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- Dr. Kenneth Christie, Professor, Royal Roads University, Canada. (*Political Studies*)
- Dr. Barbara Zagaglia, Associate Professor, Polytechnic University of Marche, Italy. (*Demography*)
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- Dr. Domenico Maddaloni, Professor, University of Salerno, Italy. (*Sociology*)
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The *Athens Journal of Social Science (AJSS)* is an Open Access quarterly double-blind peer reviewed journal and considers papers from all areas of social sciences, including papers on sociology, psychology, politics, media, and economics. Many of the papers in this journal have been presented at the various conferences sponsored the [Social Sciences Division](#) of the Athens Institute. All papers are subject to Athens Institute's [Publication Ethical Policy and Statement](#).

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*The current issue is the first of the twelfth volume of the **Athens Journal of Social Sciences (AJSS)**, published by the [Social Sciences Division](#) of Athens Institute.*

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Gregory T. Papanikos
President
Athens Institute



Athens Institute

A World Association of Academics and Researchers

19th Annual International Conference on Psychology 26-29 May 2025, Athens, Greece

The [Psychology Unit](#) of Athens Institute organizes its 19th Annual International Conference on Psychology, 26-29 May 2025, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Social Sciences](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars and students of psychology and other related disciplines. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available ([https:// www.atiner.gr/2025/FORM-PSY.doc](https://www.atiner.gr/2025/FORM-PSY.doc)).

Academic Members Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Thanos Patelis**, Head, Psychology Unit of Athens Institute & Research Scholar, Fordham University, USA.

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **4 February 2025**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **28 April 2025**

Social and Educational Program

The Social Program Emphasizes the Educational Aspect of the Academic Meetings of Athens Institute.

- Greek Night Entertainment (This is the official dinner of the conference)
- Athens Sightseeing: Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk
- Social Dinner
- Mycenae Visit
- Exploration of the Aegean Islands
- Delphi Visit

Conference Fees

Conference fees vary from 400€ to 2000€
Details can be found at: <https://www.atiner.gr/fees>



Athens Institute for Education and Research

A World Association of Academics and Researchers

19th Annual International Conference on Sociology 5-8 May 2025, Athens, Greece

The [Sociology Unit](#) of Athens Institute is organizing its 19th Annual International Conference on Sociology, 5-8 May 2025, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Social Sciences](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of Sociology, Social Work and other related fields. Theoretical and empirical research papers will be considered. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2025/FORM-SOC.doc>).

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission: **21 January 2025**
- Acceptance of Abstract: 4 Weeks after Submission
- Submission of Paper: **7 April 2024**

Academic Member Responsible for the Conference

- **Dr. Domenico Maddaloni**, Head, Sociology Research Unit, Athens Institute & Associate Professor, University of Salerno, Italy.
- **Dr. Philip G. Cerny**, Director, [Social Sciences Division](#), Athens Institute & Professor Emeritus, University of Manchester (UK) and Rutgers University (USA).
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Conflict of Interests Regarding Peer Review: Bias in Manuscript Rejection

By Ernesto Carlos Pujazon Patron* & Jose Domingo Elias Arcelles[‡]

The majority of submitted manuscripts, across all article-journal types, may be rejected for one or more reasons... While the reasons for rejection vary between desk, post-peer-review, and post-editorial-review rejections, many of the issues raised could be easily avoided by devoting enough time to planning and conceptualizing the work under consideration. Indeed, Aristotle (384–322 BC) in the Rhetoric (the art of persuasion), which was a theory of - civic discourse - stated: “The mistake lies in the beginning; as the proverb says, ‘Well begun is half done;’ so an error at the beginning, though quite small, bears the same ratio to the errors in the other parts.” This quote seems especially appropriate in this case. This paper examines the various reasons for which an article may not be accepted or considered for publication and then the paper moves into providing an explanation of the different reasons by which an article may not be considered for publication based on the reviewer’s belief, faith, professional discrepancies or methodological outcomes. Well organised and sufficient preparation is the key to success. The authors hope that people across academia and other professional experts can use this discussion when leading training-building research workshops to create awareness and assist researchers in planning and writing research papers that have better probabilities of acceptance, yet are easy to assimilate for the average reader and truly advance knowledge.

Keywords: *bias, manuscript, prejudice, rejection, review*

Introduction

The nature in which the study approach has been sustained aims to reduce the rejection load caused by unconscious bias, blind peer review manifests the process in which scientific works or technological projects are evaluated by academic experts in the same or similar professional field before the publication. In understanding the definitions, steps and dynamics, it is considered that these actions guarantee the promotion of high-quality academic research and that the findings materialized in the results are reliable. The reliability and validity of the discoveries strengthen the principles that help maintain a quality standard in the development of academic and scientific-technological knowledge (Nerina Fernanda 2016). Academics may all like to believe that they are objective scholars who may evaluate individuals or written works solely on the basis of their credentials or content. However, numerous studies reveal that each of us has a unique life experience and a particular cultural background that has shaped our inner beliefs, thoughts, taste, and behaviour over the course of our

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entire lives, which in turn has influenced or predisposed how reviews are conducted. Cultural differences in human behaviour have been widely recorded and analysed by numerous psychological theories that emphasize cognitive or affective factors (Han 2015, p. 68). This highlights how frequently people are astonished by how others behave unexpectedly when traveling between cultures. Humans frequently have unconscious or implicit presuppositions that affect how a judgment is passed and presented. Given that both men and women hold firmly solid ideas about gender, the evaluator's gender is irrelevant when examining these credentials (Eve and Jo 2012) cognitive biases often work through reasons. Instead of merely opting for the conclusion one prefers, human beings curiously come up with reasons, even if dubious ones, in order to justify their decisions to others and, importantly, to themselves. Applying frequent generalization to a population or written work may or may not be appropriate for the evaluation process, an erroneous impartial appraisal may result from this generalization. This raised issue may bring a few questions for discussion, such as: What transpires when doing an impartial assessment of a written article which is challenging to measure? Or in cases when generalization leads to incorrect assessment? How can we encourage objectivity and avoid presumption in peer-reviewed articles to lower the rejection of low-quality assessments? Although this is not a paper on cultural neuroscience approach, it remains a challenge to provide a coherent understanding of cultural discrepancies and behaviour. Culture and view point, 'Thoughts'... perspective taking may be another universal factor to be considered useful to interpret other people's actions which investigate the effect of culture, for example: East Asian cultures are often characterized as collectivistic, as opposed to Western culture, which is often characterized as individualistic (Wu and Keysar 2007, p. 600). Nisbett and Masuda (2003) pointed out that; '*East Asians and Westerners perceive the world and think about it in very different ways. Westerners are prone to focusing on a single object, analysing and categorizing its attributes in an effort to find out what rules govern its behaviour (11163).*' The physical "affordances" of the environment may also influence and have an impact on perception. It may be argued as well that the followers of a particular scientific method identify themselves with the central ideas of that system, developing a loyalty to it or to its originator drawing them into an unconscious bias (Iltis 1973, p. 345). Likewise, academic discourse expresses the language and style used in writing, which is usually formal and objective, guided by the position of a specialized and technical language to communicate ideas and findings. This usually follows a specific structure of academic discourse to support methodological statements and contribute to the development of the scientific field, the cultural and geographical context, to cite paradigmatic examples that academic institutions explore. For this reason, the agency of the findings in the academic discourse is organized in a clear and logical way with a coherent structure that facilitates the understanding and monitoring of the argument (Bolívar 2020). This clarity of written language, concisely expressed in its formal and objective style, prevents reductionist generalizations and erroneous assumptions generated by discrepancies in peer-reviewed articles from conclusions based on empirical evidence due to cognitive biases.

From the brief review presented above, key points are revealed which are essential to this two-section paper. First, this paper offers the terminology of the

following keywords such as, ‘bias’; ‘rejection’, ‘withdrawn,’ and some other similar words presented in the introduction title; and second, this paper establishes some fundamental questions to lead this discourse, why manuscripts are rejected; or does a blind peer-review offer a healthier proof-reading solution to minimize the number of paper rejections?

American Psychologist Gordon Allport (1954) in his book: *The Nature of Prejudice* published by Addison-Wesley remains a benchmark for psychological research on prejudice. This study of implicit social cognition has two different and more modern sets of origins (Brownstein 2019). The first originates from the distinction drawn by cognitive psychologists in the 1970s between ‘controlled’ and ‘automatic’ information processing. While “controlled processing” was supposed to be voluntary attention-demanding and of limited capacity; “automatic processing” was thought to unfold without attention and have practically infinite capacity and is difficult to suppress deliberately (Payne and Gawronski 2010). The ability to judge people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour without directly asking them is arguably the most important achievement in research on implicit social cognition. Implicit measures might thus be considered as tools that assess people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviour indirectly, that is, without relying on ‘self-report’. In the social cognition literature, the term ‘implicit’ refers to at least four distinct things (Gawronski and Brannon 2017), explain below:

1. a distinctive psychological construct which is assessed by a variety of instruments;
2. a family of instruments, that assess people’s thoughts and feelings in a specific way;
3. a set of cognitive and affective processes that affect responses on a variety of measures; and,
4. a kind of evaluative behaviour elicited by specific circumstances, such as cognitive load;

It may also allude to its etymology; a word borrowed from French and Medieval Latin; French ‘*implicite*,’ going back to Middle French, ‘complicated, tangled’, borrowed from Medieval Latin ‘*implicitus*’ ‘involved, complicated, implied’, going back to Latin, ‘involved, intricate’, variant past participle of ‘*implicāre*’ ‘to fold about itself, entwine, involve’ (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.)).

“Implicit bias” researchers have identified several conditions in which individuals are most likely to rely on their unconscious system, including situations involving ambiguous or incomplete information; for example, the presence of time constraints and circumstances in which our cognitive control may be compromised, such as fatigue or having a lot on our minds (Staats 2016, p. 29) Implicit bias may also refer to an automatic associations of stereotypes and attitudes towards a social groups. Those stereotypes and attitudes may result from repeated exposure to cultural stereotypes in societies, forming the basis for implicit racial, gender, belief, ethnic, and other similar biases. Research has shown that stereotypes are automatically activated merely by encountering a member of a different social group. Under this exposure our judgment, action and decision may be unconsciously affected (Izumi 2017, p. 686)

nonverbal behaviours are also shaped by unconscious attitudes and stereotypes. So, neutrality in practice is illusory because of the operation of implicit or unconscious bias (Izumi 2017, p. 685).

These actions or implicit bias may also affect the criteria or the means by which a peer-reviewed paper is assessed. While implicit biases can influence any decision-making process, they should not be interpreted as character defects or other indicators of whether or not someone is a “good person” (Staats 2016, p. 33) Implicit bias, according to study evidence, powerfully explains the persistence of many societal injustices, not only in education but also in other areas such as criminal justice, healthcare, and employment. While few people like the idea of being biased, considerable social science and neuroscience research has linked people's unconscious associations to disparate results, even among those who adamantly claim to be egalitarian (Staats 2016, p. 33) Taking the text below as an example, to analyses the implicit understanding a human mind may use to find the unfinished text.

‘If you can read this paragraph, it’s because our minds are very good at putting together pieces of information in a way that is easy for us to make sense of. Our minds do this automatically, without our conscious control.’

The implicit associations we hold arise outside of conscious awareness; therefore, they do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse. Little is known about how people incorporate information regarding unconscious bias into their discriminatory reasoning. While many researchers, activists, and journalists believe that educating the public about implicit bias will rally support to combat its discriminatory consequences, there is reason to believe that increased awareness of implicit bias may reduce the extent to which people hold others accountable for the discrimination it causes (Daumeyer et al. 2019, p. 1)

“Explicit bias” refers to the attitudes and beliefs that we have about a person or group on a conscious level. Much of the time, these biases and their expression arise as the direct result of a perceived threat. When people feel threatened, they are more likely to draw group boundaries to distinguish themselves from others (Clarke 2018, p. 513).

Scientific Objectivity

The objectivity of academic discourse in published texts configures the crucial process of peer review that determines compliance with quality standards in its evaluation, in theoretical-methodological congruence of the solidity of academic discourse and evidencing the progressive focus on human knowledge (Cuéllar 2022). Objectivity is a valuable asset. To call something objective implies that it is significant to us and that we approve of it. There are different levels of objectivity. Claims, methods, results, and scientists can all be more or less objective, and the more objective, the better. Using the term ‘objective’ to describe something has a unique rhetorical force. The general public’s admiration for science, as well as its authority in public life, stems in large part from the belief that science is objective, or at least more objective than other modes of inquiry (Reiss et al. 2020). If what makes science so great is its objectivity, then objectivity should be worth defending. Close examinations

of scientific practice conducted by philosophers of science over the last fifty years, have revealed that several conceptions of the ideal of objectivity are either questionable or unattainable. The chances of a science providing a non-perspectival “view from nowhere” or proceeding in a manner uninformed by human goals and values are slim. When comparing Goethe to Newton, Stereotypical perspectives are obviously based on stereotypes—stock characterizations that are paraded as if they were genuine explanations. Newton was a scientist and Goethe was a poet (Sepper 2009, p 263); therefore, science has long been influenced by financial conflicts of interest, politics, belief, and other extensive list of prejudices. This however, has renewed concerns about the generation of partial data and conclusions, owing perhaps to the outsized influence of apparently “non-epistemic values,” such as political ideology, religion and/or personal gain. Due to a number of factors — i.e., small sample sizes, small effect sizes, and ideological influences— scientist estimate that some published scientific findings are false (Ioannidis 2005). A key concern is that a researcher’s preferences or values can contribute to the rationalization of experimental designs or interpretations of data that will bring the researcher status, support their favoured ideology, or promote what they perceive to be social justice (Wilholt 2009).

Scholarly Review, an Early Beginning

Following the establishment of national academies in Europe during the early 17th-century, this period is generally regarded as the beginning of the practice of scholarly review.--- Francis Bacon (1561-1626) enunciated a universal method of assessment of new science, which until then was called ‘Natural science or Natural philosophy’ a mixture of chemistry, philosophical view of God and creation, natural physics, early medical practice (anatomy) and obscure belief in alchemy; in his “*Novum Organum 1620*” Bacon inspired many English scholars, some whom engaged in an informal pattern of discussion to debate their views and opinions on unfolding science (Spier 2002, p. 357). Mario Biagioli (2002) has described in detail “the slow differentiation of peer review from book censorship” and the role state licensing and censorship systems played during the 16th-century in Europe (p. 31). By 1662 these small groups of discussion formed an official society or academy ‘The Royal Charter of Incorporation’ which later became “The Royal Society of London” for improving Natural Knowledge and “*L’Académie Royale des Sciences of Paris - 1666*” were established, both bodies created in-house journals, The ‘*Philosophical Transactions*’, edited by Henry Oldenburg (c,1615-1677) (a German theologian, diplomat and natural philosopher) and the ‘*Journal des Sçavans*’ (Journal of the Learned; focusing on European history) respectively (Spier 2002, p. 357). These prototypical scientific journals gradually replaced the exchange of experimental reports and findings via correspondence, formalising a process that up until then had been essentially personal, informal, and nonasserted in nature (Lee et al. 2013, p. 3). From 1731 the “*Royal Society of Edinburgh*” had adopted a review process in which materials sent for publication were vetted and evaluated by knowledgeable members or an editorial board (Spier 2002, p. 357). From these early efforts gradually emerged the process of independent review of scientific reports by acknowledged experts that persists to this day. This was the early period of amateur scientists or so-called natural

philosophers who “produced reliable new knowledge” for their times and following gentlemanly conversations with other likeminded figures, published their findings; however, professional science is not conducted by “logically well-informed sole knowers,” mechanisms thus evolved to formalize the ways in which the trustworthiness of scientific findings could be verified and promulgated to a wider audience (Lee et al. 2013, p. 4).

It was the Newton Method

Introducing Sir Isaac Newton (1642 – 1726 / 27) would be a formidable task as his life has so much to offer in all aspects of human knowledge. His philosophy method is built based on mathematical empiricism, which promotes the idea that mathematical and physical laws may be revealed in the real world via experimentation and observation; developing a positive philosophical conception of space and the divine (Patron and Jose Domingo 2021).

The Newton – Gottfried W. Leibniz (1646-1716) controversy forms amongst others, one of the main debates in a clash of philosophical world views on the nature of God, matter and physics forces. These two systems of *‘Natural philosophy’* were very different organizations of knowledge based on metaphysical philosophical belief and mechanical principles; or, it may also have been a communication problem more than a matter of definition. Having an inadequate communication over a meaning of words may bring more issues, if the participants had been able to define their terms, a controversy may not have arisen or at least have been quickly resolved (Iltis 1973, p. 343). Latin was perceived as the language of the elite, educated people knew it, so they used it to write to each-other. Most of their works made a huge and lasting contribution to the state of human knowledge. The transmission of ideas and the production of results depends upon communication among people working within a given system of *‘Natural philosophy’* and between systems (Iltis 1973, p. 345); for example, Newtonian followers operating under this commitment viewed problems and competing theories with a different perception from those operating outside the group. As a result, the writings and experiments of adherents to other systems were perceived by them as a threat to the legitimacy of Newtonian natural philosophy (Iltis 1973, p. 345); to use a figure of speech it was a ‘them against us’ scenario where unconscious unfairness may be present in many different areas of science or philosophical concepts.

Many central debates in the philosophy of science have in one or another way to do with objectivity which is the property of various aspects of science. It exposed the idea that: scientific claims, method, results are not influenced by any particular perspective, value judgement, bias or personal interest to name a few relevant factors. ‘Objectivity’ is often considered to be an ideal for scientific enquiry and the basis for the authority of science and society (Reiss and Sprenger 2020). Since the establishment or introduction of the scientific method there have been many central debates in the philosophy of science that have, in one way or another to do with objectivity. Understanding the role of objectivity in science is therefore integral to a full appreciation of these debates. As this paper would present, it is impossible to fully appreciate the notion of scientific objectivity without touching upon some debates.

The ideal of objectivity has been criticized repeatedly in the philosophy of science, questioning both its desirability and its attainability. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines ‘objective’ – ‘as the lack of favouritism toward one side or another; freedom from bias;’ (Merriam-Webster n.d.) assuming that a truth or independent reality exists outside of any investigation or observation. The researcher's task in this model is to uncover this reality without contaminating it in any way. In philosophy -objectivity- is the concept of truth independent from individual -subjectivity- (‘bias’ caused by one's perception, emotions, or imagination). Can anything truly be free from unintentional ‘bias.’? A proposition is considered to have objective truth when its conditions are met without ‘bias’ caused by the mind of a sentient being. This debate leads us to one of the most profound cognitive biases which is the illusion of objectivity. This is the belief that we understand the world by direct perception. Whereas in fact, our understanding of even the simplest thing is guided by layers of cognitive processes deep rooted in the individual mind. A peer review method may rely on this process (the impression of objectivity) to accept or reject the publication of an article. Understanding scientific objectivity is therefore central to understanding the nature of science and the role it plays in society. A discussion of the scientific method and the arguments against its attainability and desirability, as well as the value of freedom and the notion of absence of personal bias, is included in this explanation of the natural conception of objectivity known as the faithfulness of facts. This idea's intuitive appeal is called into question when talking about the scientific method and the arguments that dispute both its desirability and its attainability; the value of freedom and the idea of absence of personal bias (Reiss et al. 2020).

‘Bias’

The term “bias” is often used pejoratively to refer to unfairly or unwarrantedly favouring an idea or individual. In the context of scientific investigation, a preference for a certain idea (i.e., a hypothesis, interpretation, or approach) can deviate from truth or be unwarranted by the evidence. Importantly, the term “bias” can be used even more broadly to include nobler tendencies toward accepting a particular conclusion, such as a bias toward the truth. Let us broadly say that in human psychology a bias is a tendency to favour a certain conclusion. Although in paradigmatic cases the conclusion is favoured in an unwarranted way, we would see that it is not inherently objectionable to have one's reasoning guided by one's goals and values (May 2021, p. 22); it may be common that in science, an investigator's values can readily serve as sources of bias. Since one's values generally give rise to corresponding personal motivations, it can influence various decisions made during scientific investigation.

For example, a researcher may be inclined to have positive feedback with the hypothesis, method and result chosen by the investigator; which could lead to an analysis bias (May 2021, p. 22) Even the decision to publish or report a particular finding can be influenced by a researcher's desire to construct a manuscript narrative that is more likely to survive peer review—a form of publication bias which refers as the failure to publish results of a study on the basis of the direction or strength of the finding (Franco et al. 2014). A questionable practice on the rise is the reporting of and reliance on “marginally significant” results; this report is slightly higher in value and it

could be significant to ultimately support a hypothesis. Personal goal, and the failure to disclose the method or data which could affect the final conclusion (May 2021, p. 23) In science, such a “factual” motive could even incentivize questionable research practices in order to promote a finding that one is already convinced is true (May 2021, p. 23; Bright 2017).

How Many Types of Bias Are There?

Murphy (2021) showed numerous sorts of prejudice that were determined based on two types of main differences:

- a) ‘Cognitive bias’. This is the most common sort of bias. According to research, there are over 175 different types of cognitive bias. It refers to a divergence from judgment norms in which you may make unjustified inferences, evaluations, or impressions. You may also recall past events wrongly. These perceptions can influence a person’s behaviour or attitude, either positively or negatively.

Indeed, ‘cognitive biases’ frequently work through reasons. Instead of simply choosing the preferred conclusion, humans strangely devise reasons, even if they are dubious, to justify their decisions to others and, more importantly, to themselves. Providing reasons for a specific conclusion is what we call “rationalization,” which is often used negatively, but it also has a positive connotation. (May 2021, p. 3345/66) Sometimes we make a choice or form a belief automatically or intuitively and only later —‘post hoc’— come up with a justification for why, and one that may or may not correspond with the reasons that drove us to the conclusion in the first place (May 2021, p. 3345/66). Reasoning and rationalization can also occur before a decision — ‘ante hoc’— in order to justify it in the first place (May 2021). The most familiar ante hoc rationalization is a form of motivated reasoning, which has been studied extensively (May 2021, Ditto et al. 2009).

- b) ‘Implicit bias’. Within the epistemology standpoint, there is scope for claims not just about truth but also about prejudice. However, these can be formulated in different ways. Bias could be seen as an inevitable feature of the beliefs of those who do not share a similar standpoint position; their views of the world may be unnecessarily ideological. Meanwhile, those who do share a similar standpoint would be viewed as not subject to bias by virtue of their social setting. Alternatively, along the lines of our formulation of the fishbowl analogy (we are all immersed in a paradigm and reality, much like a fish in the water it swims in), it might be argued that the difference between those who do and do not have a similar standpoint is the nature of the bias that their position supplies. Either way, both true and false standpoints are seen as social products, so that whether a knowledge claim is true or not is determined not by whether it has been shaped by the personal and social characteristics of the researcher but by the nature of those characteristics (Hammersley and Gomm 1997).

Clarifying the usage and term 'bias' outlines the ambiguities that surround it; arguing that these arise in part from the fact that there has been a reliance on an epistemology which is inadequate. The argument also posits that radical epistemological alternatives, such as relativism and standpoint theory, do not provide us with a viable substitute for its definition (Hammersley and Gomm 1997).

Literature Review

Human thinking is an indirect reflection of the fundamental characteristics and relationships between things. When writing an academic article, authors may entertain their thoughts about any possible rejection or may also think about how to minimize the risk or avoid any rejection. Publications in high-ranking journals are essential for career advancement and knowledge development. Journals are the custodians of humanistic and scientific knowledge, as well as a means of advancing knowledge sharing (Morgan 1984, p. 965). There is substantial literature and publications from various fields such as psychology, sociology, statistics, and science, on the topic presented under this title. This paper employs a descriptive approach to comprehend what rejection, bias, and prejudice mean in the context of this discussion. Taken into consideration divergent thinking, as an unstructured approach to problem solving that aims to generate numerous solutions, to which some authors may have made a connection with mind mapping (a method for expressing ideas in a graphical format that encourages divergent thinking). However, it is more common to think of lateral thinking as looking for one solution to a problem. Lateral thinking can also be thought of as a way to find new solutions, alternatives, or points of view to consider. It might present alternative solutions to a problem or raise more issues that need to be taken into account, which would prevent acceptance. Yet again, there is no intent to disregard lateral or divergent thinking, as an alternative, to which some authors have connected to mind mapping.

This discourse also builds on and defines key words to better comprehend their meaning. To reiterate the purpose of this paper is to present an overall view on the reason why submitted academic articles may fail to be admitted for publication. The classification system may be used to understand general literature that is available in printing or electronically via the internet. This discussion may be useful as a recommendation in any academic field, raising awareness among students and teaching supervisors on the reasons and factors underlying the rejection of articles and about the struggle to understand these distinctive factors of evaluation.

Aim

Today, there are literally thousands (estimates may vary considerably depending on the continent) of peer-reviewed journals in existence, although the severity and consistency with which peer review procedures are applied across this population vary considerably. The aim of this paper is to identify the most common reasons why article submissions to double-blind peer-reviewed journals are rejected during the

submission and post-review stages. We hope that this paper will raise some rhetorical questions and provide an explanation of the term used to better understand the issue at its inception. We also expect the paper to contribute and serve as a guideline for young researchers hoping to publish an acceptable paper, as well as to prevent future contributors from being rejected. It is vital to study and understand definitions and descriptions of this process before reaching any final judgement.

Methodology

In a peer review, the planning process evidences the implicit social cognition in the objective field to be evaluated and the strengthening of quality standards in published texts that favour the review process in the comments and evaluations of experts (Abadal and Da-Silbeira 2020). To lessen the burden of rejection caused by peer-reviews unintentional bias, which may be used as an approach, this study uses empirical a-priory evidence and metaphorical discussion on the topic presented. Furthermore, the authors will present four areas of discussion, which are critical for this theoretical discussion and understanding the definitions, steps, and dynamics of any 'article submission' to journals before reaching, yielding and drawing any final conclusions.

Discussion and Results

Recently, 'Conflict of Interest' (COI), have been a part of the much literature develop in the popular press of social sciences and scientific research journals. This 'COI' occurs when an individual, peer-review, or personal interest are in conflict with their objective obligations. Rejection of articles by the peer-review process may bring negative consequences to the researcher (Young 2009, p. 412) This bring the discussion presented here, which is drafted into four areas, such as: 1) single versus (vs) double peer-review, advantage and disadvantage; 2) manuscript rejection-causes; 3) discrimination-prejudice; and finally, 4) the Matthew effect.

However, before moving on with the discussion and aim of this argument, it would be *fair* to single out and provide an explanation of certain words used which are essential to clarify the position of this paper. Unfairness or 'unfair,' may be better explained from its etymological meaning before moving onto the discussion. The online etymology Dictionary refers to old English '*unfægr*,' which is 'unlovely, not beautiful, deformed, hideous, unlovable,' from *un-* 'not' + *fair* (adjective). With similar formation in Old Norse '*ufagr*', Gothic '*unfargs*.' Which means 'evil, bad,' was recorded from c. 1300. (Harper (n.d.)). Scientific quality must be recognized not only as a motivator for individual scientists, but also as a key to the funding required to keep the scientific machine running. 'Unfair' research evaluation is thus a major source of frustration in scientific communities around the world, as well as a potential threat to the entire scientific enterprise (Seglen 1998, p. 224). Traditional peer review is too often conducted using superficial criteria (personal or institutional reputation,

project relevance, journal prestige, crude publication counts, and so on), and is widely regarded as a lottery, not without reason.

1) *Single-Double Blind Reviews: Advantages and/or Disadvantages*

What does the title above have to offer? To begin with, very much has been discussed about ‘peer-review;’ however, one thing that the academic community and most scientists do agree on is that much of what we read has been improved enormously by thoughtful and critical peer review in general. The fundamental principle is straightforward: experts in a given domain appraise the professional performance, creativity, or quality of scientific work produced by others in their field or area of competence (Lee et al. 2013) Peer reviewers make an invaluable contribution to manuscripts that are under consideration for publication by journals (Lee et al. 2013, Rye et al. 2021) This is especially true in the case of submissions that clearly have merit but are incomplete or less focused. A high-quality peer reviewer often helps turn these manuscripts into compelling publications that attract the attentions of the community of readers. Advances in knowledge, and in science particularly, also requires rigorous validation. Therefore, peer reviewers play a vital role in this process (Rye et al. 2021). Good reviewers unerringly identify gaps and inconsistencies in manuscripts presented, offering constructive feedback for their resolution. So, excellence in peer review is something that does not come naturally to anyone; it takes a lot of experience to be able to provide authors with concise and balanced feedback that may be implemented. It is important that the peer-review contribution in the manner of feedback does not compromise the quality of the article and aims to improve it. Although there is no doubt that some of these changes will create challenges, their implementation creates the potential to bring major benefits that should serve as a role model for peer review across the broader scientific community.

2) *Manuscript Rejection: Causes*

Researchers may want to contribute to knowledge with the publication of a manuscript which has gone through single or double peer review besides all necessary steps for its acceptance. In any given year journals publish, at a conservative estimate, over a million articles. Each one of those articles will, in all likelihood, have been read by at least one, often two, and sometimes three or more reviewers, selected by the journal’s Editor-In-Chief, and most of those submissions will have undergone multiple rounds of review prior to eventual publication in a journal of record (Lee et al. 2013, p. 4). Those papers that are rejected will also have consumed a great deal of reviewer time. Moreover, at least some of those rejected papers will be resubmitted to a different journal (possibly more than one) in an effort to be published. Kravitz and Baker (2011) stated: “*each submission of a rejected manuscript requires the entire machinery of peer review to creak to life anew,*” creating, in effect, “*a journal loop bounded only by the number of journals available and the dignity of the authors*” (1). This may be only part of the story, other research councils, foundations, universities, and public-private grant-awarding bodies also need to call upon the service area of

blind review experts to evaluate the millions of research proposals, intra- and extramural, seeking funding at any given time of the year. Again, this is not always the case; manuscript rejection occurs often (Dhammi and Rehan-UI-Haq 2018, p. 97). Hall and Wilcox concluded that 62% of the published papers have been rejected at least once (Dhammi and Rehan-UI-Haq 2018, p. 97, Menon et al. 2022, p. 59). This rejection rate may be the result of different sets of rules being applied by better quality journals. Most significant journals may highlight this issue in their weblink with a disclosure:

“Authors are notified that the process is very competitive, and that on average for all our publications less than 20% of papers considered, are finally accepted for publication. Thus, before submitting, make sure that your paper meets the academic standards of scholarly research. Please, make sure that you have reviewed and cited the most important and recent English references that relate to your research.” (Academic Journals, “Paper Submission-Review-Acceptance-Publication” section, n.d, para 4).

This reveals that 80% of the manuscripts submitted for a blind review are rejected. For a manuscript to be acceptable, it must deal with a topic which is new, important, interesting to the target reader, and most importantly advances knowledge and understanding in a certain field. Every journal has a well-defined mandate and target audience. Authors must ensure that they submit to a journal within the scope of which their manuscript lies. Manuscripts outside the scope are usually rejected without an external peer review (Pierson 2004). Some reasons why manuscripts may not be considered for publication could fall into various areas such as, originality, ethical and language (Adib and Nimehchisalem 2021, p. 4):

- a) structure and content of the research; such as poor hypothesis, lack of research methodology, an improper use of statistical methods, and a lack of proper current bibliography;
- b) ethical misconduct and plagiarism; inappropriate discussion and conclusion matching the research question presented; and,
- c) poor language skills/proficiency; when it comes to manuscripts, written language is the mode of communication that connects authors and their readers. Language is a vessel that transcends authors’ ideas, and its quality is of great importance. Even if the content of the paper is original, novel, and well-thought-out, poor language skills make it difficult for peer-viewers, reviewers, and readers to understand what is expressed throughout the paper. Accurate terminology and well-expressed ideas increase the effectiveness of language and enable the information expressed in the paper to be fully understood (Kumar and Rao 2018).

This common and fatal flaw most often leads to manuscript rejection, another reason that may also lead to rejection could be perceived as the lack of novelty/originality in the research question. However, in this process of judging novelty/originality of the manuscript by editors and peer reviewers has a definite element of subjectivity involved that can be seen as ‘bias’ or ‘prejudice’ (Menon et al. 2022, p. 64). It must be stated that every journal has a well-designed and defined mandate and

area of expertise (Dhammi and Rehan-Ul-Haq 2018, p. 97, Menon et al. 2022, p. 59). Knowing the usual reasons for manuscript rejection can alert prospective authors to common errors and flaws in conducting research. It will also inform them about what the editors and peer reviewers look for in a manuscript, so that they can plan their research better and increase its chances of getting published (Menon et al. 2022, p. 60). This study may show some limitations due to the fact that every journal has its own workflow and hence, the results may not be extended to other journals, particularly those with a niche focus. Nonetheless, there are numerous opportunities for authors to plan and present their study in a way that persuades reviewers of its potential value. Finally, it is possible that the rejected manuscript may have other shortcomings too that are not mentioned in this paper. Acceptance without any changes is extremely rare. Even the best written papers still contain some minor flaws (Kumar and Rao 2018).

3) *Discrimination: Prejudice*

What constitutes discrimination-prejudice in a blind manuscript peer review? Any manuscript is typically sent to one or two reviewers, with or without the author's name and contact information, to conduct an academic expertise information (content) evaluation of the document. First it is necessary to introduce a definition of the term 'discrimination.' To capture its positive and negative connotations is both ubiquitous and necessary (Hellman 2008, p. 13). "Discrimination," Wouter Vandenhoe finds that "there is no universally accepted definition of discrimination" (Altman 2020), the etymology term '*discriminates*' appeared in the early 17th century in the English language. It is from the Latin '*discriminat*' – 'distinguished between', from the verb, '*discriminare*,' from *discrimen* 'distinction', from the verb, *discernere*. Since the American Civil War (1861–1865) the term "*discrimination*" (Salentin and Heitmeyer 2022) generally evolved in the American English usage as an understanding of prejudicial treatment of an individual based solely on their race, later generalized as membership in a certain socially undesirable group or social category. Perhaps there is a positive notion of the term 'prejudice' exposed by Gadamer's, the conception of prejudice (German *Vorurteil*) that goes back to the meaning of the term as literally a *pre-judgment* (from the Latin *prae-judicium*) that was lost during the Renaissance (Malpas 2022). Before this sense of the word became almost universal, it was a synonym for discernment, tact and culture as in "*taste and discrimination*", generally a laudable attribute; to "discriminate against" being commonly disparaged. Moral philosophers have defined discrimination using a moralized definition; however, most discussions on 'moral' are centred on the concept of 'virtue' (Homjak 2019), so under this approach, discrimination may be defined as acts, practices, or policies that wrongfully impose a relative disadvantage or deprivation on persons based on their membership in a salient social group. This is a comparative definition. An individual need not be actually harmed in order to be discriminated against.

4) *The 'Matthew Effect'*

The terminology “The Matthew Effect” is used here for practical reasons and to honour the historical account of Harriet Zuckerman’s (b, 1937) hours-long interview with various Nobel laureates in 1960 (Zuckerman 1972), which suggested that eminent scientists get a disproportionate amount of credit for their contributions to science while relatively unknown ones tend to get disproportionately little for their occasionally comparable contributions (Merton 1988, p. 606, Zuckerman 1967). This effect has become widely acknowledged in the West and has close ties with several other concepts in the social and natural sciences and it is debatable (Perc 2014, p. 1); it may serve to heighten the visibility of contributions to science by scientists of acknowledged standing and to reduce the visibility of contributions by authors who are less well known. This could be an ironic or negative disadvantaged position, where well-known authors may be favoured over less well-known or unknown authors. The initial problem is transformed by a shift in theoretical perspective and practices. By shifting the angle of vision, it is possible to note other possible kinds of consequences, such as unconscious bias which may lead to an increase in the number of acceptances or rejections of articles for publication. As one of Zuckerman’s interviewees, a Nobel laureate in physics said: *‘the world is peculiar in this matter of how it gives credit. It tends to give credit to those already famous people’* (Merton 1988, p. 606). It goes without saying that the nature and caliber of these contributions widely praised by the scientific community must be the same or at least very similar in order for the claim that established scientists receive preferential treatment when it comes to equal peer review and primary recognition for their scientific work to be considered true. That criterion is satisfied in instances of collaboration, it can be difficult to distinguish between the distinctive contributions of collaborators or independent discoveries that, if not exactly the same, at least resemble one another enough to be regarded as functional equivalents by the principals involved or by their knowledgeable peers. In papers jointly published by scientists of markedly unequal rank and reputation, another laureate in physics reports, *“the man who’s best known gets more credit, an inordinate amount of credit”* or as a laureate in chemistry put it, *“If my name was on a paper, people would remember it and not remember who else was involved”* (Merton 1988, p. 608). These examples may bring some light into the issue of single or double peer-review. At the extreme, such misallocation of credit can occur even when a published paper bears only the name of a hitherto unknown and uncredentialed scientist.

As a result, in the review process, the rejection of the manuscript in the context of the constructivist perspective infers mourning for a rejected scientific article, in terms of the idea of leaving behind the article or the possibility of publication in a certain journal and instead, focus on building a new project, or investigating other publishing opportunities. This means accepting the negative situation and moving forward, rather than getting stuck in grief and wanting to get back what has been lost. In this case, the action could be to seek publication opportunities, either in other magazines or in other types of media, or even the creation of a new project, assuming that this rejection does not mean the end of the project, the scientific career or the area of human knowledge in which the author or authors have affiliation. Focusing on the future, generating the

construction of new opportunities, instead of remaining trapped in what happened and the loss of the article due to the impossibility of publication (Villarreal-Ríos et al. 2021).

In a positive context, the new generation of researchers, who have grown with the new technologies, have a greater facility to adapt to the change of using the new communication and collaboration platforms. This allows them to fully explore the possibilities of the new tools to collaborate and share with their colleagues around the world and to increase their visibility and impact in the field of research. The new communication and collaboration platforms, such as scientific social networks and open access repositories, allow researchers to share and discuss their research with colleagues around the world and obtain valuable feedback and comments, improving academic impact in the field of research. Combining all this, the new generation of researchers have a greater awareness of the importance of open science and the need to share their research in a transparent and accessible way, favouring contributing to a more collaborative and open academic culture to adapt to the new technologies and platforms (Rodríguez-Bravo and Nicholas 2019).

However, according to Cortés Guerrero (2022) in his editorial, “The pressure to publish: Pandemic and Academy” (2022), the undue pressure exerted by some authors to have their text published despite having been rejected in the process is not ignored. Peer review under the double-blind modality is a serious problem in the community.

Conclusion

An important aspect which affects the publishing process of a paper is the choice of the publication venue. Authors should cater their submissions to the criteria set by the desired journal’s editorial board and reviewers in order to prevent their submissions from being excluded-rejected and make sure they have complied with all necessary requirements and steps. It is much more gratifying to an editor/editorial to accept a good paper rather than rejecting a poor one, yet most editors reject a great many manuscripts. Editors try to view rejections as positive acts that define the journal’s content and set its standards, but, of course, this is only the journal’s particular point of view. Certainly, anything the editor can do to soften the blow would be humane and wise: humane because the author is deserving of courtesy at all times, and wise because authors judge a journal to some extent by the quality of its publications, authors are often in many ways the journal’s most active readers.

Would exercising a freedom of choice be an exempted from any implicit or explicit, conscious or unconscious - intentional or unintentional type of ‘bias?’ When performing a double peer-review of any academic paper, reviewers may not deal with the authors or institutions names as they are not part of the requirement sent to them by the editors; but what about exercising the freedom of personal choice? Would reviewers be able to call it “biases”? Can reviewers reject or recommend a paper for publication just based on their own personal preferences, professional experience and expertise, regardless of the controversies it may present to them dealing with themes such as discrimination based on the papers title, language and/or narrative? Could this then be called ‘bias’ or prejudice against other reviewer articles if they are not

selected? If (peer-reviewers) rely and use the best of their cultural background, professional experience, expertise, and objective knowledge to resolve and reach a conclusion; could it be called yet again ‘unconscious-unintentional bias?’ We are human’s, who think, feel and act; it is our nature to interact and pass judgements every single day from the moment waking up until it is time to sleep. In real-life implications of implicit biases can create invisible barriers to opportunity and achievement for some of the researchers—a stark contrast to the values and intentions of researcher whom dedicate their professional lives to their personal success. Thus, it is critical for researchers to identify any discrepancies that may exist between their conscious ideals and unconscious associations so that they can mitigate the effects of those implicit pre-positions, thereby improving their outcomes and allowing them to reach their full potential. As a result, ... Achieving objective results may be hampered by postmodernist views of truth, which hold that nothing is permanent, that truth is always relative, and that objectivity is impossible. Given the scientific method's core commitment to truth and rationality, such viewpoints or biases can definitely conflict with any scientific enterprise.

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Affection and Reflective Expectations in the Geographical Indication

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This paper is based on the theoretical discussion of the following analyze categories: reflective expectations, affection, agrarian systems, and geographical indication. The reflective expectations category has its proposition based on the notion, the concepts of expectations and reflexivity, supporting etymologically. This concept is explicitly analyzed when the agrarian system formation is considered and recognizes the geographical indications of a product, culturally linked to a territory and region. It is not about a specific study of a product, a region, contemplated with a geographical indication, and Indication of Origin and Denomination of Origin or a specific agrarian system. The aim is to comprehend how the knowledge is disseminated, appears, and signifies itself in the agrarian systems formation and its products in its regions linked to a public policy of the geographical indication. The thesis is that social formation happens through two affection-cognitive processes: knowledge transmission by affection and reflective expectations.

Keywords: *affection, reflective expectations, geographical indication*

Introduction

This paper is based on the theoretical discussion of the following analyze categories: reflective expectations, affection, agrarian systems, and geographical indication. The reflective expectations category has its proposition based on the notion, the concepts of expectations and reflexivity, supporting etymologically. This concept is explicitly analyzed when the agrarian system formation is considered and the recognition of the geographical indications of a product, culturally linked to a territory and region. It is not about a specific study of a product, a region, contemplated with a geographical indication, and Indication of Origin and Denomination of Origin or a specific agrarian system.

The aim is to comprehend how the knowledge is disseminated, appears, and means itself in the agrarian systems formation and its products in its regions linked to a public policy of the geographical indication. The thesis is that social formation happens through at least two affection-cognitive processes: knowledge transmission by affection and knowledge transmission by reflective expectations.

Thus, in an explanatory and descriptive way, based on examples that show what it is affirmed: examples based on the studies and research from other researchers and our own experiences as a researcher in the empirical activity together with the rural communities of agricultural farmers, using the Analyse-diagnostic of Agrarian Systems Method.

The case-studies were obtained from the literature and the real experiences in the regional societies. It is necessary to comprehend the recognition of the geographical

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indication for the products among the social and economic agentes. So some typical products from different regions and countries are cited and compared to demonstrate how the affection and the reflective expectations are fundamental to the knowlegde and know-how dissemination, related to a territory.

The combination between natural factors and economic and social factors implies that product can be declared as a geographical indication, but the techniques and technologies, the know-how and the production systems are transmitted by the affection in its family and the reflective expectations into the investment decisions of the economic agentes, mainly, in this study, the farmers. It is the central approach of this paper.

Methodological Procedures to Establish the Connection among Affection, Reflective Expectations, and Knowledge Transmission

It is about establishing the scientific procedures to perceive and register knowledge transmission, techniques, and technologies in the family and collective community scope. The procedures are the following:

- a) emphasis on the family cores through qualified interviews;
- b) prevalence of the principle of information orality;
- c) identification of the agricultural and activity production system of the family core, as well as the products, techniques, and using technologies;
- d) observance of the facts in the family life history in the social context;
- e) identification of the provided information as the knowledge content;
- f) historical periods of this knowledge, establishing a chronology of the facts (technique, technological, tangible and intangible, and immaterial) to characterize knowledge of transmission through affection;
- g) to confront the information of family cores to obtain a relative scientific truth that can characterize the diffusion of knowledge in communities through reflective expectations in the time;
- h) to analyze the impulse events of knowledge diffusion in history.

There are periods when the knowledge is diffused with more intensity in the social collective, conforming to an agrarian social system or a potential geographical indication that presents its own identity, therefore, plural and more or less diversified. The agrarian system changed during history, at different speeds, with more extended permanence states or in a dynamic and intense transformation. The geographical indication preserves the product's characteristics to keep itself but always is susceptible to innovations that achieve the production processes by introducing new technologies.

The Theoretical Approach

In the principles, a regional product is certified with a geographical indication because there is a reference to this region, which comprises the social collective communities, when the people as producer economic agents are related themselves, interacting with each other. A product identity or collective mark is consolidated, and knowledge, socially constructed, is diffused in a regional space whose product is recognized as a geographical indication or an agrarian system.

If there is a collective product, this condition, in process, is done concretely through the existence of social knowledge that expands through reflective expectations among the economic agents individually in these inter-relations. Historically, this product condition depends on the individual action of the goods producers or regional goods, which only do it in social inter-relation with the other farmers, emerging the regional product.

Social interaction occurs through reflective expectations among the farmers. Expectations as state-power-action, wait, observation, demonstration, action, and reflective, by the social interaction with each other, an imitation with the adaptations related to what the other does.

The regional product is a historical condition that identifies itself and diffuses through knowledge transmission through affection among generations, descendants of a family, and social interaction with other farmer families.

The collective condition is social and historically formed. Product recognition as a geographical indication is a state declaratory act with the own juridical effects on this condition. What kinds of knowledge are diffused? All of them guide the farmer's know-how, as the concept and history of the product, the way to make it, the use of the production techniques, the access to new techniques and technologies, the handling, the transformation techniques, the marketing in the more elaborated products in national and international scale, among others. Many of these techniques are not revealed.

Given the indisputable domination exercised by the financial and commercial capital in the world changes and the indisputable role that plays in the actual organization of the world economy, we do not extend this thesis to all phenomena of our economic life. It will be impossible to continue an economic reflection based on capitalist categories because a sector much large in economic life (the best sphere of agricultural production) is based in a capitalist way, a completely different way: family exploitation without employees (Chayanov 2014).

Products from Territoriality (*Terroir*) and Affection

The *Parmigiano* cheese of Emilia-Romanha, Liguria, and Piemonte in Italy consists of a historical monument of regional gastronomy with a great wealth of the milk products of these regions in Italy. The *grana* of a part, known by the size and consistency grainy of the pasta, and the portions of pasta in fillets of another part correspond to an original way of treatment according to Bérard and Marchenay (2004).

The invention of spices opens to an organoleptic universe. The large and sophisticated techniques elaborate Modena's balsamic vinegar (*aceto balsamico*) from a wine that implies a rare, wanted, and costly product. The rose spices (*conserva di rosa*), watermelon (*marmellata di cocomero*), rose creme (*crema di rosa canina*), pumpkin and lemon peel (*marmellata di zucca*), are sold in the local candy stores. The anchovy fingerlings are prepared with salt, rolled in flour, fried, and after put in vinegar. The Emilia-Romagna region is in the heart of Italian gastronomy, according to Bérard and Marchenay (2004).

According to Bérard and Marchenay (2004), local diversity is ubiquitous. It is reflected by a set of meat sausages, cheeses, oils, candles, pastries, fruits, or vegetables: in biological diversity, scales of manufacture, ways of trade, place of the product in the community, historical heritage, with a set of records that feed the family complexity of local products.

Local agricultural and food productions belong, with rare exceptions, to the animal or plant world. Processed products such as sausages, cheeses, and fermented products undergo through biological processes. This living being is subjected to different types of human intervention in the course of its elaboration – culture, cattle breeding, and fermentation. Knowledge and technical practices are the most visible factors, as they are observable, that influence this biological diversity (Bérard and Marchenay 2004).

La *botifarra* dolça de Figueres in Catalonia, originally, is distinguished from that of the neighboring villages by a large amount of sugar and less amount of lemon peel, and the absence of cinnamon. In Emilia-Romagna, a region of Italy, *Salama de sugo* has two different types: sugo and taglio. One is served with a spoon, the other with a knife. La *raschera* exists in the form of a round or square.

The nature of the link maintained with the local society creates another form of diversity because these productions do not occupy the same place in the communities where they are born. It is the wealth of a culture that emerges behind a product. Verifying variability is imperative in the face of production volumes and zones. Although there are significant disparities, the qualities produced are limited by this category of products.

Parma ham from Emilia Romagna is marketed in Italian export markets. Charlie's pork tripe chorizo is prepared in this community, and its distribution is not widespread. The white cheese or cooked salami extension zone comprises a good part of the Rhône-Alpes region, *parmigiano*, *reggiano*, and *the raschera* is far ahead in the economic development of their regions, according to Bérard and Marchenay (2004).

Shared know-how forms another component that participates in the definition of local and traditional agricultural and food production. Outside the manufacturing zone, which is the consumption zone, they are not available, according to Bérard and Marchenay (2004). According to the position that production occupies in the social group, these collective practices are considered in the organization of the whole society, as for certain cheeses or fruit productions. Domestic practices are based on a solid collective structure that is at the origin of today's artisanal and industrial adaptations. Domestic preparation is still very much present, as in the cases of *botifarra dolça*, *salama de sugo*, *rosette*, or *alheira* that continue to be manufactured on the property and even in the city.

Food production continues to have a particular relationship with space. Its inscription in a place is based on the precedence of collective practices. They expand in space in time and are part of the shared know-how, which constitutes the guiding thread of practices that link to historical roots and the relationship with the place. The collective dimension inserts them into the local culture and allows sharing from the origin, coming from a place. Cultural criteria associate a place with a history and a social group, helping to organize and think about diversity.

Numerous local productions are designated by their place of origin and by the geographical name where they are produced. This association translates into the link established between quality, origin, and notoriety. Beaufort, *comté* or *poulet de Bresse* are cited. This naming practice is related to the ancestor and has extended.

The protection of the geographical name of a product in connection with the identification of a link with a specific territory and know-how has existed for a long time in France. It was validated on a European scale in 1992. This regulation finds the culture register with all the questions that imply contact with two worlds. Carrots from the Ouadane Oasis in Mauritania, red pepper or paprika in the Kalocsa region of Hungary, and English stilton in Leicestershire are mentioned, according to Bérard and Marchenay (2004). In classical antiquity, the origin of certain foodstuffs gave them particular qualities.

According to these authors, the protection of the geographical name of a product concerning the identification of a place in the territory and specific know-how has existed for a long time in France and was extended in Europe in 1992. The Law of 6 July 1996 defines the appellation of origin: an appellation of origin is the denomination of a country, region, or locality that serves to designate a product originating from them and in which the quality and characteristics are due to the geographical environment, comprising the natural factors and the humans' factors. This regulation mainly protects products and the regional economy from global and unfair competition.

From the moment that farmers engage in a protection process, they must prepare together a cargo book, specifying, in detail, the different stages of elaboration of their product. According to Bérard and Marchenay (2004), this collective enterprise explains practices, knowledge, and definitions in the light of all the difficulties inherent to a codification of the local technical culture in the face of diversity, local knowledge, the evolution of the tradition where they are found. Local breeds and varieties. Actions to protect geographical origins imply the reaffirmation of cultural biodiversity.

Terroir productions reveal the social construction by men who form a heritage in the activity that continues to be shaped, revealing a specific ability to build together, protect collectively in the future, and recognize each other by sharing an identity (Bérard and Marchenay 2004).

The world of local and food production presents itself as a place of articulation between the biological and the social. An animal breed, a cultivated plant, a product from cold stores, or a cheese stems from a process of accumulating knowledge, practices, observations, and adjustments. The living being evolves and interferes with different factors, authorizing manipulations of all orders, natures, and scales. Reproduction modalities are not the same for vegetables, animals, or cheese. Within

the plant world, different relationships between plants are observed due to the plant's longevity and, more or less, rapid renewal (Bérard and Marchenay 2004).

According to Bérard and Marchenay (2004), beans from Castellfollit in Catalonia are reserved for self-consumption, expanding production, and taking the place of cereal crops in crisis. This legume asserts a link to a place: its production and consumption zone are well defined, and its organoleptic qualities are recognized and appreciated locally.

From common beans to Castellfollit beans, known today, and their recent development allows us to follow the process of building the name and the typicality and input of clarified data on the construction of a *produit du terroir*. It is accompanied by a profound and rapid transformation of its culture, both from the point of view of production with an effort of mechanization, which follows the organization of work. The creation of an association of producers and a cooperative, the purchase of machinery, and the promotion and marketing of beans were implemented.

Bean producers reflected on supply diversification, proposing a pre-cooked bean supported by fairs and restaurants. All actions were carried out in a short time and under the impulse of a small group of individuals. This legume benefited from help from the local administration in charge of promoting the products. This glance led to a total reconsideration of the techniques of the commercialization methods for a product that was valued as *terroir*, and that has a local reputation for its organoleptic qualities (Bérard and Marchenay 2004).

The first appeal of origin in the milk and derivatives sector is Roquefort, from 1925. The appeals prior to 1990 appear as the result of poorly regulated local power relations, while the files instructed from that date onwards imply a more significant space for identifying the content from place to *terroir*.

The examples of the production of beans, corn, and other vegetables from Creole seeds, natives of indigenous origin, support, in examples, the entire analysis regarding affectivity and transmission of knowledge. It is based on this work and, above all, on recent European and Brazilian examples, in addition to the indigenous heritage in South American countries.

The Geographical Indication: Method and Public Policy for Valuing Local Know-How

The geographical indication is one method; it is a public policy. It stems from recognizing local know-how by the state, which aims to protect it. It is worth considering the analysis of scholars on the subject, considering our purpose in relating the local know-how that is spread by affectivity and reflective expectations. The geographical indication, understood as a public policy, facilitates, by demarcating the limits of the culturally and regionally protected product or service, the analysis of the transmission of knowledge for the formation of know-how (*savoir-faire*). Like the agrarian system, the geographical indication presents itself as a method.

For Wilkinson (2013), geographical indications represent the most significant challenge for traditional economic actors and traditional economic theory. Organic and fair trade markets developed as initiatives of social movements and the private

sector, with geographical indications depending on public protection for their consolidation and development.

Reputation protection requires agreements on the production conditions of the geographical indication. As it is a collective activity that needs to be recognized to be protected, the geographical indication is consolidated when it manages to be supported by an organization accepted as a representative of the relevant producers of the place (Wilkinson 2013). The fact that it is a collective good implies that all actors in the place, as long as they accept production agreements, should be able to benefit from the reputation signals of this product.

For Nierdele (2013), geographical indications are paradigmatic examples of a new model of production and consumption and give rise to the appreciation of traditions, knowledge, and practices associated with a territorial identity. They act as catalysts of technical and organizational innovations indispensable for producers to survive in competitive global value chains. In the case of geographical indications, there is a massive range of values identifiable by consumers who require some degree of knowledge of the attributes of the product's territory of origin: traditions, customs, landscape, climate, and know-how. The geographical indication does not guarantee a climate of trust and cooperative behavior (Nierdele 2013).

In the economic literature, geographical indications have been considered a form of competitive strategy of social collectives organized for economic purposes. According to Nierdele (2013), the first registered geographical indication in the world comes from the Port Wine Region, demarcated in 1756 by a decree of the Marquês de Pombal. This decree ensured that wines marketed under this designation were effectively produced within the demarcated region.

It is necessary to understand geographical indications, and the formation of agrarian systems, as a social identity resulting from the links of affection in the family and community, and from reflective expectations in social collectives, as processes of social transmission of knowledge.

The link with the place would make the geographical indication (GI) an instrument of defense against the misappropriation of the territory's name and reputation, opposition to the processes of product relocation, and valorization of traditional know-how and collective identity. The conflict between the domestic and industrial worlds is widely pronounced when a technological innovation emerges that increases efficiency, putting traditional know-how at risk (Nierdele 2013).

For traditional products to benefit from protection in the European Union, it is necessary to prove their specificity and typicality, as dimensions are evaluated by the existence of particular, measurable characteristics, differentiating them from current products.

Several authors emphasize that the specificity and typicality of products are based on three large groups of factors: territory, local uses, and production conditions, as well as antiquity or permanence in time, the spatial connection to a territory, and the cultural connection to customs or ways of doing things (Tibério and Cristóvão 2013).

According to Aguiar (2013), geographical indications make it possible to protect the authenticity and particularity of a local way of doing things through attributes that have been cultivated and improved over the years. Thus, they correspond to cultural identity and the organization of the production chain demanded to the achievement of

a geographical indication considers other qualitative aspects. So, correspond to the aesthetic preferences and ethical demands of a larger community, which provides opportunities for market gains, arising from this qualification and the visibility and credibility that recognition confers on production.

Geographical indications originate from disadvantaged agricultural regions where producers cannot reduce the cost of production. They are led to betting on the valorization of quality and local knowledge (*savoir-faire*), like Champagne, in France, which was a poor region located on the northern edge of the climatic zone for grape production with acidic soils. The champenoise wine-making method, adapted to the difficulties of this raw material, allowed economic success (Aguiar 2013).

It is known that the appreciation of the price of land at IP Vale dos Vinhedos, in the Serra Gaúcha, Brazil, was on the order of 200% to 500%. In the Serra Gaúcha, the intense competition of wines in the national market led the wineries to invest in the development of local tourism around wine and Italian culture, with the development of numerous activities such as accommodation (hotels, inns), gastronomy (restaurants, artisanal products), oenology and Italian immigration. In Roquefort (France), political and tourist agents rely on the international reputation of the cheese to ensure the promotion of the territory, according to Cerdan (2013).

In France, farmers estimate that GI milk production (AOP) is more interesting. It is based on the product of origin, carrying positive values. The members of Apropampa (Associação dos Produtores de Carne do Pampa Gaúcho da Campanha Meridional - Association of Meat Producers of the Pampa Gaucho of the Southern Campaign and Progoethe (Associação dos Produtores de Uva e de Vinho de Goethe - Association of Producers of Grapes and Wine of Goethe) demonstrate, according to Cerdan (2013), that they are satisfied with their collective initiative.

These demonstrative examples, based on the vision and reflection of different researchers on the topic of geographical indication, prove the existence of the process of reflective expectations in the cohesion of collective action, according to the knowledge transmitted, accumulated, and historically consolidated that characterize social collectives.

According to Casabianca et al. (2013), the reference to the community will create the collective intellectual knowledge of production. If this community has a history, there is a social reason that weaves powerful bonds of solidarity. The community produces knowledge, and this knowledge is collective. The experience acquired over generations has defined them as necessary for transmitting proven know-how. The transmission is carried out in a learning situation.

The territory is seen as a space for collective coordination, production of knowledge, and solidarity based on proximity, as a space of shared identity among its inhabitants, according to Cerdan (2013).

About the *Cabruca* Cocoa System and the Geographical Indication: Historical Heritage

In the state of Bahia (Northeast Brazil), the first historical record of cocoa occurred in 1655, when D. Vasco de Mascarenhas sent a letter to Captain-General Grão-Pará, talking about his affection for the fruit. In 1746, the first cocoa plantations were carried out in the South of Bahia, specifically in the municipality of Canavieiras. In 1752, the cultivation arrived in Ilhéus, being since then the culture that characterizes this region. Having adapted very quickly to the Bahian Atlantic Forest, it became the most important export product of this state in the first decades of the 20th century (Slow Food Brasil 2018).

After the incidence of witches' broom in the region, a disease of cacao caused by the fungus *Moniliophthora perniciosa*, which considerably reduced local production, more resistant varieties to the fungus was introduced, among which Theobahia and the clones CEPEC 2002-2011, which are part of cultivation in many production areas in the region.

The cocoa region of Bahia developed local knowledge and experiences that founded a unique model of agriculture – the *cabruca* system. Traditional cocoa planting in the South of Bahia followed the "mata cabrucada" system, which is characterized by planting cocoa under the shade of Atlantic Forest trees and has been used in the region for over 200 years. This practice was initially used by the first immigrants, so the *cabruca* system can be considered a precursor of the current agroforestry systems (Slow Food Brasil 2018).

From a historical perspective, this local knowledge and experiences, which characterize living situations, consolidated the *cabruca* cocoa system as a secular *modus operandi* in Bahia, passed between generations, in the family, and a social collective, structuring an agrarian cocoa system that was formed in. It was transformed in time, in agroecological conditions until the mid-twentieth century, with the creation of the Instituto do Cacau and, later, of the Planning Commission for the Cocoa Crop – CEPLAC, with the expansion of the technological packages of the productivism of the green revolution and the introduction of agrochemicals, even if maintaining the tropical forest (Atlantic forest) as a shade for the cocoa plantation, as an agroforestry system.

Cabruca cocoa is often associated with organic cocoa. However, not all *cabruca* cocoa is organic since the *cabruca* system indicates the planting of cocoa under the native trees of the forest, with the use of pesticides or other techniques for pest control being optional. However, to produce good, clean, and fair fruits based on agroecology, most communities and farms in southern Bahia produce organic *cabruca* cocoa (Slow Food Brasil 2018).

Many communities in the region use cocoa for their consumption and sale in street markets to supplement their income. Such products are generally of low added value, such as *cocadas*, jams, and liqueurs. There are indigenous communities that cultivate cocoa in the South of Bahia in the organic *cabruca* system, such as the Tupinambá community of Serra do Padeiro, located in the municipality of Buerarema. In some rural settlements located in the South of Bahia, such as the Terra Vista Settlement located in the municipality of Arataca, there are initiatives of family

farmers, with agroecological *cabruca* cocoa production being a regional reference (Slow Food Brasil 2018).

In 2018, *cabruca* cocoa was recognized as a geographical indication by the National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI). The GI, regulated by the Industrial Property Law, is an intellectual property instrument used by several countries to protect and value traditional products linked to their origin of production.

The product linked to its origin, with guarantee and legal protection, via IG, can be the central link in a virtuous circle of quality in a territorial system. Its conception and essence aim to guarantee the quality of production and the association of products to their geographical origin. These aspects transform it into a strategic tool for differentiating agricultural products.

The Associação Cacau Sul Bahia, author of the request for a Geographical Indication at the *Instituto Nacional de Propriedade Intelectual* (National Institute of Industrial Property -INPI) is formed by 14 associations, cooperatives and sectorial institutions. Its various spheres increase the cocoa and chocolate productive chain in many economic, social, environmental, and technological diffusion dimensions.

The first step in the process of carrying out the GI was the evaluation of the producer organization, thus choosing the APC (*Associação Cacau Sul da Bahia - Cocoa Association in the South of Bahia*), as responsible for the GI in partnership with COOPERAPC (*Cooperativa Agroindústria do Cacau e Chocolate - Chocolate and Cocoa Agro-industry Cooperative*), COOPAG (*Cooperativa Agroindustrial de Gandu - Gandu Agricultural Cooperative*), AGIIR (*Associação dos Gestores de Ibirataia, Ipiaú e Região - Ibirataia, Ipiaú and Region Managers Association*), COOAFBA (*Cooperativa de Agricultura Familiar da Bahia - Bahia Family Agriculture Cooperative*), *Cooperativa Cabruca - Cabruca Cooperative*, Lajedo do Ouro Farm, Mars Cacau and Mãe da Mata RPPN. The second step was the cultural and historical survey of the region, thus proving the existence of cocoa cultivation in the southern region of Bahia (Reis et al. 2018).

This collective union of organizations around an identity project is based on numerous common reasons. Thus, do so in the history of the agrarian system through reflective expectations between economic and institutional agents. The knowledge arising from collective cognitive action, which was socially and collectively elaborated, is transmitted, in feedback, by reflective expectations in the social collective, forming a project, know-how based on the *cabruca* cacao system, and its recognition as a geographical indication.

In this condition in reciprocal interaction of economic and institutional agents, the knowledge that implied this recognition process was based on reflective expectations that led, in collective praxis, to the awareness of the need for this project, as a social and collective value in the agrarian system of cocoa. There is no need to talk about the transmission of knowledge between these agents through affection; this implies him for family and ancestral reasons linked to the territory and the cocoa culture.

Affection and Reflective Expectations in the Formation of Geographical Indications

The regional collective knowledge that socially produces one or a set of goods capable of receiving the recognition of a geographical indication, such as a denomination of origin or indication of origin, is historically consolidated through the bonds of affection in the family community-collective scope.

Knowledge is transmitted between generations through affection, becoming a regional economic and cultural product recognized by public policy as a geographical indication. The reflective expectations of economic and social agents expand the diffusion of technical and technological knowledge beyond affection, in the family and community scope, spreading through the neighborhood of the same or other communities, of the same agrarian system, on a broader spatial scale, reaching planetary levels, such as the act of pasteurizing milk, making cheese, smoking or freezing meat, making artisanal products, raising cattle, chickens, using the machete, making a corral, planting corn and beans.

This diffusion occurs historically through reflective expectations in the multicultural exchange in spaces. The combination of the way of making differentiates the local know-how (the combination of ingredients, stages) of communities, of each region, in each agrarian system. The cheese from one region does not have the same characteristics as from another region, although both are cheese, as are brandies (*cachaças*), wines, utensils, clothes, etc.

If the idea of a geographical indication is linked to a territory (*terroir*), this gives us a perspective of permanence in the space that is characterized as such. Permanence is the state of the locus, which changes over time. Those who remain dynamically change the landscape, how the space is occupied, and the economic and social relations. The family remains (in a narrow or broad sense, extended family nucleus), which, through affection, guarantees the conditions for permanence and reproduction in the geographic and social space. As a business and self-employed economic agent or a salaried economic agent, the family is the nucleus of creating and disseminating knowledge for life in society and working between generations.

Affectivity and permanence consolidate knowledge in the microeconomic production system, making it a technique or technology, tangible or intangible, expanding in geographic space, structuring agrarian systems, which change over time, and generating products linked to this space, geographical area, as territory, whether or not, recognized by geographical indications.

It is vital to highlight the products identified as colonial, derived from the colonies in which the newly arrived immigrants from Europe were organized. Dairy and meat are their most essential components, but they also include honey and a set of preservatives, as highlighted by Wilkinson et al. (2016).

Cheese production has a long history in Brazil and is present in many country regions. Marajó Island, in the Amazon, produces a renowned buffalo milk cheese. Three regions have been the focus of different mobilizations mentioned, such as Minas Gerais, the Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, and the Northeast region. Each of these regional spaces has its artisanal cheese characteristics (Wilkinson et al. 2016).

The prominent artisanal cheese in the South is colonial cheese, which has a very different dynamic from Serrano cheese. First, this cheese is identified less with a specific territory and more with a social and cultural category – German and Italian immigrant farming families in equally distributed lots and organized in colonies, according to Wilkinson et al. (2016).

Cheese production for domestic consumption was a widespread tradition and predominantly performed by women as an extension of the kitchen. Production for sale, involving few properties, accounted for most of the production volume in the 1990s. The role of this agricultural tradition has been fundamental in the development of rural and agricultural organizations, according to Wilkinson et al. (2016).

Thus, it is understood that the transmission of knowledge between generations through family and social tradition occurs through affection in the family environment, above all, and through reflective expectations in society. A classic example is colonial products that develop in a network in the history of communities and regions.

In Brazil, the world of ordinary artisanal wines would be the one that would most adequately express the idea of a typical product. Many GIs try to promote innovations that allow producers to respond to consumption's emerging demands. There is an incessant game of qualification-requalification in which tradition and innovation decide two intrinsically associated movements.

At the same time, geographical indications emphasize the link between wine and the *terroir* and local heritage. They incite more or less radical transformations in viticulture and wine-making methods, in production relations, and in the landscape itself. Innovations can occur from the reinvention of traditions without compromising the territory's identity and the product's typicality linked to its origin. The product must continue to "make sense" to people and be recognized by the community as an expression of its culture (Nierdele et al. 2016).

Mention should also be given to artisanal cheeses from Minas Gerais, such as artisanal cheese from the Serro region and artisanal cheese from the Canastra region. The artisanal cheeses from Minas have their origins in Portuguese immigration, whose way of making is typical of Serra da Estrela, where raw sheep's milk coagulated by the thistle flower is used. For Netto *apud* Shiki and Wilkinson (2016), the way of making artisanal cheese from Minas Gerais originated in the Azorean islands of Pico and São Jorge, where cow's raw milk and *coalho* were already used, as was introduced in Minas Gerais.

In the case of *coalho* cheese from Sertão and Agreste northeast, to obtain the milk, the cows were separated in the late afternoon, and the milking, carried out on the following day, was under the responsibility of the male workforce. Milk was used for food and for the production of *coalho* cheese, butter, and, in some establishments, *requeijão*, activities that were the responsibility of women. The ancestors transmitted the cultural practice of elaborating these derived products from milk to the female domain, being the interior of the residences in the territory destined for their production. This know-how, internalized by women, was aimed almost exclusively at feeding their own families (Santos Cruz and Menezes 2016).

The Serrano Cheese is produced in the states of Santa Catarina and the Rio Grande do Sul, in the region of altitude that extends from the northeast of Rio Grande

do Sul to the southeast of Santa Catarina, comprising the region of Campos de Cima da Serra and Campos Catarinenses. At the height of tropeirismo, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the Serrano Cheese, then transported on the backs of mules, was among the main products that guaranteed the food supply of producing families, being used as a bargaining chip in obtaining groceries, which were brought by the drovers (Santos Cruz and Menezes 2016).

In the state of Minas Gerais, the artisanal cheese from the Serro Region is produced with raw milk, rennet, salt, and drip (obtained by collecting the end of the draining of the previous day's cheese, incorporated into the mass of the next batch of cheeses). Making cheese constitutes a specific way of life in which knowledge and practices are found in utensils, according to Santos, Cruz and Menezes (2016).

Artisanal Minas cheeses are defined as a reference to traditional food products that are also called typical, local, territorial products. According to Santos, Cruz and Menezes (2016), the term refers to products firmly rooted in their space of origin, capable of mobilizing feelings of belonging, tradition, locality, and common ancestry. It is said that traditional food products or traditional foods are those whose production and preparation practices follow ritual methods conducted by producers who have the knowledge and reputation necessary to maintain production.

These ties are the bonds of affection maintained between generations and guarantee the permanence of traditions and the necessary impulse for technological and organizational innovations over time. For generations, knowledge is transmitted based on ancestral affection within the family. Reflective expectations among economic agents in the community guarantee the expansion and diffusion of scientific knowledge at local and regional levels, crossing other frontiers. An economic agent adaptively or almost entirely reproduces the innovations produced or incorporated by other agents. In the course of the history of community culture, there is the technical-cultural substrate for the continuity and reproduction of technological innovations generated or introduced in the social collective.

Conclusions

This research primarily comprises the connection between processes of formation and transmission of knowledge based on affection and reflective expectations as affective-cognitive modes of transmission of know-how.

The theoretical discussion around geographical indications was just an example considered to delimit the field of study, to facilitate the proposed message to the researcher, given that products with geographical indications recognized abroad or in Brazil are linked to a demarcated territory and territoriality, historically in dynamic formation driven by affectivity in the transmission of know-how in the family environment, and, in reflective expectations, in the collective environment, configuring a culturally specific territorial social collective. Family affection sustains the permanence of these products in history as economic goods in society.

For this reflection, the theoretical reflections of this research based on specific research carried out by researchers who study geographical indications would be enough to demonstrate our initial thesis around affectivity and reflective expectations.

However, field immersion is also opportune, based on empirical information, in this case, the family farmers themselves and other key informants who know the region. As a result, the methodological proposal in the field supports the understanding of the connections of knowledge transmitted in the process.

The examples mentioned in this research corroborate that, in all situations, knowledge linked to a territory and territoriality remains cohesive to a delimited space and culture. That is, the know-how of a social collective is not even from another social group, just like the family farmer who has been cultivating cocoa for centuries in the *cabruca* system in the South of Bahia does not know how to grow grapes and produce wines from the Serra Gaúcha, in Brazil. It is the geographic delimitation and the space-affectivity relationship in the transmission of knowledge between social collectives, which are different from each other. The historical permanence of social collectives in geographic space is affirmed, even if, in constant dynamic becoming, subject to technological, social, economic, and environmental events-impacts.

The processes themselves, affective-cognitive, remain individually and collectively; they change their materiality in types of agricultural production systems with the differentiation of the categories of farmers and the structuring and transformation of an agrarian system, as well as the technological innovations that combine traditional, family and collective knowledge with scientifically conceived knowledge, which below, it will form a geographical indication of an institutionally recognized product.

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The Evolution of Digital Communication: Zelensky and the Use of Instagram in Wartime

By Daniele Battista*

Social media platforms have played a significant role in the widespread dissemination of propaganda images during recent conflicts. This phenomenon underscores the importance of these tools as vehicles for the spread of political narratives, ideologies, and propaganda messages. This study aims to investigate the role of visual propaganda in the current era of social media, with a focus on the use of spectacularization as part of the communication strategy employed by the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, within the context of the Instagram platform. The objective of this analysis is to explore how Zelensky uses Instagram as a tool to spectacularize his political persona and promote his agenda. We examine the nature and mechanisms of spectacularization, with a specific focus on how the Ukrainian President constructs a public image that combines elements of entertainment and politics. To examine the use of Zelensky's public image and personal style in the ongoing conflict, we employed a combination of social media analysis tools. These platforms allowed us to monitor and delve into the effectiveness of Zelensky's public appearances from February 24, 2022, to February 24, 2023, providing us with a comprehensive overview of the current state of affairs. The collected data were analyzed using a multidisciplinary approach that combines political communication theory and media analysis. The results indicate that the President's personal style, characterized by a predominantly informal and de-institutionalized appearance, significantly impacts the public perception of his political persona. Within the landscape of social media-based information warfare, various issues are addressed and explored. Overall, this context highlights the importance of understanding how visual imagery is used as a tool of manipulation and persuasion within the dynamics of social media.

Keywords: *propaganda, spectacularization, communication strategies, Zelensky, Instagram*

Introduction

Throughout history, war has consistently accompanied the evolution of various forms of government, significantly contributing to the formation of a wide repertoire of representations, symbols, and narratives that accompany them (Tzu 2002, Sisti 2022, Turchin 2007). This phenomenon has played a crucial role in shaping the collective consciousness and the construction of national and state identities over time. Wars, in fact, have not only shaped political and social dynamics but have also given rise to discourses and images that reflect the ideology and identity of a nation or regime. This process of meaning-making through war has been extensively studied both in terms of the strategic role of war in history and in exploring the connections between armed conflict and political culture. Historically, armed conflict has marked a

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turning point that has delineated the transition between different historical periods, and the current conflict is also chronologically situated within this progression. As in any scenario characterized by rapid evolution, conducting sociological research has progressively become an increasingly challenging task. The example of the Ukrainian case highlights how social warfare has taken on different characteristics in the current conflict, ceasing to be a mere appendage of military strategy and becoming a distinct chapter. The use of modern media provides the parties involved with a new weapon, represented by the dissemination of propaganda, sometimes characterized by misinformation or disinformation. The ongoing tension is just a fragment, moreover, of an ever-changing communicative landscape that has emerged in recent years, with the growing involvement of new media in documenting what is happening in the world. In the context of the current media landscape, it is possible to observe the incorporation of the logic of new media into a hybrid media ecosystem, as described by Chadwick (2017). This phenomenon involves the introduction, albeit not without controversy, of new channels, next-generation formats, and recent languages that complement those typical of traditional media. The exploration of the mechanisms offered by public media shows that social media are the predominant tools, and at the same time, innovative new strategies must be exploited in the field of political communication. Adaptation to online technologies has led to a transformation of the media and the audience (Diaz 2010, Rodríguez-Martínez et al. 2012) and the conditions of contemporary media ecology (Scolari et al. 2018). Web tools and current communication strategies advance in this direction, proposing a system of intercreativity (Fernández-Castrillo 2014). In light of this overview and considering what has been expressed, the Ukrainian situation cannot be classified within the traditional canon of war. Instead, it is considered a social war characterized by a subtle and unexpected form of conflict that unfolds through the solid reinforced walls of digital consensus. This type of war relies on sophisticated mechanisms that strategically utilize likes, influencers, shares, and the evocation of emotions to shape public opinion. It is evident that political dominion is not immune to the impact of ongoing transformations in communication systems within global democracies. This brings to mind a distant era when the introduction of television brought a wave of changes to the political scene following World War II. It is interesting to observe how politicians are now embracing various social media platforms, unlike in the past when they were reluctant to do so (Bentivegna 2014). Undoubtedly, over time, there has been a transformation in the tools used for political communication, and the current reality demonstrates that politics must increasingly confront the challenge of the innovative media system. In this case, the issue of fundamental importance is understanding how the spectacularized social media culture proposed by the Ukrainian president can influence narrative, codes, and communicative behaviours in relation to the ongoing conflict.

Politics on Show: The Show on Instagram and the Zelensky Case

Contemporary political communication is characterized by a constant process of change and evolution. In recent decades, we have witnessed profound changes in the dynamics of political communication, primarily due to the rise of social media platforms and the emergence of new practices in the field of digital politics (Panagopoulos 2009, Bennett and Pfetsch 2018, Davis 2019). These developments have created a political landscape where communication is inherently intertwined with a variety of elements, including citizen mobilization, campaign organization, direct communication with voters, and even the governance process (Bruns and Burgess 2015). This transformation has made political communication an increasingly complex field of study and practice in which digital media and social media play a central role in shaping political strategies. Politicians and political actors must now face the challenges and opportunities created by this new reality, striving to navigate the digital landscape to effectively reach and engage the electorate.

From this perspective, contemporary political communication represents a multidimensional challenge that requires an in-depth analysis of its dynamics, effects, and implications for democracy and decision-making. Understanding how digital technologies influence politics and society has become crucial for researchers, political actors, and citizens themselves, as the power and impact of political communication are increasingly connected to the digital environment in which we live. In recent times, political communication has been assimilated into a wide array of terms and expressions derived from the world of entertainment. Indeed, for some time now, there has been a gradual popularization of politics and its communication (Boni 2002, Corner and Pels 2003, Van Zoonen 2005, Jones 2005, Riegert 2007, Mazzoleni and Sfardini 2009). In this regard, it has been figuratively proposed that politics can be considered as a form of representation, a drama in which different figures come into play, guided by a script and a unique narrative that is staged to evoke emotional reactions in an audience of spectators (Arroyo 2012). Political communication has, therefore, undergone a process of desacralization that dates back a long time (Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999), leading to an adaptation to the norms of the media system, initially television. However, the need to adapt to these changes has led politics to extend into various spheres, even becoming an attraction for entertainment or a product of popular culture. In this new arrangement, there is an adaptation of the language of politics to the language of the media, as well as the importance of the personal sphere of the politician, personalizing politics after dramatizing it (Battista 2023a). In this context, the audiovisual sector gains significant importance, closely connected to communication, to create a mix that can engage a substantial portion of the audience. Consequently, it follows that it is of great importance to analyze and sift through what happens within the realm of Instagram. After all, political communication is also evolving in an increasingly complex digital context, where political leaders use social platforms and digital technologies to interact with the public, create new forms of storytelling and participation to build a constant and engaging presence (Sorice 2020). It is in this context that social media content plays a crucial role in making political communication attractive and engaging, using innovative production and content techniques (Battista 2023b). In this article,

therefore, we will explore the mechanisms that govern the new environment and aim to analyze how Zelensky has adapted to new technologies and digital platforms to promote his image and interact with the public in a continuously evolving political communication context. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that during this conflict, propaganda images disseminated through social media reached a wide audience, often surpassing geographical and linguistic barriers, and digital platforms provided conflict groups and actors with immediate and global online presence, allowing them to reach and engage with people directly without traditional filters or intermediaries. Furthermore, the visual and engaging nature of Instagram content, such as photos, videos, and graphics, amplified the impact of propaganda images during conflicts. These visual communication means can evoke intense emotions, manipulate perceptions, and influence public opinion. Images of atrocities, violence, or victims can be used to provoke outrage, solidarity, or fear, aiming to gain support or followers for a particular cause or ideology. Of course, in our case, there is a notable aspect to consider, as entering the agenda and the spotlight hinges on the leader and their personal traits, humanized stories, and spectacular anecdotes that break from the ordinary. The central role of the leader is indispensable; however, possessing a solid political background and competence in managing public resources alone is not sufficient to ensure success. It is also essential for the leader to possess refined communication skills, aesthetic charm, and the ability to masterfully handle political affairs. These communicative characteristics are easily recognizable in the broader context of the political environment and can be classified as a penetrating communicative profile due to its "close," "every day," and "accessible" nature for the vast audience (Bentivegna 2014, De Rosa 2014, Giansante 2014). In the case of Zelensky, his remarkable success is based on a set of fundamental elements as described by Gutiérrez Rubí (2022). Firstly, his intrinsic personal story, which serves as the primary motivational driving force for him; secondly, his extraordinary command of language, allowing him to communicate effectively and persuasively; thirdly, his skill in staging, characterized by a heroic aesthetic that contributes to creating a strong emotional impact on the audience; fourth, his consistent use of live streaming through selfie videos, enabling him to maintain a constant and engaging online presence; and finally, projecting an image of a leader unusually close, differentiating himself from traditional stereotypes, establishing a connection and closeness with the audience. These five pillars form the basis of his extraordinary success and demonstrate the absolute centrality of Instagram in this arena. Therefore, it is imperative that political leaders possess communication skills, aesthetic charm, telegenic and rhetorical abilities, as well as other related qualities (Berrocal Gonzalo 2004). It is evident that leaders themselves focus on their personal qualities of affability and likability, believing that emotional consensus can overcome the resistance of an audience less attracted to formal politics (Langer 2010). It is therefore understandable that some scholars use terms like "pop politics" (Mazzoleni and Sfardini 2009) or "celebrity politics" (Richardson 2015) to describe this communicative landscape. Online pop politics (Mazzoleni and Bracciale 2019) represents an extension of this communicative style into the virtual sphere. In a hybrid communication context (Chadwick 2017), where traditional media integrate and coexist with social networks, the latter have allowed many actors to gain autonomy

and have a voice in the public sphere. Not only have citizens, who were once marginalized and relegated to a role of passive public, gained visibility using digital platforms, but political parties have also gained such visibility and learned to reach the electorate using these tools, especially since the 2008 US presidential election campaign (Bimber 2014). All of this is done with the awareness of the clear transition from party democracy, where intermediaries favored citizens, to the democracy of the public (Manin 1995), based on the direct, political, and communicative bond between leadership and citizens. The logic of representation is transformed into that of representation, where the depth of analysis and discussion typical of elected assemblies gives way to the pursuit of deliberative speed favored by the media (Sorice 2011). The forms to create a sense of intimacy between politicians and supporters are based on visual aspects closely related to the use of images and videos (López-Rabadán and Doménech-Fabregat 2021). In this overall scenario, Instagram maximizes the self-representation capacity of politicians and can easily convey their sensationalized image. In this social media platform, candidates can make themselves known professionally or from a personal perspective through the deliberate choice of elements they include in their images, such as symbols or locations (Bellido-Pérez and Gordillo-Rodríguez 2022, Gordillo-Rodríguez and Bellido-Pérez 2021). In this context, Instagram serves as a "virtual billboard" (Muñoz and Towner 2017), where self-referential representation is manifested, privileging aesthetics and image over programmatic content (Ferré-Pavia and Codina 2022). This is a communicative arena where visually appealing messages are conveyed, aiming to capture the audience's attention through engaging aesthetics and a distinctive visual identity. However, this emphasis on the visual aspect can lead to a reduction in programmatic content, as the primary goal becomes the creation of an imaginative and engaging narrative, rather than a detailed presentation of political programs and proposals. This confirms that the sharing of visual media has become a hallmark of contemporary internet culture (Mirzoeff 2016). In conclusion, this war, which also takes place on social media, has opened new horizons for the dissemination of propaganda images during conflicts. The visual, engaging, and immediate nature of social media has made these platforms powerful communication tools for conflict actors, allowing them to reach a wide audience and influence public opinion. However, it will be crucial to critically evaluate such images, verify sources, and consider the context to avoid manipulation and the spread of misleading or distorted information. The current President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, is a significant example of a leader who has effectively harnessed and leveraged social media from a "spectacular" perspective, using it to further his political cause. This communicative strategy extends beyond the wartime context that characterizes our study period. It traces back to 2019 when Zelensky assumed the presidential office through national elections. These elections marked his political debut; up until that point, Zelensky was primarily known in his country for his work as a producer and actor, having starred in the hit series "Servant of the People," where he played the role of the president (Ryabinska 2020). Zelensky's media notoriety led to widespread support for his candidacy as the population appreciated the figure of an outsider at a time when traditional political parties were increasingly discredited (Rohozinska and Shpak 2019). This is how the fictional president became real, and the "Servant of the People" party transitioned from the

small screen to governing a country, serving as a paradigm of celebrity politics and evoking the role of other figures in the international political landscape. Thus, Volodymyr Zelensky constitutes an interesting case of how humor linked to "spectacularization" can have a significant impact on politics. Going deeper, his brilliant performance represents an example of how these soft arguments, when coupled with a clear political strategy, can be used as an effective tool to engage and mobilize the public in politics, even in serious contexts like leading a nation (Battista 2023c). More recently, the outbreak of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 brought Volodymyr Zelensky into the international spotlight. The war did not disrupt the connection between the president and his social media; on the contrary, it strengthened it, becoming Zelensky's preferred channel of communication with the population. Investigations conducted so far confirm that Instagram continues to be the most crucial platform in Zelensky's and his communication team's strategy. Through this tool, the president has raised awareness and mobilized citizens beyond Ukraine's borders, keeping the media and other politicians informed in real-time about the progress of the war and the decisions made. In short, he can control the narrative without intermediaries, on his terms, and with a high probability of it going viral (Olivares et al. 2022). Through the production of videos in which Zelensky displays emotions, empathy, and charisma, he has garnered widespread support in the international public opinion. He has encouraged the Ukrainian people to resist aggression and called for solidarity from other countries. In his speeches, Zelensky uses specific references to cities, towns, villages attacked, individuals killed, and their stories, using powerful words like "justice, truth, evil, courage, tyranny, democracy, power, leadership, friendship, betrayal, and God" (Dyczok and Chung 2022) to create a sense of closeness. This communicative approach involves a blending that relies on facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice, in addition to words, to create an engaging and persuasive communication experience. As demonstrated, this strategy aims to establish an emotional connection with the audience and convey a sense of authenticity and closeness between the leader and the citizens. In order to analyze the contemporary phenomenon of global war and its strong social media exposure, our case study will seek to highlight the process underscored by constant attention to the progression and expansion of mediatization in terms of war.

Methodology

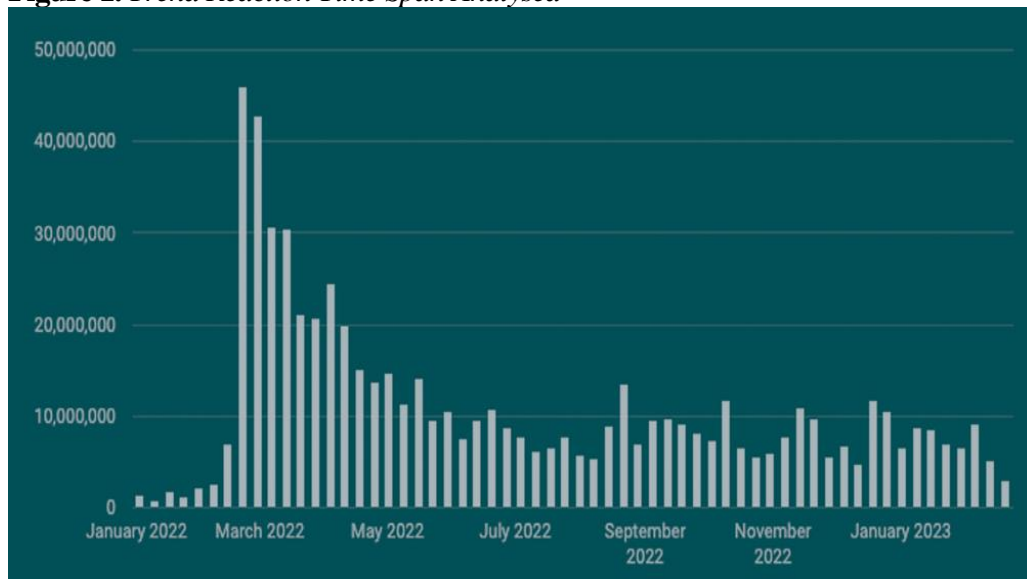
The primary objective of this research is to identify the characteristics of political spectacularization present in the videos published by Volodymyr Zelensky on Instagram. A secondary goal is to compare Zelensky's spectacularization strategy at the onset of the conflict and subsequently to assess if there is an evolution in his digital communication. Based on these premises, it was decided to approach the subject of the study through a quantitative research method. This approach allows for the systematic and objective collection of data and information, enabling a rigorous analysis of the features of the videos and any variations over time, and it allows us to uncover the DNA of media messages (Igartua 2006). The proposed technique represents an approach that seeks to examine and analyze communication

systematically, objectively, and quantitatively. This method relies on a detailed investigation of the characteristics and elements within the communicative process to gain a deeper understanding of communicative phenomena. It aims to translate qualitative aspects of communication into quantitative measures to identify trends, relationships, and patterns that might otherwise escape superficial observation. This data-driven approach enables the development of more robust models and theories in the field of communication. The protocol for the quantitative analysis of spectacularization in audiovisual messages on Instagram draws direct inspiration from the model proposed by López-Rabadán and Doménech-Fabregat in 2018, 2019, and 2021 for the study of political photography and videos on social networks. This protocol represents a methodological approach aimed at systematically and objectively examining and evaluating the level of spectacularization present in audiovisual messages shared on Instagram. The model developed by these two scholars has proven effective in studying political photography and videos on social networks, providing a solid foundation for analyzing and understanding the visual and narrative characteristics of such content. This analysis protocol relies on a set of indicators and criteria that allow for the assessment of the presence of spectacular elements within images and videos, enabling an objective and comparable measurement across different content. Applying this model to the context of audiovisual messages on Instagram involves using the same indicators and criteria to identify and measure the presence of spectacular elements within such content. This includes analyzing visual elements, such as the use of special effects, visual composition, and overall aesthetics, as well as the analysis of narrative strategies, such as tension-building and the use of emotional elements to capture users' attention. Through this analysis protocol, researchers are able to obtain objective data on the degree of spectacularization present in audiovisual messages on Instagram, allowing for comparative evaluation across different content and a deeper understanding of the communicative mechanisms used to attract and engage the audience. This methodological approach provides a structured and scientific framework for examining the presence of spectacular elements in audiovisual content on Instagram, enabling objective and comparative assessment that contributes to the understanding of the role of spectacularization in social media communication. Furthermore, what is proposed is based on the classic concept of the "5W" in journalism, a methodological approach that aims to gather and organize information comprehensively and exhaustively. The "5W," representing the fundamental questions of Who, What, When, Where, and Why, constitute a widely adopted conceptual framework in journalism to ensure comprehensive coverage of events and accurate presentation of information. The application of the "5W" is extended to the analysis of photographic, video, and audiovisual content on social media and in other communicative contexts. This approach seeks to systematically identify and understand the actors involved, the topics addressed, the timing and location of events, as well as the underlying motivations for such representations. Using this formula in this context allows for a critical examination of the nature and communicative objectives of such content, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of emerging communicative dynamics in contemporary media. It should be noted, however, that in this research, a significant modification was made to the original model, wherein the "What" variable was

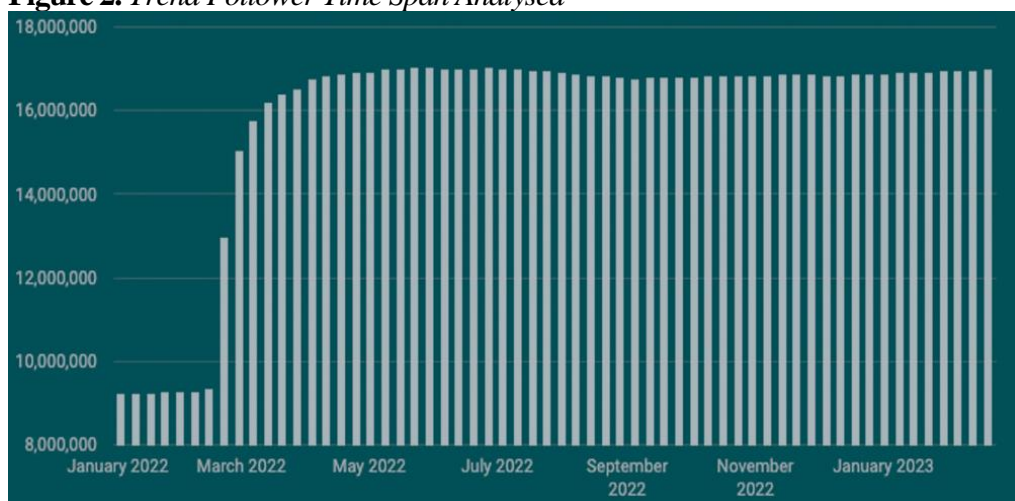
eliminated. This decision was made because the main theme of all the publications under consideration directly related to the war itself. Additionally, some minor adjustments were made to the original model to adapt the categories to the peculiarities of the analyzed sample. As an example, a new category, namely cinematic staging, was included, which proved relevant for the content analysis. These adjustments to the original model have been made to ensure a more accurate and relevant classification of the publications under examination, taking into account the specificities and unique characteristics of the studied sample. The object of the analysis consists of a sample composed of 312 recording units, represented by videos shared by President Zelensky on his official personal Instagram profile (@zelenskiy_official). For the process of extraction, loading, and management of the videos, a manual approach was used using the Google Sheets tool. This tool was adopted as a means to organize and manage the data systematically and structured. The extraction of the videos was carried out by manually selecting and retrieving relevant content from President Zelensky's official Instagram profile. Subsequently, the videos were uploaded to a Google Sheets spreadsheet, allowing for the creation of a centralized database. This manual approach provides greater flexibility and control in the process of data extraction and management, enabling accurate and detailed analysis of the selected videos for research. Concurrently, to gain an overview, we used Fanpage Karma and Blogmeter Liveinsight to evaluate the data collected from social media, such as the number of followers, reach, and engagement of published content, as well as user interactions with brands on social media. This approach also primarily constitutes quantitative research but can be complemented by text analysis and sentiment analysis techniques to understand the meaning and perception of the published content. Moreover, Fanpage Karma and Blogmeter Liveinsight use tools that gather data from various social platforms, providing analysis on content performance, reach, and engagement.

Results and Discussion

From February 24, 2022, to February 24, 2023, Zelensky posted a total of 2,567 times on his official Instagram account, which equates to an average of 3.4 posts per day. Out of these, 2,129 are videos, making up 52.17% of the publications during that period. The prominence of the video format increased as the war progressed; however, it is crucial to consider another aspect. The count of reactions collected from Zelensky's Instagram account stands as strong evidence to support the argument that the immersive narrative of the war from the warzone becomes central in the leveling of digital attention after the initial shock. Reactions, in fact, went from 46 million in the first week to 43 million in the second week, then dropped to 21 million in the fourth and fifth weeks since the beginning of the invasion (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Trend Reaction Time Span Analysed*

However, one result that can be easily explained by the dynamics of Instagram posts, which include features such as Reels that have a significantly higher engagement capacity. Moreover, out of the 2,500 and more posts made on the account, 1,694 are Reels, and 433 are carousels that combine multiple videos and images in a single announcement. In general, the Instagram account experienced abnormal growth in the initial weeks of the invasion. At the beginning of February last year, President Zelensky had a fandom of 9,284,998. The day after the invasion, there was the first million-fold increase, with followers reaching 10,869,941 on February 25th. By the end of the month, the number had risen to 13 million, with 13,359,798 followers, and on March 17th, the account surpassed 16 million followers, with 16,069,959, a number that has since then continued to grow slowly, reaching the threshold of 17 million followers in May 2022 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Trend Follower Time Span Analysed*

Returning to the video content, it is easy to notice that, given the personalization of political messages as one of the characteristics associated with the spectacularization, the majority of the videos feature Zelensky himself (95.83%). Of these, the president shares the spotlight with foreign politicians or government members in only 5.8% of cases. The remaining small percentage of videos in which the Ukrainian president is absent showcases civil society (2.78%). All of this seems almost inevitable, considering that with the spectacularization and personalization of politics, there has been a strong acceleration that has led to the emphasis on the leader, configured as a true brand (Barile 2014). Like many other political leaders, Zelensky has also employed a kind of ongoing narrative that unfolds through constant presence in the press, television, and social networks (Ventura 2019). Moreover, contemporary politics increasingly seeks forms and figures, gestures and bodies, not just laws and decrees (Salmon 2014), and this has also been influenced by the liquid society described by Bauman (Bauman 2011). Continuing to delve into the results of the video analysis, it becomes apparent that President Zelensky primarily uses his Instagram profile to promote his professional life rather than a personal one. The analysis reveals that the President presents himself mainly as a statesman, accounting for 75.36% of the cases, through numerous speeches addressed to Ukraine and the world during the early days of the war. Furthermore, an image of heroism associated with the President is evident in 11.59% of cases, for example, by sharing selfies recorded on the streets to demonstrate to the population and Russia that he has no intention of leaving the country. Zelensky's unique ability lies in his capacity to engage his online audience absolutely in political decisions, thereby contributing to creating a new political paradigm and elevating his figure to that of a savior of the homeland (Moffitt 2016). This emerging model is based on the possibility of interaction between Zelensky as a political actor and online citizens and manifests itself in the form of web politics (Mosca 2012). Web politics stands out for promoting interaction between citizens and political leaders through digital platforms, allowing them to actively participate in public discourse and engage more meaningfully in the political process. This new political paradigm is built on the belief that the interactivity and accessibility offered by digital media can promote broader citizen engagement and more inclusive participation in the political sphere. In this way, web politics plays a significant role in promoting citizens' political engagement and redefining the relationship between the leader in question and society, opening up new opportunities for a more participatory and democratic approach to managing this delicate phase. Other relevant attributes include that of protector, which emerges in 4.35% of cases when the President addresses civilians or sick soldiers, and that of communicator, highlighted in 8.70% of cases, especially in his interactions with the media. These attributes contribute to shaping the image and role that President Zelensky intends to convey through his Instagram videos during the period under consideration. Furthermore, since most of the videos from the earlier period are formal speeches, the staging is usually in accordance with institutional standards (79.17%), meaning Zelensky is shown well-framed, with a neutral angle and spotlights, in a classical political setting where official symbols typically appear. This professionalization contrasts with the significant presence of amateur videos (15.28%) recorded with a mobile phone, without editing or filters, and with reduced image quality. This scenario

is characterized using immediate language that allows individuals to strengthen their image when communicating online (Novelli 2018). In conclusion, the aspect considered integrates seamlessly with the profile we have sought to examine, and the confirmation is represented by the intensive use of the online platform, where political communication strategies are increasingly oriented towards a growing polarization around the leader and hybridize with daily life to bring the political actor closer to the population. This is not a recent phenomenon but is gradually shifting political communication to focus more and more on the personality of the leader, seeking to present them as one of the members of the audience and adopting a lifestyle-focused political approach (Giddens 1997). Moreover, autonomous management of self-presentation on social networks has also allowed, in this case, to limit the mediation of professionals and mass communication bodies (Kruikemeier et al. 2016).

Conclusion

While politicians worldwide have leveraged social media for their election campaigns, it is only through the experience of Zelensky that we can identify a true ground zero for social communication in wartime (Pietrobon 2022). In this context, social media takes on the connotation of a war machine, becoming a veritable battlefield between the two opposing political leaders and an objective of conquest. They transform into tools capable of mobilizing followers worldwide, engaging the entire international community. What makes this situation unique is that the war in Ukraine becomes the first war in history to be primarily fought through the use of memes, virtual appeals, media propaganda, political marketing, and hashtags. In this new era of communication, social media not only serve as platforms for disseminating political ideas but become the primary instruments for influencing public opinion and mobilizing the masses. Politicians clash virtually, employing all available tactics of persuasion and manipulation on social media to win consensus and gain political advantages. The war shifts to a digital terrain, where communication strategies become crucial for political success. The use of memes, virtual appeals, media propaganda, political marketing, and hashtags becomes an integral part of this new form of conflict. Politicians seek to capture users' attention and support through creative use of images, persuasive messages, and engaging narratives. These tools allow them to convey political messages immediately, virally, and extensively, reaching a wide audience and influencing public opinion on a global scale. In this context, the war in Ukraine stands out as a significant case study, where social media plays a paramount role in shaping opinions and political mobilization. The extensive use of digital tools to promote one's political agenda and engage citizens reflects a radical shift in political communication and the dynamics of contemporary conflicts. Therefore, Zelensky's experience marks a turning point in political communication, paving the way for a new era in which social media assumes a central role in waging wars and manipulating public opinion. This phenomenon raises a series of reflections that now and in the future require critical consideration of the ethical and political responsibility associated with the use of social media as tools of propaganda and persuasion, as well as the need to develop new skills and strategies to navigate this

complex communicative landscape. However, the use of social media and the importance of Instagram are subtly reflected in the words of Dalia Al-Aquidi, a Senior Fellow at the Center for Security Policy, who admitted during an interview that "without Volodymyr Zelensky's media strategy, the situation in Ukraine could be much worse (...) Zelensky has literally transformed in our eyes as if, in a world heavily shaped by Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, and other platforms, the president spent much of his life rehearsing precisely for this moment." These words illustrate how Zelensky's career and his background as an entertainer have proven strategic in a dramatic situation, teetering between life and death, and how the spectacularization of events has created a sense of closeness to the Ukrainian people in the international community.

During the Russo-Ukrainian war, President Zelensky adopted a clearly spectacularized political style, also known as politainment, in his publications. By intensely, strategically, and successfully leveraging Instagram's visual potential, Zelensky promotes his image as a leader, communicates with citizens during emergency periods, provides war reports, internationalizes the conflict, persuades public opinion, mobilizes the Ukrainian and global population, criticizes the enemy, and requests assistance from other countries. The war thus becomes the central theme of his discourse, and Zelensky adopts a digital communication style that helps present him as an engaged and involved president in the wartime context. Using Instagram's specific features, such as its visual and immediate nature, the President fully exploits the platform to convey a strong leadership image and emotionally engage the audience. Through posts, videos, and images, Zelensky is successfully communicating directly with citizens, providing real-time updates on the war situation, showing the consequences of the conflict, and seeking to evoke solidarity and support. The use of a spectacularized style in Zelensky's political communication on Instagram has proven effective in achieving several objectives: promoting his image as an engaged leader in the conflict, raising public awareness about the Russo-Ukrainian war, garnering support and solidarity both nationally and internationally, as well as conducting a campaign of persuasion and mobilization. In conclusion, Zelensky's spectacularized approach to political communication on Instagram during the Russo-Ukrainian war has allowed the president to present himself as an actively involved leader in the wartime context and to influence public opinion both in Ukraine and globally. The strategic use of visual media and the platform's specific features has enabled the conveyance of effective and engaging messages, solidifying his image and role in the narrative of the conflict.

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An Interplay Between Mass Media and Homeschooling

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Homeschooling and mass media are inseparable entities. The significance of mass media in acceleration of homeschooling is titanic. Mass media provides an avenue for interaction among the homeschoolers and their facilitators as well. It allows for the interchange of content and enhances discussion. Mass media promotes research that has to a greater extent enhanced the success of homeschooling among the practicing individuals who have ended up embracing this curriculum. Therefore, this paper examined the interplay between the two items. It dwelt on its significance and brought about the mutual interdependence that emerges when the two are intertwined for academic use. The paper adopted a qualitative research method and was addressed by phenomenological research design/ approach. It majored on the use of oral interviews, focus group discussion and was supplemented by secondary data from the secondary findings. Moreover, the findings were presented thematically and comprehensively which was enhanced by discussion of each issue independently as it emerged from the research findings.

Keywords: *homeschooling, mass media, interdependence, interchange, curriculum*

Introduction

The interplay between mass media and homeschooling represents a dynamic and evolving relationship within the realm of education. As mass media continues to shape our modern society, its influence on homeschooling practices and the impact of homeschooling on children's engagement with mass media have become subjects of increasing interest and concern. This interplay raises questions about how media can be effectively utilized as an educational tool in homeschooling environments, as well as the potential challenges and consequences associated with its use. Mass media, encompassing various forms such as television, radio, internet, and social media, has a powerful presence in the lives of children and families today. It provides a vast array of educational resources, entertainment options, and avenues for social connection. Homeschooling, on the other hand, has emerged as an alternative educational approach chosen by a growing number of families seeking personalized instruction and flexibility.

The convergence of mass media and homeschooling offers unique opportunities and challenges. On one hand, mass media can serve as a valuable resource for homeschooling parents, providing access to a wealth of educational materials, online

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courses, virtual field trips, and interactive learning platforms. It allows parents to supplement their teaching with multimedia resources that cater to different learning styles and provide exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences. Moreover, media can foster engagement and interactivity, promoting active learning and critical thinking skills. Educational television programs, documentaries, and online educational platforms have gained popularity among homeschooling families as tools to enhance subject comprehension and facilitate independent learning. Additionally, social media platforms and online communities provide avenues for homeschooling parents to connect, share resources, and collaborate, thereby creating a sense of community and support.

However, the interplay between mass media and homeschooling is not without its challenges. Concerns arise regarding the potential negative impact of excessive screen time, exposure to inappropriate content, and the influence of commercialized media on children's values, beliefs, and behaviors. Homeschooling parents must navigate the fine line between utilizing media as an educational tool and safeguarding their children's well-being and healthy development. Furthermore, the role of media in shaping homeschooling practices raises questions about the autonomy of parents as educators. How does media influence the design and implementation of homeschooling curricula? What are the effects of media consumption on children's learning outcomes and academic achievement in homeschooling contexts? These questions warrant exploration to better understand the implications of the interplay between mass media and homeschooling. Given the significance of this interplay, there is a growing need for research that examines the ways in which mass media impacts homeschooling practices and how homeschooling, in turn, shapes children's engagement with media. This research can inform educators, policymakers, and parents about the potential benefits and challenges associated with media use in homeschooling, while also fostering the development of media literacy initiatives tailored to homeschooling contexts.

Therefore, the interplay between mass media and homeschooling represents a complex and evolving relationship within the realm of education. Understanding how mass media influences homeschooling practices and how homeschooling affects children's engagement with media is crucial for educators, parents, and policymakers. This exploration can shed light on the potential benefits, challenges, and consequences of media use in homeschooling environments, ultimately contributing to informed decision-making and the development of effective educational strategies in the digital age.

Literature Review

In a recent University of Arizona Law Review article, Elizabeth Bartholet, a Harvard law professor, claims that the “homeschooling regime poses real dangers to children and to society.” Bartholet’s legal argument is that homeschooling is an infringement on child rights, placing children in inferior, socially isolating, and dangerous educational environments (Bartholet 2020). This threatens democracy, she says, since homeschooling is not likely to provide the kind of civic education available

in public schools, especially regarding democratic values. Besides the risk of child abuse and indoctrination, the strength of far right-wing religious conservatives in the homeschooling movement ensures that children will be forced into submitting to patriarchy, leading, Bartholet fears, to “female subservience.” If that wasn’t enough, she goes on to charge the homeschooling movement with links to white supremacy and racial segregation. According to Bartholet, the future of our democracy depends on “freeing” these children from unhappiness and ignorance (Bartholet 2020).

Beyond the anecdotal “evidence” provided by Bartholet, the question remains is there social scientific evidence that demands the “death penalty” for homeschooling? After considering the impact of the homeschooling movement on community involvement, diversity, and the dignity of the child, it is clear that Bartholet’s prosecution fails to overcome reasonable doubt (Bartholet 2020). Bartholet claims that homeschooling “...parents...are ideologically committed to raising children in isolation from the larger society...” She fails to recognize that homeschooling families have the highest level of community involvement of all school sectors. This civic involvement not only strengthens social capital and trust within communities, but also provides a “hidden” or implicit curriculum important for civic socialization, which may carry into young adulthood. Bartholet seems to take the “home” in homeschooling too seriously, as if their windows have prison bars. In actual practice, homeschoolers are organized in complex networks with educational organizations, civic, religious, and cultural organizations, informal personal and virtual support groups, friendship circles, extended family, and so on. Therefore, it’s upon this argument hold by Bartholet that this study unraveled the interplay between mass media and homeschooling in the wider scope.

Methodology

This study adopted phenomenological research approach. This is because, phenomenology aims to understand individuals' lived experiences and their subjective interpretations of a particular phenomenon (Koopman 2015). This approach allows researchers to explore the perspectives, beliefs, and behaviors of homeschooling parents and children regarding their interactions with mass media in the context of education (Raffaele and Knoff 1999). Therefore, the study targeted parents and students pursuing the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme in home schools in Kenya. Statistical data from a reconnaissance study conducted in schools offering the ACE programme confirmed that as of 2020, there were 274 students pursuing the programme from home. A sample of 42 students and 18 parents was selected from attendees at the ACE annual convention, where all learners following the ACE curriculum and their parents gather annually. This convention spans one week and offers participants diverse ACE-related activities. Data were collected through focus group discussions with students and interviews with parents. Based on research showing that 80% of themes captured by two to three focus groups, while 90% by three to six groups (Guest et al. 2017), the 42 learners were distributed in six groups of seven learners each. Similarly, following researchers’ assertions that

saturation can be reached by interviewing 12-20 participants (Hagaman and Wutich 2017), 18 parents were found to be ideal for participating in interviews.

Both focus group discussions and interviews were effective for capturing the experiences and perspectives of homeschooling parents and children regarding mass media use (Kontio et al. 2004). The researcher, identified a diverse sample of homeschooling families who actively engaged with mass media in their educational practices. The researcher considered factors such as geographical location, socioeconomic status, educational philosophies, and the age range of children. This provided a broad range of perspectives on the interplay between mass media and homeschooling. Open-ended questions that encouraged participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and practices related to mass media in homeschooling were employed in the two data collection instruments (Rosenthal 2016). Qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes, patterns, and variations in participants' responses regarding their interactions with mass media (Braun and Clarke 2021). The study explored how mass media is integrated into homeschooling practices, its perceived benefits, challenges, and any changes in attitudes or behaviors resulting from media consumption. Findings were interpreted based on the identified themes and patterns, and presented in a comprehensive and contextualized manner, providing quotes and examples to support the interpretations (Skelton 1994).

Discussion

The study sought to establish the interplay between mass media and homeschooling. Consequently, the study made the following findings and provides a robust discussion.

Information and Resources

This study established that mass media such as television, radio, and the internet, provide a wealth of information and educational resources that homeschooling parents can utilize. Moreover, educational websites, online courses, documentaries, and interactive platforms complements home learning by enhancing the curriculum and supplementing teaching materials (Collins and Halverson 2018). According to one of the parents who has embraced homeschooling, “mass media, such as educational television programs, documentaries, and online platforms, provide a wealth of educational content to our homeschooling children (Oral Interview, 15/03/2023). Information about these resources helps homeschooling families to enrich learning experiences by adopting and integrating them into their curriculum. Therefore, by leveraging such mass media resources, homeschooling can become more engaging, diverse, and accessible. It also emerged from this study that mass media resources offer homeschoolers access to a wide range of perspectives, cultures, and ideas. The presentation of real-world mass media was found to be an avenue for enhancing visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles among home schooling individuals. Therefore, information about these resources enables homeschooling parents to select

appropriate content that aligns with their educational goals, interests, and learning styles.

Another respondent remarked that: “indeed mass media is serving as valuable supplementary tools for our homeschooling children. It complements traditional textbooks which are hard to find and expensive. Besides, mass media diversifies curriculum materials allowing our children to access to develop the required skills” (Oral Interview, 15/03/2023). Educational websites, online courses, and interactive learning platforms provide additional resources that cater to diverse learning styles and interests. By staying informed about these resources, homeschooling parents can integrate them effectively into their teaching methods. This study found out that mass media keeps homeschooling families informed about current events, social issues, and global affairs. By following news outlets, podcasts, and online publications, homeschoolers develop a broader understanding of the world. This knowledge can be incorporated into discussions, research projects, and critical thinking exercises, fostering a deeper sense of global awareness and citizenship.

Findings from the focus group discussions revealed that information about mass media resources facilitate collaboration and networking among homeschooling families. For instance, it emerged that online platforms, forums, and social media groups provide spaces for sharing experiences, recommendations, and insights on utilizing mass media effectively in homeschooling. This interplay allows parents to exchange ideas, discover new resources, and create a supportive community (Focus group discussion, 17/03/2023). Furthermore, the focus group discussions showcased that mass media offers opportunities for homeschoolers to develop media literacy skills. By accessing and analyzing various forms of media, such as news articles, videos, and podcasts, homeschooling students were able to improve their critical thinking, information evaluation, and media interpretation abilities. Consequently, information and resources that promote media literacy education enable homeschooling parents to guide their children in understanding the impact and influence of mass media (Focus group discussion, 17/03/2023).

Based on the preceding argument, this study concludes that information and resources serve as bridges between mass media and homeschooling, enhancing the educational experience for homeschooling families. They enable access to educational content, enrich learning experiences, provide supplementary tools, foster global awareness, facilitate collaboration, cater for diverse learning styles, and promote media literacy skills. By staying informed and utilizing these resources effectively, homeschooling can benefit immensely from the interplay with mass media.

Curriculum Guidance

Another critical finding by this research was that mass media offers guidance to homeschooling parents on curriculum planning, teaching methodologies, and educational philosophies. Television programs, documentaries, and online resources provide insights, lesson plans, and recommendations for effective homeschooling practices (Clark 2001). Through an oral interview with one of the respondents the following response caught our attention. “I find mass media very useful since its curriculum guidance offers me with a structured approach to homeschooling, allowing

me to handle several subjects and to cover the objectives comprehensively". In retrospect, mass media helps parents to align their educational goals with the broader educational standards and frameworks (Oral interview, 20/03/2023). The respondent added that, "by incorporating mass media resources into the curriculum, me and other homeschooling families enhance our children's learning experiences through diverse perspectives and real-world examples.

Another respondent agreed with the preceding respondent by retorting that:

Through curriculum guidance facilitated by mass media, am able to select appropriate content and resources required for various subjects. Moreover, we as homeschooling parents are able to identify mass media materials, such as documentaries, educational videos, and interactive websites that align with the curriculum (Oral interview, 21/03/2023).

Therefore, by integrating mass media resources into specific lessons and units, homeschooling families enrich the curriculum with engaging and multimedia-based learning experiences.

In essence, through such findings showing the utility of mass media in curriculum guidance, this study confirms that, curriculum guidance is a function of mass media, and it often encourages interdisciplinary approaches to homeschooling, where multiple subjects are integrated to explore a particular topic or theme. Mass media resources play a significant role in this interdisciplinary learning by linking different subjects. For example, a historical documentary can be used to explore not only history but also language arts, cultural studies, and media literacy. Curriculum guidance facilitates the identification and integration of mass media resources for interdisciplinary learning opportunities.

These findings are in tandem with Burke, who affirmed that homeschooling allows flexibility in designing and adapting the curriculum to meet the individual needs and interests of students. Curriculum guidance provides a framework that homeschooling families can customize to suit their unique circumstances (Burke 2022). Mass media resources offer a wide range of topics and formats, allowing homeschooling parents to tailor the curriculum by incorporating materials that resonate with their children's learning preferences and styles (Burke 2022).

Therefore, from these arguments, it can be deduced that the interplay between mass media and homeschooling enriches curriculum guidance which often includes guidelines for assessment and evaluation of student progress. Homeschooling parents can use mass media resources to create diverse assessment tasks, such as creating multimedia presentations, writing reflections on documentaries, or participating in online discussions. These assessments provide opportunities for homeschoolers to demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum and apply critical thinking skills to mass media content.

In this regard, this study concludes that curriculum guidance serves as a foundation for homeschooling and facilitates the interplay between mass media and homeschooling. It provides structure, coherence, and guidelines for content selection and integration. Curriculum guidance supports interdisciplinary learning, allows for flexibility and adaptability, and provides frameworks for assessment and evaluation. By incorporating mass media resources into the curriculum, homeschooling families

can enhance the learning experience, foster engagement, and promote a well-rounded education.

Access to Diverse Perspectives

According to Arai, it's recorded that, mass media exposes homeschooling students to diverse perspectives and cultures, which can broaden their understanding of the world. Through news, documentaries, and other media outlets, students can learn about different societies, global issues, and various viewpoints, fostering critical thinking skills and cultural awareness (Arai 1999). These arguments were supported by a respondent who stated that "i like mass media because it exposes homeschooling students to a wide range of perspectives, cultures, and ideas which they may not encounter through traditional curriculum materials" (Oral Interview, 24/03/2023). Research has shown that such exposure broadens their horizons and helps them develop a more comprehensive understanding of the world. Moreover, diverse perspectives challenge students to think critically and consider multiple viewpoints (Oral Interview, 24/03/2023). Reflecting this assertion, this revealed that mass media resources, such as documentaries, news articles, and opinion pieces, provide opportunities for homeschooling students to analyze and evaluate different perspectives on various topics. This fosters critical thinking skills and encourages students to form well-informed opinions. Findings with the focus group discussions with homeschooling students confirmed that mass media introduces homeschooling students to diverse cultures, experiences, and backgrounds (Focus group discussion, 27/03/2023). By engaging with stories and narratives from different communities, students develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the complexities of the world. This exposure promotes cultural sensitivity and helps students appreciate and respect diverse perspectives.

The findings showing that mass media enriches homeschooling students learning scope by offering diverse perspectives are consistent with findings by McCarthy & Carter, who established that mass media has the potential to showcase diverse voices and narratives that are often underrepresented in traditional curriculum materials (McCarthy and Carter 2014). Therefore, by accessing a wide range of media content, homeschooling families can ensure that their educational journey is inclusive and representative of diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences (McCarthy and Carter 2014). Further, McCarthy & Carter maintain that exposure to diverse perspectives through mass media resources stimulates meaningful discussions and debates within the homeschooling environment. Students can engage in thoughtful conversations with their parents or peers, exploring different viewpoints and challenging their own assumptions. These dialogues enhance communication skills, promote active listening, and foster an open-minded approach to learning (McCarthy and Carter 2014).

In line with the arguments postulated by McCarthy & Carter this study affirmed that access to diverse perspectives empowers homeschooling students to actively seek out information and engage with media resources independently. They can explore a variety of sources, critically evaluate information, and form their own opinions. This sense of agency nurtures self-directed learning and equips students with the skills

needed to navigate an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. Therefore, this study avers that, access to diverse perspectives through mass media resources enriches the homeschooling experience by broadening horizons, enhancing critical thinking, fostering empathy and cultural understanding, promoting inclusivity and representation, encouraging dialogue, and empowering student agency. By incorporating diverse media content into their curriculum, homeschooling families can cultivate a well-rounded education that prepares students to be global citizens.

Educational Content and Entertainment

Mass media can blend education and entertainment into edutainment, providing engaging content that captivates homeschooling students. Platforms like educational television shows, podcasts, and interactive apps offer a combination of educational material and entertainment value, making learning enjoyable and interactive (Martin and Loomis 2013). Through interviews with parents of homeschooling students, it emerged that content in mass media, such as educational television programs, documentaries, and online platforms, provide engaging and interactive learning experiences for homeschooling students (Oral interview, 28/3/2023). One parent had this to say “I like the way mass media caters for the different learning styles. These resources utilize captivating visuals, storytelling techniques, and interactive elements to make learning enjoyable and effective”. The respondent further alluded that, by incorporating educational content into their curriculum, homeschooling families can enhance student engagement and foster a love for learning (Oral interview, 28/3/2023).

The parents’ views showing the utility of mass media in edutainment were echoed by students through the focus group discussions as cited verbatim

Mass media offers a variety of mediums, including videos, podcasts, interactive websites, and educational games, which cater to different learning styles and preferences. We as Homeschooling students leverage these resources to provide multimodal learning opportunities, allowing us to learn through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic means (Focus group discussion, 30/3/2023).

This finding showing that mass media facilitates edutainment which in turn caters for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning resonates with findings by Winn, who determined that educational content in mass media often presents real-world examples, practical applications, and case studies that help students make connections between academic concepts and their practical relevance (Winn 2002). Moreover, Winn argued that homeschooling families can utilize these resources to demonstrate how theoretical knowledge is applied in real-life situations, enhancing students’ understanding and encouraging critical thinking (Winn 2002).

Through these findings relating mass media with edutainment, this research contends that mass media resources provide additional learning materials that supplement and expand the homeschooling curriculum. They offer opportunities to explore subjects beyond traditional textbooks, introducing new topics, perspectives, and areas of interest. Homeschooling parents can incorporate educational content from

mass media to enrich their curriculum, offering a broader and more comprehensive educational experience.

These findings are consistent with views by Baines that entertainment elements in mass media, such as engaging narratives, captivating visuals, and appealing characters, can spark students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning (Baines 2008). When educational content is presented in an entertaining and enjoyable manner, students are more likely to be actively engaged in the learning process. Therefore, by incorporating elements of entertainment into educational content, homeschooling families can create a positive and exciting learning environment.

These arguments by Baines were reflected by a respondent who retorted that “mass media resources encourage lifelong learning and curiosity by presenting a vast array of topics, ideas, and discoveries. They inspire students to explore beyond the confines of their curriculum and develop a love for learning that extends beyond their homeschooling experience” (Oral interview, 3/4/2023). Therefore, the study confirmed that by incorporating educational content from mass media, homeschooling families can instill a sense of curiosity and a lifelong passion for knowledge in their students. In essence, educational content and entertainment in mass media promote the interplay with homeschooling by providing engaging and interactive learning experiences, offering multimodal learning opportunities, establishing real-world connections, supplementing the curriculum, motivating students, fostering curiosity, and encouraging lifelong learning. Moreover, incorporating these resources into their teaching approach, homeschooling families can create a dynamic and enriching educational experience for their students.

Potential for Distractions

One challenge with mass media in the context of homeschooling is the potential for distractions. The vast array of entertainment options available through mass media can divert students' attention from their studies if not managed effectively. Parents need to establish clear boundaries and monitor media consumption to maintain focus on learning (Bienkowski et al. 2012). An interview with one parent revealed that, the potential for distractions in mass media requires homeschooling parents to be aware of the impact and manage them effectively (Oral interview, 3/4/2023). The parent added that; by acknowledging the potential distractions, parents can take proactive measures to create a conducive learning environment, set boundaries, and establish guidelines for media usage during homeschooling hours (Oral interview, 3/4/2023). Therefore, this study found that, the presence of distractions in mass media provides an opportunity for homeschooling parents to teach media literacy skills. By guiding students in critically evaluating and discerning credible sources, identifying biased content, and understanding persuasive techniques, parents can empower their children to navigate the digital landscape responsibly.

Another parent observed that, mass media offers both educational and recreational content, and striking a balance between the two is crucial. According to him, “homeschooling parents can leverage the potential distractions by incorporating educational content from mass media into the curriculum while being mindful of minimizing excessive exposure to purely recreational media that may hinder learning

progress” (Oral interview, 5/4/2023). Based on the preceding argument, this study therefore found that, potential distractions in mass media call for selective use of media resources. Homeschooling parents can curate and select specific educational content that aligns with their curriculum goals, focusing on high-quality resources that facilitate learning and minimize potential distractions. Therefore, by being intentional with media choices, parents can maximize the educational benefits while mitigating distractions.

Another aspect that arose from focus group discussions was that the potential distractions in mass media highlight the importance of time management and self-discipline during homeschooling. The discussions unearthed the importance of allocating dedicated time slots for educational media usage, establishing routines, and encouraging self-discipline to minimize distractions and maintain focus on learning objectives (Focus group discussion, 7/4/2023). This revelation from the discussions complemented the views given by Dyson, who established that, the potential distractions in mass media can be managed by incorporating intentional media breaks and variety into the homeschooling schedule. This approach allows students to take short, purposeful breaks to engage in recreational media or other non-screen activities, maintaining a healthy balance and preventing excessive distraction (Dyson 2001).

The potential for distractions in mass media presents challenges that homeschooling parents must navigate. Therefore, by raising awareness, teaching media literacy skills, balancing educational and recreational media, selectively using media, emphasizing time management and self-discipline, and incorporating media breaks and variety, parents can effectively manage distractions and harness the educational potential of mass media in the homeschooling environment.

Influence on Socialization

Homeschooling is sometimes be criticized for limiting social interactions, but mass media can help bridge this gap. Television programs, online communities, and social media platforms can connect homeschooling students with peers who share similar interests and educational experiences. Virtual communities can provide a sense of belonging and socialization opportunities (Cooper and Sureau 2007). Based on influence on socialization, this study established that, mass media exposes homeschooling students to a wide range of perspectives, cultures, and societal issues beyond their immediate surroundings. This exposure enhances socialization by providing students with opportunities to learn about different ways of life, traditions, and belief systems. The study further revealed that, exposure to mass media fosters empathy, understanding, and appreciation for diverse cultures and encourages home schooling students to become more globally aware citizens (Oral interview, 6/4/2023).

These findings on mass media fostering empathy, understanding, and appreciation for diverse cultures while making students to be citizens with global awareness was echoed by a respondent who stated that “mass media content often prompts discussions and critical thinking about social, ethical, and moral issues” (Oral interview, 8/4/2023). Additionally, the respondent asserted that “homeschooling families can leverage this content to initiate thoughtful conversations, encouraging students to analyze and evaluate societal norms, values, and behaviors”. Another

respondent divulged that “engaging in these discussions promotes socialization by enabling students to articulate their own viewpoints, understand others' perspectives, and develop critical thinking skills” (Oral interview, 8/4/2023). Therefore, this study determined that mass media influences socialization by shaping students' media literacy and digital citizenship skills. Homeschooling parents' guide students in navigating media content, discerning credible information, and understanding the potential impact of media on society. This fosters responsible digital behavior, empowers students to engage with media mindfully, and prepares them to participate responsibly in online communities.

Further findings from the interviews with parents revealed that mass media provides homeschooling families with access to information about social issues, current events, and global affairs (Oral interview, 9/4/2023). And that by staying informed about these topics, students can develop an understanding of societal challenges, injustices, and opportunities for positive change (Oral interview, 9/4/2023). Based on this, the study discerned that homeschooling parents can incorporate discussions, research projects, and service-learning activities related to these issues, promoting socialization and encouraging students to become active agents in addressing societal concerns. The study also found that mass media plays a role in shaping individuals' identities and self-perception. Such findings had hitherto been highlighted by Beveridge who posited that homeschooling families can utilize media resources that offer diverse and inclusive representations of various identities, cultures, and backgrounds (Beveridge 2013). Therefore, by exposing students to positive and authentic portrayals, mass media can contribute to a more inclusive and affirming socialization experience, fostering a sense of belonging and promoting empathy towards others. Similar to Beveridge's argument, this study affirmed that, indeed, mass media platforms provide opportunities for homeschooling students to engage with online communities centered on shared interests, hobbies, or educational pursuits. Participating in these communities allows students to connect with peers from different backgrounds, exchange ideas, collaborate on projects, and develop social skills in a virtual environment.

Therefore, the influence of mass media on socialization promotes the interplay with homeschooling by exposing students to diverse perspectives and cultures, fostering discussions and critical thinking, developing media literacy and digital citizenship skills, addressing social issues, influencing identity development, and facilitating engagement with online communities. Moreover, by effectively incorporating mass media into the homeschooling experience, families can enhance socialization opportunities, broaden students' perspectives, and cultivate socially responsible individuals.

Bias and Accuracy

Mass media can present biased information, misinformation, or incomplete perspectives. As homeschooling parents, it is essential to teach children critical media literacy skills to evaluate sources, question narratives, and think independently. Parents can guide their children in discerning reliable sources of information and developing a well-rounded understanding of the world (Prins 2017). One respondent stated that

“bias in mass media provides an opportunity for homeschooling students to develop critical thinking skills”. The respondent further alleged that, “by exposing students to media with various biases, homeschooling parents can guide them in analyzing and evaluating sources, identifying bias, and discerning between fact and opinion.” According to this respondent, “this cultivates a healthy skepticism and encourages students to seek multiple perspectives, enhancing their ability to make informed judgments”. These respondents’ sentiments echoed Kunzman, who determined that, the presence of bias in mass media underscores the importance of media literacy education within homeschooling (Kunzman 2012). Kunzman further noted that, by teaching students to critically evaluate sources, assess credibility, and recognize bias, parents equip them with the necessary skills to navigate the media landscape independently. Media literacy education promotes discernment and empowers students to become responsible consumers and creators of media content (Kunzman 2012).

Based on the above discussion, this study found that, bias in mass media highlights the importance of consuming a diverse range of media sources. Homeschooling families can actively seek out diverse viewpoints, perspectives, and voices to counterbalance any inherent biases present in mainstream media. This encourages students to engage with a variety of sources, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues. Moreover, a pertinent issue that emerged from this study is that the accuracy in mass media is paramount in promoting interplay with homeschooling. Therefore, parents can emphasize the importance of fact-checking and verification by cross-referencing information from multiple reliable sources. This would cultivate a habit of seeking accurate and reliable information, ensuring that students are well-informed and can discern between credible and misleading content.

Findings from the focus group discussions indicated that bias and accuracy in mass media provide homeschooling families with opportunities for meaningful discussions and debates (Focus group discussion, 10/4/2023). The discussions further revealed that, by analyzing and comparing contrasting perspectives and examining how bias and accuracy influence media coverage, students develop critical thinking, communication, and negotiation skills. Thus, engaging in these discussions promotes a deeper understanding of media influence and encourages students to form well-rounded opinions. Through the discussions, this study also found that bias and accuracy in mass media prompt homeschooling students to consider the ethical dimensions of media consumption and production. Homeschooling parents can encourage discussions about responsible journalism, media ethics, and the potential impact of biased or inaccurate reporting on individuals and society. This fosters ethical awareness and a sense of responsibility in engaging with mass media.

However, the study ascertained that bias and accuracy in mass media promote interplay with homeschooling by fostering critical thinking skills, encouraging media literacy education, diversifying media consumption, emphasizing fact-checking and verification, stimulating discussions and debates, and raising ethical considerations. By addressing bias and accuracy within the homeschooling environment, families can empower students to navigate the media landscape effectively, critically engage with information, and become discerning consumers of mass media.

Parental Involvement and Media Monitoring

Homeschooling parents often have more control over their children's media consumption, allowing them to curate content that aligns with their educational goals and values. They can actively participate in media consumption by watching or exploring content with their children, providing opportunities for discussion and critical analysis (McQuiggan et al. 2015). The study through the focus group discussion discerned that parental involvement in homeschooling allows parents to actively engage with their children's media consumption. Moreover, the discussions disclosed that by discussing media content, asking questions, and offering guidance, parents can help students navigate the complexities of mass media, critically analyze information, and develop media literacy skills (Focus group discussion, 9/4/2023). This involvement fosters a collaborative learning environment where parents and children can explore media together. Further, the focus group discussions divulged that, parental involvement includes setting boundaries and rules for media usage within the homeschooling environment (Focus group discussion, 9/4/2023). Based on this, this study highlighted that, parents can establish guidelines that align with their educational goals and values, ensuring that media consumption remains balanced and purposeful. By monitoring and regulating media access, parents can create a healthy media environment that supports learning and minimizes potential negative influences.

The sentiments above were supplemented by interview findings. One participant observed that parental involvement enables the filtering and curating of media content based on educational needs and values (Oral interview, 10/4/2023). According to this participant, "homeschooling parents can select appropriate media resources that align with the curriculum and promote educational objectives. By curating media content, parents can ensure that students have access to high-quality, age-appropriate, and relevant materials that enhance their learning experience" (Oral interview, 10/4/2023). The preceding argument supports arguments by Hutchison, who posited in his works that;

Parental involvement provides opportunities for teaching media literacy skills within the homeschooling context. Parents can educate their children about media biases, fact-checking techniques, and critical analysis of media content. This equips students with the tools to navigate mass media independently, evaluate information critically, and make informed decisions (Hutchison et al. 2020).

In this regard this study deduced that parental involvement promotes open communication between parents and children regarding media consumption. By creating a safe and non-judgmental space for dialogue, parents encourage children to share their thoughts, questions, and concerns about media content. This communication allows for deeper understanding, addressing any potential misconceptions, and reinforcing the values and principles upheld within the homeschooling environment. Moreover, this study found that, parental involvement encompasses teaching responsible digital citizenship skills. Homeschooling parents can guide their children in understanding the ethical and responsible use of media, promoting respectful online behavior, and protecting their privacy and safety. This involvement ensures that

students develop a positive and responsible digital presence, both as consumers and creators of media content.

Therefore, this study ascertained that, parental involvement and media monitoring promotes interplay between mass media and homeschooling by actively engaging with students, setting boundaries and rules, filtering and curating media content, teaching media literacy skills, fostering open communication, and promoting responsible digital citizenship. By actively participating in their children's media experiences, homeschooling parents can create a supportive learning environment that encourages critical thinking, enhances media literacy, and reinforces the educational goals of homeschooling. Additionally, mass media can serve as a valuable tool for homeschooling parents, offering educational resources, diverse perspectives, and socialization opportunities. However, parents must strike a balance between utilizing media for educational purposes and managing potential distractions or negative influences. Active parental involvement and teaching critical media literacy skills are crucial in navigating the interplay between mass media and homeschooling (Dahlquist et al. 2006).

Conclusion

This study concludes that, the interplay between mass media and homeschooling is a complex and multifaceted relationship that has evolved over time. While both mass media and homeschooling have their unique advantages and drawbacks, their interactions can significantly impact the perception, accessibility, and effectiveness of homeschooling as an alternative form of education. Mass media, including television, movies, and news outlets, have the power to shape public perception and opinions about homeschooling. Positive portrayals can shed light on the benefits of homeschooling, such as personalized learning and flexibility (Dahlquist et al. 2006). Conversely, negative portrayals might perpetuate misconceptions or concerns about socialization and academic standards, leading to misunderstandings among the general public. Mass media can serve as a valuable source of information for homeschooling families. Through documentaries, websites, and online platforms, parents can access resources, curriculum ideas, and connect with other homeschooling families. However, the abundance of information can also lead to confusion and overwhelm, especially for parents new to homeschooling. Mass media's advancement, particularly the internet and online platforms, has opened up new opportunities for homeschooling. Virtual classrooms, educational apps, and online communities facilitate communication and access to educational content (Collins and Halverson 2018). However, excessive screen time and the potential for misinformation are challenges that must be navigated. Mass media can contribute to the visibility and recognition of homeschooling as a legitimate educational option. Documentaries, news features, and interviews with successful homeschoolers can inspire others to explore homeschooling as a viable choice (Anthony and Burroughs 2012). On the other hand, biased reporting or sensationalized stories can create unnecessary scrutiny and obstacles for homeschooling families. Mass media plays a role in shaping social norms and values, influencing how homeschooling is perceived in society. Concerns

about homeschoolers' socialization may arise from media portrayals, while cultural influences can impact families' decision to homeschool, depending on prevailing educational attitudes and values. Finally, the interplay between mass media and homeschooling can significantly impact how homeschooling is understood, practiced, and received in society. While media can serve as a valuable resource and advocate for homeschooling, it can also perpetuate misconceptions and challenges. It is essential for both media consumers and producers to approach homeschooling with an open mind, understanding the diversity of homeschooling approaches and the educational possibilities it can offer. Additionally, responsible reporting and accurate portrayals of homeschooling can help foster a more informed and supportive environment for homeschooling families.

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