

O consumo da corda do Círio de Nazaré na pandemia da covid-19: experiências simbólicas nos sentidos (i)materiais

The consumption of the Círio de Nazaré's rope in the covid-19 pandemic: symbolic experiences in the (im)material senses

*Gabriel da Mota Ferreira*¹

*Manuela do Corral Vieira*²

Resumo: *Este artigo analisa o consumo da corda do Círio de Nazaré, manifestação religiosa e cultural da cidade de Belém, no Pará, a partir das experiências e vivências das interações com esse objeto durante a pandemia da covid-19 (2020-2021). Assim, objetiva-se compreender o consumo simbólico da corda no contexto de procissões suspensas em que ela tradicionalmente se faz presente. Por meio das noções de ritual de consumo como prática cultural e da cultura material que constrói experiências, percebeu-se que a suspensão das procissões evidenciou o caráter constitutivo do objeto-símbolo corda do Círio na experiência dos sujeitos, de modo que a ausência dele nas ruas influenciou na própria percepção e vivência do consumo da festividade enquanto experiência social que costuma ser partilhada anualmente na cidade de Belém.*

Palavras-chave: *Círio de Nazaré; consumo; corda dos promesseiros; cultura material; pandemia da covid-19.*

Abstract: *This article analyzes the consumption of the Círio de Nazaré's rope, a religious and cultural manifestation in the city of Belém, Pará, based on the experiences and interactions with this object during the Covid-19*

1 Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA). Belém, PA.
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0627-0242> E-mail: gabrielmotaf@gmail.com

2 Universidade Federal do Pará (UFPA). Belém, PA.
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2034-5359> E-mail: mcorral@ufpa.br

pandemic (2020-2021). Thus, the objective is to understand the rope's symbolic consumption in the context of suspended processions in which it is traditionally present. Through the notions of consumption ritual as a cultural practice and the material culture that builds experiences, it was noticed that the suspension of processions evidenced the constitutive character of the object-symbol Círio's rope in the experience of the subjects, so that its absence in the streets influenced the perception itself and the experience of consumption of the festivity as a social experience that is usually shared annually in the city of Belém.

Keywords: *Círio de Nazaré; consumption; rope of promisers; material culture; Covid-19 pandemic.*

Introduction

The Círio de Nazaré [The Taper of Our Lady of Nazareth], beyond being an essentially religious manifestation, currently is an event of cultural dimension celebrated in October in the city of Belém, state of Pará. Its beginnings go back to the eighteenth century. The origin myth narrates the discovery of the Original Image³ of Our Lady of Nazareth by caboclo Plácido José de Souza at the banks of the Murutucu creek in the central region of the present city of Belém. Since then, a series of miracles have been attributed to the Saint, leading to the creation of processions (the first one was in 1793) (IPHAN, 2006), a growing number of devotees, and material elements that characterize the festivity, besides the expansion of participation forms beyond the physical presence, from the first radio and TV transmissions in the twentieth century to the current online interaction possibilities (ALVES, 2002). In 2004, the Círio was registered as a Cultural Heritage of Brazil, a title the Advisory Board of the Institute of National Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) revalidated in 2021⁴.

This paper aims to analyze the consumption of one of the most characteristic material elements of the Círio de Nazaré: the rope attached to the “carro-berlinda” [display case car] that carries the Pilgrim Image of the Saint in both principal processions, *Trasladação* [“Transfer”] and Círio [“Taper”]⁵. The rope became a part of those pilgrimages in the late nineteenth century. At the time, it was hard to move the display case car through the *Ver-o-Peso* Market area due to the absence of paving to contain the water that overflowed from the Guajará Bay (IPHAN, 2006). In 1855, people who participated in the march had the idea to wrap a

3 Today, another image circulates in official processions and events of the Círio de Nazaré; it is called the “Pilgrim” and was sculpted in 1969 to replace and preserve the original from natural weathering.

4 Available at: <https://www.oliberal.com/para/iphan-revalida-cirio-de-nazare-como-patrimonio-cultural-do-brasil-1.458805>. Accessed on November 12, 2021.

5 Held, respectively, on Saturday and Sunday of the second weekend of October, the two processions follow the same route but in opposite directions. Thus, they reenact the myth that says the Original Image was taken to the Government Palace at the time but returned to the place where it was found (IPHAN, 2006).

rope around the display car (until then, pulled by a yoke of oxen) to pull it out of the quagmire and guarantee the progress of the procession. However, 13 years went by until the festivity's organizers officialized the rope as an element integrating the *Trasladação* and the *Círio* in 1868 (IPHAN, 2006).

However, though a utilitarian function led to its insertion, the rope continues to be a traditional object for religious performance, besides its material properties: the rope became a space for paying promises and demonstrating sacrifice, symbolizing the connection between the human and the divine. Moreover, it is also a cultural space in the sense that “going on the rope” is a certificate of attendance in the *Círio de Nazaré*, which the pieces of the rope distributed among promisers at the end of the processions testify, an aspect we will analyze later.

Figure 1 – Promisors raise the rope in the 2017 *Círio*.



Source: David Carneiro/Bradesco. Available at: <https://medium.com/bradesco/cores-sorrisos-e-amores-no-c%C3%ADrio-de-nazar%C3%A9-72da086bb0c1>.

Such a reconfiguration of the rope's presence over time leads us to think about how this object also became a consumable product. From the point of view of the media logic that appropriates manifestations of popular culture, the *Círio de Nazaré* is a contemporary Amazonian

spectacle. In Amaral Filho's (2018) terms, the communication strategies elaborated in this type of phenomenon aim to publicize the show as a consumer good of the city where it takes place – in this case, the city of Belém in Pará. However, in the years 2020 and 2021, the possibilities of rope consumption changed due to the suspension of processions in the streets of the capital of Pará. Thus, this paper analyzes the consumption of the rope in the Círio de Nazaré, comparing the possibilities for consuming the object in traditional contexts with those that occurred during the covid-19 pandemic.

This research's concept of consumption is based on the relationship between culture and consumption and on the mediating role of goods defined by McCracken (2007): the circulation of consumable objects transfers meanings that inhabit the culturally constituted world from this symbolic place to the consumer individual. We also understand mass consumption as a contemporary global phenomenon that reorganizes the symbolic production of everyday experiences and practices (FEATHERSTONE, 1995), analyzing the affectivity that permeates the relationships between things and people in Círio by the emotional bases that take hold in society.

Following a netnographic fieldwork approach (KOZINETTS, 2014), this study's methodological procedures involved two distinct movements: in the months of May and September 2020, we prepared questionnaires to host in the Google Forms platform, which we applied, first, in the context of the peak of the first wave of covid-19 cases and deaths in the state of Pará and, second, right after the announcement of the suspension of processions and official events of the 2020 Círio. The survey links were available in three ways: i) forwarded via instant messaging app WhatsApp; ii) published on social media⁶ in public mode (so they could be shared), inviting whoever felt willing to answer the questionnaire and encouraging its replication to other spaces; and iii) published

6 Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

in digital sociability spaces related to the Círio, especially Facebook pages and groups⁷. In both moments, we obtained 253 valid responses.

Besides the two surveys, henceforth Fieldwork 1 (2020) and Fieldwork 2 (2020), we monitored the official social media accounts of the Círio de Nazaré⁸ and the abovementioned Facebook groups from March 2020 to November 2021. In this sense, we interpreted the data obtained through the method of online content analysis, guaranteeing participants' privacy and using only their textual outputs (KOZINETS, 2014) either in the surveys or in the public environment of Facebook pages and groups. We also resorted to one of the authors' participant observations made in previous years as a way of recovering data and impressions regarding the face-to-face experience in the processions.

Hence, the transdisciplinary character of the material culture of the Círio, exemplified in the presence of its immaterial elements, finds an opportune moment to explore the analytical potential of objects and subjects that compose communicational processes derived from the empirical phenomenon in question. And consumption gives us an opportunity to understand the cultural dimension that constitutes the being-in-the-world with other subjects and things, consumer sociabilities, and the symbolic exchanges in practices of production, circulation, and distributions of material goods.

Consuming what is not for sale: symbolic experiences of the rope

Propelled and guided by the Círio and its things, especially the rope, in the present study's case, consumer practices draw attention to emotions attached to materialities and to consumption as a socio-cultural activity since "every culture has meaningful objects imbued with symbolic

7 "Filhos da Nazinha" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cirio2020/>); "Círio" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CirioDeNazareBelem/>); "Devotos de Nossa Senhora" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/238490246194300/>); and "família Círio de Nazaré. #FCN" (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/339432873713378/>).

8 Available at: <https://facebook.com/ciriodenazare/>; <https://www.instagram.com/ciriooficial/>; <https://twitter.com/ciriooficial>.

significance.” (BRAGA; KUREBAYASHI, 2014, p. 117). From a material culture perspective, we can understand consumption as an aspect of it: “people have always consumed goods they or others created.” (MILLER, 2007, p. 40).

From our considerations above, we stress the promisors’ consumption of the rope is part of a series of consumer practices of the Círio de Nazaré as a brand (L. SANTOS, 2017) that houses diverse elements⁹: objects that are also symbols, such as the Image of Our Lady of Nazareth, the mantle that covers Her, and a poster of Her; the information that circulates about changes in the city’s calendar in October; and the events themselves, mediated through massive promotion and/or live broadcasts; besides items for personal use bearing the Círio theme to accomplish popular appeal and boost sales in the local market, such as shirts, posters, and books among many others acquired and displayed by people who participate in the Círio (FIELDWORK I, 2020). Given the intense media coverage around these consumer goods, including by the event’s organization itself, the experience with the material culture of Círio takes shape in the mediation of significations between devotees and objects, which act as media devices bearing advertising communication (JUNQUEIRA, 2009).

In the covid-19 pandemic scenario, participants could only attend specific events the Círio’s Board¹⁰ carried out remotely, and, perhaps because of that, the festivity’s organization invested in more digital presence. Thus, participating in the Círio was an experience mediated by the consumption of information and official events in a series of possibilities of free access to the feast – what had already been happening before but became more evident since 2020 either through the creation

9 Besides the rope, the research from which this discussion emerges also included in-depth analyses of the Images of Our Lady and lunchtime in the Círio as object-axes of the experience that subjects establish with material culture during the festivity.

10 In 2020, the celebrations such as the Presentation of the Mantle, the Original Image’s Descent and Ascent in the Sanctuary Basilica, and the Círio’s Mass in the Our Lady of Grace Cathedral, had only the presence of members of the festivity’s organization. In 2021, these spaces had a 50% capacity limit for devotees.

of new events for online broadcasting or smaller in-person audiences to keep the physical contact between subjects and objects.

From this perspective, the premise is that Círio participants' affectivity in relation to consumer objects, goods, and services is an activity as in the words of Spinoza's theory of affect: "The difference between being active and being passive has to do with whether or not the thing (in this case, the man) is an adequate cause for what happens in it." (JESUS, 2015, p. 165). Miller (2013) indicates that "much of what makes us who we are exists not through our consciousness or our bodies but as an external environment that habituates and incites us" (p.79). We understand the study of communicational processes in the event also involves the recognition of consumption's protagonism and the presence of (im)materialities in the world we live in relative to objects that are part of the Círio and that are constitutive of the people who participate in it, their sensibilities, and their social interactions.

In Fieldwork 1 (2020), the question was: "Is there any image/object that reminds you of the Círio?" The principal answers were the images of Our Lady (48.4%) and the rope of promisors (36.5%). Thus, this research data shows that the rope is one of the Círio's constitutive elements conducive to perceiving the power of agency between things and people; something that, in this object, goes beyond the processions, from ordering the rope, customarily made in the city of Itajaí/SC, to its landing in Belém. It is a complex tracking process reported as a special event¹¹. On the other hand, at the end or even during the processions, the rope is divided into fragments to be distributed among the promisors: officially, the rope's unhorsing (when the display car goes on without being pulled by promisors) is supposed to happen in the final meters of the *Trasladação* and Círio routes under the argument of helping to control the progress of the procession and to alleviate the promisors'

11 As our fieldwork could verify on the official Facebook page of the Círio de Nazaré. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/ciriodenazare/photos/a.151726304916604/1929116770510873/>. Accessed on: August 20, 2021.

physical weariness. Members of the Guard of Nazaré¹² coordinate and execute the cutting of the rope, and the Archbishop of Belém blesses the object's fragments.

In this sense, we notice what Featherstone (1995) indicates about the relationship between consumption and the sacred around a single object, in this case, the Círio's rope: religion adapts to consumer culture while supporting a sacred dimension contained in goods. The rope, consumed as well in the form of mediatized information about its destiny, is a good loaded with symbolism: more than its usefulness, participants consume a web of meanings that cannot be conceptualized as absolutely profane (FEATHERSTONE, 1995). Among the meanings in the abovementioned practices, there is the expectation around something that arrives in Belém for the Círio (metaphorically as a family member) and the material reward for the sacrifice undertaken that, when shared, also becomes a certificate of presence.

However, some people cut the object "in advance": they themselves take cutting tools with them to help divide the pieces among themselves while still amidst the crowd that walks close to the rope. A dangerous practice, given the proximity between people, but whose prohibition is almost impossible, and it is up to the Catholic Church and the press to annually publicize an awareness campaign for not cutting the rope. In any case, this practice is not just an example of an object's consumption through its destruction but also through its reconstruction: the division of the rope into several parts creates a kind of mosaic of the Círio (SANTOS, L. 2017) with the aim of multiply the magic and enchantment of the object – a dimension brought to life during the processions, and which we will further analyze later. Thus, the creation of strategies to consume what is not for sale in the commercial sense in the Círio de Nazaré confirms what Covalleski (2015) indicates: individuals who act in the communication process contribute to constructing the meanings of

12 Created in 1974, the Guard is a group formed only by men who act in uniform but unarmed with the function of "avoiding through convincing excesses that may occur in the events, functioning as a disciplining element during the procession." (IPHAN, 2006, p. 63).

the product they consume. The promiser who cuts the rope does so as an active participant in the communicative act.

Figures 2 and 3 – On the left, the promotional media campaigns against cutting the rope in 2019. On the right, young promisors cut and struggle for pieces of the rope in 2014.



Sources: Facebook page of the Guard of Nazaré; Gabriel da Mota Ferreira (personal archive), blurred by the research. Available at: <https://www.facebook.com/guardadenazareoficial/photos/a.1586028695055331/2440059112985614/?type=3>.

We can also understand the demand for the Guard of Nazaré to carry out the cutting of the rope as an attempt at ecclesiastical control over the consumption of the popular ritual since the cutting carried out by promisors is condemned but not the act itself. Furthermore, the selling of “the rope’s pieces” on the internet¹³ has raised a controversy about the commercial bias of the practice. One prominent issue is the battle for symbolic control over the rope. The object’s sacredness is valued since the Círio’s organization acquires it with money from devotees’ anonymous donations. However, according to the history, the rope is an object of the people who inserted it in the processions and who have it as an object of their own before being sacred.

13 In 2014, the press reported the selling of the rope’s pieces after the procession of the Círio of that year. Available at: <http://g1.globo.com/pa/para/cirio-de-nazare/2014/noticia/2014/10/pedacos-da-corda-do-cirio-de-nazare-sao-vendidos-na-internet.html>. Accessed on November 23, 2021.

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For survey respondents who have already acquired pieces of rope, this did not occur via commercial transactions: respondents said that they “got” it in processions when they were promisors or that someone had been in the procession “gifted” them (FIELDWORK I, 2020). Once again, our research found evidence of a consumption experience that does not happen in the economic sphere but that participants accomplish by competing for the rope in the streets, keeping it for themselves, or gifting it to someone else. Here, Mauss’s idea of gift (2007) is appropriate when thinking about the force of circulation of objects covered with “spirit”: the rope itself imposes the need to move on after taking part in the processions.

Given adaptations required by the covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the Board of the Círio (DFN)¹⁴ planned alternative ways for devotees to stay in touch with the celebrations. In the specific case of the rope, which was neither on Saturday, when the *Trasladação* traditionally takes place, nor on Sunday, when the Círio takes place, the experience of face-to-face contact with the object was adapted and restricted to canonical spaces: the organization, which usually divides the 800 meters of rope into two equal parts for each of the two processions, split it into smaller parts and sent those to the 98 parishes that make up the Archdiocese of Belém, where they remained on display during the month of October, the so-called “Nazarene fortnight.”

14 The Board comprises different executive directorships, such as “Evangelization,” “Marketing,” “Processions,” and others. Officially, the DFN is made up of men only (see the official website). However, “the couple carries out the work, and it is up to women to organize various aspects of the ritual.” (IPHAN, 2006, p. 62).

Figure 4 – Pieces of the rope at the Official Opening of the 2021 Círio.



Source: Fabrício Coleny/Archdiocese of Belém. Available at: <https://arquiocesedebelem.com.br/bencao-da-corda-para-as-paroquias-da-arquiocese/>.

It is worth noticing how suspending the processions had an impact on enhancing the rope's symbolic value as a sacred object under ecclesiastical control, favoring its consumption by churchgoers, whether local residents or tourists; that is something quite different from the reality built on the streets, where the rope is a meeting space between bodies that perform on the borders of normativity on multiple levels, reappropriating public space to trigger historically silenced cultural drivers (LATIF, 2020).

When it comes to sustaining the rope as an element of the Círio, even during the pandemic, when there were no processions, one can reflect on the creation of new forms of consuming the same product, understanding the culture of consumption as a creator of constant and inexhaustible needs (SANTOS, 2017). Even so, the creation of new possibilities for consumption is not equivalent, as an affective replacement,

to the presence of the rope in the streets: its absence was felt by promise-payers and by spectators who used to watch the processions pass, as reported by interlocutors of Fieldwork 2. Even so, the creation of new consumption possibilities is not equivalent, as an affective replacement, to the rope's presence on the streets. Its absence was felt by promise-payers and by spectators who are used to watching the processions, as reported by interlocutors of Fieldwork 2 (2020).

Therefore, we understand the rope's consumption as a practice of ritual consumption of the Círio itself, following Trindade and Perez's (2014) observation that individuals experience the anthropological and communicational dimensions of consumer rituals through their contact with products and services. Observing that "rituals grant authority and legitimacy when they structure and organize the positions of certain people in more or less clear roles" (TRINDADE; PEREZ, 2014, p. 159), one realizes the rope is a space for the performance of people's consumption of the Círio, created and maintained by their commitment to continue being part of the festivity, exercising their power of consumption through the object. These meanings give the rope a symbolic aura similar to the sacred since it represents the immaterial connection between Our Lady and her children through the eyes of those who see it and the bodily contact of those who pull it.

We understand the rope is a space of bodily consumption of the self and the other, where a struggle takes place for the physical and symbolic existence of subjects who perform, in Latif's (2020) words, a ritual transfiguration of the festive body. The crowd of promisors makes it very difficult for those watching the procession to see the rope itself, the pile of sisal knots. Except for moments when the promisors are encouraged by the crowd around them to lift it, one can only infer the presence of the rope by the changing row of people almost superimposed on each other, whose hands, when they manage to touch the rope, are not always visible as well. The proximity to the display car is another indication that the rope is there. At this moment, relevant aspects of the magical-religious idea of ritual are performed, according to contributions by Van

Genep (2008) and synthesized by Trindade and Perez (2014): dramatization, sequence, and regularity. Since exhibiting the rope is a way for promisors to show that object to outsiders, the practice occurs with some regularity, more than once throughout the procession, and is part of the sequence of visual scenes that precede the passage of the display car. Such impressions were observed on occasions prior to the suspension of processions.

Figure 5 – The proximity between promisors' bodies in the rope of the 2014 Círio.



Source: Flickr Milene Sousa. Available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/milenesousa/15583781532/in/album-72157648461020367/>.

Figure 6 – The rope in the 2014 Círio.



Source: Gabriel da Mota Ferreira (personal archive), blurred by the research.

The agency caused by absence: the rope that did not go to the streets

One of the answers obtained in the second survey summarizes the most felt absence in the Círio during the pandemic: “the mark of the festivity is the presence of the rope and the people accompanying the saint’s route” (FIELDWORK 2, 2020). Expressions such as “human warmth,” “energy,” and “seeing Our Lady in person” speak of the awakening of physical sensations that permeate the experience of being in the Círio and on the rope. In this case, even though memory gives access to the in-person feelings of the traditional Círio, it is precisely the absence of (im)material and human elements as mediators of sensations described in the public space of the city that compromises the experience of consuming the Círio as usual.

During processions involving the presence of the rope, the moment of its passage is provocative not only for the materiality itself but for the effect of the object that moves, integrated into the context: the work being made right there, in the streets, by thousands of artisan-promisors. According to the notion of consumption experience that Pinto and

Lara synthesizes (2011), enchantment is one of the dimensions of extraordinary experiences that influence the consumption process, as well as interaction and involvement, among others. This is what is possible to see in the rope-making process in the procession: artisan-promisors are producers as much as consumers of the rope (in which) they make (themselves).

Those authors also emphasize the symbolic dimension of consumption experiences in the sense that they rise from social interaction. And therefore, consumption practice is a kind of celebration of the connection between consumers and the society of which they are a part of (PINTO; LARA, 2011). One, then, that the rope in the Círio is an Amazonian materiality also produced for appreciation and consumption in the social environment among thousands of promisors. Integrated into a cultural spectacle that enables its immediate production and consumption before spectators' eyes, the rope possesses high cultural value precisely because its utility transcends the one it had initially. Nowadays, the rope represents a need appropriate to a cultural order (PINTO; LARA, 2011) that materially and immaterially weaves relations among people and between them and Our Lady of Nazareth.

When the rope passes in front of people, if it were not for the flags signaling its stations¹⁵ and the moment that promisors raise it, it would be hard to identify where its 400-meter-length starts and finishes. Hence, the rope in the Círio is not just a rope nor just promisors' bodies integrated into each other and Our Lady. The rope is all these things and people together in a ritual performance that manifests the immateriality of relationships (Trindade; Perez, 2014). Since the rope's construction and consumption happen simultaneously, one realizes the communicational potential of symbolic processes that consumption generates, as Trindade and Perez (2014) observe.

15 Five metal structures positioned 100 meters away from the rope help support the pressure that promisors exercise.

Figure 7 – 2018 Círio: from flowerbeds, stands, and balconies, watchful eyes on the rope's promisors while they raise one of the iron structures of the stations.



Source: Gabriel da Mota Ferreira (personal archive), blurred by the research.

Considering that the experience described above was not possible in the 2020-2021 biennium, we understand the power of the rope's agency in the promisors' lives occurs both through the presence and the absence of the object in the context of processions, either whole or in pieces. Moreover, the rope's transference from the streets to churches is a transition of that good's cultural meaning, even if temporary (MCCRACKEN, 2007). For a while, the character of a popular and aggregator space is suspended to "return" to the condition of a not enlivened object that occupies restricted selective places in terms of who possesses/consumes, like religious temples.

The rope is a consumer good that circulates with subjects as a witness that someone was there, either the individual who owns the fragment or someone who gifted it to that person. So, despite being a consumer product, the rope acquired and kept by people goes beyond what Mendes (2018) suggests about the utility of objects in the current spectacle society: they must add ephemeral values with no identity, conforming only to social status. In the practice of acquiring rope fragments, more than its

symbolic cultural value, the object contains sensitive values that emerge from the relationship between subject and object, stretching beyond the consumption moment of the procession. That is why rope fragments exert a fundamental role in the Círio's material culture.

We can return to the question of the rope's aura and its resistance in the midst of so much circulation, especially since it transits in other spaces, in addition to the streets where it becomes sacred. When reflecting on the limits of consumption through an analysis of Han (2012), Perez (2020) states that profanation is the break from exclusive access to everyday things previously reserved for the gods, so that they can return to common ordinary use. According to this definition, the rope would be one of the objects that profane Nazarene sacrality through consumption as it circulates amongst ordinary people – promisors or not, religious or not.

On the other hand, between the definitions of sacred and profane in the Círio de Nazaré, the limits seem to be quite flexible. From the point of view that opposes colonial rationality to decolonize sensibilities (LATIF, 2020), the rope is a phenomenon of consumption and material culture that reveals the existence of multiple subjects, constituted in the affirmation of their bodily presence and that make of the Círio de Nazaré, a manifestation of the people of that person of Pará and Amazonians, in constant negotiation with social actors who claim for themselves the place of possession of material and immaterial things.

Thus, its absence on the streets represents the impossibility of material exposure to the conflicts that constitute the identity of Pará and leads to the suspension of a ritual that allows its consumption (TRINDADE; PEREZ, 2014). Following the transdisciplinary perspective of Trindade and Perez (2014) on the anthropological and communicational dimensions of consumption, we understand that among the consequences of the rope's absence in the processions is the transformation of possibilities of articulation of symbolic practices among the subjects participating in the Círio and the modes of the festivity's presence in the experience of individuals.

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Furthermore, the rope that does not go to the streets suspends part of the Círio's "experiential consumption," according to the conceptual differentiation that Pereira et al. (2015) make on the experiences of the act of consuming. For the authors, this notion involves triggering memories about something that has already been lived in a way that sensations inherent to the process make consumption an experience of immersion in the symbolic universe available to the consumer. Thus, without the processions that have the rope as one of their indispensable elements, there is no production of meanings as intense as when in traditional contexts. In the discourses of research interlocutors, these moments of "being close" to others, "seeing Our Lady of Nazareth in person," and feeling "human warmth" are missed the most in the pandemic context (FIELDWORK 2, 2020).

From these statements, we understand that Círio participants refer to the sensations that make the idea of a consumption experience transcend to an experiential consumption, something they cannot live as long as social distancing recommendations prevent their physical contact with other people and with material elements that constitute the Círio de Nazaré. By interrupting a consumer ritual, which is also a form of collectively producing subjectivity (TRINDADE; PEREZ, 2014) through things, the Círio is not an experiential consumption as customary in the pandemic. And the event will only be so again when the rope returns to the streets and join the subjects who built it. Only then the rope will be fragmented by the same individuals who produced it.

Final considerations

This paper brings together excerpts from a master's research project developed during the covid-19 pandemic on the role of objects in the constitution of communication processes in the Círio de Nazaré, considering the impacts of the suspension of processions on promisors' practices of consumption of the rope. So far, we notice that the rope continues to act in subjects' imagination, especially due to its absence on the streets, which both aroused the memory of feelings lived only

during the in-person experience of the Círio and restricted the consumer public of this (im)material good in 2020 and 2021. Thus, the dialogue between temporalities indicated possible discontinuities in the potential of the rope as a cultural object/place, through which promisors experience the consumption of the sacred that constitutes the experience of the Círio de Nazaré.

In this sense, we see consumption as a practice unfolded in the social sphere, which manifests and strengthens subjects' identity markers. Semantic and sensorial meanings of being a participant in the Círio are produced and circulated through the rope, which links and enables intersubjective encounters through communicational processes.

Therefore, the analysis described here sought to observe the mutual arrangements between things and people in the consumption of the rope, which seems to help us in the understanding of objectification in the urban landscape of Belém during October. Finally, with the considerations of this paper and the research of which it is a part, we intended to document the possible practices of consumption of the rope in such atypical editions of the Círio de Nazaré. Thus, the dialogue with material culture is advisable for the study of this object's consumption in the sense that the absence of the rope in the streets reflects how much we are constituted by things, whether they are present around us or in the memory we build (im)materially and socially.

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About the authors

Gabriel da Mota Ferreira – Ph.D. student in Communication Sciences at the Postgraduate Program in Communication, Culture and Amazon of the Federal University of Pará (PPGCOM/UFPA) with a Capes scholarship. M.A. in Communication Sciences, PPGCOM/UFPA. Bachelor of Social Communication – Journalism (UFPA). Member of the Research Group on Communication, Consumption and Identity (UFPA/CNPq). In the present paper, the author gathered part of his dissertation results, having performed data collection and interpretation, besides developing the theoretical-methodological discussion, writing, and reviewing the text and its formatting.

Manuela do Corral Vieira – Ph.D. in Anthropology from the Federal University of Pará (PPGA/UFPA). M.A. in Marketing from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (UAM). Professor at the School of Communication and the Postgraduate Program in Communication, Culture and Amazon of the UFPA. Leader of the Research Group on Communication, Consumption and Identity (UFPA/CNPq). In the present paper, the author supervised the study, the fieldwork, data collection, and data interpretation, and participated in the analysis and development of the theoretical-methodological discussion, writing, and reviewing of the text and its formatting.

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