

Study on the influence of the message Communication and advertisement and their relation to citizenship education

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Article received on August 27, 2018 and approved for publication on September 25, 2018
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Abstract

This research work, carried out by the Advertising Schools of the Sergio Arboleda University and the Central University, conceptualizes on the need to recognize the different elements that intervene in the elaboration and formulation of languages that are presented in the design of different advertising campaigns with the purpose of qualitatively measuring the perception of consumers and creatives at the moment of elaborating messages that allow to sell products or services, but in turn generate in the issuer a human formation from the exercise of citizenship. In this way, it seeks to evaluate, from creativity, the awareness of the advertising message for citizenship training.

Keywords: Advertising communication; Language; Message; Humanism; Citizenship.

Introduction

At the moment the society lives bombarded of a lot of information of all type and in different platforms. In this particular case, and as an object of study, advertising communication is taken as one of the most used tools by people within their daily lives and which becomes one of the main sources to transmit not only needs of the market but ideas, trends, stereotypes, among others. It is therefore important to study these

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types of messages that directly influence the behavior of people, carefully observing how these could be directly determining in the development of proposals for the formation of citizenship.

Taking into account that advertising has different means of transmission and that the channel changes according to each type of receiver that receives it, this category of language (advertising) determines the influence of the message and its impact on the social environment. In the same sense, the problem that was identified from the exercise of advertising is how aware are the publicists, creatives and communicators in generating languages that maintain a sense of citizenship formation in their advertising messages? This difficulty (identified during the investigation) is crucial to build new analysis tools and generate new research mechanisms for the message used in advertising. In this way, it is sought, through this research exercise, to generate analysis tools on the advertising messages that access the development of citizenship education, which allow to generate reflection of concepts and ideas that contribute in these new scenarios of social education, for generate greater interactivity between the environment and the message and, of course, about the response of the message that should be the purchase of the service or product.

With reference to the above, humanism is founded as an important category of this research exercise that analyzes the essence of citizenship training to identify active subjects against the social exercise. In this way, the project seeks to include the advances of the different media and technology in the handling of information, as is the case of the Internet, which allows a greater IT-technological development in the world and therefore a clear requirement of the issuer to obtain information that allows him to make decisions in the face of the needs he finds in his own daily life and environment.

These elements begin to define the concept of *current society* which was worked from a humanistic perspective that recognizes, as well, the other and the others as a whole. This is what has made possible the realization of this large-scale project in a relatively short period; it is simply the combination of very prudent planning with the speed of electronic communications. However, previous, more modest experiences have allowed these strategies to be applied on a larger scale in this project, from a foundation of the term "humanism", referring to Levinas (1974), that is, to pay attention to the plurality of cultures on the basis of the wide range of humanistic concepts: humanity, language as human distinction, dignity, training and culture, human sciences.

According to Levinas (1974), the manifest expression of being that seeks to transcend in the relationship with the other and the self, here is specifically linked to ethics with a high sense of otherness, elements representative of the construction of language, which seeks to define in the problem of communication raised. In relation to this, the availability of many informative elements opens a new door to a world of possibilities and, at the same time, allows the construction of other informative, advertising and communicative paradigms that must be taken into account for the development of messages, that is, any communication proposal should be articulated with its effects on society, whether community, alternative or massive.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Language and human formation

Now, it is known that people do not only understand themselves by speaking. As stated by Entonado (2001), human communication is much broader and involves the conscious elaboration of the message from thinking and reflecting on the intention of the message and the response that is wanted. The human being has developed throughout its existence numerous communication systems that allow it to operate in different circumstances, either making use of its natural faculties, or applying technologies that act as an extension of these. Following Fandos Garrido (2003), writing, telephone, internet, videos, radio, among others, are some devices that have allowed to overcome the spatial or temporal distance between individuals and are some of the information platforms that define the form of consumption of it for people and how we can generate changes in social construction.

According to Blumer (1982), meaning, as an element of language, arises from the social interaction between people. In other words, meaning is not inherent in objects or preexists in a natural state. The meaning is negotiated through the use of language, where the symbolic interaction is defined, in which the social behavior of the people is identified, identifying that language is the essential tool of the development of this process. Thus, meaning does not derive from mental methods but from the process of interaction. In general, symbolic interactionists have remained in this direction. "The central concern is not the way people mentally create meanings and symbols, but the way they learn them during interaction" (Ritzer, 2002, p. 124).

For Blumer, the meanings are "[...] social products or creations that are formed in and through the activities that define people when interacting, from the elaboration of languages" (1982, p. 154). Mead (1968), on the other hand, emphasizes how meanings make language assignments the foundations of human society. Affirms that the extension of knowledge depends on the amplitude of language, the more elaboration, the more knowledge. However, the symbolic interaction is not only a means for the expression of intelligence, but also the way or how we interpret the world. In this way, the language is a stimulus that has a learned meaning and a value for the people, therefore, if each word that is used daily is analyzed to speak, the sounds of the words are related little or nothing to the object to which reference is made (Hall, 1997). For example, there is nothing inherently inherent in the word *puppy* that refers to small, baby or animal, however, the meaning of puppy is known because it is spoken with others; that is to say, as it interacts symbolically with others, the world becomes meaningful and develops a universe of discourses and languages (Blumer, 1982).

The exposure of messages defined by a clear and direct intentionality, as is the case of advertising, seeks not only to generate a buying effect and sensitize the public to a need, but also to build reflective thoughts on certain social, cultural and political stereotypes, this affects the resurgence of tendencies easily adaptable to the environment. The message contributes to questioning the complex of transformations at the intersections between the cultural and the political to understand the practices and discourses of social movements, the meaning

of the conceptions and practices in dispute of positions of power. New scenarios of conflict appear between those who exercise domination and those who resist and suffer it. In other words, “[...] people adapt more quickly to what gives them some peace of mind and quickly return to their comfort zone, which is easily what ‘Americans call’ maintaining their quality of life” (Ribero, 2014, p. 34).

It is therefore evident that through a critical examination of the new meanings and contexts of *culture, society and nature* in the era of globalization, on the new conceptions of sphere protection, which essentially relate to scenarios that builds human being, one must examine the exercise of citizenship from the theory *civic republican*. According Molina (2013), citizenship is primarily a practice, an activity in the political arena of public life, where expressed from its construction social and its development with others.

The citizen is conceived as a “political actor” who actively participates in making decisions that affect public welfare. Thus citizenship is accentuated as a practice and activity of a political nature, the civic-republican theory adopts the conception of the political community, which is directly linked to the values of participation, plurality and justice (Barber, 2003, cited in Molina, 2013).

The community offers a sense of solidarity and reciprocity among citizens without ignoring the presence of conflicts that emanate from different conceptions of the common good (Miller, 2000). The republican theory deals mainly with citizen participation in democratic political life. As Boyte affirms, it is in this type of participation “[...] how people become citizens: responsible and collaborators with the country” (2004, p. 79).

Carlos Pereda, a Uruguayan philosopher who works on the concept from the point of view of the ability to construct a position in front of the intervention of the context, states that: “The critical cycle is related to arguing from a subjective point of view and, on the other hand, the possibility of doing it objectively” (1994, p. 1463). It is, then, to investigate the profound transformations of the contemporary world in which regional and national spaces are fragmented and reordered, in the scenarios of economic and cultural globalization, while different social sectors build new identities and senses of the place, while confronting discourses and practices of domination.

Language, discourse and uses constitute the meaning of reality, the construction of a world, the production of identities and subjectivities in practices, powers and knowledge in the production of reality, the identification of sites and Subaltern forms that are potential for the reconstruction of other possible and imaginable worlds.

2.2. And for Advertising. Return to the concept

Two manifestations of political correctness, of asymmetric character, are opposed and at the same time concur, in the drift of conceptions about advertising as a communication scenario.

Regarding the first manifestation, both in the American critical reflection (Packard, 1959) and in the Latin American one (Block de Behar, 1973), just at the beginning of the consolidation of the consumer society, the denunciatory voices about its character manipulative and harmful they managed to constitute a place of broad consensus; creator of false needs,

the main driver of consumer values and forgery of perverse cultural stereotypes, advertising -without those practices were not true- was the scapegoat for all the evils attributable to the mass communication system.

There were several consequences of this critical reductionism, but for the purposes of this text three are highlighted: i) the easy evidence that advertising superimposed the interests of its communicative effectiveness to any other value hid other equally manipulative devices in areas perhaps more definitive -politics, war, exclusion- as journalism and entertainment television programming, ii) as an expression of a strange romanticism, at the same time that the communicative practices around the market were stigmatized because of their instrumentality and pragmatism, the other modalities and areas of communication remained, for a long time, out of the critical eye because of their supposed neutrality, and iii) it satisfied the consciences, it became part of an indisputable consensus and was carried out with unquestionable political correctness, by blaming publicity for the dangers of communication.

But towards the end of the eighties several circumstances would come to modify that perception about advertising. From within the students and practitioners of the field (Caro, 1994; Costa, 1992; Eguizábal, 1998) it was evident that advertising had exhausted its communicative formats and that the generalized and constant euphoria of the architecture of its messages had ended up constructing a representation of the world so distanced from reality that its effects were already totally innocuous.

At the same time, that world, populated only by happy, healthy, perpetually smiling people, had little to do with the unfulfilled promises of happiness that the postwar world order had predicted: financial crises, wars, environmental collapses, famines. The consumer had changed and, in fact, did not experience the frenzy that the market promised him, his interests went beyond satisfying his needs through the purchase; the publicity had proven because of its obviousness, in the distance one perceives that discovery with enormous strangeness that he was also a citizen with political expectations, ecological concerns, possessor of an ideology and an increasing criticality in front of the media.

Soon the enormous distance between the inanity of the consumer object and the grandiloquence of his speech was revealed: "Advertising communication [...] is more magical and passionate yet. More than in the others, there is a disproportion between the futility of the object and the breadth of the media, between the banality of the product and the splendor of the message, between the vulgarity of the mercantile object and the religiosity of the evoked images" (Cathelat, quoted in Baylon & Mignot, 1994, p. 211).

In addition to these reflections loaded with self-criticism, and a kind of guilty conscience of advertisers, the change in the understanding of the advertising phenomenon also came from the social sciences. In a landmark text that opened the nineties, Armand Mattelart (1991), a profound critic of the capitalist communication system, proposed schemes for the analysis of advertising beyond stigmatization: its central role in the formation of transnational communication conglomerates. And its overlap in terms of content, formats and languages of all other areas of communication, forced to build frameworks of analysis that overcome the dominant side of the denunciation of its persuasive effects.

Advertising, to meet its objectives, had far exceeded the scope of the commercial (Caro, 2012). Prior to the emergence of the Internet, which would subvert the logic of mass communication in the first third of the nineties of the last century, the swan song of an entire era of advertising will be represented by the communicative proposal of Benetton and his emblematic notice of the documentary photograph of the AIDS patient about to die surrounded by his family. Death, pain, crying had replaced beauty, health and happiness as the expressive resources of a warning whose objective was to position a clothing manufacturer. There was no product, there was no slogan, the image declared a strange origin to the traditional advertising discourse. Benetton did not sponsor any outreach or prevention campaign for the epidemic, nor did it even call on public opinion to show solidarity with families and people suffering from the terrible disease; he simply seemed to say: “[...] as advertising has saturated you with that ideal world where pain does not exist, then have, observe, there is death and suffering” (Benetton, cited in Caro, 2012, p. 89).

That such an extreme resource was momentarily successful was demonstrated by the fact that the brand managed to be one of the three most remembered in the global measurements that market analysts carry out for this purpose, as was also demonstrated that the *production semiotics* (Caro, 2012) overlapped with the *Industrial production* as a correlate of the ephemeral stage of the symbolic value took precedence over use value of products.

The publicists, then, began to link the brands for which they were contracted with the social, environmental, cultural and political issues -not so much the latter, since everything has a limit-; they had discovered that consumers were also immersed in real contexts and that, therefore, they drew attention to unemployment, environmental pollution, racial discrimination, the absurdity of war. But the world of advertising communication strategies seems to be a set of positions: it is enormously unstable, the capital that allows to occupy a place very soon depreciates and the tactics to remain there also very quickly fall into obsolescence.

Without going into a deep discussion of the assertion that there seems to be a sustained process, during the last three decades, of a loss of the innocence of consumers, of an increase in the criticality of the hearings and the emergence of a certain character Socio-conscious of the users of goods and services, what seems clear is that the recipients of the advertising communication: i) no longer transfer the values of an idyllic universe to a brand, ii) question what comes so much show on purpose of a simple drink, and iii) they wonder what have to see those calls to environmental awareness with a car or those images of schools with dirt floors in the middle of the jungle with a bank.

Now, the concurrence of two asymmetric manifestations of political correctness around the conceptions of advertising had been announced at the beginning of this text. Three scenarios constitute the second manifestation of such correction and its asymmetry consists in that they come substantially from the field of academia: social responsibility, responsible consumption and publicity with cause.

In this process they have to do with social contexts or directly related to advertising such as: i) the concomitant processes of the evidences of planetary non-sustainability by virtue of the economic model and the leading role of consumerism in that disaster, ii) the growing

influence of the consumer movement, iii) the rise and growth of advertising *public good* that concentrates the best developments in advertising creativity. One can also identify, in the academic field, a growing need to articulate the missionary principles of university institutions that see themselves as cultural and political projects; also in the purpose of building its interdisciplinarity and overcoming the character of aggregation of other disciplines for its understanding and professional exercise, and the need to sustain its relevance in ethical terms; In this competition, the field of social responsibility emerges as the link that unites the social demands that are formulated to the advertising field with a formative dimension of its agents.

The problematic nature of the *social responsibility* does not come from its necessary formative dimensions and dignifying professionals, but from its limited and paralyzing explanatory character of the social intervention of the advertising phenomenon and its reassuring effect in terms of conscience, which it results, ultimately, in depoliticizing consequences.

Social responsibility, in many aspects, becomes an optional dimension of the advertising exercise. There are, then, campaigns of public good, on the environment, education, mobility, disability and publicity where social responsibility is of low intensity: strong sales, promotions, product launches; spaces of production and consumption that, in some way, are constituted as scenarios supposedly *neutrals, aseptic*.

It seems that converges the possibility of practice of *social responsibility* by restrictive or negative; not to raise situations of discrimination, exclusion or disrespect in the content of the messages and not to transgress the precepts stipulated in the Code of Advertising self-regulation, would then be socially responsible in the *blank* space not make the *irresponsibility* manifest. The *social responsibility*, as one of the ethical attributes of advertising that can be practiced passively and, therefore, depoliticizing, the practice of *advertising with cause* opposes.

2.3. Social responsibility and responsible consumption

It is not intended to ignore the value of the different practices that conscious consumers perform and that the accumulation of their individual behaviors may have, in the long run, positive effects in areas such as the protection of the environment, the reduction of child labor, or health.

But the expression *responsible consumption* deserves to be thought and problematized for several reasons. The first, because it adds an ethical dimension to the action where the final stage of the commercial process is verified and it seems that it is possible to act in accordance with values as consumers that have an autonomy of productive and commercial practices, those are irresponsible. Of course, the expansion of the number of consumers who develop habits in their personal and daily lives, in line with the seven *Rs to Recycle, Reuse, Reject, Revalue, Redistribute, Claim and Repair* (Oviedo, 2016), will affect to some extent the perverse strategies of programmed obsolescence or the promotion of compulsive updating and early substitution. But its effects on the economic and political structure, which depletes the environment or takes advantage of the fragility of labor laws of Third World countries to establish conditions of work close to slavery, will be reduced.

It is not objective for this text to evaluate the veracity of the altruistic purposes of the brands that have folded to initiatives such as *Fairtrade* and that guarantee end users aspects such as fair wages and prices to producers, elimination of work children, elimination of intermediaries, use of clean energy, no use of transgenics or pesticides, extreme care of toxic waste. But from a critical perspective, and without that means denying the impact of that movement, various studies show that the boom in consumption in the metropolis, with respect to these brands, is accompanied by a resounding depoliticizing effect, according to Cole.

[...] ethical consumers believe in the power of change driven by the consumer. They implement a dyadic strategy of consumption that points to the fact that goods are marketed as much as the 'right'. They frame ethical coffee (the research was carried out in a fair-trade campaign undertaken by Starbucks) as the 'right' choice because they believe it guarantees fair prices for producers, fair wages for workers, adequate working conditions, a community environment acceptable quality of life and environmental and economic sustainability. Despite the skepticism of some, consumers read ethical coffee as an effective response to the political and economic problems they perceive as endemic in the 'Third World' and 'developing' nations (Cole, 2015, p. 339).

Locked the consumer in a subjectivism of moral order, against the deceptive act to some extent countercultural, Carriere records that "[...] instead, ethical consumption echoes neoliberalism when defending the choice of the buyer in a capitalist market economy as the appropriate vehicle to express preferences" (2008, p. 34).

3. Methodology

From a qualitative approach, the methodology was oriented from three phases, in correspondence with the objectives set out in the work. First, *show* the start symptoms that are taken with some self-critical ability to recognize their limits from the first moment; second, *interpret* the message addressed to the construction of citizenship elaborated in different advertising campaigns, centered on the logical controversies on each case, with reference to the different paradigms (to open new ones interpretation possibilities, new plans from which to look with new eyes) and, thirdly, *build* styles, own positions, justifying them to each identified problem, that is, the strategies.

The work unit was formed by a random sample segmented from production levels. Approximately 30 participants were identified (publicists in training, practicing professionals and consumers from different media, differentiating the platform and the context in which the individual is located). We worked with an easily influenced population but also with people who think that they do not consume means of communication. advertising, people in different working, professional and economic conditions, located in different scenarios of Colombian, rural and urban geography, chosen as intentional sampling, on the one hand, according to criteria of the independent variables (economic and knowledge capacity, interaction and culture) and, on the other, from features of the dependent variables (geographic location: Bogotá,

intermediate cities and rural areas). For the content analysis, 35 advertising campaigns were reviewed, of which four were intentionally chosen, in consideration of the *construction of the message* from different advertising languages; in terms of Villasante (2002) under the criterion of subjectibility to the evaluation of these processes from the very practices of the facts.

The analysis is opened to the registration of information in the form of matrices to facilitate the corresponding debate. In other words, the construction of the advertising message is measured from the communicative intention of creating a citizen awareness and its influence on the construction of citizenship. Likewise, to identify the level of influence and impact of the message in said process, interviews, observation and the method of participatory action are used as tools.

From this perspective, the categories of analysis (elaboration of content around the advertising message and citizen training) are recorded from any format or genre, where the construction of the language is defined by an educational component but also by social responsibility. This view allowed to identify the design of messages that exalt the exercise of publicity from citizenship formation, understanding the message as a mechanism of construction of active subjects in society from some problematic registers such as: a geographical space (habitat) in which they are made the things (live); an accomplishment (work) with economies of time (have); relationships (power) from certain social strategies; in cultural processes (believe) in which ideas intersect and open new experiences (create).

4. Analysis and results

Taking as reference more than 35 advertising campaigns in Colombia, between the years 2016-2017, of varied products of consumption and services, the content of the graphic, visual and sound pieces is evaluated. To determine, according to the case, according to the category of citizenship designed in the study and taking Vygotsky (1995) as the main reference, who analyzes the message from a social, political and cultural environment, sufficient for the requested research exercise. For socialization purposes, three campaigns are selected, quite committed to what they want to show.

	<p>Company: Viva Colombia. Date: October 2016 Media: Press - social networks.</p> <p>An atypical Tuesday, October 11, the airline Viva Colombia, posted on its social networks a controversial ad, which was criticized, as well as highlighted by thousands of Colombians. "Take the wench pa' the Arenosa" said the message released the Airline, which was accompanied by another phrase "Let's go to Barranquilla with this promo. Buy now". The criticisms were not expected from the users of social networks and people working for the defense of women's rights. The president of the company, William Shaw, apologized for the campaign and tried to solve the problem with campaigns that vindicated the role of the wife in marriage.</p>
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This campaign, in particular, turned out to be very special in the study, since its message clearly offended the female audience and generated greater controversy in different radio and television media, mainly. When asking both consumers and publicists about this case, most people spoke of a message that promoted the lack of values and generated a lack of moral standards for “our society”.

	<p>Banco Bancolombia's advertising campaign called "It's The Moment Of ... What is the advertising campaign about? Bancolombia launched an expectation campaign through its virtual branch and on social media. The company's commercials motivated a specific audience to expect changes to be made to the organization in favor of customers. However, they found that the changes did not come true.</p> <p>Bancolombia held a press conference where they showed a series of personal messages to relatives of the participants that motivated a message of personal recognition and that demonstrated a human character in the organization. But people and those present did not understand it this way, creating a series of comments of all kinds, of good, bad, exclusion and disrespect. The issue, being Colombia such a religious country, referred to messages of acceptance of same-sex couples, which caused some rejection (implication of very personal things), generated very divided opinions. It is complex to calculate exactly which audience is in favor and which is against the campaign. The truth is that it has caused great commotion and hundreds of comments on social networks, some in favor and others against.</p>
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This campaign gave a lot to talk about, but according to the interest of civic education, it contributed a lot to the project. The claim of the human being in the social, demonstrating its creative character in an environment of great competitiveness and business, allows to point out the importance of the message for citizenship training and verifies that content can be made with a message of citizenship and social commitment.

	<p>Advertising campaign for the Apple drink Postobón: "Life is a rose color".</p> <p>According to the perception of the people, the campaign reflects a view of relaxed life, with detachment from reality, which results, for the object of study, a disconnected form of the citizen's exercise. Despite the brand's interest in enhancing its product, the message is subject to a biased vision of social reality and does not reinforce the exercise of citizenship.</p>
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The campaigns analyzed, which are part of the soft drink sector, are characterized by a message that highlights a relaxed lifestyle, claiming the intention of advertising to idealize it, with the clear purpose of hiding the side effects of the intake of soft drinks . This is demonstrated by the people interviewed who perceive the message of the advertising of soft drinks

and their manipulation in front of the characteristics of the product. It also identifies that people do not perceive any construction of citizen subject in the message and do not find the connection that could be made at the time of constructing a different message.

The different positions of Bruner (1997), Werstch (1997) and Kaye, (1998) clearly approach the thesis of Vygotsky (1995) on the mediation that language has in the construction of society and the development of being within a any environment. The proposal of Bruner (1997), regarding the acquisition of language and communication, is openly interactionist. The language, for Bruner, serves to interpret and regulate culture. Interpretation and negotiation start at the same moment that the child enters the human scene. Likewise, like many other authors of this line, among them Gallardo (2008), it is affirmed that a communicative competence prior to language is needed.

5. Conclusions

As expressed, language becomes a fundamental element for the development of interactionism and therefore in the social development of the human being; All this would come to show that the language goes beyond a systematic and logical response of messages, it is a dialectical relationship between it and the understanding of symbols that allows creating a connection with the psychological processes of perception and conceptualization. This shows the influence of the advertising message on citizenship training, in this case. Two strategies are appropriated as communicative mechanisms that activate cognitive-emotional processes in the audiences: an indirect or counter-shock that, through the enhancement of negative-traditional values, allows to enalt significant social constructions that demand processes of citizen interaction; another that exalts, directly, proactive behaviors to position the playful and the right to the difference as principles of communication.

This research project that addresses, in different stages, the development of content in different information and knowledge platforms, understands the need to continue working on the topic, to identify the need to create training tools for people who have responsibility to make communicative proposals about the importance of taking advantage of these spaces to promote a citizen's thinking in all its issuers.

According to the above, and thanks to the exercise carried out in the field of advertising communication, favored by its clear intention to generate purchasing influence in the public, it is concluded that the categories *advertising message and citizenship training*, within many communication proposals, allow to identify the importance of promoting the use of this platform as a mechanism for human formation, taking into account the scope of the messages in this type of media construction.

From these informative scopes it can be specified that advertising is a diffusion tool that, when used properly, can generate alternative messages of citizenship and citizen coexistence. The above allows to create a greater understanding of the factors of citizen sensitivity in different environments, which would generate a greater impact on the message of the prod-

uct. The publicity, which was studied for the promotion of a citizen message, is identified as institutional, which generates in the audience a propaganda government and according to their tastes, which causes, in people, a bad reception or partial of the message. On the other hand, the campaigns of social diffusion are understood by many of the interviewed people as a protectionist publicity that appeals only to the charity of those who listen to it.

In general, it was found that for the development of campaigns that promote the need to consume different products, proposals are generated that refer to the qualities of the product or service, its availability and market segmentation; but in trying to create messages that would also allow citizenship to be formed, communicators, for the most part, were not given this process; they also do not find any sense in generating a citizen sensibility through their contents. Moreover, they even make fun of the possibility of creating those characteristics within the advertising message.

This work, which presupposes more research exercises, will continue in the search to create training tools for people who have responsibility for generating content, which allows for awareness for the construction of citizenship.

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