

# Evolution of studies on the ascendance of corporate brand advertising in the formation of public agenda. 2006 - 2018

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-5844202125>

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## Abstract

The article provides a longitudinal analysis of scientific articles in national and international journals, Brazilian congresses annals, dissertations, and theses that address the influence of corporate brand advertising on the formation of the 2006-2018 agenda in advertising, marketing, and communication sources. The research problem is the understanding of what there is and what are the characteristics of the scientific literature published on the influence of brand advertising on the public agenda's formation. The objective is to elucidate this theme's direction and progression in the field of advertising and to verify the specific production, its contributions, methods, and conclusions. From virtual data and critical reading, the selected productions were analyzed considering: (1) segment, (2) presence of theory, (3) authors, (4) country of origin, (5) research approaches, (6) methods, (7) contributions, arguments, and conclusions. The results show that there is a recognition that advertising interferes with the public agenda, but they do not bring concrete contributions to prove these interferences' modes.

**Keywords:** Longitudinal systematic survey. Agenda-Setting. Communication. Advertising. Corporate brands.

## Introduction

The *Agenda-Setting* hypothesis is a communication theory formulated by North Americans Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in the 1970s, and deals with the relationship between the emphasis placed on media content and the inclusion of this content in public priorities. Traditionally when it comes to Agenda-Setting, the basis comes from

public opinion surveys<sup>1</sup>, which point to a specific model of public opinion construction that presupposes *News making*, (HABERMAS, 1984, BARROS FILHO, 2003, TRAQUINA, 2000), which refers to selecting and directing the public agenda through speeches that represent the “dominant opinion” as the starting point for such a process, and which is completed with the *Agenda-Setting* Hypothesis (McCOMBS; SHAW, 1972, BARROS FILHO, 2003, LIPPMANN, 2010).

According to the hypothesis, “the media, by the selection, disposition, and incidence of its news, comes to determine the subjects on which the public will talk about and discuss” (BARROS FILHO, 2003, p. 169). Thus, in these models the journalist is brought as the one responsible for selecting what will be on the media agenda (*gatekeeping*), consequently, the news is the only way for a theme, subject, data, or fact to become, or not, the target of public debate (public agenda) and therefore, what will be set. This is because the *news making* model is centered on the concept that it is the journalistic fact that becomes the news, so the journalist is the one responsible for selecting it.

However, for Da Viá (1983) and Watson (2008), the model proposed by McCombs and Shaw is questionable as the *media* propose what should be discussed when selecting what will be on the media agenda. However, it is the recipients mediated by socio-cultural characteristics, as well as by their reception skills, who will select what will be discussed on the public agenda based on their values.

Nevertheless, data from the Brazilian Press Association - ABI (2016) and the Brazilian Association of Communication Agencies - Abracom (2016) published in the Yearbook of Corporate Communication 2016, state that approximately 89% of the news published in traditional media are the result of communication advisory services, therefore, the organizations’ effort through public relations and press advisory services and not the production of the vehicles themselves. Thus, we can assume that actions of corporate brand advertising are also able to set themes and social values.

The suspicion is that the setting happens daily, since the media shows, clarifies, resumes information, highlighting, reducing, or even omitting in their emissions. “The public sometimes seeks, sometimes is reached by messages that aim to entertain, inform, sell, induce positioning, cause identification” (ERNESTO, 2010, p. 69). Through the common research’s interests of this article’s authors, it was initiated in 2018 a perspective of understanding on how corporate brands advertising also works in the *Agenda-Setting* logic, whose values and themes are generators or operate in the creation of filters, which by the media circulation’s evidence demonstrate new articulations of the concepts of *gatekeeping* and *gate watching*, which are applied to consumption, as a way to model and institute the brands’ media logic. Next to this proposed perspective, there are the works of Trindade and Augusto Jr. (2015) e Mota and Batista (2014), which make similar reflections to this article’s proposal and which serve as inspiration for the research conducted here.

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1 Studies of Public Opinion in Hispanic America are called Demoscope and in Brazil Public Opinion Theories.

Then, based on the research problem, it seeks to understand what there is and what are the characteristics of the published scientific literature on the influence of brand advertising on the public agenda's formation, having as objectives to elucidate the direction and progression of this theme in the field of advertising and verify the specific production, its contributions, methods, and conclusions. As well as to investigate and describe if there is research and, mainly, scientific articles that corroborate the idea of corporate brand advertising as an influencer in the agenda's formation and thus be able to affirm if this assumption has been tested and/or widely discussed to support future research.

It is worth noting that this article is the result of the confluence of interests and shared results of the research carried out by the Mother Project *Trends in Advertising and Consumer Research in Brazil - 2006 to 2018: The construction of a subfield of research in communication*, by the first author, with CNPq funding, and the second author's PhD project - *The influence of Brand advertising in the formation of the Public Agenda*, both institutionalized research actions synthesized here jointly by this article's authoring team, which operates in GESC3 - Communication, Culture, and Consumer Studies Group, USP/ CNPq. The research's methods and results are presented in detail below.

## Research Methods

The *corpus* of observation and analysis was limited to the works published in scientific journals and electronic annals available on the Internet and published between 2006 and 2018 by more than 70 national and international journals from the marketing, communication, and advertising segments, and also annals of the main national scientific congresses in the area of communication (Compós - National Meeting of Graduate Programs in Communication, Pró-Pesq PP- National Meeting of advertising and Advertising Researchers, Intercom-Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences, and Abrapcorp - Congress of the Brazilian Association of Researchers in Organizational Communication and Public Relations) and the thesis bank of the *Sucupira* Platform (CAPES), mapping the state of knowledge on academic research in the influence of corporate brand advertising by the agenda.

The bibliographical research methodology was chosen, which consists of the

[...] initial global planning of any research work ranging from identifying, locating, and obtaining any pertinent bibliography to presenting a systematized text (STUMPF, 2009, p. 51).

The analysis on a secondary basis was carried out by means of document and content collection, since according to Covaleski (2017, p. 2):

[...] the data treatment methodology can be understood as hybrid, situated between statistical formalism and quantitative analysis, thus allowing

verification with requirements of systematicity and reliability, constituting research that is also qualitative, by observing the content and context of the analyzed material.

To study the Communication field's scientific content, it was decided to carry out a systematic bibliographic survey, that is, to map the state of the art of this selected segment. Cervo and Bervian (2002), affirm that the bibliographical research constitutes the basic procedure by which one seeks the mastery of the state of the art on a certain theme and composes part of the descriptive research when it is made with the intention of collecting information and previous knowledge about some theme that one wishes to research.

The systematic survey of the point of discussion in which this field of study is located (state of the art) is fundamental to justify the relevance of the research that is intended to be carried out, in the face of some gap, or controversy, or situation not yet tested, or complexity not yet resolved in this field of study. (SANTAELLA, 2014, p. 1-2).

The state of knowledge goes beyond the state of the art, and seeks to verify the theoretical, methodological, and other paths that guide the study of a given theme in ways to monitor the thinking suggested by subjects in the field on brands, advertising, and *agenda-setting*.

The content analysis technique can be used for the study of works aiming at unveiling the documents' theme (RICHARDSON, 2007), and also according to Sampaio (2007), the systematic review is a type of research that uses as data source the literature on a certain theme. This kind of analysis provides a summary of the evidence related to specific items with the use of explicit and systematized methods for the search, for critical evaluation, and for the synthesis of the intended information. According to the author, systematic reviews are designed to be methodical and reproducible. This type of study serves to guide the development of projects, indicating new directions for future investigations and identifying which research methods were used in an area.

This research's first desire was to shed light on the progression and direction of the *agenda-setting* associated with the context of corporate brands, in the field of academic studies of advertising and propaganda, using as inspiration and model the article by Yale and Gilly (1988) on advertising research trends identification, which considering its implications in other fields of study, sought to understand the direction that publishers, commentators, and researchers were taking through the researched subjects' identification on a larger and smaller scale, as well as the ascent and/or descent of other topics.

Based on the idea of Yale and Gilly's (1988) and Kim *et al.* (2014) model, a longitudinal analysis was performed to investigate and identify within the national and international scientific production from the last 12 years (2006 to 2018) which of them addressed the

influence of corporate brand advertising in the forming of the media agenda and the public agenda. The longitudinal design is one where there is a time sequence in which the same sample is measured several times over time, and its analysis involves comparison of data between the periods investigated, usually consisting of long periods of time.

The greater the number of aspects studied, the more precise the object of study's analysis will be. Rajulton (2001), focusing on progress or the change of a certain factor, reports that the longitudinal research aims to obtain the nature and patterns of changes, identify similarities and/or differences, and analyze interrelationships between marked changes.

The choice of this methodology is justified by the variety of theoretical approaches, methods, and objects developed in the communication, advertising, and marketing axis, thus making it possible to respond to the research problem and achieve the objectives in a consistent and robust manner.

## Research Trajectory

Thus, the relationship between setting, advertising, and corporate brands is researched, based on a systematic survey of published journals, some important Brazilian congresses in the area, and dissertations and theses from Brazil, in the period from 2006 to 2018. And, through the longitudinal analysis of content, the exploratory study was carried out through the analysis of indicators by title, keywords, and content, considering for the research: in Portuguese the terms = Agenda (Agenda-Setting, Media Agenda, Setting, Public Agenda, and Agenda), Corporate Brands, advertising and propaganda; in English the terms = Agenda; Agenda Setting; Corporate Brand; Corporate Branding; Advertising.

The study contemplated articles published by more than 450 national and international journals - 73 of which indicated the desired content - including national and international scientific journals from the marketing and business, communication, and advertising segments, as well as the annals of the main national scientific congresses in the area of communication (specifically the events of Compós - National Meeting of Graduate Programs in Communication, Pró-Pesq PP- National Meeting of advertising and Advertising Researchers, Intercom- Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences, and Abrapcorp - Congress of the Brazilian Association of Researchers in Organizational Communication and Public Relations) over 12 years, including theses and dissertations. The *Communication & Mass Media Complete* Database, *Academic Search Premier*, *Business Source Complete*, *Periódicos Capes* Portal, and *Sucupira* Platform were used to include the complete national and international content desired. According to Yale and Gilly (2014) the public record of advertising research is overwhelmingly reflected in magazines in the fields of advertising, marketing, and communication.

The first search criterion was the word *Agenda-Setting* in the title or keywords, then to refine the search, the expressions “Corporate Brand”, “Advertising”, and “Propaganda” were used separately, then the collected articles started to be verified using the added



expressions, and finally those that accused the presence of all were read to verify direct or indirect content that could subsidize and reference the search. After the readings and the reduction of articles, only those that were effectively addressing the influence of advertising on the agenda's formation were identified.

As it is the second phase of research in development, this article, which extends the initial survey, has also been preserved in the detection of the relationship between the terms already described in scientific journals and congress annals that bring articles on the field of advertising and propaganda, as well as theses and dissertations. This scope was determined for two reasons: 1) survey of the existence of these categories, which make up the articles' textual structure, with potential for future relations between them in the following research phases; and 2) investigation of the elements' dynamics that comprise the categories defined in the works published over a period of twelve uninterrupted years.

National and International Journals that presented articles on the subject after the first and second filtering:

**Table 1** – Periodicals Identified by Segment from 2006 to 2018

Classification of Scientific Journals Researched by Segment		
Segment	Scientific Journals	Total
<b>Advertising</b>	China Media Report Overseas, International Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising e Journal of Promotion Management	<b>6</b>
<b>Marketing and Business</b>	Academy of Management Review, Business Strategy and the Environment, Bussiness and Society, DSI Essays Series, European Journal of Marketing, Institutional Repository -WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Journal of Brand Management, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Communication Management, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Communications, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Political Marketing, Journal of Psychology & Marketing, Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Management Decision, Odete School of Business Publications, RAE-Revista de Administração de Empresas (Brasil), Reputation Management, Research of Midlands State University, Review of Integrative Bussiness Economic Research, South East Asia Journal of Contemporary Business, Economics and Law, SSRN Electronic Journal, The Journal of Corporate Citizenship, The Marketing Review	<b>28</b>
<b>Communication</b>	Canadian Journal of Communication, Communication Today, Communication, Culture & Critique, Comunicatio - South Africa, Revista Comunicação, Mídia e Consumo (Brasil), Comunicación y Sociedad (Espanha), Corporate Communications: an International Journal, Corporate Reputation Review, Cuadernos de Información - Chile, Florida Communication Journal, Intercultural Communication Studies, International Communication Division - AEJMC, International Journal of Communication, International Journal of Disclosure and Governance, International Journal of Scientific Research, International Journal of Sport Communication, Journal of Applied Communications, Journal of Health Communication, Journal of Magazine & New Media Research, Journal of Media Research, Journal of Public Relations Research, Media International Australia, Nordicom Review, Revista Organicom (Brasil), Revista Comunicação Midiática (Brasil), Revista Comunicação e Sociedade (Portugal), Popular Communication, Public Relations Inquiry, Revista de Estudios de Comunicacion ZER (Espanha), Revista FAMECOS - Mídia, Cultura e Tecnologia (Brasil), Midiaticom (Brasil), Revista Mexicana de Comunicacion (México), Science Communication, Semantic Scholar, Stamford Journal of Media, Communication and Culture, The International Journal on Media Management, Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture e Women's Studies in Communication	<b>39</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>73</b>

Source: Self-produced by the authors, 2019.

## Results

The problem that is expected to be debated here is to clarify what are the contributions that research in communication, advertising, and marketing has made in the world in the last twelve years on the intersection of *Agenda-Setting*, Corporate Brands, and Advertising and whether in some spectrum these studies permeate the influence of corporate brand advertising on the agenda.

It was verified that a range of periodicals from 2006 to 2018 published articles in which agenda, advertising, and corporate brands are related in some way, as well as, one notices the concentration in the periodicals and congresses of the communication segment, followed by the marketing and business area and only then, the specific ones on advertising and propaganda, at least from the quantitative point of view.

It was also possible to register a trend of articles on agenda, brands, and advertising in the *European Journal of Marketing* (10), *Journal of Marketing Communications* (8), and the *International Journal of Advertising* (5) and in the case of Brazil, more specifically in congresses and scientific meetings, Intercom - Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences (42) and Pro-Pesq PP- National Meeting of advertising and Advertising Researchers (15).

**Table 2** – List of Dissertations and Theses addressing the 2006-2018 terms

<b>Dissertations and Theses (2006-2018)</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>HEI</b>
Brazil	Latin America	1	Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina
Brazil	Latin America	1	Universidade de São Paulo
Brazil	Latin America	1	Universidade de Sorocaba
Brazil	Latin America	1	Universidade Metodista de São Paulo
Brazil	Latin America	1	Universidade de Brasília
Brazil	Latin America	1	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul
Greece	Europe	1	University of Nicosia
Malaysia	Asia	1	Othman Yeop Abdullah - Universiti Utara
Mexico	Latin America	1	National University of Quilmes
Netherlands	Europe	1	University of Leiden
Portugal	Europe	1	Escola Superior de Educação de Viseu
Portugal	Europe	1	Universidade do Minho
South Africa	África	1	Stellenbosch Uiversity
South Korea	Asia	2	KAIST College of Business
Spain	Europe	1	Universidad de Murcia
Spain	Europe	1	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
Switzerland	Europe	1	University of Lausanne
UK	Europe	1	Brunel Business School
UK	Europe	1	The University of Bradford
USA	North America	1	Syracuse University
USA	North America	1	University of Florida

Source: Self-produced by the authors, 2019.

Regarding the dissertations and theses (22), it is noted that there is not a large production and even Brazil presenting the largest quantity of them, we cannot say that it stands out in the theme's study.

As already mentioned, to restrict the search and reach more effective results, the search was carried out as described in table 3, where it can be seen that in the part that refers to the search, through a virtual database and the help of Foxit Reader, it was possible to filter and scale in 203 scientific productions, which were read and analyzed.

**Table 3** – Relationship between search terms and quantity of scientific articles identified in the 2006-2018 search bases

Relationship between search terms and quantity of scientific articles identified in the search bases 2006-2018	
Search Terms	Scientific Articles
<i>Agenda-Setting (Agenda Setting, Agendamento, Agenda, Agenda dos Meios, Agenda Pública)</i>	5.623.845
<i>Agenda-Setting (Agenda Setting, Agendamento, Agenda, Agenda dos Meios, Agenda Pública) + Advertising (Publicidade Propaganda)</i>	99.350
<i>Agenda-Setting (Agenda Setting, Agendamento, Agenda, Agenda dos Meios, Agenda Pública) + Corporate Brand, Corporate Branding (Marcas Corporativas)</i>	4.371
<i>Agenda-Setting (Agenda Setting, Agendamento, Agenda, Agenda dos Meios, Agenda Pública) + Advertising (Publicidade Propaganda) + Corporate Brand, Corporate Branding (Marcas Corporativas)</i>	492
<i>Articles that in electronic searches brought together the 3 expressions in the keywords, summary and / or content</i>	203
<i>Articles that after reading and crossing the researched items directly or indirectly related to the 3 expressions</i>	19
<i>The Influence of Corporate Brand Advertising on Public Agenda Formation (A Influência da Publicidade de Marcas Corporativas na Formação da Agenda Pública)</i>	2

Source: Self-produced by the authors, 2019.

Before the detailed reading and mapping of the production that was effectively related to the research, it was identified the evolution of production year by year, considering the 203 productions and all sources, where it is clear the oscillation of interest in the theme, as well as the year where there was a *boom* was 2009 with 28 productions and growing again in 2014 with 18 productions.

In relation specifically to the comparison between the four main scientific events that deal with the study of communication and/or advertising/propaganda, it was possible to verify that there is a predominance of Intercom with 42 productions over twelve years and the others, Pró-Pesq PP, Compós - Annual Meeting of Graduate Programs in Communication, and Abrapcorp - Congress of the Brazilian Association of Researchers in Organizational Communication and Public Relations presenting a little difference between them, however, Pró-Pesq PP has been growing in production on the subject in relation to others.

As for the longitudinal distribution of scientific production (Table 4), it was possible to verify that the journals and annals of scientific congresses of the communication segment



was where 50.3% of the production was concentrated over the last twelve years, followed by the marketing and business segment 27.1%, and the advertising segment with only 11.8%. In the case of dissertations and theses, the marketing and business ones appear with 4.9%, communication with 4.4%, and advertising with 1.5%.

**Table 4** – Longitudinal Distribution of Intersectional Scientific Production - 2006-2018

Longitudinal Distribution of Intersectional Scientific Production - 2006-2018																
Source Segment	Font Type	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Total (%)
Advertising	Articles in journals	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	2	5	2	1	0	0	15	7,4
	Articles in proceedings	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	9	4,4
	Dissertations and /or Theses	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1,5
Marketing and Business	Articles in journals	4	3	3	8	4	2	4	4	6	6	3	0	1	48	23,7
	Articles in proceedings	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	7	3,4
	Dissertations and /or Theses	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	10	4,9
Communication	Articles in journals	3	4	3	6	3	3	4	3	4	3	5	6	1	48	23,7
	Articles in proceedings	8	7	6	11	7	4	1	4	0	4	0	0	2	54	26,6
	Dissertations and /or Theses	0	2	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	9	4,4
	<b>Total</b>	17	16	14	28	18	17	13	16	18	16	12	9	9	203	100
	<b>Total (%)</b>	8,4	7,9	6,9	13,8	8,8	8,4	6,4	7,9	8,8	7,9	6	4,4	4,4	100	

Source: Self-produced by the authors, 2019.

After this analysis, a comparative reading of the 203 scientific productions was made, where there were some interesting aspects, such as the inconsistency between the relation of abstract, keywords, and research content, because in several cases the abstract contained terminologies that were not repeated in the keywords and then in the text were inexpressive. In the case of the Brazilian production this problem is more relevant, because approximately 60% of the works did not relate to these three important items of scientific reports. It appears that in the scientific article the basic items of title, abstract, and especially the keywords facilitate the work of indexing a document. The inadequate nomination of these items, simultaneously with excesses and omissions, makes it difficult for other researchers to index the subject and locate it.

After the combined and comparative readings, we found that only nineteen articles, mostly from scientific congresses, related the three expressions. However, the expression

“corporate brands” does not appear clearly but in the developed content. Of these, twelve are national and seven are international, of which four are American and one is Chilean. One of the national articles was produced in partnership with a Spanish researcher, just as one of the Americans was produced in partnership with a Korean researcher.

Another interesting data is that in relation to the source, in Brazil all of them come from scientific events, like Pró-Pesq PP (7), Intercom (4), and Compós (1). Different from the international ones, where five are from journals and only one is from a scientific-professional meeting, even though it has been republished in a journal.

And different from the first part of the analysis, there was a reversal, as the predominant segment became advertising (12), communication (5), and marketing and business (2), with emphasis on production in 2011 and 2016.

The Brazilian authors with the most publications are João Vicente Seno Ozawa, with six articles, Leandro Leonardo Batista with four articles, and Clóvis de Barros Filho with two articles, and the others with only one production. Half of the articles are based on case studies, followed by bibliographical review and in-depth interviews.

As for the content and the relationship with the influence of corporate brand advertising on the public agenda’s formation, one can see from the 203 preliminary articles that many authors point to the direct existence of a relationship, but without any directed study, applied research or theoretical basis, they are only inferences made based on other research.

In the case of the nineteen articles that directly or indirectly address this issue, only two are specifically about the relationship between *Agenda-Setting* and Advertising, but only the article “Systematic Longitudinal Survey of Scientific Studies on the Influence of Corporate Brand Advertising on the Formation of the 2007-2017 Agenda” by Zimmermann and Meira (2018) is the only one that actually deals with corporate brands as well, the other article says it will do this study, but actually it does not and the others only cite factors that may lead to the agenda’s formation. However, there is a consensus on the need for this study.

[...] the agenda setting hypothesis is - almost exclusively - applied to journalistic products. An investigation about setting an advertising theme would be quite unprecedented. There is an obvious relevance of advertising as a product of the cultural industry conveyed by the media (SENO OZAWA; BARROS FILHO, 2008, p. 4).

Trindade and Augusto Junior (2015), when dealing with the deepening of conceptual aspects between cultural mediations and the mediatization of food consumption, address the issue of relationships between advertising and agenda’s formation, however their proposal focuses on food consumption and not on corporate brands.

We consider that the megatrends of food consumption, given in Madi *et al.* (2010), work as a kind of agenda setting, whose themes/values are generating

or act in the creation of filters that by the evidence of media circulation, digital above all, showing new articulations of the concepts of gatekeeping and gate watching applied to consumption, as a way to model and institute the media logic of food brands, framed in such trends (TRINDADE; AUGUSTO JUNIOR, 2015, p. 1).

In line with Motta and Batista (2014), they carried out an article on the influence of advertising and consumption in the opinion formation, aiming to rescue the *gatekeeping* and *gate watching* processes as common concepts in the journalistic universe. The authors indicated in the article the potentialities of this insertion and perspective in media and consumption studies.

El Faro and Carrascoza (2015) developed an article that relates advertising to the *Agenda-Setting* theory, first through the study of information in the context of the society of entertainment and consumption, and rhetorical resources in communication. However, they establish this relationship through the creation of opportunity advertisements from journalistic productions.

Boyle (2010) proposed that a candidate's advertising could interfere with the public agenda to the point of counter-setting it in the media agenda, thus favoring the candidate through positive news, however, this article did not record any change in the media agenda. This result was attributed to the lack of interest of the mass media in the analyzed candidate.

Alp (2016) analyzed cases of political positions and values of societies from the perspective of setting through advertising, propaganda, and public relations and also the way they interfere in the setting of electoral campaigns, and even in non-electoral periods, to build a public opinion that represents the position of the group that uses it. From there, the author states that there is no way to disarticulate the *Agenda-Setting* Theory of the Spiral of Silence Theory. This logic is given by the principle that human beings adopt the side of the powerful. Soon the voter, believing that his or her opinion is among the least dominant, will be less inclined to express it. Eventually, opinions that are considered dominant will gain more importance and become even more dominant, while alternative opinions decrease even more.

The author also brings the perspective that the image of the world is developed and created largely by the mass media and, subsequently, the media imposes on the masses what to think about the image created. In other words, the world to be considered and the questions to be thought of about this world and the ways of thinking are determined only by a handful of people. So, from the author's perspective, the world created by the media will be adopted as a basic opinion by political parties and candidates who intend to benefit from social values to build their own realities and thus influence the public agenda through advertising, propaganda, and public relations (ALP, 2016).

In the political context, Kim *et al.* (2016) still identified advertising as one of the agendas' conditioning factors, when dealing with the first two levels of setting during the U.S.

electoral process in 2012 they analyze the intersection between political advertising, news, and Twitter. In this article the authors conclude that advertising uses *framing* (framework effect) to frame reality and thus, be able to set these “frames” as real.

On the other hand, Kaneva (2011) uses the United States example to see that a “nation brand” sets through news, advertising, public relations, movies, and digital social media, thus promoting the debate about its values and consequently building its image as a brand.

It was also verified that there is a tendency to draw the parallel between setting through brand advertising with focus on digital. As such, Esrock and Leichty (1998), the main authors who relate the agenda to advertising and public relations, more specifically in the digital context, are the most cited in international journals of communication, advertising, and marketing on the subject. More recently Guo (2012) also brings the theme, but is limited to relate the agenda in digital social media.

Hazaparu (2014) presents his research on ethical concepts and perspectives in advertising based on McCombs and Shaw’s (1972) Agenda-Setting theory and the tripolar model of Watson’s (2008) agendas, using as a unit of analysis the “[...] case of a controversial publication campaign on a major mining project at Roșia Montană, a historical region of Romania” (HAZAPARU, 2014, p. 311). To this end, the author dismissed classical approaches on ethics to propose a contextual analysis of ethical dilemmas.

Although Hazaparu (2014) did not use any methodology that effectively tested the advertising effects or reception on the agenda, as well as among its objectives it was not proven if the advertising sets topics or if it only reacts to topics that are latent or quiescent in society, the research is based on the assumption that advertising sets topics and its analysis indicate that it does. In addition, like Watson (2008), it indicates that in advertising and public relations there is a flow similar to journalism in the process of selecting themes that may or may not be set, indicating that the communicator selects pre-existing themes based on the values of society, which are dormant. In other words, for a theme, subject or fact to be set it must be related to a value that is already present in society.

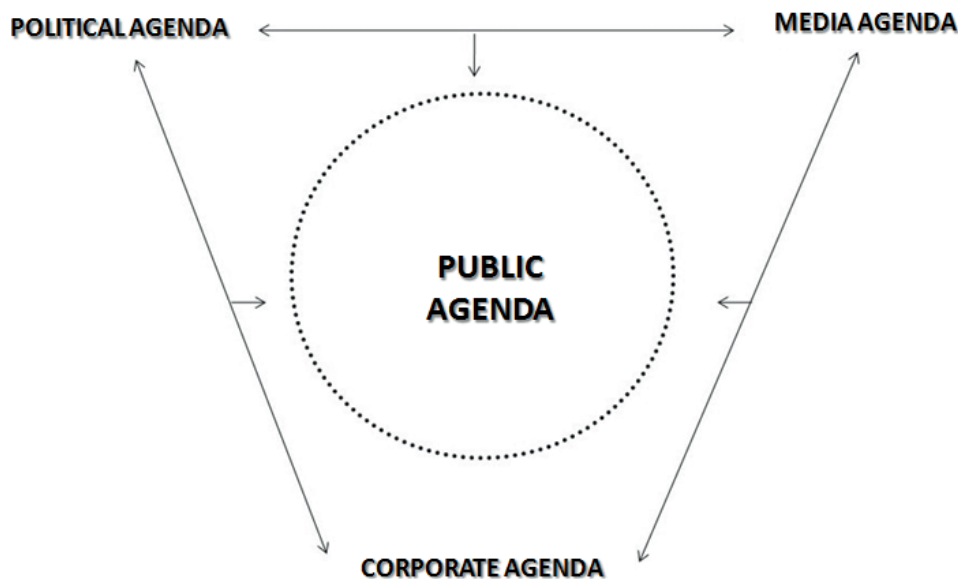
This reasoning is easily explained by psychology studies on the process of memory formation (NOBRE; EDE, 2017) and that of attention (MYERS, 2012) because for the recipient to perceive and receive a message in a conscious manner it is necessary first to pay attention, that is, that the recipient selects the message as a priority in the face of other stimuli, stores the information, and at a later time processes the message, connecting it to pre-existing factors in his/her memory, only adopting a positive or negative positioning at this latter moment. Understanding that this process deals with how the human being builds its repertoire, which makes him capable of establishing other more implemented relationships, so that any communication, including advertising, the receiver needs to connect the received message to previous factors in its memory.

Hazaparu (2014) concludes his study by stating that in the case described, advertising used interactions between three interested agendas - corporate, political, and *media* - in an attempt to dominate the public agenda, this put on the premise that

[...] advertising is not a type of linear two-way communication (from the PR and advertising teams of companies towards consumers), but a complex, interactive, and multifaceted process that needs the input of many other actors (organizations, citizens, media, civil society, regulatory institutions, etc.) to arrive at the publication product's final "look". The mere fact that there is a growing number of regulatory bodies trying to delimit the advertising sector is a strong indication of its interactive nature and complexity. Therefore, its reduction to moralistic perspectives or extremist views that place the emphasis on the goodness or badness of advertising demonstrates a reductive understanding of the multidimensional nature of advertising. (HAZAPARU, 2014, p. 312-313).

The setting proposal made by Watson (2008) does not appear in our research directly, since the text in which he deals with the advertising system as a setting possibility is in the book "*Media Communication. An Introduction to Theory and Process*", however, the author serves as a reference in several articles. What is evident in Watson's work is the presentation of a new model, the "tripolar model of agendas" that introduces political and corporate agendas, where advertising and public relations are important in the process of inserting topics in an attempt by organizations and even political groups to engender and articulate public opinion on their behalf through information overload.

**Figure 1** – Tripolar Model of Agendas, by Watson



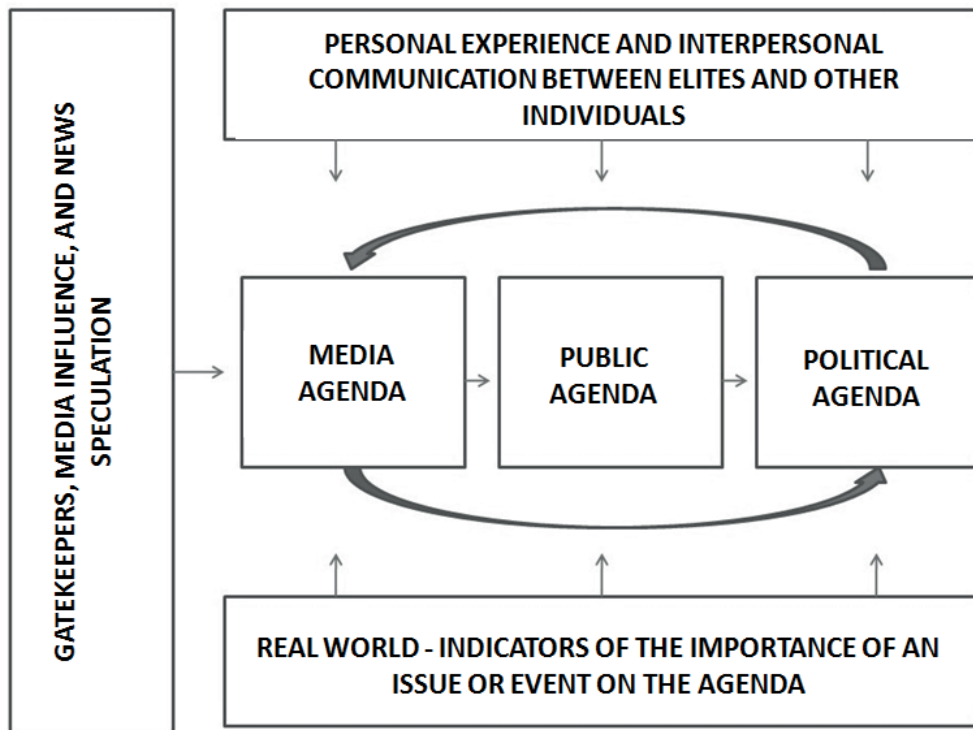
Source: Watson (2008) - Authors' adaptation.



Another important aspect of the tripolar model proposed by Watson (2008) concerns the inclusion of the corporation's agenda, which dominate contemporary life in consumer society. Organizations will then, through advertising, public relations, *lobbying*, and press relations, promote their interests by aligning their organizational communication with existing themes. In the media agenda's case, organizations will always agree, mainly because of their economic influence on it, but in the political agenda's case, they may be aligned or competing, but always associating themselves with themes and values that emanate from the socio-cultural context and pre-existing factors in society, to order public agendas and influence public opinion.

Other authors who also did not appear in this research, either because of the publication's origin, scope, or even the year of production, but who are considered important to cite were Rogers and Dearing (1988), who propose the insertion of the political agenda into the agenda outline and who describe the setting as an inter-rational process of influence between the public agenda, the media agenda, and the political agenda.

**Figure 2** – Agendas' Social Process Model



Source: Rogers and Dearing (1988) - Authors' adaptation.

Albalawi and Sixsmith (2015), who when researching the best practices in health promotion, where risk communication is fundamental for attitude change, described a new agenda in response to the contribution of digital social media, changing and adapting the models of Rogers and Dearing (1988) and that of Watson (2008). The research analysis unit was communications related to the prevention of traffic accidents in Saudi Arabia, and established a relationship between effects and reception through the analysis of Twitter effectiveness. Although the work has been developed in the public health area, the article not only proposes this new agenda but also deals with the influence of advertising on the setting of causes.

As for brand advertising, including corporate advertising, what becomes clear is that the authors believe that its setting power happens if the advertising is based on the organization's values that dialogue with social values.

Brands thus began to broaden their area of action and, in addition to the classic sphere of consumption, brands began to focus on other territories: entertainment, sports, culture, politics, etc. Advertising was one of the key ways that made possible and still makes possible the diffusion and communication of brands, appealing more and more to the values of our culture. (VILAR; COVALESKI, 2017, p. 5).

Whether to reinforce them or fight them:

Counterintuitive advertising is an important tool, from the perspective of communication studies, for the emergence of provoking and broadening in society the formation of debates that influence the behavior, opinion, evaluations, and way of perceiving the realities of minority groups, thus collaborating to the construction of a social normative environment that discourages the reactionary effects of the manifestation of the threat of stereotypes and essentialist prejudice. (LEITE, 2012, p. 650).

Hence the focus on the media receiver's active role, on the one hand acting as a citizen, by provoking accountability of companies - insofar as the citizen would be responsible for demanding a socially responsible behavior from companies - and, on the other hand, acting as a consumer, both for companies and for the media, who set social responsibility issues in the public sphere. (DELLAZZANA, 2011, p. 720).

Finally, it is clear that there is a way to study advertising as a form of public agenda:

[...] concentrated or plural, antidemocratic or libertarian, communication increasingly builds and rebuilds the agenda and our society's discourse. Whether in our daily life or in decisions about the Nation's future. Whether in our neighborhood or across the planet. Our conversation on the street about the same news we saw in different newspapers, the clothes we wear because it's in fashion (or in the media), our intimacy with actors and TV presenters [...]. All this is influenced and influences the contents and messages that are in our daily media. (FNDC, 2008, p. 31).

Therefore, from this survey it was concluded that the various types of possible setting, already reported in previous studies, conceived from McCombs and Shaw's (1972) setting theory are a possible way to research and perhaps prove that corporate brands through their values, represented in advertising, can be on the public agenda simply by their expression and social representation, their links with the public and by causes that they significantly represent in the daily life of media consumption.

It should be pointed out that this article is inserted in a contemporary vision of communication as an interdisciplinary field in synchronic dialogue with other areas of knowledge, while preserving the integrity of its object and *corpus* within the field of Communication, that is, the research is open to references from other fields, interfaces and interferences, remaining faithful to the problem of communication.

From this perspective, what is intended to shed to light in the debate on corporate brands as news able, is the evident publicizing aspect of these devices, taking into account that their expressions manifest themselves as communicative practices of advertising, propaganda, and public relations, which are fundamental in this process for the possibility of setting themes and values in society.

## **Final Considerations**

The main problems encountered in carrying out the survey, and which were most pronounced in national articles, are the lack of assertiveness and direct relationship between content, abstracts, and keywords. Different from the international articles that seem repetitive, because one notices a pattern that follows a logic that starts from identifying the theory, the method, the main themes and if there are, the media to be studied. Therefore, the meta-data for indexation are clearer in the material from abroad and the Brazilian material does not point to this more precise choice.

Another relevant point is the fragility in the methodology's presentation, because nearly most of the articles focus on the applied research's description where they should explain the methodology and then describe its application.

Numerous articles that address the agenda (context of the media agenda and/or public agenda) and that speak of advertising and corporate brands only place these two expressions

as secondary or tertiary elements of the text's real meaning, often appearing only once or only in the references. These authors propose the theme, but in fact do not develop it in the course of their text, including small mentions of the setting and the *Agenda-Setting* without deepening the matter.

Although in the last 12 years the production on the subject is still shy, Brazil has been standing out in the international scenario in the production of the advertising segment, but needs to publish more in a foreign language.

As for the influence of brand advertising, including corporate advertising, on the agenda's formation, some articles make considerations in this regard, and despite consistent theoretical contribution, there is no factual evidence. However, there is a consensus, even if this is not the result of a direct study that the advertising of product brands or corporations can be responsible for setting, especially if these are based on the values that these brands represent, either reinforcing or opposing existing social values.

It is worth mentioning that only two articles effectively deal with the influence of corporate brand advertising on the public agenda, the first published in Intercom as an undergraduate work (SENO OZAWA; BARROS FILHO, 2008) and the second published in the Pro-Pesq PP 2018 Annals (ZIMMERMANN; MEIRA, 2018). This points to the fact that advertising has room to focus on this object perspective in communication research, in view of the possibilities offered in the *agenda setting approach*.

Still on corporate brands advertising it is perceptible the growth of interest in relation to the theme as for its research. There is a relevant production in interface with public relations research. As for corporate brand advertising and its relationship with public opinion and *agenda-setting*, there is a tendency to draw a parallel with a focus on digital and yet with the relationship between the values of organizations and their dialogue with social values.

Another relevant aspect identified in the articles studied is that the *Agenda-Setting* Theory is usually associated with other theoretical perspectives, suggesting a chaining of them, such as *News making*, *Spiral of Silence*, *Gatekeeping* and *Gate watching*, *Framing* and *Priming Effect*, *Knowledge Gap* among others.

Coelho (2005) in the opening note of the magazine *Comunicação e Sociedade de Portugal*, when mapping the theories of communication points out that there is the possibility of further studies to relate advertising and propaganda to the setting of topics by society, especially those related to social actions.

Finally, research has shown that there is still no in-depth scientific study, whether with applied, quantitative or qualitative research, experiments or theoretical proof that can validate the idea of the influence of corporate brand advertising on the public agenda's formation, pointing to a still unexplored research path that is necessary.

The result that is reached after the path of these systematic longitudinal surveys was that it is also necessary to deepen the survey of trends, at the international level, with regards to the study of the *Agenda-Setting*. And, later, to cover this theme for a more in-depth research that can really establish whether there is a relationship between corporate

brand advertising and the public agenda's formation. The potentialities of these relationships are signaled in the results, but the theme can be worked on with effective depth.

At the same time, it was verified that there is a common sense in some research segments that advertising effectively interferes in the public agenda, but without concrete and evidential research contributions, which makes the factual research of this theme unpublished and suggests advances in the perspective of continuity of studies and research on the subject.

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Received on: 06.24.2020

Accepted on: 01.28.2021

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