

WEIGHT-BASED DISCRIMINATION: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF INTERNET USERS ABOUT FAT PHOBIA

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ABSTRACT. The concept of fat phobia has been usually used to define ways of discrimination towards overweight bodies. The present work aimed to know the social representations of fat phobia elaborated by internet users. A documental research was conducted based on internet comments on an article about fat phobia published by the Superinteressante magazine. Selected opinions comprised a textual corpus which was submitted to a lexical analysis through IRAMUTEQ, revealing five thematic classes: (i) "Health as discourse to justify discrimination", (ii) "Fat versus Slim: instituting differences", (iii) "Weight loss: reinforcement versus deconstruction of the standard", (iv) "Fat phobia: invention or reality?" and (v) "Fat phobia and the (in)appropriateness of affirmative actions". Anchored on the technical and scientific argument which affirms that obesity is an epidemic disease, the representations of internet users legitimized discrimination and prejudice processes against overweight people. Moreover, ironic propositions against quota policy for overweight people showed a dissatisfaction about the existence of affirmative actions that promote equality among social groups, ratifying the idea that the privileges cannot be granted to "inferior groups" or depreciated groups, and these groups, in order to be respected by society, should try to fit their bodies into the refined standard. In this context, aiming to make fat phobia an irrelevant topic, disqualifying the magazine's approach on this topic, representational strategies directed to deny its existence by comparing suffering between groups or setting differences (fats x thins) was observed. Considering the lack of researches about discrimination against overweight in Brazil, others studies on this topic are suggested.

Keywords: Discrimination; obesity; social networks.

DISCRIMINAÇÃO BASEADA NO PESO: REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS DE INTERNAUTAS SOBRE A GORDOFOBIA

RESUMO. O termo gordofobia tem sido comumente empregado para definir formas de discriminação a corpos acima do peso. Objetivou-se conhecer as representações sociais da gordofobia elaboradas por usuários de internet. Realizou-se uma pesquisa documental com base na seleção de comentários de internautas frente a uma matéria

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sobre gordofobia veiculada pela revista Superinteressante. As opiniões selecionadas constituíram um corpus textual que foi submetido à análise lexical pelo IRAMUTEQ, desdobrando cinco classes temáticas: (i) "A saúde como discurso justificador da discriminação", (ii) "Gordo versus Magro: instituindo diferenças", (iii) "Emagrecimento: reforço versus desconstrução do padrão", (iv) "Gordofobia: invenção ou realidade?" e (v) "Gordofobia e a (in)adequabilidade de ações afirmativas". Em linhas gerais, ancoradas no argumento técnico-científico da obesidade como doença epidêmica, as representações dos internautas legitimaram processos de preconceito e discriminação em relação às pessoas obesas. Ademais, a proposição irônica dos internautas quanto à política de cotas para pessoas gordas demonstrou a insatisfação quanto à existência de ações afirmativas promotoras da igualdade entre grupos sociais, ratificando a ideia de que privilégios não podem ser conferidos a "grupos inferiores" ou desvalorizados e que estes, para serem merecidamente respeitados pela sociedade, devem buscar a adequação dos seus corpos ao padrão de refinamento. Neste contexto, com a função de tornar irrelevante o tema da gordofobia, desqualificando a abordagem do assunto pela revista, observaram-se estratégias representacionais direcionadas à negação da sua existência, comparando sofrimentos entre grupos ou instituindo diferenças (gordos x magros). Considerando a escassez de pesquisas sobre discriminação baseada no peso no Brasil, novos estudos são sugeridos.

Palavras-chave: Discriminação; obesidade; redes sociais.

DISCRIMINACIÓN BASADA EN EL PESO: REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES DE USUARIOS DE INTERNET ACERCA DE LA GORDOFOBIA

RESUMEN. El término *gordofobia* ha sido frecuentemente utilizado para definir formas de discriminación hacia los cuerpos por encima del peso. En esta investigación se tuvo por objetivo conocer las representaciones sociales de la *gordofobia* elaboradas por usuarios de internet. Una investigación documental ha sido realizada con base en la selección de comentarios de usuarios de internet hacia una materia acerca de la *gordofobia* vehiculada por la revista Superinteressante. Las opiniones seleccionadas han constituido un corpus textual que ha sido sometido a un análisis lexical por IRAMUTEQ, apuntando cinco clases: (i) "La salud como discurso justificador de la discriminación", (ii) "Gordo VS Delgado: instituyendo diferencias", (iii) "Adelgazamiento: reforzamiento VS desconstrucción del estándar", (iv) "*Gordofobia*: ¿invencción o realidad?" y (v) "*Gordofobia* y la (in)adecuación de las acciones afirmativas". Ancladas en el argumento técnico-científico de la obesidad como una enfermedad epidémica, las representaciones de los usuarios de internet legitimaron los procesos de discriminación y prejuicio hacia las personas obesas. Además, la proposición irónica de los usuarios de internet acerca de las políticas de cuotas para personas gordas ha demostrado la insatisfacción acerca de la existencia de acciones afirmativas promotoras de la igualdad entre los grupos sociales, ratificando la idea de que privilegios no pueden ser conferidos a los "grupos inferiores" y que estos, para ser merecidamente respectados por la sociedad, deben buscar la adecuación de sus cuerpos al estándar de refinamiento. Con la función de tornar irrelevante el tema de la *gordofobia*, descalificando el abordaje del asunto por la revista, han sido observadas estrategias representacionales direccionadas hacia la negación de su existencia, instituyendo diferencias entre grupos (gordos vs delgados). Considerando la escasez de estudios sobre el tema en Brasil, nuevas investigaciones son sugeridas.

Palabras-clave: Discriminación; obesidad; redes sociales.

Introduction

Although the current standard of beauty overestimates lean bodies, a large part of the Brazilian society is made up of overweight people (52.5%); specifically, 17.9% of the Brazilian population is considered obese (Brazil, 2015). Obesity affects almost a third of the world population including children and adults, and has been seen as a cause of concern to be combated and eradicated due to the health risks that it brings, along with psychosocial impacts and overburdening of public accounts in many countries (Herdy, López-Jimenez, Terzic, Milani, Stein, & Carvalho, 2014).

This discourse of obesity as a pandemic scenario has pushed people to the strict control of their bodies. According to Fernando-Ramírez and Escudero (2012), an extremely profitable commercial machine to eliminate obesity has gained social space by massively propagating the benefits of diets, surgeries, exercises, and lifestyle changes.

Beyond the questioning of the legitimate purpose of these alternatives to facilitate weight loss, what is questioned is the extension of this discourse and the hegemonic imposition of this truth (or body weight standard) as the only decent or appropriate way for social actors to circulate or to feel belonging to society.

Thus, the danger lies not in the weight loss tools themselves, but in the possibility that people under the condition of obesity accept and internalize a discourse that stigmatizes them, requiring them to publicly acknowledge their "sin", their "offense" to the aesthetics, that is, an acknowledgment of their "weight" before health and for public coffers (Fernando-Ramírez & Escudero, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to envisage the alarmism that crosses the epidemic conjuncture of obesity. In other words, this scenario has nurtured a powerful food-health-beauty industry that reinforces, as a result of its particular interests, the stigma of weight, potentializing the discrimination against overweight people (Yoshino, 2010).

Despite this situation, with regard to reducing obesity, weight stigma is not a beneficial public health tool. On the contrary, stigmatization not only threatens the psychological and physical health of individuals considered obese, but also hampers the implementation of effective efforts to prevent and combat obesity, generating negative impacts on public health, further aggravating the situation. In other words, the stress associated with stigma may trigger other comorbidities as well as aggravate the clinical course of obesity, with a possible negative impact on the social and productive life of the individuals, hitherto considered normal (Puhl & Heuer, 2010).

There is no doubt that prejudice and discrimination based on weight are a reality in many sectors of society. According to the literature, in some types of work, obese people are classified as less qualified, with emotional (difficulty with self-control) and interpersonal problems, and reduced chances of success in the process of professional admission (Kolotkin, Crosby, Kosloski, & Williams, 2001). Besides being a constant issue in the work environment – leading to wage inequality, absence or reduction of the granting of promotions, pejorative comments and dismissals without clear cause –, discrimination against obese people can occur in medical-hospital settings, educational institutions, interpersonal relationships and in the media (Puhl & Heuer, 2009).

According to data from the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2011) in the United States, the prevalence rate of presumed discrimination based on women's weight/height has approached the prevalence rate of racial discrimination. In some episodes, it is even more frequent than discrimination based on age or sex, which are considered important axes of discrimination.

As societies are mutable, health and body beauty patterns are also decomposed in the game of social relations of everyday life. Thus, because the body is the materia of the human existence, that is, a physical and at the same time symbolic apparatus that characterizes the human being, and despite being a private possession in which the most individual activities (biological and psychological) are expressed, it is an artifact through which the individual can interact with the world and with his peers (Jodelet, 1994; Justo, 2011).

Reinforcing this way of thinking on the body as a product of social relations, Georges Vigarello (2012), a French historian, asserts that the meanings given to big bodies have not always had this depreciative nature. For example, in the Middle Ages, the anatomy of fat people were prized as synonymous with power, ascendancy. Thinking about this itinerary, that is, about the transformation of obesity from the appreciation of curves to the obsession with thinness, the author conjectures that "evaluation" is an important factor in the history of fat people. This moment of systematic calculation and numeric indication of weight that marked the end of the nineteenth century lasts until today, but with a particularity: a growing need to individualize weight control, penetrating since the twentieth century into private spaces with scales and other forms of measurement, which continue to be part of the daily life of social actors.

In this set of exhibitions, body control is not an invention of contemporaneity. Such control is linked "to the insensitive precision of the judgment of body curves and their inflection" (Vigarello, 2012, p.14), that is, their "deviations" in society, since the moral appeal - more remotely - until the imperative of aesthetics and health in the present days. For example, for a long time the fight against fatness privileged mechanical constraints of body shapes, such as bodices, belts, and other forms of containment. Over the course of time and the updating of scientific knowledge, body control remained but it was replaced by other power devices and more precise forms of control (e.g., BMI). In fact,

the history of fat people is tied to these twists. The development of Western societies has promoted the pursue of a thin body, a closer vigilance of the silhouette, and the rejection of weight in a more alarmed way. This transforms the record of fatness, "denigrating it" [sic], increasing its discredit and insensibly privileging thinness. Increased volume gets farther and farther from refinement, while beauty comes closer and closer to what is thin, slender (Vigarello, 2012, pp. 10-11).

Considering that society has experienced an era of generalized obesity, overweight people have become vulnerable to the dehumanization of their bodies (Soratto, 2009; Yoshino, 2010). In this context, more recently, the term fat phobia has been commonly used to indicate oppression systems concerning overweight bodies (Ferreira, 2015), portraying the devaluation, stigmatization and harassment of fat people (Isaia, 2015) that take place through of devices of diverse natures (social, media, cultural, and medical) to perpetuate models of socially valued and acceptable bodies, such as lean or hypertrophic bodies. Thus, fat phobia occurs through processes of social discrimination of people who do not fit in the body standard of beauty considered ideal. Such phobia is supported the discourse of medical and aesthetic appeals, reinforcing the domination of these bodies before the current standards (Arcoverde & Rodrigues, 2014).

In the present article, specifically, it is pointed out that the term "fat phobia" has been taken from a social perspective and therefore does not reflect any psychopathological bias related to expression, as suggested by fear of fat, for example. Moreover, a similar perspective to the discussions on homophobia was adopted, emphasizing the discriminatory processes underlying the social phenomena per se to the detriment of the "psychologization" given to the phobia or aversion that some social actors have in relation to a specific aspect of human differences (in this case, sexuality).

Therefore, it is understood that the process of aversion against voluminous bodies (i.e., weight-based prejudice/discrimination) unfolds from a larger social reality, based on specific conjunctures and ideologies and reflecting attitudes, beliefs and values of the social fabric in a given historical context. Therefore, because the body is in-between the individual versus the social interface, it affects and is affected by the movement of changing societies. For that reason, that is to say, for composing an important social object, the view of a (fat) body gains centrality and its analysis can reveal much of the history and the relations of a given society.

According to Nóbrega and Lucena (2004), social practices indicate that conflicting conditions arise from the different possibilities that exist between social actors who try to negotiate their differences, either to affirm and gain recognition of a specific difference, or to maintain not only differences, but also, and mainly, social inequalities and exclusion.

Thus, the body has been an object of interest and evidence in the media, denoting its valorization within society. In this scenario, the media acts as an important informational substrate for the social knowledge that is forged on a given representational object (Silva, Bousfield, & Cardoso, 2014). In addition to the print and television media, social networks on the Internet represent a new and complex universe of communicative, social and discursive phenomena (Recuero, 2014) that call attention. According to this author, the advent of the Internet has brought changes to society, among which the possibility of expression and socialization through computer based communication tools. These tools have allowed actors to build, interact and communicate with other actors, forming a social network, which can be defined as a set of two elements: actors (people, institutions or groups; the network nodes) and their connections (interactions or social ties). Thus, in this research, the network is considered a fruitful metaphor for observing and understanding the connection patterns of a social group.

In this game of complexity, the present study tries, in the light of the theory of social representations, to grasp the knowledge that permeates the communications of internet users about fat bodies in a social network. According to Moscovici (2012), social representations can be understood as symbolic and practical sets whose status is that of a construction and not of a reproduction or reaction to external stimuli, characterized by the use and selection of information, from the repertoire circulating in the social framework and intended for the interpretation and elaboration of reality. In the words of the author, "to represent a thing, a state, is not only to unfold it, to repeat it or to reproduce it, but it is rather to reconstitute it, change it, and modify its text" (Moscovici, 2012, p. 54).

Thus, social representations are phenomena described and explained starting from their context of production; they are not only a product of group idealization but also a process, a way of understanding and communicating (Nóbrega, 2003). Given the above, and considering the need to know how the general population has conceived prejudice and discrimination based on weight and how this fertile topic has gained space in social networks, the present study aimed to grasp the social representations that permeate the comments of internet users on the subject "fat phobia".

Method

Procedure

A documentary, descriptive and exploratory research was carried out based on the collection of comments of users of a social network on a article about "fat phobia" published in the Superinteressante Magazine on its official website on Facebook.

According with the publicity table published in the Abril Publisher's website (2016), based on the audit carried out by the Circulation Verifier Institute (CVI), the Superinteressante Magazine figures in the list of monthly magazines with the highest average circulation in the national territory, having stood out in the last ranking in terms of net circulation (227,950), behind only the women's magazine Claudia. Recognizing the prominence that the current magazine has in the country, its official website in the Facebook (3,913,666 likes) was chosen as an important source of research of general opinions of readers on the subject of weight-based prejudice/discrimination. In order to access the magazine's webpage, a Facebook account was used to facilitate the process of searching, reading and selecting Internet users' comments about the article in the print media.

In this study, the comments of readers of the article "Where fat people have no chance" were gathered, originally published by the magazine in November 2013 (issue 325), and republished on the magazine webpage in the form of a post in the year 2016. The thematic context of the publication portrayed weight-based discrimination as a frequent reality in several social segments such as work, fashion, media, among other spaces.

It is worth emphasizing that the selection of opinions regarding the post with the link of the article considered the temporal range of up to a week after publication on February 3, 2016. In that time range, the text that triggered the opinions raised 3,600 likes and 755 shares, in addition to 297 comments from Internet users. Of this total number of expressions via comments, only 90 were included in the corpus (textual content); comments with profile tags and other posts unrelated to the topic were excluded.

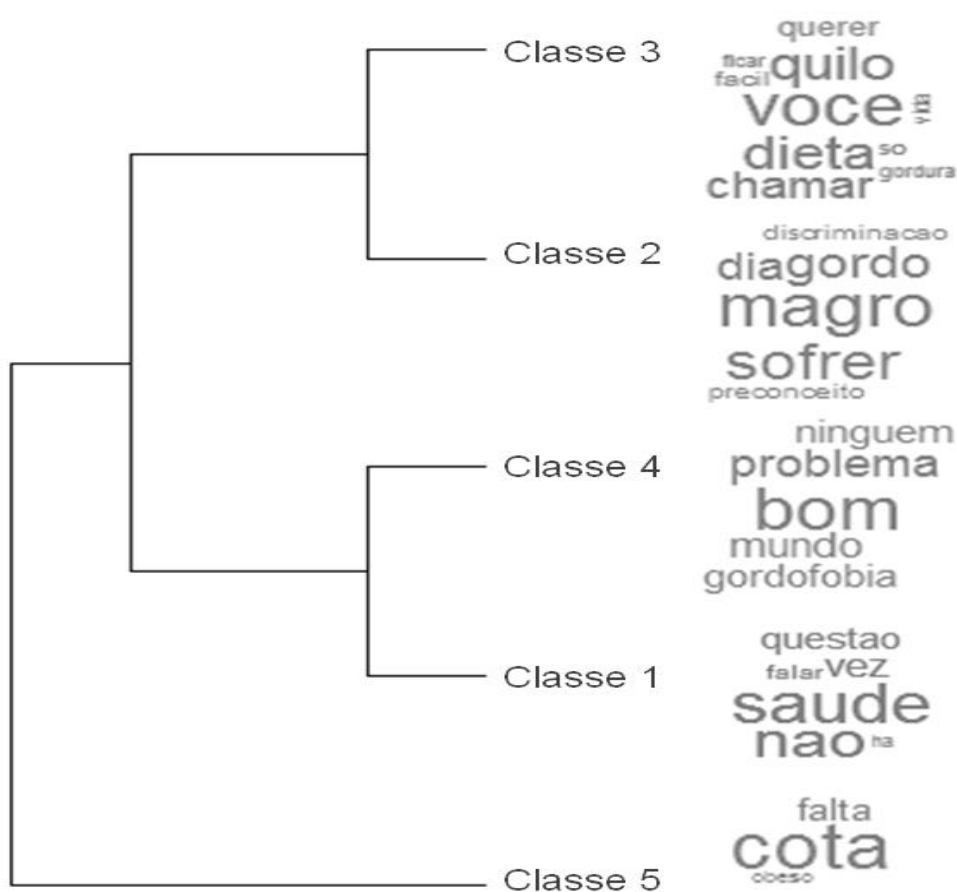
The textual corpus with the 90 selected comments was submitted to lexical analysis in the software IRAMUTEQ (Ratinaud, 2009). This is an open computer software that provides different kinds of textual data analysis, from simple ones such as basic lexicography (lemmatization, word frequency calculation) and word cloud, to more complex analyses such as descending hierarchical classification, factorial correspondence analysis and similarity analysis. As for the theoretical-methodological aspect, this computational tool was adopted because the lexical analysis makes it possible to overcome the old dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative aspects with regard to the data analysis, allowing quantification and application of statistics on essentially qualitative variables: the texts (Camargo & Justo, 2013).

This path makes it possible to describe the corpus, be it the fruit of individual or collective production, facilitating the textual analysis with a relational purpose, that is, the comparison of different constructions according to specific variables capable of describing who produced the text (Camargo & Justo, 2013). In this article, it is worth noting that in the constitution of the corpus, the variables "comment" and "sex of the internet user informed in the profile" were taken into account. As interpretive guidelines, the results of this study contemplate a descending hierarchical classification in the form of word cloud.

Results and discussion

The textual material was partitioned into 104 text segments, covering 769 words that appeared 1986 times, indicating an average occurrence of approximately 2.6. In this processing, 64.42% of the total text segments were retained in the analysis, defining 5 thematic classes, as shown in the Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Dendrogram of the descending hierarchical classification of the corpus "Fat phobia"



In the first stage of the analysis, the corpus was divided in two subcorpora. Then a subcorpus distinguished the class 5, at the far left, from the remaining textual material. Subsequently, the second subcorpus was split into two, gathering classes 1 and 4 on the one hand and classes 2 and 3 on the other. Other partitions were also observed, separating, on the one hand, classes 1 and 4 and, on the other, classes 2 and 3.

For the purpose of reading the dendrogram, only words or forms with frequency above the mean of occurrence (2.6) and with x2 higher than 3.84 were considered. The sets of arguments evidenced in the dendrogram demonstrate the knowledge developed by internet users about the representational object under study in this article (fat phobia). At the theoretical-methodological level, the analysis of classes of a dendrogram makes it possible

to capture the peculiarities that make the bulk of opinions and knowledge of the participants in the form of expression of weight-based prejudice addressed in the article published by the magazine. The classes and their main statements are described (from left to right) below.

Representing 14.9% of the text segments, class 5 was named "Fat phobia and the (in)appropriateness of affirmative actions". This class included words such as quotas ($\chi^2 = 51.78$), missing ($\chi^2 = 18.02$) and obese ($\chi^2 = 4.12$), as shown in the following text fragments.

... Spare me! They now will demand quotas for obese people in public tender procedures and universities. (Comment 57).

... To adopt quotas and everything is fine. (Comment 80).

... Quotas will solve it! (Comment 85).

... Where's the quotas for obese people? Now! (Comment 87).

... If they make quotas for fat people, I'm in. After all, no one is born fat, they become fat or choose to be fat (Comment 55).

... Quotas! What now, they'll demand to use fat actors in the soap operas (comment 71).

... Obesity is indeed lack of consciousness! What's missing it is to accept that being fat is harmful in every sense and that's the end of it (Comment 16).

The content of the class presented illustrates an ironic view of overweight people likewise the way of treatment that is commonly intended for the black minority, which is contemplated – in some contexts, such as education and work – with quotas, generating dissatisfaction with the existence of affirmative actions that seek to promote equality among social groups.

According to Jodelet (1998), the "work of creating differences is directed to the inside of groups in terms of protection; to the outside, in terms of a devaluing and stereotyped typification of what is different" (p. 51). Thus, specifically in relation to the topic of this study, although there is no quota policy for fat people structured in Brazil, the content of the class emerged repeatedly as a sarcasm of Internet users, referring to a sense of threat before the idea that privileges can be conferred to "inferior" or devalued groups, such as fat people.

Class 1, with 25,4% of the textual fragments retained in the analysis, was named "Health as discourse to justify discrimination". The characteristics of this class were the words health ($\chi^2 = 29.85$), no ($\chi^2 = 27.43$), chance ($\chi^2 = 15.08$), question ($\chi^2 = 12.51$) and speak ($\chi^2 = 5.53$).

... Although people are cruel toward the fat, [fat phobia] is not a matter of imposition of beauty, it is actually about health (Comment 22).

... Do you know why fat people have no chance? It is because this is synonymous with sedentarism, simple as that! There is no such a thing as fat phobia; the truth is that there are people who want to be accepted weighting 50 kg above the normal weight, but they do not move a straw to improve health (Comment 46).

... Supporting people to be fat is to support poor health because they are generally less healthy (Commentary 40).

... Here comes the victimhood! [Fat phobia] is not an issue of standards, but of health; we can not inspire a sedentary society (Comment 30).

... Lord give me patience for such "poor thing" mania! Creating new groups, or groups victimizing themselves, trying to dictate rules to others, is becoming viral. I hope this "poor thing" era falls at once and never return again (Comment 3).

... There is no more limit to this annoying nonsense (Comment 53).

... The Super should talk to physical education professionals, nutritionists, etc. and bring knowledge and not victimization (Comment 19).

Although there is a basically unanimous concern about obesity, the imagery field of this class evidenced that the Internet users themselves - appropriated by the scientific discourse on obesity as an epidemic disease - have legitimized processes of exclusion, prejudice and discrimination toward obese people (Fernando-Ramírez & Escudero, 2012; Yoshino, 2010).

According to some scholars, the question to be considered, in fact, is not the reinforcement of the obese body condition, but the repositioning in relation to the theme and the stigma of weight, which is not an artifact beneficial to public health. Conversely, the more we reject obesity and idolize leanness, and therefore, the more we provoke a feeling of inferiority in obese people, the more we forge food-related problems, including obesity itself (Puhl & Heuer, 2010; Stenzel, 2003). Therefore, a "(...) change of attitude before the problem is necessary, a positioning that does not lead to worsening of the situation: a non-judgmental, non-prejudicial stance, but a welcoming stance" (Stenzel 2003, p.11).

The above-mentioned class clearly shows how intolerance toward fat people can be transposed in the discursive form of health-conscious statements. Thus, under the pretext that obesity is a disease, many Internet users make statements without any concern about the burden of discrimination directed at the minority group.

In a complementary way, the affirmations where fat people are seen as illegitimately victimized persons (referring to failure as a stereotype) seem to meet the purpose of categorizing the subject as irrelevant or unrealistic, thus justifying the silence around the subject, that is, around the acknowledgement of the real existence of fat phobia in the social fabric.

In a communication on "intergroup behavior and social psychology of change", Tajfel (1980) stated that social representations are more comprehensive than the stereotype, but the latter is still an important part of it. Besides the process of categorization, three social functions relevant to a given group are established, namely: justification; causal explanation; positive differentiation.

In this aspect, the offense to the social actors whose bodies transpose the limits of the recommended measures that are socially valued by society seems to assume a discursive ideology based on the existence of superior/inferior groups, justifying the social position of value of individuals whose bodies are not deviant (positive differentiation). Likewise, the stereotype of fat people as victims/failures assumes the function of denial and disqualification of the relevance of the theme (fat phobia) and its respective impacted group, whose members must be considered the real responsible for their body condition (causal explanation of obesity).

Moreover, the class reflects a stir on the content of the diffusion of the theme, prompting Internet users to call for media attention with respect to specialist discourses, to the detriment of the views of obese people (referred to as "inferiors"), blaming them by the reality that involves them and directing the magazine's lines, which should give visibility to acceptable and legitimate discourses, such as the speeches of health professionals. This scenario demonstrates how vocational training - instituted by the scientific model - is clothed

with social value, becoming more valuable than the speech of subjects who experience obesity and its vicissitudes in everyday life.

Related to the above is the class 4, which was named "Fat phobia: invention or reality?" which gathered 17.9% of the text segments, including the following forms: good ($x^2 = 24.76$), problem ($x^2 = 15.23$), world ($x^2 = 12.29$), fat phobia ($x^2 = 10.66$) and nobody ($x^2 = 10.66$).

... Fat phobia! Wow, how dramatic, the world is turning into a dramatic comedy to "la hollywood" (Comment 20).

... No one cares about these long texts (Comment 73).

... Well, just like homophobia, machismo, feminism, racism, etc., the next thing now is to find a scapegoat to blame for being fat (Comment 41).

... Fat phobia! There nothing else to invent! The human being is so creative that he invents his own problems (Comment 49).

... Fat phobia, what a funny prejudiced name they had to invent! (Comment 59).

... Just take care of yourself! Being fat means to have serious health problems, hence nobody wants to hire fat people indeed (Comment 62).

... People can not understand that nobody is fat because they want (Comment 5).

... If each one controlled his tongue and kept his evil deeds in the form of sincerity, the world would be much better. What I notice in the comments is that speaking is very easy, but no one is able to use common sense and empathy (Comment 11).

... Is fat phobia a drama? Look, it's hard to live in a world where people see problems and discrimination as something supernatural and acceptable (Comment 17).

Based on the textual fragments presented, the substrate of class 4 reveals a clash: on the one hand, the vehement denial of the problem and, on the other hand, the reaffirmation of the seriousness and psychosocial implications of weight-based discrimination (fat phobia). This follows a similar dynamic to the previous class, which justifies the discourse of some Internet users about the conception of fat phobia as a (useless) invention of fat people who do not take care of their own health. A curiosity, on the other hand, sets in: a point of tension or resistance originated in a segment of the group of commentators, a group who claims the acceptance of the problem and, consequently, its most appropriate management.

According to Mattos and Luz (2009), there is a morality associated with fat bodies that explains the fact that the physical appearance is directly related to the trust people place on obese people. The naturalization of this discourse, for its time, can offer reinforcement to the mechanism of regulation of the body increasingly anchored in moral and/or health justifications. The tension identified in the class, however, represents a promising or at least optimistic course, in the sense of the movement that is imparted to the theme and the breaking of its silence.

In turn, with 25.4% of text segments and named "Fat versus Slim: instituting differences", the class 2 considered words like skinny ($x^2 = 15.03$), suffering ($x^2 = 11.69$), fat ($x^2 = 10.04$) and day ($x^2 = 9.24$), as represented by the excerpts below.

Discrimination is the skinny children of the third world who do not suffer the curse of a crowded refrigerator (Comment 31).

Fat people, black people, Indians, thin people, Japanese, wheelchair users, blonde, redhead, bald, cross-eyed, with superior education, without superior education, anyway, many people who have no chance. kkkkk (Comment 47).

Nowadays, everything is a motive for militancy, including being fat (Comment 45).

As if very thin people, men in the case, were not discriminated either (Comment 54).

All fat people offended trying to defend themselves (Comment 86).

I am chubby, but the only thing I read up there was mimimimimimimimimimimi (Comment 63).

A new form of prejudice... this form of prejudice is so old that I do not even know if society ever treated and will treat fat people well any day in life (Comment 23).

Where do very thin people, especially men, as quoted above, suffer a lot of discrimination?! Hahaha, please (Comment 18).

Chubby is one thing, obese is another. I'm just seeing thin people making fun of the research. There's no obese person saying it'smimimi. You people suck! (Comment 15).

It's true, chubby people as me suffer much prejudice (Comment 60).

So you mean thin people are balanced?! No one has the right to label people much less offend them; either fat, lean, black, white. (Comment 11).

According to the statements, in class 2, Internet users presented comparative discourses of the conditions of groups with different body realities (fat and thin). These comparative statements, however, again seem to have the intention of placing fat phobia as an irrelevant theme, disqualifying the legitimacy of the subject and reinforcing the difference between groups.

According to Nóbrega and Lucena (2004), social relations demonstrate, explicitly or implicitly, the processes of social categorization and the formation of stereotypes that permeate subjective experiences lived by different social groups. In the referred class, we can see the legitimacy of causes such as child malnutrition to lessen the seriousness of weight-based discrimination. It is worth noting, however, that a condition of suffering or concern typical of a given group or social context does not negate the possibility of the other group being experiencing equally real difficulties.

Finally, the class 3 named "Weight loss: reinforcement versus deconstruction of the standard" attained 16.4% of the textual corpus textual and contemplated words such as you ($\chi^2 = 27.51$), diet ($\chi^2 = 21.66$), kilo ($\chi^2 = 21.66$), naming ($\chi^2 = 15.99$), want ($\chi^2 = 9.66$) and only ($\chi^2 = 5.95$).

After sibutramine, fluoxetine, ephedrine, clenbuterol, bariatric surgery and all sorts of hormones, yes, dear friends, only those who want to be obese are obese are (Comment 6).

But experts call attention to the quality of life of these people in the future (Comment 12).

Just close your mouth, reeducate yourself, work out and walk instead of eating junk or kilos of food; if you want to be fat, well, be fat! Do not come with excuses that it is this or that later (Comment 16).

Get on the diet, man! (Comment 75).

So you are saying that it is better to poison yourself with sibutramine, fluoxetine, ephedrine, clenbuterol, true poisons that promise to lose weight, but only cause you chemical addiction, hallucination, tremors (Comment 2).

After all, who likes us accepts us as we are and who has to love you in the first place is yourself (Comment 7).

Really, people who are fat or just overweight suffer prejudice; everyone wants to talk about diet, most stores have only normal sizes, but the worst of them is you go to a doctor and it all boils down to obesity (Comment 8).

The representational content of the class strengthens the social tension posed by the socially valued expectation that one has about the body forms (lean, healthy and perfect) and the apparatus used (medicalization) to reach the proclaimed ideal (Figueiredo, 2009; Mortoza, 2011), provoking conformisms and disagreements among social actors.

In this class, we can see the predominance of figurative contents that bring to light different ways of seeing the body standard of refinement. According to the statements of Internet users, it is notable that the knowledge elaborated about the article on fat phobia puts in the agenda the discursive encounter on the deconstruction of the imposition of the slimming industry versus the feedback of this model, situating the obesity itinerary between stigma and medicalization (Fernando-Ramírez & Escudero, 2012; Mattos, 2012; Mattos & Luz, 2009; Neves & Mendonça, 2014).

Final considerations

Recognizing that the diffusion system occupies an important space for disseminating social representations about various social objects, both as a product and as a process, and also considering that social networks can reveal much of the dynamics of social actors on topics of social relevance and cultural weight, as is the case of fat phobia, the present study aimed to know the social representations that permeate the comments of internet users on the subject.

It is believed that the purpose of the study was met, shedding light on the general organization of the textual material analyzed (the comments of the internet users), finding some discursive regularity in the classes produced by the software: (i) "Health as discourse to justify discrimination", (ii) "Fat versus Slim: instituting differences", (iii) "Weight loss: reinforcement versus deconstruction of the standard", (iv) "Fat phobia: invention or reality?" and (v) "Fat phobia and the (in)appropriateness of affirmative actions".

In general, despite the peculiarities related to the representational content of each class, it was observed that the objectification of obesity as an epidemic disease and its consequent anchoring in technical-scientific knowledge was common to the root of the other classes. This discourse, with one of the highest percentage of text segments, showed that, under the aegis of health, many Internet users issued opinions that were impregnated with a discriminatory content.

In addition to this discursive regularity, which refers to the legitimation based on scientific rejection, blame and depreciation of overweight people, it was observed that the clash between the commentators revealed, curiously, the discursive emergency of

acceptance, understanding and isonomy of body differences. This, undoubtedly, reveals a necessary and promising path in terms of research and interventions.

As future developments, we suggested to carry out further research that seeks to know how the theme is treated in women's magazines, since the theme has a strong gender-related social burden, mainly affecting women according to the literature (Yoshino, 2010; Swain, 2001; Camargo, Justo & Jodelet, 2010). In the same direction, an analysis of the discursive productions of blogs related to the subject is also necessary, aiming to know how the use of the internet can appear as context of action and change of groups under the condition of obesity.

Furthermore, it would be promising to expand the framework of analysis of social representations of obesity and weight-based discrimination in relation to other groups of belonging, such as adolescents (vulnerable to depression and suffering from eating disorders), plus size models and militants against fat phobia, for example. Besides this, it is necessary to build and validate instruments related to fat phobia, weight stigma and internalized weight stigma in order to raise figures on the prevalence of the problem in different contexts. Still, it is believed that it would be interesting to compare the different genders, social classes and age groups to verify consensus and dissent in the social representations that involve the subject of obesity.

As a conclusion, considering that there are still few studies on the subject in the Brazilian context, further research is suggested to add new analytical perspectives in order to comprehensively cover the subject. Therefore, we suggest studies with an experimental design in order to situate causal relationships in the theme and related constructs. In this context, in view of the importance of the health discourse in the analysis of comments of Internet users, it would be interesting to know the influence of a discourse justifying weight-based discrimination in the collective of students and/or professionals in areas related to the treatment of obesity.

Likewise, although less related to the scope of social representations and situated in other theoretical perspectives in the framework of Social Psychology, it is also believed that critical discursive studies, allied to the intersectional perspective, may increase the barrier of knowledge concerning fat phobia, aiding the deconstruction of forms of oppression embedded in different hierarchies that make up social differences. Therefore, in the proposal of the analysis of psychosocial aspects imbricated in the fabric of obesity, Social Psychology had (and seems to continue to have) a "heavy" role in the understanding of obesity, considering the social path and the subjectivity as an important path in the consideration of (psychological and social) aspects of the social actors in their complexity, creating - despite the a priori theoretical determined fidelities - bases for the formulation of laws to criminalize weight-based discrimination and the formulation of public policies appropriate to this sector of the population, with a view to promoting health and mitigating weight-based discriminatory practices.

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