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FOOD AND MEDIA: A theoretical revision under the light of the mediatization theory

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Abstract

This article aims to articulate an overview of recent scholarship developed in the field of communication and media studies that have food cultures as the main object of research. Starting with an initial discussion about the role of food as an object of study in the fields above-mentioned, we present a critical reading of the scholarship that explores the current transformations in food cultures driven by the so-called mediatization of culture and society process from three thematic blocks that dialogue with each other: mediation of culinary knowledge; mediatized of food consumption, and social distinction and media capitals.

Introduction

 With astonishing ease, that contrasted with the magnificence of the scenery, Pope Francis denounced in a severe tone: "A family that hardly ever eats together, or that does not talk at the table but watches television, or looks at a smartphone, is a "barely familial" family" (2015, p.1). It was not the first time that the pontiff had made a negative reference, either cautiously or culpably, to the use of media technologies during moments characterized regularly by personal interaction in spatial, temporal, social, and, of course, spiritual terms. His speech highlighted the lack of consensus on the benefits and negative consequences arising from the integration of socio-technical protocols characteristic of electronic and digital media in the daily spheres and social organization (Hartmann, 2013; Lundby, 2014).

 Although the discussion about the quantitative expansion (access) and qualitative (use) of social-communicative tools and devices was initiated decades ago, after the introduction of mass media technologies (a discussion framed under the concept of *media effects*), it is in the last two decades that this has been articulated in theoretical terms in a more systematic and comprehensive way in fields such as food, as a result of the recurring process of so-called mediatization of society (Livingstone, 2009). Without assuming an *a priori* position, but reading with caution the apocalyptic and euphoric arguments that defend or condemn the transformations generated by the incidence of these processes of production of meaning, the basic question that guides this critical panorama of academic literature on the subject is: what has changed and what are the dynamics of this transformation?

 Two decades ago, Eliseo Verón pointed out: "In the last 30 years there is no sector of daily life that has not been profoundly affected: the family, the relationship with the body, health, sentimental life, food, the use of leisure time, etc.". (Verón, 1997, p.9). More than a simple market trend, in the years following Veron's statement, interest in food culture has surpassed its initial *boom* and has been systematically inserted into the fields of culture, politics, tourism, entertainment and media, on a global scale, but with differences in degrees of local affectation. Today the interactions between media, society and food culture are moving along an increasingly blurred frontier between the symbolic and the material, and between values associated with greater environmental/nutritional awareness and the commercial objectives of food production and distribution companies.

 According to Belasco (2008), given that food practice strictly occurs within the daily social organization and that it is defined by the biological imperative, it is not surprising to expect difficulties when taking food as the object of a serious and methodical social analysis. Although there has been a progressive advance in recent decades in the development of research on the relationship between food and media, the understanding of food as a subject in the field of communication and media studies has been defined by fragmentation. Just as the complex grammars of media communication processes resist a univocal and regimental approach, the food object is essentially meta-cultural (Urban, 2010). In it, there is an overlap of dimensions, objects and subjects that articulate body policies and technologies, epistemologies, territories, cultural, material and media devices. However, its importance as a research object for the field of communication is increasing and more pertinent:

> The study of forms of media communication and food models associated with a specific time and/or social group may be essential to understand some of the deeper mechanisms of cultural and social organization of our time, or of our society (Nicolosi, 2007, p. 26-27).

 Among the theoretical approaches used repeatedly to explore changes in the dynamics of the relationship between food cultures and the media, mediatization theory has been positioned as an important institutional research agenda within the disciplines associated with communication sciences and media studies (Bell & Hollows, 2005; Hjarvard, 2008; Livingstone, 2009; Thompson, 1995).

In general terms, mediatization is a concept used to critically analyze the relationship between changes in the media environment and communication practices on the one hand, and social and cultural changes in a given society on the other (Couldry & Hepp, 2013). Concretely, the theory establishes a reorganization of the relationships and dynamics between the media, individuals, institutions and social practices in the context of historical, fragmented and non-linear processes.

Although mediatization theory is still in the process of institutional consolidation, and its different traditions assume differential methodological approaches (Corner, 2018), I define as central premises of the mediatization theory: (1) the media and media communication have been inserted in all social and cultural fields and dimensions, to the point of reaching an unprecedented degree of saturation; (2) the media, understood as a modern institution, has surpassed its mediating function between structured fields in the societal organization, and has integrated its logics and dynamics within them; (3) the media and media communication are changing intensely, whether through a gradual replacement or a complementary function, the modes of personal and institutional interaction; (4) the media, understood as a set of technical, cultural, social and symbolic resources of production of meaning, has been a structural element in the articulation of modernity and its subsequent changes (Linares, 2017).

I conducted a literature review— which included papers, theses, congress proceedings and books — between July 2014 and January 2017. The search was based on *Google Scholar's* keyword alerts system, using the keywords: mediatization AND food, in both keywords **and** abstracts. After collecting the material (124 documents in total), I revised the abstracts and bibliography of each one of the works, in order to check the correspondence between the food subject and the use of the mediatization theory.

Although heterogeneous in their theoretical and methodological approaches, the corpus resulting from the correspondence filter presents an explicit relationship with one or several of the central premises of the mediatization theory mentioned above, assuming the mediatization process in a central or complementary way. I created three thematic categories that pair the assembled corpus with the premises of theory, emerging from the exploration of similar dimensions of the food subject, namely: (1) mediations of culinary knowledge —gradual or complementary substitution of personal and institutional modes of interaction linked with culinary knowledge; (2) mediatized food consumption — the role of technical, cultural, social and symbolic resources of media production in the processes of modern food consumption; and (3) social distinction and media capitals — the media integrating its dynamics into the symbolic, social and economic structure of food.

Among the research collected that did not make significant use of mediatization as part of its theoretical framework or methodological apparatus, but that explore the relationship between media and food from other theoretical approaches, I found: food and cultural identity construction processes in late modernity (Stano, 2016; Ashley et al., 2014), consumption patterns associated with lifestyles and taste distinctions defined by class, gender and cultural trajectory arrangements (Trindade, 2012;), changes in the different dimensions of the food system associated with the development of digital media (Calefato, La Fortuna & Scelzi, 2016), the key role of food in global media industries and systems (Hjalager & Richards, 2003), the ethical and aesthetic intersections of food discourses and practices (Halkier, 2016; Naccarato & Lebesco, 2012) and the construction of a historiography of food media texts (Appadurai, 2007).

Mediations of culinary knowledge

Located at the intersections of rituals and practices of food production, preparation and consumption, this thematic cluster discusses the way in which the media have reconfigured the processes of learning and transmitting culinary knowledge, exploring how the technical possibilities of production, circulation and dissemination of this knowledge is shared through media infrastructures, as well as the way in which the processes of communicative mediation have changed the ways in which we build food

repertoires (technical and practical), changing their symbolic construction.

The learning of techniques, taste profiles, cooking times and methods, modes of organization within domestic and professional kitchens have traditionally been transmitted through face-to-face interaction. Although this type of transmission has not been replaced by other forms of mediated symbolic interaction, other sources and forms of symbolic interactions have been progressively integrated into the panorama of domestic cooking and, to a lesser extent, into the professional field. According to Lisa Heldke (1992a), food production is a *thoughtful practice* that dynamically integrates theory and practice. Moving away from the dualistic hierarchy that determines that theory plays a more important role than practice, the author formulates her argument from a relational approach: practice is formulated from theory, which, in turn, is altered from practice itself; that is, food production should be understood as "mentally manual" and "theoretically practical" (Heldke, 1992a, p.204).

Lisa Heldke's (1992a) argument starts with a speculative subversion of Western philosophy: if Plato had considered studying food as an object of systemic reflection, he would have had to invert his philosophical system, placing activities qualified as manual crafts at the top of the hierarchy and relegating those associated with the arts at the end of the classification. However, according to Heldke, in practical activities, such as food production, there is no exact differentiation between object and subject; on the contrary, the two elements meet, mix and overlap. The practice of food production involves direct, temporal and physical contact with the world. A constant change being reproduced.

Heldke bases his argument on John Dewey, who explored the difference between theory and practice as a difference of degrees rather than type. Theorizing is in fact a type of practice, a non-automatic but purposefully conscious action. Therefore, food production should be understood as a thoughtful practice that requires specific knowledge and training, which is put into practice in a transformative and cumulative process. This approach promotes a differentiated understanding of the traditional dichotomies related to food practice: knowledge and doing, mental work and manual work. Distinctions that have been structured and rooted in gender roles and their social repertoires (Heldke, 1992b). Heldke's practical-theoretical positioning explores the change from the foodstuff to the culinary product, expressed as the transforming process from nature to culture by Claude Lévi-Strauss (2008) in his well-known culinary triangle. Both the method of preparation and the procedure of an established recipe are rituals that confer and transfer meanings. For Lévi-Strauss, the difference in meaning in the type of food preparation is based on the opposition between *natural/cultural* and *elaborated/non-processed*, allowing the creation of different associations between categories such as gender and social class.

Leaving behind the argumentative speculation, food practices overlap with other practices at the moment reproduction. Even in the act of food transformation, one practice may be being performed while another is being processed, defined or projected (Sutton, 2014). Recognizing the interconnections between food and the social world represents identifying a mode of interaction that the author calls *bodily knowledge*, a *foci* in which the nature of these thinking practices is embodied: "The knowledge involved in making a cake is 'contained' not simply in 'my head', but in my hands, my wrists, my eyes and nose as well" (Heldke, 1992, p.219). This type of interaction is mutually constitutive and interrelated. If the culinary learning in the domestic sphere has been characterized by oral transmission, guided by participation and direct observation especially within the limits of family and social ties, professional and institutional education linked to the training of agents inserted in the gastronomic subfield is structured by highly systematized communicative models (Trubek, 2000).

The work of Martin Caraher and Tim Lang (2001), in British territory, tensions one of the main assumptions in relation to the changes in the processes of knowledge transmission: the effects and influences of television cooking shows on culinary repertoires. According to the results, the influence of cooking shows on our *behavior* in the kitchen was classified as low. Viewers of such shows mainly consume their content as a form of entertainment and not as practical or pedagogical information. According to the

researchers, the effects that these television shows produce can be characterized as indirect influences on aesthetic repertoires, i.e., consumers use these shows as a source of knowledge about the cultural and social fabric, understanding gastronomy and cooking as an element of growing importance in the construction of symbolic distinctions, cultural repertoires and individual and collective identities (Lang & Caraher, 2001).

On the other hand, Isabel de Solier (2014) has defined as *material media* the symbolic space (discourse and infrastructure) where people acquire some kind of culinary education associated with professional skills and competences. According to the author, food media can also be consumed, depending on the reception conditions, as practical educational texts and in some cases, as secondary sources of culinary knowledge (particular food cultures, recipes, dishes and ingredients). This does not mean that formal culinary education, face-to-face processes of transmission of culinary knowledge, technical and professional courses and the skill forged in repetition in the contexts of professional and domestic kitchens cease to represent the main sources of culinary knowledge acquisition, but it does allow an expanded understanding of the process of complementarity between interpersonal practices and media or *semi-interactive practices (*Sutton, 2014; Thompson, 2005).

The comparative study developed by Alan Warde (1997) on recipe columns in women's magazines in England between 1968 and 1992 demonstrates that media went from representing food as a practice linked to a sphere of family care to a performative practice where the competences and specificity of culinary knowledge were highlighted. This professional stylization of food has formulated a comparative framework between everyday practices and the models or media regimes of food production.

According to Lyon et al. (2011), the drop in the culinary knowledge index represents a paradox: even if there is a reduction in domestic culinary practices due to the ease and availability of processed foods and a greater number of food options out-the-home, different processes for acquiring culinary skills are increasing in parallel because of: (1) the growing variety of foodstuff available, which require different cooking methods; (2) increased exposure to different techniques and procedures; (3) and the continued development and improvement of cooking tools and techniques.

Mediatized food consumption

In this cluster, food is analyzed from its representation in media discourses. The focus is on the processes of mediation, negotiation and adaptation of media representations of food in the identity construction processes. Food is a shared language that establishes local and global codes and symbols in different cultures and dimensions of meaning production (Barthes, 2007; Appadurai, 2007). Additionally, food functions as a social and cultural marker precisely because we use it as a communicative function, that is, as a producer of meaning (Cramer, Greene & Walters, 2011). We use food to affirm our affiliation and differentiation from a given social environment and reaffirm our collective and individual identity.

Analyzed in the light of today's society, Brillat-Savarin's famous maxim, "Tell me what you eat, I'll tell you what you are", stands as an omen of the reflections made by Stuart Hall over 170 years later: "The subject (...) is becoming fragmented; composed not of a single one, but of several identities" (2006, p.12). If in the past food represented the place where the subject-eater-producer was, today it represents the place where we want to go and who we want to be.

Seen from this perspective, food is considered an element of material culture (Braudel, 1984) that allows to articulate identity traits among members of a culture or community (Bell & Valentine, 1997). Thus, food presents itself not only as a social act that allows us to understand and know in a tangible way different cultures (Appadurai, 1997), but also as a communicative act represented in everyday practices and rituals that establishes "a body of images" that is mediatized by advertising, media discourses and the tourism industry, thus altering the collective imagination about a culture (Barthes, 1997 [1961], p.29).

According to Boutaud and Madelon (2010), the culinary and gastronomic saturation in media products would have produced a distorted view not only of the process of food production and consumption, but of the culinary market and labor in the professional sphere; a symbolic enchantment that presents the chef as a *rock star*. On the figurative level, the different discursive logics of the media reveal syncretic strategies between practice, technique, aesthetics, taste and its different embodied values (Ibid.). The authors explored the way in which the embodied and naturalized signs from particular lifestyles are mixed with a rhetoric associated with the pragmatism of *being* and *doing* in the kitchen, promoting an *ethos* that combines an ethical and aesthetic culinary expression around an idealized way of life.

A significant part of the research grouped in this cluster focuses on the study of the dynamics of expression and performance of the figurative and representational traits of food discourses in the media, based on methodologies linked to discursive semiotics. This approach can be defined as an update of the studies between food, consumption and modern culture, initiated by Roland Barthes (1997[1961]). Analyses that seek to highlight the semantic, rhetorical and semiotic modes through which the systems of signs embodied in national food cultures (ideas, images, rules and behaviors) react to changes in models and patterns related to contemporary lifestyles and modes of consumption (Hébel, 2010).

A recent collection of research papers on food cultures whose theoretical approach uses the theory of mediatization as a framework to discuss these issues is *Consumption Challenged: Food in Medialised Everyday Lives* (2016). In it, the researcher Nelem AvBente Halkier questions the agency of the consumer, whose role within the general scheme of modern food is being put into question by individualizing and privatizing their responsibility and contribution to the environment and modern health standards. Based on specific cases supported by empirical research, the author examines the ambivalence, challenges and complexities of the consumer's role on different themes related to public health (obesity epidemic), the environment, nutritional risks and sustainable practices in the Danish food market.

Halkier makes use of the concept of medialization (*medialisation*) by John B. Thompson (1996), whose seminal work on the role of the media in shaping the formative processes of modernity has been referenced as one of the precursors of current studies on mediatization (Couldry & Hepp, 2013). The author discusses how these food discourses seek to attract the attention of consumers and promote changes in habits of purchase, production and consumption in order for them to act as morally aware citizens (citizenship being performed through the role of the consumer), whose agency has a determining role on social problems. In other words, discourses that seek to reformulate consumption practices from the perspective of individual responsibility.

In dialogue with Halkier's research, the differentiation made by Stig Hjarvard on direct and indirect mediatization — differences in the degrees of transformation promoted by the media on institutions and their practices — manifests itself useful in understanding the potential consequences of media on production, circulation and affectation in food practices. According to the author, direct mediatization involves changing non-mediated activities, for example: food purchases on digital platforms, use of recipes published in different media formats, commenting and sharing these through social media platforms or medias such as videos and photographs (Hjarvard, 2008, p.114-115). Indirect mediatization would take place when activities are differentially influenced by the content, formats and media genres, for example: visiting restaurants of a gastronomic celebrity, collecting promotional merchandising from fast food restaurants, negotiating information discussed in healthy eating media campaigns in domestic media spheres.

Overall, cultural studies on food have been the main basis to investigate the place of contemporary food consumption and its media representations: representations and economic standings reproduced by media discourses; the implicit hegemony being promoted or contested; the ways in which legitimacy is granted to one of the enunciative poles (Ashley et al., 2014). The collection of articles edited by Jonatan Leer and Karen Povslen Klitgaard, *Food and Media: Practices, Distinctions and Heterotopias* (2016) presents

a theoretical synchrony with this perspective. The editors demarcate the relationship between food and media as interactive, which means that due to increasing media visibility in all spheres and phases of contemporary food practices — from the consumption of news from *chef-celebrities* to the creation of blogs and digital recipes archives —, the media acquires a normative role in how *we make food* today (Leer & Povslen, 2016).

According to Leer and Povlsen (2016, p.2-21), the *Foucauldian* concepts of heterotopia — symbolic and discursive systems from which people frame their experiences — and heterotopology — the places of description of heterotopias linked to lifestyles, taste and food — function as transversal elements that help to understand societal dynamics through its spatial and temporal dimensions. Assuming these concepts implies understanding the media as the connective agent of a circular relationship between the material and immaterial dimension of food discourses and practices, and understanding the potential of media uses as a possible heterotopia; that is, acknowledging both the real and virtual due to the possibility of spatial decontextualization inherent to the transmission capacities of the media. According to the editors-authors, the dominant discourses in the actual food cacophony are maintained or negotiated by new codes, or spaces of meaning that conform to the basic nuclei (ideas and conceptions) of concepts such as maternity, health, cooking, gender. This means that: "(...) we must not be blind to the commercial and political systems in which mediated food, like its recipes and its promises, are always embedded" (Leer & Povlsen, 2016, p.13).

The use of the concept of heterotopia in this type of research works as an anchorage of both hegemonic and anti-hegemonic positions of the spaces of production of meaning determined by food and media cultures. Both food and media and their multiple combinations must be seen as a field (symbolic space) of negotiation between identity discourses that seek to be legitimized from and/or through food: "(...) food media are conceptualized not only as a hegemonic force, but also as diverse platforms for the emergence of counter-positions, and therefore of possible sites for constructions otherness" (Leer & Povlsen, 2016, p.11). The consumption of media and food content induces the consumer to create negotiation strategies that are performed with the objective of acting within these heterotopias and dealing with the variety of frictions that the contemporary food universe offers (Halkier, 2016).

This identity approach can also be evidenced in the research of Mikkel Eskjær (2013), which focus on the paradoxes of media and food discourses. Using as a case study the Danish company *Aarstiderne*, specializing in the sale of organic food, the author demonstrates how the trend of ecological and sustainable consumption on *online* platforms transforms the environmental image from anti-establishment values to something contemporary. According to Eskjær, the media coverage of sustainable food consumption reveals a paradox: on the one hand the *Aarstiderne* experience illustrates how media coverage is a vehicle for the *mainstreaming* of ethical consumption, making it more rational and marketable with the help of *online* marketing and logistics. On the other hand, the mediatization of ethical consumption also promises the consumer a dissociation from traditional forms of commercialized consumption.

In the Brazilian academic context, the work of Eneus Trindade presents a differential perspective on the processes of mediation and mediatization of consumption. The basis of his research lies in the complementary integration between the processes of communicative mediation, which "allow understanding the subject in the dynamics of communicational processes with their appropriations in face of the realities that act", and the mediatization, understood as the processes that "model cultural patterns, sociability practices, institutionalize political logic, beliefs and patterns" (Trindade, 2014, p.8). The position of the subject-consumer within the analysis of the media environment's affectation on the contexts of performance (communicative mediations), allows addressing the mediatization from the perspective of the consequences and appropriations in the habits, values and practices of consumption of the subject (Trindade; Perez, 2014).

Drawing on empirical research conducted under the structure of the studies of reception and

critical discourse analysis, Trindade adds a unique contribution to the advancement and expansion of studies on the mediatization of food consumption. The importance not only of communication devices, but also of ritualization, habits and symbolic bonds established between brands, advertising discourses and consumers, allow establishing more specific manifestations about the parallel role of the meta-process of mediatization, acting simultaneously with other macro social movements in everyday practices (Trindade, 2012; 2014).

Social distinction and media capitals

The literature review of scholarship that studies the functioning of the different fields of cultural production from a methodological perspective linked to the sociology of media, which allows looking into the relationships of our object through an expanded societal approach. The theoretical-methodological tools integrated into Pierre Bourdieu's praxis have been regularly used to research food cultures, with focus on the relationships between class structures, the construction of taste regimes and the strategies of social distinction being performed through the consumption of cultural goods, including food (Bridle-Fitzpatrick, 2016; Bacon, 2014). Taste and its role in the hierarchies of social and cultural distinction has been a key issue in sociology since the publication of Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* (1960). This work, based on research conducted in France, determined the role that taste plays in the formation of individual and collective class structures. According to the formulation of Bourdieu (1960), taste is the capacity and predisposition of appropriation of resources (objects and practices) in the material, corporal and symbolic dimensions of a particular class. This means that unlike individual expressions or personalized patterns, taste regimes are associated with elements of expression of belonging and distinction through different capital acquisition practices (Bourdieu, 1989).

Although food production and consumption continue to be a marker of class distinction (Goody, 1982; Mennell, 1996; De Solier, 2005), recent criticism of Bourdieu's argument has been articulated from four perspectives: (1) the limited relevance of the formation model linked to social classes at a time when the boundaries and frontiers between hierarchies, scale of values and criteria of judgment and marked aesthetic preferences are more complex (Featherstone, Hepworth & Turner, 1991); (2) the expansion of the democratization of *good taste* promoted by the expansion of communication channels and greater access in terms of food supply and demand; (3) the inclusive restructuring (exclusion and inclusion being dialectical poles) of the eclecticism of the omnivore (De Solier, 2014); (4) and the convergence of taste structures defined by the growing supply available in terms of consumer goods (Warde, Martens & Olsen, 1999). However, to read *The Distinction* without considering the context of its publication, marked by opposition to bourgeois values, a growing population expansion, social distinction through consumption as a rule, the identification of education and culture, positioned as individual and collective liberation forces, is to flex the theory and interpret its analytical efforts superficially.

Alan Warde (2005), a sociologist specialized in food, has criticized the dual positioning of taste in the current sociology of food: the distinction and social reproduction defended by Bourdieu and, on the other hand, the freedom of choice and mobility of categories characterized both by Bauman's fluidity (2007) and the establishment of post-traditional societies by Giddens (1990). For Warde, the solution must be sought in reconciling food and taste preferences with modes of consumption. The *omnivorous* appears as one of these concepts formulated to reconcile these opposing positions. The concept deals with the fact that currently we experience a moment of fluidity in the limits between high and the popular culture, whose cultural repertoires and consumption practices follow this pattern. Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco (2012) researched the discourse of more than 30 *foodies* and their textual productions in different media platforms related to the gastronomic subfield and its culinary practices, and the way in which the nature of *good taste* went from being a marked characterization of exclusivity to become a

marker of inclusion determined by knowledge and consumption of *ethnic* culinary cultures.

In the case of the gastronomic subfield, the omnivorous does not demand an indiscriminate taste, on the contrary, it is formulated as a reformulation of the exclusive criteria of judgment. The value structured around the concepts of *authenticity* and *exoticism* of culinary cultures suggests a change in the rules and values established in the very *doxa of* the subfield; a globalizing turn instigated both by the opening of markets and the consequent possibility of displacement, and by the formulation of new aesthetic-food regimes linked to different discourses of modern lifestyles. However, its democratic potential also hides new patterns of distinction: not everything counts in terms of consumption as a social marker, not all foods are legitimate and legitimate choices (in relation to symbolic capital). On the contrary, the boundaries between a legitimate and illegitimate culture are being redrawn through a negotiation between "democratic quality and cultural populism" (Johnston & Baumann, 2007, p.179).

The use of Bourdieu's praxis has been the object of adaptations to research the possible introduction of media capitals in different cultural fields (Couldry, 2004, 2009; Driessens, 2013), and problematize some premises that have been affirmed in theoretical proposals on mediatization, demonstrating that the process of mediatization can be operationalized beyond the understanding of media logic as a formula and model of reproduction. The research of Nicolás Llano Linares (2017) presents an exploration of the media particularities of the process of mediatization in the gastronomic subfield, anchoring mediatization's macro-theoretical premises to a methodological approach related to sociology, that positions the subject as the object of transformation. In general terms, the perspective adopted by the author seeks to displace the media effects exclusively of the communicational object, articulating the consequences of media saturation in the social world with an exploration of historical conditions, objective structures of the gastronomic subfield and the subjective responses of participating agents, using media or visibility capital as the central axis of the transformation (Ibid.).

The research results point to a gradual understanding of the mediatization process in food culture, especially in the gastronomic subfield, and the way in which it has been changing the dynamics, processes and practices formulated in the subfield, transforming its internal structure and *doxa* in different ways: (1) change in the notions of cultural authority and its legitimation tools; (2) changes in conversion rates from the inclusion of media capitals in the types of capitals available in the subfield; (3) intensification of struggles and tensions between the configurative poles of the subfield; (4) incremental demand for the performance of media practices associated with the enhancement and maintenance of media visibility; (5) and the influence of a new path associated with the secondary *habitus* formulated under the logic of constant media visibility. In the case of the gastronomic subfield, the result of the growing importance of media visibility can be seen in the way in which the legitimacy of media capital deepens the tensioning of sources defined by the autonomous pole of the field, since the valuation of media capital as a source of cultural and symbolic capital is still being contested (Ibid.). A consequence that Bourdieu, in his work on the journalistic field, had already considered, but not in the light of the current degree of media visibility: making concessions to the market with the aim of gaining "legitimacy based on *ratings* and 'visibility'" (Bourdieu, 1998, p.73), brings with it a risk of losing position in the social field.

Final considerations

After overcoming the perception of food futility as an object of study, the scholarship produced in the field of communication in the last decades have been constantly questioning different social and cultural dimensions of the object. Although there is a continuation of studies that explore the role of the media in the construction of symbolic and discursive universes, the academic inquiry of food has been expanded to stances that seek to verify the transformations and changes in food practices using sociological and anthropological methodological frameworks anchored in communication theories,

especially in studies of reception and mediatization (Fantasia, 2010).

The results of the research reviewed in this paper reveal that the degree of direct affectation of the mediatization process in the field of food is inferior in comparison with other fields of cultural production. In the field of popular music, for example, constitutive elements of its object are being modified profoundly by the transformations of media environments. Streaming and digital services of musical reproduction, just to set two examples, have modified both the logic of the heteronymic pole (money is in the live shows and not in the purchase of physical musical object), and the nature of musical production, circulation and consumption. In comparison, food culture reveals itself as a process of indirect or flexible mediatization. However, the different theoretical and methodological approaches implemented in the studies reviewed point to a general conception of the mediatization process as a phenomenon with different degrees of affectation in different contexts, with particular dynamics defined by other meta-social processes that develop in a fragmented and non-linear manner (Krotz, 2013).

The different characterizations of the role of media in the transformations of food culture discussed in this paper can be defined using the metaphors created by Joshua Meyrowitz (1999) on the functions and possible consequences of the incremental role of media in society and culture: conduits or vehicles, languages and environments. As vehicles or conduits, the media amplifies the volume of media visibility, the speed and range of interactions and forms of transmission of culinary knowledge. As languages, the media construct normative discourses that shape the aesthetic and ethical aspects associated with culinary, gastronomic and cultural ideals. Finally, as an environment, the media co-structures power relations by embodying media practices, increasingly constitutive of these same power relations, represented in struggles for capital and positions of legitimacy in the field.

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