

ARTICLE

# JOURNALISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

## different profiles of journalistic content on the *Facebook* pages of Brazilian newspapers

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**ABSTRACT** – This work aims to present a typology of uses of social media by Brazilian traditional newspapers, by analyzing their journalistic content. The research observed 9,993 posts from nine regional newspapers on their *Facebook* fan pages. We use a quantitative approach through a content analysis of the posts about news collected. Due to the migration to a digital version, many newspapers have used social media as tools for spreading journalistic content. However, the strategies to occupy these spaces are diverse and the enterprises evoke different themes to call the public's attention, which allows the creation of a typology of different uses of social media. The results show five different profiles of journalistic content on newspapers' social media, which vary from politicized fan pages to those focused almost exclusively on entertainment.

**Key words:** Traditional newspapers. Social media. Facebook. Typology. Journalism.

### **JORNALISMO NAS REDES SOCIAIS: os diferentes perfis de conteúdo jornalístico no *Facebook* dos jornais impressos brasileiros**

**RESUMO** – Este artigo tem por objetivo apresentar uma tipologia dos usos que os jornais impressos brasileiros fazem das redes sociais digitais, a partir do conteúdo jornalístico. A pesquisa é feita tendo como base 9.993 postagens realizadas por nove veículos regionais brasileiros em suas fanpages do *Facebook*. Trata-se de uma abordagem quantitativa, a

partir da análise de conteúdo das notícias coletadas. Com a migração para uma versão digital, muitos passaram a utilizar as redes sociais como ferramenta para distribuir conteúdo jornalístico. Porém, as estratégias para ocupar este espaço são diferentes e os veículos exploram variados temas para chamar a atenção, o que permite a criação de uma tipologia de usos distintos das redes sociais. Os resultados mostram que há, pelo menos, cinco diferentes perfis de conteúdo jornalístico nas redes sociais dos jornais pesquisados, que variam desde fanpages politizadas até aquelas voltadas quase que exclusivamente para o entretenimento.

**Palavras-chave:** Jornais impressos. Redes sociais. Facebook. Tipologia. Jornalismo.

## **PERIODISMO EN LAS REDES SOCIALES: los diferentes tipos de contenido en *Facebook* de los periódicos brasileños**

**RESUMEN** – Este artículo busca presentar una tipología de los usos que los periódicos impresos brasileños hacen de las redes sociales, a partir del contenido periodístico. La investigación analiza 9993 posts hechos a lo largo de 45 días por nueve vehículos regionales brasileños en sus fanpages en *Facebook*. El abordaje metodológico posee un enfoque cuantitativo, teniendo por base el análisis de contenido de las noticias recogidas. Con la migración de los periódicos a una versión digital, muchos de ellos pasaron a utilizar las redes sociales como herramienta para distribuir contenido periodístico. Sin embargo, las estrategias para ocupar este espacio son diferentes entre los medios, los cuales exploran temáticas variadas para llamar la atención, lo que permite la creación de una tipología de usos distintos de las redes sociales. Los resultados muestran que hay al menos cinco diferentes perfiles de contenido periodístico en las redes sociales de los periódicos investigados, que varían desde fanpages politizadas hasta aquellas que se dirigen casi exclusivamente al entretenimiento.

**Palabras clave:** Periódicos. Redes sociales. Facebook. Tipología. Periodismo.

### **1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

This work presents a typology about the variety of journalistic content spread on *Facebook* fan pages. The research is based on the scenario of traditional newspapers migration the online environment and appropriation of social media as spaces for making their content visible, reaching more readers, and broadening the access to their digital versions (Ju et al., 2014; Larsson, 2018). Social media have become relevant tools to press media, which have seen on those platforms a popular space for meeting their audience (Ju et al, 2014). Despite the constant use of these digital media, we could see different strategies related to the kind of content in circulation to make posts more attractive to readers (Hong, 2012).

The typology proposal comes from the literature and the journalistic content on 9,993 messages posted by newspapers editors

on *Facebook* during 45 days. The research analyzed the fan pages of nine newspapers, one from each state in the Northeast of Brazil: *O Estado do Maranhão* (Maranhão), *Meio Norte* (Piauí), *O Povo* (Ceará), *Tribuna do Norte* (Rio Grande do Norte), *A Tarde* (Bahia), *Jornal da Paraíba* (Paraíba), *Diário de Pernambuco* (Pernambuco), *Gazeta de Alagoas* (Alagoas) and *Jornal da Cidade* (Sergipe).

The methodology uses a quantitative content analysis approach. Data analysis was based on a codebook previously constructed, which aimed to identify the characteristics of the posts. We observed the themes on the news shared on *Facebook* and identified the proximity among newspapers through a correspondence analysis. Furthermore, we verify the frequency of these themes on the posts, which also allows us to identify the similarities and differences in the ways of using that tool.

Understanding the usability of social media by content producers – especially on *Facebook*, in Brazil – becomes important since this is the most used Social Network Site (SNS), according to the Brazilian Research on Media (Brasil, 2016). Additionally, the importance of observing these multiplatform media can be reiterated from the Digital News Report data (Newman et al., 2016), which reinforce the reduction of newspapers circulation in the conventional format, while access to news through SNSs increases.

Yet the research is based on a significant part of the literature that sees SNSs as strategic spaces for newspapers, both commercially and editorially. Journalistic enterprises spread on these platforms content that potentially catch more attention from the audience, since they realize SNSs are “bridges” to news portals and need “clicks” to achieve visibility. This generates a new model of production considering economics and publicity (Hong, 2012). Most content is focused on entertainment and curiosities, which is corroborated by the results of recent surveys: readers tend to access a sizable percentage of content on entertainment in news portals (Shoemaker et al, 2010; Massuchin & Tavares, 2015).

On the other hand, some newspapers have editorial principles that guide them to act as hard or soft news broadcasters. According to Zago & Silva (2014), when newspapers migrate to the Internet they occupy spaces on SNSs and intend to be different from one another, which could lead to a different news consumer market and different forms of social media appropriation. In this text, this discussion is strengthened when the typology that shows different

ways of using social media is proposed, based on the different models of journalistic production conducted in the *Facebook* fan pages of the newspapers.

## **2 Strategies for marketing and journalistic editorials on social media**

Even though social media, especially SNSs, have not come up with the function of distributing journalistic information, the literature shows that more and more newspapers have created fan pages to spread their content (Ju et al., 2014). Thus, SNSs, overall *Facebook* and *Twitter*, have been consolidated as sources of information (Garcia de Torres et al., 2011). Lohman (2016), for example, showed that indirect traffic to websites and portals is significant and this has attracted the attention of newspapers' companies, which saw on these media the chance to increase the volume of websites access by creating a "bridge" from SNSs to them. According to Hong (2012), there is a positive association between the increasing of online traffic and the use of SNSs, although this also depends on the network size generated by each newspaper on these platforms.

Social media enhance the circulation of journalistic content (Zago & Bastos, 2013) because they offer new distribution channels that previously reached the audience only through printed version or when the public visited the websites. Nowadays, publications reach people through news feeds. Despite the algorithmic action, which limits the equitable distribution (Devito, 2017), SNSs keep leading readers to the fan pages, whether or not they are directed by the algorithms. Moreover, these media enable the recirculation process, which cannot be ignored, as Zago (2014) discusses, because they provide broader reach of posts. This possibility generates the cascade effect caused by SNSs (Hong, 2012).

In the digital environment, diverse content is offered to users, which leads journalistic enterprises to adopt some strategies to call the public's attention among the informational abundance (Zago & Silva, 2014). Therefore, they use strategies that can be both marketing or editorial ones. The search for more clicks become revenue for these companies (Hong, 2012) and this concern generates new business models for the journalism, which presents content through new forms and subjects – also encouraged by what algorithms prioritize

(Devito, 2017; Tandoc Jr; Mitra, 2018). Moreover, it arouses curiosity to catch the readers' attention and generates informational traffic (Hong, 2012). Additionally, there are structural characteristics that stimulate the public to share news on social media (Trilling et al., 2017), like the use of videos and photos, and that can be emphasized by producers to have more access to their websites, which goes beyond the content choice process<sup>2</sup>.

As pointed out by Johnson (2015) and Massuchin and Carvalho (2016), SNS have presented new forms and themes even more soft, focused on entertainment and curiosity facts. Even though it is not a pattern – as we will apprehend from the analysis – literature points out an approximation tendency between the journalism and the genre tabloid. According to Chagas (2016, p. 30), this phenomenon is due to the marketing view that it is an “alternative economic solution to the traditional business model”. Some researchers show the public interest about this “soft content” (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012; Tewksbury, 2003; Garcia-Perdomo et al, 2017). Although entertainment do not attract attention of the whole audience, the literature identifies that part of this public has interest and consequently access soft content. Thus, newspapers open spaces for investing on these themes. Consequently, there is more access to the portals so the subject is considered as one of the clicks generators.

On the other hand, Trilling et al. (2017) call attention to a model from the studies about Brazil: news that show directly the daily life. The authors argue that readers constantly search this content and it could be part of the informational enterprises strategies, which invest on this kind of production model, by knowing that there is a consumption profile connected to “domestic” news. That is, entertainment is not the only topic to generate access, but also content close to daily life. Larsson (2018) also realized that hard news attract more interaction, which emphasizes the public's preferences about relevant content.

SNSs, consequently, promote changes in the news production. Hermida (2010) says that these means create a new environment for journalism, especially based on quickness and sharing of information. They generate new forms of content production, which points to an influence on the journalistic practices and the way it is defined (Tandoc Jr & Mitra, 2018; Poell & Van Dijck, 2014; Hermida, 2010). These are the new definitions of content found on social media, which this research presents and discusses from the data.

### 3 Methodological approach

For the analysis, we used a quantitative content analysis (CA) based on a codebook elaborated previously to data collection. The analysis covers the whole Brazilian electoral period of 2016, 45 days. The search for this time was strategic, since it is a moment where entertainment is not the focus. Instead, political topics should be more expressed on *Facebook* fan pages.

The selected newspapers published at that time 9,993 messages on *Facebook*, and we analyzed all of them. However, some did not present news reports or a specific subject (11.5%), for example “Have a nice Tuesday!” (*Tribuna do Norte*, 16 August), “Luck of the day: It is Friday!” (*Meio Norte*, 19 August). Therefore, they were dismissed from the total number at the end of the classification, which left 8,846 posts about news<sup>3</sup>.

The newspapers whose fan pages were analyzed are: *O Estado do Maranhão* (Maranhão), *Meio Norte* (Piauí)<sup>4</sup>, *O Povo* (Ceará), *Tribuna do Norte* (Rio Grande do Norte), *A Tarde* (Bahia), *Jornal da Paraíba* (Paraíba), *Diário de Pernambuco* (Pernambuco), *Gazeta de Alagoas* (Alagoas) and *Jornal da Cidade* (Sergipe). We chose one newspaper from each state from the Northeast of Brazil to compose the *corpus*<sup>5</sup>. The selection was based on the relevance of each publication into the state and on data about circulation, according to the Brazilian National Newspapers Association (ANJ). We may highlight the centrality of these means of information, since other researchers have already analyzed national newspapers (Massuchin & Carvalho, 2016), but regional media are important for the local population they cover and still deserves investigation (Pinto, 2016). Then, we chose to compare newspapers from the nine states from the Northeast of Brazil, whose newspapers have received minor attention from researchers, especially about their uses of social media.

Publications were collected weekly through the *Facebook* application *Netvizz*. At the end, we constructed a database with all these posts. After that, researchers from the group Communication, Politics and Society (COPS) classified these messages, based on the codebook, and this passed through a reliability test (Bauer, 2002), which was composed by 49 posts randomly selected and classified by seven students. This test reached 80% of consistency<sup>6</sup>.

The variable observed was “theme”, which was divided into 16 categories: electoral campaign; institutional politics; economics; health; education; minorities; environment; ethics and moral;

infrastructure; violence and security; accidents and tragedies; sports; entertainment; curiosities; others (which covers posts of news content about themes that could not fit on the categories – 6.8%). There was also the category “no journalistic information”, which represented 4.7% of posts considered as “missing” in the analysis.

We identified three thematic areas: political issues; social issues; and entertainment. Concerning the political issues, we have posts related to electoral run, political parties and institutions (Executive, Legislative and Judiciary). Social issues evolved all the topics that do not highlight politicians, but are of interest of citizens: health, education, environment, infrastructure etc. The third category aggregates themes related to entertainment, curiosity and sports. After this division, we analyzed data by using the software SPSS, in order to run a correspondence analysis and to achieve the frequency of each category.

The profiles of uses and the typology established are based on the journalistic content available on the posts on *Facebook*, even though we did not consider in this work aspects such as linguistic strategies, visual resources and comprehensiveness. The next section presents the analysis, categories and how newspapers fit into the classification.

#### **4 Different fan pages profiles: a typology proposal of the content on social media**

The first table (Table 1) presents the frequency of posts during the electoral period and the daily average of posts. There is a significant difference among the newspapers concerning the intensity of use of the fan pages to share content. It is important to highlight that 77.1% of posts come from five newspapers: *O Povo*, *Diário de Pernambuco*, *Meio Norte*, *A Tarde* and *Gazeta de Alagoas*. They post on average 45 times per day, which is the case of *O Povo*.

Even though they are regional newspapers, many of them use very intensely social media, which is close to national vehicles (Massuchin & Carvalho, 2016). The effective use of *Facebook* fan pages is much divergent among newspapers in the same range rather than between national and regional ones. Therefore, the centrality of SNSs does not depend on the newspapers circulation, the audience and the resources (Garcia de Torres et al, 2011). *Zero Hora*, for example, is a regional newspaper that has invested on digital media for a long time and has a solid model of using these means (Carvalho, 2010).

**Table 1** – Distribution of posts among newspapers

<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>N.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Av/day</b>
<i>O Povo</i>	2,164	21.7	45.1
<i>Diário de Pernambuco</i>	1,586	15.9	33
<i>Meio Norte</i>	1,523	15.2	31.7
<i>A Tarde</i>	1,263	12.6	26.3
<i>Gazeta de Alagoas</i>	1,171	11.7	24.4
<i>Tribuna do Norte</i>	664	6.6	13.8
<i>O Estado do Maranhão</i>	608	6.1	12.7
<i>Jornal da Paraíba</i>	581	5.8	12.1
<i>Jornal da Cidade</i>	433	4.3	9
Total	9,993	100	

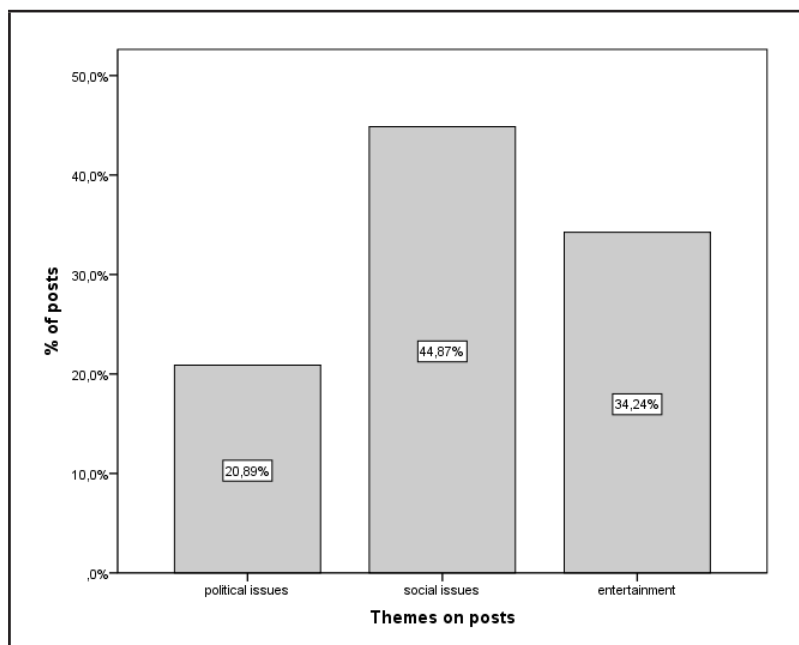
Source: The authors (2017).

If on the one hand some newspapers are closer to the logics of production intensity of the Brazilian quality papers related to their use of *Facebook* fan pages, on the other there are some that use these tools in a limited way, like *Tribuna do Norte*, *O Estado do Maranhão*, *Jornal da Paraíba* e *Jornal da Cidade*. In these cases, the average of daily posts varies from 9 to 13. By comparing *Jornal da Cidade* and *O Povo*, we can see that the latter posts five times more than the first each day. Thus, we can also see differences between the platform appropriation ways, which can be connected to the SNS centrality inside newsrooms and the presence of specific content editors<sup>7</sup>.

Besides intensity, it is possible to perceive differences regarding the themes, which is the focus of this article and where we base the classification of the profiles. Graph 1 shows the frequency of themes among the *corpus* analyzed. Aggregated data points that Brazilian Northeastern newspapers save a relevant space for social themes, which shows a differentiated production model, less concerned about entertainment (Massuchin & Carvalho, 2016). In that category, we can find posts about health, violence, economics, security, infrastructure, minorities, corruption, among other questions that are neither politics nor entertainment. However, it is important to note that posts on entertainment excel those about political subjects, even though there were two reasons for a more intense political coverage: the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff and local elections.



**Graph 1**– Aggregated data on the Themes on posts



Source: The authors (2017).

Observing aggregated data shows, then, that the key point on regional newspapers SNSs pages are social subjects. This feat differentiates them from the use made by national newspapers, which have high percentages of entertainment (Zago & Bastos, 2013; Massuchin & Carvalho, 2016).

Notwithstanding, as a comparative research, disaggregated data are also observed to identify similarities and differences among newspapers behavior. From this point, we can note thematic differences similarly to those identified related to intensity. Despite this tendency, there are significant variations, which can be identified through the content analysis (Table 2), as follows, by considering dimension 1 in the relation between themes and newspapers (see graph 2), which has the higher singular value (0.027) and inertia (0.077). Then, it shows the stronger connection between variables.

**Table 2-** Line profile – Correspondence analysis

<b>Newspapers</b>	<b>Politics</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Entertainment</b>
<i>A Tarde</i>	0.237	0.412	0.351
<i>Diário de Pernambuco</i>	0.148	0.425	0.427
<i>Gazeta de Alagoas</i>	0.173	0.544	0.283
<i>Jornal da Cidade</i>	0.306	0.586	0.108
<i>Jornal da Paraíba</i>	0.301	0.503	0.196
<i>Meio Norte</i>	0.071	0.415	0.514
<i>O Estado do Maranhão</i>	0.430	0.495	0.075
<i>O Povo</i>	0.253	0.389	0.358
<i>Tribuna do Norte</i>	0.200	0.480	0.320
Mass	0.209	0.449	0.342
Chi-square: 774.804 sig: 0.000			

Source: The authors (2017).

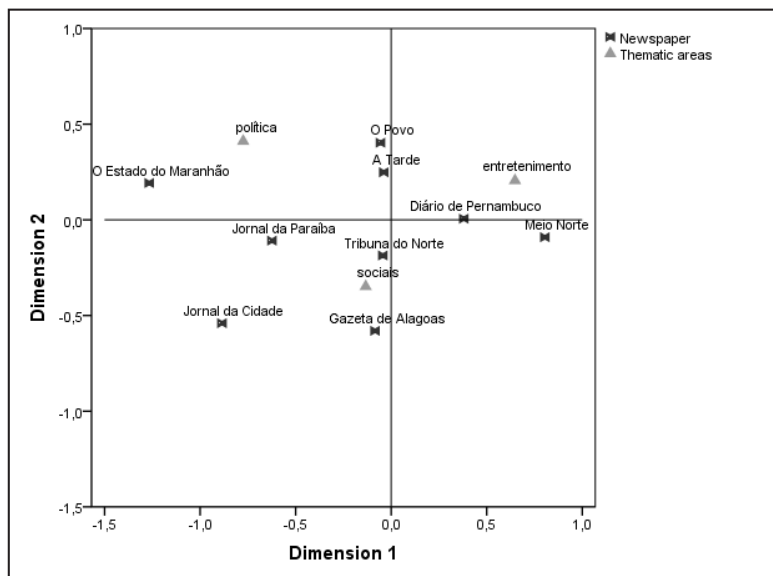
The comparison between newspapers and themes is based on values over the mass in each column. This shows that *O Estado do Maranhão* (0.430) is the closest to political subjects. On the other side, we see entertainment more connected to *Meio Norte* (0.514). Social themes are close to the center and appear significantly connected to many newspapers, mainly to *Jornal da Cidade* (0.586) and *Gazeta de Alagoas* (0.544).

The graph 2 demonstrates the above-mentioned relations and shows all the themes distribution among newspapers posts on *Facebook*, which highlights the need of creating more than three classifications. Despite the high associations between newspapers and our categories, it is notable that in some cases these informational vehicles assume intermediate position because they are associated to more than one theme. I.e., they have values over the mass for both themes. This shows for example a relation of proximity not only connected to politics, but to social subjects, as in *Jornal da Paraíba* (0.301 and 0.503, respectively).

The data on the next graph (Graph 2) reiterate the analysis above, but indicate complex relationships, which allows the creation of at least five different typologies of *Facebook* use by

the newspapers to distribute journalistic content. This distinction shows how the same platform has diverse uses and evidences different models of production.

**Graph 2** – Correspondence analysis: Themes x newspapers on the fan pages



Source: The authors (2017).

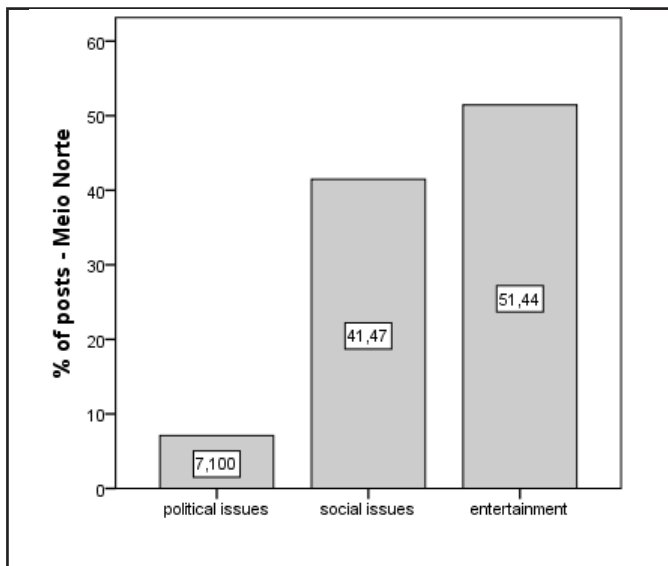
While *O Estado do Maranhão*, *Meio Norte* and *Gazeta de Alagoas* privilege one main theme, the other newspapers open spaces for a range of subjects, which generates mixed typologies. It happens to entertainment and social themes in *A Tarde*, *Diário de Pernambuco* and *O Povo*, as well as the distribution of politics and public interest themes in *Jornal da Paraíba* and *Jornal da Cidade*. Next, we present data related to each of the five typologies – two pure ones and three hybrid – found by our analysis.

### Profile of entertainment

Among the nine newspapers, the one with the strongest relation to what is called entertainment is *Meio Norte*. On the *Facebook* fan page of this newspaper, the editors explore subjects that attract

clicks and consequently profitability (Hong, 2012). More than 50% of the posts contain entertainment (soft news or curiosities), which does not consist on informing the public. Even though the click generation is also connected to structural factors and forms – which are not discussed in this text –, entertainment on *Meio Norte* was very often posted, including international content. For example, we could mention the following posts: “Fitness muse shared audacious shot on Instagram” (*Meio Norte*, 10 September) and “The picture left many netizens shocked” (*Meio Norte*, 12 September). According to the graph below (Graph 3), on the contrary, the fan page in which politics appears very few times is this newspaper’s (7% of posts on this subject).

**Graph 3** – Distribution of Themes: *Meio Norte*



Source: The authors (2017).

It is important to highlight that curiosities called more attention in this newspaper on the search for news. It works for calling people’s attention. From the total of publications on entertainment (681), 306 were classified as curiosities, like “A young boy thought he could enter into a vase because he was thin” (*Meio Norte*, 27 August 2016). This content is directed to a public that tends to access soft news (Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2012; Tewksbury, 2003).

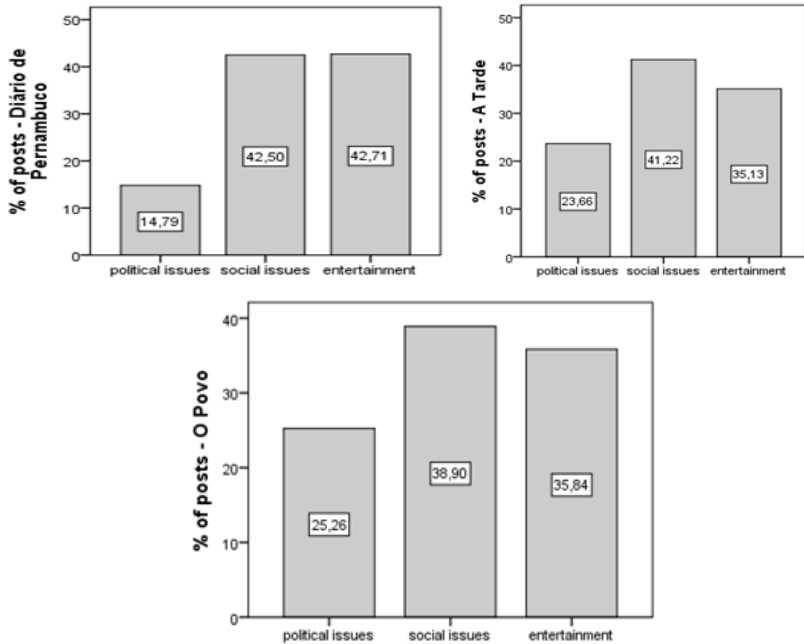
In newspapers that use SNSs like *Meio Norte* and consequently can be framed into the same typology, there is an emphasis on the search for access whatever it takes, and themes do not reference the regions, which could attract public interest (Triling et al., 2017). Moreover, this profile of newspaper is closer to the national ones, which have explored entertainment the most (Massuchin & Carvalho, 2016). It demonstrates a journalistic change that has brought even more news similar to those on tabloids (Chagas, 2016). The tactic of focusing on curiosity is due to the recognition that fan pages are “bridges” to news portals and websites, which guarantees funds (Hong, 2012).

### **Entertainment and social themes**

Three newspapers (*Diário de Pernambuco*, *A Tarde* and *O Povo* – Graphs 4, 5 and 6) use the fan pages for exploring two themes simultaneously: entertainment (for clicks) and social themes to approaching the audience. None of these newspapers has other subjects that excel significantly social themes, but there is a considerable number of posts that intend to call the public’s attention and amuse it, which reaches almost 43% in the case of *Diário de Pernambuco* and 35% on the others.

Although it seems that we talk about the same entertainment profile, there are differences among these newspapers, since there is no exploration of the reader’s curiosity and there is more news posted on sports and varieties. The coverage is often about regional soccer teams, mainly on *A Tarde* and *O Povo*, which shows the regional relevance on the posts.

**Graphs 4, 5 and 6** – Distribution of Themes: *Diário de Pernambuco*, *A Tarde* and *O Povo*



Source: The authors (2017).

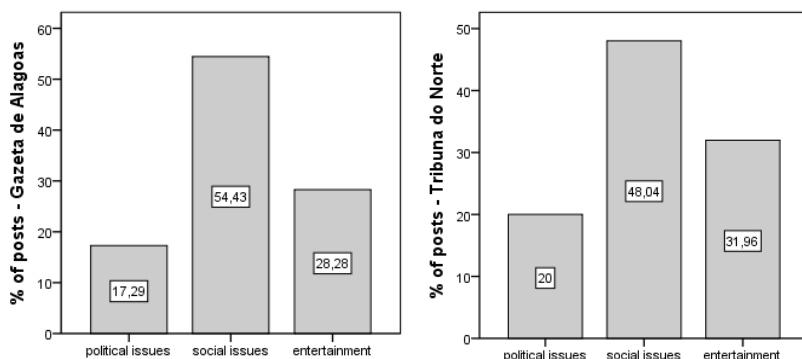
*O Povo* is an interesting case because its fan page presents an equilibrium concerning the variety of subjects, by giving space for politics, for example, since it was an electoral period. Even though posts on variety and sports are on the top of the ranking, the themes that follow them are electoral campaign and institutional politics.

Therefore, we can highlight that there is a balance on this case among entertainment, social and political themes. Despite the aim of calling public attention by the use of entertainment and curiosities, which interferes on the choice of themes to be published on SNSs (García-Perdomo et al., 2017; Trilling et al., 2017; Johnson, 2015), this newspaper do not disconnects from the social and political context to which it is attached. This means two points: a) posts on curiosities are not the only that matters (even though they are 'click catchers'); b) entertainment linked to local/regional appeal also call the audience's attention, so newspapers invest on this kind of content on their *Facebook* fan pages.

## Social profile

Although the presence of entertainment reaches 30% of posts, *Gazeta de Alagoas* and *Tribuna do Norte* give more space and visibility to social subjects on their fan pages (Graphs 7 and 8). Therefore, some newspapers invest on public interest content<sup>8</sup> and we can affirm that there are social themes scattered on their social media, even though it is not a pattern and happens only to some typologies.

**Graphs 7 and 8** – Distribution of Themes: *Gazeta de Alagoas* and *Tribuna do Norte*



Source: The authors (2017).

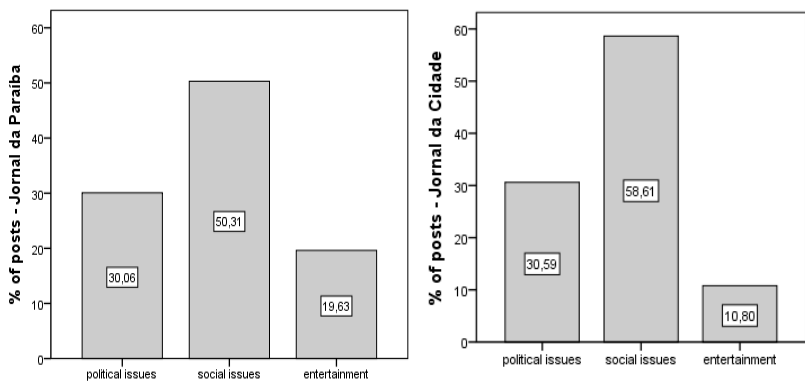
The approach on social themes is also associated to regional content, which guarantees the newspapers identity as they represent each state of the Northeast of Brazil. It is different from entertainment, which is often associated to national and international content. Concerning these two newspapers and their classification it is important to mention how contexts are quite visible in the approach of subjects on social media posts.

The most highlighted subtheme is ‘violence and security’. In this case, newspapers reflect the reality into each state, which present high indexes of violence (Alagoas and Rio Grande do Norte), even though Chagas (2016) highlight that these newspapers are closer to tabloids when they cover excessively crimes on their posts. In this case, these newspapers’ fan pages offer some entertainment, but they differ from others by emphasizing social subjects. They make the journalistic production regional and this characteristic generates interest on the news value “proximity”, which is relevant for social media.

## Social and political themes

Some newspapers mix social subjects and entertainment on their posts, while others are much closer to social and political themes, with less space for entertainment. For example, 50% of posts from *Jornal da Paraíba* and *Jornal da Cidade* contain social themes, but also 30% of them consist on politics. Consequently, the number of spaces for entertainment decline compared to the three first typologies presented.

**Graphs 9 and 10** – Distribution of Themes: *Jornal da Paraíba* and *Jornal da Cidade*



Source: The authors (2017).

We can note that the affirmative that there is always a predominance of entertainment on SNSs – a pattern on this space – is fragile, at least on regional newspapers. Beyond the model in which there is emphasis on social themes, there is also a predominance of politics. Concerning social subjects, violence and security are on the most posts, as well as economics. In *Jornal da Paraíba*, for example, 74 of the 433 posts focused on news about violence and security. Notably, these are subjects of regional and local appeal, as we discussed above.

Regarding the importance of political themes, at least for editors – since this work do not investigate consumption and engagement –, there are two types of issues: local elections (it was an electoral period) and institutional politics, overall on the national context. On this typology, there is no space for entertainment, which

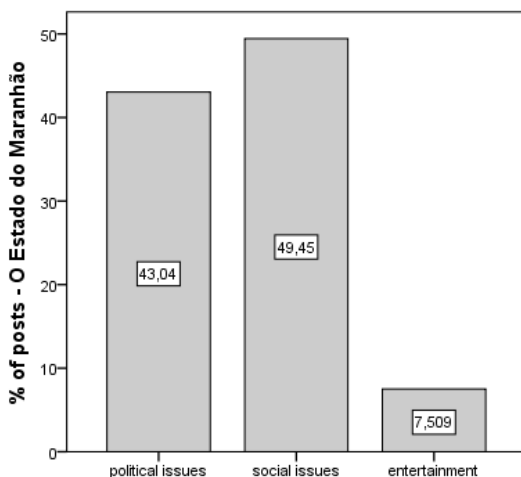


is replaced by politics, even though social issues are predominant. We must reiterate the possibility of covering themes of public interest and that the statement about the limited space for entertainment do not fit to all models of social media use.

### Political profile

We must reiterate the possibility of covering themes of public interest and that the statement about the limited space for entertainment do not fit to all models of social media use. Despite the emphasis on social themes on most of the analyzed fan pages, there is another profile, which can be identified on *O Estado do Maranhão* (Graph 11). 43% of the posts covered news on politics. In view of the regional media proximity to political groups (Pinto, 2017), we identified another profile of uses of social media, which highlights the political aspect.

**Graph 11** – Distribution of Themes: *O Estado do Maranhão*



Source: The authors (2017).

Thus, the statement of journalism as a political actor – either during political campaigns or out of them – can be evoked to understand the way newspapers use SNSs. By knowing the potential of content distribution (Zago & Bastos, 2013), it is a strategy to make political content circulate.

The distribution of political themes occurs either when there is interest on local issues (like elections) or national issues (about the Federal government, for example). This case stimulated the composition of this typology on the codebook. *O Estado do Maranhão* was different from the other newspapers, as it presented 21.2% of posts on institutional politics and 17.4% on campaigns. This model of fan pages use is contrary to that adopted by *Meio Norte*, which represented the absence of political subjects. This feat justifies the importance of the establishment of different typologies to map the diversity of fan pages use, which generates different editorial models for social media.

Despite the presence of social themes on almost 50% of the posts, how this newspaper highlights political issues makes it distinct among the others. Even though this category is not the main one, it aggregates more than the general average (see Graph 1), which is almost 21%. 43% of posts are focused on elections or institutional politics, above the other newspapers. We opted then for creating a specific typology to aggregate newspapers that open spaces for political themes, even though they are not predominant<sup>9</sup>. This justifies the typology and the exclusivity of this newspaper, as a singular case.

## 5 Conclusions

The research aimed to propose a typology on the uses of social media by newspapers that spread journalistic content through SNSs, especially *Facebook* fan pages. The text presented an analysis considering regional newspapers behavior on that platform, which differs from national quality papers. Moreover, the comparison allowed us to classify pages among diverse profiles of social media uses regarding the type of journalistic content published by news producers, by analyzing 9,993 posts.

The results show that there is not a single pattern of uses of social media for sharing journalistic content, since producers make choices based on economic, editorial and public interests. This emphasizes the existence of different journalismisms, and we cannot classify “regional media” as a single system (Pinto, 2017). We found at least five different profiles. There are newspapers focused on entertainment; others highlight a mix of entertainment and social themes; some of them emphasize only social themes as key points; some newspapers present a mix of social and political subjects; and

finally, there are newspapers that expand their political role to SNSs.

These five categories point to different models of journalistic production for social media based on marketing and editorial politics. Therefore, the practices of use of social media do not have patterns and they are not similar among the newspapers. By observing only subjects on news, we identified several behaviors, which are marked by contextual differences and the diversity of audiences, as well as internal politics of the enterprises.

Beyond identifying the differences among newspapers, the analysis showed that social topics excelled on posts of these regional newspapers according to the aggregated data. This shows a certain differentiation from the national newspapers marketing model, which emphasizes entertainment, even though some regional ones also invest on this topic. There are publications that present more similarities and others that are far from the patterns found by literature.

Some newspapers do not follow the tendency of posts that seek to entertain the public through soft topics. It does not automatically mean that there is no strategy. As discussed before, there are marketing and editorial strategies. In these cases, editorial ones keep SNSs close to the patterns of printed versions and search for clicks through entertainment. The public's interests and the need of differentiate themselves from the entertainment profile on other publications, especially non-journalistic ones, could explain the profile of posts connected to social and political themes. Depending on the audience, these topics could be the most accessed ones.

Newspapers that use the most entertainment post more intensely on their *Facebook* pages. Therefore, in most times it does not mean that newspapers do not mention social and political issues. It means that they explore entertainment and considerably increase the volume of posts. If the emphasis on entertainment did not matter for having more clicks, as the literature states, the intensity of posting would be balanced among the regional publications.

The research allows us to have a panorama about the problem to identify patterns, which is one of the aims of a quantitative research. Although the absence of details (a characteristic of qualitative research), this investigation identifies convergent and dissent points among newspapers concerning the use of fan pages. Regional newspapers used distinct marketing and editorial strategies, but were still close to those adopted by national quality papers, as stated by other works in the research area.

In the future, comparisons between regions would allow us to verify broader problems on how journalism uses social media in Brazil. Finally, we understand that the typology is an important contribution from this research, which could allow other researchers to identify newspapers similarities and differences according to the typology established. This could offer a continuity to the research on the subarea of journalism studies.

## NOTES

- 1 This text presents some results of the research “Journalistic coverage during elections and the information spreading on social media: a study of the main Brazilian Northeastern newspapers’ fan pages”. It is developed by the “Research Group on Communication, Politics and Society” (COPS), and sponsored by the “Research, Scientific and Technological Development Foundation” from Maranhão (FAPEMA), call for Proposals: Universal Proc. N. 01226/16. A previous version of this work was presented at the congress of the Asociación Latinoamericana de Investigadores en Comunicación Social (ALAIC), at the University of Costa Rica, between the 30 July and 1 August 2018, sponsored by the “Research, Scientific and Technological Development Foundation” from Maranhão (FAPEMA), Process Scientific Events N. 01663/18.
- 2 Although this work discusses only the importance of subjects for the proposal of a typology of journalistic production for social media, and affirms that entertainment is important for clicks on the links, the literature also shows other facts that could generate more access.
- 3 Among these 11.5% dismissed for analysis, 6.8% of posts presented themes out of the scope of the classification previously established. It did not cause any problem for the research, since it was under 10% without representativeness among the corpus. 4.7% of posts were related to posts without news reports. Therefore, they were not considered, because the aim was to analyze only journalistic content.
- 4 Meio Norte’s (PI) Facebook fan page is directly connected to its news portal and the printed version.
- 5 The Northeast of Brazil is the region that contains the higher number of states in the country (nine). According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), it concentrates 28% of the national population (56 millions), the second most populous one, and covers 18% of the Brazilian territory, the

third biggest region. However, it has the lowest Index of Human Development. On the other hand, its GDP increased significantly in the last years.

- 6 We highlight that the broader research of which this article is a partial result analyzed other variables (style, form, hashtags, campaign, range, and mention to candidates). We present these characteristics on other texts.
- 7 We will check on this information on the new phase of the research, which seeks to understand the logics of social media appropriation under the view of producers and editors.
- 8 This work do not intend to measure the public interaction with the posts. Therefore, we could not know if there is more engagement over entertainment or other subjects.
- 9 We may highlight that political themes cover only two categories, elections and institutional politics, while social subjects range from health and education to minorities (eight categories). Entertainment aggregates three categories. Thus, it is more difficult for political subjects to exceed 50%, as it had fewer opportunities for coverage.

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