Research Article

Fan Affirmation: Alethurgy on an Indie Music Fandom

Afirmação Fânica: Aleturgia em um Fandom de Música Indie

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■ **ABSTRACT**

Context: highly identified with the genre, indie fans are engaged and productive, especially in virtual communities where they circulate opinions and share experiences. **Objective:** since relations mediated by consumption provide conditions for constituting subjectivities, we rely on Foucault's theory with the aim of analyzing how the interactions of indie music fans evidence an alethurgical process of subjectivation. **Methodology:** to do this, we performed a netnography on a large global forum for indie music discussion. **Results:** results show a cultural configuration in which the communal sense legitimize conducts, based on emotional testimonies and manifestations of expertise, which establish the very condition of fanity associated with the capacity of its members to outline the fan object, develop a fan authority and then to position themselves in relation to the market logic in which the genre is inserted. **Conclusion:** thus, we conclude that indie music fans perform an alethurgy of affirmation. The study innovates by adopting the concept of alethurgy as a means of analyzing the subjectivation of fans, which is evidenced as a theoretical gap in the field of CCT.

Keywords: fans; indie music; subjectivity; alethurgy; netnography.

■ **RESUMO**

Contexto: altamente identificados com o gênero, os fãs de *indie* se demonstram engajados e produtivos, sobretudo em comunidades virtuais onde fazem circular suas opiniões e dividem experiências. **Objetivo:** uma vez que relações mediadas pelo consumo propiciam condições para se constituir subjetividades, baseamos-nos na teoria foucaultiana com o objetivo de analisar como as interações de fãs de música *indie* evidenciam um processo aletúrgico de subjetivação. **Metodologia:** para tal, realizamos uma netnografia em um grande fórum global de discussão de música *indie*. **Resultados:** os resultados demonstram uma configuração cultural em que o senso comunal legitima condutas, fundamentadas por meio de depoimentos emocionais e manifestações de expertise, que estabelecem a própria condição de fanidade, associada à capacidade de seus membros de delinear o objeto de fanidade e desenvolver uma autoridade fânica e daí se posicionar em relação à lógica de mercado em que o gênero se insere. **Conclusão:** assim, concluímos que os fãs de música *indie* performam uma aleturgia de afirmação. O estudo inova ao adotar a concepção de aleturgia como meio de analisar a subjetivação de fãs, que se evidencia como uma lacuna teórica no campo da CCT.

Palavras-chave: fãs; música *indie*; subjetividade; aleturgia; netnografia.

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2nd round	👤	(x)							

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INTRODUCTION

The size of the entertainment industry can be seen in its numbers. Its global revenue in 2017 was of approximately 1.9 trillion dollars. The billionaire music industry, which accounts for 8% of that amount, is part of this context (International Trade Administration [ITA], 2017). Much of its profitability derives from new digital platforms (e.g., streaming, paid downloads), which account for 50% of the market. In addition, sales of physical products (e.g., CDs, DVDs, vinyl records) and live performances account for 34% and 14% of the market, respectively, whereas the remaining 2% refers to other activities and means (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry [IFPI], 2017).

Indie music, which is part of the musical entertainment industry, has emerged in the mid-1980s through initiatives focused on producing and trading a music type different from the ones consumed in the musical mainstream. The genre was born in the United States and in England, in the midst of the Do It Yourself movement, which was a collaborative logic between technology and aesthetics based on low-cost creative solutions that did not follow the great industry of that time (Dale, 2008). The indie culture has spread toward new subgenres in the 1990s and became an umbrella term for dozens of sounds and styles (Scaruffi, 2003). In parallel, some indie artists have gained popularity, mainly through the grunge (McDonald, 2000), and britpop (Meier & Hesmondhalgh, 2014) movements in the United States and England, respectively. The growth of the indie movement has consolidated from the 2000s onward since it successfully spread toward new subgenres and gained popularity. Thus, the genre became even more diffuse and present in the lives of music consumers, in addition to increasingly gaining room in the market until it acquired the mainstream status (Mead, 2009; Skancke, 2007).

Fans of indie music, who felt connected to the concept and aesthetics of the movement, emerged throughout this process (Bromwich, 2014; Coscarelli, 2017; Maloney, 2011). Fans are a peculiar type of consumer. Kozinets (2001) has introduced the concept of fan in the consumer culture theory (CCT) field as part of a subculture guided by media products. Jenkins (1992) — who is notorious for his fan studies — described the concept of creative collaboration as the main feature of fans. According to him, fans are defined by their practices, which involve different production types that, in their turn, can be material or immaterial. Thus, he highlights textual creation referring to shared, or even collectively produced, discursive practices capable of revealing the worldview and values of fans, as well as the demands shared in the community.

Accordingly, Souza-Leão and Costa (2018) have featured fans as prosumers based on the assumption that production and consumption practices are inseparable. Thus, based on the consumption perspective, such a practice would involve productive activities that can be configured as constituent parts of products and services and as (re)signification processes influencing individuals' consumption experience (Souza-Leão, Moura, Santana, Nunes, & Henrique, 2019). This perspective had repercussions on CCT after the study by Ritzer (2005; 2008), mainly due to possibilities presented by Web 2.0 platforms (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010).

The advent of Web 2.0 has provided a new way of operating content on the internet, since it allowed individuals to produce and make what they find interesting public through comments, photos, videos, among others (Cova & Dalli, 2009). This production is part of the concept of participatory culture, which concerns the collective and collaborative production and distribution of contents of common interest (Booth, 2013; Guschwan, 2012). This dynamic take place on one, or more, media platforms and does not require the participation of members engaged in a given community (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012; Jenkins, 2006).

Internet-based technologies had already strongly affected the music industry by enabling music files to be exchanged between peers (i.e., peer-to-peer) and, subsequently, by turning the streaming into the main music consumption model (Sinclair & Green, 2016). Thus, the easy access to musical productions and the likelihood of interacting and producing in virtual environments have enhanced the collaboration of music fans (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017).

Fan productions often deal with the circulation of different meanings and with the construction of knowledge about their relationship with what they consume and with the social space where they meet (Fiske, 1992). According to Foucault (2011), the social construction of knowledge is one of the fundamental conditions for manifestations of truth in the process of building individuals' subjectivity. This process is featured by acts that reveal the truth linking individuals to the systems of truth they relate to.

Among the acts of truth constituting the human being, Foucault (2014) presents alethurgy as the process through which individuals manifest the truth within them in order to take a stance for themselves and for others. By affirming the truth, they extinguish doubts and manifest intrinsic rules to such subjectivity. Thus, alethurgy is not restricted to individuals who exercise it; the truths associated with the constitution of subjectivity can extrapolate it, as well as inspire and encourage the manifestation of other alethurgies and, therefore, of other subjectivities.

Indie music fans who get together to share content and experiences often focus on the propagation and resonation of the genre, since it is the main way to reach, get to know, and consume the indie culture (Hesmondhalgh, 1999; Skancke, 2007). On the other hand, relationships mediated by

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consumption provide the conditions to constitute subjectivities (Luedicke, Thompson, & Giesler, 2011; Zajc, 2015). According to Fiske (1992), it is mainly made possible through fan talk, which is the main fandom production accounting for the circulation of different meanings attributed to objects of fan adoration.

Thus, it is possible assuming that fan interactions are featured as fan talks whose nature turns them into a prosumer practice. On the other hand, based on the Foucauldian viewpoint, it is possible stating that these interactions are based on a set of knowledge that enables subjectivity through alethurgy. Thus, the present study is driven by the following investigative question: 'how do interactions of indie music fans evidence an alethurgical process of subjectivation?'

This topic covers an important theoretical gap, since the CCT field does not focus on the subjectivation of fans. On the other hand, it points out that the investment in studies focused on better understanding the behavior of fans in consumer communities is featured as a relevant agenda for CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2007), as well as on the assumption of the concept of culture as a distributed network (Arnould & Thompson, 2015), which is strongly aligned with Foucault's theory. However, Foucault's adoption in the field has taken the main place through his theory of power (Denegri-Knott & Tadajewski, 2017; Kedzior & Allen, 2016; Moisander & Eriksson, 2006), thus, using aspects of his theory of subjectivation can open an important investigative path. More specifically, it was not possible identifying in the literature any study focused on investigating the overall behavior of fans or consumers as alethurgical process. Thus, besides filling a theoretical gap (i.e., the subjectivation of fans), the current study is outlined in an innovative way.

In applied terms, despite its consolidation, the music industry has been facing a reinvention process due to the technological rupture that reconfigured music consumption, which led to market fragmentation and increased the consumption of a whole variety of genres such as indie (Leguina, Arancibia-Carvajal, & Widdop, 2015; Magaudda, 2011). This aspect justifies the herein adopted empirical approach.

INDIE MUSIC AND ITS FANS

The term 'indie' is associated with the concept of 'independent,' which refers to the freedom of artists in comparison to large conglomerates and music labels. The movement was established in the 1980s, in England and in the United States, through small initiatives that worked as labels launching artists under the order of Do It Yourself (DIY), which meant a way to produce based on low-cost and strongly creative practices (Dale, 2008). It is also associated with what was defined as "alternative," a label used to define bands that dissociated themselves from what was mainstream

at the time of their inception (Meier & Hesmondhalgh, 2014). Thus, indie refers to a musical production aligned with the experimentation discourse, with lack of concern with the interest of mass audiences and with the rejection of profit as a purpose (Skancke, 2007).

The first wave of indie artists was experimental and aligned with a strand of aggressive melodies — the band Fugazi was its reference (Fairchild, 1995). Next, productions based on more melodic sounds — inspired by the band The Smiths — have gained room (Hesmondhalgh, 1999). The globalization movement in the 1990s has unfolded the indie culture into several subgenres (e.g., lo-fi, dream pop, noise pop, post-rock), as well as triggered the proliferation of bands that fitted this "umbrella" definition. This expansion was not restricted to the form of musical production; it also concerned the popularization of indie music consumption. Some indie artists have achieved remarkable marketing results (e.g., R.E.M., Nirvana, Oasis). This phenomenon enabled questioning to what extent artists could be called indie after they achieved great success (Scaruffi, 2003).

New production, information, and communication technologies available at the beginning of the 21st century enabled developing and promoting a new generation of indie artists such as Elliott Smith, Belle & Sebastian, Flaming Lips, The Strokes, and Arctic Monkeys. The integration with what was considered mainstream became even clearer due to the growing popularity of artists, which led to the emergence of new subgenres (e.g., garage rock, post-punk revival) in order to retake the movement's origins (Mead, 2009). The genre became almost ubiquitous, since its prominence ranged from hit charts to small local scenes (Skancke, 2007).

The genre was consolidated along the way thanks to its fans, whose features make them different from other music fans; they do not often align with mainstream products, they defend the movement's concept and follow their idols regardless of fashion cycles (Bromwich, 2014; Coscarelli, 2017; Maloney, 2011). Thus, they take opposite positions to that of labels and artists who distance themselves from the ideal of independent production and musicality (Sanneh, 2005); besides, they make voracious criticisms to artists who prioritize success over the musicality and originality of their productions (Daly, 2016).

However, Maloney (2011) points out the stance taken by indie fans who are more susceptible to artists' involvement in market-oriented actions. This flexibility in assessment is based on the understanding that although new music production and distribution technologies are part of the natural evolution of the genre, they turn music into an almost free consumer product and make artists look for alternatives to maintain their activities.

PROSUMERIZATION OF FANS

Consumption can be understood as a cultural practice used to build meanings in order to deal with social changes, to express and maintain certain lifestyles, as well as to create or perpetuate ideas and worldviews (Cova & Cova, 2002). Based on consumer experiences, consumers connect with products and brands consumed by them, as well as with other consumers, a fact that makes these interactions capable of creating bonds (Cova, 1997; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988).

These ties can be identified in the sense of collectivity observed in consumer subcultures featured by strong engagement processes (Cova, Kozinets, & Shankar, 2007). The culture of fans stands out among the most emblematic subcultures, nowadays (Souza-Leão & Moura, 2018; Guschwan, 2012). Fans have been investigated since the early 1990s; they have been featured as active consumers of media and entertainment products, specialized and proactive poachers, as well as individuals eager to discover new things (Jenkins, 1992). They can be understood as consumers who are strongly engaged to pop culture, who create meanings based on their consumption and interaction with other fans, mainly in communities (Duffett, 2013; Hills, 2012), and who engage in likely political transformation processes (Souza-Leão & Moura, 2018; Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2017).

According to Jenkins (2006), fans are consumers who want to be an active part of the entertainment industry. Thus, they share experiences and opinions about what they consume, mainly through the appropriation of available technologies. Therefore, the understanding of fans is strongly associated with that of participatory culture (Guschwan, 2012; Jenkins, 2006), which can be understood as a communal dynamics that acts on the production and circulation of media products in a political way (Jenkins, 2006). Such practices influence the media text production and distribution forms in collaborative actions, in a profusion of shared creations associated with the ubiquity of the media and with the appropriation of technologies (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012; Langlois, 2013). Participation is an important factor for every community member, since it covers social connections ranging from simple commentaries to civic engagement (Guschwan, 2012; Jenkins, 2006; Langlois, 2013).

The functioning of participatory cultures does not require any form of organization; it is based on collective intelligence, which concerns the accumulation of information collectively built through shared contributions deriving from individuals' knowledge about and experiences with (e.g., affiliations, creative productions, solutions and collective knowledge development, and production-method sharing) the cultural product bringing them together (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012; Guschwan, 2012; Jenkins, 2006).

According to fans, connections between peers are established in communities called fandoms (Booth, 2013; Fuschillo, 2018). Nowadays, these social spaces are mainly based on technological communication platforms, such as social media or online forums, which are used to connect individuals and to expand their knowledge about the products connecting them (Delwiche & Henderson, 2012; Fuschillo, 2018).

Fans can be categorized as prosumers based on their type of activity (Chen, 2018; Souza-Leão & Costa, 2018). Prosumption refers to the symbiosis between production and consumption; the technological advent of the 21st century has enabled new ways to establish this relationship (Ritzer, 2005, 2008, 2014). The participation of consumers in this process is mainly voluntary, desired, and difficult to be controlled by producers.

New ways of prosuming, which are featured by users' sophisticated skills to produce and share content in a collaborative manner, based on Web 2.0 technologies, have emerged (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Web 2.0 prosumers often create bonds with each other and develop communal consumption experiences through this process (Dujarier, 2016). This context gave rise to a new marketing logic, which is more collaborative and interactive, and according to which the value of what is consumed is created in a collective way (Cova & Cova, 2012; Gamble & Gilmore, 2013).

ALETHURGY AS A SUBJECTIVATION PROCESS

Fan activities enable better understanding identity concepts in their interaction with products and peers (Booth, 2013; Souza-Leão & Moura, 2018). Identity concepts based on knowledge deriving from consumption practices establish who individuals are, based on worldviews arranged in market contexts (Arvidsson & Caliandro, 2015; Jones, 2015). New market dynamics indicate how cultures make affirmative stances emerge in conflicts that point toward social configurations and tensions (Caruana & Crane, 2008; Luedicke et al., 2011). The impact of the market on individuals' lifestyle indicates how market agents and elements are capable of influencing cultures (Karababa & Ger, 2010; Zajc, 2015). Accordingly, CCT studies have focused on understanding how cultural consumption contexts influence the constitution and maintenance of subjectivities based on the assumption that morals can be mediated by practices performed in the market (Caruana & Crane, 2008; Karababa & Ger, 2010; Nairn, Griffin, & Wicks, 2008; Zajc, 2015).

Based on the idea that the market is a social space that provides conditions to constitute subjectivities (Luedicke et al., 2011; Zajc, 2015), the current study addresses what

Michel Foucault treats as individuals' constitution practices. According to Foucault (2008) the market logic is seen in all social instances since the spread of American neoliberalism; it became a form of government incorporated into biopolitics, which is defined by the philosopher as the form of dominant power exercised through techniques focused on controlling population's behavior in the contemporary world. This power is not directly exercised; it happens through a governmentality process led by a set of institutions, social practices, and even ways of thinking, a fact that impregnates it in the social fabric itself. Thus, it is a dynamic process based on movements of resistance to the power exercised by some individuals over the others.

Based on Foucault's philosophy, the constitution of individuals presupposes adopting certain behaviors; therefore, it is mediated by an exercise of power, which is understood by the theoretician as a process of mutual influence and resistance (Foucault, 2006). These behaviors are based on cultural stances, which, in their turn, are based on different moralities (Foucault, 2012). Foucault (2006, 2012) defines the social values and rules based on which individuals relate to each other in a dynamic game as moral. Thus, morality is not a set of orders to be blindly followed; they are guidelines that act on individuals and create action spaces in their lives. It is not a matter of submission to the rules, it concerns ones' relationship with them, which enables understanding the nuances, as well as multiple directions and trajectories, with regard to whether or not to follow morals in order to formulate subjectivities.

Subjectivity takes shape through the flow of truths built by practices associated with individuals themselves and with others (Foucault, 2017), in a given socio-cultural context (Foucault, 2010, 2011). Subjectivation dynamics take place when individuals associate themselves with certain discourses of truths. Different perspectives, understandings, arguments, and ideas are conveyed through these truths; thus, they become accessible to individuals so that they constitute themselves as subjects (Foucault, 2017).

According to Foucault (2017) the truth is the way through which individuals get to know the world and themselves in order to form subjectivities. Truth is the symbolic contribution supporting moral precepts that guide individuals' behavior. Self-care practices emerge from the truth; they incorporate individuals' practices toward themselves and the others (Foucault, 2017). Individuals associate themselves with truths and constitute their subjectivities through self-care and the care of others. It is, therefore, an interaction process, rather than a solitary association, since truths underlying subjectivation processes are dispersed in the social environment. This operation enables individuals to form and change themselves. Thus, telling the truth is

a fundamental condition that presupposes the practice of alethurgy (Foucault, 2014).

According to Foucault (2014), alethurgy is a manifestation of truth understood in the broad sense; it is a set of possible procedures encompassing different manifestations that highlight the truth before other arrangements competing for a similar status. The alethurgical process indicates how individuals choose to bring to light what is laid down as true as opposed to something (i.e., the false, the hidden, the invisible, the unpredictable, among others).

Alethurgy is not just about affirming what is believed in a creed; it is about affirming the fact of this creed; about turning the act of affirmation into an object of this act and, then, authenticating it, either before oneself or before others. It is about producing truth through logical or experimental procedures in which individuals stand before themselves and the others (Foucault, 2014). This production of truths in alethurgy extinguishes one's doubts and presents a revealing truth. It gives subjectivity a connection resulting from this revelation, which focuses on the rules of conduct and, thus, points out possible paths to be followed (Foucault, 2011).

The connection of truths based on affirmations forms the alethurgy movement, which is both an affirmation of itself and the acknowledgement of the truths supporting such an affirmation. Thus, one alethurgy leads to others; it is an affirmation process that allows subjectivity to associate itself with several truths by enunciating them. However, alethurgy is neither about adapting oneself to imposed rules, nor about imposing individual truths to the collectivity: it is a negotiation to enable the truth of a given individual to be confronted and influenced by the truths of others (Foucault, 2014).

The alethurgical practice has great influence on individuals' behavior because it is directly connected to the act of making a given truth count for a certain individual. This practice summarizes truth-related operations taking place in social contexts, rather than in an isolated way (Foucault, 2006). It is the first step toward what Foucault (2011) understands as acts of truth, since individuals are not only asked to tell the truth, but also to utter their own truth (e.g., desires, faults, state of mind) in order to manifest themselves as a statement of who they are.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

Netnography was the method adopted in the current study to help better understand the behavior of indie music fans in a virtual community. This approach is often used to interpret the cultural behavior of a given group in virtual environments. Furthermore, it is aligned with post-structuralism — i.e., with the choice of Foucault's theory —

because both approaches understand culture as a system of symbols building reality itself through language (Kozinets, 1998, 2015).

The method by Kozinets (2015) was developed to focus on consumer interaction; it is capable of capturing inferences about individuals' behavior, participation, values, and beliefs in virtual environments. According to the aforementioned author, "netnography refers to an ethnographic approach applied to the study of online communities and cultures" (Kozinets, 2010, p. 6).

The immersion in an online culture that is adaptable to the environment and focused on the context is the main feature

of this method. Thus, researchers perform observation and participation activities in the investigated virtual community through computer-mediated communication platforms such as social networks and forums (Kozinets, 2010). The method provides the means to observe textually-accessible behaviors and, consequently, to understand symbolic meanings, attitudes, and discourses found in virtual consumption communities. Its main aim is to identify behavioral patterns and forms of social interaction in online communities linked to consumer practices (Kozinets, 1998). The current study has followed the guidelines by Kozinets (2010, 2015), in order to operationalize the research, as seen in Figure 1.
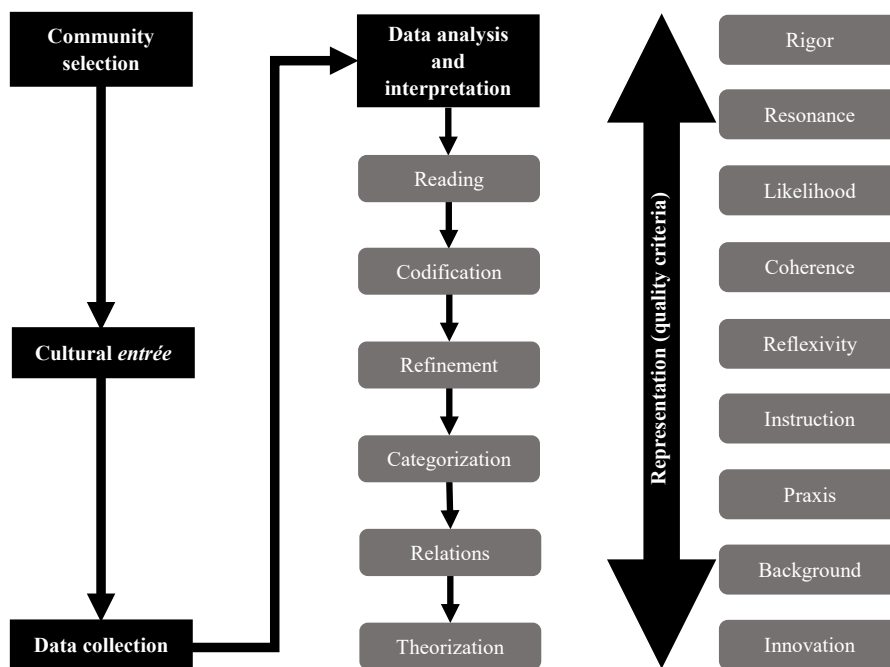

Figure 1. Netnography stages.
Source: prepared by the authors based on Kozinets (2015).

The current study has identified six online discussion forums used by indie music fans. The virtual "community" called Music Banter was selected to be investigated because, in comparison to other communities, it presents more relevant data and has more active users who have relevant, substantial, and rich interactions about the investigated subject. Besides, it is organized in a more systematic way when it comes to topics concerning indie bands, their activities, and fan participation in them.

An anonymous profile, which is allowed by the forum, was used to observe interactions that enabled a better understanding of the community functioning (cultural

entrée). Cross-sectional reading of forum's discussions was initially carried out to enable having a global view of fans' performance. In parallel, tools available for browsing the forum (i.e., searches, ways of commenting, avatar editing, information organization) were tested to enable researchers to operate in the forum. It is worth mentioning that researchers are indie music consumers who follow launchings in the segment, so they were able to observe changes in topics addressed in the community and how they were encouraged.

All comments (in English) about topics published from January 2004 to December 2017, in which fans

worldwide addressed a large number of subjects concerning the formation of indie subjectivity, were 'collected'. Data available in the forum covered an indie music-consumption growth period, as well as a change in the music pattern itself, which was primarily featured by digital access (i.e., files, streaming).

'Data analysis and interpretation' started with *corpus* 'reading', which focused on deepening the understanding about the meanings attributed to the analyzed data. These meanings were then 'codified' in order to identify practices supporting the subjectivation dynamics of the online fan community. Comments were organized by similarity; the ones addressing the subjectivation process were pointed out. This procedure enabled codes resembling each other, or the ones dealing with similar topics, to be 'refined' and, then, grouped to make inferences (observed in them) more robust. A 'categorization' procedure was carried out to indicate subjectivation processes taking place in the practices of fans, after the codes delimited and aligned to the research question were grouped. Connections between codes and categories enabled identifying 'associations' between them; these associations were supported by discursive processes. Finally, these processes were interpreted based on the herein adopted 'theoretical' framework.

Netnography flow was carried out to align its 'representation', which concerns quality criteria pointed out by Kozinets (2015). In order to do so, the research must rigorously meet the ethnographic approach, mainly in the field work (cultural *entrée* and data collection). Data collection and analysis must enable capturing the human dimension of the observed individuals ('resonance') and accessing the community in a credible way ('likelihood'). Data analysis must establish standards to compare the inference of codes and categories in order to identify 'coherent' findings, which depends on researchers' 'reflexivity'. Results, in their turn, must be described in a clear way to enable analyzing and discussing the findings ('instruction'), as well as respecting the observed 'praxis', in order to give it a voice. Such results require adequate theoretical 'background' in order to be interpreted and to enable the 'innovative' reading of the investigated object. The current study has highlighted the adoption of these criteria both in the presentation of the present section and in results' description (below).

RESULTS' DESCRIPTION

The theoretical and conceptual backgrounds adopted in the current research assumed a double function:

firstly, they supported the construction of the research problem and worked as guidelines for data observation and analysis; secondly, they were used as resource to support the elaboration of the inferred codes and categories, with regard to their descriptions. Thus, elicited codes associated with the empirical context of the current investigation were subjected to the interdisciplinary approach comprising CCT and Fan Studies in order to advance in relation to the initial literature review, based on data interpretations. Grouping these codes into categories has led these interpretations to a broader abstraction level directly aligned with the herein proposed problem, based on Foucault's theory. Based on this line of reasoning, category titles aimed at expressing alethurgical acts, whereas code titles indicated the most immediate fan practices supporting them.

Fourteen codes were identified and organized into six categories, as shown in Table 1. The adopted literature is evoked as these categories and their respective codes (in quotes) are described. Codes were also depicted through strata of research *corpus*; associations among categories are shown in Figure 2.

'Emotional fan statements as construction of truths' (C1). This category concerns the exchange of reports among fans about the important role indie music and artists play in their lives. Thus, individual experiences are shared in, and validated by, the fandom; consequently, they cease to belong to the individual and become part of the indie fan condition itself. According to Foucault (2011), alethurgy requires individuals to not only speak the truth, but to complete it based on the truths with which they have contact. Thus, this category expresses an alethurgical procedure in which fan subjectivity is based on the empathic sharing of emotional experiences.

'Fan nostalgia' (Cod01) is evidenced in actions and moments when the indie culture and fans' personal lives get mixed to each other. By describing stories based on their personal and emotional involvement with the indie culture, they reveal how their fan condition relates to their lives. This process highlights the fundamental role played by consumption in promoting the development of emotional bonds and the recovery of affective memories (Cova, 1997; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988).

Table 1. Codes and categories.

Categories			Codes		
Code	Title	Definition	Code	Title	Definition
C1	'Emotional fan statements as construction of truths'	Sharing consumption memories and experiences as a way to substantiate fan status.	Cod01	'Fan nostalgia'	Sharing consumption experiences that evoke affective memories.
			Cod02	'Fan affiliation'	Sharing situations that depict emotional ties with artists.
C2	'Fan expertise manifestation as self-constitution process'	Showing in-depth knowledge to validate fan status.	Cod03	'Fan immersion'	Presenting information and contents to be legitimized as fan.
			Cod04	'Fan exchange'	Exchanging information and contents to be legitimized in the fandom.
C3	'Communal sense by valuing the affirmations of oneself and of others'	Producing collective practices as basis for community support.	Cod05	'Fan companionship'	Support among community members based on their mutual contributions.
			Cod06	'Fan acknowledgement'	Praising the contribution among community fans.
			Cod07	'Fan framework'	Reporting lack of acknowledgement as an obstacle to the sense of collectivity.
C4	'Object-of-fan-adoration design based on the elaboration of truths'	Negotiating concepts aimed at delimiting the understanding about the object of fan adoration.	Cod08	'Fan objectification'	Community's attempt to define the object of fan adoration.
			Cod09	'Fan rhetoric'	Attempt to legitimize perceptions about the object of fan adoration within the community.
			Cod10	'Fan demand'	Demand by fans concerning the trustworthiness of their object of adoration.
C5	'Knowledge as a means of establishing fan authority'	Using expert knowledge as a means of distinction in the fandom.	Cod11	'Fan assessments'	Well-founded opinions capable of establishing fandom legitimacy.
			Cod12	'Fan specialization'	Knowledge aimed at establishing a privileged space in the fandom.
C6	'Fan statements about market logic'	Reporting market agents' position about the elaboration of the object of fan adoration.	Cod13	'Fan attack on production'	Criticism of the industry, which reduces the object of fan adoration to market interests.
			Cod14	'Fan attack on the media'	Criticism of the press, which reduces the object of fan adoration to an undifferentiation system.

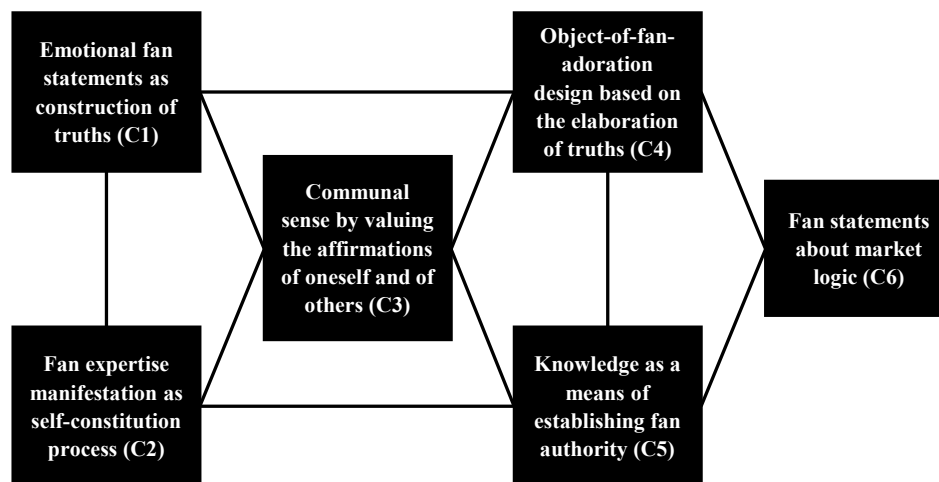**Note.** Source: prepared by the authors.

Figure 2. Map of associations among categories.
Source: prepared by the authors.

In their reports, fans highlight different and striking elements (e.g., lyrics, melodies, concerts) at different times in their lives. These experiences associate the consumption of indie culture with interpersonal relationships (i.e., friendships, love relationships) and with important moments in fans' lives. The message from a community member who reported the experience of watching a live Flaming Lips' show is herein highlighted to illustrate Cod01: "I wasn't being sarcastic about their live show either, I was waiting for Radiohead at Glasto 2003 and accidentally ended up in the thick of their infamous vibe, never seen so many people smiling. 'She don't use jelly' was the highlight."

According to this fan, the band's concert was a memorable surprise, since he expected to see another concert. Besides the band's performance, he also felt connected to the audience's response. By highlighting one of the songs performed in the concert, he showed how the event remained alive in his memory as a remarkable experience.

The relationship between fans and the indie universe is also evidenced by 'fan affiliation' (Cod02) with artists of the genre. When individuals become fans of a given artist, they try to get to know him/her better by establishing an emotional bond with this artist. This phenomenon indicates how music consumption stimulates the affection for the consumed object, as highlighted by Magaudda (2011).

Fan reports reveal how they become avid consumers of the work of these artists, and of their musical references, and start to follow their professional activities and personal lives. In the next excerpt, a fan shares with the community his yearning to go to a concert by the band My Bloody Valentine and his frustration with the possibility of not being able to fulfill his wish. "I really would love to go to one of those shows, but there are none in PA. I would have to go to New York and I can't drive. I don't even know any upperclassmen in my high school who like MBV enough to go to New York for them. I am going to die if I don't get to see 'Only shallow' or 'Soon' live..."

The second category concerns 'fan expertise manifestation as self-constitution process' (C2), which refers to the cognitive nature of fans who strive to become experts in the product consumed by them in order to mutually share such knowledge in the fandom and legitimize their fan status. According to Foucault (2011) individuals produce and express truths not only, or necessarily, because they were asked to do so, but, above all, to manifest who they are. Thus, this category highlights the development of expertise as a common way for fans to constitute themselves as such.

'Fan immersion' (Cod03) reflects the intensity observed in the pursuit and mastery of inaccessible information about the indie universe. This practice evidences the pursuit of information about the products fans are bond to, which is

one of the most evident features of fan culture (Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 1992).

Fans demonstrate intense involvement in in-depth discussions about products consumed by them and their artistic concepts. They focus on details (e.g., aesthetics, sound, musical genres, artists) that only individuals who dedicate themselves to deepening their knowledge could perceive. In the excerpt below, a fan shares his enthusiasm for the artist Elliott Smith by means of a rich description of his journey and artistic features. "Elliott Smith is (no argument) one of the best singers/songwriters of the past 15 years. His Beatles/Beach Boys' influence is what differentiates him from most artists and he could put together a very good song with pretty harmonies and beautiful lyrics. He was a very talented guitar player, and he also played the clarinet, bass, harmonica, drums and piano. Eliot is amazing. He's probably one of the most poetic and influential musicians I have seen for a really long time."

In addition, 'fan exchange' (Cod04) concerns how fans use the forum and the knowledge of their peers in the online community to collect quality information about the indie universe. According to Leguina, Arancibia-Carvajal and Widdop (2015) it is a vital feature in music consumption: musical taste is a process strongly based on exchanges (e.g., information, suggestions) among individuals who share the same preferences.

Details about artists' career and about the musical genre itself are extensively exchanged, as well as information about new artists and songs. The dialogue between fans who share interest in the band The Jesus Lizard well-illustrates this code; one fan tries to discover similar artists and the other provides detailed information in this regard: "I got some of The Jesus Lizard, can anyone suggest some bands that are similar to them?" "The Birthday Party. Also, two of the members of The Jesus Lizard were in a band together called Scratch Acid in the 1980s. There's a CD called "The greatest gift" that has all their recordings on it."

These expertise manifestations (C2) are linked to emotional statements (C1). These categories function as 'two sides of the same coin' since they show how emotional and cognitive issues share a role in the constitution of fan subjectivities. Both categories, in their turn, are linked to the 'communal sense by valuing the affirmations of oneself and of others' (C3), since the concept of fan collectivity is based on the exchange of concepts, information, experiences, and affectivity, which tightens bonds among individuals and naturalizes the fandom culture. Truth acknowledgment in alethurgy is a procedure that supports affirmations of oneself and of others (Foucault, 2011). Thus, this category shows how the mutual acknowledgment of affirmations of oneself and of others legitimizes the fandom as the space for subjectivation.

'Fan companionship' (Cod05) reflects the engagement of fans in this communal process. They exchange information, tips and viewpoints about the indie culture in a process of mutual support, mainly from the most versed in the genre to those who were just introduced in this universe and are eager to acquire new knowledge. On the other hand, 'fan acknowledgement' (Cod06) is practiced and valued. Several messages published in the fandom are public acknowledgements of information, suggestions, and opinions that help individuals improving their knowledge about, and experience with, indie music. Besides highlighting how these contributions are positive and useful, they work as an encouragement for this type of collaboration to remain perennial.

These companionship and acknowledgement practices show what Cova, Kozinets and Shankar (2007) described as exchanges among community members, when they addressed the relevance of interactions for the consumption experience itself. Accordingly, Figueiredo and Scaraboto (2016) have stated that the sense of community encourages the circulation of transitory objects that generate value for members of a consumer culture.

A dialogue between Fugazi fans well-illustrates these two codes. They share the opinion that the band deserved greater acknowledgement. It is curious that the second fan emphatically thanks the first for taking a stance about the topic. Sharing this feeling establishes a marker in the community that would not be legitimized based on an individual opinion. "I could be wrong... but I'm a little offended that I didn't see Fugazi mentioned once in the definition of indie. I thought Fugazi was the definition of indie." "THANK YOU! I was reading through this — great history and genre definitions by the way, I'll be using this — but I was very disappointed that, until the last post, I didn't even see anyone talk about Fugazi. They were definitely major in the creation of indie. Ian McKaye's whole DIY philosophy is a key factor in what makes a real indie band (although the punk community was also very DIY)."

On the other hand, those who do not positively contribute to the fandom go through a 'fan framework' (Cod07). This process is evidenced in the recrimination of comments presenting some misinformation or misunderstood argument about the indie culture. This practice meets the understanding that those who do not contribute to the fandom are not acknowledged as legitimate community members (Hills, 2002; Jenkins, 1992).

Thus, fans define which comments are useful, or not, to continue the discussions. The excerpt below highlights a fan's criticism of those who do not give credit to the sources mentioned in the forum. He emphasizes how it compromises collective work, since it makes it lesser attractive and even discouraging for individuals to bring information — which

will not be acknowledged — to the community. "These education threads can always use updating, but I'd still prefer if I were asked before any revisions. Also, not that it matters, but I did contribute quite a bit of my own writing to the emo education thread — I noticed I am not listed as a co-author anymore..."

The communal sense (C3) creates an environment conducive to the debate about 'object-of-fan-adoration design based on the elaboration of 'truths' (C4). Interacting fans end up anchoring themselves in certain perceptions about what would feature the musical style in order to discuss about it. However, it is not done in a purely critical way; it is based on personal concepts and preferences that reveal how the emotional connection of fans (C1) plays a fundamental role in this assessment, through which they try to establish what the indie culture is. According to Foucault (2011), alethurgy, as a means of public profusion of truths, is a movement that, per se, extinguishes doubt; not because it determines the absolute truth, but because it makes it possible negotiating possible truths. Thus, this category stands out as an alethurgical practice that addresses the multiplicity of understandings about the indie genre.

'Fan objectification' (Cod08) takes place when these individuals try to reach a definition of indie. In order to do so, they exchange their impressions and intuitions about their understanding of what the musical style is and join a conceptual and aesthetic discussion about the genre. The current study agrees with Hackley and Hackley (2018), according to whom it is a typical fan practice to complete the meaning of media products consumed by them based on collective intelligence. Thus, even if they do not reach a further definition of indie, they end up adding layers to the concept of the genre. This process can be classified as a paratextual production, which, according to Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington (2017), refers to the addition of auxiliary meanings and contents to the original text (e.g., media product).

This practice takes place in the midst of a 'fan rhetoric' (Cod09), since fans defend personal opinions and viewpoints in order to persuade each other. Thus, there is the attempt to legitimize individual concepts at fandom level. This behavior is explained by Leguina et al. (2015), according to whom listeners of the same genre or artist do not create new symbolic frontiers when they share their choices in the age of digital consumption; on the contrary, they reinforce the existing ones by enabling an engagement process.

The following commentary illustrates these two codes through a fan's opinion about the genre as creative independence. "There are heaps of examples of artists deciding that they don't want to sign with a major label and starting their own record label or signing with an independent record label. … A major reason why artists go for independent labels is so that they can have greater creative freedom. I mean.

Would Sleepytime Gorilla Museum ever be signed to Sony BMG? Unlikely. Too weird..."

As the result of previous processes, it was possible identifying a 'fan demand' (Cod10) for certain genre production features. Such claims referred to the artistic style, to musical guidelines, and even to specific songs that do not resemble the artist himself or the indie universe. This practice can be understood as an action aimed at building a reality socially demarcated by fans in relation to the genre. Accordingly, Gray et al. (2017) have pointed out that fan interactions channel their voices in the marketing and social dimensions.

Thus, indie fans make direct or indirect comparisons between different songs or albums by a certain artist, or between artists they believe to be similar, in order to determine whether these productions properly represent the genre and to demand changes when they understand that it does not happen. The excerpt below highlights the speech of a Flaming Lips' fan who shares his desire to see something different in the band's sound. "The Lips are one of my favorite bands, although I honestly wish they had more 'fun' songs of the 'She don't use jelly' variety, and fewer slow, drawn out tracks, although they do both styles well."

Similarly, the communal sense among fans (C3) establishes the conditions for 'knowledge' to operate 'as a means of establishing fan authority' (C5). Fans' opinion specialization shows how they make a point of presenting grounded evaluations, which indicates the understanding that the fan status is linked to the knowledge of what being a fan means. Therefore, this category works in a complementary way to the delimitation of the genre (C4), since it is based on fans' ability to engage with the indie culture through knowledge (C2). Foucault (2014) indicates that, in alethurgy, individuals produce truths from a movement in which they simultaneously take a stance for themselves and for others, as well as that stance acts authenticate individuals' belief in themselves.

Therefore, this category reveals how fans use their knowledge to legitimize themselves as references in the fandom.

Thus, fans strive to make 'fan assessments' (Cod11). They build well-articulated and well-founded texts in order to legitimize their opinions before the fandom. These comments describe and dissect subgenres, artists, rhythms, sound, among others. This practice is aligned to a participatory culture context where the accurate debate between peers encourages the exchange of concepts, which, in its turn, drives the constitution of collective intelligence (Fuschillo, 2018; Jenkins, 2006).

The 'fan specialization' (Cod12) construction process lies behind this behavior. This practice concerns how some

fandom members project themselves as experts in the indie genre; this status is manifested in comments that claim specific knowledge or erudition on the addressed topic. Being an expert is a unique feature of fans (Jenkins, 1992; Souza-Leão & Costa, 2018). According to Kozinets (1999), this is how some fandom members stand out: by having active and constant participation in the community, they play an opinion-leadership role.

The following comment illustrates both codes in this category. The fan analyzes how the band My Blood Valentine would have been one of the most influential groups of their time and of the shoegaze movement. He addresses their sound and even mentions details such as the use of instruments. His speech is constructed in a didactic tone, which is in line with an ethos of wisdom that is expected to be acknowledged. "But I think My Bloody Valentine was a very important and influential band in those respects, the whole shoegazer movement really took off because of them. And I think 'Loveless' is very melodic, those who say it isn't haven't heard it more than once. The guitar is their musical canvas for which they paint over it with melody, rather than the typical rock band, which uses bass and drums instead, it's a very ambient style... The music is loud and noisy, but it isn't heavy or hard, it's very mellow and soft in spirit, that's why I like it."

Fans' attempt to delimit the genre (C4) and their authority in discussing about it (C5) are related practices that allow them to make 'fan statements about the market logic' (C6). Fans discuss about how this rationality can de-characterize and impoverish indie music; besides, they understand that their relationship with the artists they are fans of cannot be understood based on marketing concept. According to Foucault (2014) alethurgy plays a key role in affirming truths as a way to establish disputes; thus, this category expresses fans' understanding that the market logic is not accepted as a true discourse.

This understanding takes place in two different ways. Firstly, as 'fan attack on production' (Cod13). The fandom echoes the fact that record companies are more concerned with marketing strategies focused on boosting the reach of artists than with the musical quality of their works. They strongly criticize those who allow these goals to shape their production, which leads to changes in styles and sounds in order to suit the preferences of a wider audience. This positioning is in line with what Chen (2018) advocates as a possibility for fans to be contrary to producers' strategies and decisions that do not reflect concepts attributed by fans to their object of adoration.

On the other hand, the position contrary to the market logic is also seen in 'fan attack on the media' (Cod14). According to fans, the specialized press has disseminated an understanding about the indie that brings it closer to the mainstream music, which is considered paradoxical to the

indie label itself. This practice shows the political engagement of fans, since it aims at preserving a lifestyle and a worldview (Souza-Leão & Moura, 2018; Gray et al., 2017) that they believe to be threatened by the prevalence of market practices. "Wonder how this is possible, given the origins of the term. It is not definable in any way, shape or form. It has always been a term to discuss the financial affiliations of a band, not a sound. Does it concern you that the term has been hijacked by major record labels to sell and promote product? Does it concern you that journalists that are too lazy or too incompetent to draw accurate musical comparisons bandy the term around to define a 'sound' when the term inherently does not have a sound associated with it?"

The aforementioned comment illustrates both codes, since it expresses a viewpoint according to which, although the indie culture is more about attitude than about style, the major record labels have appropriated it in order to sell the musical product and the press has endorsed this trend.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was possible concluding that indie music fans perform a stance alethurgy in their interactions about this musical universe. The communal sense (C3) is at the heart of this process, since it establishes and legitimizes individuals' behaviors. On the one hand, the community endorses the way fans relate to the genre and to their favorite artists, whether through emotional statements (C1) or through expertise manifestations (C2). On the other hand, it establishes the fan condition associated with the ability of fandom members to outline their object of adoration (C4), to establish a fan authority (C5) and, then, to take a stance toward the market logic (C6) the genre is inserted in. This dynamics reveals how alethurgy happens in the herein investigated empirical field (see representation in Figure 2).

Dimensions such as fans' affection for, and knowledge about, the artists they admire and the genre itself overlap each other and constitute a basis that tells fans that being a fan presupposes these two features in a concomitant way. They are the foundation for this condition to be confirmed in the fandom; fans are acknowledged as such to the extent that they can show their emotional attachment through expertise. On the other hand, it is expected to be done in a collaborative way to benefit the community rather than to serve selfish interests. This process corroborates the articulation of self-care and care for others as a subjectification form.

Therefore, the subjectivity of indie fans is based on collectively established truths (i.e., delimitation of the object of fan adoration, fan authority) that are preserved from other truths (i.e., fan attacks on market logic) as a form of resistance. These truths, in their turn, are based on fans' ability to articulate knowledge (i.e., emotional, expert knowledge).

However, it is up to the fandom to establish appropriate conducts to enable this process (i.e., communal sense), a fact that features governmentality.

Thus, the alethurgy of indie music fans reveals a fan statement, i.e., a process through which they define fan status as social construction ruled by certain principles, which enables fans to take a stance toward their object of adoration. However, it is possible saying that, besides the herein substantiated and articulated evidence of findings, certain market logic also guides fan practices — although they do not realize it —; after all, they ultimately operate as consumers in an economically oriented cultural system.

These aspects lead to the theoretical contribution of the current research: evidence of how fans collectively constitute themselves as such; fan status as a consumption subjectivity that presupposes the articulation of (emotional and cognitive) knowledge communally ruled and validated through positions that are (re)affirmed as their own condition for existence. The current investigation can also contribute to the reflection about the articulation between market and society: on the one hand, it reveals how fans actively participate in media product (re)signification processes by playing the role of curators and protectors of their objects of adoration; on the other hand, it works as a means of conveying fans' voice by taking into consideration power asymmetries between producers and consumers.

Thus, the current study has introduced the understanding about the constitution of fan subjectivity to the CCT field, based on a theory increasingly aligned with discussions in the field (e.g., Arnould & Thompson, 2015; Canniford & Bajde, 2015; Lanier, Rader, & Fowler, 2015). In addition, it highlighted a form of subjectivity that is far away from the perception of fan status as a pathology, which is almost always treated in a stigmatized way (Souza-Leão & Moura, 2018; Gray et al., 2017). Finally, it brought up an important discussion about the limits of consumers' freedom of action in relation to the market (Kozinets, 2002).

In view of a theoretically generalizable contribution, the limitation of the current study lies on its restriction to a specific fandom of a certain media product, which is evidently justified by the dimension of the empirical work that outlines both the research problem and its executability. Similarly to developments of the present investigation, it is likely mentioning future research based on Foucault's theory of subjectivity. Studies conducted with fandoms associated with other musical genres of pop culture (e.g., pop, rap) could help improving and broadening the understanding about music fans. In broader terms, similar studies conducted with fans of other media product types (e.g., comics, games, movies, series) could help substantiating the theorization of fan subjectivation processes.

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