)

On the other hand, fans who are familiar with the league use to share their knowledge about it in their tweets. For example, there is messages – posted in different games over third season – that shows an image to explains the signs by referees in order to help viewers who started watching the NFL short time ago.



Extraordinary sports aspects of NFL

The second category in our analysis expresses how NFL Brazilian fans see the sports aspects of the league as extraordinary, since these aspects are not natural to their culture. Thus, the comparison between NFL and the Brazilian sports scenario becomes an evident practice. Code 08 compares NFL to local American Football tournaments, and such process highlights the difference between the level of this sports modality in most Brazilian and foreign leagues. These differences are significant to the extent that, in some cases, it seems that viewers are watching a different sports modality. Another comparison encompasses American football and football association, which is the Brazilian national sports modality. Code 09 points out that NFL games present upper quality standards than football association games in Brazil. The texts below present tweets that illustrate such comparisons.

Code 08:

I'm a GE journalist and nowadays I cover the Northeast league, between *Caçadores* and *Espectros*. The difference is huge! Other sports!?! LOL #TudoPelaNFL (November 13, 2016)

#TudoPelaNFL Time to enjoy *Mengão's* championship in Brazil Bowl and next I must run home to watch the great NFL (December 18, 2016)

I just do not watch Brazilian American Football because I've already gotten used to exciting NFL level games #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowlnaESPN (February 03, 2019)

Code 09:

Is it serious that the Brazilian team wants to compete with the NFL? Thursday-night is NFL! #TudoPelaNFL (October 06, 2016)

If ye think well, the *Brasileirão* opening looks like this one. Players look at the camera. They cross their arms... almost the same #SuperBowlnaESPN (February 05, 2017)

This kind of comparison is based on the perception of Brazilian NFL viewers about the quality of the American football in the NFL - two factors are highlighted: the oversized athletic versatility of NFL players (Code 10); this sports modality is understood as tactically complex, since it enriches the experience of watching it (Code 11). These quality features are pointed out in tweets depicted below.

Code 10:

This move was a ward to Maurren Maggi, an amazing jump and a sensational block!!!#TudoPelaNFL (October 23, 2016)



Such a beast, 2tds with only one hand and the two interferences thanks to jimmy Graham because he came to Seattle to be happy, what a man #TudoPelaNFL (November 07, 2016)

A reception with the help of his ass assured the victory to Seattle Seahawks. I love NFL #PlayoffsNFLnaESPN (January 07, 2017)

Code 11:

I think that it is impressive how there are some many statistics about American sports (nba and nfl)!! #TudoPelaNFL (October 20, 2016)

#TudoPelaNFL I think that it is necessary to change this. NFL in my opinion is fun not just the tackles, but these small details (chess game) (October 30, 2016)

#NFLnaESPN Chess game my friend!!! (January 21, 2019)

NFL consumption can be understood as a quite exciting experience. Brazilian fans value the fact that the games present many unbelievable moves and that these moves are not limited to the scores themselves (Code 12), mainly because score changes are common; therefore, it is very difficult to foresee the winners (Code 13). Such unpredictability also results from the fact that NFL counts on significant technical balance between teams – it is surprising for Brazilian fans that new winners can emerge in the championship every year (Code 14). The next tweets highlight viewers' excitement.

Code 12:

SAFETY ALERT, THE GREAT MOMENT #TudoPelaNFL (October 16, 2016)

WHAT A PUNT BLOCK! LOL THANKS TO SPECIAL TEAMS #GoPackGo #NFLnaESPN (September 16, 2018)

Code 13:

What an exciting game end: Denver x San Diego!! Within a few seconds everything can change #TudoPelaNFL (October 13, 2016)

I HAVE LIVED TO WATCH THIS AMERICAN FOOTBALL GAME!!!!!! WHAT AN AWESOME SPORTS MODALITY #TudoPelaNFL #SNF #SEAvsAZ (October 24, 2016)

Fuck man, what an emotional game #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowl (February 04, 2018)

Code 14:

Teams in the finals last year will not reach the play offs this year #TudoPelaNFL (November 06, 2016)

NFL is so exceptional that I allow myself to cheer for two teams with no regrets #GoCowboys #GoPats #TudoPelaNFL (November 13, 2016)

The last codes point towards the enthusiasm expressed by Brazilian fans when they realize that they witness historical NFL moments, and when they see that NFL nowadays is



better than in the past. Two aspects highlight such statement: Tom Brady is one of the best players in the history of NFL, and the Brazilian fans feel privileged to watch his incredible performances in consecutive NFL championship games (Code 15). On the other hand, Brazilian viewers get more mesmerized at every new season, since new records are commonly broken (Code 16). The following messages illustrate the feeling of witnessing history being made.

Code 15:

Tom Brady threw 505 yards in a Super Bowl, even though the trophy did not come, which is a sad new for a game like today's, and for the season, EXTREMELY WEAK DEFENSE, end, Eagles had a great game, congratulations... #NFLnaESPN #NotDone (February 04, 2018)

Loosing or winning, I still love the Patriots, Tom Brady remains a GOAT. Ridiculous defeat, I'm mad, I'm crying, but...Go Pats, ALWAYS!!!!!! #SuperBowlSunday #TomBrady #TB12 #NEPatriots #PatriotsNation #NFLnaESPN #SB2018 #GoPatriots (February 04, 2018)

With 6 titles, Tom Brady has become the greatest Super Bowl champion, and is undoubtedly the biggest name in NFL history #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowlnaESPN (February 03, 2019)

They have to separate collective and individual sports. If you understand at least a bit of the NFL, you would know that Tom Brady is under consideration for the greatest athlete of all time in team sports, and they would not be talking about politics, which, honestly, does not matter in that case. #SuperBowlnaESPN #NFLnaESPN (February 03, 2019)

Code 16:

#NFL writers are spectacular. There is a better #SuperBowl every year. It is from other league, but #ILoveThisGame!! #SuperBowlnaESPN #NFLnaESPN (February 04, 2018)

WHAT A HISTORICAL GAME!! #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowl #SuperBowlnaESPN CONGRATS #EAGLES (February 04, 2018)

And I thought I would never watch such an exciting game such as last year's SB for a while. Totally wrong! #NFLnaESPN #SuperBowlnaESPN #FlyEaglesFly (February 04, 2018)

Save this game. Guard that moment. We saw history being written. We saw the unlikely event. We've seen one of the biggest games in NFL history. I love you #NFLnaESPN #Rams #Chiefs (November 20, 2018)

What was that! I love sport... and today I witnessed one of the greatest NFL games of all time... third game in aggregate score and only game with the two teams have passed the 50 points! Simply amazing! #NFLnaESPN (November 20, 2018)

That moment you think "24 hours ago, I was seeing the best of the NFL in history". I miss that game!!! (November 21, 2018)

Results reflections

The way Brazilian NFL fans experience consumption through virtual interactions reflects their active relationship with cultural objects. Thus, it is necessary understanding how



consumer experiences lead to the polymerization of a system of feelings, values and thoughts shaped to interpret social life.

One of the main definitions of consumption experience was established by Holbrook and Thompson (1997) who suggested that consequences of consumers' subjective actions represent a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic perceptions and aesthetic criteria of the culture they are part of. The experience is not limited by feelings arising from a passive reception, it goes way beyond that, since it is formulated based on subjective aspects of individuals who experience it (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014; Jiang, Luk, & Cardinali, 2018; LaSalle & Britton, 2003). However, it is also influenced by a range of imported values and feelings that consumers carry with them even before they have experienced it: dreams, imagination, love, passion, hate, affection and hedonic pleasure; and that have direct impact on their perception about the experience of consuming a cultural asset (Holbrook & Thompson, 1997).

Consequently, NFL broadcasts to Brazilian fans can be understood as extraordinary moments, because they are experienced as stochastic moments (Lanier & Rader, 2015) singularly seen as novelty. These experiences, in their turn, are lived according to a sense of belonging to a certain community (Lanier & Rader, 2015; Carú & Cova, 2003), which shares the taste for, and the knowledge about, this sports modality, as well as opinions, feelings and experiences directly or indirectly related to it. Finally, the way the games are broadcasted allows fans to hedonically experience all these aspects (Ryynänen *et al.*, 2016; Lanier & Rader, 2015) - this experience involves multi-sensory stimuli, imagination and a heavy emotional load.

Results highlight the way which the virtual interaction potentiates consumers' productivity by encouraging them to share their consumption experiences in a very specific form, for instance, it gives back the emotion of watching sports on TV and the collective sense typical of face-to-face experiences, which are replicated and potentiated by the Web 2.0 resources. Such process is possible due to the coproduction of consumption experiences based on the participative culture context in which consumers produce and share opinions, knowledge and feelings about the product they are fan of (Andrews & Ritzer, 2018). On the other hand, it reveals the way the fruition of sports audiences requires spectacles (Wenner, 2012; 2014), since sports aspects involve media matters that this audience cannot be unbound from. Therefore, NFL consumption in Brazil is an extraordinary experience lived by sports audiences given the fans' prosumption actions (Andrews & Ritzer, 2018; Newman & Giardina, 2011).



This behavior broadens the scope of CCT research when it comes to the relationship between cultures and market ideologies. Such a concept reveals itself as a political action in consumption practices and shows how producers can guide and incorporate consumer behaviors that are satisfactory to them. (Arnould & Thompson, 2007). This policy got more complex and diffuse due to the fragmentation and reconfiguration of power relation networks (Arnould & Thompson, 2015) such as finding highlights that the consumer experience is the aspect destabilizing CCT myths (Fitchett, Patsiaouras, & Davies, 2014).

Final considerations

Our findings point out that NFL viewers in Brazil live an extraordinary consumption experience in virtual interactions established during NFL game broadcasts due to its media and sports aspects. This outcome complies with the logics of sports audiences, because these games provide an experience to their consumers that includes either sportiness or the media impact of the game (Whannel, 2014).

With regard to the media potential of NFL, Brazilian fans live such extraordinary experience due to three aspects: the commercial impact of the league, since these fans admire and get involved with its promotional strategies, with broadcast innovations and with the advertisement of notorious brands and pop culture products; Super Bowl aggrandizement as a spectacular event – fans wait for this event given its ability to mobilize sports and artistic entertainment aspects without previous paradigms; and the enthusiasm to learn and teach the rules and the cultural context of a game that is not common among popular Brazilian sports modalities.

Based on NFL's sportiness, there are other three aspects that give Brazilian NFL fans the opportunity to live an extraordinary experience: the quality of the game, which is observed through its complexity and the athleticism of its players, in comparison to football association and to the American football played in countries other than the United States; the level of excitement resulting from the high dispute and combativeness standards, as well as the score changes throughout the tournament; and the feeling of being part of the sports' history, when fans realize that they experience a special moment when they witness the quality of the game.

Our study focused on the engagement of Brazilian NFL viewers in the Twitter and their discussions about NFL broadcasts. This aspect can be understood as a research limitation; however, we understand that our scope was designed by the object of the study itself.



Accordingly, Jenkins (2006) states that consumers engaged to social network interactions are the most relevant part of participative cultures; they are the figure of a new consumption profile that is not limited to receive media texts.

However, our research contributes to legitimize how consumers of virtual interacting sports are natural prosumers. As we understand, based in de Souza-Leão and Costa (2018), fans are intrinsic prosumers. Those of the NFL in Brazil express their productivity when engaging in spreadability of their extraordinary experiences regarding the league consumption. Thus, we expand Andrews and Ritzer (2018) conception that prosumers of sports in the Web 2.0 context can generate monetization content for sports-spectacle producers, by providing a new kind of brand power through their testimonies in social networks.

Finally, we saw future outcomes of the present study such as investigations focused on media-product fans, mainly the ones composing the group of sports viewers, either in investigations about the fruition of Brazilian fans who watch other American leagues, such as the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the Major League Baseball (MLB), or in the reproduction of mega-events of global projection that have competitive participation in Brazil, such as FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games - which are examples of a fruitful research.

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