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Cultural Mediators in the Digital Age Symposium

Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez, Santiago

10 September, 2018

Entel Room

Final Programme

9.30 am **Coffee and registration**

10.00 am **Welcome and Introductions**

10.15-11.30 am **Panel 1: Circuits of cultural value and legitimacy in digital sphere**

Chair: Joanne Entwistle

Matías Valderrama and Patricio Velasco, "Youtubers: new distinctions and valorisations".

Francisco Ibáñez and Arturo Arriagada, "It has to be organic": unpacking digital influencers' knowledge and expertise in the social media economy".

Break 11.30-11.45

11.45-1.15 **Panel 2: Mediation of 'lifestyle'**

Chair: Arturo Arriagada

Lucía Vodanovic, "Journalism without 'news': everyday aesthetics and the private self".

Tomás Undurraga, "Knowledge production in journalism: translation, mediation and authorship in Brazil".

Paloma Domínguez, "The process of collaborative writing of fanfiction fan-authors: a new way of conceiving writing in the digital era".

Lunch

1.15-2.30 pm

2.30-3.45 Panel 3: Mediating fashion

Chair: Agnès Rocamora

Elizabeth Wissinger, "Circuits of Cool in Fashion Tech".

Maria Carolina Zanette and Daiane Scaraboto, "Shaping legitimacy: the role of materiality in contestations of products' legitimacy by consumers".

Benjamin Rosental and Flavia Cardoso, "(Mis) Representations of the third age in the media: stigma management strategies in an evolving society".

3.45-4.00 pm Break

4.00-5.00 pm Panel discussion with Agnès Rocamora and Joanne Entwistle

ABSTRACTS

YouTubers: new distinctions and valorisations

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Attention has been paid to the influence that digital platforms would have on the creative practices of their users. In particular, the generation of content on YouTube, although starts as a hobby in most cases, has become a productive activity that requires salient social networks and knowledge of how to “go viral”. Becoming a successful YouTuber have served as a springboard for events and careers in other traditional media so that a growing industry. But, at the same time, the creative practices of YouTubers are affected by the algorithms and technical affordances of the platform, configuring what is popular or good content. The creation of videos on YouTube is also established under certain legal conditions and policies defined from the North, which restrict creative processes and often transfer the profits of the content generators to third parties.

Through a qualitative analysis of semi-structured interviews with Chilean creators of audio-visual content on YouTube and based on Science and Technology Studies and Bourdieu’s fields theory, we will show how practices of creators in YouTube are situated within an emerging socio-technical field where a struggle for different forms of capital takes place. This field presents its own dynamics of distinction, recognition and consecration, which would be actively mediated by complex algorithmic systems and analytics that configure the valorisation and monetisation of contents (and their creators), as well as ensuring respect for regulatory frameworks. We examine how in this field a successful and consolidated group of creators has been established with strong connections with brands and traditional media, in front of other content generators in more disadvantageous positions that have had to adapt and look for alternatives to “cheat” the algorithms to preserve their independence. In sum, this study will offer clues about the development of this field and the growing commercialization of the content on the YouTube platform in Chile.

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Sociologist and Master in Sociology from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. His areas of interest include Digital Culture, Communication Media, Social Movements, Digital Methods, Social Network and Media Analysis and Social

Theory. He is currently working on research projects about the digital transformation of organizations and the datafication of individuals and environments.

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“It has to be organic”: unpacking digital influencers’ knowledge and expertise in the social media economy

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In the present work we propose to explore the varied forms of expertise displayed by digital influencers on Instagram. We understand that new technological platforms require the updating and translation of old knowledge into this new ‘digital’ context, while enabling the generation of new ones. Influencers’ knowledge depends on the position they occupy in the social media economy. This economy is constituted by followers, influencers, branding agencies, brands and training academies. For influencers this knowledge is more intuitive and difficult to transmit, reluctant to be encapsulated in formulas. They also validate their position in this economy as providers of this valuable expertise.

We identified different strategies through which expertise is displayed and validated. Part of the effectiveness of influencers’ actions depends on how followers perceive the content. Content perceived unnatural by influencers’ followers is associated with traditional advertising, while what is “organic” is desirable. This does not correspond so much to a really natural and spontaneous content, but to one that is situated as accounting of everyday life. Influencers mediate the everyday life in a digital ecosystem (e.g. Instagram and YouTube are digital sources of information and ‘inspiration’, as well as platforms to communicate their content and validate their expertise). They do this by hiding

from its audience the effort and planning that their practices imply. Influencers do not seek to recommend products and consumer experiences from an expert voice, but from a close one, which values the individual experience and the diversity of results over technical guarantees and accredited opinions. Influencers are loyal to their audience, but also to the brands and agencies that structures their digital practices. In an economy that has long been strengthening brands by associating them with human attributes and concerns, influencers come to do the same exercise in the opposite direction: they are able to describe their daily life in terms of the sum of certain actions associated to brands and goods.

Francisco Ibáñez

Sociologist, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Associate Researcher in Cultura Social Media (www.culturasocialmedia.com), research lab based at Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez that explores the role social media has in processes of value generations. Co-author of the study "Musicians, labels and fans in the digital age", funded by Chile's Arts Council (2017). His interests include technology, everyday life and digital culture.

Arturo Arriagada

Associate Professor in the School of Communications at Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez. PhD in Sociology and MSc in Media and Communications from the London School of Economics. Director of Cultura Social Media. In the last three years his research has been oriented to the relation between communication, economy and social media.

Journalism without 'news': everyday aesthetics and the private self

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Recent scholarship about lifestyle journalism has started to establish its function beyond the focus on the political and the social in order to include those roles related to everyday life (Hanusch, 2017), the self-expression elements of consumption and the individual construction of identity (Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2013). A number of authors have worked with Bauman's framework of 'liquid modernity' to argue that, in a world in which identity is less imposed from the solidity of external terms of reference, individuals forge and display their identities through lifestyle choices; journalists do play an important role in that management of the self and everyday life. Indeed, it could be argued that the 'everyday' has emerged as an important dimension in the research of journalism, mirroring its emergence in other areas of critical theory –an advent discussed by John Storey (2014) in *From Popular Culture to Everyday Life*–. In more specific terms, Hanitzsch and Vos (2018) have asserted the roles of journalism in everyday life onto three

interrelated spaces: consumption, identity and emotion; in these spaces, the journalist could act as a marketer, service provider, friend, connector, mood manager, inspirator and guide (Hanitzsch and Vos, 2018). One of the interesting insights of this recent literature about the role of lifestyle journalists is that it has become possible to imagine the audience as both citizen and consumer, and not necessarily as either citizen or consumer (Hanusch, 2017).

This link between consumption and identity also stresses the need to place journalism in the wider context of lifestyle media research, as Julian Matthews has done when discussing the journalist as an 'intermediary' and highlighting how the media ecology is 'peppered with journalists who dispense advice and shape tastes on cultural matters in their role of self-portrayed "expert"' (2014: 148).

In spite of this recent scholarship, and the explosion of lifestyle journalism content online (through the emergence of a never ending offer of platforms such as Refinery 29, The Pool and many others), lifestyle journalism continues to be under researched and regarded as a 'lesser' form of it, somehow ignoring the fact that journalism has always included coverage of the private as well as the public sphere, as argued by the feminist media scholar Lisbet van Zoonen (1998). Additionally, journalism could refer 'to more than the news of the day (be it hard or soft), more than breaking news, in fact, not just "the news" but also "the new," and sometimes "the old"' (Le Masurier, 2015: 139), with regards to fostering identities embodied by particular lifestyles.

Given the digital emphasis of the Cultural Intermediaries conference, the paper explores this notion 'private self' in the work of female lifestyle journalists who use the on-line sphere as an entrepreneurial opportunity to create a brand around themselves, very often alongside the role they take in a more traditional news organization. Using content analysis of the exchanges between these journalists and their audience (both in below the line-comments and in YouTube posts), it argues that these on-line 'conversations' signal a shift from the organization to the individual and enables journalists to build an audience outside of the publication they write for. This journalism without 'news' alludes to the expressive values and practices of everyday life with reference to consumption, and speaks to the private persona of both the audience/reader and the journalist in her professional role.

Lucia Vodanovic completed her a PhD in Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths College, and is now Senior Lecturer at the London College of Communication (UAL). Her research interests focus on social aesthetics, the creative citizen and the boundaries between amateur and professional practices, amongst others. Her work has been featured in publications such as *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, *Invisible Culture* and *Travesia: Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, and she is the co-editor of the forthcoming *Lifestyle Journalism: Social Media, Experience and Design* (Routledge).

Knowledge production in journalism: translation, mediation and authorship in Brazil

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Based on a multi-site ethnography of two influential newspapers in Brazil, this article examines how Brazilian journalists mediate knowledge claims made by experts, policy makers and the lay public. It asks whether and how these journalists experience themselves as knowledge-makers. More specifically, it argues that Brazilian journalists index their production of knowledge in reference to four main characteristics: depth, authorship, influence, and expertise. Journalists tend to consider newsmaking a contribution to knowledge when: (1) they have the resources to do proper investigative reporting (depth); (2) they are able to help define the public agenda through their reporting and to express their opinion (authorship); (3) they have impact on the polity, the economy or other fields they cover (influence) and (4) their journalistic knowledge is recognized by readers and by specialists (expertise). In practice, however, there are multiple obstacles that make Brazilian journalists hesitant about their contribution to knowledge, including intensified working conditions, the lack of plurality within the mainstream presses, and their informal methods for dealing with knowledge claims from other fields. This research reveals that Brazilian journalists have different understandings of the nature of knowledge in journalism. These understandings cluster around two distinct poles: an expert notion of knowledge associated with disciplinary boundaries, and a distinct conception associated with journalists' capacity to mediate between jurisdictions. When journalists' production is assessed from the former point of view, the informality of their methods is seen as undermining their knowledge credentials. By contrast, when journalists' contribution is assessed from the latter point of view, their 'interactional expertise' comes to the fore.

Tomás Undurraga is Associate Professor at the Sociology Department, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Chile and Honorary Fellow in the STS Department at University College London. His research intersects cultural and economic sociology and has been mainly focused on the political economy of Latin America and the media role in the public sphere.

The process of collaborative writing of fan-fiction fan-authors: a new way of conceiving writing in the digital era

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Digital technologies have revolutionized the way we communicate. In this space, new discursive, cooperative and interactive practices are born, in which writing becomes the action that generates a sense of agency. Within these practices is fan-fiction, a type of literary practice that allows the creation of original texts based on massive cultural products, such as books, television series or films. The main focus of collaborative writing in fan-fiction has been discussed from a cultural perspective as a way of discursive appropriation (Jenkins, 2009), but few of these works have explored the collaborative writing process itself. The objective of this presentation is to explore the process of writing fan-fiction from a socio-cognitive perspective. To do this, the creation act is understood as a social and cultural process guided by the writing model of Hayes (2015). Our theoretical proposal involves the phenomenon and variables that affect the writing process as well as a methodological proposal using virtual ethnography.

Paloma Domínguez Jeria is a candidate for a PhD in Linguistics at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, master's degree in Cognitive Science and Language, mention in Linguistics at the University of Barcelona and bachelor's degree in Creative Literature at the Universidad Diego Portales, with experience in the area of research and teaching in Linguistics and Literature. Her areas of interest are related to the way that technology affects the modes of production, distribution and reception of literary texts and the multimodal study of comics. She's currently working at Universidad Diego Portales and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

Circuits of Cool in Fashion Tech

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Presenting oneself as fashionable is a way to be seen, and is key to mattering in the Instagram-fueled universe of clicks, likes, and followers (Duffy, 2017, Arriagada 2014, Rocamora 2016, Entwistle, 2018, Wissinger, 2015). The impetus for self-branding and constant connectedness in fashion tech culture creates strong incentives for users to attach themselves to platforms and brands through sharing biometric and personal data in exchange for convenience and

cool. Tracking personal information to achieve wellness or health has been the focus of much debate (Lupton, 2016; Nafus, 2016; Neff & Nafus, 2016). Less attention is being paid, however, to how contemporary pressures of the #nofilter selfie society glamourizes and normalizes giving up one's data in exchange for the ineffable, intermediated, benefits of 'cool' in the fashion world.

What kinds of values do consumers produce and circulate in the circuits of 'cool' when they engage with fashion techs as recommendation apps, 'smart' dressing rooms, and wearables that unlock experiences for the wearer? How do these technologies pull consumers in producing value through exposing themselves to personalization and customization in the realm of brand engagement; or when using embodied technologies to discipline their body to reach the level of the fashionable ideal; or engage with wearable tech and technological clothing interface to gain access to being in the know, or on the scene, or otherwise privileged in some way in the fashion world?

In the fashion tech transaction, cultural mediation is automated, fed through algorithms that shape experiences (see, for example, Hansson, 2017, among others). New levels of technological embodiment and embeddedness in the fashion domain afforded in particular by wearable and embodied technologies are creating new value chains between consumers, producers, and fashionable technologies. To examine these questions, this presentation draws from personal interviews with fashion and tech designers in New York and California, coupled with participant observation at numerous fashion tech summits, tech conferences, trade shows, and meet ups. It engages with data from 23 interviews with fashion and tech designers working in the field of wearables. Field notes comprise observations at the Decoded Fashion summit meeting of fashion and tech designers; Fashion/Culture/Design (FCD) conference at the Parsons Institute in NYC; events at fashion tech accelerators BF+DA and Eyebeam; and numerous meet ups at the Samsung accelerator, Microsoft Research Headquarters, Third Wave fashion, and Kickstarter headquarters, among others.

The discussion draws out and examines tensions between user's desires to expose themselves in order to access the perceived benefits of the kinds of "cool" offered by the automated mediations of fashion's technological tracking, and the potential drawbacks and false promises made to consumers in these transactions. It concludes by looking at how these practices are taking digital culture to new level of value formation, which is in need of discussion and critique, to make sure it is moving in directions that do not damage personal freedoms and user interests.

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BMCC/CUNY. She has published and spoken about fashion, technology, and embodiment, in the U.S. and internationally. Her book, *This Year's Model: Fashion, Media, and the Making of Glamour* (NYU 2015), tracks how emerging technologies shape bodily ideals, which fashion models promote by doing "glamour labor," the work to appear as attractive, exciting, and cool in person as one's edited, curated, and filtered online self. Her current research focuses on how wearable technologies impact gender and embodiment.

SHAPING LEGITIMACY: THE ROLE OF MATERIALITY IN CONTESTATIONS OF PRODUCTS' LEGITIMACY BY CONSUMERS

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This study examines how materiality, that is, the design, material substances, and marketing efforts objectified in a product, shapes contestations of this product's legitimacy by consumers. Institutional theorists have modeled the process by which legitimacy judgments made at the individual level develop and change. Nevertheless, the role of material components in this process has been overlooked. This study builds on Ferreira and Scaraboto's (2016) framework of extended materiality, which centers on consumer-object interactions, to examine the role of materiality in contestations of the content of the legitimacy of a product by individual consumers and by small consumer collectives, reflected in and influenced by media representations. We analyze consumers and media's relations with a particular product - shapewear. Shapewear is a category of objects defined by their function: they transform the body that wears it by compressing or enhancing body parts, squeezing flesh, fat, and muscles into most desirable shapes. Shapewear includes girdles, corsets, crinolines, brassieres, bustles, and several other forms of constructed undergarments. In the past, these garments were made of whalebones, wood, metal, and rigid plastic for structure. Historically, concerns with the effect such rigid structures had on the bodies that wore them led to contestations to the legitimacy of shapewear. Contemporary shapewear is predominantly made of Spandex, a soft and flexible fabric. Even though the materials, designs, and marketing efforts surrounding shapewear have varied through time, it is possible that contestations of shapewear's legitimacy continue to be influenced by its materiality. We propose a framework that showcases the role of materiality in shaping legitimacy contestation across levels - individual (consumers), meso (consumer collectives), and macro (media representations). Materiality can ignite reassessments of the legitimacy of a product in three ways:

pragmatically, by provoking sensorial experiences that violate consumer expectations; relationally, by materializing a feeling of inappropriateness of a consumer's social identity, or materially challenging a consumer's sense of self-worth; and morally, by objectifying moral and ethical values that are inconsistent with the consumer's. Reassessments by individual consumers aggregate at the collective level and are validated by media representations to consolidate into a collective contestation of a product's legitimacy by consumers.

Maria Carolina Zanette is assistant professor of marketing at ESLSCA business school in Paris. Her main research interests focus on consumer culture and social media. Some of her works include investigations on how consumers connect their own personal words with major cultural influences, mainly by interacting with social media.

Daiane Scaraboto is assistant professor of marketing at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. Her research projects converge around connecting consumer behavior and marketing management. She has investigated the multiple roles consumers assume in markets - and that lead to the creation, shaping, or destruction of consumption opportunities for themselves and for others.

(Mis) Representations of the third age in the media: stigma management strategies in an evolving society

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Marketplace exclusion, marginalization and stigma have been discussed from various points of view in consumer research literature (see Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2012; Williams and Henderson 2012; Mirabito et al. 2016). Consumer researchers have focused on how marketplace resources and practices can evolve from being marginalized to acquiring some level of legitimacy among some segments of society (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013) and extant literature sustains that marginalized consumers may leverage resources and apply a wide range of strategies to resist market exclusion, or alternatively, to promote market evolution. However, research on how cultural intermediaries such as media and advertising portray marginalized consumers and how these consumers are affected and respond to these stereotyped images is still scarce (Dumer and Miles 2009; Priesler et al. 2015), although it is particularly relevant in societies where

legislation and public policy are being changed, aiming at integrating marginalized groups into society.

This research seeks to address these gaps by analyzing how cultural media products such as advertising campaigns portray the third age in Brazil and discusses how these representations often antagonize these consumers' identity projects, as well as contradict the normative legitimacy which these groups have acquired through the country's recent changes in legislation and public policy. Our dataset consists of 623 commercials of 49 brands that appeared in the top of mind ranking of one of the main Brazilian newspapers, desk research on what it is like to be over 65 years old in the Brazilian society, two in-depth interviews with industry experts which consult for firms targeting third age consumers, and 7 in-depth interviews with third age informants. Our third-age consumer informants were asked to talk about how they see themselves and then were exposed to commercials from our pool to provide their impressions on them.

Our work complements extant research which has studied stigmatized consumers' struggle for legitimacy in the marketplace and we argue that even positive stereotypes can contribute to perpetuating stigma. We sustain that third agers manage these stereotypical images through narratives that either call for self-efficacy tactics or for combating the stigmatizers' narratives.

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