

Portuguese Supermarkets and their Cooking Magazines: A Spread of Paradoxes Around the Sustainable Discourses

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ABSTRACT

Seeking to establish how supermarket chains have dealt with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, this paper analyzed the discourses of two cooking magazines promoted by the two major Portuguese supermarket brands: Continente Magazine, owned by the Continente chain, and Sabe Bem, supported by the Pingo Doce supermarkets. As they represent supermarket brands and the Portuguese food culture, analyzing these publications' discourses, we could identify their relationship with the sustainable principles advocated by the 2030 Agenda through its addressers' verbal and image choices. We concluded that among the several fragilities implicit in this relationship, several principles of the Agenda are kept at the edges of the magazines' discourses, including the second Sustainable Development Goal, which deals specifically with food.

Keywords: *food consumption; 2030 Agenda; communication sciences; Continente Magazine; Sabe Bem.*

1 Introduction

The inclusion of food in the different scenes of humanity's daily life demonstrates its relevance as a cultural instrument (Montanari, 2008). Thus, it also plays a significant role in understanding the phenomenon of social distinction (Bourdieu, 2007). Hence, it is understandable that food stands as "one of the oldest and most striking subjects of human thought" (Bakhtin, 1987, p. 145). Outlined with these characteristics, we realize that it is beyond nutritional and statistical studies and a relevant object of study within the communication system (Barthes, 1961).

Such breadth contributes to understanding the media spotlight on food at the beginning of this century, which stimulated a boom around the topic and numerous agents, most notably chefs (Luderer, 2013; Rousseau, 2012). However, shadows are behind this focus, as several agents essential to the food circuit have been shaded from this light. Still, some spheres trying to move the spotlight in other directions have emerged, such as the 2030 Agenda (United Nations-DESA, 2015), a global proposal with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets.

As the successor to the 8 Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000), the 2030 Agenda expresses more ambition through its purpose of "leaving no one behind". In tandem with its opposite, hunger, falls within these goals' context, aiming at respectful prosperity for the Planet and its inhabitants.

Checking the global dimension of food is challenging because, reviewing it from production to distribution and consumption, one notices an organism circulating between the biosphere and the noosphere. Moreover, its composition represents several sign layers.

Thus, understanding them under the light of the complexity paradigm (Morin, 1997; Morin and Pakman, 1994) becomes virtuous, for they are moved under a plurality of codes, which pull several circuits and keys, fluttering between order and disorder.

The signifier sustainability should also be perceived from this angle. The attempt to represent the conciliation between economy and ecology and still play a social role under the same structure suggests a challenge for this word. In fact, it emerged to reconcile the friction between a vibrant market, which needed to deal with ecological causes/crises and tried to limit marketing impulses (Prado and Prates, 2012). One sees an accumulation of (in)consonance that imposes a latent contradiction: the pursuit of development by sustainable means (Redclift, 2005).

These discursive frictions are installed in the food culture and can be seen in different structures, such as supermarkets. On the other hand, introducing these distribution chains in the market following World War II and the Green Revolution agricultural movement revolutionized the food sector (Bernstein, 2015). These new businesses created a social impact on food shopping, requiring consumer autonomy to follow aisles and select products displayed on shelves (McClelland, 1962). This aesthetic drives a new communicational paradigm in food consumption, inhibiting the dialog between different actors (Barbero, 2002).

In Portugal, food sales are clustered in supermarkets (Truninger et al., 2022). The two largest chains in the country develop different communicational strategies to help mitigate this sense of abandonment that consumers experience. Among them is the circulation of their own cooking magazines, promoted for over ten years. The Continente supermarkets, operated by the SONAE group, offer the monthly *Continente Magazine* (CM) at their cash registers for €1. The bimonthly *Sabe Bem* (SB) can be purchased for €0.50 at the Pingo Doce (PD) supermarkets, owned by the Jerónimo Martins (JM) group. Besides the dozens of culinary recipes published in each edition, these magazines, which can be partially accessed on their promoters' websites, cover several topics, including sustainability.

These publications are classified as customized, which can be understood as being promoted by the interest of companies in sedimenting their brands before a specific target audience, expressing content that lies on the borders between marketing, advertising, and journalism (Denner et al., 2018; Dyson, 2007; Fischer, 2013). Although there is a high number of circulation in this category and different sectors exploit it, this media modality has been little studied in the field of Communication (Denner et al., 2018).

Influenced by commercial interests, this edition style offers a standard set of themes with specific aspects highlighted when associated with supermarkets. The focus on the female audience and the presentation of subjects spanning health, cooking, and fashion, cleverly intertwined with advertising, are highlighted (Dyson, 2007; Luderer and Carvalho, 2019).

Some few studies were checked on customized magazines promoted by supermarkets, and the existing ones indicate that this media resource has been applied by British multinational groceries, such as Sainsbury's and Tesco (Dyson, 2007; Hassan and Parves, 2013), as well as by the German company Lidl or the Polish one Biedronka (Miszczak, 2015) which is part of the Portuguese JM group. In short, these studies contribute to a better understanding of the communication limits within this editorial model and their function as a tool to foster closer connections with customers.

An investigation carried out in the Repositório Científico de Acesso Aberto de Portugal (Open Access Scientific Repository of Portugal) (2023), directed by the titles of the two publications focused on in this study- CM and SB-, indicates the little interest of the scientific community in these objects. In addition to two papers focussing on CM, one dealing with food heritage and the other discussing marketing strategies, the other five published there are of my own authorship with different peers. These papers discussed different editions published by the CM and SB journals, seeking to relate them to the axis of sustainability. In doing so, they addressed the covers of these publications, the tourist destinations promoted, traditional culinary recipes, the prominence of the Mediterranean diet in times of COVID-19, and the role of mothers around food choices.

This body of work has helped to highlight unique aspects of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda (United Nations-DESA, 2015) concerning the business groups promoting the two magazines. As this is a very secretive sector, very difficult to access, these studies have provided some clues regarding the commitment of these companies to sustainability.

Understanding food as a system, that is, as a network involving different activities that overlap and complement each other, from production, processing, transportation, and consumption to disposal (Coleman et al., 2021), it is pertinent to understand the plans of these business groups, which year by year have improved their positions in the global patchwork market (DELOITTE, 2023). Although CM and SB are not viewed as journalistic publications - which supposedly ensures more objective, truthful codes separate from profit interests (Dyson, 2007) - their narratives become passable tools to understand the discourses and commitments of these companies that move many pieces in the food system.

These communication channels are a means to discover different issues related to the food sector and are a plausible way of understanding how these strongholds promote sustainable food. Therefore, this paper sought to explore how those narratives dialogue with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda (United Nations-DESA, 2015).

This Agenda is aligned with relevant issues related to sustainable food (Mason, P. and Lang, T., 2017; Willet et al., 2019) as well as climate change, a fundamental topic associated with the food system (Clarke et al., 2022; European Parliament, 2021; Poore, J., and Nemecek, T. (2018).

In this sense, it is also relevant to note food promotions in Portugal since, as exposed by Galli et al. (2020), it is a country that transgresses the capacity of Earth ecosystems, maintaining a high consumption of meat and fish and the need to implement better practices related to food waste.

Given this interest, the CM and SB were analysed using the SDGs as a parameter. We examined the verbal and imagery messages expressed in the two magazines and verified the different points targeted by the 2030 Agenda (United Nations-DESA, 2015).

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 The layered magazines

The empirical exercise, sometimes intuitive, is aligned with this study that analyzes printed magazines. The hundred pages of each issue offer multiple messages, creating possibilities for approaches that are abstracted as they move away from the focus set out: the 2030 Agenda (United Nations-DESA, 2015). The date of the launch of this document became an important device for the corpus selection, so 2015 served as a milestone to select the editions investigated in this study, limiting them to those of the beginning of 2022. However, to ratify information added to sustainability, sections of older editions were also sought to elucidate some data linked to this cut.

The covers are peculiar in the analysis process, as they outline repertoires, expressed by images and words that suggest the enunciator's interest (Luderer and Carvalho, 2019). The editor's letter is another significant analysis element for the same reason, besides being plausible to check its watchwords (Prado, 2011). Based on the focused theme, the titles of the sections also contribute to elucidating the content of the messages alluded to by the enunciator.

The digitized editions of the SB are peculiar in the process, as they contribute to safely and quickly checking the presence of certain words in each edition. However, although this quantitative data offers relevant information, given the repetition of some terms, the qualitative analysis takes precedence is predominant in this study, due to the magazine's reliance on images within its repertoire.

In addition to the process of interaction and analysis with verbal and non-verbal texts, which underlie the perception of communication contracts that may be made between addressers and addressees, the technical data that classify them are also relevant information and are sometimes not explicit in their content. In the media arena, CM and SB are in the segment of cooking magazines (APCT, 2022; Dados.gov, 2022; Media Booking, s.d.). However, the signature on their editorial letters suggests the publications link to the heads of the supermarkets' marketing department, which labels

them as custom publications. That category's purpose is to communicate the values and image of a brand, expressing subtle messages about the companies promoting the publication. It is a channel to create bonds with consumers through entertainment (Aguiar and Steinhäuser, 2019). Both CM and SB explicitly mention the brands of the supermarkets that promote them: the title of CM is linked to Continente supermarkets, and SB prints the PD's logo on the cover. It is worth noting that magazine covers are the most important visual tool for capturing the public's attention (Lamb, 2018).

The journalistic format is another feature of custom magazines; in this format, they gain the addressee's credibility (Martinuzzo, 2014). The graphical features and aesthetic choices of CM and SB reflect that. Both are divided into sections with different topics and articulated by experts in the field. Furthermore, the CM is edited by *Público*, one of the main Portuguese newspapers, and, like Continente supermarkets, owned by the SONAE group.

CM was launched in September 2010, and the first edition of SB in May/June 2011. The proximity of these dates and the many similarities between the two publications suggest competition. However, acknowledging that memory is a collective phenomenon (Halbwachs, 1990), it is important to consider both as cultural objects that absorb and replicate the models of an era. Hence, besides the aesthetics of the dishes and utensils, or the thematic sequence they follow each year, based on a festival calendar, other common discussions emerge in culture and become their repertoires.

The 2030 Agenda fits into this framework. Although it was published in 2015, it was pertinent to check other issues of the magazines that circulated before that date and highlighted topics that matched the genes of the analysis. Just as these older publications provided clues to ratify the analysis, the same was true for those that circulated more recently, in the first four months of 2022.

Custom magazines usually maintain high circulation numbers. Thus, they have a wide reach (Fischer, 2013). Only a few editions of CM and SB have less than 120,000 print runs, and both are leaders in the culinary genre in Portugal (Media booking, n.d.). That explains the slogan on the covers of CM: "The best-selling cooking magazine in Portugal."

Their target audience is middle- to upper-middle-class women between 25 and 54 living near the country's major urban centers (Media booking, n.d.). These data are consistent with recent indexes collected on food consumption habits in Portugal. The consumers' preference is supermarkets, and women are the prominent agents in the decision-making process in these activities (Truninger et al., 2022).

This motto supports the construction of these magazines as they both have a similar structure to those of the female gender and, according to Warde (1997), they are magazines with the following trait: they address several topics with a simple approach but provide an added value, answers about the commensality of an epoch.

2.2 Discourse Analysis: x-raying a media object

By recognizing the various peculiarities emanating from these objects, which are the corpus of this study, it was possible to perceive them as communication media suitable to analyze with the methodological support of Discourse Analysis (Charaudeau, 2009; Prado, 2011). We analyzed their verbal and imagery messages, focusing on their narratives, which suggest points of intersection with the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and their 169 targets.

This interaction process was analytically pondered, without losing sight of intuition, from observing the signifiers conveyed in the composition of the narratives. The images, their colors, formats, and how they are arranged on the pages were also relevant. However, despite being portrayed as "proof of truth" in discourses (Charaudeau, 2009, p. 55), caution is necessary, particularly concerning food. Photographic resources are part of the dynamics of the food-related publication because visual appeals sharpen the reader's various senses beyond sight (Chiachiri, 2008).

Overall, attention should be paid to the sign representations and their meanings, perceiving their (in)visibilities. When dealing with mediated narratives, it is important to consider how they are constructed. As democratic, they are simplified and fragmented for better understanding. Thus, "a critical social vision to perceive 'the unsaid', the hidden, the possible meanings underlying the game of appearances" is immanent. (Charaudeau, 2009, p. 29).

It is also worth discerning the convocations applied by the addresser in their interest in maintaining a communication contract with their addressee, their reader (Prado, 2011). One checks the communication triggers in the messages that contribute to establishing this agreement, which is a simulacrum. For example, some watchwords (Deleuze, 1992) related to consumption models defended by the addresser gain meaning in the discourses; when applied, they become devices for the addressee to seize these models and follow them.

2.3 Magazines as a cultural text

The discourses are expressed in a certain historical-cultural sociosphere (Machado, 2013), and it was relevant to realize some peculiarities of this corpus to carry on analyzing the magazines. These publications are contemporary. In the Portuguese stronghold, they are aggregated into the media context and take food as the main focus. That combination includes them in the cultural sphere of one time and space, and the theory of cultural semiotics adds principles that contribute to understanding them better.

Thus, given the characteristics of CM and SB, it will be coherent to conceive them as a text of culture, applying to this noun a broader meaning than binding it to a linguistic occurrence. The signifier text, connected to the magazines, relates to the concept of the cultural semiotician Lotman (1996, p. 56): "a complex device, which holds various codes, that can transform the incoming messages and generate new messages."

Furthermore, cultural semiotics views culture as a large, polyglot, heterogeneous text that moves and is rebuilt between texts and contexts. Thus, it is worth noting that:

the food culture clusters all the texts of food and cooking ever produced, from the first food consumed by the human species to the most sophisticated dish created in an experimental kitchen laboratory: every text of this culture system is part of the cultural fabric of food. Moreover, merging them creates communicative links that build new texts in a continuous process of semiosis and recoding (Jacob, 2013).

Accordingly, magazines can be assumed to be part of the food culture system as a text. They create new cultural texts through semiosis, "the elementary mechanism of semiosis production is the transformation of perceived information into coded information [...]" (Machado, 2013, p.64), and this translation system occurs in a certain semiosphere. It is worth realizing that the semiosphere is like a semiotic continuum through which texts move. They are "the environment where signs relate to each other and construct languages and meanings" (Vargas and Rocha, 2019).

We can assume that the magazines are inside the semiosphere of the Portuguese culture. In that spatial context, considering the temporal aspect, semiosis occurs. Hence, those communication media are embedded in this semiosphere. Perceived as cultural texts, they create new syntactic arrangements around food and promote new repertoires and possible cultural recoding.

3 Results

3.1 The magazines' alignment with the SDGs

As cultural texts on food, the CM and SB magazines offer different topics to address the 17 SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. Some of these topics stand out in this analysis: the discourses on health, sometimes supported by the promotion of the Mediterranean Diet - a discursive element that also contributes to supporting sustainability issues; the increased focus on food waste; the role of women in the food sector from the addressers' perspective; the discourses on tradition and their links with a nationalist movement; and the invisibility of small producers and other agents, who, guided by the addressers' messages, remain at the social margins.

The focus on these topics does not prevent us from recognizing that the magazine includes other topics that end up interfering with the course of the analysis, such as: the discourses around specific diets, the products listed in the promotional labels disseminated by the two magazines, the promotion of meat and fish, or even the promotion of tourism, which are very important topics in the Portuguese culture and economy.

The sections listed in the magazines help maintain the order in the analysis cycle. However, it is pertinent to avoid this trap that activates a fragmented text reading, blurring its holistic potential when possible. It is important to respect and boost the complexity of this corpus, which vibrates between orders and disorders, perceiving its complex junctions the various levels and times. Thus, perceiving its cross-disciplinary sphere is part of this dynamic (Nicolescu, 1999).

Following this paradigm, we perceived the articulations and representations guided by verbal and visual descriptions, disseminated in more than one hundred editions of these cultural texts. Thereby, we recognized the messages that flow in the semiotic continuum of its semiosphere. The SDGs were perceived in this flow.

Like the magazines, the 2030 Agenda comprises several discursive echoes related to sustainability principles. As a document, it is a guide to reflecting a historical period because it signals different global aspirations. It is also a communication media and a text of culture. It is an indicator of politics, society, and market attitudes. However, in this study, the 17 SDGs and the 169 targets only guide the magazines' analyses.

3.2 Following the 2030 Agenda

In the analysis, the discursive layers of the CM and SB were related to the SDGs. In this way, we studied the addressers' commitment to the points outlined in the Agenda. We recognized that several discursive aspects were not part of the debate, namely poverty and hunger.

These issues are food-related and expressed in the first SDG - "end poverty in all its forms, everywhere" - and in the second - "end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture". However, neither of these are addressed in either publication. The same is true of Target 1.5: "Climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters".

These issues are far from the discursive line of CM and SB, as both are aligned with the models related to women's publications, which excel in other debates (Warde, 1997). Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic, related to goal 1.5, was scarcely mentioned in both publications. One can see this statement in their editorial letters, an important sector to verify in printed magazines to understand the addresser's intentions in each issue (Prado, 2011). In the 2020 issues, the letters of CM ignore the pandemic, but those of SB note it. It is worth relating these choices to the different formats of both editorials.

The SB editorials are personalized: the addresser includes a snapshot of a woman in this welcome letter. Introduced as the PD's marketing director, she is the one who signs the letter. This personalized profile, ignored by CM, creates a differentiated bond with the magazine's addressee. It makes it possible to break the line of a formal, distanced relationship, to foster a charismatic bond of affection that opens the way to address certain topics.

Addressing the COVID-19 topic, the letter of the July/August 2020 SB issue introduces a poetic narrative: "after having seen spring blooming at a distance through the window [...]". Discussing the afflictions experienced at the beginning of the pandemic, it relates the phenomenon to food: "[...] we spent more time at home and cooking filled a significant part of our days. Cooking, a gesture of love, intensified, as did the curiosity for new recipes, ingredients, and flavors."

The letter in the following issue of SB (September/October 2020, p.3) reiterates this style of narrative, adding value to the discourse by including the topic of sustainability:

Despite some uncertainty about what everyday life will look like in the coming months, one thing is certain: the food choices we make, and the habits we have in our kitchens will continue to play a key role in our well-being, that of our families, and also in an increasingly sustainable future.

By relating the sustainable signifier to the context of the pandemic and food, we confirm one of the distinctions between the SB and the CM's addresser. While the former shows commitment by raising this debate, the Other, I mean, that of CM, by ignoring these discourses, suggests its fragile involvement with these issues.

The CM editorials of May and June 2020, for example, introduce the word sustainability in its context, locating the signifier in the last paragraph of the letter. Besides this lack of attention, they insert it in a plot linked to the promotion of consumable goods: "we also mention sustainability in the form of apps for your phone" and "to discuss sustainability, we sought the advice Eunice Maia gives in her book". The August editorial includes it again, replicating this instigation to consumption but focusing on products of the Continente brand since it is a special edition aimed at disseminating these items. In this case, the editorial explains that Continente seeks to "help consumers adopt healthier food and more sustainable behaviors". It states that it aims, by 2025, to make the packaging of its products "100% environmentally friendly"; and also points out that regarding the "choice of producers, selection of ingredients and raw materials," Continente meets "high environmental and social criteria".

The points highlighted above relate to some SDGs. However, it should be noted that the narrative is constructed in the first person of the plural, highlighting the benefits of the company's practices. Thus, it articulates semantics in which the addresser underlines its qualities, prompting the addressee to assume the role of customer. Compared to SB, we can see that the CM addresser creates another relation with their addressee.

When checking the editorial of the January/February 2022 issue of SB, a special edition to promote the PD brand products, one realizes that the food topic is the driver of the message. The real purpose of this custom magazine is restrained in the discourse. Furthermore, noticing a discursive move toward the 2030 Agenda is relevant because it introduces some previously ignored points related to the second SDG. It reads: "[...] at Pingo Doce, we believe that good food should be accessible to all,"; and about nutrition, it states that "Every day we rely on a multidisciplinary team [...] To ensure the best nutritional profile [of this brand's products] [...]".

3.3 Discourses on health and the Mediterranean diet

Nutrition is a frequent topic in the magazines, as well as health and well-being. This topic triad is explored in specific sections in CM and SB. Professionals from these respective areas address them. In conceptual terms, these are the voices of experts included in the discourses to give credibility to the information (Charaudeau, 2009; Prado, 2011).

In this respect, the Directorate General of Health, the main body of the Ministry of Health in Portugal, has featured in a section in SB since its 36th edition (March/April 2017). Through this channel, it promotes its discourses around health, emphasizing the discussion of the ten principles of the Mediterranean Diet (MD), aligning them to the role this diet plays as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Graça, 2015, p. 26).

CM also addresses the MD, but it only plays the lead role in SB. Since its launch, its covers suggest it through a sign: an olive tree, in green color, which is associated with olive oil consumption (Luderer and Carvalho, 2019). As of issue 58 (November/December 2020), the olive tree is replaced by another symbol. Composed of different signs and colors, it is related to the MD and linked to a new brand of the company, aiming to promote the diet: "*Juliana- a Dieta Mediterrânica à Portuguesa*" (Juliana- the Portuguese-style Mediterranean Diet; Luderer and Baptistella, 2022).

With this new layout, the editions now include entire pages dedicated to the MD, which are always very colorful. The colors are related to the variety of products and eating habits recommended in this diet. Besides the pigments being related to the different ingredients used in the soups, an iconic proposal in the Portuguese diet, it demonstrates the variety of foods suggested by health experts to make a dish.

The MD has become more prominent in the publications. Its ten principles are now disseminated over a full page in the editions. With a green background – the imperative color to represent nature and the discourses on sustainability – ten colored rectangles of irregular sizes are illustrated, reflecting the principles of this diet (Pingo Doce, 2020, p. 13):

1. Simple recipes that protect nutrients;
2. High consumption of vegetable products;
3. Preference for local and seasonal products;
4. Using olive oil as the main source of fat;
5. Moderate consumption of dairy products;
6. Aromatic herbs for seasoning, reducing salt to a minimum;
7. Frequent consumption of fish and low consumption of red meat;
8. Red wine at main meals and moderately;
9. Making water as the main beverage throughout the day;
10. Socializing around the table and regular physical activity.

Including the Directorate-General of Health in the SB reflects the increasingly political dimension of the diet in Portugal. Thus, it is worth mentioning the new brand launched by the PD in 2020, the *Juliana*, with the motto "*Portuguese-style Mediterranean Diet*", endorsing, through this food proposal, a nationalist repertoire (Luderer and Baptistella, 2022).

Although this motto deserves due criticism, this discursive construction points to the consistency of this diet or the new brand, *Juliana*, with the second SDG. The third principle of the MD privileges local and seasonal products, in line with goal 2.3, which focuses on the productivity of small producers. As for the sixth principle, the excessive use of salt is a battle the health agencies in Portugal still have to win. Local and seasonal products become good allies, challenging canned and processed products. With this, a diet based on fresh produce endorses goal 2.4, highlighting the importance of a resilient agricultural model to maintain the ecosystem.

Considering the postulates surrounding the MD, one wonders about the range of products marketed by supermarkets that clash with the principles of this diet. The special editions of CM (August 2020 and 2021) and SB (September/October 2018 and January/February 2020 and 2022), aimed at products linked to their own brands, become a reference for this reflection. Besides canned manipulated foods, which have a longer shelf-life due to the amount of salt or sugar and other chemical additives, they promote frozen and other manufactured items, which have packaging with the symbol of the supermarket brands. This group also includes encouraging the consumption of different beverages, while the ninth principle of the MD is to keep water as the main source.

Food manipulation offers more value to the merchandising process. When food is packaged, frozen, canned, or processed into a semi-ready-to-eat meal, it reaches other discursive levels beyond survival-related purposes. Here is an example from the special issue of CM (August 2021, p. 20-27). With the title "*É preciso ter lata*" (Portuguese idiom to say You have some nerve, literally "It takes a can"), the addressee is summoned to focus on the illustrated products of the brand Continente. Besides the five recipes, the eight pages illustrate several notes, exploring different quality related to the products they feature, such as: "at Continente, we invest in the high quality of our products"; "rich in protein, the kidney bean has a high content of folic acid"; "the calcium levels of canned fish can be considerable, especially when the bones are eaten"; "at Continente we also run sensory tests"; "At Continente we are on the Portuguese families' side".

The raw materials producing the food products of the Continente and PD supermarket chains brands are presented in CM and SB. The first has the "Continente producers club" section, and the second has "our producers". Both depict extensive farmland and monoculture farming. Countless machines and a manufacturing process supported by technology are part of this scenario. As part of the plot, the leaders of these enterprises are highlighted. These individuals are white men while women represent the subordinate jobs.

In this context, small producers, fresh, local, seasonal products, or agents linked to social and ethnic diversity, are on the margins of the two companies' projects. Since women are perceived to be embedded in this context, it becomes pertinent to understand further the relationship of these companies to the fifth SDG: "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls."

3.4 The construction of submissive consumer readers

Even though CM and SB refrain from using the feminine pronoun in their articles, the verbal and imagery messages of both, including their advertisements, suggest their target audience: white women and mothers tormented by a routine with too many tasks and duties. The discourses of both publications revolve around models of values and calls that require this woman to be happy, active in her occupation, maintain a social cycle, and, above all, supported by the discourses of nutrition, preserve her greatest asset: a happy and healthy family (Luderer and Ferreira, 2022). As for the compelling and tempting culinary productions, it is up to her to control herself, keep thin with the support of expert tips and respect the nutritional and aesthetic standards of contemporary beauty.

Amid these discourses, the addresser stands as her partner, suggesting availability to help. No progress is seen in the speeches regarding goal 5.4 of the fifth SDG, which proposes the "shared responsibility within the household". Attention should be paid to the seductive and fatuous speeches of the addresser and their paradoxes because this set intoxicates their readers.

The experts' voices advocate in favor of the MD principles or other similar indicators to promote a desired and utopian Perfect Health (Sfez, 1996) that offers a very long and fully healthy life. In mythology, Hygieia is the Greek goddess of good health. However, as in culture, the same semiosphere holds different discourses, some linked to the Other, opposing the Same. In the mythological sphere, we look for Chronos, the Greek god of time, to represent the Other compared to Hygieia. Unlike the commitment to health and well-being, Chronos represents agility around food and is represented in the chronometers highlighted next to the cooking recipes, showing the production time of each dish. Its success is connected to the ultra-processed, the canned, the frozen, the semi-ready, and the packaging representing a brand.

Before this appeal, Hygieia's principles were compromised because, in the section "*É preciso ter lata*" (CM, August 2021, p. 20-27; CM, September 2017, p. 56; SB, December, 2015, p.11), the addressers rely on Faustian discourses to give Chronos – linked to industries and male representations - some qualities dictated by Hygieia representing health, cleanliness, and sanitation.

3.5 Waste in the 12th SDG

Among the different SDGs, the CM and the SB analysis suggest that their promoters' projects are aligned with the 12th SDG: "ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns". However, this statement should be cautiously approached because, as Redclift (2005) points out, it is important to understand the oxymoron in sustainable development. Another relevant aspect is greenwashing. This practice, through which organizations disseminate false information to promote themselves as sustainable companies, is part of the large retailers' universe (Correa et al., 2017).

Because we are dealing with custom magazines, sustainability should be one of the devices to explore the magazines' context and contribute to promoting the networks of Continente and PD. The first 17 issues of SB (May/June 2011 to January/February 2014) provide an example. Under the title "sustainability", the last sections of these issues outline proposals linked to social responsibility and good practices, and their narratives spell out different actions practiced by PD.

Some publicized actions relate to the Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000), suggesting themes later incorporated into the SDGs. One example is food waste, postulated in goal 12.3 of the 2030 Agenda. However, at that time, in either the CM fifth edition (February 2011) or in the SB third edition (September/October 2011), waste was linked to the economic crisis in Portugal. Moreover, when checking the publications issued after 2015, when the 2030 Agenda was published, we can see other discursive properties related to waste.

In the last two SB issues of 2015 (September/October and November/December), there is a section entitled "use everything", promoting cooking recipes made with skins and stones. The tagline "Zero Waste" is included in these narratives and will later be applied to name a section launched in May/June 2018. In 2020, PD will launch a book with this title (Trindade, 2020). It is available in exchange for 10 promo stickers, each representing a €25 purchase in PD supermarkets. Besides the 180 wasteful recipes, the 237 pages of the book include an extensive introduction dedicated to sustainability. The green that predominates this graphic composition presents a repertoire of the company's various actions concerning sustainability, among which are the practices dedicated to the MD.

The slogan "Zero waste" is also echoed in CM. In 2020 it was introduced in its narratives by promoting books related to the topic. That same year, it introduced a section on sustainability, addressing waste and appealing to reducing the use of plastic. However, it is suppressed in May 2021, when the addresser resumes the summary of the early publications.

On the other hand, the addresser introduces three characters as an attraction, two chefs and a dietitian, all acknowledged by the media. However, none of them is committed to the discourses around sustainability.

3.6 Codfish and the 14th SDG

The festive calendars are a driver to increase consumption and, in the case of Portugal, it is worth reflecting on the fish and seafood because they are part of this semiosphere and are highlighted in both magazines. Cod is an icon in Portuguese cuisine (Sobral and Rodrigues, 2013), and besides its high daily consumption, the fish is a great reference for Easter and Christmas events. The sardines stand out in June when the saints' feasts are celebrated, and the octopus is also taken to the consumption stage at Christmas.

Both publications address these products by suggesting cooking recipes from chefs, dietitians, and fishery professionals. However, until very recently, a debate related to the 14th SDG's Agenda, "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development," is invisible in the history of both publications.

On that note, one ad, which ran between the March 2021 and February 2022 issues of CM, is worth mentioning. Two pages of each issue were dedicated to promoting cod from Norway and its authenticity. Only once is the quality related to being managed "in a completely sustainable way" (CM, July 2021, p. 62). Meanwhile, in CM's previous issue (June 2021, p. 88-89), the addresser notes in the section dedicated to sustainability that the Continente supermarket chain "already sells fresh and frozen fish in bulk from sustainable sources". Given the tense used in the sentence, one can infer that the practice was an innovation.

The May/June 2015 SB (p. 66-78) highlights an extensive report linked to the "producer" section to present sardines and, like other narratives around fish, focuses on objectives unrelated to sustainability. However, through the September/October 2021 issue (p. 72-78), the addresser employs the topic of sustainability by promoting the Portuguese-sealed sea bream, highlighting that in PD, "much importance is given to sustainability issues [...]."

Moreover, another content ratifying this discourse is published in the SB of September/October 2020 (p. 86-87) and November/December 2021 (p. 94-95), promoting the 12 commitments of PD under the "Amar o mar" (Love the Sea) program. This initiative, conceived by the Liga para a Proteção da Natureza (League for the Protection of Nature), an Environmental Non-Governmental Organization, is integrated into PD's environmental agenda. PD's brand is promoted through this channel, showing its commitment to sustainable causes to its consumers.

3.7 Bridging the semiospheres

Previous studies that deal with customized magazines linked to supermarkets in other countries (Denner et al., 2018; Dyson, 2007; Hassan and Parves, 2013; Miszczak, 2015) contribute to ratifying the application of some of the tonics listed in this study, which are used to captivate and retain customers. Thus, the expressive circulation, the panoply of themes listed, the prominence of the brand allied to ready or semi-ready foods - which generate more profit and meet the discourses of practicality -, and the escape of negative guidelines, since the predominance is the idyllic images and the discourses of perfect health.

Miszczak's work (2015) is particularly valuable, as it discusses Smaki Życia (Flavors of Life), the customized magazine of the Polish chain Biedronka, which, like Pingo Doce and the Colombian Ara, is part of the Portuguese group Jerónimo Martins (JM), which has been achieving better positions annually in the Global Powers of Retailing, reaching 47th position (Deloitte, 2023).

According to this source, sustainability is a growing trend in the retail sector, and data collected by Miszczak (2015) contribute to understanding some of JM's practices. The appreciation for the theme of waste, conferred in SB, is in line with the actions developed at Biedronka in 2013, and other strategies promoted by this chain activate patriotism. In this sense, checking how the models cross borders and reach other Semiospheres is pertinent.

During the COVID-19 period, SB appealed to its readers-consumers using nationalist narratives (Luderer and Baptistela, 2022), advocating for the promotion of local products. French companies are also extolling this sales style (Meyer, 2023), and some of their supermarkets installed in Portugal repeat this strategy. Although this practice is in line with the 12th SDG, a subtle approach can be seen in these appeals, where anti-democratic and xenophobic movements are emerging.

This maxim, among others, indicates the potential of the magazines promoted by supermarket chains to check their intentions. The prominence of some SDGs in their repertoires, in the absence of others, indicates their real interests. Like so many other companies in this sector (Braga et al., 2019), we can see the greenwashing implied in them, and the interest in promoting goods, that is, processed, packaged, semi-ready products, which are questionable when validated as food (Silva et al., 2022). Even though "Customers, on the whole, increasingly choose products or services of a company not only because of competitive prices" (Miszczak (2015, p. 123), this narrative game becomes cruel, making it difficult to decide on the purchase.

4 Brief Conclusion as we Look to the Future

The analysis of the cooking magazines *Continente Magazine* and *Sabe Bem*, promoted by the two largest Portuguese supermarket chains, allowed us to assimilate the semantics of these publications, perceiving them as cultural texts. Their messages suggest the potential of this food-related corpus be explored in several scientific areas, including echoing in favor of the complexity paradigm.

Vis-à-vis the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, their speeches convey the paradoxes of the economic pillar worth for supermarkets, which now deals with the filters around the social and ecological spheres. In this scenario, one realizes that their speeches tend to meet the Greek god, Hermes, as the addressers apply clever narratives intended to summon the addressees to succumb to the interests of commerce, sales, and profit.

Thus, they deviate from several points targeted by the 2030 Agenda, including the second Sustainable Development Goal, which concerns food. However, they draw closer to the 12th, regarding production and consumption patterns.

Looking at the discursive evolution of these two magazines, with a history of over ten years, one can see that the principles dictated by the 2030 Agenda are increasingly incorporated into their repertoire. Pingo Doce, the promoter of *Sabe Bem*, has built a more faithful relationship with the 2030 Agenda indicators than its competitor, *Continente*. Even *Continente Magazine* claims to have taken steps down in promoting the discourses around sustainability.

Several supermarket chains have explored this custom publication model. However, they are still at the edges of the scientific field, specifically the Communication Sciences. That said, besides their role in marketing, they prove to be potential tools for providing a range of topics other than market discourses. As such, as cultural texts, they address a broad repertoire that goes beyond food and can be the lens to perceive the semiosis emerging in the most diverse semiospheres of the Planet.

Faced with the business influencing them, formed by competitive nuclei that keep their strategies under lock and key, inhibiting and limiting the exercise of scientific research in this stronghold, these publications emerge as one of the valves to scrutinize the discursive practices within this challenging landscape. Although they are linked to marketing, they are communicational supports and allow checking, disseminating and questioning the practices carried out by these business institutions, which are extremely significant for the food system and, consequently, for the sustainability of the Planet. CM and SB are a valve to stimulate consumption. Given that this tool can compare the different faces of the patchwork stronghold, it is hoped that this study will be a device to sensitize peers to perceive these objects globally.

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