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Civic Imagination and Brazilian Television Fiction: forms of life under debate in the series Segunda Chamada

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Abstract

The paper seeks to analyze the series *Segunda Chamada* (Globo, 2019; 2021) from the perspective of the notion of civic imagination. This study has the purpose of identifying the potential for building the debate on citizenship in Brazil, based on the cultural imaginary of school institutions represented by the series, which places different forms of life in dialogue. To this end, a bibliographic review is carried out on the notion of citizenship, as well as imagination and imaginary, to understand the conceptual dynamics of civic imagination. Using this framework, a brief analysis of the narrative plots of the first season of *Segunda Chamada* is made to identify themes that spark the civic imagination. Finally, final considerations are made regarding the research, of an exploratory nature, indicating developments for future investigations into the topic.

Keywords

Citizenship; public education; city imagination; Brazilian serial production.

Introduction

In Di Felice's (2021) perspective, contemporary societies are undergoing changes that impact forms of life¹, permeated by technological devices that determine new ways of inhabiting for subjects in a process that can be understood by the idea of platformization of society, in which different activities (social, political, economic, affective, etc.) are mediated by digital platforms (Van Dijck et al., 2018). This condition of inhabiting, pointed out by the author, can be interpreted as a new understanding of the subject as a citizen, not necessarily belonging to a politically demarcated geographical region, but an inhabitant of a complex ecological network of "multiple communicative practices among the members of a network [...], formed by human beings, data, sensors, software, algorithms, forests, roads, etc." (Di Felice, 2021, p. 44). There is, then, the configuration of a new civism, or civic world, a set of norms, values, and practices that constitute a "universe of relationships outside the domestic space or intimacy where the status or condition of citizen takes precedence" (Oliveira, 2022, p. 146).

This contemporary view of civism and citizenship, also shared by authors like Canclini (2020), seeks to account for complex relationships, no longer subject-centric or universalizing, that emerge from political agendas on cultural and social diversity, biodiversity, the problem of automation, monitored information, and territorial disputes. Both Di Felice (2021) and Canclini (2020) corroborate the view that digital platforms affect forms of life in all their dimensions, demanding new strategies for subjects to act politically as citizens.

For this current configuration, the notion of "civic imagination", as formulated by Jenkins, Peter-Larazo, and Shersthova (2020), can be viewed as a political action strategy tailored to the context of societal platformization. The authors advocate for engagement in political agendas through the appropriation of media and entertainment imagery - a method of articulating activists and citizens through fictional worlds of films, comics, or series. While the proposal primarily addresses social conflicts in the United States, there exists a gap in understanding how this concept could be applied to other scenarios, such as the Brazilian context.

Building upon these references, this research aims to understand how nationally produced serialized audiovisual fiction can address themes that articulate diverse ways of life through the lens of civic imagination. The object of study is the first season of the series *Segunda Chamada* (Globo, 2019–2021), a co-production between Globo and O2 Filmes. Based on the play *Conselho de Classe* by Jô Bilac, the series was written by Carla Faour and Julia Spadaccini, with contributions from Maíra Motta, Giovana Moraes, and Victor At, under the artistic direction of Joana Jabace. *Segunda Chamada* examines the shortcomings of public education in Brazil by following the daily challenges and conflicts faced by a Youth and Adult Education (EJA) class at the Carolina Maria de Jesus State School, located on the outskirts of São Paulo.

Throughout the episodes, various themes and social realities are explored, with narratives that juxtapose different ways of life and debate the conditions of citizenship within a Brazilian context marked by extreme inequality. The series presents education as the primary vehicle for individual and collective transformation, and the school as a space for reconstituting the "meaning of living together." This perspective aligns with the premise that the function of the school is to foster civic education, defined as "a condition for a people to be able to exercise citizenship and pursue the path of prosperity" (SEALF/MEC, 2022, p. 4).

Therefore, the objective is to address the central research question: Does the cultural imaginary presented in the series *Segunda Chamada* have the potential to stimulate civic imagination among viewers?

1 The notion of "forms of life" is adopted here from the perspective of Greimas and Fontanille (1993), referring to the different ways in which human subjects conceive, organize, and attribute meaning to their experiences through symbolic systems, such as language.

To achieve this, the article will initially undertake a comprehensive literature review on the contemporary concept of citizenship, encompassing the notions of imagination and the imaginary, to elucidate the conceptual dynamics that contribute to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. Building upon the established theoretical framework, a concise analysis of the first season of "Segunda Chamada" will be conducted, aiming to identify thematic elements that may potentially evoke civic imagination. In conclusion, the research, which employs an exploratory approach, will offer considerations on the findings and delineate potential avenues for further investigation into communicative dynamics that transcend narrative analyses of fictional series.

Citizenship as a Process under Construction

In recent years, Canclini (2020) notes that debates surrounding the notion of citizenship have intensified within a context of crisis in institutionalized political representation and the rise of anti-democratic movements in various countries, many of which are propagated online. These discussions tend to broaden the understanding of civism and democracy beyond the universal view of rights tied to a specific territory of a sovereign state.

In Brazil, this debate gained momentum in the 1990s, following the redemocratization process marked by the end of the military regime and the enactment of the 1988 Constitution. According to Silva (2010), a hallmark of the return to democratic rule was the strong connection between the idea of citizenship and social movements, which became more heterogeneous and began seeking alternatives to traditional spaces of political transformation, such as political parties and labor unions.

When addressing the concept of citizenship, Silva (2010) observes two main tendencies: (a) a traditional or modern strand, which understands citizenship through Marshall (2002), an English thinker who establishes the idea of citizenship based on political, civil, and social rights constituted by the State, which considers everyone as equal; (b) and a critical strand, opposed to the idealism of the first, which establishes citizenship as something stable and equal for all through constituent rights. In the view of Brazilian thinkers of this line, the "conception of citizenship appropriate to the Brazilian reality should prioritize its procedural moment more than the implementation of rights" (Silva, 2010, p. 97).

However, being strategic for democracy, as Benevides (1994) complements, the idea of citizenship also presupposes institutions, mediations, and civic behaviors, with social spaces for struggle and political institutions (such as parties and unions), legislation, and sectors of public power. Benevides assumes citizenship through the prism of action, a social and political process under construction, in contrast to passive citizenship, which is granted by the State, with the moral idea of favor and guardianship" (Benevides, 1994, n.p.).

The citizenship reflected by Brazilian researchers would be that of a constructive process, "in which diverse social actors build disparate normative projects and clash over the reconfiguration of the normative order" (Tavolaro, 2009, p. 97).

This procedural view of citizenship, detached from the rigidity of traditional spaces of political representation, is also shared by authors like Canclini (1997), who discusses how contemporary practices of media consumption have altered the exercise of citizenship. For the author, the degradation of political institutions in recent years has led to the strengthening of other modes of participation, derived from the private consumption of products and media.

As a backdrop to this trend, Canclini (1997) also points to the fluidity that the ideas of identity and culture have taken on in an increasingly globalized society. Currently, forms of life are assimilated as "a flexible articulation of parts, a collage of traits that any citizen of any country, religion, and ideology can read or use" (Canclini, p. 17). The author argues that citizenship goes beyond the rights recognized by state institutions: it also encompasses social and cultural practices that provide a sense of belonging to

individuals, who no longer need to be tied to a territory.

This belonging, as Canclini (1997) aptly points out, is not linked to a right to equality, but to difference. Thus, subjectivity gains an aspect of renewal in society, adding to citizenship a function of 'political strategy,' in order to embrace cultural practices that still escape the legal order. In this way, different fronts of claiming existence emerge, with "a racial citizenship, another of gender, another ecological, and so we can continue to break down citizenship into an infinite multiplicity of claims" (Canclini, 1997, p. 24).

This process is further intensified with digital platforms, which, according to Canclini (2020), have definitively destroyed the 'sense of living together,' with cultural practices that occur entirely online, creating a greater sense of urgency in political groupings (some ephemeral) based on affections and ecological issues. In the author's view, a process of decitizenization is crystallizing, with the erasure of traditional political institutions in favor of identity-based social movements. This is added to practices in online social networks, with "globally or regionally empowered actors who rehearse actions on what we should or should not do in relation" (Canclini, 2020, p. 16) to political and ecological agendas. Although the term decitizenization suggests that the idea of citizenship is ending, the author emphasizes that the use of the expression is only to reinforce a movement of deconstruction of the classical understanding of citizenship.

In addition to these contemporary discussions, one can also cite the notion of digital citizenship formulated by Di Felice (2021, p. 44), which proposes "rethinking the habitative condition from the notion of communicative forms," transcending any relationship of the individual with a specific territory or place, but being the result of communicative practices "among the members of a complex ecological network." This would establish an ecology of networks, no longer centered on subjects, but interactive between individuals, biodiversity, technology, information, and territory, establishing interdependencies among members, and determining new forms of life, "continuously constructed by the administration of data flow" (Di Felice, 2021, p. 87).

According to the author, coupled with the changes brought about by connective technologies and digital architectures of interaction, the crisis of the Western political imaginary, democracy, and the revision of the anthropocentric question break the culture of citizenship linked to the right to vote. Di Felice (2021) points out the flaws in this conception, since access and participation in voting do not imply effectively participating in the meaning, values, and foundations of public debate and civism. Thus, digital citizenship is understood by the author as the expansion of parliamentary rights and participatory forms and, therefore, as a strengthening, a more complete version of democracy.

In this last notion, there is a more positive view of digital networks for the consolidation of full citizenship, which contrasts with the perspectives of Canclini (2020), who understands digital platforms (the ecology of networks in Di Felice's view) as a space biased by technology companies and particular interests of neoliberal capital, which has been systematically eroding democracy in different countries. Despite this, both Canclini (2020) and Di Felice (2021) agree that the notion of citizenship is being updated in light of transformations in media consumption, and how this brings multiple forms of life to the political debate, with citizens without a uniform identity, but mutable, that takes into account non-human agents.

Given this context, following the line of thought of Canclini (1997, 2020), it is urgent to understand how the collective imaginary of civil society is represented and propagated by media and platforms. From the author's perspective, these would be the "scenarios of consumption where what we could call the aesthetic bases of citizenship are formed" (Canclini, 1997, p. 248).

Going further, one can think of these means as instruments of citizenship, constituting imaginaries that foster reflections and citizen actions, in which different social subjects can dialogue through fictional worlds. As Han (2022) states, when discussing the scenario of the crisis of democracy in recent years due to social networks that nullified rational debate, imagination is necessary for a democratic and inclusive discourse, because through it, the subject can put themselves in the place of the other, which helps to

formulate opinions and positions more objectively. He concludes, "without the presence of the other, my opinion is not discursive, much less representative, but autistic, doctrinaire, and dogmatic" (Han, 2020, p. 51)².

Building upon this line of reflection, we can adopt the notion of 'civic imagination' as a means to discuss how entertainment productions can be strategic tools for the constructive process of citizenship. It is understood, therefore, that audiovisual products such as series and soap operas, produced for television and streaming, are capable of influencing the public to "imagine alternatives to current cultural, political, or economic conditions," because "we cannot change the world without imagining what a better world would look like" (Jenkins, Peter-Larazo, & Sherstova, 2020, p. 5).

The Notion of Civic Imagination

Formulated by Jenkins, Peter-Larazo, and Sherstova (2020), the concept of civic imagination seeks to reconcile the dimensions of consumer and citizen present in the audience of media productions, addressing activist actions that stem from the realm of entertainment imagination. In the authors' conception, through fictional experiences, individuals can see themselves as agents of citizenship, capable of making changes and showing solidarity with others whose social and political perspectives differ from their own, thus joining a collective with shared interests, bringing "imaginative dimensions to real-world spaces and places" through concrete actions (Jenkins, Peter-Larazo & Sherstova, 2020, p. 5).

It is worth noting that the notion of civic imagination should not be confused with the idea of social merchandising, which is widespread in Brazil through studies on soap operas, especially Globo productions. Social merchandising is understood as a communication strategy adopted within the narrative arcs of soap operas, in which "socio-educational measures are used that allow the audience to extract teachings and reflections capable of positively changing their knowledge, values, attitudes, and practices" (Lopes, 2009, p. 153). In other words, it does not elicit a participatory dimension from the audience, as the idea of civic imagination does through a process of appropriation or re-signification by individuals for use in social agendas. Behind the notion of merchandising, there is a rather expository idea, like commercial products, which in this case would be social agendas³.

Despite this intended purpose, it is not difficult to find examples of social merchandising now considered controversial in their representations, sparking debates through sensational scenes, with physical and verbal aggression against women, the elderly, and Black people (Freitas & Chaves, 2020). It is possible to affirm that many soap operas lacked proper social responsibility in addressing their various themes, having both successes and failures, so much so that, starting in 2023, Globo established a team to edit soap operas rebroadcast by the paid channel Viva, intending to remove everything that is seen as 'politically incorrect' for today (Felix, 2023).

The idea of civic imagination stems particularly from a perspective of British Cultural Studies, which establishes a proximity between cultural productions and the political view of the subjects who consume them. In the authors' perspective, culture needs to be understood as a symbolic space where meanings are not given, but constructed in reception and disputed. Thus, the idea of civic imagination

2 Han's (2020) statement arises from a dialogue with the ideas of Hannah Arendt (2020), in discussing political thought as 'representativeness' in democracy, where the thought of the other is always co-present in the formation of opinions through discursive practice.

3 Despite this intended purpose, it is not difficult to find examples of social merchandising today considered controversial in their representations, sparking debates through sensational scenes, with physical and verbal aggression against women, the elderly, and Black people (Freitas & Chaves, 2020). It is possible to affirm that many soap operas did not have proper social responsibility in the treatment of their various themes, having both successes and failures, so much so that, starting in 2023, Globo established a team to edit soap operas rebroadcast by the paid channel Viva, with the objective of removing everything that is seen as 'politically incorrect' for today (Felix, 2023).

adopts the notion of hegemony for culture, through Hall (2003, p. 255), viewed as "a kind of permanent battlefield, where no final victories are obtained, but where there are always strategic positions to be won or lost." As a zone of dispute, Jenkins et al. (2020) position popular culture (commercial or not) as the basis of all forms of expression of the subject, which can be used for political engagement for the common good.

In this sense, there are actions taken to benefit a public that is outside the social sphere of the subject, supporting community connections to meet shared goals. Examples of these actions are drawn from case studies of fan activism, such as those of Game of Thrones, when they remixed Donald Trump's speeches with excerpts from the series⁴, portraying him as a villain (Jenkins, Peter-Larazo, & Sherstova, 2020).

Imagination, commonly understood in an individual context, gains a public status when used as a strategic political action. The authors argue that democratic regimes require a strong public imagination to make new ideas and political proposals visible, shareable, and understandable for all (Jenkins, Peter-Larazo, & Sherstova, 2020). Democratic discourse, as indicated by Han (2022), would occur through the sharing of subjectivities contained in the imagination of different social groups or forms of life, which, in turn, would be nourished by the cultural imaginary consumed through media and platforms that represent fictional worlds⁵. Thus, after a broader understanding of citizenship and how it dialogues with the notion of civic imagination, it becomes necessary to understand the relationship between imagination and the imaginary, and how these dialogues with the existence of different forms of citizen life.

Imagination, Cultural Imaginary and Forms of Life

The theme of the cultural imaginary has been widely discussed in various fields of knowledge, often confused with imagination. Since ancient philosophers, especially logicians and Cartesian rationalism in the 17th century, the imaginary was defined as dream, madness, and delirium.

Based on the definition of imaginary taken from the dictionary as "the set of symbols and attributes of a people, or of a certain social group," Nascimento (2001, p. 1), based on Durand (1997), points out that the term is organized by three core meanings: "plurality, representation, and collectivity, figuratively represented by set, symbols, people, and group," respectively. Imagination, on the other hand, defined as "the faculty that the spirit has to represent images, fantasies, creation, invention," brings the traits of "singularity, representation, and individuality, figuratively represented by spirit, represent, creation, and invention," respectively (Nascimento, 2001, p. 1). For the author, "both imaginary and imagination are languages, only the first term is of the collective order and the second, of the individual" (Nascimento, 2001, p. 1). According to the author, the imaginary is organized by cultural and collective agreements. Thus, the authentic imaginary does not distance us from reality, but restores us to it.

Durand (1997, p. 15) defines, in an anthropological conception, the imaginary as being the "museum of all past, possible, produced, and to be produced images." The imaginary forms the "thinking capital of man." From this perspective, the imaginary is constituted by sets organized around nuclei between constellations and archetypes. For Durand (1997), the symbolic representation of the imaginary can be found in languages and social institutions.

Understanding imagination as a cultural construction that emerges from the structures of the human unconscious, Durand (1997) argues that imagination is the source of liberation. He explains:

It is through it [imagination] that the donation of meaning passes and the *process of*

4 Available at: <https://youtu.be/I0tE6T-ecmg?si=rPNKM0kYViBsH7bA> Accessed on: October 8, 2023

5 The term fictional world is used to "denote the sum of all content and expressive planes (all compositions) that are constructed to adhere to the same internal logic" (Dena, 2009, p. 23) of a fictional reality that is represented through different media. The fictional world of a television series, for example, can be represented by other means besides television, such as through books derived from the original work.

symbolization functions, it is through it that human thought becomes alienated from the objects that amuse it, like the dreams and delusions that pervert and engulf it in desires taken for reality (Durand, 1997, p. 23, emphasis added by the authors).

This process of symbolization is materialized by images that are organized into standardized representations, which impose meanings on a passive viewer (Durand, 1997). On the other hand, Durand shows us that there are transgressive images, through which the imaginary reconstructs or transforms the real. These images occur in oral narratives, street theater, children's rhymes, that is, in popular culture and in art considered canonical.

In this regard, even though the cultural production of entertainment has a contradictory nature, as argued in the notion of civic imagination, the cultural imaginary of entertainment is, at the same time, capable of reinforcing hegemonic ideas and being a source of transformation for individuals. As Durand (1997) states, it is through imagination that the subject is liberated and expresses their desires, which, as focused here, seek the common good.

Institutions, such as schools, for example, are socially sanctioned symbolic networks, which have both a functional and an imaginary part in culture. Thus, the moment these institutions enter into crisis, a fragmentation of this sanctioned symbolic network is exposed, establishing new forms of life that escape a traditional institutional understanding.

Based on Greimas and Fontanille (1993), it is understood that forms of life manifest the ways of feeling, thinking, being, and acting of subjects who follow an organized model of behaviors archived in the cultural imaginary and updated in representations. Forms of life change from a rupture, a fracture in everyday life that, through the invention by negation of a social morality, a system of values, or narrative programs legitimized by the media, causes an innovative event. This event, if accepted, stabilizes and starts to configure itself as a new way of life that will soon become routine (Câmara, 2014).

From this perspective, considering the plurality (human and non-human) that the notion of citizenship seeks to encompass today, the forms of citizen life can be analyzed from the point of view of the dynamics represented and disseminated by the cultural system. Some of these forms of life are inventive and transgressive in the face of established social standards, or come into conflict with each other, which demands a new political action.

Based on the assumption that television narratives put forms of life into circulation, "facilitating the constitution or affirmation of social groups qualitatively distinct from each other" (Landowski, 2002, p.94), audiovisual serial fictions are understood as an adequate space for the debate around civic imagination in the Brazilian context.

More specifically, the series *Segunda Chamada* (Globo, 2019-2021) presents a perspective on the role of school institutions in the face of the contemporary cultural imaginary. It is considered that the school, as an institution, configures a disciplinary imaginary that always seeks to train active citizens for the common good. In the traditional classroom, a teacher is responsible for the organization and conduct of a disciplinary ritual, directed by the laws that govern Brazilian education, passing his knowledge on to the student. However, what is established in the experience is the construction of collective knowledge, permeated by debates, conflicts, and reconciliations of the different. This characteristic permeates all episodes of *Segunda Chamada*.

Next, the cultural imaginary of school institutions represented by the fictional world of *Segunda Chamada* is analyzed to identify the potential in building a civic imagination.

Segunda Chamada – possible worlds and civic imagination

Launched on October 8, 2019, the first season of the series *Segunda Chamada* aired on Globo, with eleven episodes, and its second season, with six episodes, premiered in 2021 directly on Globoplay,

and was only broadcast on open TV in 2023. The series has a strong dramatic and social context appeal, with themes from the daily lives of Brazilians.

To strengthen the proposal of verisimilitude, *Segunda Chamada* was recorded in a real public school, located in São Paulo (SP). One of the authors of the series, Carla Faour, explains: "The director found the school, and it really makes all the difference because it carries the memory, the history. You see the marks that the students left there. The series wins by having a location and not just a studio."⁶.

It is with this dialogue between the everyday and the fictional that the plot leads the viewer to an experience that tries to resemble the day-to-day life in a public school, in addition to providing more tools to guide social debates, in what Lopes (2009, p. 31) calls a 'social semiosis', from the moment a teledramaturgy product creates a kind of communication network of its own and involves the public by mixing the limits of reality.

The limits of this reality can be understood by the idea of "possible worlds" which, from Ryan's perspective (2005, p. 449), are spaces for constructing accessibility relations between the fictional world and the real world, and these relations depend "not only on logical principles, but also on physical laws and material causality". Thus, fictional worlds can be realistic or fantastic, depending on whether the events they relate to can or cannot occur physically in the real world. The realistic aesthetic and social themes of the fictional world of *Segunda Chamada* help to configure it credibly and believably.

In the world of the series, the plots and ways of life of students and teachers in Brazilian public education unfold. All its elements help to create accessibility relations between the fictional reality of the characters and the concrete reality of the public, engaging their imagination in urgent social themes, beyond public education itself. The dialogue between so many forms of citizen life in this possible world would help to establish the potential for civic imagination that *Segunda Chamada* presents.

An explicit example of this search for verisimilitude is at the end of each episode of the first season, where there are testimonials from real people about the importance of education in their lives. They are all adults, some elderly, reporting the life experience that led them to enter school to complete formal education.

In the last episode of the first season, instead of testimonials from real former students, the viewer is surprised by testimonials from student characters in the series. These stories show that reality inspired fiction to portray the possible world of the series. Through the testimonials, the relationship between fiction and reality is reinforced, imprinting marks/traces of truth through the documentary language of memory narration.

Thus, an "affective engagement" (Baltar, 2007) is established with the public, bringing them closer and, sometimes, creating an identification of the viewer with the stories portrayed. Baltar (2007, p. 96) explains:

performances of memory - the act of witnessing, of narrating memory - and a notion of emotional engagement with such an act, a bond that ends up reinforcing the value of authenticity, recovering, in this way, through this kind of sentimental contract, the social place of speech of the documentary domain. The emotional charge that unites us, character, director, film, and spectators, gives credibility to what is, ultimately, of the order of the intimate, the private.

Such testimonials also reinforce a melodramatic aspect of the series, because, following Baltar's (2007) thinking, the 'performances of memory' are linked to the melodramatic universe for two reasons: "firstly, because the bond established from these testimonies is of the order of affective engagement; and secondly, because such engagement acts precisely to strengthen a kind of correlation between the private and the public." (Baltar, 2007, p. 96). These are the so-called procedures of melodramatic imagination

6 Retrieved October 10, 2023 from <https://gshow.globo.com/series/segunda-chamada/noticia/segunda-chamada-elenco-direcao-e-autores-lancam-nova-serie-da-globo-em-sao-paulo.ghtm>

that articulate precisely an invitation to emotion, in the case of the viewer of the series. Thus, in addition to the constitution of the world, the melodrama present in *Segunda Chamada* helps in the articulation of transgressive images, which in turn feeds the public's imagination about the different forms of citizen life active in society.

As the main axis of the world of *Segunda Chamada*, there is the public school as a fictional institution that orders dramatic conflicts, which also characterizes it as an institutional series. Meimarides (2021, p. 128) states that these series represent fictional institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and police stations, which "are responsible for ordering and providing rhythm to the narrative", just as the social institutions around us order certain processes. According to the author, another issue explored through fictional institutions is their representation as functional organs for the social system, a characteristic that is constantly brought up in *Segunda Chamada*, as public education is always figuratively portrayed as precarious, but essential for the construction of citizenship.

Finally, Meimarides (2021, p. 129) states that these organizations, in addition to ordering narrative routines, "provide dramatic tension by constantly placing the characters in limbo", that is, fictional institutions assume a foreground in all narrative lines, constituting dramatic dynamics central to the characters' plots, such as roles (teachers, students or principals, in the case of a school) and norms the relationships between them. As the author comments, this makes series focused on social institutions assume a "flexible and lasting narrative format, because they can tell the same narrative several times disguised as different stories" (Meimarides, 2021, p. 129).

These are characteristics that are reflected in the multiple plots represented in *Segunda Chamada*, inserted in the institutional dynamics of Brazilian public education, in which the school is placed as a civic space for debate and conciliation of social conflicts. In a serialized structure, marked by melodrama, which combines narrative arcs that are concluded in a single episode and others that spread throughout the season, *Segunda Chamada* strains the relationship of its different characters and deepens everyday themes in Brazil.

Through the Plots of Public Education

In *Segunda Chamada*, the subjects are presented interchangeably, by more than one character, as reflected in a mirror. The technique is used by comparing facts of the teachers' lives with those of their students. The teaching difficulties are stamped on the precarious physical structure of the school. Right in the first episode, there is an irony in relation to the state of instability of the fictional institution, when one of the teachers, pointing out the problems with a lamp, says, "Here is a short circuit every day". The overload of the student, a mother who takes her daughter to school to continue studying, is also in the teacher Sônia (Hermila Guedes), with two children, without a support network, and with an abusive and aggressive husband. The same teacher, who is a victim of violence from her partner, faces the decision to file a complaint against him at the police station after a similar episode with one of her students. Another teacher, Eliete (Thalita Carauta), holds the baby in her lap and says: "I'm also a single mother, I also know what it's like"⁷.

Here we have the school as an institution beyond the guardian of formal knowledge, of the subject in the book, on the blackboard, but as a trainer of life, and as a network that intertwines countless similar stories between its characters. Among the themes paraded in the 11 episodes of the first season it is possible to find: extreme poverty, teenage pregnancy, transphobia, underemployment, violence, crime, drugs, violence against women, rape, abortion, prostitution, discouragement of culture, religious intolerance, lack of family planning policies, police repression, racism, among other issues.

⁷ Episode 1, 18 min.

Through its plots, *Segunda Chamada* presents elements of traditional melodrama, with numerous moments of tension, strong emotional charge, twists and turns and extreme situations, at various times combining pain, fear, violence, tears, and passions, with chapters loaded with "aesthetics of repetition" (Zanetti, 2009, p. 184), combining devices in the plot such as polycentrism (countless nuclei that converge) and regulated irregularity: the facts are exposed in an disordered way, but nothing that escapes easy understanding by the public.

The personal drama of the protagonist, teacher Lúcia (Débora Bloch), who suffers from the death of her son since the first episode, is unraveled in balanced doses chapter by chapter, until the elucidative outcome in the last two episodes of the first season. In this way, "the viewer feels comfortable finding the familiar, knowing how the plot will be more or less conducted and how the conflicts will be resolved" (Zanetti, 2009, p. 185). The feeling of curiosity and, at the same time, of comfort that everything will be clarified in the end is something characteristic of institutional series (Meimarides, 2021).

Another important point that connects the production to melodrama is the profile of its protagonist, a heroine who transcends, at all times, her role inside the classroom and connects in the search for the resolution of her students' problems, largely by carrying the guilt of not having 'helped' her own son, who passed away. The clashes between the character Lúcia and the principal Jaci (Paulo Gorgulho) expose the teacher's savior profile, as in her statement in the first episode: "They can give up on school, but I don't give up on them". This classic role of heroine is one of the precepts for melodrama, being part of a "combination of resources and strategies, resulting in effects that generate certain feelings, meanings and sensations" (Zanetti, 2009, p. 192).

This characteristic is more evident by the dynamic of interposition of the plots of students and teachers, as well illustrated in episode 8 of the first season, when the story arc of student Aline (Ingrid Gaigher) is used as a tool to expand the personal drama of teacher Sônia (Hermila Guedes), one of the protagonists of the series.

In the first chapters of the series, the public is introduced to the problematic relationship of the teacher with her husband, Carlos (Otávio Müller), who is unemployed and does not participate in the activities of the house where he lives with his wife, mother, and the couple's two children. Sônia serves as a reflection of the real situation of thousands of Brazilian women in issues such as overload, accumulation of domestic work, mental exhaustion, and abusive relationships. As the plot unfolds, Sônia begins to get emotionally involved with a colleague, Professor Marco André (Silvio Guindane). This relationship ends up increasing the husband's aggressiveness towards his wife, in an escalation of events present at various times in the unfolding of the series, and whose climax occurs in the eighth episode, in which a student of Sônia is assaulted by her own partner.

It is noticeable that the series proposes to connect the two stories (teacher and student) so that the public realizes that violence against women is more common than they think, using the resource of identification, which leads us to believe that the same can happen to those who are watching the product. In order to promote these discussions before the audience, the series reproduces a "shared repertoire", as Lopes (2009) points out. This content "is at the base of the representations of an imagined national community that television, more than any other medium, can capture, express and permanently update" (Lopes, 2009, p. 23).

The chosen theme (violence against women) has a strong appeal and has received increasing prominence in the country, which has alarming rates⁸, as is clear in the face of the reaction, especially of the students. The model of intertextuality of the stories is also applied when Aline's boyfriend tries to reconnect with the young woman at the school door, before assaulting her. While he approaches her ("come back to me"), students dance hip-hop and sing "Beware of this low game, I'll tell you off". The

8 Cf.: <https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-paulo/noticia/2023/07/20/casos-de-violencia-contra-mulher-crianca-e-adolescente-crescem-no-brasil-em-2022-mostra-anuario.ghtml> Accessed on: November 7, 2023.

assault on the young woman happens in front of everyone, and the contextualization of the case is done, on purpose, in front of Professor Sônia, who relives her own secret dilemma. The professional's fear is put to the test when the student decides, supported by her colleagues and Marco André, to report the aggressor to the police: "I think you are rushing. What if he is dangerous?". At this moment, another student, Natasha (Linn da Quebrada), provokes the teacher: "It seems that you are the one who is afraid" - in a dialogue that can also be understood as a provocation to the viewer.

Episode 8 of *Segunda Chamada* brings examples of what Durand (1998) classifies as components of an imaginary constructed through narrative and imagetic elements, in the context of the "explosion of video" (Durand, 1998, p. 32), which symbolizes the preponderant force of audiovisual media. In the case of the series, distributed by open television and streaming, we have a manifestation that the image represents "a kind of intermediary between an unmanifested unconscious and a collective awareness" (Durand, 1998, p. 36).

By adopting the school as a symbol of the current fragmentation of the symbolic networks of the contemporary cultural imaginary, *Segunda Chamada* constitutes a fictional world in which forms of life intersect through the plots. The series brings to the public discussions that demand a citizen's imagination of the subjects, to think collectively in the solution of problems at different levels.

In this process, it is possible to identify a fomentation of real discussions of the public, in the face of similarities with their own experiences, whether as students of the public network, teachers, residents of the periphery, or who have already lived indirectly through any of the cases pointed out there. Even in the context of the middle class, which appears in the background in the story of the protagonist Lúcia, this is identified. These tools of recognition and belonging are displayed without the guise of social merchandising, characteristic of soap operas, where a poorly disguised didacticism is generally felt. Here, the notion of social responsibility is integrated in a way that seems more natural in the viewer's life experiences.

Final Considerations

As discussed in this work, the notion of citizenship is expanding, not limited to formal political and legal criteria, or being a universalizing view of subjects, but also trying to encompass non-human agents in some debates. Contemporary forms of citizen life are constructed in multiple ways and act to be recognized. This dynamic puts the experience between different people into debate, emerging conflicts that are intensified especially through digital social networks, where dialogue is subjugated by the resources and governance of the platforms.

The promotion of civic imagination through the cultural imaginary that circulates in the media and platforms could be used as a pedagogical means to create a space for dialogue between different people, to discuss solutions to political and social problems in people's daily lives. This quality can be seen in the first season of *Segunda Chamada*, in which a public school is transformed into a microcosm of Brazilian urban reality. However, the cut made here is synthetic, and investigations regarding the perspectives of the notion dealt with that permeate the discussions on racism or transphobia, for example, can be unfolded. In particular, future investigations that cross-analyze fictional audiovisual series with research on the consumption and reception of the works.

It is pertinent that the research expands its scope beyond narrative issues. Participation would be an important factor for the notion of civic imagination, and platforms a space for the development of participatory strategies. Even with online distribution, *Segunda Chamada* fails to expand its agendas and discussions on a platform like Globoplay. The series fosters the notion of civic imagination, but the main platform through which it circulates does not have the resources to take advantage of this.

And this may not be restricted to *Segunda Chamada* alone. Brazilian teledramaturgy is rich in

examples that address sensitive social and political issues. The debates could be fed back with public participation.

Such strategies require, on the other hand, a more in-depth study of the public's actions on social networks. As a consumer research that has a qualitative approach. This issue may not be of interest to many private broadcasters as it does not have a commercial return. Which puts us back around another debate outside the scope of this research: reflecting on a public communication policy, something important to think about strategies that foster civic imagination through media and public service platforms. These are issues that need to be unfolded in future investigations.

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