

DEHUMANIZATION AT *VEJA*: analysis of the construction of HIVpositive characters in magazine articles

DESUMANIZAÇÃO NA VEIA: análise da construção de personagens soropositivos em reportagens da revista

DESHUMANIZACIÓN EN VEIA: análisis de la construcción de personajes VIH positivos en artículos de revistas

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ABSTRACT:

Considering the importance of journalism in social life and its ability to build and maintain stigmas, this article presents the results of a research that sought to verify how HIV positive people are represented in Veja's reports. We conclude that the magazine is unable to construct the AIDS narrative in a humanized way. For this, the work considered the perspectives of ljuim (2011) on humanized journalism, the research by Soares (2002) and Fausto Neto (1999) on the AIDS narrative, and the indications of Coimbra (2004) and Brait (1985) for the construction of characters in the journalistic text, taking into account the methodology of Content Analysis (BARDIN, 2011).

KEYWORDS: AIDS; Content Analysis; Revista *Veja*.



"I realized that AIDS was tragically revealing the way our society discriminates against people." (Herbert de Souza, 1994).

Introduction

One of the roles that journalism has taken over time is to raise awareness, educate and debate controversial and public health issues. To this end, the media has in the production routine definitions of relevant subjects to reach the public. That said, it is interesting to note that journalism is an essential institution to social dynamics, which offers its actors "a fundamental public space for democracy and human rights" (FERNANDES, 2002, p. 11). According to Fernandes (2002) is in the social space that the public opinion is shaped, given that anyone in contact with news is part of this process and, through it, society is able to interpret social phenomena, which are subject to values and stigmas. In the case of AIDS and HIV, in general, there is the perpetuation of a stigma rooted in the social bosom that turns living in society a stigmatizing experience, as explained by Rosana Soares (2002).

Communication studies such as Hildenbrand's 1996, discussing the official communication regarding AIDS on TV until the 1990s, have already managed to problematize the importance of communication when it comes to accessing information related to AIDS and the ways in which the Brazilian government communication decided to address the issue. Three years later, in 1999, Fausto Neto published the book Communication and Print Media: Studies on AIDS, in which he discusses the different discursive constructions about the syndrome in printed newspapers from 1983 to 1995. Soares, in 2002, and in the following years, proceeded the debate in her work on veiled images and the stigma of AIDS, devoting herself to the investigation of print media. In this paper, we sought to contribute by updating academic production in the area by verifying how the topic was addressed in the journalism of Revista Veja at certain times in the last decade.

Given that magazines represent their times, we believe that the observation of the AIDS theme and its characters in Veja are of great relevance. The present research has been developed precisely from a concern with the central people in this story, those who live with HIV and/or AIDS. The aim of this study is to verify how the magazine presents its characters, and whether it does so in a way that does not manages to build the AIDS narrative in a humanized way.

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AIDS: social stigma

AIDS is a social syndrome. Starting with this statement envision to clarify that, despite its biological features and its medical confrontations, we believe that AIDS marks are - perhaps even more - strongly present in society. According to Lucí Hildenbrand (1996, p. 94), in its early years as a news item, the theme took stereotypes to the extreme, being especially conveyed as "gay cancer" and socially reaching a type of divine punishment for the vulgar and promiscuous. Hildenbrand (1996) explains that even with the publicization of diagnoses in the most diverse kinds of people, men, women, and children, still, in the early 1980s, the most profound image established on AIDS patients was connected to homosexuals, hemophiliacs, sex workers, and heroin addicts.

In Brazil, when AIDS-related stigma is debated, we can point out two moments. A first, between the 1980s and the 1990s, when the syndrome manifested itself strongly in the body since the advancement of the clinical picture determined a weakened, thin and fragile appearance, also, in the case of those who developed skin cancer, with indicative scars. Consequently, the first phase of AIDS manifests itself, primarily, as an abomination of the body, a deformity, and without the possibility of concealment.

As an article in *Folha* reports, the old slogan of the 1994 campaign - "Anyone who sees a face does not see AIDS" - still applies: "The difference is that, at that time, AIDS ended up showing its face: the patient lost a lot of weight, the skin turned gray, the hair was thin, the body stained. With medication, the HIV positive people seem healthy, but that did not scare away the prejudice" (Folha de S. Paulo, 11/28/2001). Stigmatized before by physical marks, nowadays by symbolic marks, the carriers seem to have no more appropriate name: they are in fact depositories of the stigmas that still constitute AIDS, even in undisclosed signs. (SOARES, 2002, p. 10).

The second moment is the current one, "although the body (sex, blood, death) remains as a nodal point of this tracing, its discourse is no longer articulated around social groups (and their apparent scars), but of individuals (and their invisible marks)" (SOARES, 2015, p. 7). With more developed treatments, medicines, and a health care network allowing those living with HIV to live a full life, even so, the HIV seropositive remains the one who carries a stigma, as the ones that Goffman (1968) calls blemishes of individual character. Only that now is a stigma that can be hidden and concealed. Moreover, for most living with HIV, this is the way they find to continue living socially¹,

¹ With the production of the non-fiction book "O Laço que Abraça" we had the possibility of talking to several people who live under the stigma of AIDS in the city of Uberlândia/MG. And we realized that all of them at some point, whether at work or in relationships, preferred to hide their positive HIV diagnosis.

in a constant state of alert, caused by the possibility of others discovering their secret. "The issue is not that of managing tension generated during social contacts, but rather that of managing information about his failing. To display or not to display; to tell or not to tell" (GOFFMAN, 1968, p. 38), hence they act consciously through the "concealment of stigma symbols" (1968, p. 82). Such behaviors are manifested in different ways, either by changing the drugs received from boxes immediately after leaving the clinic or preferring to be absent from work when the option is to present a medical certificate indicating the diagnosis².

Methodology

In this paper, we present the results of qualitative research within a field of applied social sciences, which is journalism. The method adopted in this study is the descriptive analysis (RUDIO, 2007, p.69). Its procedures go through documentary research, since the main material collected are reports from Revista Veja (OLIVEIRA, 2013, p. 70). Our paper focuses on the verification of the previously stated hypothesis, seeking its confirmation or not, when submitting the selected reports to a content analysis, therefore we aim to verify the use of journalistic techniques in the construction of humanized characters or not. Content analysis is nothing more than

a set of techniques for analyzing communications to obtain systematic and objective procedures for describing the content of indicator messages (quantitative or not) that allow the inference of knowledge related to the conditions of production/reception (inferred variables) of these messages (BARDIN, 2011, p. 48).

Laurence Bardin explains that there are two purposes of content analysis: the first, which serves exploratory research and discovery, and the second, more relevant to this research, as it is

> A 'test administration' function. Hypotheses in the form of questions or provisional statements, serving as guidelines, will appeal to the method of systematic analysis to be checked for confirmation or information. It is content analysis 'to prove it'. (BARDIN, 2011, p. 35)

Furthermore, the use of this technique enables inferences, Herscovitz points out that "media content analysis would be one of the most efficient methods to track this civilization for its excellent ability to make inferences about what was printed or recorded." (2007, p. 123). For the development of the research within the determined

² Stories of people who gave testimony for the production of the book O Laço que Abraça.

criteria, we first defined the universe of sampling. This universe is related to all citations of the keywords AIDS and/or HIV in Veja magazine, from January 2006 to December 2016. The first collection presented 136 editions with at least one quote. Our sample selection is explained by Laville and Dionne as a sample by strata, defined as a "probabilistic sample whose elements are chosen at random within strata or subgroups, defined by one or more particular characteristics." (LAVILLE; DIONE, 1999, p. 171).

Although, at first, we thought of working with cover stories, this idea was frustrated when we found that there were no cover stories about AIDS or HIV in the chosen period for the study. The second step was applying the first inclusion criteria: be journalistic material. Such criteria were necessary because of our objective. Thus, we have discarded everything that was not journalism - that is, advertising, government campaigns, and comments from readers. After we selected only texts primarily concerned with AIDS and/or HIV, since the keywords even appear in reviews, news, and reports about timelines or great entrepreneurs. The result of this filter resulted in 20 texts.

After carefully reading these texts, the sample analyzed was determined based on the following inclusion criteria: to be a report that presented the keyword AIDS and/or HIV, related to human beings; and the following exclusion criteria: articles without HIV seropositive people; and/or published in December or during the carnival period. Since humanization is a fundamental condition in the present research, there is an inherent need for HIV-positive people in the texts, because we seek to verify how they are represented, so materials without illustrative sources, specifically without HIV-positive people, were excluded from the sample. It is worth mentioning that, among the materials included, in those where there is the presence of other illustrative sources in addition to HIV-positive people, these characters were also analyzed. We opted to remove the content published in December and during the carnival period due to the fact that, in general, these are two moments very focused on AIDS by government campaigns, whose approach could distort the results because of their volume and different characteristics.

At the end of this selection, the sample of this research is composed of three reportages: "Beyond HIV", published on June 13, 2007, in the 2012 edition on pages 88 to 94, which addresses the issue of metabolic diseases for those living with HIV; "They make a difference", published on March 3, 2010, in edition 2154 on pages 110 to 115, presents Brazilians at Doctors Without Borders and the treatment for AIDS in Mozambique; and "It is necessary to have an attitude against AIDS", published on the November 12, 2014, in edition 2399 on pages 94 to 97, which shows data on the

discrepancy between knowledge and prevention practices of the Brazilian population on HIV.

To systematize the results obtained, we propose the observation of seven analysis operators, described below and divided into two subgroups: general analysis operators, with five items to be analyzed, and specific analysis operators, with two items. The operators were built in an interrogative form, based on the assumptions described in the literature review of the subject. In the sequence, they will compose an analysis chart (chart 1) that was applied to the corpus to verify the hypothesis.

Operator	Guiding questions	Possibilities for answers	References/observations
THEME	 (a) What is the central theme of the report? (b) Does this theme repeat the patterns already observed by Rosana Soares? If so, which one? If not, how could it be classified? 	 (a) There are no closed answer options, we objectively record the central theme of the article. (b) State; Science; People; Civil society; Other. 	Soares (2002)
SAYING	(a) What aspect does the reporting take on?	(a) Declarative saying; Opinion saying; Indicative saying.	In this operator, not only do we check the headlines, like Fausto Neto (1999), but we also observe the subtitles of the reports.
INSTALLATION	(a) What type of installation does the title and subtitle fit into?	(a) In the body; In the territory; In the subject; Not applicable.	Fausto Neto (1999)
ANAPHORIZATION	(a) Is AIDS portrayed within the perspective of reiterating the genesis of the disease? If so, how does this happen in the text?	(a) In this operator there are no closed answer options.	Fausto Neto (1999). The intention here is, with the greatest possible objectivity, to identify whether the text rescues the origins of AIDS, a process that can happen in several ways, in view of the worldwide history of the syndrome.
SOURCES	(a) How many and how can the sources	(a) Information source; Opinion source; Illustrative	Beltrão (1969)



	of the report be classified? (b) What is the space (in lines) for each source?	source; Advisory source. (b) The answers to the second question were organized based on the list of sources and the respective amount of space each receives.	
CHARACTERS	 (a) What is the character type? (b) How does it characterize it? (c) What type (s) of characterization does the text use to present the character? 	 (a) Round; Flat; Flat - Type Character; Flat - Caricature; Referential; Anaphor; Extra. (b) Direct; Indirect. (c) Physical appearance; Speech; Space; Psychological characterization. 	Brait (1985) Coimbra (2004)
HUMANIZATION	 (a) Does the report have the human being as the center of its concerns? At the same time, does it affirm the equality of all human beings and recognize personal and cultural diversity? (b) Is the report free of prejudgments, prejudices and stereotypes? (c) Does the text caricature the human being? (d) Does the report ignore the complexity of the social phenomenon AIDS? (e) Does the text recognize the Other as a human being? 	There are no closed answers options for these questions.	ljuim (2011; 2017)

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Character building and dehumanization

When reporting on AIDS Veja magazine presents texts related to the trends observed by Rosana Soares (2002). Of the articles analyzed, one is linked to the theme Science - the reportage "Beyond HIV" (LOPES, 2007, p. 88). According to Soares (2002), there is in the periods observed by her a journalistic constancy with the theme Science, also observed in this research. Despite not bringing good news, which occurs more frequently, according to the author, the text "Beyond HIV" explains the negative impacts of anti-AIDS drugs on health, generating metabolic diseases. We observed that the texts "They make a difference" (MAGALHÃES, 2010, p. 110), and "Attitude is needed against AIDS" (CUMINALE, 2014, p. 94) fit the themes proposed by Soares (2002). Magalhães' text, which displays Brazilian doctors working on Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Mozambique, falls under the category Civil Society. According to Soares (2002), this theme is related to the movement that seeks to include everyone in the debate concerning AIDS. For Soares (2002), another common theme is People, which ends up introducing ordinary people and personalizing the narrative, such as what we found in the reportage "Attitude is needed against AIDS", which introduces stories of two HIVpositive people and brings them closer to the reader. The text starts with "At 25 years old, actor and dancer Rafael Bolacha saw his life change radically" (CUMINALE, 2014, p. 94). Also, the texts "Beyond HIV" and "Attitude is needed against AIDS" discuss the issue in the general scope of society with the use of data and statistics.

The sayings indicated by Fausto Neto (1999) were also observed in the reportages "Beyond HIV" and "Attitude is needed against AIDS". Despite Lopes' headline - "Beyond HIV" – that didn't fit in a category by Fausto Neto, its subtitle "[...] people with the AIDS virus have to face high cholesterol, diabetes, and osteoporosis "(LOPES, 2007, p. 88) allows it to be classified as a declarative saying, which, at the same time, informs and explains the reality of those living with the virus. The title "Attitude is needed against AIDS" and its subtitle "Research reveals how Brazilians face the disease. The vast majority know how to prevent, but many still do not use condoms and doesn't have the habit of testing for an HIV "(CUMINALE, 2014, p. 94) can also be classified as a declarative saying, considering that also takes party when stating a fact. Only the headline "They make a difference" and the subtitle of the report signed by Magalhães can't be fitted on the sayings indicated by Fausto Neto (1999) since the reporter does not use the acronyms HIV or AIDS in the headline or subtitle.

As for the analysis operator installation, following Fausto Neto's statements about "discursive constructions that have the 'discourse-organizer' in the newspaper's symbolic-discursive device" (1999, p. 50), we can see the disease in the headlines and subtitles of the reportages. In "Beyond HIV", the disease settles in the body, not emphasizing the geographic location of the cases and not identifying the subject, evidenced by the used expression: carriers of the AIDS virus. In the text "Attitude is needed against AIDS", the subtitle clarifies the installation in the territory, specifically talking about Brazilians. For the text "They make a difference" Fausto Neto's notes do not apply.

Also, in agreement with Fausto Neto (1999), we tried to verify the anaphorization of AIDS, that is, the resumption in the text about the history of the disease. We noted that the text "They make a difference", although it makes a small reference to the country's history, does not mention anything about the beginning of AIDS. The articles "Beyond HIV" and "Attitude is needed against AIDS" are quite similar, presenting a small paragraph referring to mortality in the early 1980s until the development of more effective medical treatment.

Regarding the categorization of sources within the perspective of Beltrão (1969), we have observed that advisory sources and opinion sources, when they appear, get limited space. The three reportages together have five information sources, three opinion sources, and eleven illustrative sources. This number reinforces humanization as a mark of magazine news. Despite this, we also noticed the disproportion between the number of HIV-positive and non-HIV-positive sources.

Since we are working with texts from the same magazine, therefore they have the same graphic pattern, it is possible to analyze how the space is distributed between the sources, using as a unit of measurement the lines. When we talk about space, we see how much the informational bias predominates in two of the reports. All the sample has pages divided into three columns and each has 60 lines. The report "Beyond HIV" has six columns, i. e., 360 lines, of these 21 are destined for Silvia Almeida (HIV positive), 10 for Bruno Caramelli - cardiologist - and 15 lines for a study by Circulation, a specialized scientific publication, which we can classify it as a documentary source. However, written text is just over two columns, as the infographic and photo cover the three central columns of the report.

The reportage "They make a difference" has 18 columns of space (1080 lines). Of these, the two opinion sources receive 15 lines in total, they are two members of Médecins Sans Frontières non-Brazilian or Mozambican. Since the report is based on human experience, the rest of its sources (eight) are illustrative. In order of appearance in the text: Simone Rocha, executive director MSF-Brazil - 5 lines; Raquel Yokoda, a doctor from São Paulo - 48 lines, photo size: two columns wide, ³/₄ column high, with caption; Wânia Correia, a historian from Goiás - photo size: three columns wide, a half column high; and 13 lines as a box; Laura Lichade, Mozambican nurse - 25 lines, photo size: two and a half columns wide, just under a half column high; and 18 boxed lines; Anonymous Mozambican woman - 16 lines, photo size: a column and a half wide and a half column high, with caption; Kaneti Chavunda, retired military man (HIV positive) - 15 lines; Felisberto Dindas, counselor (HIV positive) - 23 lines, photo size: two columns wide, ³/₄ column high, and 9 lines in a graphic element, i. e., a text box; Janaína Carmello, nurse -37 lines, photo size: two columns wide, a half column high, and 19 lines of text box. It is worth mentioning that each box has lines in different widths and using a distinct text font from the reportage pattern, and, therefore, the space they occupy was counted in view of the space that common lines would occupy there.

Finally, the article "Attitude is needed against AIDS" divides its 8 columns (720 lines) of space into: 30 lines, a photo size of two columns wide ³/₄ column high, with captions for Rafael Bolacha, actor and dancer (HIV positive); 66 lines, an infographic covering two complete columns for Pesquisa Atitude Abril; 8 lines for Artur Timerman, doctor – opinion source; 4 lines, an infographic size of 3 columns wide and twenty lines high for the Health Ministry; 5 lines to Pesquisa Unesp; and 10 lines, plus photo with the size of two complete columns, with a caption for Gygy Maciel (HIV positive).

"In general, the journalist illustrates the fact with someone's story" (LIMA, 2002 quoted by VILAS BOAS, 2003), this note by Edvaldo Pereira Lima can be verified in the data above on the distribution of space between the elements of the reports, that demonstrate the focus of the AIDS articles in the Revista Veja. They take on a more statistical bias and use a little of the variety from human stories to effectively care about the human being in context. At last, it shows the HIV seropositive characters in a mechanical, statistical perspective, disconnected from the real, that does not constitute a person (LIMA, 2002 quoted by VILAS BOAS, 2003) and, as we see in the next analysis operators, far from the humanized perspective.

As we move forward in the analysis, we move on to specific operators, those of characters and humanization. The first ones confer the characterization, being considered for this analysis only illustrative sources (BELTRÃO, 1969). First, we verified the type of character in which the sources fit, according to what was indicated by Coimbra (2004) and Brait (1985). The personages can be organized into types established

by their characterization. The characters in the report "Beyond HIV" were classified as flat. The characterization of Silvia only happens to show her as HIV positive and this whole process occurs with psychological characterization, in this case, evidenced by the text that always refers to changing habits for a healthier life. Her characterization is direct.

Simone, Raquel, Wânia, Laura, Felisberto, and Janaína are all characters in the reportage "They make a difference". They are flat characters since they are portrayed only according to one characteristic. Among them, Raquel and Laura stand out, because they were characterized in two ways - direct and indirect - and are introduced with more characteristics. The author writes a bit about Raquel's professional career, which allows the reader to infer personality details, e. g., that she is someone who cares about others and seeks solutions to problems, besides, the text specifies that she is young. Laura, in turn, is characterized by the physical aspect and space surrounding her, which is intended to highlight human tragedy and local precariousness.

In the same text, we have Kaneti Chavunda and an anonymous Mozambican woman. The first can be classified as a type character since, in addition to presenting a single idea, that idea is explored to a maximum, extrapolating the matter of Mozambican ignorance concerning medical issues. The second is an extra who illustrates people's difficulties in accessing health care. The report "Attitude is needed against AIDS" presents Gygy Maciel, as a type character, with a direct psychological characterization, since her characteristic of being overly confident in her partner is repeated both in the text and in the caption. Rafael Bolacha is the only one to be classified as a round character, the HIV carrier is presented not only for his history with the disease, but also for his concerns and professional life.

The second specific operator is that of humanization. Although there are six subquestions, all are deeply related, e. g., caricaturing the human being unavoidably implies in a text that does not recognize the Other and, therefore, can be loaded with prejudices and stereotypes. The text "Beyond HIV", using the classification of Ijuim (2011), cannot be called humanized journalism, seeing as how it flattens the reality of those living with HIV. The report goes so far as to almost ignore the impact that the socio-cultural context has on people's routine and, only at the end of the text, remembers to mention that for some routine changes are not possible and maybe ineffective in the treatment of metabolic diseases. The article "They make a difference", on the other hand, is more problematic, not only because of the way it displays HIV-positive characters, but mainly because of the racist treatment it gives Mozambicans, both in the general narrative and with the characters, especially those (Kaneti and anonymous woman) who are poorly educated. Although the reporter herself explains the contextual problems that the country suffers, the text seems to blame the people for the illness of AIDS.

Lastly, the report "Attitude is needed against AIDS", builds value judgments, standardizing the experience with HIV, and the written caricature of woman also prevents humanized journalism. Prejudice is implicit when confronted with excerpts such as: "Young middle-class people infected by the AIDS virus in clubs watered with too much alcohol and drugs have become frequent figures in the offices of infectious disease specialists" (CUMINALE, 2014, p. 96). Especially considering the available information that shows that not only in this stratum of society the detection has risen significantly: "the epidemic, despite being decreasing in the Southeast, has been growing in poorer regions, such as the North and Northeast and, among women." (VIEIRA et al, 2014). Also, the author continues with a line of argument about "The exaggerated female confidence" (CUMINALE, 2014, p. 97) and Gygy's blame, explained in the excerpt: "she started dating her orthopedist. 'I trusted him completely, so much that I had never considered using condoms'"(CUMINALE, 2014, p. 97) without bringing up the social inequality and that women, especially older ones like this character, are subordinated to a sexist culture, as it's widely known that "relational patterns between genders make women abdicate prevention in favor of maintaining the relationship" (KAHHALE et al, 2010, p. 40).

Conclusions

We reiterate that the purpose of this paper was to find out how the magazine builds the characters in articles about HIV/AIDS and whether the way it does it can humanize the narrative. For that, we had the hypothesis that Revista Veja did not humanize its narrative about HIV/AIDS, and when confirming it, we also revealed that the vehicle prefers to select specialist sources, always giving technical tones to its reports, without facing the social side of the syndrome.

Considering the analysis conducted, we can conclude that the writing and characterizing of people contribute to the dehumanization in the journalistic text. In general terms, we see the small sample of the survey as just another reflection of the journalistic dehumanization related to AIDS in Revista Veja, which contributes to the persistence of a stigma so strongly alive in the social environment. Not talking about, for and with society, is also taking a stand.



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RESUMO:

Considerando a importância do jornalismo na vida social e sua capacidade de construir e manter estigmas, o presente artigo apresenta os resultados de uma pesquisa que buscou verificar como as pessoas soropositivas são representadas nas reportagens da revista Veja. Concluímos que a revista não consegue construir de forma humanizada a narrativa sobre Aids. Para isso. o trabalho considerou as perspectivas de ljuim (2011) sobre jornalismo humanizado, as pesquisas de Soares (2002) e Fausto Neto (1999) sobre a narrativa da Aids, e as indicações de Coimbra (2004) e Brait (1985) para a construção de personagens no texto jornalístico, levando em conta а metodologia de Análise de Conteúdo (BARDIN, 2011).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Aids; Análise de Conteúdo; Revista *Veja*.

RESUMEN:

Teniendo en cuenta la importancia del periodismo en la vida social y su capacidad para construir y mantener estigmas, este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación que buscaba verificar cómo las personas VIH positivas están representadas en los informes de revisión de Veja. Concluimos que la revista no puede construir la narrativa del SIDA de una manera humanizada. Para esto, el trabajo consideró las perspectivas de Ijuim (2011) periodismo humanizado, sobre la investigación de Soares (2002) y Fausto Neto (1999) sobre la narrativa del SIDA, y las indicaciones de Coimbra (2004) y Brait (1985) para la construcción de personajes en el texto periodístico, teniendo en cuenta la metodología de Análisis de Contenido (BARDIN, 2011).

PALABRAS CLAVE: SIDA; Análisis de Contenido; Revista *Veja*.