



UNIVERSIDADE
CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA

THE DYNAMICS OF INFLUENCE:
THE VIDEO CONTENT PRODUCTION STRATEGIES USED
BY FITNESS DIGITAL INFLUENCERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Dissertation presented to Universidade Católica Portuguesa in order
to obtain the Master's degree in Communication Studies in the
specialty of Communication, Television and Cinema

By

Carolina de Oliveira Fulgêncio

Faculdade de Ciências Humanas

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Resumo

Esta dissertação destaca o papel dos influenciadores digitais de fitness no que diz respeito às estratégias de produção de conteúdo de vídeos de treino no *Instagram* e no *YouTube*, com o intuito de persuadir pessoas a começarem ou a continuarem a praticar exercício físico. A revisão da literatura expõe os conceitos de Internet, world wide web e web 2.0 no contexto do sistema de comunicação contemporâneo; média digitais e redes sociais; *user-generated content* e *produser*; as plataformas *Instagram* e *YouTube*; o cenário do mobile; as características do vídeo, juntamente com os conceitos da economia da atenção e micro-vídeos; a revolução do fitness; e líderes de opinião, práticas de micro-celebridades e de *self-branding* para explicar a figura do influenciador digital. De forma a responder à pergunta da pesquisa “quais são as estratégias de produção de vídeo utilizadas por influenciadores digitais de fitness nas redes sociais para persuadir o público a começar ou a continuar a praticar exercício físico?”, foram aplicados métodos qualitativos: entrevistas em profundidade a influenciadores digitais de fitness Portugueses e Americanos, análise de vídeos e análise de conteúdo categorial das entrevistas e dos vídeos selecionados. Ficou claro que, enquanto elas são transversais tanto a Portugal como aos Estados Unidos da América, foi possível distinguir várias estratégias diferentes, como o uso de micro-vídeos de “demonstrações de exercícios”; “how-to/ tutoriais”; e “motivacionais”, com a prática de exercícios físicos em ambientes de treino como o elo comum. Afinal, a melhor maneira de fazer com que alguém comece ou continue a treinar é, de facto, demonstrando que tipo de exercícios é que se pode fazer e como.

Palavras-chave: Influenciadores Digitais; Fitness; Vídeo; Redes Sociais; Instagram; YouTube

Abstract

This dissertation highlights the role of fitness digital influencers, regarding the content production strategies of workout videos on Instagram and YouTube, in order to convince people to start or continue to work out. The theoretical framework introduces the notions of the Internet, world wide web and web 2.0 in the context of the contemporary communication system; digital and social media; *user-generated content* and the *produser*; the platforms Instagram and YouTube; the mobile landscape; the characteristics of video along with the concepts of attention economy and micro-videos; the fitness revolution; and opinion leaders, micro-celebrity and self-branding practices to explain the figure of the digital influencer. As a means of answering the research question “which are the video production strategies used by fitness digital influencers on social media in order to persuade their audience into starting or continuing to work out?”, qualitative methods were applied: in-depth interviews to Portuguese and American fitness digital influencers, videos’ analysis, and categorial content analysis of the interviews and selected videos. It became clear that, while they were transversal to both Portugal and the United States of America, it was possible to distinguish several different strategies, such as the use of “exercise demonstrations”; “how-to/ tutorials”; and “motivational” micro-videos, with the practice of physical exercise in workout environments as the common feature. After all, the best way to get someone to start or continue to work out is, indeed, by demonstrating what type of exercises they can do and how.

Keywords: Digital Influencers; Fitness; Video; Social Media; Instagram; YouTube

Acknowledgments

Sometimes, the simplest choice of a path becomes one of the most important decisions that will take on a big role in life, much like the butterfly effect. If there is something that physical exercise and all its essence has been teaching me throughout the time is that, in order to take it to the next level, it is imperative to become comfortable with the uncomfortable. In fact, the ‘consistency is key’ motto is the best I have ever come across with. In everything I do, I try to remember it. It takes discipline, hard work, and that applies not only to my fitness journey, but to my dissertation progress. There is no shortcut to mastering habits – we have to fully stay engaged with the process, and thankfully, I did. The most ironic thing is that what kept me going throughout this investigation regarding the fitness and social media ecosystem were, indeed, breaks to workout, check Instagram, and listen to music on YouTube while writing. Thus, I’m deeply grateful for the role that everyone played throughout my journey. I must thank the interviewees Bruno, Emily, Erik, Mafalda and Margarida, who were all so open and willing to help in whatever I needed; my CrossFit and gym family, for always pushing me in every workout, motivating me to do better, and challenge my fitness progress on a daily basis; my parents and family, for always supporting my choices and timings, and trusting that I am independent enough to do that; my friends, for constantly be there for me, especially the ones who were in the same position as me and made it possible for us to help and lift each other up; and, last but not least, my Professor Cátia Ferreira, for always providing the best guidance, knowledge and feedback one could ask for.

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Introduction

“Often we don’t realize that our attitude toward something has been influenced by the number of times we’ve been exposed to it in the past.”

(Robert B. Cialdini, 2009)

There is no doubt that mobile technologies and social media have been playing an indispensable role in the everyday lives of consumers. Parallely, there has been an exponential growth in the desire to improve the human body and fitness overall. It is no coincidence that both are related: the fact that Instagram and YouTube are both designed for visual display, it became much harder to ignore the content related to fitness nowadays. Indeed, the fitness revolution that began in the late 1800s has sparked, and now, the search for a healthy lifestyle has led to people wanting to start working out more and eating right, and social media platforms are now playing a great role in that field. While it can still be considered a niche activity, a lot of people have started to share their own opinions and recommendations online, in order to inspire others. Those people, who can be perceived as opinion leaders by being experts in their fields, are now considered to be digital influencers. Thus, the structure of the two-step flow theory of mass communication and the notions of self-branding and micro-celebrity are relevant to understand the process of influence in the digital environment. Their ability to share up-to-date information with their followers through creative content, such as workout videos, makes it easier for everyone to, at least, have tools that may help them reach their fitness goals. As diverse as their motivations might be, being those personal betterment, labor productivity, aesthetic embellishment, or health strengthening, they all share a singular passion: to improve the human body. Additionally, video is becoming increasingly important in the contemporary culture since it can increase communication richness, empowering those who develop their own videos, and encouraging behavior and mindset formation among users. Subsequently, it has benefits for users, due to the fact that video allows communication to flow in a more natural way, resembling face-to-face communication, and facilitates the process of personal identification. Thus, in the context of an increasingly interconnected world, social media have transformed the Internet

from a platform for information, to a platform for influence, and that is what triggered my theme choice.

Furthermore, either shifts in people's habits and routines in the field of exercise and physical activities or in the field of information and technological societies are, each more, connected with media production and content creation, with these having a constant presence in people's everyday life and human society. By exploring this trendy topic, the importance of this study lies in the examination of the dynamics of influence regarding video content production strategies used by fitness digital influencers. To the extent of the fitness field, it is significant because it helps acknowledging the importance of social media as a means of helping people to create healthier lifestyles, having an impact in the structure of health systems allowed by governments and in the promotion of healthier lifestyles.

Moreover, since these trends are relatively new and little research has been done in the field, this present study aims to fill in that scientific knowledge gap. Thus, the theoretical framework introduces the notions of the Internet, world wide web and web 2.0 in the context of the contemporary communication system; digital and social media; user-generated content and the *producer*; the platforms Instagram and YouTube; the mobile landscape; the characteristics of video along with the concepts of attention economy and micro-videos; the fitness revolution; and opinion leaders, micro-celebrity and self-branding practices to explain the figure of the digital influencer. Through a qualitative approach, the data collection methods used were interviews with Portuguese and American fitness digital influencers and content analysis to examine videos published by these digital content influencers on Instagram and on YouTube to understand, in detail, what kind of content is shared. Both the interviews and the videos were submitted to a categorial content analysis, more specifically, the thematic analysis, because it works by breaking up the text into units, in categories according to analogical groupings. In this sense, the object of study of this research are the interviewed fitness digital influencers' workout videos on Instagram and YouTube. The research question that is sought to answer is the following: which are the video production strategies used by fitness digital influencers on social media in order to persuade their audience into starting or continuing to work out? Additionally, it is intended to address complementary questions concerning the fitness digital influencers' world that

have arisen: (1) What triggered the fitness digital influencers' interest in fitness? (2) What motivates fitness digital influencers to start sharing content regarding workouts on social media? (3) Which social media platforms do fitness digital influencers use the most to share their content? (4) What are the perceptions of the definition, role, assets and future of fitness digital influencers? (5) What is the relationship between fitness digital influencers and their followers?

In what concerns the structure, this dissertation is divided in two distinct parts: Theoretical framework and Empirical work. The Part I comprises the chapters Digital layers and Social layers, which give a broader context to what is intended to study, through international and national references, and a diverse bibliography. Thus, as the title disclosures, the first chapter highlights the role of the digital in society: how the contemporary communication system is structured; the proliferation of digital media; the distinction between social media and social networking sites; the role of users in content creation; the trendy platforms Instagram and YouTube; the relationship between mobile and new video practices and formats. The second chapter addresses the concepts of fitness and digital influencers, which focus on the social side of the main theme. The Part II includes the chapters Methodology and Data analysis. The methodology section is divided in the sub-chapters Research context and Research design – which contain the research questions, methods, sample descriptions, implementation of the data collection methods and the used validity strategies. The data analysis section is divided between the analysis of the interviews and the video content, and descriptions of both collected data are made.

Part I – Theoretical framework

Chapter 1: Digital layers

1.1. Contemporary communication ecosystem and digital media

There is a time frame in history where the use of digital technology became prevalent and of common use throughout the occidental world, which is called the Digital Age. It began in earnest with the widespread use of the Internet (Beck & Hughes, 2012). With billions of people around the world using it as a means of communication, it is undeniable that the Internet has been playing a major role in the way society works. In fact, Castells (2003) makes an analogy when stating that “the Internet is the fabric of our lives” (7): a link between what the Internet means nowadays to what the electrical network meant during the Industrial Revolution is established, in terms of ability to distribute information throughout the field of human activity (Castells, 2003). Similarly, Castells (2003) proposes to call this new “world of communication” (8) as “Internet Galaxy” (8), similar to what Marshall McLuhan did when he called “Galaxy Gutenberg” (8), in order to explain Gutenberg’s importance in the diffusion of the press. On that account, the Internet stands not only alongside the electricity but with the printing press as one of the greatest innovations of all time (Dewar, 1998; Castells, 2003), due to the fact that it is “a means of communication that allows for the first time the communication of many with many, at a chosen moment, on a global scale” (Castells, 2003: 8).

In fact, Toffler (1981) mentioned that the human race had “undergone two great waves of change, each one largely obliterating earlier cultures or civilizations and replacing them with ways of life inconceivable to those who came before” (11). The concept of waves was how he referred to the different types of societies, which would move at a certain velocity. The author explained that the First Wave of change, “the first turning point in human social development” (Toffler, 1981: 14), referred to the agricultural revolution, and the Second Wave was related to the rise of industrial civilization. While both had taken thousands of years and three hundred years, respectively, today’s history is “more accelerative” (Toffler, 1981: 11). Yet, he predicted a Third Wave, which would, indeed, be completed in a few

decades. To Toffler, much in this emerging civilization would contradict the old traditional industrial civilization and, at the same time, be “highly technological and anti-industrial” (Toffler, 1981: 11). With its own distinctive world outlook, this new civilization would also have its “own ways of dealing with time, space, logic, and causality” (Toffler, 1981: 11). Actually, the author foresaw, among other technological advances, that the computer would be, without a doubt, the key to the “revolutionary advance” (Toffler, 1981: 170). He believed that computers would become a daily-life ubiquity, reshaping the business world, both businesses and the nature of work itself, and even the structure of the family (Toffler, 1981). Besides this, Toffler also predicted that computers and communications could help the creation of communities, with these new technologies strengthening bonds and relationships. “With information becoming more important than ever before” (Toffler, 1981: 352), the new civilization would restructure several sectors and, “above all, reorganize the media of communication” (Toffler, 1981: 352). Overall, “the fusion of Third Wave energy forms, technologies, and information media [would] speed revolutionary changes in the way we work” (Toffler, 1981: 352). Thus, with that increased amount of information exchanged with one another, the concept of “information society” (Toffler, 1981: 167) emerged.

The history of computers is linked to the history of the idea that it is possible to apply a scientific method to human affairs. The production and management of information have assumed a key role in advanced societies, and have led to the emergence of terms such as “information society.” The increasingly central position of information in social, political, and economic evolution has been made possible thanks to the evolution of computers and networks, as well as the contributions of many different social actors. The information society is not a given, but rather a project that continues to grow in new directions (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 21).

Moreover, the Internet became the “technological basis for the organizational form of the Information Age: the network” (Castells, 2003: 7). A network, to Castells (2003), is a “set of interconnected nodes” (7), which is actually an old human practice. However, nowadays, networks grew to become “information networks powered by the Internet” (Castells, 2003: 7). Features such as flexibility and adaptability (Castells, 2003; Castells & Cardoso, 2005) make networks great tools of organization, as they “essential to surviving and thriving in a rapidly changing environment” (Castells, 2003: 7), especially now, due to the introduction of computer-based information and communication technologies, and particularly the Internet (Castells, 2003). Also, “the evolution of the information society is closely related to

the forms of information production and distribution that were established with the spread of computers first, and networks later” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 31), which made it possible for information to be in the central position of the social, political, economic and cultural progress, assuming a key role in advanced societies (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). To Tomaél, Alcará & Chiara (2005), since networks are valuable spaces to share information and knowledge, to be engaged in one is the key element to attain those purposes. Manuel Castells (1996) makes a direct relation of networks with society in the Information Age, claiming that its functioning follows a network logic, which involves all spheres of human activity in a multidimensional interdependence (production, consumption and experience), with the Internet as its material infrastructure (Werthein, 2000; Tomaél, Alcará & Chiara, 2005; Coutinho & Lisbôa, 2011). The network configuration is peculiar to the human being. Besides always presupposing groupings, networks are collective phenomena, which means that their dynamics imply relationships of groups, people, organizations or communities (actors) that enable different types of relationships (work, study, friendship, among others). People delineate and expand their networks depending on their insertion in the social reality (Tomaél, Alcará & Chiara, 2005). Thus, “social networks are one of the strategies for sharing information for information and for knowledge, depending on the relationships between those who integrate them” (Tomaél, Alcará & Chiara, 2005: 93).

The emergence of the Internet became “the lever in the transition to a new form of society – the network society” (Castells, 2003: 8), and a new economy too: the network economy¹ (Castells, 2003; Castells & Cardoso, 2005; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). However, information society and knowledge society cannot be referred as synonyms with network society; it is not the fact that information and knowledge are not central matters to society, but they have always been present in “all historically known societies” (Castells & Cardoso, 2005: 17). Networks are, indeed, what distinguishes this society from the others because the novelty is “microelectronic based, through technological networks that provide new capabilities to an old form of social organization” (Castells & Cardoso, 2005: 17). Therefore, the pillar of the network society are the digital communication networks, which make it

¹ Delfanti & Arvidsson (2019) define the networked economy as the “organization of production processes based on the decentralization and autonomy of production units” (153). According to Castells & Cardoso (2005), that “new and efficient form of organization of production, distribution and management” (20) was triggered by the rise in the productivity growth in the USA and other economies that had embraced the same form of organization.

global since it “reaches countries across the planet and spreads through integrated power in the global networks of capital, goods, services, communication, information, science and technology” (Castells & Cardoso, 2005: 18). Effectively, the network society is defined as

a social structure based on networks operated by communication and information technologies based on microelectronics and on digital networks of computers that generate, process and distribute information based on knowledge accumulated in nodes networks (Castells & Cardoso, 2005: 20).

By letting users communicate among themselves and simultaneously sharing and exchanging information in digital form, networks make good distribution conduits and can be considered “a means of creating a new form of electronic community” (Feldman, 2003: 6). People are “drawn together by the common thread of the network they all use” (Feldman, 2003: 6), which means that the geographic location becomes irrelevant. The fact that networks can be global, allows digital information to become networkable (Feldman, 2003). Accordingly, because it is based on “global networks of capital, goods, services, communication, information, science and technology” (Castells & Cardoso, 2005: 18), the network society is connected to the concept of globalization (Castells & Cardoso, 2005), which is an interaction and integration process among people, companies, and governments worldwide (Guttal, 2007). Nevertheless, in the twentieth century, this network- based structure is a derivation of economy needs, in terms of flexibilization processes and arranging new measures of management and globalization; the search for a society where freedom of expression and communication would become a reality; and advances in information technology and telecommunications, which allowed society to be able to become organized into networks and for these networks to be transposed to the Internet (Castells, 2003).

Though, “in the 1950s and 1960s people began to think of the computer as a tool not only to perform calculations but also to communicate” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 38). Hence, in the 1960s, a computer network called ARPANET, “the ancestor of the Internet” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 38) was created by the US military research agency ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency), with the sole purpose of interconnecting data to other computers, connecting military bases and universities that did research for the government (Castells, 2003).

Arpanet was based on packet-switching technology, which breaks each message into a series of packages that can move through the network independently and are reassembled by the receiver. This architecture is distributed, since there is no central node through which all messages have to pass, and redundant, since information can travel along many different routes (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 39).

Later, in order to make it possible for ARPANET to connect to other computer networks, the concept of “a network of networks” (Castells, 2003: 14) was introduced. Yet, there was a need for standardized communication protocols. So, the TCP/IP protocol was “created to decentralize the control over communications to individual computers or participating nodes and prevent the possibility that someone could control or censor communications” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 39), becoming the standard for digital networks. Also, the protocol was free, which meant that anyone could use it and implement it on any device and for different purposes (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). Though, besides ARPANET, the current format of the Internet is also the result of a basic tradition of computer networking: bulletin board systems (BBS) (Castells, 2003; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019), which were “databases of messages and other information contained in personal computers which could be accessed by individual users via the new modem technologies” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 39). Nonetheless, in 1990, ARPANET was dismantled as a military network but its infrastructure remained. In fact, it became the communication infrastructure of the World Wide Web (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019), and that development allowed Internet to grow “rapidly as a global network of computer networks” (Castells, 2003: 15) and “encompass the whole world” (Castells, 2003: 17). The World Wide Web is an information sharing application (hypertext system) developed by Tim Berners-Lee, that allowed to obtain and add information to and from any computer connected via the Internet, through HTTP, HTML and URI, later called URL (Uniform Resource Locators) (Castells, 2003). The URLs, by being “recognizable addresses that identify content present on a server and allow a computer to request and access it” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 40), made websites independent “from the physical location of their information on a particular computer or server” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 40). Thus, the spread of the World Wide Web in American and European homes allowed the web to begin to represent an expanding industry and evolve continuously (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). That justified the development of the following stages: web 1.0, web 2.0, web 3.0, and web 4.0. The Web 1.0, the first generation of the web, is

considered to be not only the web of information connections but the “read-only web” (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012; Choudhury, 2014). The early web provided limited user interactions or content contributions and only allowed to search and read information (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012). Besides this, the communication followed the one-to-many model, since the messages were produced only by organizations and received by users (Barreto, 2013), where the web masters were the ones responsible for managing and updating the websites’ content (Choudhury, 2014). Yet, even though it was the most common model, that reality was only set in the first few years, as the first blog or weblog was introduced in 1997, which reflected the beginning of the possibility for user interaction or content creation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 60). Accordingly, the blogs were the first tools of public space that allowed users to share their inputs and opinions online (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012). The dream behind the web was, indeed, to create a common information space in which people would communicate by sharing information (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012), and that was only made possible after the burst of the “dot-coms” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 41). The entrance of businesses on the web reflected its turning point due to its commercial dimension, with portals like Amazon or eBay (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019), for instance. The web 2.0, the second generation of the web, is considered to be a web of people connections or participative web (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012) and a “read-write web” (Dougherty, 2004 *apud* Choudhury, 2014), due to its bi-directional collaboration character. Overall, with the principle of “the web as a platform” (O’Reilly, 2007: 1), the distinction between the first stage of the commercial Internet (web 1.0) and the social web emerging from the transformation of the World Wide Web is made. To Musser (2007), the web 2.0 is a “set of social, economic, and technology trends that collectively form the basis for the next generation of the Internet – a more mature, distinct medium characterized by user participation, openness, and network effects” (10), while Horrigan (2007) claims it as the next stage of the information society and proposes that the web 2.0 is the capacity that people have to use a variety of information and communication technology as a means of expressing themselves online and participate in the commons of cyberspace. Therefore, this new expression represents both the network’s technical development and, especially, the fact that it evolved faster, due to the participation of users²

² Due to their importance in the reconfiguration of the web, Axel Bruns (2012) coined the term *producers* to refer to those participative users. Though, the concept will be further explored in the “Creative consumers and content creation” sub-chapter (1.2.1).

worldwide. Among the web 2.0 features, there was the rise of blogging, which is a “personal home page in diary format” (O'Reilly, 2007: 24), and a technology called RSS (Really Simple Syndication) that is considered to be the “the most significant advance in the fundamental architecture of the web” (O'Reilly, 2007: 24):

it may seem like a trivial piece of functionality now, but it was effectively the device that turned weblogs from an ease-of-publishing phenomenon into a conversational mess of overlapping communities. For the first time it became relatively easy to gesture directly at a highly specific post on someone else's site and talk about it. Discussion emerged. Chat emerged. And – as a result – friendships emerged or became more entrenched. The permalink was the first – and most successful – attempt to build bridges between weblogs (Coates, 2003 *apud* O'Reilly, 2007: 25).

Thus, “hyperlinking is the foundation of the web” (O'Reilly, 2007: 22): the fact that users can add new content and other users can discover it, “the web of connections [grew] organically as an output of the collective activity of all web users” (O'Reilly, 2007: 22). That collective intelligence is, in fact, an essential part of the Web 2.0, in which it almost turns into a “kind of global brain” (O'Reilly, 2007: 26). Besides this, other main technologies and services of web 2.0 include wikis, mashups, tags, folksonomy and tag clouds (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012). Moreover, the web 2.0 has created new interactive functionalities and objects that promote new forms of interaction and social practices, boosting social networking (Amaral, 2012). Essentially, the web 2.0 technologies “allow assembling and managing large global crowds with common interests in social interactions” (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012: 2), but they will only be discussed in the following section. The web 3.0 (Markoff, 2006 *apud* Choudhury, 2014), the third generation of the web, is known as the semantic-executing web due to having semantic markup and web services as foundations. It is also a web of documents or data, almost as a global file system or global database, respectively (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012). The explosion of data lead to the emergence of a problem of space (Hendler, 2009) and the semantic web was developed to overcome the problems of the previous one by linking, integrating, and analyzing

data from various data sets to obtain new information stream [to improve] data management, support accessibility of mobile Internet, simulate creativity and innovation, encourage factor of globalization phenomena, enhance customers' satisfaction and help

to organize collaboration in social web (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012: 5).

Accordingly, since the vision was to make the web readable by both humans and machines through a system in which machines could understand and respond to human requests based on their meaning, the relevant information sources being semantically structured was a requirement. In other words, the idea was to “structure data and link them in order to more effective discovery, automation, integration, and reuse across various applications” (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012: 5). According to Hendler (2009), “the base of Web 3.0 applications resides in the Resource Description Framework (RDF) for providing a means to link data from multiple websites or databases” (112). Also, “with the SPARQL query language, a SQL-like standard for querying RDF data, applications can use native graph-based RDF stores and extract RDF data from traditional databases” (Hendler, 2009: 112). In other words, the web 3.0 emerged as a way of describing “further developments beyond interactivity and widespread cocreative engagement” (Cover, 2016: 76) that integrate the digital revolution, and is also used to refer to

new frameworks for thinking about the building of software applications away from broad-purpose programs such as Microsoft Word to customizable applications that are developed for very specific activities – something the small-sized mobile and the development environment of Google for its Android platform has facilitated (Cover, 2016: 76).

The main difference between web 2.0 and web 3.0 is truly that web 2.0 “targets on content creativity of users and producers while web 3.0 targets on linked data sets” (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012: 6). The web 4.0, the fourth generation, is considered to be a symbiotic web (Aghaei, Nematbakhsh & Farsani, 2012; Bauman & Bachmann, 2017 *apud* Almeida, 2017), due to the mutual dependence between individuals and commercial enterprises. The vision behind it is the interaction between humans and machines in symbiosis, where their boundaries are faded (Almeida, 2017). Besides this, the web 4.0 is associated with the concept of “Internet of Things” (Khoo, 2010; Perera, Zaslavsky, Christen & Georgakopoulos, 2014 *apud* Almeida, 2017), and is thought to bring aspects of the web 2.0 and 3.0, in order to become ubiquitous (Davis, 2010 *apud* Almeida, 2017). Overall, the web is moving toward using connective and artificial intelligence to become an intelligent web an always connected world (Cover, 2016). However, for this dissertation purposes, the

most important web stage development is the web 2.0 because of its features, especially the social turning point.

Despite that, and taking into consideration the revolutionary impact of the printing press (in the fifteenth century) and photography (in the nineteenth century) on the development of modern society and culture (Manovich, 2001), the contemporary society witnessed a new media revolution in the 1980s with the proliferation of the personal computer (Costello, Youngblood e Youngblood, 2013), which represented the shift of culture to “computer-mediated forms of production, distribution and communication” (Manovich, 2001: 43). The computer, then, assumed a leading role as the “universal instrument of inspiration, creation, distribution, and consumption, radically transforming old methods and workflows that have defined media production and cultural transmission for centuries” (Costello, Youngblood e Youngblood, 2013: 23). While the introduction of the printing press and the photography only affected media distribution and still images, respectively, the computer media revolution not only affected “all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulating, storage and distribution [but also] all types of media – text, still images, moving images, sound, and spatial constructions” (Manovich, 2001: 43). Therefore, the development of modern media and computers are connected, and the convergence of both of them is the origin of the concept of “new media” (Manovich, 2001), which was used to refer to the emerging information and communication technologies based on digital code (Peters, 2009; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). However, Peters (2009) argued that ‘new’ did not mean ‘digital’, or at least that it could not mean that for long. Also, due to the pace of technological change at the time, he considered that ‘digital’ would become ordinary and then ‘old’. Indeed, it is imperative to acknowledge that all media are new when they have just been introduced³ (Peters, 2009; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). To think about the press, for instance, as a dated technology shows that people take it, indeed, for a granted old media technology, when, “at the time of its introduction it had a revolutionary impact on the transformation of modern societies” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 6). Thus, new media do not replace old media: they can integrate, change (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019) and/ or reinforce them (Silverstone, 1999). To Poster (1999), it all comes down to the fact that

³ According to Silverstone (1999), “novelty cannot be assumed not taken for granted” (12).

the new is ‘just like’ the old in the sense of its relative or historical construction with its own coherence but also different from the old in the sense that it contains different potentials for freedom and domination (12).

Besides this, Silverstone (1999) argued that new media supposedly comprises characteristics such as “digital convergence; many-to-many communication; interactivity; globalization; [and] virtuality” (11). However, even though those are not new at all, except for the specific technical ones, he explained that

face-to-face communication is simultaneous and interactive and does not need a mouse. Globalization is prefigured in both cinematic and televisual culture. And any entry into electronic space has always presupposed and required a physical space as both its beginning and end point. Quantity, certainly, turns into quality in the matter of communication. This is true not just for the Internet but for all media networks. New media technologies, in their supposed novelty, have to be tested not just against the old, but in the context both of the past and present, against the social and the human (Silverstone, 1999: 11).

Novelty, then, is both a function of everyone’s account of who is talking and who is remembering (Peters, 2009), and an important factor in what comes to the “continuing development of communication technologies” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 7). In addition, while new media cannot refer to any particular set of technologies, it “must sustain fascination across time and space divisions, history and social groups” (Peters, 2009: 17). Therefore, modern media can be perceived as emerging communication and information technologies that are “undergoing a historical process of contestation, negotiation and institutionalization” (Peters, 2009: 18) and most of them go through the following periods:

technical invention – during which media are recognized rarely as ‘new’ and usually thought of as ‘old plus’; cultural innovation – during which media develop new social uses; legal regulation – during which the interested parties explicitly contest and negotiate for media power; economic distribution – which continues until media become social mainstream – the point at which media are no longer new. Then, facing a new and improved version of itself, a medium may fade from obviousness to obsolescence, sometimes disappearing entirely from social memory (Peters, 2009: 18).

Though, it is not a rule that every media can be submitted to those stages, or even survive at all. However, at some points in history, the idea of a medium emerges to “express itself in

new form and the next cycle begins anew” (Peters, 2009: 18). Thus, media can be renewable, which means that a medium⁴ does not need be new only once (Peters, 2009). New media, then, affects and involves everyone fully as social, political and economic beings (Silverstone, 1999: 12). Furthermore, Manovich (2001) explained the concept of new media by stating that computing technologies share five principles: numerical representation, which means that all media objects are composed of digital code, as a formal equation or mathematical function; modularity, which can also be referred as “fractal structure of new media” (Manovich, 2001: 51), is used to explain that new media maintains the same modular structure on different scales; automation, in which the first two principles (numerical coding and modular structure of a media object, respectively) allow many operations to be involved in media creation, manipulation and access to be automated (where there is, in part, no human input in the creative process); variability, which means that a new media object can exist in “different, potentially infinite, versions” and not be something that was fixed once; and transcoding, which is related to the fact that the structure of computerized media follows the “established conventions of computer’s organization of data” (Manovich, 2001: 63), such as lists, records and arrays (Manovich, 2001). Despite that, while Manovich (2001) uses the term numerical representations to refer to digital media, in an attempt to avoid the word digital, Delfanti & Arvidsson (2019) use it. However, they both mean the same. Thus, digital media are a “set of technologies and media based on computers and networks (...) that carry information represented by numerical sequences” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019:150) and then transform it into human language, such as

personal computers, mobile phones and smartphones, tablets, digital cameras, video game consoles, telecommunications satellites, credit cards, MP3 players, RFID chips, televisions, servers, browsers, social media services, or self-tracking gadgets (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 9).

Essentially, “part of the experience of digital media lies in the continuous succession of rapid technological cycles that bring new gadgets, new applications, and new services to the market” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 7). Notwithstanding, Manovich (2001) affirms that analog media is converted to new media through a digital representation, which combines

⁴ A medium can be thought of as a “pathway or channel through which ideas, information, and meaning flow as they travel from one place or person to another. Every medium has a native form and structure through which it delivers content” (Costello, Youngblood & Youngblood 2013: 7).

samples. Digital media, then, which comprises “text, still images, visual or audio time data, shapes, 3D spaces” (66), share the same digital code, which is, indeed, “digital in the sense that it is based on the binary distinction between two symbols, 1 and 0” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 9). This allows different media types to be displayed using one machine, such as the computer, for instance (Manovich, 2001). Besides being able to transform analog code into their own binary language, digital media are “convergent, hypertextual, distributed, pervasive, algorithmic, asymmetric, and both ephemeral and permanent” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019:9). In what concerns the different types of content, whether they are written, audio, visual, or others, they converge into a single technical platform (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). Moreover, users can enjoy content in a non-linear way through hypertext⁵, linking webpages in the World Wide Web (Manovich, 2001; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). Also, since “the Internet is composed by thousands of interconnected nodes” (Benkler, 2006 *apud* Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 10), digital media are characterized by a distributed model, which “allow random access” (Manovich, 2001: 66). In addition, users can have a bigger role in the content creation (Benkler, 2006 *apud* Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019), due to “the spread of cheap computers, tablets, and smartphones, along with widespread Internet connectivity and software that foster the production of user-generated content”⁶ (Benkler, 2006 *apud* Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 10). After all, combined with the World Wide Web and the Internet, digital media have revolutionized the 21st century (Dewar 1998). Nowadays, not only do digital media “foster new forms of interaction and enrich the social life of individuals” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 47), but they integrate both online and offline lives, where the difference between them tends to disappear (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019).

1.2. Social Media

The traditional one-to-one communication paradigm and the communicational power holding changed with the emergence of the web 2.0, along with its features and

⁵ Hypertext is text that embodies references to other texts or other forms of content (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019).

⁶ These concepts will be explained throughout this chapter.

characteristics (Barreto, 2013). Parallely, society had been witnessing the emergence of new forms of sociability and, particularly, urban life adapted to the new technological environment, implanted by the combination of new information technologies with the global expansion of telecommunications networks (Werthein 2000, Coutinho e Lisboa 2011). As it was mentioned before, even though society determines and shapes technology (Castells & Cardoso, 2005), technology is necessary for the “diffusion of networks in all aspects of the activity at the base of digital communication networks” (Castells & Cardoso, 2005: 17). Thereby, the networked organization that takes place in several levels (Cardoso, 2006) ended up transforming the area of communication, including the media and its economy, where the new digitalized communication system became more interactive gradually (Feldman, 2003). This led to the emergence of a “new infrastructure for online sociality and creativity” (Dijck, 2013: 4), called social media, which refers to

a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61).

To Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), it is possible to differentiate two key elements of social media: the field of media research, which involves social presence and media richness, and social processes, which implicates self-presentation and self-disclosure. Social presence is viewed as “the acoustic, visual, and physical contact that can be achieved” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61). On the other hand, the social presence theory states that media differ in the degree of that social presence, which is

is influenced by the intimacy (interpersonal vs. mediated) and immediacy (asynchronous vs. synchronous) of the medium, and can be expected to be lower for mediated (e.g., telephone conversation) than interpersonal (e.g., face-to-face discussion) and for asynchronous (e.g., e-mail) than synchronous (e.g., live chat) communications. The higher the social presence, the larger the social influence that the communication partners have on each other’s behavior (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61).

Furthermore, the concept of media richness is closely related to the idea of social presence since the “media richness theory” (Daft & Lengel, 1986 *apud* Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61) is based on the supposition that the resolution of ambiguity and the reduction of uncertainty are the goals of any type of communication. Indeed, some media are more effective in

solving ambiguity and uncertainty than others due to their level of richness, which is “the amount of information they allow to be transmitted in a given time interval” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61). Regarding the social media’s social dimension, the desire to control “the impressions other people form of them” (Goffman, 1959 *apud* Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62) in any type of social interaction characterizes the concept of self-presentation. The goal is not only to influence others to gain rewards, like making a positive impression, but it is “driven by a wish to create an image that is consistent with one’s personal identity” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62).

The key reason why people decide to create a personal webpage is, for example, the wish to present themselves in cyberspace (Schau & Gilly, 2003). Usually, such a presentation is done through self-disclosure; that is, the conscious or unconscious revelation of personal information (e.g., thoughts, feelings, likes, dislikes) that is consistent with the image one would like to give. Self-disclosure is a critical step in the development of close relationships (e.g., during dating) but can also occur between complete strangers; for example, when speaking about personal problems with the person seated next to you on an airplane (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62).

The theater can actually be used to explain this public performance of identity, in which social media “are one of the “stages” from which individuals represent their own identity through a continuous work of construction” (Goffman, 1959 *apud* Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019:54). Overall, people’s life and identity are shaped by the activities mediated by social media services (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019), as they are inextricably linked to an individual’s sense of belonging and, thus, sense of self (O’Brien, 2011). However, what drives many users to these sites in the first place is the “need for connectedness” (Dijck, 2013: 4). In the end, it all comes down to networks. Additionally, the logic of social media is rooted in four grounding principles: “programmability, popularity, connectivity, and datafication” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 2). This logic is explained as a “set of strategies and mechanisms” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5) that helps to understand how social interaction is mediated in the network society through the dynamics of “mass media, social media platforms, and offline institutional processes” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 11). On one hand, the principle of programmability, in light of the mass media logic, refers to the “ability of a central agency to manipulate content in order to define the audience’s watching experience as a continuous flow” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5). On the other hand, in the web environment, the concept undergone a shift “from content and audiences to code and users, and from

programmed flow to programmability” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5), being grounded in both technology and user agency. Thus, the logic of programmability mixes both social media’s principles and mass media’s values, while the technological and social mediation of content is affected by the “two-way traffic between users and programmers” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5). Now, the concept of programmability “pertains largely to computer code, data, algorithms, protocols, interfaces and the platform organizations that are responsible for programming” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5). Indeed, the basis of digitalization, the conversion of analog to digital, is the “numerical representation [that] turns media into computer data thus making it programmable” (Manovich, 2001: 68). In theory, algorithms are nothing more than “sets of coded instructions” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5), however, practically, they “shape all kinds of relational activities, such as liking, favoriting, recommending, sharing and so on” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5) in social media platforms. Based on inferred data, algorithms automatically make suggestions, but it does not mean that “editorial (human) choices” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6) disappear. Contrarily, those are just “processed imperceptibly and automatically” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6). Hence, “the power of algorithms (...) lies in their programmability: programmers steer user experiences, content, and user relations via platforms” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5). Besides this, programmability and human agency are also connected, since users are able to shape “algorithmic mechanisms” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6), whether it is by participating and contributing in the social media universe, or by resisting to coded instructions, challenging protocols or manipulating coded interaction. Therefore, even though central agency can have a substantial control on content, users are also capable of retaining “significant agency in the process of steering programmability” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6), which, “in doing so, platform programmers and users continuously negotiate the terms of social interaction” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6).

Programmability can hence be defined as the ability of a social media platform to trigger and steer users’ creative or communicative contributions, while users, through their interaction with these coded environments, may in turn influence the flow of communication and information activated by such a platform (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 5).

Moreover, regarding the popularity principle, it is “conditioned by both algorithmic and socioeconomic components” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6), even though it can be unpredictable (Lerman & Hogg, 2010). Again, it is possible to establish both a comparison and connection

between the mass media and social media logics. For a long time, the mass media has always had the power to push ““likeable” people to become media personalities” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6) and sometimes achieve “the status of celebrity” (Dijck & Poell, 2013:6), and “in terms of agenda setting” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6) as well, shaping public opinion through “filtering out influential voices” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 6). However, in the social media logic, popularity (of people, things, or ideas) is boosted in each platform with its own mechanisms and measured mostly in quantified terms (Lerman & Hogg, 2010; Dijck & Poell, 2013). The platforms do that in order to enhance its value and their users’ popularity too. The “Like-mechanism” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7), for instance, “claims to promote a social experience but the button simultaneously figures in an automated “like-economy”” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7). Similar to what happens with programmability, popularity also increases in a “two-way traffic” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7) since “algorithms automatically assign differentiated value, but users themselves may also engage in concerted efforts to lift certain people's visibility” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7). In fact, the online popularity’s logic resides, for instance, in “banners for “most viewed” videos on YouTube (...), or follower counts” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7) on Instagram, although each platform has its own “strategies for advancing some topics and prioritizing particular users” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7). These platform metrics “measure and rank people and ideas” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7), which are then “amplified through mass media and in turn reinforced by users through social buttons such as following and liking” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7). Though, what makes popularity differ in light of both logics is social media’s “ability to measure popularity at the same time and by the same means as it tries to influence or manipulate these rankings” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 7). After all, “social media logic complements mass media logic and enhances its dominant norms and tactics, just adding an extra dimension” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8). Furthermore, still in the “syntax of social media logic” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8), there is the element of connectivity. When social media platforms appeared in the early 2000s, their “primary pursuit” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8) was, indeed, connectedness, as it was mentioned earlier. An example of this fact is YouTube, which had the goal of “connecting users to (self-made) content” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8). According to mass media logic, the media’s aim has always been “to connect content to citizens or to link advertisers to consumers” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8), depending on their public or commercial objectives. The audiences would be addressed through the craft of “news, information, and entertainment” (Dijck & Poell,

2013: 8). Likewise, “many social media platforms (...) still promote their networked services as enablers of human connections” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8). Whereas, the authors argue that, if connectedness is considered to be a part of social media logic, connectivity is, thus, the best term to capture this logic’s element.

Connectivity, which originated as a hardware term, refers to the socio-technical affordance of networked platforms to connect content to user activities and advertisers. More precisely, in a connective ecosystem of social media, the “platform apparatus” always mediates users’ activities and defines how connections are taking shape, even if users themselves can exert considerable influence over the contribution of content (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8).

Dijck & Poell (2013) also affirm that connectivity differs from “the notion of “spreadibility” introduced by Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford and Joshua Green” (8), in which social connections between individuals are stated as important, but the social media platforms’ role is deemphasizing. Notwithstanding, connectivity, instead, “equally emphasizes the mutual shaping of users, platforms, advertisers, and, more generally, online performative environments” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8). Despite that, unlike mass media, this element does not have to deal with “geographically or demographically delineated audiences”. In fact, connectivity not only enhances connections between individuals (Dijck & Poell, 2013), but it can be automated, due to “the formation of strategic alliances or communities through users’ initiative, partly forging target audiences through tactics of automated group formation or personalized recommendations” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8).

Connectivity should thus be seen as an advanced strategy of algorithmically connecting users to content, users to users, platforms to users, users to advertisers, and platforms to platforms. But the boundaries between human connections and commercially and technologically steered activities are increasingly obfuscated (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 9).

However, Castells & Cardoso (2005) argue that the change in sociability, supported by the logic of communication networks, lead to the “emergence of individualism as the dominant culture of our societies” (23). Consequently, the concept of “networked individualism” (Castells & Cardoso, 2005; Dijck & Poell, 2013) arised, which presupposes that “people directly connect to other people with whom they are involved in specialized relationships of common interest” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8). Sociability is, thus, built in “self-selective

communication networks, on or off, depending on the needs or dispositions of each individual” (Castells & Cardoso, 2005: 23), and it is the new media, and especially social media platforms, that allows people to “pick and choose others to connect with and communicate on a personal basis. From this perspective, these media allow individuals to create their own customized social networks and communities” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 8).

Finally, programmability, popularity and connectivity are all principles rooted in the condition of datafication. Yet, the combination of the four enables the shaping of social traffic. Similar to social media, television, which is included in mass media logic, was and still is able to “reach mass audiences in real time coupled onto their ability to do audience research” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 9), by drawing “large crowds to watch live images” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 9). In social media logic, platforms have also “developed their own strategies for predicting and repurposing user needs, while also nursing their own equivalent of “real-time-ness”” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 9). This elaboration of techniques for predictive and real-time analytics were only possible due to datafication, which

refers to the ability of networked platforms to render into data many aspects of the world that have never been quantified before: not just demographic or profiling data yielded by customers in (online) surveys, but automatically derived metadata from smart phones such as time stamps and GPS-inferred locations (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 9).

Data, which is the “symbolic rough material out of which, through processes of accumulation, sorting and interpretation, ‘information’ is generated for use by particular actors with particular purposes (Kallinikos, 2009a *apud* Couldry & Hepp, 2017: 123) is, thus, casually seen as “raw” (Dijck & Poell, 2013; Couldry & Hepp, 2017) resources that are channeled online, through invisible and natural mechanisms (Dijck & Poell, 2013). Yet, it is only an oxymoron, as no data is raw (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). In computer-mediated communication, each type of content is treated as data (Dijck & Poell, 2013), and, subsequently, data is materialized within a database (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Social networking sites, for instance, “process large quantities of users’ behavioral data every second” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 10), and, according to Couldry & Hepp (2017), “data-based infrastructures of computer-mediated communications now play a key role in social interaction” (122) since the processing of the volume of collected data is “unmanageable

without automation” (124). Everything is, indeed, datafied, whether it is the act of friending, liking, trending, or others. Also, the ability to “add a real-time data dimension to mass media's notion of liveness” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 10) is a crucial datafication characteristic.

Much of social media data value lies in their real-time “live” appearance: platforms claim they can track instantaneous movements of individual user behavior, aggregate these data, analyze them, and subsequently translate the results into valuable information about individuals, groups, or society at large (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 10).

Subsequently, this datafication principle can also be used to detect representative trends, “predict user taste and insert personalized ads” (Dijck & Poell, 2013: 10). Furthermore, even though there is no systematic way to categorize different social media applications, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) distinguish several types of them, such as collaborative projects; blogs; content communities; social networking sites; virtual game worlds; and virtual social worlds, where the majority of content added is user-generated (Banerjee, *et al.*, 2009). Within collaborative projects, it is possible to differentiate wikis, that are websites that allow users to add, remove and change text-based content, such as Wikipedia; and social bookmarking applications, which enable the group-based collection and rating of Internet links or media content, such as the web service Delicious that allows the storage and sharing of web bookmarks. Accordingly, the idea underlying collaborative projects is that the “joint effort of many actors leads to a better outcome than any actor could achieve individually” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 62). Blogs are “special types of websites that usually display date-stamped entries in reverse chronological order” (OECD, 2007 *apud* Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 63), which are typically text-based and managed by one person only, but allow the possibility of interaction with others through the addition of comments. Content communities include text (BookCrossing), photos (Flickr), videos (YouTube) and PowerPoint presentations (Slideshare), with the goal of sharing media content between users. Social networking sites are applications that enable users to connect, but this topic is going to be deepened in this chapter. Regarding the virtual worlds, it is possible to distinguish two groups of them. Virtual game worlds are “platforms that replicate a three-dimensional environment in which users can appear in the form of personalized avatars and interact with each other as they would in real life (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 64), providing the highest level of social presence and media richness, with “World of Warcraft” as an

example. Though, while virtual game worlds “require their users to behave according to strict rules in the context of a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG)” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 64), in virtual social worlds there are no rules that restrict the variety of possible interactions, “except for basic physical laws such as gravity” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 64). The Second Life application can be an example, where it is allowed for “inhabitants to choose their behavior more freely and essentially live a virtual life similar to their real life” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 64). Nevertheless, for purposes of this study, the focus will be primarily on social networking sites and content communities, since those social media platforms provide the “tools necessary for influential and meaningful” (Hanna, *et al.*, 2011: 266) content creation and sharing.

1.2.1. Creative consumers and content creation

In the Digital Age, not only did a set of big communication challenges emerge as a consequence of the web 2.0, but the networked information environment, the diffusion of the Internet, and the advent of new web technologies triggered the growth of the information and creative production and distribution sectors (Benkler, 2006; Zarrella, 2010; Dijck, 2013; Pavlik & McIntosh, 2013). These circumstances, the emergence of a digital public sphere, contributed for people to easily collaborate in the creation of content, “be it images, words, video or audio” (Mayfield, 2008: 8), since it led to the “multitude of platforms and practices” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 5) that enabled masses to do so on “a scale barely imaginable a few years ago” (Romero, Galuba, Asur & Huberman, 2011: 18).

Among the technological, economic, and organizational transformations of information societies, an important place is occupied by the increased user participation and active collaboration in content production. This evolution is part of the trend toward broadening access to information and using it to democratize productive and political processes, a core element of the information society project (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 71).

The way people consume content has always been driven by technology (Read, 2018b). By being part of people’s lives, technology makes them more informed consumers, empowering them in terms of connecting, sharing, collaborating and creating content in a bidirectional

information flow (Hargittai & Walejko, 2008; Halmann *et al.*, 2009; Walmsley, 2010 *apud* Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). Instead of having more passive roles (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Law *et al.*, 2003 *apud* O'Brien, 2011), consumers start to take on an increasingly active role in co-creating (Horrigan, 2007; Berthon, Pitt, McCarthy, & Kates, 2007 *apud* Hanna, *et al.*, 2011) and spreading content (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). Thus, “consumption has become a collective process” (Jenkins, 2006: 4), which means that an “(inter)active audience” (Dijck, 2012: 136) started to emerge. Thereby, the concepts of consumer and producer began to change (Amaral 2012), originating the term “*producers*” (Bruns, 2012). Producership is commonly used to describe the paradigm shift towards user-led forms of collaborative content creation, which is fundamentally built on the affordances of the technological framework of a networked, participatory environment. These changes in the canonical dynamics of the cultural industry’s production value chain (Bruns, 2012; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019) lead to a consumer professionalization: through the many-to-many communications media, participants started to become both users and producers of information and knowledge. Consequently, there was a hybridization of the roles of user-producer, and vice-versa (Bruns, 2012). Also, with this instantaneous sharing simplified by the rise of a set of online communication tools (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013), circulation, “which is a hybrid system where content spreads as a result of a series of informal transactions between commercial and noncommercial participants” (Usher, 2010), was shaped to the point of a new concept arising:

“Spreadability” refers to the technical resources that make it easier to circulate some kinds of content than others, the economic structures that support or restrict circulation, the attributes of a media text that might appeal to a community’s motivation for sharing material, and the social networks that link people through the exchange of meaningful bytes (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013: 4).

This term acknowledges the importance of social connections among individuals, which are amplified by social media platforms (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). The fact that people are now increasingly “shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content” (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013: 2) within larger communities and networks, and the idea of spreadability focusing on the active agency of the ordinary media user, this “shift from distribution to circulation signals a movement toward a more participatory model of culture” (Jenkins, Ford

& Green, 2013: 2). While the term “participatory culture” (Jenkins, 2006: 3) used to be related with cultural production and social interactions of fan communities in the creation and circulation of new content, it “now refers to a range of different groups deploying media production and distribution to serve their collective interests” (Jenkins, 1992 *apud* Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013: 2). The combination of accessible “digital technologies, user-created content, and shifts in the power relations between media industries and their consumers” (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013: 19), regarding the emergence of social media platforms. Indeed, “a culture of participation via digital media is based on the removal of barriers to the expression of creativity, on willingness to share content, and on the feeling that one’s contribution is valuable to a community” (Jenkins, 2006 *apud* Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 71). Therefore, the “collaboration on such platforms would not be possible without the spread of a culture of participation that has become an integral part of processes of information and knowledge production” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 71). Parallely, through those social interactions with others, convergence is what “occurs within the brains of individual consumers” (Jenkins, 2006: 3). This term, which “manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural, and social changes” (Jenkins, 2006: 3), since the circulation of media content is dependent on consumers’ active participation, is the combination of spreadability and the culture of participation. After all, “spreadable media is media which travels across media platforms at least in part because the people take it in their own hands and share it with their social networks” (Usher, 2010).

Despite that, in a time when “most social media rely almost exclusively on (...) content for their platforms” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 154), the term content usually “refers to units or bundles of symbolic communication, fixed in some material form, and shared in the context of some medium” (Burgess & Woodford, 2015: 1). Dijck (2013) adds that content is an important element to distinguish, even though it is “often overlooked as a constitutive element in social media” (35) since it often manifests along with “technology and user agency” (35). In fact, it only takes for someone to have access to computers and the Internet to participate in social media and contribute with their own writing, art, videos, photography, commentary, among others (Pavlik & McIntosh, 2013). Though, it is a “medium for interaction between people” (Rushkoff, 2000 *apud* Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2013). According to Burgess & Woodford (2015), “while mediated communication has always involved the

creation and sharing of linguistic, visual, or multimedia content” (1), a distinctive feature of digital communication has been “the prominent role played by amateur or “user generated” content as a core feature of its forms and platforms” (1). In this regard, when social media platforms first evolved, between 2000 and 2006, the notion of “user-generated content” (Amaral, 2012: 137) emerged. It is defined as the general practice of producing and publishing media content on the Internet by ordinary users, rather than by paid professionals (Daugherty *et al.*, 2008 *apud* O’Brien, 2011; Amaral, 2012). However, the concept of user-generated content preceded the advent of web 2.0. Yet,

the combination of technological drivers (e.g., increased broadband availability and hardware capacity), economic drivers (e.g., increased availability of tools for the creation of UGC), and social drivers (e.g., rise of a generation of “digital natives” and “screenagers”: younger age groups with substantial technical knowledge and willingness to engage online) make UGC nowadays fundamentally different from what was observed in the early 1980s (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61).

Nonetheless, nowadays, for user-generated content to be considered as such, it needs to be published on a social media or on a publicly accessible website, which excludes the content exchanged in e-mails or instant messages; a certain amount of creative effort must be displayed; and can have been created independently outside of professional routines and practices, and, occasionally, with a commercial market context in mind (Kaplan e Haenlein 2010). In recognition of the extent to which user-generated content, a “key element of the Web 2.0 paradigm” (Burgess & Woodford, 2015: 1), seemed to be driving developments in digital and legacy media alike in 2006, Time Magazine actually proclaimed the person of the year was “You” (Barreto, 2013; Dijck, 2013; Burgess & Woodford, 2015), “making sense of the novelty of ordinary, nonprofessional users creating content” (Burgess & Woodford, 2015:1). In fact, the biggest content drivers are millennials⁷, who contribute with over 70% of all user-generated content (Macdonald, 2019), which is itself 35% more memorable and 50% more trusted than other media (Wright, 2017). Besides this, Burgess & Woodford make a comparison between “the reconfiguration of photography” (2015:1), that went from “a skill practiced by experts to a mass amateur capability” (2015:1) and “the reconfiguration of the tools, systems, and business models for digital media content that have

⁷ Ages 25 and above (Macdonald, 2019).

transformed the roles, identities, and politics of content creation and sharing on the web” (2015:1). Both democratizations actually turned into “a ubiquitous technology of personal, interpersonal, and public communication” (2015:1). Commercial services like YouTube or Instagram serve as good examples to this association, as they would have not survived “without the content produced and posted by its public” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019:71). They both “allow users to publish, tag, and share videos and photos, respectively” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019:73) and their success derives not only from “the use of software for online publishing, but also to the spread of low-cost equipment such as cameras, as well as software for video or photo editing” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 73). Thus, it is clear that interactive digital media platforms are changing the content landscape due to the vast nature and sources of information and connectivity, “in effect creating a 24/7 collaborative world” (Singh, 2005; Walmsley, 2010 *apud* Hanna *et al.*, 2011: 267).

1.2.2. Social networking sites

Over the past several years, social media have emerged to redefine the digital media landscape. To the extent that is possible to distinguish several types of social media, social networking sites are a major one (Dijck, 2013). In fact, as of May 2019, while the total worldwide population was at 7.7 billion, there were 3.499 billion active social media users, and, on average, people had 7.6 social media accounts (Smith, 2019c). Indeed, the importance of social networking sites as digital communication tools lies on the fact that the interactivity that these digital platforms promote allow the creation and maintenance of close relations⁸ (Barreto, 2013), as it will be explained in depth. Fundamentally, social networking sites refer to

web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (boyd & Ellison, 2008: 211).

⁸ An average of 2 hours and 22 minutes are spent daily per person on social networking sites and messaging (Mohsin, 2019), which corresponds to 142 minutes a day (Smith, 2019c).

Triggered by the spread of networked digital information and communication technologies, social networking sites are examples of the network society at work. Their roots can be traced to the 1980s bulletin board systems (BBS), that allowed users to log in, not only to share software and data, but also to send private messages and post to public message boards, yet, through very slow connections. Most of these were local communities due to the fact that long-distance calls that would be required to access BBSs in other parts of the world were extremely expensive (Zarrella, 2010). Between the 80s and 90s, the desktop applications CompuServe, Prodigy and AOL began to rise, whose had more features than BBSs since those systems allowed users to “connect to the Internet and create personal profiles, post events, chat, and send public and private messages” (Zarrella, 2010: 55). Later, as the World Wide Web grew in popularity, social networking moved to web-based applications (Zarrella, 2010). What makes them so unique is that they are “channels through which individuals can interact socially” (Mayfield, 2008: 35). In most social networking sites,

participants are not necessarily “networking” or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network (boyd & Ellison, 2008: 211).

Once users join a social networking site, they are asked to fill out a form with multiple questions (boyd & Ellison, 2008). The profiles are considered to be the “building blocks” (Zarrella, 2010: 57) of social networking sites, even though they differ widely in how much they allow people to customize them (Zarrella, 2010). Thus, a profile that contains information is generated, which typically includes “descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an “about me” section” (boyd & Ellison, 2008: 213), among other that allow users to present themselves to others. The visibility of these profiles differs from one social networking site to another, “according to user discretion” (boyd & Ellison, 2008: 213). Still, the act of two people connecting is the most important action of a social networking site due to the fact that they were created to emphasize strong connections (Zarrella, 2010). Accordingly, after joining a social networking site, users are invited to search for friends or people of interest on the same network (Facebook; LinkedIn). Its terminology depends in each social networking site, since some of them require a bi-directional friendship. For instance, the one-directional ties are sometimes labeled as fans or followers (Instagram;

Twitter), even though many sites call these friends. The truth is that the term friends can be deceptive “because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday vernacular sense” (boyd, 2006a *apud* boyd & Ellison, 2008: 213). The public display of connections is a crucial component social networking sites, although there are exceptions (boyd & Ellison, 2008). It is also possible to leave messages in the friends’ profile such as comments (Facebook), or even private messages (Facebook; Instagram; LinkedIn), similar to webmail (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), which are not universally available. There are also social networking sites that, by default, present the public profile (Friendster); others control what the user can see depending on whether or not he has a paid account (LinkedIn); others that allow users to choose if the profile can be seen by everyone or only by friends (MySpace), and even individuals that are part of the same network can access the profile, unless you deny this request (Facebook) (boyd & Ellison, 2008). In addition to all these features, it is still possible to share photos, videos or audio files (Instagram) (boyd & Ellison, 2008; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Additionally, there are “mobile-specific social networking sites but some web-based (...) also support limited mobile interactions” (boyd & Ellison, 2008: 214). Moreover, even though many social networking sites “target people from specific geographical regions or linguistic groups” (boyd & Ellison, 2008: 214), they all cross geo-spatial and social boundaries (Banerjee, *et al.*, 2009). Some of them are even “designed with specific ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, political, or other identity-driven categories in mind” (boyd & Ellison, 2008: 214). In the end, it all comes down to the fact that social networking sites are fed with content produced by its users and, for that reason, they rely on them (Barreto, 2013).

Later, the authors Ellison & boyd (2013) revisited the concept of social networking sites, which evolved throughout time, while their foundational activities remained fundamentally the same. They stated that, at that time, “the three defining features of a social network site (that) appeared to be the profile, the connections lists, and the functional ability to traverse those connections” (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 1), have shifted. It was both the social and technical aspect of these sites that changed dramatically since then, with the fade in significance of some features that were once the distinguishing points, and the reproduction of features “by other genres of social media” (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 2). Since the previous

definition, while useful, did not accurately describe the landscape of social networking sites today, the authors introduce the following:

A social network site is a networked communication platform in which participants 1) have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users, and/or system-level data; 2) can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others; and 3) can consume, produce, and/or interact with streams of user-generated content provided by their connections on the site (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 8).

Ellison & boyd (2013) affirm that the “new definition positions social network sites first and foremost as a communication platform, while also highlighting the importance of sharing content, typically consumed through a stream” (8), which is a “primary driver of SNS use” (8). Profiles are no longer simply

“self-descriptive, static text, but rather a dynamic combination of content provided by the user (such as status updates), activity reports (such as groups they’ve joined), content provided by others (such as virtual gifts that are displayed on the profile or “tagged” photographs uploaded by others), and/or system-provided content (such as a subset of one’s Friend network and activities on third-party sites.)” (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 5).

The connections between people that are displayed in the profiles “delineate who can access what content, and serve as a filter through which viewers can browse profiles and discover friends in common” (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 5). Actually, the former ‘Friends lists’, which were predominantly reciprocal evolved to the point where, even though people are able to discern the “kinds of relationships in their circle” (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 6), “users report about 25–30 percent of their total Facebook Friends are “actual” friends” (Ellison *et al.*, 2011a; Ellison *et al.*, 2011b *apud* Ellison & boyd, 2013: 6), for instance. Social networking sites have become more “media-centric and less profile-centric” (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 9), which means that “each person’s stream is populated (and updated) with content provided by those whom they’ve chosen to friend or follow” (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 9). Accordingly, to sum up,

the significance of profiles in the user experience has declined, but profiles as spaces for self-presentation and content distribution are still the anchor of social network sites. Friends lists are still the core organizing principle, but have gone from being a way of knitting together profiles to be coming the “social graph” backbone. Most

importantly, the implicit role of communication and information sharing has become the driving motivator for participation (Ellison & boyd, 2013: 10).

In order to move forward with my literature review, I propose to address in the next sections two platforms that have enhanced the rise of the social media's phenomena: Instagram and YouTube. Whether it is because of their features, practices allowed, the amount of people currently making use them, or the fact that they are among the most popular social media platforms, both Instagram and YouTube have not only made their way into everyone's lives, but are continuously shaping the current media ecosystem, as it will be further explained.

1.3. **Instagram**

Nowadays, countless pictures and videos of everything imaginable are promptly shared over the Internet. Through the eyes of social media users, it seems like "every moment counts" (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012: 6). Instagram began as a local search-and-discovery app called Burbn. It worked through geolocation, allowing people to find places, book plans, earn points with visits, capture photos, among others. However, given the fact that it started to become too similar to the social networking site Foursquare, besides being packed with too many unnecessary features, the founders decided to focus only on the photo-sharing infrastructure (Sengupta, Perloth & Wortham, 2012). Consequently, it resulted in the app's renaming to Instagram, which is a portmanteau of the words instant (camera) and telegram (Sengupta, Perloth & Wortham, 2012; Holmes 2015). Thus, Instagram, which was officially released in October 6th 2010, started as a free photo-sharing social networking iPhone app that enables users to take pictures, edit them with a selection of digital filters and share them with their followers (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012; Miah & Burd, 2013; Clement, 2019c). The posts on the users' timeline are only made visible to others depending on their privacy preferences, in which only approved followers are allowed to see. However, by default, there is no privacy settings on. Nevertheless, Instagram's network dynamics are asymmetric, which means that "user A follows B, B need not follow A back" (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014: 596). The published content is mostly viewed in the "core page showing a "stream" of the latest posts from all their friends, listed in reverse chronological

order” (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014: 596). Besides this, people can, view, like and comment the posts shared by their friends (Instagram, 2019c; Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014), and keep track of all that activity in the updates’ page (Hu, Manikonda & Kambhampati, 2014). Later, in 2013, videos were added, as well as thirteen filters built specifically to embellish them. Users were allowed to share 15-second clips to their Instagram feed and, throughout the time, 60-second videos came along (Read, 2018b). In the first 24 hours after the introduction of the new feature, more than 5 million videos were shared (Osman, 2019; Smith, 2019a), which is more than 208,000 videos per hour (Osman, 2019). The uploaded photos or videos to Instagram’s network can also be shared in real time on social networking sites (Hochman & Schwartz, 2012; Miah & Burd, 2013; Instagram, 2019c) such as “Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr and Foursquare (...) for greater visibility and engagement” (Miah & Burd, 2013:1). Apart from the ease of capturing photos with a mobile device, giving it a more professional and stylized look, Instagram’s popularity is increased by its “instant shareability” (Miah & Burd, 2013: 1) and due to its acquisition by Facebook in 2012 (Csathy 2016). Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung (2015) go beyond and add that Instagram came up with a vision for visual content with “image first, second text” as rule. For the authors, the app is an all-in-one package since it can open, edit and load photos instantly and with high quality.

The service was initially released as an iOS application but later was made available for other mobile systems such as Android (2012) and Windows phone (2013), as well as online (Clement, 2019c; Instagram, 2019c). As of June 2018, Instagram reported more than one billion monthly active users worldwide (Instagram, 2018b; Clement, 2019c), the daily active users stood at 500 million (Clement, 2019c) and an average of 95 million photos and videos were shared per day (Read, 2018a). Effectively, people are increasingly accessing the Internet via mobile device⁹ (Handley, 2019). The mobile experience is, indeed, what sets the difference (Miah & Burd, 2013), because since mobile devices are now a constant and mundane presence in everyday life (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Sey & Qiu, 2007) in this “digital “Internet of everything”” (Cover, 2016: ix), there is an ease in accessing and using platforms like Instagram more often. In fact, there are differences between Instagram’s

⁹ In fact, while it is estimated that around 2 billion people currently only use their smartphones to access the Internet, it is expected that, in 2025, the number will grow to approximately 3.7 billion people, which corresponds to nearly three quarters of the world (Handley, 2019).

mobile app and web version: the last one is exclusively for registered users in the app and does not provide the same number of features. Indeed, unlike most social networking sites, Instagram was thought and created to be used exclusively in mobile, with a location-based services' logic, which emerged at the end of the last millennium (Oragui, 2018). Location-based services' apps began in the late 1990s and were the result of the convergence of three different technologies: mobile Internet access, global positioning, and advanced graphic interfaces (Oragui, 2018). Nowadays, every communication device has a location-based service incorporated, which means that "virtually everything is located and locatable" (Gordon & Silva, 2011: 2). With the popularization of smartphones (Oragui, 2018), the space relevance for non-spatial experiences¹⁰ can be visible through the use of Instagram as "interaction can take place in multiple, simultaneous scales" (Gordon & Silva, 2011: 3). This place removal associated with mobile devices made connectivity ubiquitous (Silva 2013).

Newer smartphones, however, are capable of locating things much more precisely due to a combination of GPS, triangulation of waves and wi-fi. Furthermore, they are capable of running applications ("apps") that translate this location-awareness into useful services, such as navigation, locating the nearest gas station, locating a nearby friend, and calling a cab in the vicinity. As a result, location-based services and location-based social networks became an intrinsic component of mobile communication (Silva, 2013: 117).

Besides this, "the increasing popularity of mobile phone connectivity had the potential to shrink geographical distances by connecting remote users while on the move" (Silva, 2013: 116). Thus, geography is now at the center of the "organizational logic of the web" (Gordon & Silva, 2011: 3) and, the subsequent space renegotiation coins the term "networked locality (or net locality)" (Gordon & Silva, 2011: 2), which "implies a ubiquity of networked information" (Gordon & Silva, 2011: 2) and depends on the technological tools that make it possible.

Digital expressions of the spatial self are becoming increasingly embedded in our spatial practices and the social production of space. As millions of people use these tools to annotate their physical locations and instantly share them with various social

¹⁰ Regarding the changing conception of space, Castells (2005) proposed the concept of "space of flows [to explain the electronic link between] separate locations in an interactive network that connects activities and people in distinct geographical contexts" (233). In other words, it simply means that "simultaneity of social interaction can be achieved without territorial contiguity (Castells, 2008:447).

groups such as “friends” and “followers,” the spatial self is becoming a prominent part of our daily life. However, the spatial self is not merely a byproduct of mobile social media use, nor is it simply an aggregation of geocoded data. The spatial self refers to intentional socio-cultural practices of self-presentation that result in dynamic, curated, sometimes idealized performances of who a user is, based on where they go (Schwartz & Halegoua, 2014: 5).

Then, what was considered “Instagram-worthy” (Wagner, 2018) was so high that its users were starting to get intimidated and feeling the pressure of sharing amazing photos, which meant that people weren’t posting to Instagram every day either. According to CEO Kevin Systrom, even though users want to share more, they would rather not publish it in their gallery wall. Consequently, a low-pressure alternative to Instagram’s high-pressure photo feed was presented (Wagner, 2018). In August 2016, Instagram introduced what would become the most popular feature of the social networking site: Instagram Stories. Competing with Snapchat's Stories (Clement, 2019c), the feature’s implementation unquestionably boosted the users’ growth, attracting more than 400 million daily users (Wagner, 2018; Osman, 2019) and engagement (Dhillon, 2018; Instagram, 2019a) since it allows sharing day-to-day moments in a 24-hour ephemeral slideshow format (Read, 2018b). Besides changing the way people share and consume things online, Instagram took advantage of the fact that hundreds of millions of people had already created an enjoyable feed, following friends, family, local businesses, celebrities and influencers, making Stories benefit immensely from its built-in network (Wagner, 2018). With no limit for the publication of content, Instagram Stories allow people to share photos or videos in a spontaneous, realistic, fun and creative way, since drawing, text and animation tools are available (Wagner, 2018; Instagram, 2019a) as well as instantly reposting them. In fact, according to Schneider (2018), “40% of content on Instagram Stories is video”. However, contrary to regular posts, there are no likes or public comments. Besides this, the Instagram Stories only became available to mobile web in 2017. To view the followers’ Stories, all it takes is to tap on their profile photo with a colorful ring around it in the bar at the top of the feed, which is the first thing everyone sees when they open Instagram, whenever there is something new to see. Practically, users can control playback and view Stories at their own pace because it is possible to tap to go back and forward, swipe to jump to another person’s story or even skip it entirely. Most Stories content is shot casually and quickly through the Instagram app’s camera, meaning that time-consuming video editing isn’t required. Even though they can

feel raw and unpolished, because they're full-screen in the mobile-native vertical format, they're instantly engaging, especially on larger smartphones (Wagner, 2018). Also, the increase of Instagram Stories' popularity is connected to the "Swipe Up" feature, which allows users with more than 10,000 followers to post an external link (Osman, 2019).

Unlike regular Instagram Stories that vanish after twenty-four hours (Chacon, 2019), Instagram provided a feature called Highlights (Bojkov, 2019), which are groups of Stories that users can create as folder sections as a pin in their profile. This means that once a story is posted, one can save it in a Highlight that will be displayed on the Instagram profile, or choose the option to archive the Stories and, in the future, create highlights from the saved Stories in the archive (Bojkov, 2019). In fact, they are like "curated collections of Instagram Stories that followers can tap into and watch any time they like" (Chacon, 2019). Nowadays, Stories are so popular and mainstream that Instagram has moved to professionalize the format (Wagner, 2018).

In 2018, IGTV, Instagram's version of "TV", was launched (Wagner, 2018). Built for how people actually use their phones, is an app for watching long-form, full screen, vertical videos that, unlike on Instagram, are not limited to one minute. Instead, each video can be up to an hour long. However, while there's a stand-alone IGTV app, users were also able to watch from within the Instagram app so the entire community of one billion could use it from the very start (Instagram, 2018b). According to Kevin Systrom, the premise of IGTV is that anyone can be a creator (Instagram, 2018b). With a channel directly associated to their profile (Instagram, 2018b), content creators can upload their own IGTV videos in the app or on the web (Instagram, 2018b), similar to YouTube (Read, 2018b). yet, unlike YouTube, IGTV is ad-free (Dhillon 2018). In fact, even though IGTV was not an immediate success in the way Stories were (Wagner, 2018), its introduction is considered to be the next-generation television and entertainment product in everyone's pockets, as traditional television viewership declines among teenagers and young adults (Read, 2018b). Moreover, it is seen as a new chapter of video on Instagram (Instagram, 2018b) and on mobile video itself (Instagram, 2018a). As soon as people turn on the television, a video will start playing – and so it happens in the app (Instagram, 2018b). According to Mark Zuckerberg, the IGTV's product approach is not only focused on helping people connect with creators but

also to facilitate the viewing of the content they want to see from people they want to follow and build a community around those creators (Wagner, 2018). Besides this, users can swipe up to discover more and switch between “For You,” “Following,” “Popular” and “Continue Watching”, instead of only watching content from people they already follow on Instagram and others they might like based on their interests (Instagram, 2018b). Apart from that, vertical videos have changed the way in which many people create and consume content, capturing a large percentage of the video-watching market in the process. To the Instagram founders, the television formatted videos on a horizontal screen are outdated, which lead to the natural progression of going from traditional 16:9 videos to full-screen vertical videos, as Stories, according to Facebook (Read, 2018b). However, in 2019, landscape videos were introduced. while vertical videos can work great for creators who want to be up-close and personal with their audience, landscape also has its strengths, especially when it comes to formats like dance and sports which are high motion and often feature a handful of people in frame (Instagram, 2019b).

In a time when Instagram is growing in users, it reached one billion monthly active users in 2018 (Smith, 2019a; Statista, 2019), up from 800 million in September 2017 (Statista, 2019), becoming the fastest growing social network at 5% growth per quarter, significantly ahead of Facebook with 3.14% (Osman, 2019); usage, with more than 60% of users logging in and using the app (Smith, 2019a; Statista, 2019), spending, on average, between 24 and 32 minutes scrolling or posting content (Osman, 2019), and publishing more than 40 billion photos, each day (Osman, 2019; Smith, 2019a); and prominence, with about 3.5 billion likes every day (Smith, 2019a), users are going to Instagram to follow people they know and influencers, while, on YouTube, people largely use it to see influencers or content channels. Indeed, Instagram, besides being predominantly associated with millennials, which is a group that comprises 32% of Instagram users, is not only mostly used by people with ages between 18 and 34 years old (Osman, 2019) but it is, indeed, the most used and focused on social networking sites by 92% of influencers (Osman, 2019).

1.4. YouTube

YouTube started as a “a disruptive “Web 2.0” start-up” (Burgess & Green, 2018: vi) but evolved to the point of being among the “most successful and long-lasting content creation platforms” (Burgess & Woodford, 2015: 1) in the digital media environment today. YouTube’s website, which was founded and launched in June 2005 by former PayPal employees Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim (Burgess & Green, 2018), and bought by Google in November 2006 for US\$1.65 billion (Mayfield, 2008; Burgess & Woodford, 2015), was, in the earliest stages, a sharing self-made amateur videos’ platform, an ““alternative” to watching television” (Dijck, 2013: 110). In fact, throughout time, it grew to be more of a content produced itself, rather than a “neutral web service” (Burgess & Green, 2018: 8) that “merely accommodated the distribution and storage of content produced by their users” (Dijck, 2013: 112). Actually, “YouTube’s initial [slogan] was “Your Digital Video Repository,” denoting the platform’s original function as a container or an archive for home videos” (Gehl, 2009 *apud* Dijck, 2013: 112), contrasting with the “Broadcast Yourself” (Dijck, 2013: 112) motto, which changed after Google purchased YouTube. The new slogan reflects the site’s ability to globally distribute homemade personal content and the platform’s aptitude to redistribute professional content previously broadcasted on television (Dijck, 2013). The service aims to simplify the task for those who want to share video on the web, among existing social media, as a “community-formation function” (Burgess & Green, 2018: 4). Essentially, it was, and still is, a “platform for everyday expression (and) creativity” (Burgess & Green, 2018: 12). Regarding the website’s interface, back in 2007, it was very simple for people to

upload, publish, and view streaming videos without much technical knowledge, using standard web browsers and modest Internet speeds. YouTube set no limits on the number of videos users could upload, offered basic social functions like the opportunity to connect with other user as ‘friends’, and provided links and HTML code that enabled videos to be easily embedded into other websites (Burgess & Green, 2018: 2).

Also, the platform used to display what the authors described as “a visual representation of an apparently transparent ‘database’” (Burgess & Green, 2018: 62), which were truly ordered lists of what was considered popular among the YouTube audience. In terms of

visual design, the thumbnails of videos were dominant, instead of user profiles, groups, or conversations (Burgess & Green, 2018). Throughout the time, the site progressively evolved: as it was redesigned, it allowed the shift to mobile apps. According to the authors, the home page's navigation is now condensed to endless scrolling (Burgess & Green, 2018). This way, not only are users more orientated towards content, but the act of "logging in helps to deliver personalized content and to curate playlists" (Burgess & Green, 2018: 62). Indeed, "platforms like YouTube have become progressively less like websites and more like apps (...), even on the web" (Burgess & Green, 2018: 104). According to Smith (2019b), 70% of YouTube views actually come from mobile devices, with an average of 1 billion mobile video views per day. One of the reasons for its mass popularization is, undoubtedly, its usability (Burgess & Green, 2018). Besides this, YouTube not only allows contents to be viewed, shared, embedded and discussed (Burgess & Green, 2013 *apud* Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017), but the website follows two major user functions: content creation and content seeking (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017). While in content creation "users make and share their own video content with specific individuals and groups or with the general public" (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017: 364), which is the user-generated content concept mentioned earlier, content seeking is an "intuitive user-action that allows users to browse and search for specific videos for individual gratification" (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017: 364). Thus, YouTube's emphasis lies in the "usable functionality, technical features, and content as a means of social connection" (Burgess & Green, 2018: 4). The site's embedded tools ease the social interaction (Rotman & Preece, 2010) by providing a community that can connect users to videos, users to users, and videos to videos (Burgess & Green, 2018). In fact, according to Rotman & Preece (2010), the foundations of online communities are, indeed, people, interaction, shared purpose and culture, and the concept can be defined as

a group (or various subgroups) of people, brought together by a shared interest, using a virtual platform, to interact and create user-generated content that is accessible to all community members, while cultivating communal culture and adhering to specific norms (Rotman & Preece, 2010: 320).

Even though content is not decided by the owners of YouTube, it is still mediated: it is "heavily steered by search engines and ranking algorithms" (Dijck, 2013: 112).

YouTube's interface design and its underlying algorithms select and filter content, guiding users in finding and watching certain videos out of the millions of uploads, for instance through buttons for "most popular" videos. The site controls video traffic not by means of programming schedules but by means of an information management system that steers user navigation and selects content to promote. Even though users feel they have control over which content to watch, their choices are heavily directed by referral systems, search functions, and ranking mechanisms (Dijck, 2013: 112).

Despite that, in order for someone to watch a video, it is not mandatory to register. However, if users want to broadcast a video, they are compelled to do so and create an account; a channel (Mayfield, 2008; Zarrella, 2010; Burgess & Green, 2018), which can be customized in several ways (Zarrella, 2010). The chosen username, which cannot be changed, is the first and most important step because it will determine the user's "YouTube URL" (Zarrella, 2010: 85). Moreover, there is the possibility to hide or rearrange specific parts of the profile, as well as customize it with specific foregrounds and background colors, and fonts (Zarrella, 2010). Besides this, registered users can decide if their videos are published in a public or private way, in which only invited friends can watch them. Users can also write comments and rate the videos in question (Rotman & Preece 2010). Also, the process of uploading sharing videos, whether on YouTube itself or through other social media, is easy, even for users with less technological knowledge, and may contribute to the site's popularity (Rotman & Preece, 2010).

In a preliminary state, when YouTube was driven by purely social motivations, more creative and empowered content consumers emerged. Also, in 2007, the website's explosive growth (Dijck, 2013) caused a rupture between producers, the professionals of audiovisual content, and the audience, the amateurs (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009; Dijck, 2013; Burgess & Green, 2018). This breach, where the gradual degree of the uploaders' professionalism made it difficult to distinguish professional and amateur content¹¹ (Jakobsson 2010 *apud* Dijck, 2013), was triggered by the emergence of more accessible technology and software to record videos, which also lead to a "democratization of the audiovisual space" (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009: 126). Consequently, as a result of the constant and dynamic

¹¹ User-generated videos on YouTube actually get 10 times more views than content created and uploaded by brands (Wright, 2017).

interconnected instances of empowered social collaboration participation by so many different people (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009; Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017), YouTube stands as an example of “co-creative” culture” (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009: 90). Also,

the development of multifunctional digital components and devices has encouraged users to engage with YouTube via different hardware platforms and interfaces including television, personal computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones” (Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017: 364).

Though, the potential for YouTube’s communication and interaction is enabled by the interface itself and its features, such as the like and dislike buttons, and the comments. To Dijck (2013), likability is “the result of an algorithmic computation derived from instant clicks on the Like button” (13). Yet, there is no assessment of the videos’ quality built into these buttons; “online quantification indiscriminately accumulates acclamation and applause, and, by implication, deprecation and disapproval” (Dijck, 2013: 13), similar to what happens with the comments, even though these are not quantifiable. In other words, what actually happens is that the evaluation is based on instant emotions, whether they are positive or negative. In what concerns popularity, it is considered to be both quantifiable and manipulable in terms of rankings. The proof that the like and dislike buttons have the popularity mechanism built into themselves is that the more friends or followers someone can have (which may enable their influence), the more clicks they receive, and, successively, the more their authority or reputation increases. Consequently, potential trends can emerge. Though, “friending, following, and trending are not the same functions, but they derive from the same popularity principle underpinning the online economy of social media” (Dijck, 2013: 13). Nevertheless, the amateur users, which are now known as YouTubers, were considered as the generation of the most active ‘*producers*’ (Dijck, 2013; Blanco, 2015) that gain fame exactly through their video content (Blanco, 2015). Certainly,

the “shift from the idea of the website as a personal storage facility for video content (by-line ‘Your Digital Video Repository’) to a platform for public self-expression (now notorious exhortation ‘Broadcast Yourself’) opened it up to the more revolutionary rhetoric about user-led content creation and innovation (Burgess & Green, 2018: 7).

“YouTubers” (Burgess & Green, 2018: 94) is what content creators call themselves, as part of the YouTube community. One of the Youtuber’s roles is the performance of “inside knowledge in an entertaining way while also making interventions into the culture of the YouTube community” (Burgess & Green, 2018: 107), which is, in fact, a mode of communication. The fact that these people also have the necessary technical skills, they offer the possibility for collective learning in a platform where creative communities can form and interact (Burgess & Green, 2018). The authors Burgess & Green (2018) refer to YouTubers as “cultural agents” (102) who demonstrate YouTube as a permeable system, since they are embedded in social and cultural networks, which allow them to move their content and their identities. Yet, the platform has never functioned as a closed system, as it has been providing tools to insert content on other websites (Burgess & Green, 2018). For instance, in order to help drive viewership, there is a feature that connects both YouTube and Instagram, which is the ‘See More’ link. People can tap at the bottom of some Instagram Stories, or just swipe up to view the link right inside the app, which can be a YouTube video (Instagram, 2016; Peterson, 2019). However, even though everyone can tap or swipe to see the content, only verified accounts or profiles with more than 10.000 followers are able to add links (Instagram, 2016). Sites like YouTube have made their way into everyday life, becoming ubiquitous (Dijk, 2013). Today, YouTube has 400 hours of video uploaded every minute (Smith, 2019b), which puts it as a mainstream and default source of commercial online video content (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009; Smith, 2019b). Also, with over 1.9 billion logged in monthly users, the platform is considered to be the world’s second largest search engine and the most visited site after Google (Smith, 2019b). In what concerns the popularity of YouTube content, as of December 2018, the most popular video content category worldwide was “People and blogs” by 32%, based on share of available videos, comparing to the categories “Gaming” (31%), “Other” (17%), “Entertainment” (10%), “Film and animation” (6%) and “Music” (5%) (Clement, 2019b). In addition, while the average length of YouTube videos, also as of December 2018, sorted by category was at 11.7 minutes, the average length of the “People and blogs” category was at 8.4 minutes per video (Clement, 2019a).

1.5. Mobile devices and online video

With the number of Internet users worldwide passing the four billion barrier, which is more than half of the world's population (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019), mobile technologies such as smartphones and tablets have transformed the Internet experience. Besides further integrating digital media into the flow of everyday life (O'Hara, Mitchell & Vorbau, 2007; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019), they promote an ““always on” lifestyle, that is, continuously connected” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 48). However, the mobile has a different impact than digital media in general and is strategically important nowadays due to the fact that it is the fastest diffusing communication technology and the most rapidly adopted in history¹² (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu & Sey, 2007; (Bruck, Motiwalla & Foerster, 2012). However, this growth has not occurred uniformly around the world (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu & Sey, 2007; Castells, 2008), with vast disparities in terms of standardization by population between rich and developing countries (Castells, 2008). Effectively, the mobile is a social revolution itself in terms of democratization of access, since it is the fundamental pillar for Internet access in developing countries. Still,

mobile communication has become the prevalent mode of communication in our world, and that its digital divide, at least in terms of access, is much less pronounced than the one we find with the Internet. Because of fast diffusion of broadband, mobile telephony is becoming the support of multimodal communication (including audio, video, and text) and it is widely distributing Internet through wireless networks, thus freeing the Internet from some of the limitations of the fixed-lines infrastructural layout (Castells, 2008: 447).

Thus, this explains why mobile devices, which are an “eminently global technology” (Castells, Fernandez-Ardevol, Sey & Qiu, 2007; Ling & Donner, 2009 *apud* Goggin, 2013: 86), reside at the center of the “vast transformation in communication and media summed up by the rubric of ‘convergence’, or ‘digital technology’ or ‘new media’” (Goggin, 2006: 2). Nokia was actually the earliest and foremost to discover the mobile phones’ potential as a consumer good and to design one, at the request of the Finnish army (Castells, 2008).

¹² This growth derives from the evolution of better designs like the iPhone case, “more computational power, data storage capacity and network speed and reliability” (Bruck, Motiwalla & Foerster, 2012: 1).

Though, many transformations in the field of mobile communication have occurred since then, as it moved towards the smartphone era (Hjorth, Burgess & Richardson, 2012). Mobile devices have evolved to become “hybrid devices that articulate with other new technologies such as digital cameras, portable digital assistants, or location technologies” (Goggin, 2006: 2): known today as smartphones¹³. Though, it was through third-generation (3G) and fourth-generation (4G) networks¹⁴ that personal video communications started to become ubiquitous (Goggin, 2006). Nowadays, the communication process is the “heart of human experience” (Castells, 2008: 448) and it is “built around wireless communication circuits that amplify the human mind” (Castells, 2008: 448). This means that “we now have a wireless skin overlaid on the practices of our lives, so that we are in ourselves and in our networks at the same time” (Castells, 2008: 448), which is considered as the “real coming of age of the network society” (Castells, 2008: 448). Indeed, because it enables the spread of information and communication, the advent of satellite-based wireless communication has become an indispensable tool for economic and social development (Castells, 2008):

from an advanced technology reserved to advanced countries in order to reduce their connectivity gap. From a mobile substitute for voice communication, it has evolved into a multimodal, multimedia, portable system of communication, which is gradually absorbing most of the functions of the fixed-line phone to the point where there are more wireless phones in the world than fixed-line phones and the gap between the two technologies continues to increase (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu, & Sey, 2007: 245).

Moreover, with the 2010s being marked by the shift to mobile media (Burgess & Woodford, 2015), mobile devices evolved from a being used for professional communication catering for an upscale market [to] become mass-consumer products” (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu, & Sey, 2007: 245) deeply integrated in the communicative practices of people everywhere in the world (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu, & Sey, 2007). The drivers of this diffusion of wireless technology in developed countries are, in fact, young people (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu & Sey, 2007). In an attempt of expressing their demands

¹³ A smartphone is a mobile phone that performs many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, Internet access and an operating system capable of running downloaded applications.

¹⁴ 4 Generations of wireless mobile telecommunications technology. Those networks (3G and 4G) are what makes a connection between phones and the Internet possible.

for “safe autonomy¹⁵”, ubiquitous connectivity, and self-constructed networks of shared social practice” (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu, & Sey, 2007: 245), the youth culture seized mobile phones to fulfill those needs, since they provide spatial, temporal, social, and cultural autonomy. Thus, because “the first users are the shapers of the technology itself” (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu & Sey, 2007: 245), the professional culture and the youth culture “have framed the forms and content of wireless communication” (Castells, Fernández-Ardèvol, Qiu & Sey, 2007: 245). Furthermore, the rise of the smartphones¹⁶ and the proliferation of applications through the Apple’s App Store and Android Market¹⁷ provided an expansion of opportunities for expression and agency through mobile (Goggin & Hjorth 2014 *apud* Berry & Schleser, 2014).

These prospects of the proliferation of mobile filmmaking and photography, and the embedding of these creative practices in networked and social media illustrates developments that not only have an impact on smartphones but also the contemporary media ecology as a whole. Mobile media making introduces new practices, formats, and forms signifying avenues for creative innovation (Berry & Schleser, 2014: 3).

Thus, the pervasiveness of smartphones with built-in cameras (Schenk & Long, 2012; Berry & Schleser, 2014) “changed the mode of capture, consumption, and curation for a significant proportion of digital media content” (Burgess & Woodford, 2015: 4). Since those embedded cameras are taken everywhere along with mobile phones, they allow new kinds of imaging practices to arise, alluring to the replacement of the ‘Kodak moment’ for the ‘mobile moment’. The camera phone has, in fact, been promoting a new understanding of the ways that images can be used to communicate and express ourselves within our everyday lives. Also, not only do they challenge many of the established conventions, but they reconstruct the experience of seeing (Berry & Schleser, 2014). Thus, this means that users no longer depend on desktop or laptop computers in order to access, edit or produce content¹⁸, whereas, they are able to do so through mobile apps, with tools and techniques that were once available only to professionals (Goggin, 2006; Burgess & Woodford, 2015; Berry &

¹⁵ It is a pattern provided by the possibility to reach anyone at any time anywhere, which characterizes the daily life of millions of people around the world (Castells, 2008).

¹⁶ Along with the proliferation of the iPhone and Android smartphone (Cover, 2016).

¹⁷ Known as Google Play now.

¹⁸ Teen and Millennial age groups now spend almost as much time on mobile devices as they do on a computer, laptop or tablet (Clement, 2019d).

Schleser, 2014). While smartphones have become the dominant channel to watch online video (Koltun & Kelly, 2019), online video consumption is now one of the most popular Internet activities worldwide (Clement, 2018), shaped by the mobile landscape.

Nevertheless, the video was the last media language to thrive in the digital context, more specifically, to become part of the user-generated practices. That only became possible due to the advent of the web 2.0, known as the social turn of the web, and the software change, especially the increase in bandwidth. Among those transformations, it was the process of digitalization that set the conditions for the convergence of several software-based artifacts and technologies (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2008) into daily life ubiquities. Though, while video is described as a “recording of moving images and sound, especially as a digital file¹⁹, “digital video is a collection of electronic signals recorded by a camera onto a piece of media: videotape, optical disk, hard drive, or flash memory” (Schenk & Long, 2012: 36). In what concerns its components, digital video technology consists of “tracks, frames, scan lines, pixels, and audio samples” (Schenk & Long, 2012: 36). A track corresponds to the video and audio captured by a camera, which are converted into electronic data. Then, the video track consists of frames, which are a series of still images, that appear to be moving when played in sequence. Each individual video frame consists of several horizontal lines that are scanned from the top across the screen. A pixel²⁰ is the smallest component of a video image. Audio tracks is the place where the audio is located on a video track (Schenk & Long, 2012).

Furthermore, video content creation usually starts with an idea for a long-form production, which is “followed by the elaboration of the script and a shooting plan” (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2011: 286). Then, in what concerns the postproduction of the material shot, the project is crafted, which means that the video is edited, and transitions and special effects, such as animations, titles or compositions, are added²¹. After that content is approved, other crafting processes include “final edits for titles, sound production, adjustments to audio and video levels, and the addition of subtitling and extra recordings” (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2011: 287). Moreover, “stories and narratives integrate [the] audience into the process by

¹⁹ Cambridge Dictionary, “Video”, Retrieved 2019 from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/video>

²⁰ Short for ‘picture element’ (Schenk & Long, 2012).

²¹ It is typically done in digital editing programs and specialized postproduction workstations (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2011).

changing [their] state from passive to active, and they give [their] thoughts the chance to be evaluated in others' minds" (Simmons, 2012 *apud* Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017: 48). On one hand, since a narrative combines both content and discourse, it "creates dynamic patterns between past and future, and integrates mental images which it pictures imaginary situations by uniting possible outcomes" (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017: 48). That causes motivation and, subsequently, creates a basis for behavior change and the formation of new attitudes. On the other hand, stories are a "shared knowledge and a source of information that is used collectively" (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017: 48), which builds a potential sharing network between individuals (Sanders, 2010 *apud* Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017). Thus, reaching their audience is crucial to storytellers. Not only do they draw the audience's attention, but they simplify and materialize complicated ideas²². Instagram itself has become a platform for "an active community of visual storytellers" (Miah & Burd, 2013:2) because of its roots and functionalities, such as allowing stories to be created with visual messages (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017). Despite that, along with the rise of the digital age, the term "attention economy" emerged to describe the supply and demand of a person's attention. While attention is a resource and part of the human experience, people are no longer able to have it in abundance, due to the amount of content that has become immediately available. We now live in a "world so full of information that its fullness necessarily needs to balance out against something else" (Forstmann, 2019), and that is attention. Thus, mechanisms to reveal people's interests and intentions were created, such as the like and dislike buttons, which are ways of showing that people are paying attention, and that has become the new currency. Consequently, this allows personal attention to be manipulated (Forstmann, 2019). One way of doing that, regarding the topic of video formats, was the introduction of short online videos, or micro-videos, which have emerged as a new form of user-generated content on social media platforms such as Vine and Instagram. Those new forms of content are characterized by the purpose of allowing users to create 6-second videos, in the Vine platform, in particular (Redi, O'Hare, Schifanella, Trevisiol & Jaimes, 2014). In the Instagram's case, it only allows the publishing of videos from 3 seconds and up to one minute on regular posts, for instance, which are designed for less extensive consumption and time, related to the attention economy concept. Overall, these new forms of video practices contrast with the contents of longer formats, as it is traditional on television. In fact,

²² Similar to what opinion leaders and digital influencers do.

video-on-demand differs from TV scheduling and prime-time nomenclatures, since relevant content is defined in the Internet media ecosystem through personalized and continuously shifting user experiences and audience data profiling (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2011: 289).

Also, the diffusion of the Internet revolutionized the media industry so much to the point of content creation forms no longer following just one linear source, such as the television, with its sheer distribution. Now, those forms are “the outcome of several interactive digital sources operating upon a complex and constantly changing technical landscape” (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2011: 281). In fact, video production and distribution have become incredibly interrelated and dependable one upon another (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2011). Essentially, it was the introduction of the QuickTime²³ in 1992, that enabled online video to become a “mainstream possibility” (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009: 268). Later, the widespread use of YouTube, which eases the access to online video, not only changed society (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009: 55), but it “challenged the traditional modes of video production through the increasing involvement of users in generating content” (Kallinikos & Mariátegui, 2008: 2), as a means of self-expression and social connectedness needs (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017). Though, for amateur user-generated practices to be possible, social changes had to occur, since video used to be exclusive to the professional community because the equipment was expensive and the editing software was very difficult to use. Now, in a time when video sharing has become a growing social practice (Rotman & Preece, 2010), not only does YouTube have the world’s dominant website for online video sharing status (Mayfield, 2008; Snickars & Vonderau, 2009; Rotman & Preece, 2010; Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017), but it has become its synonymous as well (Snickars & Vonderau, 2009). YouTube itself, whose main communication vehicle is video (Burgess & Green, 2009 *apud* Dijck, 2013; Paolillo, 2008; Lange, 2007b *apud* Burgess & Green, 2018), was one of the “first online communities to foster a culture where broadcast video content was not only consumed, but also created by the users” (Seyfi & Soydaş, 2017: 59). By being a user-generated content (UGC) platform, it gave an unprecedented boost to the “online production and distribution of multimodal content” (Dijck, 2013: 35) such as videos, photos, text, and music. Indeed, to Burgess & Green (2018), much like the web 2.0 logics, the idea of “video

²³ It is a “software architecture for displaying and manipulating time-based data (such as video and audio) on a computer” (Schenk & Long, 2012: 465). Nowadays, QuickTime is the “most popular architecture for online video” (Schenk & Long, 2012: 424).

content shot on mobile phones would be a catalyst to online connections” (2). Consequently, the conventional practices of video production were molded and the cultural categories of video and broadcasting were redefined due to the advent of social media infrastructure (Dijck, 2013).

Chapter 2: Social layers

2.1. Fitness

Even though being physically fit hasn't been considered essential for human survival since prehistory, humans have continued to pursue physical exercise to promote good health for thousands of years.

Some historians have traced its origins as far back as 3000 BCE, citing the practices of yoga in India and martial arts, or wushu, in China among the first exercise regimens used intentionally to prevent disease and maintain physical wellness. The birthplaces of the western world, including ancient Mediterranean civilizations like Rome and Greece, also understood and celebrated the benefits of physical fitness over 2,000 years ago and have been credited with developing some of the world's first weight training equipment²⁴.

However, while most of the workforce was formerly employed in agriculture, the industrialization period in the United States of America and Europe was especially marked by a more sedentary way of life, due to the emergence of more bureaucratic and mental labor occupations, which stood as challenges for the physical culture (Maguire, 2008; Becic, 2016). Besides this, the migration of demographics from rural to urban environments, increasingly crowding into cities (Black, 2013) also contributed to the “shift in the dominant view of exercise [as] opportunities arose for cross-cultural exchange” (Maguire, 2008: 26). Germans, for instance, that mass immigrated to the United States of America in the mid-1800s, introduced gymnastics as a “prominent part in community life and social reform” (Maguire, 2008: 26) since it was part of their social and political traditions. The Turnverein, a “‘gymnastic’ society” (Maguire, 2008: 27) helped cities boosting the construction of public gymnasiums, aiding “the institutionalization of a positive link between athletic exercise and personal and social development” (Maguire, 2008: 27). Apart from that, while the Scottish brought their own set of games (Caledonian or Highland), which were “often run as commercial spectator sports” (Maguire, 2008: 27), the British contributed with the Rational Recreation, a self-improvement ideal, and Muscular Christianity movements, which “sought

²⁴ Gold's Gym, “Earning Our Place in The History of Fitness”, Retrieved 2019, from <https://franchising.goldsgym.com/2018/04/26/earning-our-place-in-the-history-of-fitness/>

to bring together the mental, physical and spiritual development of men” (Maguire, 2008:28). Taken from Britain to North America in 1851, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) was one of these moral reform movement’s institutions (Buck, 1999; Maguire, 2008). It aimed to substitute the rough rural life by endorsing athletics in order to develop a moral character by teaching values, such as manliness and individualism, which were feared to be lacking because of the changes to everyday life wrought by urbanization, industrialization and immigration (Maguire, 2008). Overall, not only was the promotion of exercise an urgent topic, but the participation in athletics between 1820 and 1860 was seen as a “way to build a healthy body, good moral values, and a strong character” (Maguire, 2008: 26). Along with the appearance of the YMCAs in America that helped to emphasize that importance of exercise (Buck, 1999) and the movement in gymnastics and general fitness throughout the western world in the early 20th century, the modern fitness movement, as it is known today, also “evolved from the military competition between the nations during WWII and the cold war” (Becic, 2016). Even though the wars caused many gyms to close, it actually increased the interest in weight training and exercise (Buck, 1999). As it became clear that men were not physically fit to serve their countries in military service during the draft (Becic, 2016), the “military began employing former Muscle Beach²⁵ regulars to train new recruits”. Consequently, soldiers continued training with weights for recreation and exercise throughout the war and, after leaving the service, they needed places to work out, and that is how temporarily closed gyms were in demand again after the war (Buck, 1999).

Notwithstanding, it is imperative to distinguish a few of the groundbreaking American figures in the fitness world: the visionaries Vic Tanny, Jack LaLanne and Joe Gold (Balik, 2004 *apud* Luther, 2004). These men fully embody one of the United States culture’s motifs: the concept of the “resourceful individual²⁶” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 201), which refers to the demand of a successful individual to be driven and future focused. On one hand, Vic Tanny, the pioneer in the creation of the health club, opened the first postwar gym in

²⁵ It refers to a Santa Monica location (a small strip of shoreline), which was the hub of the physical fitness boom in the United States during the 20th century, which started with predominantly gymnastics activities on the south side of the Santa Monica Pier.

²⁶ This concept “resonates strongly with the by-your-bootstrap mythos that has historically played a central role in American culture in general and American business culture in particular, as well as with the neoliberal economic philosophy that has become so prominent for many Western governments” (Lair *et al.*, 2005 *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 11).

1941, in Santa Monica, California, and inspired others to build gyms. In addition, he was considered a visionary due to the fact that, at a time when clubs specialized in particular sports, his facilities were among the first multi-purpose gyms. Besides offering many options, such as weight lifting, swimming, bowling, and ice skating, his clubs were a venue to socialize and make friends (Buck, 1999). On the other hand, after joining the Berkeley YMCA, where he discovered weights, Jack LaLanne duplicated them and began devising exercises:

he developed the prototypes of exercise equipment presently available in contemporary health spas. His inventions, to name a few include the weight selector pulley, calf, leg extension and squat machines which he never patented. His squat machine concept is now the Smith Machine patented by (...) Rudy Smith²⁷.

Besides that, LaLanne, which had also opened one of the first modern health clubs in 1936 in Oakland, California, by 1982, there were 200 around the United States (Buck, 1999). Thus, he is regarded as the man who “kickstarted the American fitness revolution and is often called the ‘godfather of fitness²⁸’”, as well as the greatest modern proponent of women’s health and interest in physical fitness. Through hosting his television show, The Jack LaLanne Show (1956-1970), which was considered to be the American television’s longest running exercise program, he managed to reach millions by formulating a common sense approach to physical fitness: “his show taught his viewers, predominantly homemakers, how to exercise using household equipment: chairs, towels and broomsticks” (Buck, 1999). Later, in 1965, there were only “three gyms for the 7 million people in the Los Angeles area and real strength training was nearly unknown²⁹”. Thus, it was Joe Gold, a Merchant Marine veteran and fitness pioneer, that also shaped the history of the fitness industry by opening a gym known as Gold’s Gym near Venice, California’s famed Muscle Beach, inspired by his friend Vic Tanny³⁰. It featured weight lifting homemade equipment that he actually built himself, which “were superior to anything on the market and were

²⁷ JackLaLanne, “The Godfather of Fitness”, Retrieved 2019, from <http://jacklalanne.com>

²⁸ JackLaLanne, “The Godfather of Fitness”, Retrieved 2019, from <http://jacklalanne.com>

²⁹ Gold’s Gym, “From Fitness Pioneer to Industry Leader”, Retrieved 2019, from <https://franchising.goldsgym.com/brand-strength/our-evolution/>

³⁰ Even though Vic Tanny inspired Joe Gold to build a gym, their types of gyms were different. Tanny’s health clubs were completely finished in gold plating, which made them sleeker, sportier and flashier, whereas, Gold’s gym was rugged, solid and sturdy, since it was devoted to bodybuilding (Buck, 1999).

precursors to the equipment now standard in any good weight room³¹”, and offered a place where bodybuilders could shape their physique. A few years later, fitness legends such as Arnold Schwarzenegger and “his “gang” led the bodybuilding movement into the 1970s with Gold’s Gym at the forefront³²”. Thus, these subsequent daily life transformations set the stage for the development of the fitness boom that took place in the 1970s and 1980s (Maguire, 2008). The fitness boom was, indeed, shaped by the convergence of a popular cultural interest in self-improvement and a political economic emphasis on individual responsibility (Maguire, 2008; Millington, 2016), called neoliberalism (Kenton, 2019). Regarding the self- improvement and self-actualization matters that surfaced over the twentieth century, instead of a social improvement, they were ways of promoting individual fitness.

While the connection between individual fitness and national strength continues to resurface at times of war, the social construction of fitness has largely shifted from fears about protecting the country and its way of life, to fears about warding off disease and keeping up in an appearance- driven culture (Maguire, 2008: 2).

On the other hand, the neoliberalism philosophy mentioned earlier referred to an economy where there was little amount of government interference in the individuals and society’s economic issues, with the belief that it provided the greatest possibility for economic growth, which would lead to human progress. Besides this, the purpose was to transfer economy control from the public to the private sector (Kenton, 2019). Parallely, in the 1970s, a new popular health consciousness used to describe neoliberal perspectives on health, medicine and exercise pervaded culture (Crawford, 1980; Millington, 2016). The ideological dimension of the fitness boom was designated as “Healthism” (Crawford, 1980: 368) and defined as

the preoccupation with personal health as a primary-often the primary-focus for the definition and achievement of well-being; a goal which is to be attained primarily through the modification of life styles (Crawford, 1980: 368).

³¹ Gold’s Gym, “From Fitness Pioneer to Industry Leader”, Retrieved 2019, from <https://franchising.goldsgym.com/brand-strength/our-evolution/>

³² Gold’s Gym, “From Fitness Pioneer to Industry Leader”, Retrieved 2019, from <https://franchising.goldsgym.com/brand-strength/our-evolution/>

According to Crawford (1980), healthism viewed health as a fundamental, private and individual matter for which individuals were personally accountable as responsible, moral agents, and that the solutions to behavioral health problems were “seen to lie within the realm of individual choice” (368). Though, the social degradation caused by the crowded and insanitary living conditions, which lead to outbreaks of epidemics such as cholera, along with the spread of tuberculosis in the 1830s, were the reasons for the need of this social and health reform (Maguire, 2008). Besides this, since most times diagnoses were uncertain and, thus, medical treatment was severe, people were extremely receptive to “methods of prevention and self-help therapy” (Green, 1986 *apud* Maguire, 2008: 28). Consequently, “social and health reformers, physicians, and the popular press promoted physical activity for the individual as the panacea for the social ills of the day” (Maguire, 2008: 27). To sum up, the popular interest in physical fitness is explained:

The issue of health has been brought to the fore by changes in the nature of disease, the economic rationalization of health care, and calls for demedicalization as well as greater personal responsibility for one’s health; while changes in patterns of employment and the types of personal qualities demanded for service work, as well as a broader shift towards a culture of self-promotion and improvement, have done the same for the issue of appearance. Health and appearance have become central both to the social order, and to an individual’s occupational success and social status (Maguire, 2008: 21).

The fitness boom was also characterized by the 1970s “running explosion” (Crawford, 1980), and the “proliferation of fitness ‘tools’ such as athletic shoes and exercise “apparel from companies like Nike and Reebok; equipment such as treadmills for use in the home; and fitness media like the popular exercise videos featuring the actress Jane Fonda” (Millington, 2016: 2). It also had several material dimensions: fitness participants themselves, which were once-sedentary individuals; fitness-themed media, such as magazines and newspapers, in which people could search for the latest tips and techniques of the fitness lifestyle; fitness apparel, which aimed to fuel fitness participation; and more sophisticated exercise equipment, which was intended to be used both in a domestic or gym setting. Besides this, there was a significant growth of health clubs and fitness gyms, which combined old forms of exercise, such as calisthenics classes and weightlifting, as these were spaces that allowed to engage with fitness professionals: aerobics instructors and personal trainers (Maguire, 2008; Millington, 2016). Thus, for all these reasons, fitness is considered

to be both a field of negotiations between the “consumer culture and the service economy” (Maguire, 2008:3), and a “commercial enterprise” (Maguire, 2008: 5) due to its mass marketization.

The very notion of ‘fitness’ has changed over the physical culture’s history (Maguire, 2008; Black, 2013). From a sports medicine perspective, the concept of ‘fitness’ is “combination of strength, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance” (Maguire, 2008: 1). However, this definition is rather complex than clear-cut due to the fact that it depends on each individuals’ objectives and criteria. Besides this, bodies and selves’ aspects such as “character, attractiveness, happiness, strength, morality, intelligence, courage, honesty” (Maguire, 2008: 2) have been problematized and valorized over time, which reflected a change in the settings of society, forcing fitness definitions to evolve. Fitness also comprises

feelings of capacity, notions of control (over ourselves; over how others see us), and understandings of societal norms and expectations, be they articulated in advertising and the media in terms of beauty and youth, or in medical and government documents in terms of risk and health (Maguire, 2008: 2).

Additionally, combined with the neoliberal ideals, the new economic order which redefined the shift toward individual responsibility as physical prowess over health and wellness, in which a lot of leisure time is spent on the work of self-improvement (Maguire, 2008), the revalorization of the body and the subsequent growing appreciation of physical beauty contributed to the emergence of fitness in the contemporary society (Ferreira, 2017). Even though “physical beauty setting parameters vary according to the social historical moment” (Ferreira, 2017: 1148), the pressure to be beautiful is a constant. In the 1980s, the fit body not only became a status symbol but also an “emblem of an individual’s purchasing power, moral health, self-control, and personal discipline” (King, 2006 *apud* Millington, 2016: 2) – the discipline of the body as symbol of success. Nowadays, beauty is associated with a “lean, in shape, young body” (Ferreira, 2017: 1148), which has come to be seen as a social obligation. This matter is viewed as a “central aspect of influence in human relations, which is reflected in the current context of social media” (Ferreira, 2017: 1148). In this context, “fitness profiles engage millions of followers on social media worldwide, with tips about fitness” (Ferreira, 2017: 1148). In fact, the fitness boom has unleashed the term “fitspiration” (also known as “fitspo”), which is used to describe the fitness inspiration that has emerged

on social media, allowing users to view content anywhere, such as images, videos, advertisements, or quotes, related essentially to physical exercise, with the goal of attaining an ideal body, and communicate with like-minded people (Carrotte, Prichard & Lim, 2017; Finley, 2017; Raggatt, *et al.*, 2018). Certainly, this ease of sharing passions, interests, values and relevant information through social interactions, which can have a powerful effect on the fitness industry in terms of inspiring and motivating people to exercise (Arnold, 2018), is only possible due to social media (Ferreira, 2017; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019; Johnston & Davis, 2019). Also, the growth of smartphone usage and mobile video viewing makes interactions more personal and private, allowing a fitness audience to establish (Finley 2017). In a time when health consciousness is a predominant social life feature, the fitspiration trend, in which more and more people are sharing fitness content online, is perceived to shape health and fitness beliefs and, consequently, have an immediate inspirational effect on others (Arnold, 2018), similar to a snowball effect (Wagner, 2018). Nowadays, not only are social networking sites being considered as highly accessible and popular growing sources of fitness education, they are proving to have the potential to strongly influence individuals' thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Arnold, 2018; Johnston & Davis, 2019). To Tomaél, Alcará, & Chiara (2005), when information and knowledge are transformed by the actions of individuals, they “become valued competences, generating social and economic benefits that stimulate development” (93) and “fundamental resources for the formation and maintenance of social networks” (93). Thus, the role played by social media in health and fitness is represented by inspiration, motivation, information and education (Arnold, 2018). Even though these types of profiles are dedicated to post and share photos and videos of healthy foods and products, such as protein, shakes or detox teas, as well as disseminating results to get the body in good shape, the focus of this study will be solely workout videos. According to Tiggemann & Zaccardo (2015), the premise that social media fitspiration content exists across different social media platforms and if Instagram is the most commonly used for this kind of purpose, due to its highly visual nature (Carrotte, Prichard & Lim, 2017), is not unanimous. Yet, according to Smith (2019), Instagram was listed by 32% of USA teens as their most important social networking site. In fact,

The fitness industry now exceeds over \$84 billion in value worldwide – with over \$25 billion in America alone – and with

modern research and an ever-growing list of exercise options, the upward trend in growth won't likely end soon³³.

2.2. Digital influencers

The democratization and ubiquity of social media have been allowing “the ease of creating, publishing and sharing content with those with similar interests [which] has had a definite effect on the nature of message dissemination” (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014: 593). Thus, the combination of the rise of connectivity allowed the emergence of the concept of the digital influencer. The authors Delfanti & Arvidsson (2019) explain it as “actors that are able to mobilize a large number of other individuals due to the size of the network to which they are connected, as well as their social and communication skills” (151). Lincoln (2016) believes that a digital influencer is “an online persona with the power to stimulate the mindset and affect the decisions of others through real or perceived authority, knowledge, position, distribution or relationships”. This type of people, who may have started out as prosumers, has the ability to have an effect in terms of motivating members of particular communities gathered around similar interests, by sharing information and tips, which can act as triggers for action (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014; Arnold, 2018). Similarly, Lincoln (2016) states that there are three common traits among influencers: the fact that they have an effective echo effect, which means that they can “mobilize opinions and create reactions”; a high exposition in terms of having “large communities and audiences focused on specific issues in which they have expertise”; and a “major share of voice”, meaning that they participate in conversations about their focus area with more frequency and authority, and, thus, they are the most revered participants in these conversations. Additionally, Lincoln (2016) considers that influence is “essentially applied science working in the marketplace”, rather than being just a product of luck, timing or sheer charisma. In fact, mastering the following six universal principles of influence are the key tools to not only become a successful influencer, but a skilled persuader too: reciprocity; commitment and consistency; social proof; authority; liking; and scarcity (Cialdini, 2009). The combination of each of these principles highlights the ways in which someone can interact with others more effectively, aiming to influence them. Moreover,

³³ Gold's Gym, “Earning Our Place in The History of Fitness”, Retrieved 2019, from <https://franchising.goldsgym.com/2018/04/26/earning-our-place-in-the-history-of-fitness/>

being an influencer is considered to be an ongoing process, as they must constantly be evolving, growing and contributing, so that others can go to for advice. The fact that they have insight and actionable information, and produce more and more valuable content, influencers may increase their power to catalyze actions in others and create and maintain a genuine and loyal following, which is the result of adding real value to their industries (Lincoln, 2016). In the end, what matters is, indeed, the delivery of a regular, consistent, unique and valuable message (Romero, Galuba, Asur & Huberman, 2011; Lincoln, 2016). Besides this, it is possible to identify different categories of digital influencers. On one hand, Lincoln (2016) distinguishes three types of influencers: “micro influencer”, which is someone who influences a small circle of people; “subject matter expert influencer”, which is “someone who has significant influence over a specific subject and the industries that deal with that subject”; and “macro influencer”, which is someone who has significant influence “reaching a variety of subjects, industries and demographics”. On the other hand, Hatton (2018) explains her view in terms of differences between the notions of micro and macro influencers. Micro influencers are considered to be regular people with a following rate under 100,000 (Hatton, 2018; Anderson, 2019). They work in a similar way to word-of-mouth, which generates a kind of authenticity that, subsequently, attracts engagement and awareness. Whereas, macro influencers are famous (often celebrities), known by the many, a household name, who may have thousands or millions of followers (Hatton, 2018). Overall, there are influencers everywhere in different forms, circles and with varied levels of authority. Yet, as human beings, everyone can influence each other (Lincoln, 2016). Nonetheless, it is imperative to understand how everything eventually lead to the concept of the digital influencer.

Thus, Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet (1944), while conducting a study focused on the process of decision-making during a Presidential election campaign, introduced the two-step flow of communication hypothesis. Instead of finding empirical support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions, they realized that informal and personal relationships were potentially more influential in the voting behavior, probably due to greater coverage and certain psychological advantages over the formal media, such as the radio or newspapers. Accordingly, with the aim of studying the impact of social influence in the media, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) developed the two-step flow theory of mass

communication. In light of that theory, Katz & Lazarsfeld (1955) identified a group of individuals who played “a special role in the network of personal relationships” (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944: 14) by exerting more influence than others: the “opinion leaders” (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944: 14). According to that theory, the opinion leaders receive information and, then, mediate its transmission, affecting directly the public through their own interpretations (Uzunoglu e Kip 2014). However, “the formal media were more effective as sources of influence than personal relationships” (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944: 14). Thus, since “opinion leaders act as intermediaries in the web of social interactions” (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014: 593) and are considered to be the main focus of the two-step flow of communication, Rogers (2003) views opinion leadership as “the degree to which an individual is able to influence other individuals’ attitudes or overt behavior informally in a desired way with relative frequency” (27). The fact that opinion leadership is done through interpersonal communication (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1944), it can be considered as both source and guide (McQuail & Windahl, 1993 *apud* Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014), which is thought to be “more powerful in affecting attitudes of individuals compared to mass media” (Weimann, 1994 *apud* Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014: 593). Also, regarding the dimensions of opinion leaders, there are three common characteristics and behaviors:

personification of certain values (who one is); competence (what one knows); and strategic social location (whom one knows)”. The first dimension relates to the traits and values of opinion leaders. Competence expresses opinion leaders’ level of expertise on certain subjects, and finally, social location concerns the size of their network, and particularly, the number who value their leadership in the particular area of expertise (Katz, 1957 *apud* Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014: 593).

Nowadays, with the current technological developments, the Internet can be used as a strategic communication tool for digital influencers, since their role is similar to the offline opinion leaders in the two-step flow theory of mass communication. Influencers can “mediate messages and affect communities in the digital environment, where messages can be disseminated rapidly and easily with a potentially viral effect” (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014: 592), much like the opinion leaders did through word-of-mouth. It all comes down to the fact that they can have an effect on the communities they speak to. Besides this, this process is now easier because people no longer need to rely solely on face-to-face communication. Instead, in the contemporary online wired environment, personal interaction is generated in

the digital environment, which implies that a common geographical space is not required. In fact,

until the last decade, the majority of related studies deemed face-to-face contact and personal interaction dominated by physical proximity as a necessity for the presence of opinion leadership. The convenience, wide availability, and minimal cost of social media have simplified the process of contact (Uzunoglu & Kip, 2014: 593).

In today's society, according to Delfanti & Arvidsson (2019), social relationships are mediated by digital technologies, which are essential to the construction of individual identities. Also, "the emergence of networked publics and the importance of digital media as tools for building social relations are intimately linked to changes in the way personal reputation is formed" (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 63). The fact that digital media amplify and transform the way in which reputation is created, it determines "the intensity of the interactions an individual can establish with a particular public, and therefore the importance of that public for her overall identity" (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 65). Though, identity must be communicated and performed, rather than just simply lived. Individuals call it as "personal brand" (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 65). The idea of personal branding or self-branding was first popularized in the 1990s and is viewed as "the construction of a communicable version of one's identity that emphasizes qualities compatible with a particular strategic purpose" (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 151). It involves "individuals developing a distinctive public image for commercial gain and/or cultural capital" (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 191), which becomes "a rational and reflective process aimed at being communicated, in particular on social media" (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 65). Though, the focus is the idea that it is beneficial to have a public identity that is charismatic and responsive to the needs and interests of target audiences (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). To the authors, the notion of self-branding has become extremely popular and is related to fame, and consequently practices of micro-celebrity; the culture of neoliberal individualism; and the commercial viability of some social media influencers due to its inspirational and seemingly replicable character (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Yet, self-branding is practiced by both those "for whom a strong public image (is) expected" (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 192) but also by ordinary people who see an opportunity with the "marketing possibilities of contemporary convergent technologies" (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017:

192). Instagram and YouTube are among the platforms that allow the creation, acceleration and accentuation of a strong online identity because they enable “users to address audiences without the constrictive scaffolding of traditional media” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 200) by providing the freedom and agency needed to do that. Also, due to the shift towards media convergence and the fact that content can flow across multiple channels, the relationship between the brand and the audience is, hence, strengthened (Granitz & Forman, 2015 *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). Besides this, since social media gathers a lot of attention and narrative, it significantly increases the potential for fame and celebrity through the practice of self-branding. The narratives can attract audiences for a multitude of reasons, whether it is because they can be inspirational, relatable, and/or instructive. Though, what matters is that they find a following and stand out in the attention economy (Khamis, Ang, & Welling, 2017). In order to reach an effective branding and produce a targeted and strategic public persona, people must bear in mind the hallmarks of “consistency, distinctiveness and value” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 196), which are then consolidated by audiences/followers/fans through likes, shares and comments. This specific kind of social media driven identity construction is called “self-mediation” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 196), in which “what users post, share and like effectively creates a highly curated and often abridged snapshot of how they want to be seen” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 196), even though it already precedes the Internet era. For instance, diaries came before blogs, photo albums preceded Instagram, and hardcopy scrapbooks already existed before Facebook (Good, 2012 *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017). However, since personal archives on social media are

designed for public consumption rather than personal reflection, the branded self not only plays to postmodern notions of identity, with an emphasis on construction, style and fluidity; it also and necessarily claims distinctiveness” (Berger, 2011 *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 196).

Other distinctive feature of social media is that it “accommodates ordinary users with distinctive stories and/or content, and furnishes them with highly visible metrics of popularity” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 196). Those types of users can find online fame due to the possibility of their following turning into a fan base. Thus, that pursuit of visibility, attention and recognition involves practices of “micro-celebrity” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 196). This concept was firstly coined by Theresa M. Senft in 2001 and means “the

concerted and strategic cultivation of an audience through social media with a view to attaining celebrity status” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 196). Yet, throughout the years, both the concept and its practices became a pervasive cultural phenomenon. Micro-celebrity “implies that all individuals have an audience that they can strategically maintain through ongoing communication and interaction” (Marwick & boyd, 2010, *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 197), however, that relationship with the audience seems to be more ‘real’ than the conventional one between mainstream media stars and fans. In fact, “the bigger the audience, the stronger the brand” (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 197), as the success is measured by the number of likes, shares, followers and comments.

This phenomenon is fueled by at least three interrelated forces: the extent to which social media proceeds without the gamut of gatekeepers that otherwise determines and limits content flows; audiences increasingly predisposed to ‘ordinary’ people in the spotlight; and a cultural economy that contours almost everything (including conceptions of the self) along consumerist lines (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 197).

Furthermore, self-branding on social media is an individualized process and does not depend or require initial affiliations. Also, the way digital natives make use of self-branding shows how private individuals have internalized marketing designed ideas (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017).

There is a historical logic to this: global capitalism coupled with the communication technologies of social media has wrought significant cultural, economic and political upheaval, and the concept of self-branding manifests as an opposite navigational strategy for otherwise vulnerable, overwhelmed individuals. As such, self-branding through social media can be understood as a way to retain and assert personal agency and control within a general context of uncertainty and flux. Therefore, it harmonizes with neoliberal notions of individual efficacy and responsibility; and rests on capitalist faith in enterprising, resourceful and self-directed labour. Within the twenty-first-century context of intense media activity and competition, the emphasis on the atomized, distinctive self is framed as an affirmation of control and conviction (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 200).

Essentially, self-branding is an important business concept for amateur individuals “because it demonstrates self-performances and presents a sense of individuality that can help to differentiate a personal brand from its competitors” (Chen, 2013 *apud* Khamis, Ang &

Welling, 2017: 200) on social media. Its rise is also viewed as “another form of neoliberal governance by compelling (or ‘empowering’) people to consider themselves entrepreneurial subjects, ultimately responsible for their own success or failure in the marketplace” (Bandinelli and Arvidsson, 2012 *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 201). In recent years, self-branding is thought to have spread a belief system into the neoliberal knowledge economy since a lot of areas or occupations are promoting “self-branding skills as both life-changing and life-making and thus succeed in the social production of market relations” (Bandinelli and Arvidsson, 2012 *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 201). Instagram and YouTube, for instance, facilitate not just participation but practices of self-branding because they provide the means to express and present themselves to others (Dijck, 2013; Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019) through the social processes of self-presentation and self-disclosure (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Moura (2016), the tendency is, indeed, “text reduction and image supremacy”. Nowadays, Instagram plays an important role in terms of self-branding practices as it provides users to achieve the condition of “Instafame” (Marwick, 2015 *apud* Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017: 199), or actually being mentioned as “Instagrammers” (Latiff & Safiee, 2015: 17), which refers to people having a great number of followers on the app due to their content, attracting, somehow, many people. While some of these influencers have follower counts exceeding those of traditional celebrities, they are viewed quite differently (Waller, 2016), almost as if they were a more accessible celebrity (Ferreira, 2017). Yet, the power of influencers is not directly inherent in how many followers they have, but in their ability to really influence others. Still, Instagrammers can be considered not only micro-celebrities but digital influencers or even opinion leaders, since their messages affect the digital community. The fact that “influencers hold a symbolic capital” (Ferreira, 2017: 1149), as defined by Bourdieu, confers them a sense of identification based upon elements such as admiration, association, aspiration or recognition (Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013 *apud* Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), which increases more involvement and proximity (Waller, 2016) and the adoption of similar routines (Djafarova & Rushworth 2017).

This pseudo proximity combined with the admiration seems to make the posts to have an impact on followers’ lives that often goes beyond the central theme of the Instagram profiles – fitness (Ferreira, 2017: 1149).

Moreover, with Instagram representing a mixture of people, covering all kinds of niches, from all over the world (Waller, 2016), even personal trainers, for instance, are now using the platform to share their workouts. To Ferreira (2017), the influencer's strategy of encouraging the view that they are both celebrities and common people can be "understood as using the symbolic power as a way to maintain a position in the dominant group within the social field" (1150), according to Bourdieu. Thus, they can strongly influence their followers' choices, due to that real authority conveyed by the symbolic power, which "occurs mostly because influencers are seen as people who have the merit of achieving an admired body" (Ferreira, 2017: 1150).

In their Instagram profiles they don't just show a perfect body shape – as it can be seen on super models and other celebrities – they show the process of building the perfect body, giving their followers the illusion that this achievement is possible for everyone who is willing to pursue it. When influencers show the process they go through, they also show their merit: their perfect body is earned as result of a lot of effort and dedication (Ferreira, 2017: 1150).

It can be explained due to the fact that physically attractive communicators are more successful at changing beliefs (Baker and Churchill, 1977; Chaiken, 1979; Debevec & Kernan, 1984 *apud* Erdogan, 1999), taking the "Source Attractiveness Model" (Erdogan, 1999:299) into consideration. The author believes that "intellectual skills, personality properties, lifestyles, or athletic prowess" (Erdogan, 1999: 299) are positive associations attributed to people which enable the classification of that stereotype as attractiveness. It is contended that the effectiveness of a message relies on a few characteristics, such as similarity, familiarity and liking (McGuire, 1985 *apud* Erdogan, 1999).

Similarity is defined as a supposed resemblance between the source and the receiver of the message, familiarity as knowledge of the source through exposure, and likability as affection for the source as a result of the source's physical appearance and behavior (Erdogan, 1999: 299).

Moreover, the attractiveness of the communicator defines the effectiveness of persuasive communication through the process of identification (Cohen & Golden, 1972 *apud* Erdogan, 1999). Apart from the Source Attractiveness Model, there is other model that was also developed for the study of communication: the "Source Credibility Model" (Erdogan, 1999: 297). It contends that the "effectiveness of a message depends on perceived level of expertise

and trustworthiness” (Dholakia & Stemthal, 1977; Hovland, *et al.*, 1953; Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1991; Solomon, 1996 *apud* Erdogan, 1999: 297) and attractiveness of the communicator (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The extent to which a communicator is perceived to be a source of valid assertions is what defines expertise, which refers to someone’s knowledge, experience or skills. Trustworthiness depends on the perceptions of the target audience and refers to the honesty, integrity and believability of the communicator (Erdogan, 1999). In case the source is credible, the information can

influence beliefs, opinions, attitudes and/or behavior through a process called internalisation, which occurs when receivers accept a source influence in terms of their personal attitude and value structures (Erdogan, 1999: 297).

Djafarova & Rushworth (2017) add the elements of relevance and timeliness, in what concerns the validation of an Instagram post by the public’s perception, regarding its quality. The authors explain relevance on Instagram as being related to specific issues or people, giving the following example: people who have personally experienced issues with their weight and show transformation images and documentation of weight loss journeys on Instagram are likely to be more credible sources. This type of fitspiration content is, indeed, inspiring, due to the fact that people are able to relate to and trust the person posting that content. As they may be seen as a person who encountered similar challenges and barriers to getting healthy, the feeling of the results being achievable for themselves as well is incredibly powerful (Raggatt, *et al.*, 2018). Whereas, that identification does not happen with paid fitness models who give a superficial and glorified view of becoming fit, are sponsored by a company, or minimize the challenges of changing their lifestyle (Raggatt, *et al.*, 2018).

The benefits of social connection and interaction offered by the online fitspiration community can help to explain how fitspiration may enable active behavior change. There is a realization that it is more realistic to achieve the same physical results as a fitness Instagrammer compared to a celebrity, which motivates followers to pursue the same goals as a fitness influencer (Raggatt, *et al.*, 2018: 8).

Thus, this perceived relationship between effort and results puts influencers in a special or superior baseline, “corroborating Bourdieu’s idea of the body as having symbolic value and therefore something that maintains the social differentiation” (Ferreira, 2017: 1150). Also,

the presentation of a perfect body is another type of capital in a cultural environment which is so admired and desired in light of the contemporary society's standards can be responsible for the influence of others is related to the idea of attractiveness, explained before. Nowadays, to have a body within the beauty standards in a culture that worships beauty, and to have conquered it with effort and dedication is what distinguishes someone as superior and powerful (Ferreira, 2017).

Yet, it is common to distinguish ways of referring to content creators in each platform, whether it is Instagrammers on Instagram or YouTubers on YouTube³⁴. According to Tolson (2010), YouTubers may be considered celebrities, or high-profile Internet microcelebrities. Even though there is a lot of people sharing videos nowadays, only a few of them manage to get millions of views on theirs. For this to happen, YouTubers, or other digital influencers, need to convey the feeling of spontaneity and authenticity (Tolson, 2010), since the new generations are increasingly demanding more speed, immediacy and a lot of immersive content (Blanco, 2015), due to that type of mediated communication. The public, as YouTubers themselves, are "young people who have no interest in traditional media and choose to discover new ways to be aware of network society" (Blanco, 2015). Besides this, the "rhetoric of authenticity is a key dimension of discourses of celebrity" (Dyer, 1991; Marshall, 1997 *apud* Tolson, 2010: 277) and one of the most important features of micro-celebrity (Khamis, Ang & Welling, 2017).

Successful YouTubers know how to articulate authenticity to entertainment and to navigate the inherent ambivalence of their performance and self-representations – using combinations of intimacy, humour, and irreverence, carefully balancing authenticity, community, and brand relationships (Burgess & Green, 2018: 37).

Furthermore, YouTube videos are no longer for just consumers' entertainment, but are instruction sources of the things they like best, for example, the varied tutorials and DIY (Do It Yourself) videos (Tolson, 2010).

³⁴ The trend is to have a specific concept to identify a particular digital influencer according to the social media platform they use. Despite that, I am going to use the concept of digital influencers throughout this dissertation, regardless being them Instagrammers or YouTubers.

Part II – Empirical work

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Research context

The pervasiveness of fitness in social media is a recent phenomenon, and that is the focus of this research study. While “in the nineteenth century in the United States³⁵, exercise was an important element of the military, childhood physical education, religious organizations such as the YMCA, the dieting industry, and the medical establishment” (Maguire, 2008: 2), not only did fitness become a distinct way of life in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, but it transformed into a culture. The configuration of interests and activities around working out, such as training techniques, diets, and motivational mantras, elevated to be personal growth and social value’s markers to a niche activity and, as diverse as the motivations are, they all share a singular passion, which is to improve the human body (Black, 2013). Nowadays, more than ever, it is much harder to ignore fitness and wellness³⁶, and the need to have a healthy lifestyle, due to the constant reminders on social media platforms. At the same time, it is much easier now to find motivation and inspiration because these platforms not only have helped cultivate fitness communities³⁷, especially for people that train at home, in the absence of a visible community that one might find, for instance, at a gym or at a fitness class (Schlossberg, 2016), but allow the processes of self-disclosure and self-presentation to be easier than ever. In addition, the figure of the digital influencer evolved from the concept of opinion leaders, not only due to their experience and knowledge in their field, but because they have the ability to provide up-to-date information to their followers through creative content on social media platforms, such as Instagram and YouTube. According to Finley (2017), it is possible to find more than 30 million fitness videos on YouTube alone, and countless more on other social media platforms. In the end, the online

³⁵ Even though the “rise of the modern American health clubs began in California in the 1940s, their predecessors came from the 19th century Europe” (Buck, 1999).

³⁶ Wellness is viewed as “the integration of all aspects of health and fitness (mental, social, emotional, spiritual and physical), which expands a potential for living and working effectively, making a significant contribution to society” (Furtado, 2009: 8).

³⁷ Social media enhances the promotion of niche communities while projects us in a world in which we are “alone together” (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019: 67).

fitness content sharing makes it easier to come together, as everyone is working towards the same goal: a healthier lifestyle.

3.2. Research design

In order to define the approach to my theme, constructivism was the chosen philosophical worldview (Maxwell, 2012; Creswell, 2014). At a somewhat more specific level, and since the goal of this research study is to rely as much possible on the participants' views of the studied object (Creswell, 2014), I chose to follow a paradigm that is relevant to qualitative research: interpretivism (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Maxwell, 2012). I believe that those perspectives fit best with my assumptions and methodological preferences: while the interpretive approach "seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action" (Burrell & Morgan, 1979: 30), which will help me expose the complexity of human processes and their experiences (Maxwell, 2012; Creswell, 2014), constructivism allows me to "focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants" (Creswell, 2014), whose backgrounds shape their interpretations, which flow from their personal, cultural and historical experiences (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the research design model that I decided to follow is what Maxwell (2012) calls an interactive model, which consists of the components of a research study and the ways in which these may affect and be affected by one another. Its intention is to help understand the structure of the study, how to plan it and get it through. Maxwell's method has an investigation model in Z because it is characterized as an inductive method, which allows interactivity. Not only is it possible to make several changes throughout the investigation without questioning the study, but, in this type of model, all stages are linked and affected by each other. Therefore, there is a certain freedom in every one of the stages. This type of qualitative research has a much broader spectrum and, consequently, is less restrictive when compared to other traditional models. As it is possible to understand through the figure 1, the Z model is characterized by five phases: goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and validity. With the first phase being the goals, it is supposed to help delineate and justify the study, in order to understand why it

is worth doing. The conceptual framework, which follows the objectives, aims to group existing theories on the subject in question and to define the guiding line of the study. This step is viewed as a system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs and theories that support the empirical work, which is not based on the assumption that something that has been found, but in something that was built on. In order to do so, one must be aware of what researchers have published regarding the field in question. At this stage, the work's structure must be unique. The third phase incorporates the research questions, whose main functions are to focus, guide and conduct the study. By embodying what the researcher really wants to study, this kind of questions are the heart of the work. The research questions result from the model interaction, and not just from the starting point: they connect all the other components of the design. The methods are the fourth phase, which is where the study itself will be effectively carried out, and where the chosen techniques and specific approaches will be used. Finally, the fifth phase goes through the work's validation. The purpose is to reflect if there are other alternatives to conclude the study and to think whether or not the collected data corroborates the conclusion of the study. Besides this, it is important to take bias into account and not to let data and analysis be corrupted by existing biases and values. Regarding the ethics stage, Maxwell (2012) deliberately removed it because he believed that it should be included in every component of the study. Also, it should be kept in mind that all steps are related and that they must be in accordance with each other for the final work to be coherent (Maxwell, 2012).

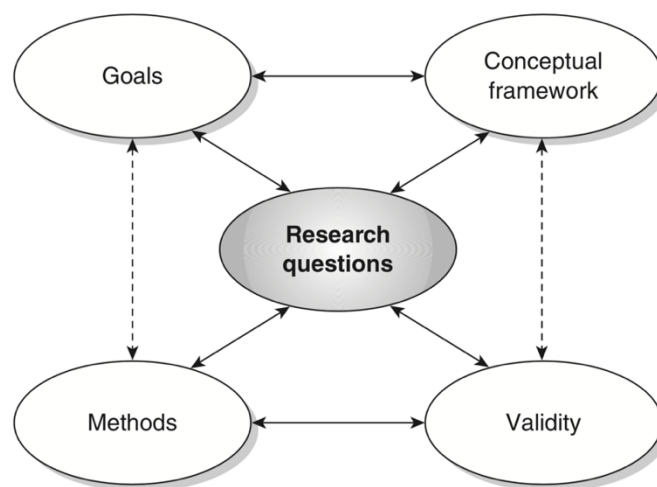


Figure 1 – Maxwell's Interactive Model of Research Design.

3.2.1. Research questions

My research object are the interviewed fitness digital influencers' workout videos on Instagram and YouTube. In what concerns my personal goals, which are the motivation basis to do a study, are grounded on the fact that I feel that this type of digital influencers has a genuine impact on me on a daily basis, in terms of inspiration and motivation to train more than I already do. Accordingly, in terms of intellectual and practical goals, I want to comprehend what drives and motivates fitness digital influencers into becoming, indeed, influencers, and gain insight into what goes on their 'behind-the-scenes', in what concerns the video content creation. In this sense, and because it is a current and relevant topic, the main question that is sought to answer is: "Which are the video production strategies used by fitness digital influencers on social media in order to persuade their audience into starting or continuing to work out?" Besides this, the goal is to also be able to answer the complementary questions inherent to the defined research goals: (1) What triggered the fitness digital influencers' interest in fitness? (2) What motivates fitness digital influencers to start sharing content regarding workouts on social media? (3) Which social media platforms do fitness digital influencers use the most to share their content? (4) What are the perceptions of the definition, role, assets and future of fitness digital influencers? (5) What is the relationship between fitness digital influencers and their followers? In order to answer these questions, it was necessary to choose the adequate research methods, as will be seen in the following section.

3.2.2. Method

After having delimited the research question that framed the fieldwork, it was considered that a qualitative approach would allow a greater knowledge of the object of the present research study. The data collection methods used were the following: interviews with Portuguese and American fitness digital influencers, which will focus on the meanings and interpretations of the participants provided by open-ended questions (Creswell 2014), and categorial content analysis to examine videos published by these digital content influencers on Instagram and on YouTube to understand, in detail, what kind of content is shared.

According to Quivy and Campenhoudt (1995), the interview method is almost always associated with the content analysis method because, inevitably, when conducting interviews and interpreting responses, the researcher is doing a reflection and an analysis on the content of them. Thus, the categorial analysis will be used in both the interviews analysis and in the video content analysis. Since this analysis technique, among the different possibilities of categorization, works by breaking up the text into units, in categories according to analogical groupings (Bardin, 2011), the thematic analysis is the one that I found most effective on the condition that it applies to direct and simple discourses.

3.2.3. Sample and data collection

Every study faces a sampling decision, whether it is a matter of choosing when and where to observe, whom to talk to, or what information sources to focus on (Maxwell, 2012). The type of sample I chose is called “purposeful sampling” (Patton, 1990 *apud* Maxwell, 2012: 235), which can be used to capture adequately the heterogeneity in the population, ensuring that the conclusions effectively represent the entire variation range, and establish particular comparisons to illuminate the reasons for differences between settings or individuals (Maxwell, 2012). In terms of the primary source of data collection, I chose exploratory interviews, since they are useful to explore the subjects, and help me deepen the phenomenon of influence by giving clues, ideas, and working hypotheses, rather than pre-established assumptions regarding the subject (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2005). There is, indeed, a real and authentic exchange of experiences. Also, semi-directed interviewing seemed to me to be the most appropriate way to capture the phenomenon’s subjectivity because this source of information not only offers a more direct contact between the participants, the interviewer and the interlocutor, but provides deeper and richer information, and reflections (Quivy & Champhoudt, 2005), with the particularity of being more focused on the elements of analysis. Thus, I decided to study a relatively small number of individuals and preserve their individualities because their meanings are shaped by the unique circumstances in which they are inserted. Taking the interlocutors’ category defined by Quivy & Campenhoudt (2005) into consideration, I contacted a few of those who constitute the public to which the study directly relates: the fitness digital influencers themselves, which are this research study’s universe. These are people who, by their position, action and responsibilities, have a good

knowledge of the problem. In what concerned the choice of who I wanted to interview, the initial idea was to only contact Portuguese fitness digital influencers, some of which I already had in mind. However, throughout the writing of the literature review, especially the Fitness sub-chapter (2.1.), I decided that it would be crucial to interview people who could provide information regarding the current American context. Accordingly, even though they are not representative of the population, the fitness digital influencers presented in the table 1 (Bruno Salgueiro, Emily Samuel, Erik Anderson, Isabel Silva, Mafalda Sena, Maria Palma, Margarida Santos, Olivia Poling, Paulo Teixeira and Vanessa Martins) were deliberately chosen for the important insights that they could provide, data which I could not obtain otherwise. The selection criteria were based on relevance in their contexts, determined by country (Portugal and USA); used social media platform (Instagram and/or YouTube); number of followers³⁸; type of influencers³⁹; and frequency of published video content⁴⁰. Besides this, in the case of the American fitness digital influencers, it also had to do with their workplace, *Dogpound*⁴¹.

³⁸ Some were a lot higher than others, but that was done on purpose so I could collect different views, from both micro and macro influencers. Though, the minimum for someone to be considered for this selection was having more than 10.000 Instagram followers or YouTube subscribers.

³⁹ I searched for the ones that seemed to be more authentic and that focused almost purely on videos of workouts, rather than promoting brands and products in a commercial way.

⁴⁰ All of them usually post on a weekly basis, if not daily.

⁴¹ It is one of the most well-known and exclusive gyms in the USA.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Platforms</i>	<i>Username</i>	<i>Number of Instagram followers</i>	<i>Number of YouTube subscribers</i>
Bruno Salgueiro	Portugal	YouTube/ Instagram	@dicasdosalgueiro	94.100	331.000
Emily Samuel	USA	Instagram	@emilyy_fitness	124.000	-
Erik Anderson	USA	Instagram	@erikanderson33	10.600	-
Isabel Silva	Portugal	Instagram/ YouTube	@iamisabelsilva	563.000	28.500
Mafalda Sena	Portugal	Instagram	@senasaudaveis	34.200	-
Maria Palma	Portugal	Instagram/ YouTube	@a.mariapalma	96.800	16.700
Margarida Santos	Portugal	Instagram	@maggy_santos7	22.200	-
Olivia Poling	USA	Instagram/ YouTube	@oliviapolingfitness	10.600	-
Paulo Teixeira	Portugal	Instagram	@ptpauloteixeira	75.200	-
Vanessa Martins	Portugal	Instagram/ YouTube	@vanessamartins	533.000	37.300

Table 1 – General information about the selected fitness digital influencers⁴².

However, even with numerous attempts, only a few replied to the invitation to take part in this research study. As it was expected, most of the selected digital influencers were not very accessible, similarly to what happens with celebrities. Therefore, the ones that I was actually able to interview, and that represent my sample, were Bruno Salgueiro, Emily Samuel, Erik Anderson, Mafalda Sena and Margarida Santos. As it is possible to verify in the table 2, there are more details about the interviewees, such as age, education and occupation.

⁴² The numbers of Instagram followers and YouTube subscribers were updated on September 21st.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Main platform</i>	<i>Username</i>	<i>N° of Instagram followers</i>	<i>N° of YouTube subscribers</i>
Bruno Salgueiro	35	Portugal	Personal training/ Crossfit coaching (level 1)	Stuntman and personal trainer	YouTube	@dicasdosalgueiro	94.100	331.000
Emily Samuel	27	USA	Psychology/ Personal training	Personal trainer (Dogpound NYC)	Instagram	@emilyy_fitness	124.000	-
Erik Anderson	24	USA	Economics and Finance/ Personal training	Personal trainer (Dogpound LA)	Instagram	@erikanderson33	10.600	-
Mafalda Sena	29	Portugal	Architecture	Architect	Instagram	@senasandaveis	34.200	-
Margarida Santos	27	Portugal	Management	Marketing and medical advertising coordinator	Instagram	@maggy_santos7	22.200	-

Table 2 – Personal information about the interviewees⁴³.

⁴³ The numbers of Instagram followers and YouTube subscribers were updated on September 21st.

The video content analysis was the second source of data collection, which complements the exploratory interviews. In what concerns the organization stage, I began to choose the documents that I wanted to analyze, which, in this case, are the interviewed fitness digital influencers' workout videos, and formulated its objectives. Subsequently, I moved on to the elaboration of indicators that would support the final interpretation. According to Bardin (2011), this phase is constituted by unstructured activities, opposed to the systematic exploitation of documents. I decided to follow what the author explains as a 'floating' reading, which consists of making contact with the documents that are going to be analyzed, and knowing the text, allowing myself to be invaded by impressions and orientations. However, since I followed every selected fitness digital influencer from the beginning of writing this dissertation, and was used to see their video content on a daily basis, I was already doing that before reaching this stage, even if it was unconsciously. Moreover, the universe of the analyzed documents was decided when I selected the fitness digital influencers that I intended to interview. Yet, after doing five of the ten interviews, I had to limit the video's universe to each interviewee, which resulted in 85 videos, between Instagram posts, Instagram Stories⁴⁴ (and Highlights) and YouTube. Since the universe was very similar according to each person, in terms of identifiable patterns, it was narrowed down to a corresponding sample of ten videos – two per each interviewee, which are representative of the others. Also, since the objective was already determined, the constitution of the corpus was completed, which refers to the set of documents taken into account to be submitted to analytical procedures. According to Bardin (2011), its constitution may imply choices, selections and rules. Thus, I was guided by the rule of representativeness, whose analysis can be performed on a sample. In this research study, the videos of each fitness digital influencer were similar among them, so, I chose two types of videos of each interviewee to analyze. Consequently, as I mentioned, this would allow the sample to be representative of the initial universe and the results obtained may be able to be generalized to all of them. Furthermore, in light of the homogeneity rule, which states that the selected documents must comply with precise criteria of choice and not have too much uniqueness outside the criteria, the criterion of choice was the fact that they were workout videos, in terms of content, and were posted either on regular Instagram posts, Instagram Stories, or on YouTube, in terms

⁴⁴ If a digital influencer posts Instagram Stories with more than one video related to the same workout, I am going to consider those two or more as one video only.

of distribution. I also followed the rule of relevance, as the documents withheld were considered to be appropriate as sources of information, in order to meet the purpose of the analysis.

3.2.4. Implementation

Firstly, I started by handling the interviews' script and their requests. The interview script was written both in Portuguese and English (appendices B and C, respectively) and the questions did not differ according to the interviewees. Thus, the script contained sixteen questions. The first one was related to the interviewees' fitness backgrounds and what triggered the sharing on social media. The second and third questions concern the used social media platforms. From the fourth to the eighth and in the last (sixteenth) question, the focus revolved around the concept and dynamics of fitness digital influencers, more specifically thoughts on what is an influencer of that category and on what did they think it takes for someone to successfully achieve that status; if they considered that there had been having a rise in the amount of fitness influencers; if they saw other influencers as competition, influence or other; if they followed other fitness influencers and who (in order to see if any interviewee followed another); what did they believed to be the factor that distinguishes their content from others; and what were their thoughts for the future of fitness digital influencers. The ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth questions aimed at understand their content: what did they think worked best; where, how and why did they publish their content; and if they had any help in terms of producing it. The fourteenth and fifteenth have to do with their relationship with their followers and if they felt that their content had really influenced anyone in practical terms.

The fitness digital influencers that constituted the universe of this research study were all approached during July via email, Instagram (via the instant messaging system) and with help of friends that knew a few of them. As it was mentioned before, only Bruno Salgueiro, Emily Samuel, Erik Anderson, Mafalda Sena and Margarida Santos gave positive answers. Thus, the first interview was conducted on July 29th with Mafalda Sena, through email (appendix D); the second interview was conducted between July 29th and August 13th with

Margarida Santos, through WhatsApp audios (appendix E); the third interview was conducted on August 14th with Erik Anderson, through FaceTime videocall (appendix F); the fourth interview was conducted on August 24th with Emily Samuel, through email (appendix G). Since these influencers who were not able to arrange an interview schedule or be physical present due to geographical matters, only the fifth interview was conducted in person, with Bruno Salgueiro, on August 28th (appendix H). In order to obtain more transparency, I started every interview by explaining the purpose of this dissertation and the reasons why I wanted them to be a part of this research study. Also, I mentioned that I had sent them a consent form regarding identity authorizations and what I had explained but in writing. When the interviews were conducted in person, and via videocall and WhatsApp audios, there was a slight openness to broader responses.

The videos for the video content analysis were all collected from the interviewees' profiles on Instagram and YouTube. In the Instagram case, I followed closely and meticulously what they posted daily, especially Instagram Stories, due to their ephemeral character. For this reason, I had to screen record those videos on my phone, in order to be able to view and analyze them later. For the regular posted videos on their Instagram profiles and Instagram Highlights, I also screen recorded them so I could have an organized folder with the full sample at the time I started analyzing it. The selected Instagram videos (appendices T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z, AA), whether they were in the format of regular posts, Instagram Stories, or Instagram Highlights, range between July 16th and August 29th. Regarding the selection of YouTube videos (appendices BB, CC), since there were a lot of videos grouped in playlists, I chose one from two of them: the playlists named *Dicas do Salgueiro* (with 60 videos) and *Exercícios/ Tutoriais* (with 365 videos). Since each type of video follows the same structure, they are representative of the rest of the videos in each playlist. Also, because the *Dicas do Salgueiro* playlist is older than the *Exercícios/ Tutoriais* playlist, it is pertinent to establish if there was a progression in terms of video practices⁴⁵. In an attempt to codify the most important aspects and themes and, then, determine different video patterns, an analysis grid was built (appendix I). The macro variables were created to group the categories of analysis. Accordingly, the variable *content* refers to the categories *type, participants, action, location,*

⁴⁵ The *Dicas do Salgueiro* playlist has videos from 2015 and earlier, and the *Exercícios/ Tutoriais* playlist has videos from 2019. The selected videos are from December 2015 and July 2019.

duration, to understand the video settings, namely, what type of video it is; who is being filmed; what is happening; where is it located; and how long is the video. The variable *composition* comprises the audiovisual components that constitute a video, such as *orientation, frame size, camera angle, sound, postproduction, additional elements*. They aim to describe the position, used angle and camera movement in which the video was filmed; if there is sound and, if so, what type; if the images were somehow edited; and if there are any additional elements such as text, tags, emojis or gifs. The variable *distribution* has to do with the categories *channel* and *device*, which are related to where the video was published and with which device was the video shot. The final purpose of the combination of all of these categories is to answer determine which are the video production strategies used by fitness digital influencers on social media in order to persuade their audience into starting or continuing to work out, as it was already explained.

3.2.5. **Validity**

In order for someone to contour validity issues and thereby increase the credibility of the conclusions in a research study, Maxwell (2012) proposed seven main strategies that can be applied, depending on the specificities of the chosen research object: (1) intensive, long-term involvement; (2) ‘rich’ data; (3) respondent validation; (4) searching for discrepant evidence and negative cases; (5) triangulation; (6) quasi-statistics; and (7) comparison. Therefore, I considered that this research study would benefit from following three of these. The first validity strategy has to do with certifying that the involvement with the research object was intensive and long-termed. To be able to do that, I started to keep up with this study’s universe by thoroughly observing their social media activity. That allowed me to become extremely involved and familiarized with the research object from the very beginning, which makes it an extensive period of time. In regards of the second validity strategy, which is related to the collection of detailed and diverse data, I chose two specific data collection methods that would complement themselves, to make sure the data collected was ‘rich’ enough. Thus, the interviews’ transcripts were written in the most verbatim way possible, since most of them had had the audio recorded. Also, combined with the comparison validation strategy, it was possible to provide a full and revealing picture of what

goes on the behind-the-scenes of the video content production by comparing the fitness digital influencers insights with my content analysis of their videos.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

4.1. Interview analysis

As it was mentioned earlier, my intention is to capture the meanings from the experiences of each fitness digital influencer (Bruno Salgueiro, Emily Samuel, Erik Anderson, Mafalda Sena and Margarida Santos) through content analysis, which is a method “based on the manner in which the elements of the ‘speech’ are articulated with each other” (Quivy & Campenhoudt, 2005). Thus, before starting to describe the interviewees’ answers, I organized their answers through clusters and, subsequently, condensed them into themes. Accordingly, the analysis of the interviews is structured in five variables: Fitness journeys; Social media platforms; Digital influencers; Online video content; and Followers.

4.1.1. Fitness journeys

In what concerns how the five digital influencers became interested in fitness and their journeys towards sharing content on social media are quite different from each other. For both Margarida and Bruno, for instance, physical exercise and the healthy lifestyle entered their lives at very early stages. At three years of age, sports such as swimming, ballet and tennis became a habit for Margarida, which was something that her parents gradually instilled. As she grew older, she joined the gym and became a fan of working out. Encouraged by friends to share her opinions on social media, Margarida launched a blog, called *Operação Ano Inteiro*, which had more to do with sharing recipes and her favorite gym classes. Instagram grew to be the platform she uses the most nowadays, since she believes that it is where a lot of people go to search for quick information. Nevertheless, the blog is still updated and the posts are also shared on Facebook, which was a platform that she used to make a lot of use in the beginning, in order to reach as many people as possible. In Bruno’s case, by the time he was nine years old, he joined martial arts, as an influence of a Bruce Lee movie he had seen. After that, he tried kung fu, rugby, water polo and weight training in his teenage phase. Later on, and up to today, CrossFit, circuit training, boxing and kickboxing are part of his weekly routine. As for his career, the fact that he became a

stuntman, a professional television double, which is a profession that also requires choreographing scenes with realism and maintain security, lead actors to ask him to train them. Subsequently, Bruno decided to pursue personal training alongside his other occupation. Parallely, around the time YouTube was starting to rock, he decided to pair up with a friend, Luís Piçarra, which had a production company that made all sorts of videos, in order to fill the void regarding fitness tutorials in Portugal. Thus, they created the YouTube channel called *Dicas do Salgueiro*, which mixes fitness, somersaults, stunts and digital marketing, to, essentially, give fitness tips and workout ideas. Erik also became a fan of working out as he grew up in high school watching videos of bodybuilders on Instagram and YouTube, which triggered the wish to become a trainer. Even though he practiced sports such as American football, wrestling and rugby, Erik reinforced that he did not enjoy that as much as working out. Besides that, while studying Economics, he used to write down workout programs for friends and people in specific, through social media. After a series of events that increased his previous desire to become a personal trainer, Erik moved from California to New York to pursue his dream and help people out, even though he is recently back in Los Angeles. In terms of his motivations to share content on social media, it started with him showing his physical progress, which grew to be a place where people could take away some knowledge. Erik added that, lately, he has been making changes in his profile, adjusting it to not only be more focused on working out and fitness but also showcasing his celebrity clients, their improvements and how he is training them. Whereas, Emily's fitness journey began after she was trying to fight a serious eating disorder that she developed in her freshman year of college. She became addicted to the gym while she was home recovering, since she described it to be the only place where she could feel better and in control. That triggered the desire to share the gym knowledge she had been retaining throughout the years and help other girls. Contrary to other fitness Instagram pages, Emily reinforced that she wanted girls to take away something positive from her account, rather than feel worse about themselves after leaving her page. Her main purpose was, and still is, to help as many people as possible by posting free workouts, so that no girl would ever feel the way she did. Already in adulthood, as Mafalda realized she urgently needed to lose weight and stop having a sedentary life, she started working out and surround herself with people who motivated her, from women who inspired her to personal trainers who taught her how to do the exercises. As soon as she started to see the changes in her body, it became

an addiction. The content sharing had a lot to do with close people asking for help and tips to guide them because of her physical transformation, which was seen as an inspiration. Thus, she started the *Senasaudáveis*' project, in order to motivate others to have a healthier lifestyle, showing everyone her recipes and that the will to get up before seven in the morning to workout everyday pays off, and that it is something achievable to everyone, if they put their mind to it.

4.1.2. Social media platforms

Regarding their Instagram, they all created their accounts in a personal capacity in the beginning, and then they evolved throughout time. When asked if they used any other platform, Emily said that to even have figured out how Instagram itself worked was already a big task, as she admitted to be really bad with technology. Bruno mentioned that Facebook and Instagram complemented his YouTube channel, even though he only became more active on Instagram after the video sharing feature was released in 2013. As Facebook decreased in popularity among younger people, he said that, even though he still publishes his videos there, he is more focused on Instagram since most of his audience is there now. Also, he mentioned the swipe up feature on Instagram Stories, which are fundamental to link content from other platforms, in his case, YouTube. Similar to Bruno, Margarida referred that, although she always keeps sharing the blog's articles on Facebook, that platform is no longer the main complement of her blog. In fact, Instagram surpassed the blog because it went from being just a place where people would look for information and ask her questions, to being a place of essentially sharing of exercise, food, and everything related to a healthier lifestyle. Yet, it is on the blog that she publishes longer posts of subjects that she wants to address and that she feels they would not be that interesting on Instagram. Moreover, both Mafalda and Erik used to have YouTube channels. However, while Mafalda stopped due to lack of time, Erik was only active on his channel with his Austrian bodybuilder friend, Onome Egger, a few years ago when he was living abroad. Now, it is also a matter of not having free time due to his tight schedule and, sometimes, insecurity that no one is going to watch his videos.

4.1.3. Digital influencers

Both Erik and Emily agree that a fitness digital influencer is someone with a lot of followers. However, they go further in their opinions. Erik stated that, in order for someone to be successful in this area, he or she has to be someone passionate about fitness and with knowledge. Though, it does not mean that a lot of the influencers are good in terms of how they influence fitness. Erik explained that not only there are a lot of people that do not know much about fitness, because they did not study it, and are only good at taking pictures and recording videos, some actually trick other people into buying their programs, promising that they would look like them afterwards. Emily supported those ideas, saying that, these days, a fitness influencer is not certified and only posts a ton of videos with good angles. Mafalda and Bruno have very similar opinions. To them, those who do not have the desirable knowledge should surround themselves with good professionals to get advised. Mafalda considers that that it is not enough to be self-taught person. Also, they both agree on the fact that it has to be someone that is able to transmit a message of daily motivation to those who need a push to workout, showing that, even though it takes some effort, technique and experience are the keys to better results. However, Bruno believes that tips are not enough. Not only should fitness digital influencers give the tools necessary and explain them for someone to feel that they could try on their own, but they need to remind themselves that, no matter how many followers they have, they have a big responsibility towards their followers because those people trust them enough to the point of being influenced. Emily also considers someone a successful fitness digital influencer if they share their fitness knowledge in a responsible manner. Besides that, instead of fitness digital influencers, Emily pointed out that a fitness Instagram coach would be the correct definition of someone that impersonates the previous characteristics mentioned by all of the interviewees. They should be certified trainers that post functional workouts and that make a career out of helping people, contrary to tricking people, as Erik mentioned. To Margarida, it all comes down to the fact that it has to be someone who has a healthy and balanced lifestyle; a combination of physical, mental and food balance. Besides this, she thinks that whoever searches for a healthy lifestyle should look for it in the long run, and that that is the way to go, because she does not believe in extremes.

When asked whether they thought there had been a rise in the amount of fitness digital influencers, they all agreed, without any doubts. While Margarida thought that this abundance might be interesting since they can cover completely different segments, Erik and Emily not only believe that it is a saturated market and that people are seeing how marketable and profitable it is, but said that it now looks more as if fitness digital influencers are like entrepreneurs in terms of selling fitness programs and that people only want to become famous from it. Mafalda adds that there are a lot of people who think they can influence, but they do not actually have that ability to do so. Whereas, Bruno puts it in terms of how today's society thinks: he considers that there has been a big boom of fitness digital influencers because we are in an age where appearances matter, even though a lot of people say that they do not. Regarding how the interviewees see the existence of other fitness influencers on Instagram and YouTube, Erik, Margarida and Mafalda consider them as inspirations. Erik and Margarida said that, like everything in life, some people take that healthy competition and use it as a driver to better themselves. However, Erik feels that he does not compete with anyone on social media, but him. Mafalda tries to take the best out of those who she considers to be good influencers. Bruno has a different opinion: even though he senses that there are good examples, he does not consider that 90% of them fit that category. This is derived from the commercial side that some fitness digital influencers start to take on, where there are people that start to view it from a business perspective, almost like entrepreneurs that are missing the point, much like Erik and Emily's thoughts. He explained that sometimes they do not even embody training, which means that some may have never done much training, or only train from time to time. He went further and said that some of them only take steroids in order to look more attractive. In the end, he pointed out that they not only do learn nothing in the process, but they are unable to teach anything to anyone.

Furthermore, everyone, except Bruno, gave a positive answer when it came to if they followed their colleagues' work on social media. On one hand, at a level of training and physical exercise, Mafalda mentioned the Portuguese girls Catarina Gouveia (@categouveia), Sara Matos (@saralvesmatos) and Margarida Santos (@maggysantos7). On the other hand, Margarida went further and gave more than national examples, such as Isabel Silva (@iamisabelsilva), Maria Palma (@a.mariapalma), Mariana Rocha (@missfitinsta) and Vanessa Martins (@vanessamartins). Internationally, her source of

inspiration has always been Gabriela Pugliesi (@gabrielapugliesi). Erik not only mentioned his work colleagues and boss (@kirkmyersfitness) at *Dogpound* but also the bodybuilders Calum Von Moger (@calumvonmoger) and Bradley Martin (@bradleymartin). Bruno failed to give concrete Portuguese fitness digital influencer examples as he couldn't recall anyone else apart from English ones with YouTube channels, such as Alan Thrall (@untamedstrength), Brian Alsrue (@neversate), Mark Bell (@marksmellybell) and Stan Efferding (@stanefferding). Though, he explained that the ones he follows the most are Portuguese crossfitters or athletes like Telma Monteiro, Fernando Pimenta or Nélon Évora. In Emily's case, she mentioned two people in particular: Reinhard Nel (@reign_train) and Lala Duncan (@liftwithlala), both *Dogpound* trainers, which she looks up to.

In what concerns their thoughts for the future of fitness digital influencers, they all came to similar conclusions. Margarida believes that, even though the future is uncertain, the industry will evolve, and the digital influencers will certainly evolve with it. Contrarily, Erik, Mafalda, Bruno and Emily consider that only the ones educated and passionate enough will have a place in the digital fitness world. Erik makes a distinction between two types of fitness digital influencers: the ones who only post pictures of themselves looking insane aesthetically and the ones who actually share fitness videos. Thus, he explained that a lot of exercises look really good on Instagram, while they are not the best, which makes it harder for people to decipher what is actually good or bad. Erik clarified that people are good in portraying those since what is good is, sometimes, not as exciting to look at. Parallely, he feels like the fitness industry is going to keep growing, shifting away from bodybuilding to be replaced with the search for the most perfect physique. Mafalda and Bruno believe that those who only do it with a sense of fame and have quick return through brands will realize, sooner or later, that that is not the ideal place to do so and will not make it. Bruno said that while that kind of influencers will always have a specific niche, they will stagnate. He justified that statement by saying that only the ones who continually have the consistency to create new and interesting material and that understand that they have to give more to others than themselves, instead of focusing on just showing off, will remain successful. He also stated that people should remember that nobody is following them for nothing, but rather because they take something away from there. In the same line of thought, Emily said that, sooner or later, even people who have little fitness knowledge, or none, will be able to

identify the “enterTRAINment” workouts and unfollow anyone posting that kind of content, and, thus, hopes that more people will create more original and safe content that shares knowledge and less pictures of their good angles.

4.1.4. **Online video content**

Compared to other fitness Instagram pages, there was a different answer in what concerns what the interviewees think distinguishes their content from others. Emily believes that her content stands out because there are so many body weight workouts that people can save and do if they do not have access to a gym, whether it is because they can't afford it, live far or just be travelling. Also, it is meant for people that just want something to do quick at home too. By sharing almost twenty-four hours a day of her life, Mafalda thinks that it sets her apart since she shows that it is possible to combine a normal job with a healthy lifestyle. Margarida shares the same opinion in terms of demonstrating her healthy part of life, but she hopes that people are not focusing solely on a beautiful body or aesthetics, even though she considers that to be a legitimate goal. Erik exemplifies with a client, Jay Alvarez (@jayalvarez), who is one of the biggest influencers of people in their twenties and had never in the gym before, let alone lift weights. Overall, it is the fact that he showcases his celebrity clients and their different types of bodies, which can have an impact on their audiences. With YouTube as his main platform, contrasting with the other interviewees that merely make use of Instagram, Bruno does not have a doubt that the type of communication he uses is his strength. In fact, he considers himself influential in the sense of being more a fitness communicator. Bruno compared his YouTube channel to an entertaining television channel, where people can learn from the tips he provides through his workout videos and tutorials. The quality of the images and sound recorded, and the editing made possible by his team are also what differentiates his content from others. In addition, he mentioned that he created a few different training plans, that can be done in several locations, and made videos where he exemplified every exercise, including the warm-up and stretching. That is something which he believes no one has ever done before, especially without wanting to make money out of it. Since everyone needs a different workout plan according to multiple factors and goals, his aim is definitely not selling training programs.

Moreover, videos were elected the approach with more impact. Margarida, Mafalda, Erik, Emily and Bruno consider videos to be the best way to distribute content regarding workouts. Erik added that, from his Instagram analytics, videos do not get as many likes as photos, but they get more ‘saves’ and ‘sents’. However, he thinks that that is almost just as important because that brings more followers in. That means that if people are saving and sending them to other people, it’s going to attract more people, and, consequently, more people might see his videos. The fact that photos tend to do better is something that Margarida agrees. She confirmed that she shares a lot through photos in posts and videos in Instagram Stories, due to the fact that the content in posts is more static. Yet, video, which has been evolving lately, is also a good way to share information. Margarida actually mentioned that if someone sees a post they like, they will probably go to the Stories to try to find out more. Thus, she said that that is why she often puts her workouts in the Instagram Stories, rather than posts, which are left for other type of content. For Bruno, even though Instagram is faster and more enjoyable to work with, YouTube continues to be his favorite distribution channel. He feels like videos should always be seen horizontally, since he gets tired of watching long videos standing on his phone, which can be a common view, and that is why he always shoots and shares his videos like that. Also, he believes that, in order to view longer videos, people tend to go to YouTube. Apart from that, people’s attention is only, at most, a minute or two, no more than that. Thus, he recently started to make shorter clips out of his YouTube videos and adapt them to be viewed on IGTV. Parallely, he adopted a strategy: to add subtitles, since a lot of people do not even turn on the sound. Still, he admits that this type of editing, which he does on his own, is nothing compared to his original videos, in which he uses the *InShot* app on his mobile phone. However, since he is someone who does not like to follow trends, because eventually trends disappear, he believes that the most effective way of producing and sharing this type of content has a lot to do with the chosen topics. He demonstrated that by saying that a simple chest workout is always going to be a chest workout and that people will continuously look for it in five, ten or fifteen years from now, for instance. Contrarily, Erik, Emily and Mafalda denied ever using IGTV, but Instagram Stories and posts instead, on a regular basis. Mafalda explained that Stories, by being a spontaneous product of the moment, has little editing, and that it can mirror reality in a way that motivates and brings people closer. Margarida stated that IGTV requires some editing, which she does not have enough time to dedicate herself to that feature. However, Margarida

and Erik referred that they make use of Instagram Highlights, although it is something that Erik feels like is something he needs to work on. Yet, Margarida has everything separated in her Highlights by training, food and supplementation, among other things that she finds interesting.

In terms of the video content creation, Erik's and Mafalda's strategy is very simple and only requires their phones. Erik said that he usually films his clients' workouts for around ten out of sixty minutes, and then edits it for about five minutes, which can give a total of approximately fifteen to twenty minutes for everything. Depending on how detailed Emily wants her videos, some edits can take up from a few minutes to an hour, depending on. Since she considers herself to be artsy and creative, she said that, most of the time, she comes up with the moves on the spot and that they turn out better than the ones she plans a lot because, if she thinks too much about it, she tends to get carried away and make the workouts more complicated than they need to be. Similarly, Bruno said that ideas can appear and he writes the topics in five minutes, but, other times, he spends more than one day thinking about something. There are videos that take longer because he said he sort of sees the shots in his head. However, if something requires him to do a fitness research, then it can take a little longer. Margarida found it hard to answer because she said that it depends on when she might be having a creative moment. For her, it can take hours or be something more spontaneous, since she views Instagram as moments. In this case, she confessed that if she likes something, she will post it right away, without putting much thought on that. Mafalda shares information every day, which places her as the one who shares more videos in a consistent matter. That derives from her purpose to motivate her followers to make the most of their day to day life and longevity. Erik publishes video content approximately around two or three times a week, in order to put together a fitness video educational page where people are actually learning and taking away knowledge, rather than just looking at shirtless pictures of him. Margarida tries to film some exercises, especially when she goes to the gym to have a specific class, or when she finds an emptier gym. Regarding frequency, her sequence varies a bit over the weeks, but Margarida likes to post video content, at least, two to three times a week. Though, she tries to update her social media videos every day, especially on her training days, to keep track of what she has done, where she is going, and how she can do it. Also, her goal is to inspire people, which is common for everyone. In

terms of periodicity, Bruno shares at least 1 video per week, on Sundays, at half past eight in the evening, which is pre-established. For Emily and Margarida, it is a matter of time. Emily publishes them whenever she can because she is a super busy person. Her main purpose is to share and spread knowledge, which she thinks is the best way to help people. When asked if they had any support staff for producing their video content, only Bruno responded affirmatively. He explained that, even though he is the one who thinks and writes down the fitness ideas for videos, him and his colleague occasionally do some brainstorming. Besides that, he said that his guidelines of how he wants the video to be filmed and edited are always taken into consideration and put into action by his colleagues. Thus, in the end, it is normally a team of four people: Bruno, Luís Piçarra, who shoots the videos, and Alex and Melina, the two editors. In Mafalda's case, she used to have help only when she created a YouTube channel. Though, when she shut it down due to lack of time, she stopped having that kind of help. Margarida, Erik and Emily assured that they only rely on themselves. In fact, Emily disclosed that the only support she gets is a foam roller standing up and a water bottle on top of it to set her phone against to self-record.

4.1.5. Followers

All of the interviewees declared to have a good and healthy relationship with their followers. While Emily tries to keep things more fitness related and less of her private life, because she already had to deal with a stalker in the past. She does not feel really comfortable talking to the camera even though she is actually extremely outgoing in person but she wants to help as many people as possible and post things that will do that. In contrast, Margarida is more open. Margarida and Mafalda feel like they try to read and answer all or at least almost all of the comments or direct messages because they think that their followers value that effort and it brings them closer. Also, Margarida said that that feedback is good, not only for her personal and professional development, but to improve the content she shares on social media. Erik also tries to reply to every comment, but says that, in what comes to direct messages, he gets really busy and does not reply to all of them. Bruno said that, when he is approached by followers on the street, they get the idea that he is, in fact, just like in the videos, mostly due to his way of speaking in the videos. For instance, he uses a lot of 'you',

rather than ‘you guys’, and that makes them feel free to go talk to him and ask questions. Overall, he has gained so much of people’s trust throughout the past five years that, whenever someone pops up with a bad comment, the other followers jump in and defend him, in a way that he does not even have to say anything at all.

Dealing with if they felt that their content on social media had influenced at least one person into starting working out, they all said that they receive daily positive feedback. There are people saying that Emily’s workout videos are very useful, others say that they feel incredibly inspired by Mafalda’s transformation, that they also changed their lifestyle to a healthier one. Likewise, for Erik, that actually was the reason for why he started his career: by helping out people to achieve their fitness goals. Margarida has a similar opinion: she acknowledged that the main reason for her to have a public Instagram account and do the content sharing is all about people, and not so much for herself. She added that if she can change the behavior of one, two, ten or twenty people, then she will gladly continue because that is enough for her. Sometimes Bruno has doubts about the messages he gets, but realizes that people are genuine when they meet him face-to-face or adapt their discourse to him in the messages.

4.2. Video content analysis

Similar to how the data collected from the interviews was presented, in the video content analysis, the themes were structured according to clusters, in order to outline the patterns that I encountered in the videos. Therefore, I came up with the macro variables *content*, *composition*, and *distribution*. Successively, the semantic categories *type*, *participants*, *action*, *location*, *duration*, *orientation*, *frame size*, *camera angle*, *sound*, *postproduction*, *additional elements*, *channel*, and *device* comprised in those variables were defined according to the processes of inventory and classification of the categorization process, in order to isolate and classify the elements in an organized way (appendices I to S).

4.2.1. Content

The *content* variable includes the *type*, *participants*, *action*, *location* and *duration* categories. In regard to what type of videos do fitness digital influencers publish, the most used on Instagram was what can be expressed as “exercise demonstration”. In terms of who is featured in them, they were always the interviewees themselves, Bruno, Emily, Erik, Mafalda and Margarida. Yet, there were exceptions: while Mafalda, Margarida, Erik and Emily showcased exercises excerpts of their own workouts, Erik and Emily also did that with their clients: the models Madi Teeuws and Kelsey Merrit, respectively, in the selected videos. However, Emily’s videos of her working out can be better categorized as a “how-to/ tutorial video”, since she gave instructions of which exercises to do and how, by exemplifying them, similar to what Bruno did on YouTube. Moreover, since both videos were “how-to/ tutorials”, Bruno had other people featured in them, João Melo and Luís Piçarra, to help him in fulfilling the needs of that type of video. Besides this, Margarida also made use of the “motivational” type of video, speaking directly to the camera, as if she was talking to her followers face-to-face, encouraging them to workout. Thus, in terms of the action, the practice of physical exercise was always a constant, whether there was someone working out or explaining how to do a specific movement correctly, or both. Moreover, the most chosen location to record the videos were, indeed, gyms, even though some were also done outdoors or in CrossFit boxes⁴⁶. In what concerns the duration of the videos on Instagram, the shortest lasted for 22 seconds and the longest lasted for 1 minute and 37 seconds. The average length was 1 minute and 20 seconds. Though, on YouTube, the duration of the videos ranged between 4 minutes and 19 seconds and 11 minutes and 3 seconds, with an average of 8 minutes.

4.2.2. Composition

The *composition* variable includes the *orientation*, *frame size*, *camera angle*, *sound*, *postproduction* and *additional elements* categories. Accordingly, the most used video orientation on Instagram was the vertical one, also known as portrait mode. On YouTube,

⁴⁶ A box is a specific type of gym for CrossFit.

the horizontal orientation, or landscape, was the chosen one. The only exception in this category was one of Margarida's videos on Instagram, in which she chose the horizontal orientation. In terms of frame sizes, they were essentially eye level⁴⁷ full shots, even though other shots also ranged between high and low angles⁴⁸. While Emily and Bruno were the ones who simply used full shots, Margarida's most used them, as well as close-up shots. Erik stuck to full⁴⁹ and medium shots⁵⁰; but Mafalda used a wider variety of shots, such as close-ups⁵¹, medium close-ups⁵² and wide shots⁵³. Furthermore, Bruno also used reaction shots⁵⁴. In regard to the camera angles, Erik and Emily only used still and tracking shots⁵⁵, which were also used by Mafalda, Margarida and Bruno. Though, both Mafalda and Margarida used the face to camera⁵⁶, the point-of-view⁵⁷ and establishing shots⁵⁸ as well. Moreover, Mafalda's videos even had a pan⁵⁹ and boomerangs⁶⁰, and Bruno's videos had a tilt⁶¹, a master⁶² and 2-shots⁶³. In what concerns the sound, every video had, at least, pure ambient sound, which was Mafalda's case. Others had ambient sound but with music too, like Erik's and Emily's videos. Margarida also had music in one of her videos, however, the song was

⁴⁷ Eye level means that the shot taken with the camera approximately at human eye level, resulting in a neutral effect on the audience.

⁴⁸ High angle means that the subject is photographed from above eye level. Low angle means that the subject is photographed from below eye level.

⁴⁹ A full shot frames characters from head to toes, with the subject roughly filling the frame. The emphasis tends to be more on action and movement.

⁵⁰ A medium shot is when a person is usually viewed from the waist up (Schenk & Long, 2012).

⁵¹ A close-up is a "shot where the subject fills the majority of the frame. If the subject is a person, the shot will consist primarily of the person's head and shoulders" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 449).

⁵² A medium close-up shot is a "slightly wider shot than a close-up. Usually like a sculptured "bust" – head, neck, shoulder, upper torso" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 100).

⁵³ A wide shot is a "shot that shows a whole area, usually full-figure in the case of people" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 100).

⁵⁴ A reaction shot shows the character's reaction to the shot that has preceded it.

⁵⁵ A tracking shot is a moving shot that pushes the camera through the scene (Schenk & Long, 2012).

⁵⁶ A face to camera shot refers to when the subject films himself.

⁵⁷ A point-of-view is a "shot where the camera shows the point of view of one of the characters" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 100).

⁵⁸ An establishing shot establishes an overview of the scene that follows, usually used in the beginning of a sequence.

⁵⁹ A pan is a "side-to-side movement of the camera, where the camera rotates around its base. The resulting motion is what you would see if you stood in one place and turned your head from side to side" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 101).

⁶⁰ A boomerang takes a burst of photos and stitches them together into a high-quality mini video that plays forward and backward.

⁶¹ A tilt is "similar to a pan, but the camera tilts up and down. Analogous to tilting your head up or down" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 101).

⁶² A master shot is "usually a wide, often static shot that covers all the action in a scene. Master shots "establish" the scene – its location, geography, participants, and tone" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 100).

⁶³ A 2-shot is a shot in which two subjects appear in the same frame. It is "used to cover a dialogue scene between two actors. Both actors are visible, usually from mid-torso up" (Schenk & Long, 2012: 100).

added with the feature named Instagram Music. Also, one of Margarida's videos was mute, which was the only one with this characteristic. Besides this, Margarida and Bruno spoke to the camera, which corresponds to the voice element. Additionally, Bruno had occasional audio effects. On Instagram, while some did not edit anything, like Erik and Emily, Mafalda and Margarida only made use of Instagram filters to adjust the colors of their videos. Whereas, on Bruno's YouTube videos, the postproduction involved video editing, in terms of building the narrative through several shots, video effects (slow-motion, for instance), video transitions, color correction and graphics. Among the additional elements available to add in overlay to the videos on Instagram Stories, both Mafalda and Margarida used text, emojis⁶⁴ and gifs⁶⁵. Mafalda also used tags⁶⁶, and the text she wrote had to do with rounds and repetitions of exercises, and hours at the time. Likewise, Margarida's texts not only referred to what kind of workout and exercises she had done, but also motivation phrases, and how many kilometers she had just finished running. In addition, one of Margarida's videos had discourse, in which she tried to push and motivate her followers by talking about her workouts, the adjustments in her workout plan, and how hard it can be do train by herself and not lose focus. When publishing on Instagram Stories, Erik used text to share a motivational phrase and tags to identify the location and who was filming him. When publishing on an Instagram regular post, Erik only made use of the description area to describe the full workout in a more detailed matter, with the rounds and repetitions of the exercises done, and tag his client, who was on the video. Emily also wrote the combinations of her workout on the video description, but added a motivational phrase in the end of the text. Though, she was the only one who put text in overlay on an Instagram regular post like a title. In her video on Instagram Stories, Emily only tagged her client. Likewise, in Bruno's case, he used a lot of text throughout the video, such as oracles to identify who was featured in the video (for instance: "Bruno Salgueiro, duplo profissional e personal trainer"), and the stages of a specific movement, alongside with the most important ideas one should be retaining while watching his video. Also, Bruno put his logo, videos and images in overlay to give examples about what he was talking about; signs such as a check mark to let people know that that was the correct posture; and sponsorships' publicity.

⁶⁴ Emojis are ideograms (graphic symbols that represent an idea or a concept) and smileys (stylized representation of a smiling humanoid face) used in electronic messages and web pages.

⁶⁵ A gif is a lossless format for image files that supports both animated and static images.

⁶⁶ A tag on Instagram is one manner to indicate the subject(s) of a photo or video.

4.2.3. Distribution

The *distribution* variable includes the *channel* and *device* categories. To Emily, Erik, Mafalda and Margarida, Instagram Stories were the most used distribution channel, while, for Bruno, it was YouTube. Though, Erik and Emily also published videos of full workouts⁶⁷ on regular Instagram posts. While Emily focused on workout videos of herself, Erik opted to record a few exercises of one of his clients. They both published six videos on a single post, like a video carousel. Regarding the used devices, almost everyone's custom choice appeared to be smartphones. However, in Bruno's case, it was a professional camera.

4.3. Discussion

Firstly, the fitness digital influencers elected video as having more impact than photos in general. Even though videos in regular posts may not get as many likes as photos, they get more 'saves' and 'sents', according to the fitness digital influencer Erik Anderson. This could mean that, since videos are not static contents, people's attention may deviate, in regard to the attention economy⁶⁸ concept. Nowadays, especially in platforms like Instagram and YouTube, there is an endless amount of content available, which leads to less attention to every single post that pops up in everyone's social media feeds. However, the 'saves' and 'sents' are seen to be as important as likes⁶⁹ because it means that people are not only saving the videos, and perhaps seeing them later over and over, and even reproducing them, but sending them to more people, resulting in more views, which may have a positive effect in terms of gathering more people around the fitness videos' world⁷⁰, and fitness itself.

Furthermore, according to the interviews and the video content analysis, the used video production strategies were "exercise demonstrations"; "how-to/ tutorials"; and

⁶⁷ By full workouts, it means that each type of exercise made during a workout was recorded, and not that the entire workout was recorded and published.

⁶⁸ Addressed in the Mobile devices and online video sub-chapter (1.5.).

⁶⁹ To the extent that the like mechanism works as attention currency.

⁷⁰ Like a snowball effect.

“motivational” videos⁷¹, being the first one the most employed. The people featured in those videos were the fitness digital influencers themselves, with occasional appearances of clients on Instagram “exercise demonstration” videos, and guests on YouTube’s “how-to/ tutorial” videos. Concerning the role of the *producer* proposed by Axel Bruns (2012) and the idea of consumer professionalization, the interviewees affirmed that they only depended on themselves to do the work related to the creation of video content, both filming and editing. Yet, that only applied to those who used Instagram as the main platform. On YouTube, since the contents have longer durations and involve more production, the help of more people was needed, whether it was for filming or editing the raw materials. In terms of the videos’ durations⁷², the average length on Instagram was 1 minute and 20 seconds, with the shortest being 22 seconds and the longest being 1 minute and 37 seconds. This corresponds to the micro-videos’ category⁷³, which is a new form of user-generated content on social media platforms that emerged due to the users’ diminished attention and time. However, it contrasts with the contents of longer formats. Accordingly, the average video length on YouTube was 8 minutes. Additionally, in terms of how they record their videos, the fitness digital influencers used mostly their smartphones for Instagram videos and a professional camera for YouTube videos. Overall, the practice of physical exercise was the common feature in every video. Excerpts of workouts were shown; the proper form and correct techniques in specific exercises were demonstrated; the common mistakes on popular exercises were highlighted; and instructions of which exercises to do and how were given. Moreover, the locations were gyms, outdoors or CrossFit boxes.

Besides this, the sharing frequency was generally daily or weekly on Instagram. Whereas, on YouTube, Bruno pre-established that one video per week would be published at the same specific hours. In terms of distribution, the interviewees preferred Instagram Stories, due to the fact that they are a spontaneous product of the moment with little editing, which can mirror reality, in a way that can motivate and bring people closer. However, they used a lot of regular Instagram posts and YouTube too. Parallely, the swipe up feature on Instagram

⁷¹ These are ways of encouraging followers to tackle their exercise sessions with energy and determination, winning the audience over with positivity.

⁷² According to Dhillon (2018), Instagram videos max out on engagement at a length of 30 seconds, while it is four times that for YouTube. Also, YouTube engagement on videos does not differ between 4 minutes videos and 10 minutes videos. When on YouTube, people are expected to be more patient with the content.

⁷³ The short online videos’ topic is addressed in the Mobile devices and online video sub-chapter (1.5.).

Stories was mentioned as fundamental to link content from other platforms, such as YouTube, for instance. Also, the social media platforms that the interviewees use the most to share their content were, indeed, Instagram, which could be complemented with blogs, according to Margarida; and YouTube, which could be complemented with Instagram, according to Bruno. To Burgess & Green (2018), this practice of cross-platform model not only amplifies the creative and relational labour required to maintain a successful presence, but reduces the dependency of the creator on their main platform. Though, only two of the five interviewees made use of more than one platform – Emily, Erik and Mafalda stuck to Instagram only.

Regarding the videos' orientation on Instagram, the portrait mode (vertical) was the most used. As it was explained in the theoretical framework, the “television formatted” videos on a horizontal screen are considered to be outdated, which is leading to the natural progression of going from traditional 16:9 videos to full-screen vertical videos: the Stories. The mobile-native vertical format allows content to be more engaging since it is shot casually and quickly through the Instagram app's camera. Yet, on YouTube, the horizontal orientation, or landscape, is still the default. In what concerns the frame sizes, they were essentially eye level full shots, which framed the people from head to toes, emphasizing on action and movement. In terms of camera angle, the most used and important was the tracking shot, which moved throughout the shot to see the integral movements. In regard to the sound, most of the videos only had music and ambient sound. Others featured discourse, which was used to motivate the followers. The fitness digital influencers also had the option to use additional elements, such as text, emojis, gifs and tags, which not only complemented what they were showing, but also added meaning to their content. Thus, the overlay texts in the videos were mostly used to write the types of workouts, exercises' rounds and repetitions; motivation phrases; and tags to identify locations and people. In terms of the Instagram regular posts' description area, it was used to describe the full workout in a more detailed matter, with the rounds and repetitions of exercises, and motivational phrases in the end of the text too. On Instagram, while some did not edit anything in postproduction, others made use of Instagram filters on Stories to adjust the colors of their videos. After all, for the most part, Stories are all about the sharing of behind-the-scenes' moments, as spontaneous and casual as they can be (Dhillon, 2019). In contrast, on YouTube videos, the postproduction

involved video editing, in terms of building the narrative through several shots, video effects (like slow-motion, for instance), video transitions, color correction and graphics.

Additionally, the reasons behind the digital influencers' interest in fitness were: having started to practice sports from very young ages, which led to physical exercise becoming an integral part of their lives, and also their jobs; watching videos of other influencers, such as bodybuilders, on social media platforms such as Instagram and YouTube (which eventually triggered the pursuit of a personal training career); fighting a serious eating disorder, and thus, becoming addicted to the gym; and the urgent need to lose weight and stop having a sedentary life, which, after starting to see body changes, working out became an addiction. In terms of what motivates the interviewees to share content regarding workouts on social media are: the lack of fitness tutorials in Portugal; being encouraged by friends; showing physical progress and transformations; people asking for help and tips to guide them; and share knowledge from previous experience to help other people achieve their fitness goals. In many ways, the similarities between a digital influencer and opinion leaders are evident, due to their ability to be open to receive new messages and influence others on certain topics (Uzunoglu and Kip, 2014). Also, they believe that their content stands out due to several factors: demonstrating the healthy part of their lives; sharing different training plans that can be done anywhere, such as body weight workouts that people can save and do if they do not have access to a gym; show that it is possible to combine a normal job with a healthy lifestyle; showcase celebrity clients and their different types of bodies; the type of communication; giving tips; the good quality of content in terms of image, sound and editing; and exemplifying the exercises through tutorials.

Furthermore, the interviewees identified fitness digital influencers as someone who should have a lot of followers; be passionate about fitness; not limit themselves as self-taught and surround themselves with professionals; be fitness knowledgeable and share information in a responsible manner; be able to transmit a message of daily motivation to those who need a push to workout; show that effort, technique and experience are the keys to success and better results; give not only tips but the tools necessary and explain them for someone to feel that they can try them on their own; remind that, no matter how many followers they have, they have a big responsibility towards their followers because people put their trust in them;

and have a healthy and balanced lifestyle, which is a combination of physical, mental and food balance (wellness). Thus, there was the opinion that a fitness Instagram coach would be the correct definition of someone that impersonates the previous characteristics. However, they also mentioned negative aspects: some thought that a lot of fitness digital influencers trick other people into buying their programs; promise that they will look like them afterwards; only take pictures and videos and do not know much about fitness, probably because they did not study it. They all follow other fitness digital influencers, whether they are national or international examples. Apart from everyone, only Bruno said that he could not think of any national example, since the quality was thought to be null. He considered that 90% of the fitness digital influencers are only focused on the commercial side from a business perspective. Though, they all agreed that there had been a rise in the amount of fitness digital influencers, and that that abundance can be interesting since they can cover completely different segments. Yet, they also agreed that it led to a market saturation, where influencers are like entrepreneurs in terms of selling fitness programs and that people only want to become famous from it, partly because they are in ages in which appearances matter, even if they deny it. Furthermore, while they see the existence of other fitness influencers as inspiration, healthy competition and drivers to better themselves, they also believe that there are two different types of fitness digital influencers: the ones who actually share fitness videos and knowledge, and the ones who only post pictures of themselves looking insane aesthetically and just showing off, with the sole purpose of obtaining fame through these type of businesses. Regarding the interviewees' perceptions of the future of fitness digital influencers, they think that the industry will keep growing and evolve, and so will the influencers, even if that means that it will shift away from bodybuilding. They know that only the ones who are educated and passionate enough, and consistent in creating new, interesting and safe material, will have a place in the digital fitness world, and less sharing of "good angles".

Overall, the relationships between the interviewed fitness digital influencers and their followers are good and healthy, as they receive constant positive feedback. The fact that they sometimes address the audience by 'you', especially in YouTube videos, instead of generalizing, conveys more authenticity. According to Tolson (2010), the use of everyday

language and the exhibition of confidence through body language⁷⁴, can bring the digital influencer closer to the viewers, transmitting the feeling of as if they were participating in a personal conversation. In addition, some of the interviewees try to read and answer to most of the comments and direct messages, which makes it another way of building a strong relationship.

⁷⁴ Such as making eye contact with the camera when having a conversation with followers.

Conclusion

“Content is king.”

(Bill Gates, 1996)

In this study, I set out to identify which video production strategies are used by fitness digital influencers on social media platforms, in order to persuade their audience into starting or continuing to work out. Purportedly, it was possible to distinguish several different strategies. First of all, video was thought to have more impact than photos when it came to fitness and workouts, which can be posed as a strategy itself. In what concerns the types of videos, there were three: “exercise demonstrations”; “how-to/ tutorials”; and “motivational” videos, being the first one the most used. Regarding the content itself, the practice of physical exercise in workout environments was the common feature in every video. Also, the micro-videos are a strategy as well: in a time when the attention economy prevails and the number of workout videos available is continuously increasing, mostly due to the consumer professionalization, in order for the fitness digital influencers’ content to stand out, it must be objective and extremely straightforward. This is also why Instagram is currently the best platform to distribute content, as it allows the sharing of short vertical videos casually recorded through smartphones (the Instagram Stories), and several videos in a carousel format in regular posts. This way, the content can be more engaging. Parallely, YouTube serves a different purpose and is more focused in tutorials with longer explanations and details. Thus, even though videos on a horizontal screen can be considered to be outdated in some platforms, such as the Instagram case, it prevails as default on YouTube because of its culture and video length. After all, there is no doubt that it is more comfortable for someone to watch a long video on YouTube with the smartphone horizontally. Besides this, the fact that the fitness digital influencers filmed themselves and sometimes public figures in the workout videos is a strategy too. It shows that their content is authentic in the sense that exemplifying what they are trying to explain is far more impactful than simply telling it. At the same time, the behind-the-scenes, through Instagram Stories especially, is the interviewees’ favorite way to do it to capture the followers’ attention. Oddly, with the results I obtained, the IGTV did not succeed in surpassing YouTube with longer videos, as it was

firstly predicted by Instagram. Additionally, tagging the people featured in the videos is another strategy because they normally repost the videos on their accounts (again, applied to the Instagram Stories' case) and thus, more people can have access to it. By doing the filming and editing all by themselves, it only confirms that we are now in an era where autonomy and practicality prevails, and that digital influencers are not only simply opinion leaders but *producers*. Yet, even though the case is different with YouTube, since it involves more production, it was possible to understand that few people are needed to get the job done. Contrasting with Instagram, the content on YouTube is shot with a professional camera. Therefore, Instagram resembles a behind-of-scenes in terms of being more spontaneous (no editing on regular posts and little editing apart from Instagram filters to adjust the videos' colors), and YouTube has more to do with short films with narratives created in pre-production and edited in post-production (which involves building the narrative through several shots, video effects, video transitions, color correction and graphics). Even the videos' sharing frequency was found different across platforms: on YouTube, the strategy was to publish a video at the same time and day of every week to keep the audience engaged; on Instagram, the strategy was the daily sharing of videos, which is another type of follower engagement, in terms of constantly accompanying the lives of the fitness digital influencers. The use of the swipe up feature on Instagram Stories to link content from other platforms, such as YouTube, and the use of other platforms to complement the main ones can be considered strategies as well: this practice of cross-platform model amplifies the creative and relational labour required to maintain a successful presence and helps reducing the dependency of the influencer on their main platform. Furthermore, the videos were essentially eye level full shots, and because it framed people from head to toes, emphasizing on action and movement, it showed the entire action strategically. In terms of camera angle, the most used and important was the tracking shot. Since that shot is characterized by the camera moving accompanying the action to see the integral movements is also a strategy because it provides several angles to see how the exercise is done and what the correct posture is. In regard to the sound, while most of the videos only had music and ambient sound, the "motivational" type of video featured discourse, and that can be a strategy to motivate the followers by talking to the camera as if they were having a face-to-face conversation. Still, the most strategic additional element was text, both in overlay and in the description areas because they allowed an easier sharing of

types of workouts, exercises' rounds and repetitions; motivation phrases; and tags to identify locations and people in a more detailed manner.

In an attempt to answer the complementary question about triggered the fitness digital influencers' interest in fitness, they all have the same foundation, which is having been surrounded by physical exercise throughout their lives (independently of being imposed or not by someone, or at what point of their lives it appeared), and the pursuit of a better and healthier body. On another level, what drives and motivates fitness digital influencers into becoming, indeed, influencers, and sharing content regarding workouts on social media was also very similar too. After having proof that their method was working for themselves, the will to show physical progress and transformations to inspire others began to rise: the goal was always to help others. In many ways, the similarities between a digital influencer and opinion leaders are evident, due to their ability to be open to receive new messages and influence others on certain topics. Thus, above all, it has to do with sharing their success or other people's results, and more importantly, the process of getting those results, in order to inspire others to start or continue their fitness journeys. After all, people will do things that they see other people doing.

In terms of the definition and role, fitness digital influencers must be passionate about fitness; be constantly learning; be able to transmit a message of motivation; give and explain tips; bear in mind that it is a big responsibility when it comes to sharing workout videos because people put their trust in them; and have a healthy and balanced lifestyle, which is a combination of physical, mental and food balance (wellness). However, since the interviewees identified a downside to the definition and role, some of the interviewees did not consider themselves as influencers. They explained that a lot of people that supposedly are fitness digital influencers try to trick their followers and see the social media platforms as a commercial business perspective to obtain fame and money, which goes against everything a fitness digital influencer should do or be. Thus, while they saw the existence of other fitness influencers as inspiration, healthy competition and drivers to better themselves, and gave examples of fellow national and international professionals, curiously, there was one interviewee that believed that the quality of Portuguese digital influencers was extremely poor, as he failed to give national examples. Nevertheless, even though the reasons were all

different and unique, the interviewees believed that their content stood out, and that is an interesting thing because it can cover several aspects in what concerns the fitness world. Apart from that, it is thought that the influencers industry and the fitness market niche will keep growing and evolve. With constant positive feedback, the relationships between the interviewed fitness digital influencers and their followers were considered to be good and healthy, probably because their content were made to help their followers so there was no type of negativity between them. Also, when the audience is addressed by 'you', it conveys more authenticity and brings them closer.

In essence, it became clear that it does not matter to have a lot more interviews or analyze more videos because it all came down to the fact that there is no difference between Portuguese and American fitness digital influencers, which means that the countries or locations do not make the strategies far different from each other, and if they are micro or macro influencers, in terms of number of followers. However, that comes as no surprise since we are living in a connected world so the digital influencers on social media can influence and be influenced by others, as the interviewees confirmed. Thus, independently from where they are from, the video strategies end up being mixed because the goals are all the same: the improvement of the human body and the search for a healthier lifestyle, and the sharing of how to do it.

Nonetheless, throughout this investigation, it was possible to identify some limitations. The first one is related to my initial objective: besides identifying which video production strategies do fitness digital influencers use, I also meant to test them from the followers' perceptions, in terms of if the videos really make a difference when it comes to actual motivation to start working out. However, with the process of reviewing the literature and the development of the research, it was justified to shift the focus of the study exclusively to the digital influencers' perspectives and stop at the moment in which they publish their videos. Hence, this limitation was recognized in advance and the focus was adjusted. Besides this, the study is focused in two specific regions, Portugal and the United States of America. For that reason, the conclusions cannot be applied worldwide, even though the strategies found were similar in both countries. Also, the current study can be considered limited given that it is based on only five in-depth interviews and, consequently, the sample is relatively

small, even though this is an exploratory study. For this matter, the fact that it is not easy to obtain faster or even any responses at all from digital influencers proved intangible to gather more data for the time allowed for the research to develop. Also, the frequency and consistency of published content were determinant factors for the choice of whom to interview, and there weren't that many fitness digital influencers posting on a daily or weekly basis. Thus, finding a big number of fitness digital influencers that publish videos actively and frequently was another limitation. This way, it is safe to confirm that this research does not generalize the types of video production strategies used on social media. What this study does is give a glimpse of what the selected fitness digital influencers have been posting on Instagram and YouTube, and how they make use of both platforms. Finally, even though fitness inspiration posts and videos can have a positive impact on social media audiences, stirring up competition and motivation for people to increase their efforts during their workouts, the fact that not all of the interviewees have a degree or a course related to fitness, it is impossible to verify the accuracy or credibility of the information provided in the analyzed videos. Similarly, it is not my place to affirm if the followers know how to discern what is good information and what is not, which was something that the interviewees mentioned themselves: the concern about the spread of misinformation in the social media ecosystem.

My suggestion for future research is directly related to the identified limitations of this research study. If someone were to pursue the thematic of the influence dynamics of workout videos on social media, a greater sampling of analyzed videos should be considered, so that more patterns could be identified or confirm the ones I identified. Also, conducting more interviews would allow the extraction of more insights that could explain this growing fitness trend. Besides that, on another level, I believe that it would be useful to investigate the reception dimension of the videos, that is, the followers' thoughts and perceptions regarding the identified video content production strategies. The purpose would be to understand if they actually have a practical impact on people's daily lives. Ideally, a questionnaire survey would be the most effective way to obtain that kind of data, in order to comprehend to where the influence through video on social media platforms can go. In addition, while I was searching and collecting videos to be integrated on my sample, I realized that, besides workout videos, there is also another growing trend among the fitness

world that is the subject of a lot of other videos: content related to healthy foods and recipes. Thus, another fruitful line of inquiry could be addressing nutrition, to the extent that videos with that theme on social media platforms may influence the start and maintenance of a healthy and consistent diet, which is another component of a healthy lifestyle.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Consent form

Consent form to take part in research

- I, _____, agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that I allow the use of my identity for study purposes.
- I understand that extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation.
- I understand that I am free to contact the researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Place and date: _____, ____/____/____

Signature

Appendix B – Interviews’ script for Portuguese fitness digital influencers

1. Quando é que surgiu o teu interesse pelo fitness? Consegues descrever-me a tua jornada de fitness e o que te motivou a partilhar opiniões e recomendações nas redes sociais, com enfoque na prática de exercício físico?
2. Relativamente à tua conta no Instagram, criaste-a com o propósito de hoje em dia ou foi evoluindo ao longo do tempo?
3. Utilizas outras plataformas para além do Instagram? De que forma é que estas complementam o que desenvolves no Instagram?
4. Para ti, o que é um influenciador digital de fitness? O que é que consideras fundamental para um influenciador digital de fitness ser bem-sucedido?
5. Consideras que houve, de certa forma, um ‘boom’ influenciadores digitais de fitness nos últimos tempos?
6. Como encaras a existência de outros influenciadores digitais de fitness no Instagram? Competição, fonte de inspiração, ou outro?
7. Segues o trabalho dos teus colegas? Se sim, de quem?
8. Comparativamente a outras contas de fitness no Instagram em Portugal, o que achas que distingue o teu conteúdo dos outros? Existe alguma coisa em particular na sua conta que achas que levou ao teu sucesso como influenciador?
9. De que forma consideras mais importante para partilhares o teu conteúdo: através de vídeos ou de fotografias?
10. Quais costumes utilizar para publicar o teu conteúdo: publicações normais; Instagram Stories; Instagram Highlights; IGTV? Porque achas que essas são as melhores formas de apresentar o teu conteúdo?
11. Quanto tempo, em média, dedicas a pensar, criar, editar e publicar o teu conteúdo de vídeo?
12. Com que frequência é que publicas vídeos e quais são os principais objetivos dos mesmos e da partilha deles?
13. Tens ajuda no que toca à gravação ou edição do teu conteúdo de vídeo ou fazes tudo sozinho/a?
14. Como descreves a tua relação com os teus seguidores?

15. Sentes que o teu conteúdo tem tido sucesso no sentido de ter influenciado alguém a adotar um tipo de comportamento, nomeadamente, começar a praticar exercício físico?
16. Qual é a tua opinião sobre o futuro dos influenciadores digitais de fitness?

Appendix C – Interviews’ script for American fitness digital influencers

1. When did you become interested in fitness? Can you tell me about your fitness journey’s background and what motivated you to share opinions and recommendations on social media, focused on physical exercise?
2. Regarding your Instagram account, did you initially create it for this purpose or did it evolve throughout the time?
3. Do you use other platforms besides Instagram? If so, does any of these help you complement what you develop on Instagram?
4. In your opinion, what is a fitness digital influencer? What do you think someone needs in order to become a successful fitness digital influencer?
5. Do you think that there has been a rise in the amount of fitness digital influencers?
6. How do you see the existence of other fitness influencers on the Instagram platform?
7. Competition, source of inspiration, or other?
8. Do you follow your colleagues’ work? Whose?
9. Compared to other fitness Instagram pages, what do you think distinguishes your content from others? Is there anything in particular in your account that you feel has led to your success as an influencer?
10. Which of these do you consider has more impact when it comes to sharing your content: videos or photos? Why?
11. Which of the following do you use to publish your content: regular posts, Instagram Stories; Instagram Highlights; IGTV? Why do you think that is the best way to deliver your content?
12. How much time do you devote to think, create, edit and publish video content?
13. How often do you publish your videos and what are its the main purposes?
14. Do you have any support staff for producing your video content or do you do it yourself?
15. What is your relationship with your followers?
16. Do you feel that the content you have posted on social media has influenced at least one person to adopt a particular behavior?
17. What are your thoughts for the future of fitness digital influencers?

Appendix D – Interview 1: Mafalda Sena

1: Quando é que surgiu o teu interesse pelo fitness? Consegues descrever-me a tua jornada de fitness e o que te motivou a partilhar opiniões e recomendações nas redes sociais, com enfoque na prática de exercício físico?

“Comecei há cerca de três anos, quando percebi que precisava urgentemente de perder peso e deixar de ter uma vida sedentária. Conheci pessoas que me motivaram dentro do ginásio, mulheres que me inspiraram, *personal trainers* que me ensinaram como fazer os exercícios, e, a partir do momento que deixou de ser um bicho de sete cabeças, comecei a ver mudanças no meu corpo e veio o bichinho e o vício pelo desporto.”

2: Relativamente à tua conta no Instagram, criaste-a com o propósito de hoje em dia ou foi evoluindo ao longo do tempo?

“A minha transformação acabou por inspirar aqueles que me rodeiam e começaram a pedir a minha ajuda e dicas para os orientar, por isso iniciei este projeto para poder partilhar as minhas receitas com mais pessoas, a motivar para um estilo de vida mais saudável através de receitas simples elaboradas por mim. Onde mostro que não é um bicho de sete cabeças cozinhar de forma saudável e nutritiva. Sempre adorei cozinhar e ajudar a minha mãe e avó a preparar os almoços e jantares; depois foi só juntar o útil ao agradável e desenvolvi esta paixão pela cozinha saudável e exercício físico, ao qual dedico grande parte do meu tempo livre. Eu adoro criar; e sou apaixonada por alimentos saudáveis e nutritivos (com sabor!). Além disso, adoro a sensação de captar através de fotografias e vídeos, essas minhas criações. Comecei o *Senasaudáveis* com o desejo que tenho de poder partilhar todo este novo estilo de vida que me deixou bem mais feliz e com energia.”

3: Utilizas outras plataformas para além do Instagram? De que forma é que estas complementam o que desenvolves no Instagram?

“Sim gosto muito do Pinterest para tirar ideias! Mais nível visual do que conteúdo prático de receitas.”

4: Para ti, o que é um influenciador digital de fitness? O que é que consideras fundamental para um influenciador digital de fitness ser bem-sucedido?

“Acho que essencialmente tem de conseguir passar a mensagem de motivação diária a quem precisa de um empurrão. Tem de conseguir mostrar que é preciso algum esforço, mas que a técnica e a experiência são o principal para melhores resultados. Acho que se não é profissional da área (como eu) se deve rodear de bons profissionais e mostrar que são eles que sabem e que ajudam; não basta sermos autodidatas.”

5: Consideras que houve, de certa forma, um ‘boom’ influenciadores digitais de fitness nos últimos tempos?

“Acho, sem dúvida. Até porque nos últimos tempos houve um ‘boom’ de redes sociais... É natural. E há muita gente que acha que pode influenciar e não tem essa aptidão, mas tenta a sua sorte e vale o que vale. Mas também rapidamente se consegue perceber quem sobrevive porque dá trabalho, e tens que gostar. Isto de ser influenciador tem muitas coisas boas, mas tem muito tempo perdido também.”

6: Como encaras a existência de outros influenciadores digitais de fitness no Instagram? Competição, fonte de inspiração, ou outro?

“Sinceramente, tento retirar o melhor de todos aqueles que considero bons influenciadores, seja de que área for. Até porque o *Senasaudáveis* abrange muito mais do que alimentação e exercício físico; é um pouco de tudo o que se passa no dia-a-dia de uma pessoa normal, de quase 30 anos, que trabalha de segunda a sexta-feira e tenta ser o mais ativa possível. E,

portanto, até influenciadores de beleza, cuidados de pele, moda, arquitetura e decoração me interessam. Volto a frisar, dicas e informação que interessa a uma mulher normal.”

7: Segues o trabalho dos teus colegas? Se sim, de quem?

“Sigo claro! Ao nível de receita saudáveis gosto bastante da @artilicious; @anita.healthy; @margarida.dgsantos; ao nível de treinos e exercício físico: @cetegouveia; @saralvesmatos; @maggysantos7.”

8: Comparativamente a outras contas de fitness no Instagram em Portugal, o que achas que distingue o teu conteúdo dos outros? Existe alguma coisa em particular na tua conta que achas que levou ao teu sucesso como influenciadora?

“Acho que o que me distingue é realmente partilhar praticamente 24 horas do meu dia-a-dia e mostrar que é possível ter um trabalho normal e conseguir ter um estilo de vida saudável”.

9: De que forma consideras mais importante para partilhares o teu conteúdo: através de fotografias ou de vídeos?

“Depende. Receitas, muitas vezes o passo-a-passo por vídeo é o ideal assim como para os treinos. Mas uma imagem do resultado final de uma receita para partilhar e poderem guardar a receita é fundamental.”

10: Quais costumas utilizar para publicar o teu conteúdo: publicações normais; Instagram Stories; Instagram Highlights; IGTV? Porque achas que essas são as melhores formas de apresentar o teu conteúdo?

“*Stories*, sem dúvida! Porque é muito do momento; poderem perceber que há pouca ou nenhuma edição. É muito espontâneo e isso aproxima-me das pessoas. Conseguem-se espelhar mais e motivar naquele momento para fazer acontecer.”

11: Quanto tempo, em média, dedicas a pensar, criar, editar e publicar o teu conteúdo de vídeo?

“Depende. Aproveito quando tomo banho, quando vou a conduzir para o trabalho para pensar em receitas novas, por exemplo. Eu partilho informação todos os dias! Fotografo e edito tudo no telemóvel. Muito básico.”

12: Com que frequência é que publicas vídeos e quais são os principais objetivos dos mesmos e da partilha deles?

“Motivar, motivar, motivar! Quero que todos tirem o melhor partido do seu dia-a-dia e que consigam ter longevidade, saúde e que continuem a gostar de comer.”

13: Tens ajuda no que toca à gravação ou edição do teu conteúdo de vídeo ou fazes tudo sozinha?

“Faço tudo sozinha. Tive ajuda quando comecei o canal de YouTube. Quando deixei de ter parei porque não tenho nem *skills* nem tempo para tudo, infelizmente.”

14: Como descreves a tua relação com os teus seguidores?

“Eu gosto e faço questão de ter 95% a 100% de respostas às mensagens diretas e comentários. Acho que dão bastante valor a isso e acho importante para haver mais proximidade.”

15: Sentes que o teu conteúdo tem tido sucesso no sentido de ter influenciado alguém a adotar um tipo de comportamento, nomeadamente, começar a praticar exercício físico?

“Sei e isso deixa-me super contente. Recebo feedbacks diariamente de pessoas que mudaram o estilo de vida por se inspirarem em mim. Quem me dera ter uma Sena na minha vida quando quis começar, porque ter ideias todos os dias de receitas práticas, saborosas e saudáveis ao mesmo tempo não é fácil; porque ver alguém a levantar-se antes das 7 horas da manhã para ir treinar diariamente nos ajuda a perceber que é possível; e porque ver a transformação de alguém nos motiva.”

16: Qual é a tua opinião sobre o futuro dos influenciadores digitais de fitness?

“Acho que quem realmente gosta e se interessa pelo assunto e sabe o que faz vai ter sempre lugar neste mundo digital. Quem só o faz com intuito da fama e ter retorno rápido através de marcas, etc, muito rapidamente vai ver que este não é o lugar ideal. Acho que há alguns, mas poucos, ainda em Portugal, mas são mais os de beleza, moda e culinária em si, do que propriamente fitness.”

Appendix E – Interview 2: Margarida Santos

1: Quando é que surgiu o teu interesse pelo fitness? Consegues descrever-me a tua jornada de fitness e o que te motivou a partilhar opiniões e recomendações nas redes sociais, com enfoque na prática de exercício físico?

“Eu faço desporto desde os três anos. Comecei na natação, no ballet, depois no ténis e foi por volta dos dezoito anos que me inscrevi no ginásio, ou dos 16. Não me lembro; acho que foi dos dezasseis até. O meu interesse pelo fitness assim no geral, ou seja, pelo desporto, que eu não considero assim muito... não gosto muito da palavra fitness, essa é mais a verdade. Acho que foi desde sempre, embora nunca tenha sido uma grande fã. Foi um hábito que os meus pais me inculcaram e acho que hoje em dia, que sou fã obviamente e que não consigo passar sem, teve muito a ver com todo esse background que eu tive quando era mais nova. A partilha de opiniões nas redes sociais e tudo mais só começou há três anos quando eu lancei o blog, porque as minhas amigas diziam sempre que eu devia partilhar alguns conteúdos. Na altura até era mais receitas, ou alguns exercícios, ou quais é que eram as minhas aulas favoritas, e então nasceu o blog, ainda numa altura que as pessoas ainda ligam a alguns blogs e, pronto, posso dizer que não houve um decréscimo assim tão grande até hoje, portanto, pelo menos fico contente. O Instagram depois no início não era bem para partilha desta minha área relacionada ao desporto, mas começou a ser mais porque é uma plataforma onde está muita gente, onde há bastante interesse e de busca rápida de informação. E, portanto, hoje em dia partilho muito mais até no Instagram e no blog do que, por exemplo, no Facebook, que foi uma das ferramentas que utilizei bastante ao início.”

2: Relativamente à tua conta no Instagram, criaste-a com o propósito de hoje em dia ou foi evoluindo ao longo do tempo?

“Acho que já respondi um bocadinho na primeira. O Instagram não foi criado com o propósito de partilhar ideias, isso foi o blog, mas depois começou a ser um sítio onde as pessoas procuravam informação e me faziam algumas perguntas. Então, hoje em dia, é

essencialmente uma partilha do desporto que eu faço, do exercício físico, ou seja, da alimentação também, pronto, e tudo relacionado com o estilo de vida assim mais saudável.”

3: Utilizas outras plataformas para além do Instagram? De que forma é que estas complementam o que desenvolves no Instagram?

“Sim, utilizo o blog www.operacaoointeiro.pt, que é onde eu partilho conteúdos mais longos ou assuntos que eu quero abordar e que acho que no Instagram não vai ser interessante; o Facebook, que na altura era o complemento principal do blog; e pronto, o Instagram, que hoje em dia é onde eu partilho mais coisas, embora no Facebook continue sempre a partilhar artigos que escrevo no blog.”

4: Para ti, o que é um influenciador digital de fitness? O que é que consideras fundamental para um influenciador digital de fitness ser bem-sucedido?

“Para mim, um influenciador digital de fitness tem de ser alguém que partilhe de um estilo de vida saudável e equilibrado. Para mim, Margarida, isso é fundamental. Pode não ser para toda a gente, mas, para mim, um estilo de vida saudável, sem equilíbrio, em várias áreas, ou seja, quando falava de equilíbrio falava de equilíbrio físico, falo de equilíbrio mental, falo de equilíbrio a nível da comida. É fundamental porque, sem isso, viver nos extremos é uma coisa que a longo prazo não funciona e as pessoas normalmente quando procuram um estilo de vida saudável querem procurá-lo a longo prazo. Se não o querem, também não é através do meu Instagram que vão conseguir resultados. Apenas a curto prazo porque eu não acredito nesse método.”

5: Consideras que houve, de certa forma, um ‘boom’ influenciadores digitais de fitness nos últimos tempos?

“Considero que há bastantes influenciadores digitais mais nesta área, mas acho que até pode ser interessante porque trabalhamos todos um bocadinho segmentos mais diferentes e, pronto, e mesmo nas partes que nos podemos complementar, acho que é interessante não haver uma só voz.”

6: Como encaras a existência de outros influenciadores digitais de fitness no Instagram? Competição, fonte de inspiração, ou outro?

“Acho ótimo haver outros influenciadores de fitness. Eu não fui a primeira a aparecer e nem serei certamente a última e, por isso, acho que pode ser um tipo de competição saudável porque, para além de, pelo menos as que eu conheço, me dar lindamente, acho que é uma fonte também de inspiração uns aos outros.”

7: Segues o trabalho dos teus colegas? Se sim, de quem?

“Sigo. A nível internacional, a minha fonte de inspiração é, e sempre foi, a Gabriela Pugliesi. Eu adoro-a. Gosto imenso, imenso, imenso dela porque para além de mostrar a parte da vida saudável e do desporto, não é uma influenciadora que pense só nisso. É uma pessoa que também está ligada a outras áreas e é um bocadinho como eu, que não vivo disto. Isto não é o meu trabalho, isto é assim o meu hobby, uma coisa que eu gosto de fazer, que me dá prazer e que acho que posso ajudar outras pessoas. A nível nacional sigo várias meninas, sigo a @missfit insta, sigo a @vanessamartins, sigo a @a.mariapalma, sigo a @iamisabelsilva, portanto, somos várias.”

8: Comparativamente a outras contas de fitness no Instagram em Portugal, o que achas que distingue o teu conteúdo dos outros? Existe alguma coisa em particular na tua conta que achas que levou ao teu sucesso como influenciadora?

“Acho que para além de mostrar esta parte da vida saudável, mostro muitas vezes que o desporto não é só para quem tem tempo ou só para quem não tem mais nada que fazer, mas sim uma forma de complementar qualquer outro trabalho, qualquer outra área da vida. A nível de conteúdo, espero também que não passe só uma ideia de um corpo bonito ou de uma estética que, de todo que é isso que me move, embora acho que seja um objetivo super legítimo. No meu caso, não é só isso. Acho que o desporto tem várias vertentes e há quem faça para emagrecer, há quem faça para engordar, há quem faça para ter uma barriga lisa, há quem faça para ter um rabo maior, e eu acho que nos encaixamos aqui, pelo menos o que eu tento mostrar, é que qualquer um destes objetivos é válido, mas eu, pessoalmente, não trabalho apenas para um especificamente.”

9: De que forma consideras mais importante para partilhares o teu conteúdo: através de fotografias ou de vídeos?

“Eu partilho muito através de fotografias nos *posts* e vídeos nos *Stories* porque acho que o conteúdo de *posts* é mais uma coisa um bocadinho mais estática, embora já se veja a aparecer muito vídeo. Eu própria acho que é interessante; acho que está a evoluir. Naturalmente, se evoluir, acho que é uma boa forma de partilhar informação. Nos *Stories*, acho que vídeo talvez é o que as pessoas mais procuram quando estão a passar. Se veem um *post* que gostam, secalhar vão aos *Stories* tentar saber mais, e por isso é que muitas vezes eu meto os meus treinos nos *Stories* e não nos *posts*.”

10: Quais costumas utilizar para publicar o teu conteúdo: publicações normais; Instagram Stories; Instagram Highlights; IGTV? Porque achas que essas são as melhores formas de apresentar o teu conteúdo?

“Eu utilizo os *Stories* e os *Highlights*, e o IGTV menos, porque o IGTV já requer alguma edição e, pronto, ultimamente não me tenho dedicado tanto. Mesmo os *Highlights*, tenho tudo separado por treinos, alimentação, suplementação, e entre outras coisas que acho interessante também que complementam. Nos *Stories* é com uma base mais regular. Tento

todos os dias atualizar, sobretudo nos dias que treino, para manter alguma informação do que é que fiz, de onde é que pretendo chegar e como é que o faço.”

11: Quanto tempo, em média, dedicas a pensar, criar, editar e publicar o teu conteúdo de vídeo?

“Esta pergunta é um bocado difícil de responder, sou-te sincera, porque quando tens um trabalho ou um hobby assim mais ligado às redes sociais, há um período em que eu possa estar a ter um momento criativo, quando preciso de tirar alguma fotografia e sei exatamente o que é que quero; pensar numa descrição e publicar, e pronto, aí, dependendo do tipo de fotografia, posso levar entre duas a três horas, mas se for uma coisa mais espontânea, sei lá, tipo estou aqui neste momento e acabei de perceber que quero tirar uma fotografia, tiro e publico, que eu não tenho nada esse problema de todas as minhas publicações terem de ser pensadas ou terem de ser demasiado trabalhadas porque eu sou uma pessoa bastante espontânea nessa área e também agora é a ideia que eu gosto de passar, que isto é uma coisa real. Aliás, isto do Instagram é instantâneo, são momentos, e eu não vou estar a ponderar e a pensar em todos os momentos. Se eu gosto de uma coisa, faço e partilho.”

12: Com que frequência é que publicas vídeos e quais são os principais objetivos dos mesmos e da partilha deles?

“De vídeos, acho que partilho mais quando vou ao ginásio e tenho alguma aula específica e, portanto, é fácil de pôr a gravar e depois partilhar com vocês, ou se tiver num ginásio mais vazio e que possa filmar alguns tipos de exercícios. Portanto, a sequência varia um bocadinho com as semanas, mas pelo menos duas a três vezes por semana gosto de publicar conteúdo de vídeo. O meu objetivo é facultar também às outras pessoas, a não a imitar, mas a ter algumas inspirações do que é que possam fazer. E depois sim, falar nos ginásios delas, falar nos *personal trainers* delas, mesmo através da ajuda da Internet, a pessoa poder ver o que é que pode fazer.”

13: Tens ajuda no que toca à gravação ou edição do teu conteúdo de vídeo ou fazes tudo sozinha?

“Não, não tenho ajuda para já. Faço tudo sozinha.”

14: Como descreves a tua relação com os teus seguidores?

“É uma relação saudável. Sinto que tenho um Instagram que é bastante aberto nisso. Não sou aquela pessoa que recebe mensagens e não responde; acho que nunca fiz isso. Se fiz, alguém que me diga, porque eu acho mesmo que não. Ou aliás, eu odeio ter mensagens que não respondo porque toda a gente merece uma resposta, e, se eu tiver oportunidade nos meus momentos mais mortos, ou num momento em que eu esteja mais ligada aqui ao telefone, eu perco tempo a responder às mensagens, ou pelo menos a ler os comentários e tudo. Eu acho que isso é interessante, tanto para mim a nível de evolução pessoal e profissional, como também a nível de poder melhorar ou não o conteúdo que eu meto nas minhas redes sociais.”

15: Sentes que o teu conteúdo tem tido sucesso no sentido de ter influenciado alguém a adotar um tipo de comportamento, nomeadamente, começar a praticar exercício físico?

“Ah, claro que sim, sem dúvida. Aliás, esse é o principal motivo e a principal causa de eu ter o meu Instagram aberto e fazer as partilhas que faço porque, claro que isto é a minha vida e tenho imenso gosto no que faço, e faço para mim porque já fazia, pratico desporto desde que sou pequenina mas, se eu puder mudar o comportamento de uma, duas, dez, vinte pessoas, então eu vou fazê-lo porque isso para mim é suficiente.”

16: Qual é a tua opinião sobre o futuro dos influenciadores digitais de fitness?

“O futuro é sempre um bocadinho incerto, seja no que diz respeito a nós enquanto influenciadores digitais ou qualquer outra área, mas eu estou aqui disposta a ver como é que

as coisas vão melhorar, como é que as coisas vão evoluir, e nós certamente vamos evoluir com elas. Também no dia em que eu achar que isto possa deixar de fazer sentido, se deixar de fazer, também acho que sou uma pessoa bastante dinâmica e flexível nesse aspeto.”

Appendix F – Interview 3: Erik Anderson

I: When did you become interested in fitness? Can you tell me about your fitness journey's background and what motivated you to share opinions and recommendations on social media, focused on physical exercise?

“Growing up in high school and stuff on YouTube, the fitness kind of like blew up and I always watched this one bodybuilder, Ronnie Coleman. Those were the first videos I had ever seen of someone really working out. He’s incredibly strong, one of the greatest bodybuilders of all time. Then he kind of got into working out and, after his time, then another big famous guy on YouTube [appeared]: his name was Rich Piana and he passed away recently but he had an awesome YouTube series. I got really into it and that made me passionate about working out. Then, from then on, Instagram became a thing and these fitness influencers started blowing up, and I always wanted to be like them. I watched them on Instagram, YouTube, and followed them religiously and that’s kind of what drove me to be a trainer, because I always enjoyed working out more than sports, but I started working out because of sports, and [because] I watched these guys on YouTube. I practiced American football, wrestling and rugby, and then I studied Economics in college, and Finance, and then I went to Bali, and I met this fitness model, Karina Elle, and I realized how successful you could be with social media and fitness. I wouldn’t even consider myself really successful in that terms, like an influencer, but I realized how successful she was with her career and that motivated me. It was really random; I found her out on an island in Bali called Gili. And I was like ‘there is no way I’m going to sit behind a desk my whole life and work nine to five’. My story is so long. I lived in Austria for a little bit. I studied abroad and I met the youngest pro bodybuilder in the world there. He was on the rise, so I helped him with all the social media and he kind of became this “fitness influencer” type of person and I figured out like how to make money for him. So, after I met Karina in Bali, I decided like ‘screw the like 9 to 5 desk job. I’m going to go after my dreams and try to do this fitness thing’. So, I signed him up [Onome] for this bodybuilding competition in Miami and he got third place. He lost to the head trainer of Equinox, which is a luxury gym, and that guy was a trainer in New York. He was like ‘you guys should come to New York. Erik, you could help me with

my Instagram and social media, and then I'll train your friend Onome', who is the Austrian bodybuilder. So, I moved to New York and my friend tried to move to New York but he couldn't get a green card, so I was stuck in New York, a California kid, and I didn't want to go home and be a failure. So, then I decided I'd become a personal trainer in New York, and I told my parents I was like a celebrity trainer, which wasn't even true, because then it would be like 'you're so dumb, you turned down all of this money of working a desk job to move to New York and just be a normal trainer'. But I never saw myself as normal. I always told them I trained celebrities, which wasn't true at the time but now it is. That's kind of my story and how I got into it."

2: Regarding your Instagram account, did you initially create it for this purpose or did it evolve throughout the time?

"It evolved through time. I decided to share workout videos so I could show people what I was doing to get my body."

3: Do you use other platforms besides Instagram? If so, does any of these help you complement what you develop on Instagram?

"Yeah, I do have a YouTube channel, which I used to use back with my friend Onome, the Austrian bodybuilder, but that was like five years ago. I feel like I should be doing more but I just get so busy with how many clients I have and also, I feel like I'm insecure sometimes like 'am I going to go on and make like a bunch of YouTube videos and no one is going to watch?'"

4: In your opinion, what is a fitness digital influencer? What do you think someone needs in order to become a successful fitness digital influencer?

“I guess I wouldn’t really consider myself an influencer yet, in the terms that I put it, because I kind of see a fitness influencer as someone with a lot of followers, but like, in saying that, I think that a lot of the influencers are bad in terms of how they influence fitness. They just have a lot of followers and that’s about it. They’re good at taking videos and pictures, but they really don’t know that much about fitness because a lot of them didn’t study it. So, what they do is scamming people and tricking them, and saying like ‘if you buy my program, my specific things, then you’ll look like me’. A lot of it is genetics, and a lot of the supplements are kind of bad, but I think [that] to be a fitness influencer, you have to be passionate about fitness. A good fitness influencer is passionate about it and knows their stuff. Like, one of my favorites is Bradley Martin. He really knows about fitness, technique, form and lifting weights, and it’s educational like personal training and stuff like that.”

5: Do you think that there has been a rise in the amount of fitness digital influencers?

“Yes, definitely. I remember back then, it was only like Steve Cook, Bradley Martin, ... There is only a couple of people that were making a ton of money with the fitness industry at first, but now there’s so many people and it’s a lot harder for these fitness influencers to make money by themselves. It’s like entrepreneurs in terms of selling fitness programs and stuff because there is so many fitness influencers. It’s a saturated market. So, in terms of making money as a fitness influencer these days, it is all about finding a contract with like Gymshark or an apparel line, or something that pays really well. I know Gymshark pays amazing to their athletes. They treat them very well, and I think that that’s where you’re going to find a lot of success as a fitness entrepreneur, or you start something like Gymshark, if you’re able to. But just like in general, influencers have increased.”

6: How do you see the existence of other fitness influencers on the Instagram platform? Competition, source of inspiration, or other?

“I guess I do kind of want to be a fitness influencer and I do influence people, so, in a way, I guess I’m like a micro-influencer. I see a lot of them as inspiration. I think that’s just like

in terms of life in general, seeing people's competition... some people use that in a good way. They're competitive and that's what drives them to the top and pinning against each other. But for me, I've never been that competitive; only at sports. I would get very upset. I'm not competitive with anybody on social media; I just kind of compete with myself and try to do better than what I did a month ago. Since I moved to LA, I've met a ton of influencers and it's good to hang out around and I'm inspired by them. All my friends out here have become like these influencers or are these influencer people, so it's cool to see what they do and it motivates me in a way."

7: Do you follow your colleagues' work? Whose?

"I definitely follow my colleagues, if that's like the people at the *Dogpound*, and their posted workouts. I think that that is the way for me to go. I've changed my page a lot in the last couple of weeks, where I want to showcase my clients and their improvements and kind of how I'm training them. And then, also show lifestyle photos, but I want my page to be more focused on working out and fitness. The top three people I like to follow, since I love bodybuilding, [is] Calum Von Moger, this funny Australian guy. He's one of my favorites and I think I like him so much because he doesn't take fitness that seriously. It doesn't consume his entire life and there's people that take it way over the top. Who else do I like? Bradley Martin, I feel like I've learnt the most from watching him growing up and my path is kind of very similar to Bradley Martin's in a way. He started out with no money and didn't have any clients, and then built himself up. I think [that] by the time he was around my age, just right when Instagram was starting, he had around ten thousand followers and I have almost ten thousand followers now, when I'm also twenty-four. But that was also when no one had ten thousand followers, so there's a little bit of a difference. I've always looked up to him. Funny thing is I don't even really follow these people on Instagram. I think that the other one would be definitely Kirk Myers, my boss, because [of] the way that he did it. He is a trainer and then started a company. All of these people are starting online companies but not many of them have physical gyms, whereas, he made this crazy gym that's almost like a playground for people. It's just so much fun and makes everyone happy."

8: Compared to other fitness Instagram pages, what do you think distinguishes your content from others? Is there anything in particular in your account that you feel has led to your success as an influencer?

“I think that what distinguishes mine between others is that I showcase different types [of bodies]. Other fitness influencers only showcase their bodies, whereas, mine showcases other people’s bodies. For example, Jay Alvarez. He’s one of the biggest influencers of people my age, twenty-four or early twenties. This is one of my proudest things: I got him to lift weights and he had never been in the gym before, so that’s something that you’re not going to find in anyone else’s page – just him working out.”

9: Which of these do you consider has more impact when it comes to sharing your content: photos or videos?

“I feel like, right now, I’m changing my page. It’s more like workout type exercises, so the videos are really good for that. They are not getting as many likes but they are getting more ‘saves’ and ‘sents’, which I feel like is almost just as important because that brings more followers. If people are saving it and sending it to other people, it’s going to attract more people to the page, but in terms of getting likes, the photos tend to do better.”

10: Which of the following do you use to publish your content: regular posts, Instagram Stories; Instagram Highlights; IGTV? Why do you think that is the best way to deliver your content?

“I don’t really use the IGTV; I use just the normal posts and I want to become better at Highlights, which is something that I need to work on.”

11: How much time do you devote to think, create, edit and publish video content?

“The workout is like an hour and during that workout I’ll film for maybe like ten minutes. Then, I’ll edit it for maybe like five [minutes], so like twenty minutes, I think, for everything.”

12: How often do you publish your videos and what are its the main purposes?

“Videos, I’ll do like two to three times a week and the main purposes... It’s more like a fitness video educational page where people are actually learning stuff and taking away knowledge, rather than just looking at shirtless pictures of me.”

13: Do you have any support staff for producing your video content or do you do it yourself?

“No, I do most of the videos by myself.”

14: What is your relationship with your followers?

“That’s a good question. I feel like I do respond to all the comments in a funny matter. I feel like I have a good relationship with my followers. I don’t reply to all my direct messages though; I get so busy.”

15: Do you feel that the content you have posted on social media has influenced at least one person to adopt a particular behavior?

“I definitely have motivated [people]. I get messages about working out and I try to help as many people as possible. I actually used to do workout programs for people in specific. That’s what I did and that’s how I got into personal training. I did it through social media, helping friends, and writing out programs for them.”

16: What are your thoughts for the future of fitness digital influencers?

“It’s so hard because there’s different types of fitness influencers. There are the ones that are just like the pictures, who look insane aesthetically; and then there’s the ones with the videos. I feel like the future for fitness is, yes, you’re going to get a bunch of these exercises that look really good on Instagram, but they’re not the best exercises, so it’s going to be harder for people to decipher what is actually good or bad. Because even the bad stuff looks really really good. People are good in portraying it; and, then, sometimes the good is not as exciting to look at. I think the fitness industry is going to keep growing and growing and I feel like it’s going away from bodybuilding, whereas, people are trying to find, at least for me, I’m trying to find an aesthetic physique, my most perfect physique, and meet what society likes as a physique. But, also, I want my page to be where people can learn.”

Appendix G – Interview 4: Emily Samuel

I: When did you become interested in fitness? Can you tell me about your fitness journey's background and what motivated you to share opinions and recommendations on social media, focused on physical exercise?

“I developed a serious eating disorder [in the] freshman year of college. I was actually removed from school in order to get help. I was at a really low point in my life. It was like I wasn't able to just wake up feeling happy. I was doing a ton of drugs, I wasn't getting any sleep, and I was treating my body like s***. I would binge eat whatever I wanted and then purge it up later. When I was home trying to get better, I started going to the gym. I actually became addicted to the gym and would go for up to three hours a day (which is totally unnecessary. I was actually over training) and I was still obsessive over what I was eating. The gym gave me a feeling of control though. I loved the environment and it let me just be in my own head. At the time, my anxiety was through the roof and I was a huge bi*** to be honest, and, every time I left the gym, I felt a little better. All I wanted was to be happy... And the gym was a place that never failed to make me smile. After a few years, my eating disorder was something I would still work at every day. I didn't get better overnight. It was actually something that lingered for a much longer time than I let my family to believe. The gym was the one place that I felt better though, so I wanted to share that with other people. I obviously didn't let social media know I was still having eating issues, but I wanted to share the gym knowledge I retained over the years with other girls to try and help guide them in the correct direction. I used to compare myself to these Instagram girls all the time, but I was making an effort to change my mindset. I wanted girls to take away something positive from my Instagram page, rather than feel worse about themselves after leaving my page. I wasn't the type to be posting bikini pics in front of expensive cars. I was posting free workouts for girls to follow along with. I just mainly wanted to help as many people as possible. I didn't want any girl to ever feel the way I did.”

2: Regarding your Instagram account, did you initially create it for this purpose or did it evolve throughout the time? 3: Do you use other platforms besides Instagram? If so, does any of these help you complement what you develop on Instagram?

“I didn’t initially create it for that purpose. I was just like every other girl that was posting mason jars with flowers in them, appealing food, and tons of mirror selfies. When I decided I wanted to make a career out of it, that’s when I started sharing more exercises. I definitely evolved it through time. I would even post on my story ‘hit me up for free workout guides’ and I would make guides for people in exchange for testimonials (I had no right to be doing that at the time because I wasn’t a certified personal trainer, but all I cared about was helping people). I did not use any other platforms, I used only Instagram. I’m honestly really bad with technology. You guys are lucky I even figured out how Instagram works.”

4: In your opinion, what is a fitness digital influencer? What do you think someone needs in order to become a successful fitness digital influencer?

“These days a fitness ‘influencer’ is anyone with a ton of followers, not certified, posts a ton of videos with it angled facing the butt, and posts of ‘slimming teas’. A fitness Instagram coach, is someone like me who shares knowledge, is a certified trainer, posts functional workouts, and has made a career out of helping people. It all depends on what you consider ‘successful digital influencer’... There are tons of idiots with millions of followers that post non-functional workouts that others would consider ‘successful’ because of [the] number of followers. I consider someone a successful influencer if they are sharing their fitness knowledge in a responsible manner. If someone has eleven thousand followers, and they’re posting knowledgeable and educational content. I consider them one hundred times more successful than the girl with one million followers posting butt selfies and doing videos of only squats and booty kicks.”

5: Do you think that there has been a rise in the amount of fitness digital influencers?

“Yes, people are seeing how marketable and profitable it is. Fitness is an ongoing thing that will never die. People want to become ‘famous’ from it too which is honestly embarrassing in my opinion.”

6: How do you see the existence of other fitness influencers on the Instagram platform? Competition, source of inspiration, or other?

“I think [that] if you’re just breaking out into the fitness Instagram trend now, you’re a little behind. I also think that there will always be the people that believe in the cookie cutter workouts. People that have a really baseline knowledge of the fitness industry will see right through those ‘enterTRAINment’ workouts and unfollow anyone posting that garbage.”

7: Do you follow your colleagues’ work? Whose?

“Of course! We all learn from each other. Two people in particular: his name is Reinhard Nel and I look up to him and really respect his training methods. He doesn’t have that many followers, yet he’s the best coach I’ve ever met in my life. Another girl named Lala Duncan. She’s a rockstar. She posts only functional workouts, and she defines ‘strong is sexy’.”

8: Compared to other fitness Instagram pages, what do you think distinguishes your content from others? Is there anything in particular in your account that you feel has led to your success as an influencer?

“I think that my content stands out because there are so many workouts you can save and do if you’re ‘on the go’. I post tons of body weight workouts for those people who can’t afford to go to the gym, live very far from a gym, are traveling and just don’t have access to a gym. I think so many people just want something to do quick at home as well!”

9: Which of these do you consider has more impact when it comes to sharing your content: photos or videos?

“Like I said, these videos are for all ages and fitness levels. They’re easy to do anywhere and anytime.”

10: Which of the following do you use to publish your content: regular posts, Instagram Stories; Instagram Highlights; IGTV? Why do you think that is the best way to deliver your content?

“I only use Instagram. Never used IGTV; don’t even know how to use it. That’s what worked for me. I don’t see why to fix something that’s not broken.”

11: How much time do you devote to think, create, edit and publish video content?

“I come up with the moves on the spot most of the time. Some edits can take up to an hour, some can take a few minutes, depending on how detailed I want the video. I have always had more of a creative and artsy brain; my best workouts are made up on the spot. If I think too much about it, I tend to get carried away and make the workout more complicated than it needs to be.”

12: How often do you publish your videos and what are its the main purposes?

“I publish them when I can. I’m a super busy person so whenever I have an hour at work to myself, I’ll usually set up my phone to record myself and create a workout on the spot. The main purpose is to share and spread knowledge. That’s the best way to help people.”

13: Do you have any support staff for producing your video content or do you do it yourself?

“Hahahaha no way! The only support I get is a foam roller standing up and a water bottle on top of it to set my phone against to self-record.”

14: What is your relationship with your followers?

“I’m actually extremely outgoing in person, but I hate talking to the camera on my Instagram. I’m pretty shy and hate the sound of my own voice. I want to help as many people as possible and post things that help. I don’t share too much of my personality or my private life because of who I’m dating and I’ve had a stalker issue in the past. My boyfriend is a celebrity and it’s funny because he’s a lot more outgoing on Instagram than I am. I’m just different, I guess. I keep things to fitness.”

15: Do you feel that the content you have posted on social media has influenced at least one person to adopt a particular behavior?

“I get messages pretty frequently telling me how much the videos help and that they use the workouts all the time. I don’t preach any diets or anything like ‘keto’ stuff. So, it’s not like I’m having people follow any of my trends.”

16: What are your thoughts for the future of fitness digital influencers?

“I’m hoping that more people create content that shares knowledge, not just angles of their butt. I’m also hoping that when people post, they aren’t just following what they see other people do. I’m hoping more people post original and safe content.”

Appendix H – Interview 5: Bruno Salgueiro

1: Quando é que surgiu o teu interesse pelo fitness? Consegues descrever-me a tua jornada de fitness e o que te motivou a partilhar opiniões e recomendações nas redes sociais, com enfoque na prática de exercício físico?

“Eu comecei nas artes marciais quando eu tinha nove anos porque vi um filme do Bruce Lee ou sobre o Bruce Lee e fiquei maluco. A minha mãe e o meu pai, na altura, inscreveram-me no Kung Fu e, então, passei ali aquela idade de teenager e tudo com a pancada das artes marciais, só a querer treinar e a querer aprofundar mais os meus conhecimentos. Aos dezoito anos, saí do Kung Fu mas entretanto eu sempre fui uma pessoa muito ativa, portanto, não queria parar o físico. Andei a brincar às modalidades: experimentei rugby, experimentei polo aquático (que foi uma desgraça), rugby não, mas polo aquático foi uma desgraça, mas continuava sempre em forma. Basicamente queria experimentar outras coisas. Mais tarde, descobri também o CrossFit. Eu também já tinha feito muitos treinos de alta intensidade e muitos circuitos, coisas que fui buscar às artes marciais e que ia buscar, por exemplo, a vídeos e a coisas que eu via. Gosto muito de musculação; já fazia musculação desde os dezoito anos, então o CrossFit acabou por ‘casar’ tudo isto e conseguir fazer também mais trabalho de alta intensidade, mais padronizado. Hoje em dia, estou a dividir os meus treinos entre CrossFit ou treino de circuito, boxe e kickboxing, que é para manter sempre acesa a cena das artes marciais, e por causa da minha carreira também. Quanto a carreira, aos vinte e três ou vinte e quatro anos, tornei-me duplo de televisão. Tinha estado em dois ou três cursos e não tinha acabado nenhum, portanto, estava assim um bocado perdido, no entanto, a cena física e do fitness e das artes marciais sempre foi a minha paixão, e tive essa oportunidade por causa de um rapaz, que é o David Chan, que tirou o curso de realizador nos Estados Unidos (ele também era como eu, viciado em artes marciais). Lá, ele conseguiu trabalhar como duplo de alguns filmes de artes marciais. Voltou para Portugal nessa altura; encontrei-o (nós já nos conhecíamos desde miúdos) um dia por acaso e ele disse ‘olha, eu gostava de criar uma equipa de duplos em Portugal’ e eu disse ‘olha, conta comigo. Neste momento não estou a fazer assim nada de especial, portanto’ e foi tipo obra do destino. Passado um mês estava a trabalhar com ele e gostaram tanto do nosso trabalho que não

parámos de trabalhar desde então; portanto já sou duplo há cerca de doze anos. Mais tarde, um duplo não é apenas a pessoa que faz as situações arriscadas; um duplo é também uma pessoa que faz a coordenação, ou seja, se tu fores uma que atriz que vai fazer uma cena de luta ou de perseguição ou de violência doméstica, convém haver lá uma pessoa que faça com que tu não te magoes, faça o design e a coreografia, e faça de forma a que as câmaras percebam ou pareça que é real. Portanto, temos segurança, temos coreografia e temos realismo, e isso é muito importante, ou seja, isto acaba por ser muito pedagógico, e então estamos a treinar os atores para fazer certas coisas. Houve um ou outro ator que entrou em contacto comigo e com os meus colegas a dizer ‘olha, não nos querem dar uns treinos fora daqui, tipo treinos físicos, treinos de artes marciais, o que seja’, e foi aí que eu vi do género ‘ok, isto é uma boa carreira também que eu posso prosseguir lado a lado, que é a de *personal trainer*’. Então fui tirar a formação de *personal trainer*, no CEFAD, e pronto, então neste momento era duplo e *personal trainer*, até que o Luís Piçarra, que tem uma produtora desde sempre, que faz todo o tipo de vídeos, vídeos institucionais, jogos da bola, vídeos para empresas, etc, e nós já tínhamos falado há algum tempo que qualquer dia íamos fazer algo juntos. Então surgiu a ideia; foi também na altura em que o YouTube também estava a começar a bombar; havia muita falta de vídeos em português sobre fitness, como tutoriais, então a ideia foi mesmo essa ‘olha puto, bora começar a fazer uns vídeozinhos para o YouTube’ e ele ‘bora, tenho o material, tenho tudo, siga’. E correu muito bem, então criámos as Dicas do Salgueiro. Portanto, estamos a misturar fitness, algumas cenas que eu aprendi do meu know-how de duplo porque tem a ver com a ação e com as brincadeiras que fazemos, saltos mortais, acrobacias, espargatas, e pronto, e todo este novo mundo cibernético e do marketing digital. Basicamente é isso. Portanto, cá estamos hoje em dia. Já temos cinco anos e meio de Dicas do Salgueiro e, têm corrido bem; tem sido sempre um crescer, não só a nível de seguidores como patrocínios, etc; tem vindo a correr bem.”

2: *Relativamente à tua conta no Instagram, criaste-a com o propósito de hoje em dia ou foi evoluindo ao longo do tempo?*

3: *Utilizas outras plataformas para além do Instagram? De que forma é que estas complementam o que desenvolves no Instagram?*

“Eu fui tardio no Instagram. Eu já tinha instalado o Instagram logo no início quando surgiu, mas a título pessoal Bruno Salgueiro, e nunca liguei muito àquilo. Eu ainda estava agarrado ao Facebook, digamos assim, e ao YouTube. Eu não sentia muito a plataforma do Instagram porque eu fotos não sou... não é que eu não goste de fotos mas, por exemplo, eu funciono muito melhor em vídeo do que em fotos, porque chateia-me fazer fotos. Fotos de artes marciais então, que é aquilo que eu mais faço, é horrível; fazer cem saltos até uma foto ficar no ponto, então eu nunca gostei muito. Então tinha algumas fotos e partilhei algumas na altura, mesmo de alguns trabalhos que tínhamos feito, mas deixei aquilo morrer; deixei o Instagram morrer. Mas entretanto, mais tarde, é que eu peguei, há uns dois anos, que o Instagram já estava no seu apogeu, e já dava para pôr lá vídeos. Mudei o nome de Bruno Salgueiro para Dicas do Salgueiro no Instagram e fiquei tipo ‘ok, vai ficar este o Instagram das Dicas’. Portanto, agora estamos mesmo ligados a isso. E assim que me liguei a isso, subiu mais, mas já podia ter muito mais seguidores. No YouTube tenho, por exemplo, 300 e tal mil seguidores e no Instagram só tenho noventa e três ou noventa e dois ponto não sei o quê [mil seguidores]. Só há uns dois anos é que meti lá mais vídeos e fotos e comecei a gostar do Instagram. E quando comesas a gostar é tipo ‘ok, já percebi como é que isto funciona, os Stories, etc’. De início, o Facebook apanhava muito bem a malta. Eu linkava o vídeo novo e havia na boa 300 partilhas do vídeo; era brutal. Agora como a malta nova já não está muito no Facebook, no Instagram isso também acontece com o ‘swipe up’ nas Stories, mas não é tão forte como era o Facebook nos primórdios. Agora, tudo o que ponho no Instagram, uso aquela opção que é partilhar também no Facebook, e pronto, vai tudo lá parar. Porque o Facebook ainda não morreu, acho que ele cresce todos os anos, não cresce é tanto.”

4: Para ti, o que é um influenciador digital de fitness? O que é que consideras fundamental para um influenciador digital de fitness ser bem-sucedido?

“Um influenciador digital é uma pessoa em quem as outras pessoas depositam alguma confiança. Neste caso do fitness, tem a ver com... dicas. Não queria estar a usar a palavra dicas mas é mesmo, dicas de quem quer que seja. Para tu influenciares, muitas vezes isto não acontece porque as pessoas não sabem, mas tem de ser uma pessoa que alguém queira

seguir, ou porque gosta do *lifestyle* dessa pessoa ou porque gosta do look; e no fitness existe muito isso. Se essa pessoa tiver aquele ‘corpo’, a malta gosta e quer seguir, ou porque é alguém que partilha aquilo que come. Portanto, é alguém que deposita nos outros, ou melhor os outros depositam nessa pessoa confiança para poderem ser influenciadas. Porque ser influenciado não é só seguir e pronto. Eu sigo muitas páginas que não me influenciam nada. Agora, o verdadeiro influenciador é uma pessoa que exerce tamanha influência que possa também falar num produto ou numa cena qualquer que use e as pessoas tipo ‘ah é? Que engraçado!’, portanto, há aí muita responsabilidade acrescida. Tens a parte dos produtos que é a parte mais material e mais comercial da coisa, que também influencia. Relativamente a influenciar a levar a treinar, eu acho que o melhor influenciador ou o influenciador com mais qualidade é aquela pessoa que consegue motivar os outros a ir treinar e, com isso, perceber também que a motivação só não chega; convém dar ferramentas; convém tu explicares e comunicares, e isso é que faz um bom influenciador. As coisas de uma maneira que as pessoas sintam que sozinhas já conseguiam desenvolver-se minimamente. Não quer dizer que não precisem de ajuda; tu até podes influenciar alguém a ter um *personal trainer* porque é ótimo, mas pelo menos saber por onde começar, ter algumas respostas a algumas perguntas que secalhar no dia-a-dia não encontras pessoas que pudessem responder. O melhor feedback que eu posso ter é que o meu canal é amplo o suficiente para qualquer pessoa que está a treinar e que queira fazer uma pesquisa em português sobre fitness, está lá o Salgueiro. Mas acho que o bom influenciador deve sentir que no fundo, por mais seguidores que tenha, é uma responsabilidade grande, porque há pessoas que são influenciáveis ao ponto de tu dizes e elas vão fazer. Portanto convém não estares a dizer algo que seja disparatado ou algo que não tenhas verificado 2 ou 3 vezes, ou se te puderes aconselhar ao lado de profissionais de cada área, também melhor. Acho que até me obriga, como influenciador, a ser mais pesquisador, e isso, para mim, também é bom, que cresço mais. Regra geral [o meu canal], é quase como um canal de televisão com entretenimento, mas com que tu podes estar a aprender, portanto, eu acho que isso é que é ser influenciador. Eu acho que sou mais influenciador no sentido em que sou mais um comunicador do fitness; que dá umas ideias giras que são um bocadinho generalistas apesar de, às vezes, especificar e digo se o treino é destinado a crianças, pessoas mais velhas, etc.”

5: *Consideras que houve, de certa forma, um ‘boom’ influenciadores digitais de fitness nos últimos tempos?*

“Sem dúvida, sim. Mesmo ainda antes do Instagram, já tinhas muitos no YouTube, principalmente lá fora. Em língua portuguesa tinhas mais brasileiros do que portugueses, mas sim. Quanto mais não seja porque mostram o corpo, mostram o tipo de treinos que fazem, mostram o que é que comem. E as pessoas cada vez mais, às vezes é por motivos mais fúteis, seja por querem ficar bonitos, querem a barriga mais definida, etc, mas o que interessa é que estão a mexer-se por causa de um objetivo, ponto final. Por isso sim, tem havido um boom grande porque estamos numa era em que as aparências, por muito que as pessoas digam que a aparência não é tudo, mas as pessoas ligam cada vez mais. Portanto, acaba por ser aqui uma contradição grande, mas isso só joga a favor daquelas pessoas que sabem e têm ferramentas para tu ficares mais bonita por fora também. E a saúde vai atrás. Nem toda a gente procura por motivos de saúde, o que é uma pena, mas acaba por ser um bom efeito secundário disso, o que é ótimo. Depois também comesças a perceber as outras faculdades do treino, que não apenas tornar. Começas a perceber que é um dia muito melhor, relaxaste muito melhor, à noite adormeceste melhor porque secalhar já ‘explodiste’. É ali uma altura, principalmente em aulas, em que tu não pensas em mais nada; só pensas naquilo e isso é uma forma de meditação, se fores bem a pensar. Conheço muitas pessoas cujo nível de stress e a quantidade de coisas que têm na cabeça nem sequer lhes permite relaxar e eu tenho a certeza que se fizessem uma hora de treino por dia em que não fazem nem pensam em mais nada, em que alguém lhes diz o que tem de fazer seria fantástico, principalmente coisas com *skill*, em que tens de aprender... as artes marciais e o CrossFit são ótimos; tens de estar a pensar no que estás a fazer, ou a contar o número de repetições em que já vais. Não consegues estar a fazer mais nada, e isto é ótimo para tu fugires um bocadinho do dia-a-dia, e depois voltas. É tipo masmorra, mas no bom sentido.”

6: *Como encaras a existência de outros influenciadores digitais de fitness no Instagram? Competição, fonte de inspiração, ou outro?*

“Bem e mal. Há exemplos bons que eu adoro e sigo, e partilho as coisas deles com todo o gosto. Agora 90% do que eu vejo, eu não partilhava nem que me pagassem, porque começa a entrar naquela onda em que, às vezes o lado comercial acaba por matar um bocadinho esta questão; começas a conseguir detetar as tretas e começas a conseguir perceber que há muita malta ou que fala que já ganhou não sei quanto dinheiro com isto; já estão a cena demasiado de uma perspectiva de negócio, quase como se fossem jovens empreendedores com bíceps grandes, e isso para mim é estúpido porque estás a perder a ideia inicial; ‘então a ideia não era dares as ferramentas às pessoas, não era motivares os outros, ou é mostrar o teu Lamborghini que compraste que secalhar até foram os teus pais que te pagaram e dizes que foi com acompanhamentos online?’. Ultimamente apanho tantos assim que já se está a transformar numa cena... porque depois são pessoas que elas próprias não personificam o treino; elas próprias são aquela pessoa que secalhar nunca treinou muito ou que treina de vez em quando, vão tomar esteroides porque sabem que ficam mais apelativos para as fotografias, fazem umas quantas sessões de fotografias e limitam-se a investir nisso mas não aprendem nada no processo, não ensinaram nada a ninguém. Apenas disseram ‘somos muito bons’, ‘segue-me’, ‘faz os meus acompanhamentos, ‘compra estes produtos’... pronto, quando eu vejo isso, vejo com maus olhos, ou seja, esse, para mim, é o mau influenciador, que é aquela pessoa com quem tu não aprendeste nada e só te perpetuou aquela cena do ‘eish o gajo é gigante, eu quero ser como ele’, o que no fundo não faz parte do processo, e quem está no fitness e quem já treina há alguns anos, percebe que essa não é a génese.”

7: Segues o trabalho dos teus colegas? Se sim, de quem?

“Em Portugal deixa-me pensar... não me estou a lembrar assim de nenhum. Eu não sigo as ‘insta fit girls’ porque não é o meu target, digamos assim. Nada contra e apesar de às vezes eu ver que há uma com uma má técnica, ou que está a dar uma informação errada, elas têm o lugar delas. Se elas puxarem as raparigas para irem fazer o treino, eu não sou daqueles personal trainers fervorosos que vão dizer [alguma coisa]... porque o meu trabalho não se resume àquilo. Elas estão a fazer um vídeo, tipo ‘esta é a minha rotina de treino de abdominais’. Eu não posso achar que o meu trabalho como personal trainer é só aquilo, ou seja, eu sei que sei mais do que ela, e então? Ela pode na mesma fazer um vídeo a dizer qual

é a rotina de abdominais dela. Ela não me está a tentar roubar o trabalho; e se eu acho que ela me está a tentar roubar o meu trabalho, é o mesmo que eu dizer que o meu trabalho é aquilo. Não, o meu trabalho é mais do que aquilo, por isso, porque é que eu havia de levar a mal aquilo? Claro que há más dicas que eu fico tipo... pronto, ok. Em termos de exemplos ingleses com canais no YouTube tenho bastantes: Mark Bell (@marksmellybell), Alan Thrall (@untamedstrength), Brian Alsrue (@neversate), Stan Efferding (@stanefferding). É que, regra geral, eu já não sigo muito aqueles que poderiam pôr alguma coisa que me interesse mais; os que eu sigo mais em Portugal são a malta do Crossfit ou atletas portugueses como a Telma Monteiro, Fernando Pimenta ou o Néilson Évora, por aí.”

8: Comparativamente a outras contas de fitness no Instagram em Portugal, o que achas que distingue o teu conteúdo dos outros? Existe alguma coisa em particular na tua conta que achas que levou ao teu sucesso como influenciador?

“Sem dúvida a comunicação. O tipo de comunicação que é; a edição rápida, mas não demasiado rápida. Eu acho que os nossos vídeos são muito muito bem editados e muito bem gravados, e nem é por mim, é mesmo pelas pessoas que trabalham comigo. [Os vídeos] têm uma qualidade brutal; nunca vi vídeos com tanta qualidade, de tutoriais, atenção. Claro que vais ver curtas-metragens no YouTube que estão muito bem feitas com drones, com tudo, mas nós até isso estamos a fazer, com drones também. Fui dos primeiros, que eu me lembre, mesmo a nível mundial; eu nunca vi ninguém fazer isto, a dar planos de treino, e quando eu digo planos de treino, eu já vi pessoal a dizer assim ‘segunda-feira vais fazer não sei quê, terça-feira...’ e meter o plano de treino todo num vídeo. Não, o que eu fiz foi, já tenho quatro ou cinco planos de treino diferentes; tenho dois para casa ou para a rua, tenho outro para ginásio, e tenho outro de hipertrofia, que é: dia 1 e vamos fazendo os cortes, mas demonstro os exercícios todos, inclusive o aquecimento e a parte final. Nunca vi ninguém a fazer isso, porque a maioria da malta é do género ‘vê um bocadinho do meu vídeo e agora no final, se quiseres, compras o meu programa de treino’. Eu não quero isso, portanto, logo aí, eu diferencio-me porque eu não quero isso. Não quero ser de todo um gajo que vende programas de treino; acho estúpido. Vou fazer o mesmo plano de treino para ti e para outra pessoa qualquer que diz que tem os mesmos objetivos que tu? Não faz sentido. Eu prefiro mil vezes

fazer frente a frente com a pessoa com quem estou a trabalhar ou perceber como é que ela é. E depois é o meu lado artístico; eu gosto de fazer vídeos diferentes. Tipo, o vídeo do plano de treino em casa começa com um drone que vem a descer a rua, depois, de repente, vai em direção à minha janela, vê-me na minha janela lá com o meu pijama a aquecer, ... pá, são essas diferenças.”

9: De que forma consideras mais importante para partilhares o teu conteúdo: através de fotografias ou de vídeos?

“Vídeos. Se bem que já gosto de brincar com memes e *boomerangs* mas quase sempre vídeo. E a minha distribuição favorita continua a ser o YouTube, apesar do Instagram ser mais rápido e estar mais a gostar minimamente de trabalhar... é assim, nós gravamos sempre vídeos na horizontal e é assim que deve ser visto o vídeo, na minha opinião. Mas se eu puder pegar nalguns vídeos, fazer ali pequenos excertos e moldá-los para Instagram também me está a dar prazer fazer isso. Portanto são essas as formas que eu mais gosto. Mas o YouTube para mim, é sempre o YouTube.”

10: Quais costumas utilizar para publicar o teu conteúdo: publicações normais; Instagram Stories; Instagram Highlights; IGTV? Porque achas que essas são as melhores formas de apresentar o teu conteúdo?

“No Instagram já estou a pôr vídeos no IGTV, mas isso é uma coisa recente. Eu agora tenho apostado um bocado no IGTV também porque eu já vi que a malta ali até três ou quatro minutos ainda vê. Faço bué isto; agora já tens *thumbnails* praticamente; imagina queres ver um treino de piscina, carregas e depois se quiseres vais ver no IGTV e está aqui o treino inteiro a explicar o que é que eu fiz. Isto é um vídeo do YouTube que eu trabalhei para pôr no IGTV. Nada de especial, uso aquela aplicação, a *InShot*. Mas é isso, tenho andado a brincar, mas é assim, eu não sou uma pessoa que adora seguir as tendências. Eu gosto de fazer as coisas porque eu sei que eventualmente as tendências morrem e as coisas que eu faço, aliás, os meus vídeos mais vistos foram aqueles que, de início, nem tiveram muito, e

agora vais ver, passado um ano, e tem duzentas mil visualizações. Alguns têm um milhão e meio, assim de repente. Porque são tópicos que as pessoas procuram daqui a cinco anos, dez, quinze; um treino de peito é sempre um treino de peito, não é uma coisa de agora. De qualquer das formas, eu vou olhando para o Instagram e vendo o que é que está a bombar. O IGTV, de início, ninguém ligava àquilo. Agora, de repente, está toda a gente a pôr. E eu ‘ah então isto está a crescer agora, então agora é que eu vou... [pôr]. A mim cansa-me ver um vídeo grande em pé no telemóvel. Por isso é que a malta já usa redutos como excertos com legendas, que muita gente nem liga o som. Dá mais trabalho, mas pronto, moldas o vídeo para aquele bocadinho. Vês que as pessoas só têm aquela atenção no máximo um, dois, três, mais do que isso não. De resto, vídeos grandes a malta vai para o YouTube.”

11: Quanto tempo, em média, dedicas a pensar, criar, editar e publicar o teu conteúdo de vídeo?

“Depende, pode surgir uma ideia e eu escrevê-la agora em cinco minutos. Escrevo sempre só tópicos para depois ser mais fácil. Às vezes, essa ideia, vou dormir a pensar nela praticamente, e, no dia a seguir, estou o dia todo a pensar em como é que a hei de fazer. Há vídeos que demoram mais tempo porque eu estou a ver os shots na minha cabeça e eu só preciso de escrever as *guidelines* do que vou fazer; se for alguma coisa que requeira que eu vá fazer alguma pesquisa de fitness, aí demoro um bocadinho mais porque vou ver e depois escrevo para não me enganar a dizer as coisas”.

12: Com que frequência é que publicas vídeos e quais são os principais objetivos dos mesmos e da partilha deles?

“Em termos de periodicidade, geralmente é pelo menos um por semana, porque aos domingos é obrigatório um, às oito e meia da noite; se bem que nós decidimos parar agora em Agosto e agora secalhar só retomamos em meados de Setembro, mesmo para dar um bocadinho de [espaço]. Também foram cinco anos e meio sem parar então vamos ver se isto

tem algum... Vamos ver se conseguimos tipo agora voltar com mais vontade e fazer coisas ainda mais fixes.”

13: Tens ajuda no que toca à gravação ou edição do teu conteúdo de vídeo ou fazes tudo sozinho?

“A escrever sou sempre eu. Agora, o que acontece é: eu digo ao Piçarra, o meu colega, ‘olha, vamos gravar isto assim e assim, eu estou a pensar fazer assado’ e ele assim ‘ah sim era fixe fazermos assim’; há aqui algum brainstorming, mas a ideia de fitness parte de mim. Editar também parte muito de mim em termos de *guidelines*; eu sei muito bem como é que quero o vídeo e até sou um bocadinho difícil às vezes, mas já aconteceu eu dar total liberdade ao editor para ele fazer o que quiser. A gravar sou sempre eu e o Piçarra, a não ser que precisemos de algum convidado, ou que precisemos de levar o drone e precisamos de alguém para estar a ‘comandá-lo’. Mas geralmente sou só eu e o Piçarra. A editar é a Melina ou o Alex.”

14: Como descreves a tua relação com os teus seguidores?

“Muito boa; nunca tive problemas nenhuns. Há sempre um bocadinho aquela coisa de sentem-se à vontade comigo porque eu tenho aquele discurso de ‘tu’, não é ‘vocês’ nem ‘como é que é malta’, é tipo ‘tu!’. Eu falo sempre ‘para ti’, e então a malta sente-se à vontade para vir falar comigo e fazer-me perguntas. Sinto que quando falam comigo, mesmo pessoalmente, ficam com aquela ideia de que eu sou, de facto, igual aos vídeos; dizem-me muitas vezes isso. Normalmente sinto que eles são genuínos comigo e sinto que consigo ser genuíno com eles. [A malta] está filtrada, ou seja, a malta parvinha até pode mandar um comentário mau, mas morre na praia ou alguém lhe cai em cima a dizer tipo ‘fogo, mas este gajo nunca disse nada de mal e agora estás a dizer isso para quê? Está-te a dar dicas há cinco anos, qual é que é a tua cena? Os outros só pedem dinheiro para te dar dicas, este está-te a dar dicas à borla e tu estás a dizer que ele é parvo? Achas que ele é mau atleta? Achas que

ele não sabe do que é que está a falar?’ e eu ‘ok, não preciso... [de dizer nada]’. Isso é fixe; ganhei a confiança das pessoas.”

15: Sentes que o teu conteúdo tem tido sucesso no sentido de ter influenciado alguém a adotar um tipo de comportamento, nomeadamente, começar a praticar exercício físico?

“Sim, sem dúvida. Até porque as pessoas dão-me esse feedback e, às vezes, quando mandam mensagem, fico a achar que mandaram essa mensagem a 20. Mas quando tu conheces ao vivo, percebes que de facto é verdade e, pronto, o poder da Internet nisso é fantástico. Claro que há pessoas que tu percebes que é genuíno, porque adaptam o discurso a ti.”

16: Qual é a tua opinião sobre o futuro dos influenciadores digitais de fitness?

“Vai ser como tudo na vida. Alguns foram mais moda do que outra coisa e vão morrer na praia, ou então vão estar continuamente a tentar fazer conteúdos, e têm sempre ali aquele nicho, mas não vão conseguir dar aquele salto, porque as pessoas ficam muito apaixonadas pelos números. E se os números não crescem depois começam a estagnar um bocado ou começam a ficar frustrados e começam a ir para outro lado. E há outros, que se forem bons, que se fizerem conteúdos que são partilháveis a longo prazo, eu acho que só podem progredir e conseguir cada vez mais outras coisas também. Isto é bom também a nível pessoal; isto é um marketing pessoal muito grande. Eu estou no YouTube porque sei que é uma janela, uma janela para verem quem eu sou e o que é que eu faço, e, com isso, já me surgiram todas as outras coisas como patrocínios, workshops, palestras, etc. Portanto, as pessoas que jogam bem nisto, que continuamente têm a consistência de ter material interessante que dê ferramentas aos outros e não pessoas que só digam ‘olha para mim e motiva-te’. Tens de dar ferramentas, tens de pôr pessoas a fazerem coisas que nunca antes pensaram ser possível porque tu deste aquela ferramenta ou aquela dica e motivaste-a. Se tu continuamente fizeres isso, eu acho que sim, não vejo razão nenhuma, mesmo que o Instagram acabe, vai haver outra rede social, mesmo que o YouTube acabe vai haver outro sítio ou alguma coisa qualquer onde tu possas colocar vídeos. O vídeo não vai acabar assim tão depressa; pelo

menos na nossa vida provavelmente não. Por isso, eu acho que quem se vai manter a longo prazo e subir os seus números é aquela pessoa que entende que tem de dar mais aos outros que a si própria, e aqueles que não vão fazer isso são aqueles que são só show-off, porque um dia o corpo bonito acaba-se, ou porque um dia disseram a coisa errada porque não sabem do que é que estão a falar, ou porque o público depois também pode ser muito volátil, principalmente nas redes sociais. Portanto eu acho que as pessoas se devem meter no seu lugar e devem lembrar-se que ninguém está a ver só porque sim; as pessoas estão a ver-te porque retiram alguma coisa daí. Por isso, preocupa-te com o que as pessoas estão a retirar de te verem, e isso, a longo prazo, é que funciona. Os meus vídeos são a prova disso. Há muita malta que lança vídeos atuais e que logo no primeiro dia têm um milhão de visualizações. No entanto, um vídeo tão simples como treino de peito em casa tem um milhão e meio [de visualizações]. Porquê? Porque as pessoas continuaram a ir ver porque é um vídeo sempre útil, só isso. Não é uma tendência, é perigoso estar na moda. Podia abrir um ginásio e passar estes conhecimentos, mas, por enquanto, gosto de o fazer através de vídeos; acho que é mais giro, acho que é mais divertido. Portanto, quem se mantém a longo prazo é quem entende isso. Faz para os outros, não faças para ti. A melhor coisa que pode acontecer é tu olhares para os teus vídeos de há cinco anos e sentires que realmente progrediste, quer dizer que evoluíste.”

Appendix I – Analysis grid

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	
	<i>Participants</i>	
	<i>Action</i>	
	<i>Location</i>	
	<i>Duration</i>	
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	
	<i>Frame size</i>	
	<i>Camera angle</i>	
	<i>Sound</i>	
	<i>Postproduction</i>	
	<i>Additional elements</i>	
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	
	<i>Device</i>	

Appendix J – Analysis grid: Mafalda Sena (1)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	Exercise demonstration
	<i>Participants</i>	Mafalda Sena
	<i>Action</i>	Workout: functional training (running; squats)
	<i>Location</i>	Outdoor
	<i>Duration</i>	1 minute
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	Portrait (vertical)
	<i>Frame size</i>	Close-up shot (high angle) Establishing shot (high angle and point-of-view) Full shot (eye level) Medium long shot
	<i>Camera angle</i>	Face to camera shot (F2C) Point-of-view shot (POV) Pan shot (panning)
	<i>Sound</i>	Ambient
	<i>Postproduction</i>	Instagram filters (color)
	<i>Additional elements</i>	Text: “07:10”

		<p>“LET’S GO” “60 squats”</p> <p>Emojis</p> <p>Gifs: “the gym” “OUTDOOR” “Nice”</p> <p>Tags: “@filipelucaspt” “@mafaldadpinto” “@anacls.ribeiro” “@joanaacosta” “@cc.claudlav”</p>
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram Stories
	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone

Appendix K – Analysis grid: Mafalda Sena (2)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	Exercise demonstration
	<i>Participants</i>	Mafalda Sena
	<i>Action</i>	Workout: CrossFit WOD (workout of the day)
	<i>Location</i>	Gym
	<i>Duration</i>	1:37 minutes
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	Portrait (vertical)
	<i>Frame size</i>	Full shot (low angle and eye level) Medium close-up (high angle)
	<i>Camera angle</i>	Establishing shot Boomerang Still shot Tracking shot
	<i>Sound</i>	Ambient
	<i>Postproduction</i>	Instagram filters (color)
	<i>Additional elements</i>	Text: “4 rondas” “20 lunges (15kg each side)”

		“20 push-ups” “4x20” “50kg” “4x 15 wallballs” “10 remadas” Gifs: “Buenos dias”
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram Stories
	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone

Appendix L – Analysis grid: Margarida Santos (1)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	Type	Exercise demonstration; motivational
	Participants	Margarida Santos
	Action	Workout: core training (abs and stretches)
	Location	Gym
	Duration	1:05 minutes
<i>Composition</i>	Orientation	Landscape (horizontal) Portrait (vertical)
	Frame size	Full shot (eye level) Close-up shot (low angle)
	Camera angle	Still camera Face to camera shot
	Sound	Mute Voice
	Postproduction	Video effect (time-lapse)
	Additional elements	Text: “Voltar a treinar abdominais ao fim de tanto tempo...”

		<p>“BUT NEVER GIVE UP”;</p> <p>“Dar uma força à malta que esteja a sair do trabalho/faculdade”</p> <p>“Tenho os treinos divididos em superiores e inferiores c/ abdominal”</p> <p>Emojis</p> <p>Gifs:</p> <p>“Le STRETCH”;</p> <p>“Inspire – Be Inspired”</p> <p>Discourse:</p> <p>“Só passei aqui para dizer: vão treinar! Bora, motivação. Segunda-feira é meio caminho andado para o resto da semana correr bem e os restos dos treinos também. Eu agora estou a dividir os meus treinos... quer dizer, já dividia, entre superiores e inferiores, mas com um plano novo, que já não fazia um plano há muito muito tempo. E uma das grandes desvantagens de treinar sozinha é isso mesmo, é que depois perde-se o foco e perde-se o hábito de desafiar e mudar os exercícios, mas agora com um plano novo estou com mais vontade de treinar.”</p>
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram Stories (uploaded from camera roll)
	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone

Appendix M – Analysis grid: Margarida Santos (2)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	Exercise demonstration
	<i>Participants</i>	Margarida Santos
	<i>Action</i>	Workout: cardio (running)
	<i>Location</i>	Outdoor
	<i>Duration</i>	35 seconds
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	Portrait (vertical)
	<i>Frame size</i>	Full shot (eye level and low angle) Close-up shot (high angle)
	<i>Camera angle</i>	Establishing shot Face to camera shot Point-of-view shot Still camera
	<i>Sound</i>	Ambient Instagram music
	<i>Postproduction</i>	Instagram filters (color)
	<i>Additional elements</i>	Text: “14,5km”;

		<p>“ROAD TO @maratonvalencia”</p> <p>Gifs: “super!”</p>
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram Stories
	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone

Appendix N – Analysis grid: Erik Anderson (1)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	Type	Exercise demonstration
	Participants	Erik Anderson
	Action	Workout: strength training (deadlift)
	Location	Gym/ workplace (Dogpound LA)
	Duration	22 seconds
<i>Composition</i>	Orientation	Portrait (vertical)
	Frame size	Full shot (eye level)
	Camera angle	Tracking shot
	Sound	Ambient (with music)
	Postproduction	Instagram filters (color)
	Additional elements	Text: “Wake up and go” Tags: “DOGPOUND WEHO” (location) “@yetihood” “@dogpound”

<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram Stories
	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone

Appendix O – Analysis grid: Erik Anderson (2)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	Exercise demonstration
	<i>Participants</i>	Dogpound LA client (Madi Teeuws)
	<i>Action</i>	Workout: strength training (legs)
	<i>Location</i>	Gym/ workplace (Dogpound LA)
	<i>Duration</i>	1 minute (carousel of 6 mini videos)
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	Portrait (vertical)
	<i>Frame size</i>	Medium long shot (eye level) Medium shot (eye level)
	<i>Camera angle</i>	Still shot Tracking shot
	<i>Sound</i>	Ambient (with music)
	<i>Postproduction</i>	No
	<i>Additional elements</i>	Text (description): “@madtev Smashing leg day: Slide board side lunges 3x10 RDLs W/ Bands 3x10 Split squat jumps 3x10

		Rear Delf Flys 3x15 Deficit KB deadlifts 3x15 Lunge/Squat burnout 1x10"
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram post
	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone

Appendix P – Analysis grid: Emily Samuel (1)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	How-to/ Tutorial
	<i>Participants</i>	Emily Samuel
	<i>Action</i>	Workout: HIIT (high intensity interval training)
	<i>Location</i>	Home
	<i>Duration</i>	1:06 minutes (carousel of 6 mini videos)
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	Portrait (vertical)
	<i>Frame size</i>	Full shot (eye level)
	<i>Camera angle</i>	Still camera
	<i>Sound</i>	Ambient (with music)
	<i>Postproduction</i>	No
	<i>Additional elements</i>	Text (video): “AT HOME HIIT” Text (description): “AT HOME BW HIIT 3-4 ROUNDS: EX1. 12 each side

		EX2. 30 seconds EX3. 30 seconds EX4. 12 each side EX15. 12 each side EX6. 30 seconds *for the times exercises, try and get as many reps as you can/ on the next round try and beat that number! ALWAYS PUSH YOURSELF!”
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram post
	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone

Appendix Q – Analysis grid: Emily Samuel (2)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	Exercise demonstration
	<i>Participants</i>	Dogpound NYC client (Kelsey Merritt)
	<i>Action</i>	Workout: resistance training (core and glutes)
	<i>Location</i>	Gym/ workplace (Dogpound NYC)
	<i>Duration</i>	34 seconds (total of 3 mini videos)
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	Portrait (vertical)
	<i>Frame size</i>	Full shot (high angle and eye level)
	<i>Camera angle</i>	Tracking shot Still camera
	<i>Sound</i>	Ambient (with music)
	<i>Postproduction</i>	No
	<i>Additional elements</i>	Tags: “@kelseymerritt”
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	Instagram Stories (retrieved from Highlights)

	<i>Device</i>	Smartphone
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Appendix R – Analysis grid: Bruno Salgueiro (1)

	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	Type	How-to/ Tutorial
	Participants	Bruno Salgueiro and João Melo
	Action	Step-by-step tutorial (Olympic lifting: snatch)
	Location	Gym
	Duration	11:03
<i>Composition</i>	Orientation	Landscape (Horizontal)
	Frame size	Long shot (eye level) Medium shot (eye level) Reaction shot (eye level)
	Camera angle	Still camera shot (alternating with a few master shots with different angles) 2-shot (eye level)
	Sound	Ambient Music Voice
	Postproduction	Video editing (alternating angle shots) Video effects (Slow-motion) Video transitions Color correction

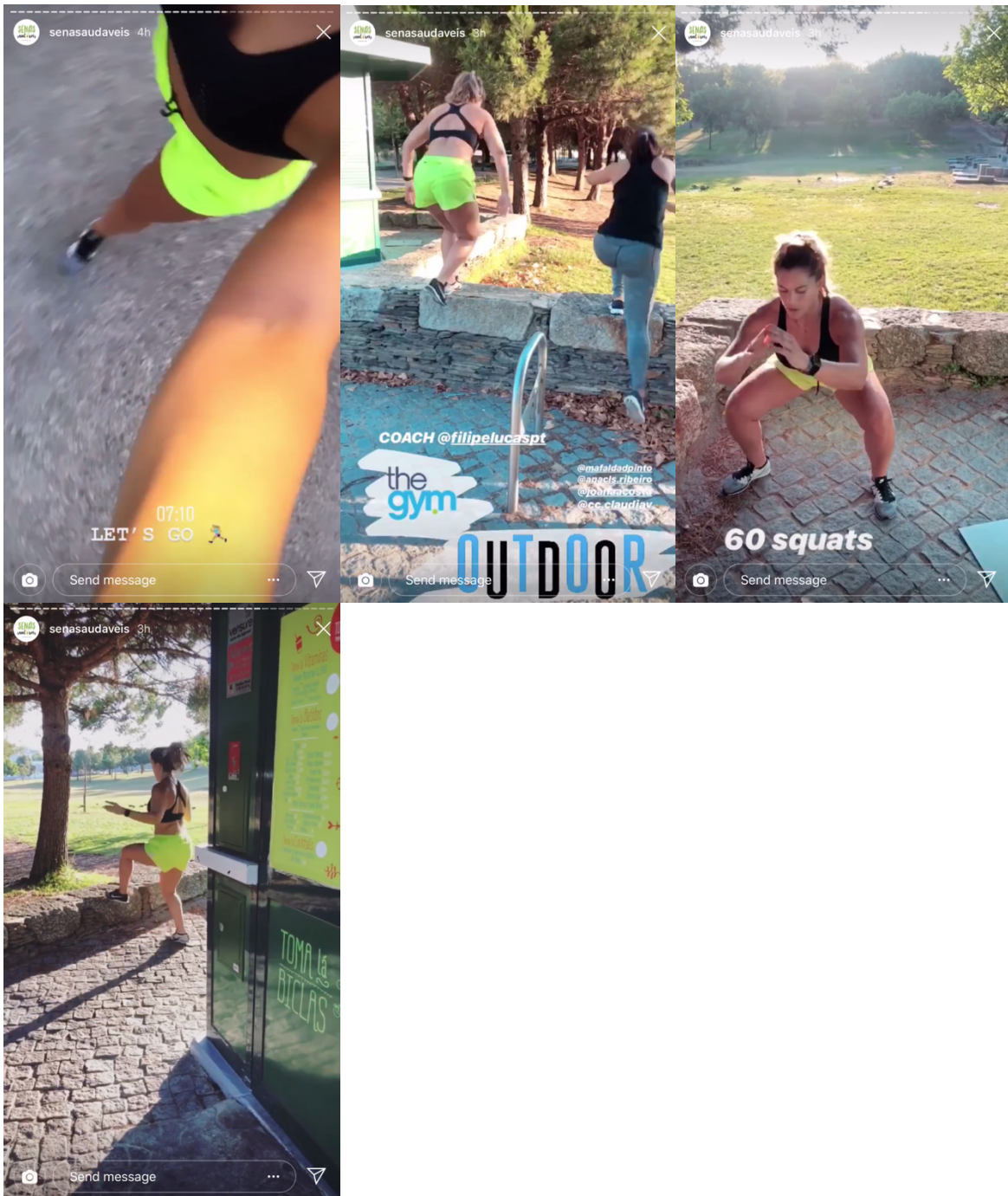
		Graphics
	<i>Additional elements</i>	<p>Text:</p> <p>“Bruno Salgueiro – Duplo profissional/ personal trainer”</p> <p>“João Melo – Treinador e atleta halterofilismo”</p> <p>“Gravado no <i>@semperfit_oficial</i>”</p> <p>“Posicionamento pés”</p> <p>“Largura da pega”</p> <p>“Parte final do movimento – trem superior”</p> <p>“Overhead squat”</p> <p>“Snatch a partir do joelho”</p> <p>“Melhorias: não subir o traseiro na primeira puxada; subir a barra na vertical na tripla extensão (levantar a t-shirt)”</p> <p>“<i>@joaomelotraining</i>”</p> <p>“<i>@teamteleswl</i>”</p> <p>“<i>@dicasdosalgueiro</i>”</p> <p>“Barbell club: <i>@xxicrossfit</i>”</p> <p>Other elements:</p> <p>Overlay videos</p> <p>Logo <i>Dicas do Salgueiro</i></p> <p>Correct sign</p> <p>Overlay videos with interactive links of other videos</p> <p>Clothing advertising</p>
<i>Distribution</i>	<i>Channel</i>	YouTube
	<i>Device</i>	Professional camera

Appendix S – Analysis grid: Bruno Salgueiro (2)

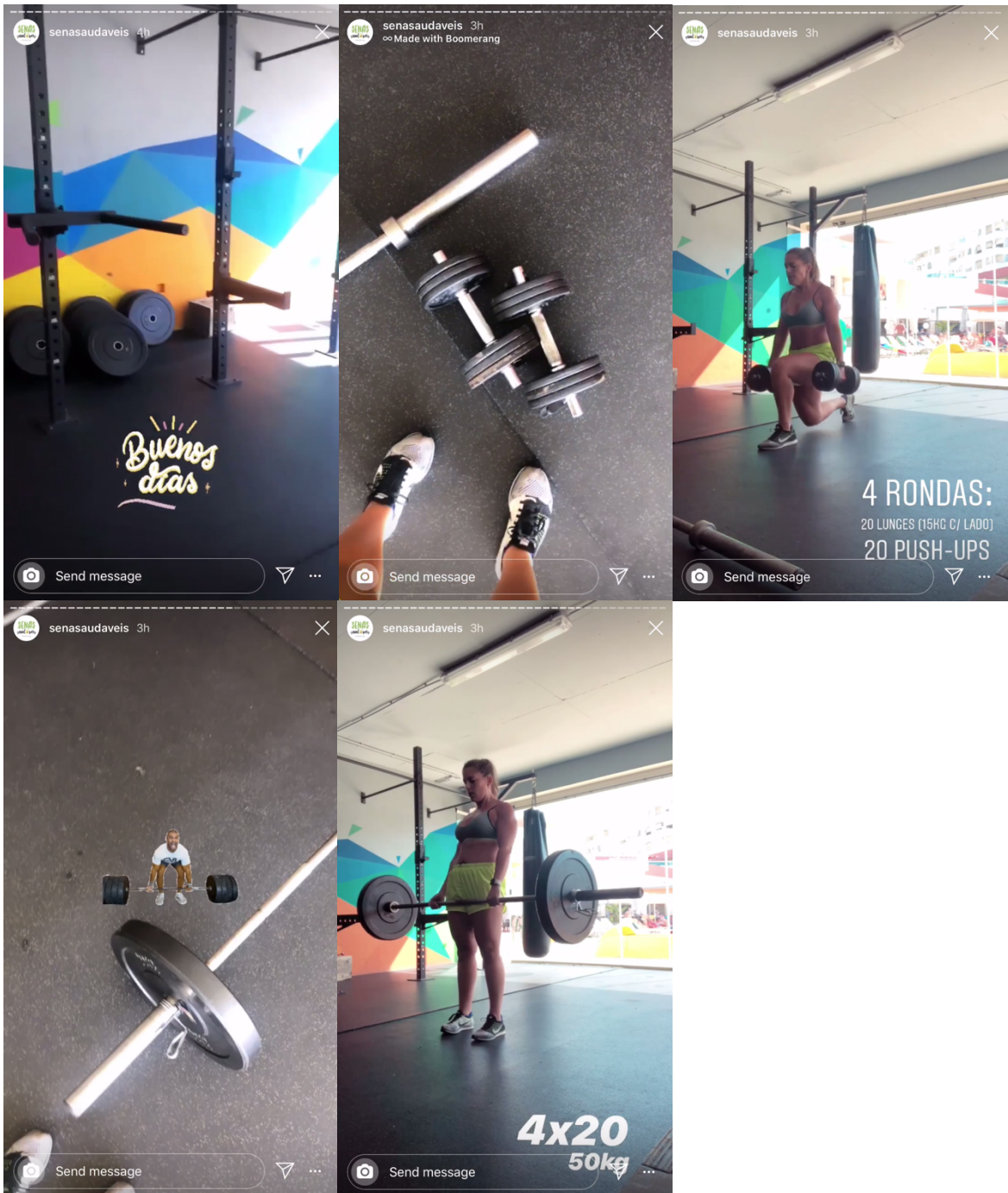
	<i>Video</i>	
<i>Content</i>	<i>Type</i>	How-to/ explainer
	<i>Participants</i>	Bruno Salgueiro and Luís Piçarra
	<i>Action</i>	Most common squat mistakes
	<i>Location</i>	CrossFit box (Rato)
	<i>Duration</i>	4:19
<i>Composition</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	Landscape (Horizontal)
	<i>Frame size</i>	Medium close-up shot (eye level) Full shot (eye level and low angle) Reaction shot (eye level)
	<i>Camera angle</i>	Still camera (alternating with a few master shots with different angles) Point-of-view shot Tilt
	<i>Sound</i>	Ambient Music Voice Audio effects
	<i>Postproduction</i>	Video editing Video effects

		<p>Video transitions Color correction Graphics</p>
	<p><i>Additional elements</i></p>	<p>Text: “Bruno Salgueiro – Duplo profissional/ personal trainer” “@dicasdosalgueiro” “/asdicasdosalgueiro”</p> <p>Other elements: Logo <i>Dicas do Salgueiro</i> Overlay image (Smith machine) Overlay videos</p>

Appendix T – Video's screenshots: Mafalda Sena (1)



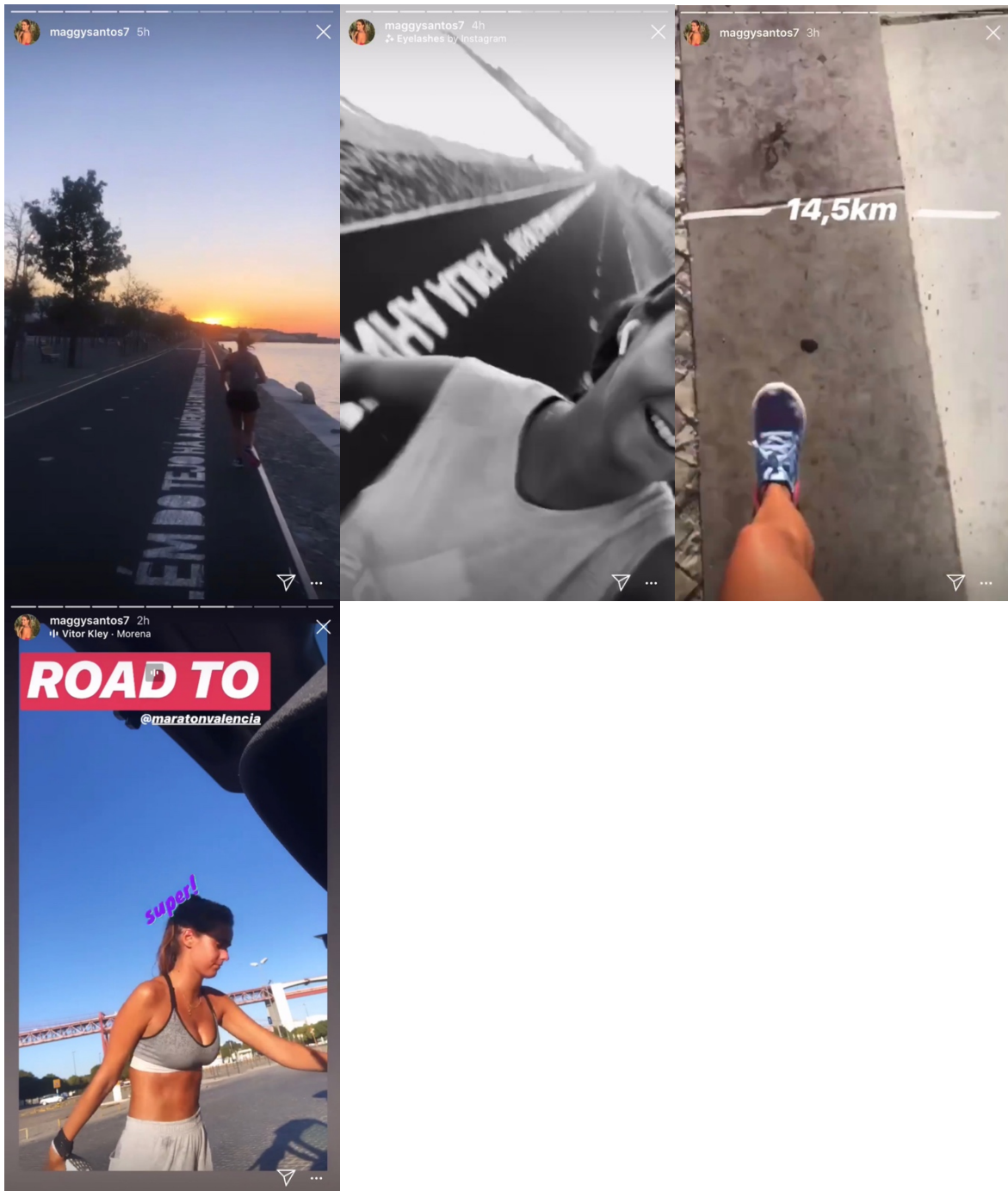
Appendix U – Video's screenshots: Mafalda Sena (2)



Appendix V – Video's screenshots: Margarida Santos (1)



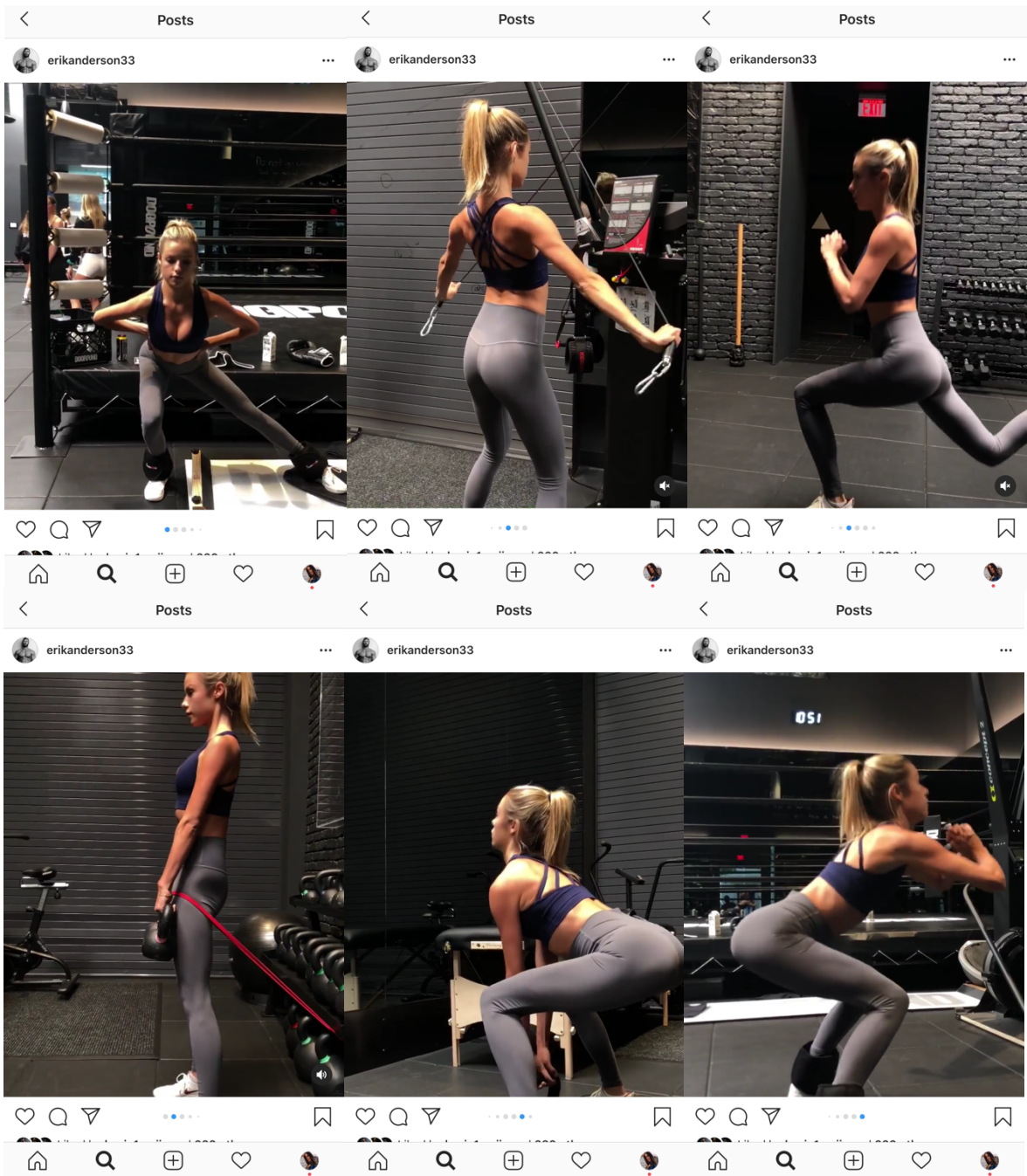
Appendix W – Video's screenshots: Margarida Santos (2)



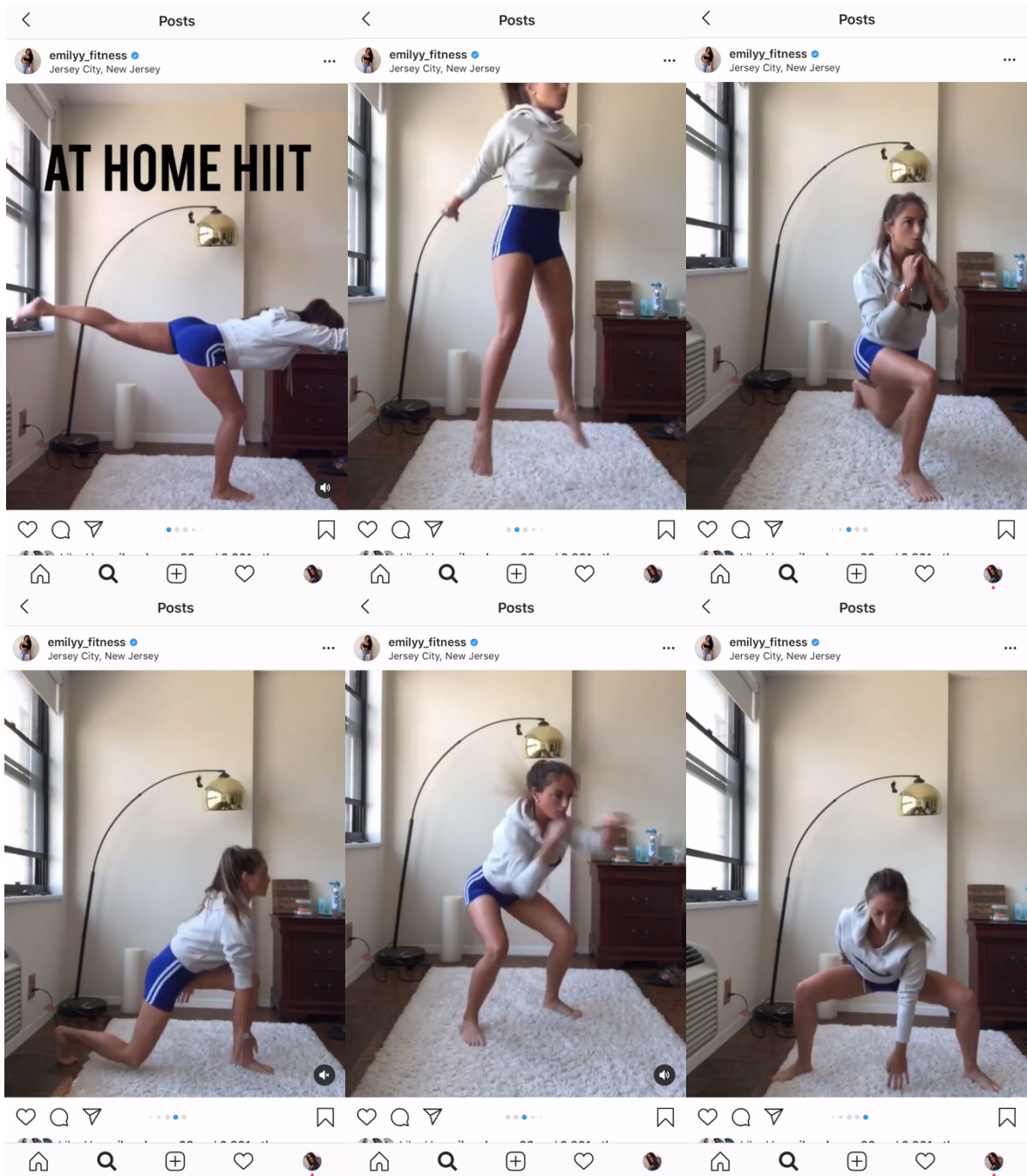
Appendix X – Video's screenshots: Erik Anderson (1)



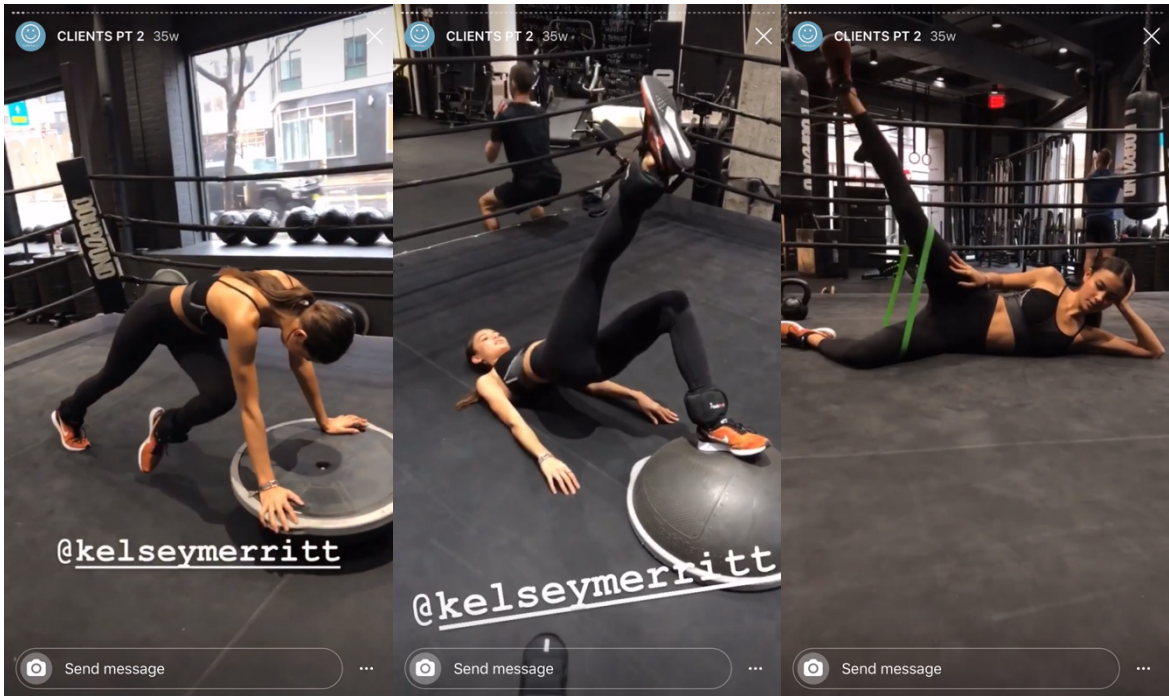
Appendix Y – Video's screenshots: Erik Anderson (2)



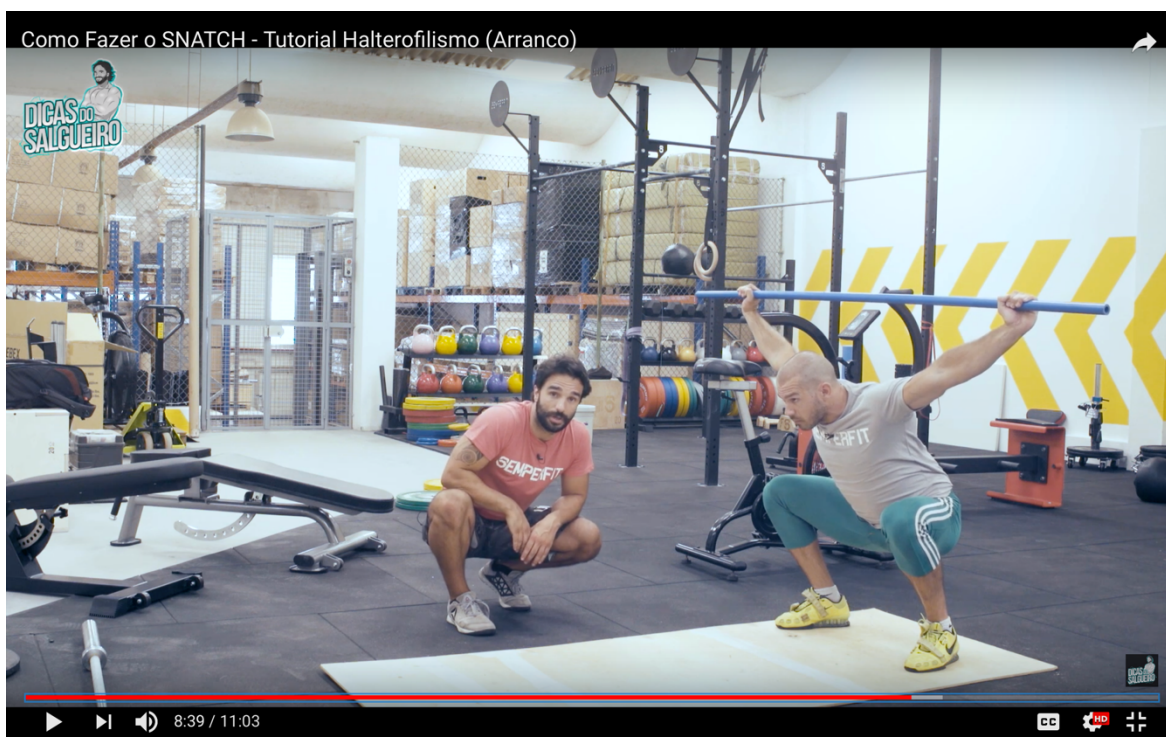
Appendix Z – Video's screenshots: Emily Samuel (1)



Appendix AA – Video's screenshots: Emily Samuel (2)



Appendix BB – Video's screenshots: Bruno Salgueiro (1)



Appendix CC – Video's screenshots: Bruno Salgueiro (2)

