COMMUNICATION AND URBAN POLICY: COMMUNICATION AS MEDIUM AND TOOLS FOR URBAN MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC POLICIES IN SOME EXPERIENCES IN BRAZIL

Comunicação E Política Urbana: A Comunicação Como Meio E Ferramenta Em Gestão E Políticas Públicas Urbanas Em Algumas Experiências No Brasil

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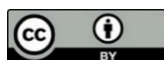
ABSTRACT

This paper sought to understand communication as an interactional medium and as tools for the development of strategies and public policies for city management. This qualitative study was developed through a bibliographic review for the first section, using a systemic-comprehensive-interactional perspective as theoretical lenses to see the cities and the conditions of communication between the Public Power, Civil Society and the environment in which they are. In the second part, case studies were developed in three experiences in the south and southeast regions of Brazil. The data were collected through public consultations answered by the studied city halls, the access to their social networks and institutional websites, and by reviewing academic works, newspaper and opinion articles dealing with such experiences and/or about the COVID-19 pandemic. It was possible to realize, at the end of the analysis, that the proposed systemic perspective can be applied to understand and propose good practices for communication and its management processes in the studied cities context and, perhaps, can be replicated in others, following systemic-interactive-autopoietic guidelines, from a dialogical outlook, that recognize diversity, the possibility of conflicts and the conditions for cooperation by virtue of the arguments, not by the argument of force.
KEYWORDS: Urban Communication; Complex Systems; Social Networks; Cities Management; Public Administration.

RESUMO

O presente trabalho buscou compreender a comunicação enquanto meio interacional e ferramenta para o desenvolvimento de estratégias e políticas públicas de gestão da cidade. Este estudo qualitativo foi desenvolvido por meio de revisão bibliográfica para a primeira seção, de cunho teórico, em que se trouxe uma perspectiva sistêmica-compreensiva-interacional para enxergar as cidades e as condições de comunicação entre Poder Público, Sociedade Civil e o meio em que se encontram. Na segunda parte, foram apresentados estudos de caso em três experiências nas regiões sul e sudeste do Brasil, cujo levantamento de dados se deu por meio de consultas públicas às prefeituras municipais estudadas, acesso às redes sociais e *sites* institucionais delas, além da revisão de trabalhos acadêmicos, matérias de jornal e artigos de opinião que versam sobre tais experiências e/ou à temática da pandemia da COVID-19. Foi possível perceber, ao final da análise, que a perspectiva sistêmica proposta pode ser aplicada para compreender e propor boas práticas nos processos de comunicação e gestão desta nas cidades do contexto estudado e, talvez, replicada em outros, seguindo diretrizes sistêmicas-

interacionais-autopoiéticas, de caráter dialógico, que reconheçam a diversidade, a possibilidade dos conflitos e as condições de cooperação pela força dos argumentos, não pelo argumento da força.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Comunicação urbana; Sistemas complexos; Redes sociais; Gestão de cidades; Administração Pública.

a. Presentation and methodological introduction

The general state of crisis produced by the pandemic of the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, has highlighted the need to rethink the interactions of human systems, now discouraged from face-to-face encounters and agglomerations. The consumption of reliable information - guaranteed by social institutions that have public faith, such as the State, the official media, and public concessionaires - returns to the stage of public debates with a central role in effectively facing the challenges that are presented, both in the health field and in the areas of humanities and applied social sciences.

It is true that the demand for policies that improve the interaction between Public Power and Civil Society predates the pandemic. In the same sense, there is an increase in the search for public services and means of access to information that can be operated autonomously by citizens, without the need for mediation directly performed by other human beings. For this to be possible, it is necessary to think communicational strategies, plan and structure policies, making possible the conditions to carry them out and to guarantee their maintenance.

The structuring of e-government strategies and platforms also requires internal dynamics within the institutions for the circulation, processing and resolution of demands. It is not enough to provide access to information: the systems that interact must be able to understand each other and deliver results with quality, efficiency and effectiveness. In municipal contexts, where the structures and budgetary capacities are considerably limited when compared to the federal sphere, the uses in the planning and management of this type of communication policy can mean damage reduction in several areas of action, better rates of citizen participation, and improvement in the choices of where to allocate local resources.

The pandemic situation makes this clearer: the fight against the dissemination of false information by public agencies and the proper guidance to the population about the necessary protocols for the confrontation of COVID-19 can reduce the chances of infection, which would start virtuous chains of flattening the contamination curve, relieving the health systems of the municipalities, and reducing the socioeconomic impacts produced by the spread and the sequelae of

the disease. It is not, however, a policy that produces results by itself: communication management is part of an intelligent and integrative - systemic and interdependent - management environment. It is not the pandemic, but these communication management strategies that are the focus of this paper.

This article is the result of research and monitoring developed since 2016 with three Municipalities, Pelotas - RS, Viçosa - MG and Curitiba - PR, considered, respectively, medium-sized cities and a metropolitan center, located in the South and Southeast regions of Brazil. Surveys were carried out through consultations with institutions and their respective bodies that deal with communication policies between Public Power and Civil Society. The basic script used was based on three thematic axes: 1 - history and legislation; 2 - team, structure and strategies (internal information management); 3 - participation and collaboration. Each of these axes was guided by three questions, so that, at the end of the consultation, it was possible to obtain a general panorama and a qualitative analysis of the public policies based on communication developed in the experiences studied. In addition, some scientific articles that deal with communication policies developed in the cities of Curitiba - PR and Pelotas - RS were reviewed.

The choice of the three municipalities present in this article occurred after the geographic cutout was made thinking about the two previously mentioned regions. Between the years 2016 and 2020, the authors observed and analyzed the experiences of these municipalities based on references found in the media, by indication of specialized literature on the use of social media by organizations, contacts made with academics, and opportunities for direct interaction with the managing institutions. They are all cities with good levels of literacy and education, according to IBGE Cidades, factors that facilitate the implementation of public policies based on communication, using digital tools to increase their reach and effectiveness. High impact higher education institutions are also present, which contributes to local and regional development, as well as encouraging flows and diversifying the local culture.

The general objective of this research was to identify how communication can be understood both as a tool and as a means for the development of urban management public policies, relating theories to the analysis of selected experiences of Brazilian municipalities. It is, therefore, a multidisciplinary effort to see the theoretical and pragmatic capacities and limitations of the strategies developed by municipal public authorities in their interactions with people and their territories

The first section aims to structure the theoretical lenses used for the interpretation of the cases. Initially, a brief conceptual discussion is held to establish a framework for the communication dynamics studied. It also seeks to outline an idea of what can be considered as a good ethical model for communication management in this context. These two points are important to detail the

minimum conditions for the evaluation of the experiences of communicational management that were described and analyzed, since the dialogues built between the authors used ponder on communication as a condition of possibility for life in collectivity in a systemic way.

Next, some of the experiences studied are presented. The first is the one of Curitiba from the 2013 - 2016 management, used as a reference by all the other studied Municipalities, being pointed out as the pioneer in Brazil in the development of a communication policy properly structured for the new reality of the use of social networks and related tools. Pelotas comes in the sequence, as an object of review of previous studies and of new consultation, in order to understand how its communication policy was restructured from 2016 to the moment it started facing the pandemic of the new coronavirus in the year 2020. The last experience presented is that of Viçosa - MG, which is more recent and occurred at the same time that the world was dealing with the first crises caused by COVID-19 from March 2020. At the end, the discussion goes through the strategies adopted by these municipalities during the year 2020, considering the arrival of the new coronavirus and the municipal elections that occurred in the middle of the pandemic.

b. **Preliminary considerations on urban communication management**

The idea of city is usually accompanied by the existence of a regulating instance that centralizes power and order itself, producing some kind of security for the groups that inhabit that same territory. From the Greek *polis* to the contemporary metropolis, this legal fiction that today is understood in the figures of the State or the Public Power interacts with the environment and with individuals in a constant and autopoietic way (BERDAGUE, 2004).

Authors from the 20th and even the 21st century, such as Weber, Luhmann and Habermas, present interesting relational and interdependence perspectives to discuss the relations between power and societies. It is possible to see, in this historical period mentioned above, the development of complex societies that reorganize themselves due to the narrowing of international relations in the political, economic and cultural spheres, the shortening of distances between nations and cities, and the emergence of mass communication technologies. This process also helped in the consequent substitution of major war conflicts for competitions between countries in the sectors of information technology, biosecurity, energy sources, and the conditions for large-scale production, in order to meet the demands of a model of mass consumption by globalized capitalism.

In Weber's (2004) view, the State represents socially legitimized violence, being occupied by groups that conquer political power. Depending on how this State is politically organized, this may or may not favor democratic processes and direct participation of society in the day-to-day political decisions, whether in the cities or in broader levels of public administration.

It is necessary to consider, also in the Weberian perspective (WEBER, 2010), that the ethical models that base the actions of political and scientific agents are different from those that guide the actions of other citizens. In the case of politically elected agents, the ethical judgment used is the ethics of responsibility, which views the ends to be achieved as good or bad, seeking appropriate means to achieve them. This does not mean that "the ends justify the means", but rather that the decision-making process of political agents is guided more by objectives than by a categorical imperative, achieving the greatest common good as much as possible. For ordinary citizens, on the other hand, what prevails is the ethics of conviction, based on the notion of duty being good regardless of the ends.

If there is this fundamental difference in the understanding of the duty to be between public agents and the rest of civil society, it is likely that the understanding of what is ethical or unethical, good or bad, positive or negative, will not be identical either. To this end, it is necessary to think about overcoming the contingencies produced in the interactions between the State and the population in general. These contingencies are not only due to questions of values, but also to pre-existing conditions of difference and inequality between the subjects of the communicational relationship, whether they are understood in their systemic perspective, as Luhmann, Maturana and Varela work, or in a critical perspective, as is the case of Habermas.

Maturana and Varela (1992, p. 245-246) state about an ethics centered on human coexistence:

> If we know that our world is necessarily the world we bring forth with others, every time we are in conflict with another human being with whom we want to remain in coexistence, we cannot affirm what for us is certain (an absolute truth) because that would negate the other person. If we want to coexist with the other person, we must see that his certainty – however undesirable it may seem to us - is as legitimate and valid as our own because, like our own, that certainly expresses his conservation of structural coupling in a domain of existence – however undesirable it may seem to us. Hence, the only possibility for coexistence is to opt a broader perspective, a domain of existence in which both parties fit in the bringing forth of a common world. A conflict is always a mutual negation. It can never be solved in the domain where it takes place if the disputants are "certain". A conflict can go away only if we move to another domain where coexistence takes place. The knowledge of this knowledge constitutes the social imperative for a human centered ethics.

The passage above does not establish tolerance to the intolerant, but rather sets minimum parameters for the formulation of an ethic that aims at the collective construction of a virtuous and diverse reality. Two relational principles can be drawn from this. They are related to the notions of mutual recognition of those who interact in a complex environment, such as the communicational one, and of a dialogical ethic centered on humanity and on the diversity that dwells in each of the subjects of this relationship. This recognition must take place before the act of knowing, in order to develop the condition of possibility to know the other and the world in a complex and diverse way.

About this recognition, Axel Honneth (2008, p. 73-74) explains:

> Without the experience that the other individual is a neighbor/similar, we would not be in a position to endow them with moral values that control or constrain our actions; therefore, this elementary recognition must first be consummated, we must existentially take part (*Anteilnehmen*) of the other, before we can learn to orient ourselves by recognition norms that enjoin us to certain forms of consideration or benevolence. [...] in the process of their socialization, individuals learn to internalize the recognition norms specific to their respective culture; in this way they enrich step by step that elementary representation of the other, which is available to them from an early age by habit, with those specific values that are embodied in the principles of recognition prevailing within their society. It is these internalized norms that regulate how subjects legitimately deal with each other in different spheres of social relations: what expectations I can have of the other, what duties I must fulfill toward him, what behavior I can expect of him, all derive ultimately from the naturalized orientation to principles, which institutionally fix in what (evaluative) senses we must recognize each other according to the relation between us. Taken together, these principles of recognition form the moral culture of a given period of social development. (free translation)

This recognition, given the theoretical distinctions between schools of thought or areas of knowledge and the contingencies that may exist from these differences, is a prerequisite for an ethics developed in the field of language or discourse ethics. Maturana and Varela (1992, p. 247) point out that it is through language that humanity presents itself, constitutes the world and, in a context of dialogue and interactions between human beings, the presence of the other is legitimized.

In Habermas' theory (1989) something similar occurs, with the need to establish a communicative rationality as a way to make it possible to solve the world's ills by democratic and participatory means. Truths and solutions must be built from consensus, which will only be true when a discursive ethics is applied, in which all those present have symmetrical conditions to make choices and perform speech acts. In other words: 1) Communication must be intelligible, with clarity and ease of understanding of what is being communicated; 2) Speakers must be responsible for the honesty of their arguments; 3) There should be no contradiction between what is said and what is done; 4)

Sensitive or emotional elements are allowed, but keeping the correctness of the rules of the present communicational dynamics; 5) What should prevail is the strength of the arguments, not the arguments of force. The latter are used by instrumental reasoning, which does not fit in a discourse ethic; 6) The media should have the important role of producing and disseminating information within these rules, so that these conditions can be achieved more broadly and to foster debate in the public sphere.

This is important because, according to Habermas (1989), it would not be possible, outside of acting towards mutual understanding, to overcome the previous conditions of reproduction of culture and become aware of what is necessary for the transformation of the structures and superstructures of society. It implies that, individually, these actors would be tied to conditions that favor the use of instrumental reason, strategic action, and temporary survival, instead of emancipation through communicational action. In summary, when there are conditions that stimulate collective actions based on the common good and on the participation of individuals in the day-to-day public debate, individual choices of how to act change their tendency from the mere struggle for survival to cooperation.

The communicational process, as classically theorized, is produced from interactional fields, in which sender and receiver understand the meanings of their messages and transform their meanings over time. This communication can occur from the interaction with the other, with oneself, and/or with the environment, and the perception of the subjects and their context is modified from the experiences of senses that they may have throughout their lives. In an autopoietic systemic perspective, the relational communicational model ends up guiding interactions and meanings of other systems, such as the organic systems, built using codes. (BERDAGUE, 2004).

Also on that, Gomes (2016, p. 227) explains how systemic communicational processes take place, based on Niklas Luhmann's social systems theory, which, in turn, was based on Maturana and Varela's systems theory:

> One of the main foundations of this perspective is the understanding of social systems as operationally closed and interactively open units, which have communication as their essential operation. The difference between the social system and the environment is (re)produced continuously through communication, ensuring the maintenance of the system and seeking to reduce its complexity. The differentiation of social systems seems to follow a reflexive and recursive movement, in which meaning is constructed in a network of communications, which operates in a circular, autopoietic and operationally closed way.

In the moment of realization of communication processes, a difference is constructed between communication and environment (system and environment). The communication is responsible for developing its own logic of connection with the next communication, forming a network that invents its own memory and differentiates social systems. The meanings, then, circulate in the network, and constitute the operative horizon of social systems, which despite being operationally enclosed, are not isolated. (free translation)

About communication in cities, Canevacci (2004, p. 37) points out:

[...]It is generally said that culture travels in only one direction: from the source, through a channel, to the passive receiver, in a given historical context. For me, communication in general and urban communication in particular are always dialogical. The observer is active in a double aspect: In the choice of urban indicators, in their qualitative configuration. There is always, no doubt, an objective aspect emanating from a given building that one cannot miss. However, between subjective selection and objective presence there is always an unresolved tension, "implacable" in the sense that one can never accommodate.

When decoding the message, there is always a creative side, a subjective criterion. It is interpreted according to the particular background of the researcher, his intellectual and political biography, his tastes and emotions, or according to chance. The translation of the urban message is always a betrayal. In this double process of selection and translation, urban communication is dialogical: it is a question and answer, a give and take. The art of listening between two subjectivities is exquisitely anthropological. The subject can be nature, a tree, a building. It is only possible to move on to interpretation after this interactive mental disposition to welcome and request the murmuring. (free translation)

Canevacci (2004) complements with a criticism to the classical conception about communication, stating that communication should be thought in its dialogic aspect, in which the receiver would not be a mere object of a communicational relationship, but another element capable of performing the subjective actions of emitting and transforming what is communicated, its context and its meanings. "The journey is two-dimensional [...] Communication travels in both directions. A decentralized and dialogical fundamental principle is thus affirmed, which is why even a teacher should learn from the messages sent to him by students." (CANEVACCI, 2004, p. 43-44) This reinforces the systemic-interactional-autopoietic understanding mentioned earlier, as it makes room for coexistence, conflicts, cooperation and exchange of meanings.

Considering what has been presented so far, it is possible to elaborate some notes about paths and challenges for the development of public policies based on communication and its management:

- It is necessary to approximate the conditions of dialogue between members of the Public Power and Civil Society, both in content and method, in order to reduce the perception of distance between what the representatives and the represented think;

- For this to happen, a common ethical model must be developed, aiming at the recognition, understanding, and comprehension among those who dialogue on the stage of public debates;

- In this ethical model, diversity, as a possibility of variability of expressions of being, of existing, of thinking, and of having or not having affections, must be welcomed and encouraged to dialogue, ensuring the necessary conditions for everyone to be able to speak equally about whatever is being discussed. This means that it is necessary to make the communicational environment beneficial to cooperation and to the overcoming of grievances through the strength of arguments, prevailing the best reasoned conviction;

- The media and the mass communication means have a fundamental role in the dissemination of information, which must go through filtering and checking processes performed by trained professionals in order to ensure the health of the democratic debate. Access to quality information must be a prerequisite in the processes of democratization of information, and it is also the duty of the State to provide reliable information to the population;

- The conditions, tools, means and methods for the dialogue between Society and the State and for access to public information must reflect the changes of time, including technical ones, so that there are no bureaucratic dysfunctions or contingencies due to the disuse or obsolescence of traditional means of communication;

- To take into consideration the social role and the constant transformation of language, realizing its diversity as a means and tool for achieving comprehension between subjects and the complexity that articulates the reality of cities in the 21st century;

- Facilitate understanding and ensure access to public documents and information that underlie the debates on urban life, whether through transparency portals, access via official websites, social networks, or dissemination in public spaces, as a way to create a favorable environment for civilized dialogue between institutions and social actors;

- To think and execute decentralizing processes of decision making and urban interventions, not leaving aside the protagonism of the Public Power in the management of these processes through the legislative monopoly and its police power, in order to curb abuses of rights and enable policies on a macroscopic (or macrosystemic) scale.

These guidelines are not binding. They are, in fact, observations derived from the theoretical set previously presented, added to the empirical work developed in recent years, in order to understand how the experiences of communication management are taking place in some cities in Brazil. This will be the theme of the next section, which will present methodologies, strategies, models and structures designed by municipal governments in the Southeast and South of the country, seeking to improve the conditions of dialogue and service to the public, using public policies based on communication and its management.

c. Some examples in Brazil – Curitiba-PR, Pelotas-RS e Viçosa-MG

Thinking about communication management policies is not a concern of the last decade, derived from the rise of social networks in everyday life: as an example, Eduardo Luís Correia, then coordinator of the Communication Center of the Municipality of Santo André, in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, published a statement in the magazine Comunicação & Educação n. 19, December 2000, in which he described some of the challenges and perspectives mentioned above, highlighting the need for dialogical policies, the encouragement of cooperation, and the importance of public administration to act and understand communication management in a systemic way. He also points to the conceptual differences between communication management work done for private entities and that which should be done in public institutions:

> A point to be remembered in the production of communication for a public institution the size of a large city hall, especially for the central role it occupies, is the relationship between government and advertising agencies. [...] In general, communication agencies usually adopt for public agencies the same work concepts that guide the actions of the private sector. And, due to the characteristics of the agencies, the concept of communication with which they work is that of a functionalist profile, based on the direct relationship between sender and receiver, disregarding the communicational process in its several interfaces. They only seek to reach as many people as possible, in a standardized way. The receiver, in this situation, appears as part of a huge uniform mass, without peculiarities, desires or aspirations.

> There is, evidently, a field of tension between a more complex communication proposal, interactive and rooted in diversity, and another, conventional one. The confrontation, in fact, is not dualistic: municipal administration versus advertising agency. For, within the government, there is the feeling that public and official communication must follow parameters based on market interests. [...] Consensualizing different postures, so that a clearly defined master line is maintained, should be the path outlined in a proposal for a communication

policy for the Santo André City Hall. And this is what is being sought. (CORREIA, 2000, p. 93-94) (free translation)

He adds, at the end, that there is no recipe for implementing this type of policy and that experience is by trial and error. The use of the media should be as broad as the diversity of its audience and the availability of these media and tools to communicate. Thinking about this is also thinking about the economic efficiency of this type of public policy, that is, the maximization of collective welfare with the proper allocation of scarce public resources, replacing underperforming formulas by others that are more advantageous or make more sense in the local reality.

For the context of the second decade of the 21st century, compared to previous periods, there is a greater democratization of access to technologies of audiovisual production, instantaneous sharing of messages and the constant presence of these contents in everyday life. It is important, however, to pay attention to what Coêlho (2015, p. 55) says, quoting Braga (2012):

> Technological invention, although relevant in the analysis of emerging phenomenon in the process of mediatization, is not enough by itself: the development of "internationally driven social inventions" (BRAGA, 2012, p. 36) also needs to be investigated. Braga (2012, p. 50, emphasis added) further emphasizes that "in the midiatizing society, it is not 'the media' or 'the technologies' or 'the cultural industries' that produce processes - but rather all the social participants, *ad-hoc* groups, subjects, and institutions that trigger such processes and as they trigger them". (free translation)

In this case, the author points to social networks and institutional sites, such as the Facebook page of Curitiba's City Hall, for example, as an interactive medium, as communicational environment in which there can be dialogical appropriation of these virtual spaces both by the institution and by the subjects that have access to it. More than a tool, an instrument to make a message arrive from one interlocutor to another, it starts to have the characteristics of an environment that influences and is influenced in and by the interactions of other elements that are in this complex system, besides other systems that interact with it. It is as Gomes (2016, p. 227) explained in an excerpt mentioned in the previous section: communication begins to differentiate itself from its environment, perform the autopoietic process, and distinguish the systems that network. Other networks and social contexts, as well as media vehicles or interactions made *offline*, are examples of complex systems that interact with each other and influence the internal and external behavior and organization of what make them up, in various directions and rhythms.

Events like the COVID-19 pandemic require quick responses to dilemmas that were previously little or unknown. Knowing how to communicate during this period makes a difference, but one cannot

expect results as consistent as from a public communication policy well stitched together over time. The moment of crisis can, combined with other relevant factors, as will be shown later, affect the very process of implementation of these policies and their results, since the immediacy required by the emergency scenario demands changes in previously established strategies and structures. It may, however, not be all bad. The word crisis, since its etymology, allows us to think of positive changes.

1) **The use of social media by the City Hall of Curitiba, PR (2013-2016): the strategies of the "Smile City"**

It is common to find Curitiba being cited as an example for having produced innovative urban practices and for having a relevant urban planning history. McKibben (2004) reports several points about this inland capital that caught his attention as a world model of development, a model that surprised him, since he had never heard about Curitiba until he stopped in the city during an airline connection. He highlights the bus system as being the best in the world, and the 99% happiness rate of the city's residents in surveys at the time, compared to 60% of New Yorkers. He also points out the contribution of former mayor Jaime Lerner for the right urban interventions, with reduced costs and designed to reuse the pre-existing urban infrastructure. These cases later inspired a book written by the former mayor called "Urban Acupuncture", in which he tells a little about the urban intervention processes designed by him and his team to improve the welfare of the population of the capital of Paraná.

The city has a consolidated urban planning history, so much so that Ribeiro and Silveira (2006) describe a timeline for the moments of this planning and execution of changes that starts in 1673, since the foundation of the city, going up to the 2000s. The first measures are listed, such as the prohibition of building outside the initial main streets, making the streets uniform, the creation of the first Posturas Code, the first Master Plan, dating from 1940 (Plano Agache), its revision in 1962, and the formalization of a participatory integrative plan in 1984, almost two decades before the City Statute was published. There is also a concern with the elaboration of environmental policies and with the promotion of the city for tourists, which develops between the 1990s and 2000s.

From the second half of the 20th century, especially during Lerner's administrations, there is a concern with walkability in the city, becoming a trademark of the former mayor in his urbanistic projects and a frequent reference used by him in his lectures, in which he mentions private vehicles in a jocular way and in the sense of "something mandatory, but pedantic". This characteristic of

prioritization of walkability persists, but each administration ends up trying to give its own touch in policies involving urban mobility and seeks to have some differential in relation to previous ones.

The same has been happening with public policies based on communication and its management. As already mentioned, Curitiba has a history of using new techniques, including for the participatory and integrative production of master plans, and, according to the City Hall, it pioneered the adoption of an ombudsman system by phone through the number 156 between the 1980s and early 2000s, which later became a standard for other cities in the country. This tool was developed from a contract signed with a non-profit Social Organization, which maintained the partnership with the City Hall and expanded its reach and portfolio throughout the country.

Given the initial step, digital management systems were developed for internal use in various sectors of the Municipal Public Power and also for the use of services by citizens. In 2012, Curitiba reached the top of the Brazil Digital Cities Index (CPqD and Momento Editorial), according to the website of Instituto das Cidades Inteligentes, ICI.

But it was in 2013 that the communication policy developed by the City Hall had profound structural and strategic changes. The use of social networks, especially *Facebook*, the changes in the institutional website and the redefinition of the ways of entry, circulation and exit of information were relevant to become again an example of urban management, this time in its digital aspect:

> In Brazil one of the pioneers, according to Revista Exame (2014), in the public sector of the use of Facebook, as a means of organizational communication, was the Municipal Government of Curitiba that, with a modern and stripped-down language, managed to subvert the old models of how to work the institution's communication craft with the population, adding value in the participation of its followers and in the communication activity. (ROSADO; BARRETO, 2016, p. 24) (free translation)

Santos and Harmata (2015) point out that the work began as soon as Mayor Gustavo Fruet took office (2013-2016). According to the team that was in charge of the City Hall Communication Department at the time[1], the understanding came from the campaign period, in which social networks were used to get closer to the public and the easiest access was perceived through these networks. The proposal was to develop the entire communication policy based on the pillars of "citizenship, services, and education". With this in mind, the team used humor to increase the reach of its publications and a language that was more accessible to young people, which made the environment

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[1] This excerpt and others with data and versions that directly reference the City Hall or the team that dealt with communication policies originated from a public consultation held *in loco*, at the headquarters of Curitiba's City Hall, in July 2016. Some information was later rectified by digital correspondence.

of its networks less formal and added audiences that until then did not participate in the public debate about the city. According to the Secretariat, there were no references of Brazilian public institutions that used these social networks as communication channels, and even less in this format.

> As demonstrated by Castells, "it is necessary to be seen to exist in cyberspace". (2005, p. 27) Thinking in this way, the strategy adopted to increase the visibility of bureaucratic themes that are often difficult to understand by Curitiba's City Hall on social networks was to appropriate the language based on memes and interact humorously with its audience, which currently belongs to an age group between 18 and 24 years old, according to Facebook data. This way, important information for citizens could reach a larger number of people organically, without the need for media investments, besides drawing attention by the simple and humorous way of approaching the themes. (SANTOS; HAMARTA, 2015, s.n.) (free translation)

The *Facebook* page of "Prefs", as the *persona* adopted by Curitiba's City Hall became known, reached 850 thousand followers in 2016, becoming the second largest official public page in Latin America, behind only Buenos Aires City Hall. It is measured, although it was not the initial goal of the project, that 20% of the 156-phone service has migrated to social networks by the end of the Fruet administration. A good part of this is due to the communication strategy designed from the language adopted in the networks, to the speed with which they responded to the demands and the ease of use of the tools available on social network sites, such as comment boxes and *chats*.

Santos and Hamarta (2015) bring data comparing the months of May and September 2013, which indicate a 50% decrease in calls to channel 156. They attribute this decrease to the advent of new strategies for the use of social networks and the development of an application that helped access information about urban public transport, called "Meu ônibus", on *Facebook*. The experience of participation in the management also had significant gains with the new tools and new means of interacting with the City Hall through the Internet: the dialogue about the Annual Budget Law in 2015 was also opened through social networks, receiving contributions in larger numbers than through the channel 156 and the ballot box.

Barriento, Tavares and Leite (2015, s.n.) quote speeches from members of the team responsible for the Prefs project until then, in which they comment on the challenges of the changes undertaken. They sought references in cities such as New York, Paris and Berlin, in addition to the work done during Barack Obama's electoral campaign, which helped in the preparation of the formulas used in the city:

Marcos Giovanella also pointed out, during the Vlog interview, that he doesn't like to use the term "humor" and that he uses a more human language in his posts, one that is closer to the people. He said he tries to use

subjects that are related to the city and the services offered by the City Hall.

Alvaro Borba, responsible for Curitiba's profile in another social network, Twitter, says the team is "using the tool for what it was created for, which is dialogue." He emphasized, during the interview to the Uol site, that criticism is free and no request for information goes unanswered. The Revista Exame website did a report where it named Curitiba as the funniest city in Brazil. "The page gained national notoriety by abandoning "officialism" and embracing informal language and good humor, typical of the Internet, to communicate with the population about relevant issues of everyday life," says an excerpt of the article.
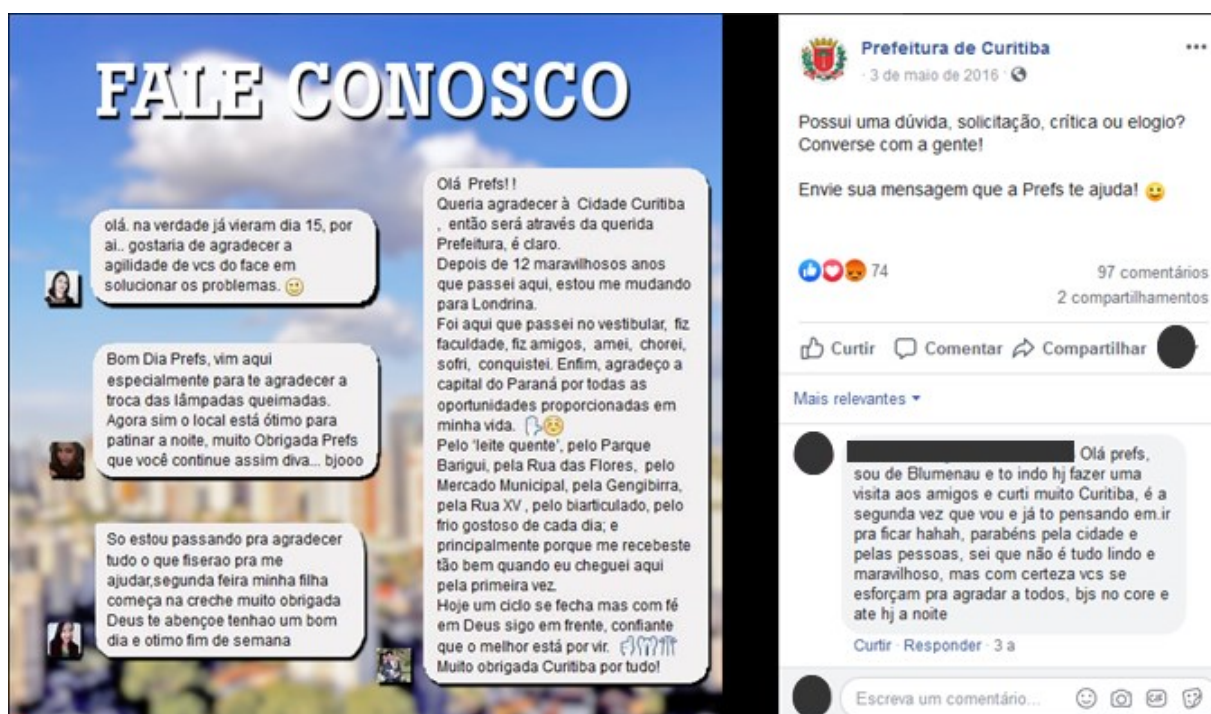
Image 1: Curitiba City Hall's *Facebook* post about attendance via social media, from May 3, 2016.

It was in 2014 that a campaign launched by Curitiba's City Hall after a publication received the attention of city halls and encouraged a nationwide movement, spreading its way of interacting with the public via social networks. This campaign was the object of study by several researchers in the areas of Social Communication and Organizational Communication, as well as took over news pages throughout Brazil. Coêlho (2015, p. 60) describes and explains it as follows:

Given the great repercussion of Prefs on Facebook and the countless declarations of love that the page received daily from followers spread across several states, on September 14, 2014, the page made an irreverent post to

publicize a collective wedding that would take place in the city, obtaining 2,812 likes and 283 shares. [...] The result was an intensification of "wedding requests and a subsequent post, on September 17 [...] (free translation)

Prefeitura de Curitiba
17 de setembro às 21:07 · Editado · @

Gente, a Prefeitura não pode casar.

Mas isso não quer dizer que não amamos e cuidamos de todos.

Obrigado pelo carinho e pedidos de casamento. ♥

Curtir · Comentar · Compartilhar

👍 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ e   Principais comentários ▾
outras 6.517 pessoas curtiram isso.

↪ 48 compartilhamentos

Escreva um comentário...   📷

Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro É uma pena, Prefeitura de Curitiba! Formaríamos um ótimo par. Teríamos dias mais calorosos e azuis e noites mais gostosas, com friozinho, filminho e edredom. ♥
Curtir · Responder · 👍 432 · 18 de setembro às 12:56
    ↪ 23 Respostas

▬▬▬▬▬▬ Gente, a prefeitura é só uma página no Facebook. Que desespero todo é esse? Vamos usar o bom senso na internet, por favor.

(Pronto, Prefs. Já despistei todo mundo... Podemos casar em paz)
Curtir · Responder · 👍 539 · 17 de setembro às 21:15
    ↪ 13 Respostas

▬▬▬▬▬▬ Prefs, você precisa me amar, precisa me amar! ♥

Image 2: publication from September 17, 2014, in which the City Hall, responding to marriage requests that its persona on social media had been receiving from internet users. In the comments, the Rio de Janeiro City Hall page appears lamenting the impossibility of a wedding. Source: https://bpmcomunicacao.com.br/blog/tretas-de-meme-entre-prefeituras-descubra-como-tudo-comecou/.

After the interaction that occurred through this publication, the campaign #aceitaCuritiba (say yes Curitiba) emerged, driven by pages of city halls from various municipalities in the country, by the followers of the Curitiba City Hall page and other Internet users who accessed the pages due to publications on the subject in the media and other social networks. The Rio de Janeiro City Hall also adopted the campaign and, on September 18, made a publication "making the request official", which generated interactions of other city hall pages with "jealousy" and proposing a three-way relationship.

> Behind the scenes, the managers of the institutional pages on the social network talked on the phone to try to find a way to take the mobilization to an action involving Curitiba's and Rio de Janeiros's residents, so that the whole thing would not be limited to a joke - which could even bring problems and criticism later for the social media teams of the city halls, focused on a joke instead of disseminating important information about the municipalities they represented. On 9/23 Rio de Janeiro's City Hall released an invitation advising that the wedding party would be held in a collective blood donation in the cities of the "bride and groom" and in the cities of the "groomsmen and bridesmaids". On 9/24 the campaign would start with the *hashtag* #CasamentoVermelho (Red Wedding), with the release of the list of gifts suggested by the bride (COÊLHO, 2015, p. 61). (free translation)

The name of the blood donation campaign being called "Red Wedding" was an ironic reference to an event that occurred in the HBO show Game of Thrones, in which there was a massacre that spilled a lot of blood, generating a pun for the moment. Other actions were motivated by this campaign, such as tree planting, book donations, and initiatives to care for children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and women who are victims of domestic violence. Coêlho (2015) highlights, however, that the engagement and repercussion, which occurred in various ways on the network, did not reflect equally in the number of blood donations on the day that had been proposed, despite having triggered many actions in several cities in the country through the institutions "that were willing to help, gifting the Curitiba 'bride'." This, adds the author, makes it necessary to reflect on the difference between engagement in the networks and the real engagement of the public in relation to the organizations.

The initial objectives of the strategy adopted by the City Hall, however, were achieved, transforming its social network into a public space for debate, based on the three pillars mentioned above. Moreover, an environment of non-violence, good humor and receptivity was built, observed by the interactions with the public and other institutional pages, whether from Curitiba or not.

Another important point to be highlighted in the strategy of the 2013 to 2016 management has to do with the transformation of the Secretariat of Social Communication into a kind of "medium secretariat". It was up to the team to receive, filter, and forward the demands that came in via apps, social networks, and so on, assigning them to the competent sectors of the Administration, giving

feedback or a solution to the requesters within a few days. This has led to a considerable reduction in the waiting time for citizen service.

CALÇADA VERDE EM CHICAGO

CALÇADA VERDE EM CURITIBA

Image 3: publication about green sidewalks generated debate about the condition of urban mobility infrastructure on the City Hall Facebook page.

As can be observed in Image 3, the communicational medium produced on the *Facebook* page of Curitiba's City Hall is not closed to dissent and criticism. In the comment boxes of the publications, it is common to see people bringing demands and/or criticizing the City Hall's posture in aspects of urban maintenance, about the quality of services provided or even the language used in social networks. It turns out that, even being positive to engage the younger population, as pointed out by Santos and Harmata (2015), the strategy of adopting a lighter, humorous and less institutional looking *persona* does not please a portion of the older population, especially the elderly, who do not understand the language and resources such as *memes* and references from *pop* and *geek* cultures. Coêlho (2015) mentions that the repercussion of the #Casamentovermelho campaign presented criticism in the sense that the actions would have been a waste of time and at odds with the seriousness expected of a Public Administration institution. The local media treated with irony the "gift list" made by the City Hall and marked campaign promises made by the mayor that so far had not been fulfilled.

On this, Coêlho (2015, p. 67) comments:

> Something that also caught our attention, regarding the repercussion and engagement of people in the comments of the posts made during the campaign, was the fragility and inconsistencies of the counterpositions. We also observed that, when faced with criticism, many people defended the Pref's webpage in an empathetic way to its actions in the social network, without showing a deep reflection on the objectives, place of speech and silences of the Curitiba's City Hall *Facebook* channel. The page's logics are perceived in different ways, being able to generate/strengthen bonds and also questioning some of the organization's postures. On the other hand, the page on the social network humanizes the Curitiba's City Hall and sometimes acts as a more powerful feedback channel than its traditional ombudsmen. (free translation)

It is important to highlight that the communication policy adopted by Prefs was so relevant that it became a critical point in the electoral debate in 2016, when part of the population positioned itself in the sense that the language did not match the expected posture and that it would be necessary to make changes, while another part believed that, if the main opponent of that administration won, his conservative proposals would end the good things that had been developed so far. At the polls, the population chose the opposition, which ended up backing down in parts on the changes related to communication policies. The language became more moderate, with fewer appeals to humor and pop culture resources, which were used to attract a diverse young audience. The website was redesigned, and the social networks started publishing much less content outside the institutional axis.

As a curiosity, the Prefs (from the 2013 to 2016 management) produced from thematic maps to soundtracks on the *Spotify* music app for city tours, so that people could go sightseeing, get to know a bit of the city's culture and history in its diversity, even without having visited it. A true case of *placemaking* combined with *placemarketing* based on intuitive cultural experience. One of the maps, for example, "Leminski's Curitiba", indicates points in the city where the writer used to spend his time or that he had mentioned in his works, telling a little about his daily life and its symbolism. For those who know the author's production, the sensation may be similar to that of walking around São Paulo listening to the song "Sampa", by Caetano Veloso, in which the singer describes places, things, people and sensations from when he moved to the São Paulo capital (CORRÊA; BOSCO E SILVA, 2019).

The data provided by Santos and Hamarta (2015) in their survey regarding the publications on the Prefs Facebook page in August 2014, a moment before the #CasamentoVermelho campaign, indicate that there was a balance between the publications that were primarily intended to inform and those that were intended to interact, with the former prevailing over the latter (53% x 47%). One need, however, did not exclude the other, being possible to interact and demand in the informative publications in the same way that it was possible to provide information in those with a more recreational/interactive nature. From this analysis the following tables were generated:

Tabela 1 – Posts na Categoria Informação	
Subcategoria	**Posts**
ciência	2
clima	4
conscientização	23
cultura	21
educação	1
esportes	1
foto	1
habitação	2
notícias da cidade	59
saúde	2
serviços da prefeitura	19
trânsito	8
transporte	2
turismo	2
Total Informação	**147**

Tabela 2 - Posts na categoria Interação	
Subcategoria de Conteúdo	**Posts**
clima	8
conscientização	1
cultura	7
foto	35
humor	17
música	30
turismo	2
visual	3
Total Interação	**103**

Image 4: Tables related to August 2014 posts on the Curitiba City Hall Facebook Page. Source: SANTOS E HAMARTA, 2015, s.n.

The authors comment:

> It is possible to analyze that even in the content with an interactive character, it is also possible to see the presence of content relevant to the city, such as culture, tourism, and awareness. In addition to these themes, it is possible to see that the constant use of images (in the photos content category) of the city also aims to publicize the attractions of the city and awaken the pride of belonging to the city. (SANTOS; HAMARTA, 2015, s.n.) (free translation)

Além disso, numa análise sobre o uso das linguagens, considerando as categorias informativa, cômica, audiovisual e interativa, as duas primeiras despontam como as mais presentes, na ordem apresentada, havendo um equilíbrio entre elas, com a prevalência da informativa. Apontam que as perguntas feitas nas caixas de comentários das publicações, identificadas como frases terminadas com o símbolo '?' (ponto de interrogação), sem discriminar se de caráter informativo ou de mera interação social, foram respondidas em cerca de 31% das vezes. (SANTOS; HAMARTA, 2015, s.n.)

From this experience of Curitiba, with emphasis on the projects from 2013 to 2016, it is possible to add and highlight:

- The process of humanizing communication does not come out of nowhere: there is a historical process of planning the city for people and for the promotion of collective welfare, confirmed by the opinion polls cited by McKibben (2004), which comes from the organization of its public leisure spaces, followed by the acupuncture and urban mobility projects thinking on

walkability, by the existence of an integrative and participatory master plan prior to the City Statute, and by the adoption of environmental perspectives and structuring for sustainable tourism in the beginning of the 21st century;

- The strategies adopted by the management from 2013 to 2016 with the use of social media allowed a systematic restructuring of the way the city started to communicate its meanings and interact with the surrounding communicational environment. Considering that Curitiba is internationally and historically perceived as a reference in urbanism, especially in terms of urban mobility and public transport, a more dialogical and digital approach to communications made it become a model once again, as highlighted by the Secretariat of Social Communication;

- The use of social networks associated with the reform of the institutional website and the development of applications in a partnership with Colab.re, based on the tripod "citizenship, services and education", made it possible to increase the degree of social participation in the city management, collaborating with demands and interactions in an agile, humanized and responsive-dialogical way;

- The possibility of conflict was present within an ethical minimum maintained by the team of the Secretariat of Social Communication, doing what is called community management or building beneficial communities, in which one seeks to overcome cycles of conflict through dialogue between those who think differently. There was, however, an internal guideline for blocking users, which is not known what the criteria are, as Santos and Hamarta (2015) point out, and which causes some insecurity, given that there is no legal discipline that points out the limits for the use of the blocking of citizens on social networks by public figures who use these networks to provide information of public interest.

- The new public policy for communication also helped the project to revise the Master Plan in 2015, which had 522 events to gather suggestions, according to the Secretariat of Social Communication, and was widely publicized on the City Hall's social networks.

2) **The redesign of the official page of the City Hall of Pelotas - RS and its social networks (2017-2020 pre-pandemic): identity, history and access to information**

Pelotas, in the interior of the State of Rio Grande do Sul, is considered a medium to large city, with an estimated population of 343,132 people, according to IBGE Cidades. Initially populated by mammals of the size of the Giant armadillo, about 10 thousand years ago, the region of the Municipality of Pelotas had the presence of Minuano and Charruas peoples, two indigenous ethnic groups that used the road as a passage through the southern region of the country, until 1700. The war between the Portuguese and Spanish crowns, and the consequent expansion in this territory, led to an indigenous genocide, which caused both groups to disappear from there. With the end of the war in the village of Rio Grande, in 1776, the territory was named the village of São Francisco de Paula, in honor of the saint on April 2, when the local conflict ceased.

Coming from the Northeast, escaping from the drought, a Portuguese cattle producer created the first charqueada (pig raising) there. 32 years later, the village became a parish and, in 1832, a town. The business related to the charqueada grew and this led to the development of the first steamboat in the state, in order to speed up the delivery processes of the local production. It was an activity conducted with slave labor, and in 1833 the population of enslaved blacks corresponded to 51% of the total in the village. Before long, in 1835 the village became a city, renamed Pelotas in honor of the first indigenous leather boats used in the region. It also hosted the first show house in Rio Grande do Sul. In the same year the Farrapos War breaks out and a good part of the population flees the conflict.

The reconstruction lasted a few years after the end of the war, but the economic activities managed to expand in the second half of the 19th century, making possible exchanges with other places in Brazil and the world. Something that added external elements to the local culture were the sweets from the French and Portuguese cuisines, besides the mixtures with the local repertoire and the addition of ingredients from the black cultures. One of the region's main sweets, the quindim, is attributed to the interaction of these related gastronomic experiences. This candy tradition was important in the 1900s for the national popularization of these delicacies and for the local economic development, especially of the immigrant families from Europe, who brought with them some fruit production and processing techniques. Pelotas today is well known for the products of the candy industry, for the municipal event of the Feira do Doce (Candy Fair) and for its architecture. It also has the oldest Agronomy College in the country, which today is part of the Universidade Federal de Pelotas - UFPel.

These and other historical information were taken from an infographic in the form of a timeline produced by the team from the Communications Office of the Pelotas City Hall (ASCOM). Since 2017, this body has been developing a work of content curation, review of digital communication platforms and user experience, besides promoting events with educational institutions and public administration bodies for the collection and processing of data about the city. The purpose of this is to have at hand reliable data about the city in order to properly manage public affairs and the common good, being able to disseminate the product of this work as treated information for the population.[2]

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[2] The information about the remodeling process of public policies and communication platforms used by the Municipality of Pelotas were collected through two consultations held with ASCOM, in 2018 and 2020, which provided clarifications through telephone conversation, e-mails, and videoconference recorded for the development of this work, including data about COVID-19 in the Municipality.

The previous experiences in the City Hall's communication policies, especially regarding computer media, were highlighted in a study by Corrêa, Stephan and Bosco e Silva (2020), indicating some of the City Hall's history in this area of the management:

> Since 1989, the Municipality of Pelotas has had a public company (COINPEL) responsible for developing solutions for the communicational, technological, and informational management of the city. But it was from the 2012-2016 administration that the City Hall began to develop policies more in line with the new reality generated by the advent of social networks and digital media, propagated instantaneously by the world wide web.
>
> The first challenge was to understand how social networks work and improve their use to ensure a dialogic channel between the municipality and the population. This means learning their algorithms and producing targeted content to reach the local population, achieving specific goals with this. The first step was to change the focus of the existing social networks, creating in them true direct channels of communication between the public authorities and the people.
>
> Next, the City Hall's technical team worked on the Transparency Portal, where the normative constructions referring to the Municipality can be found, as well as information about the administrative management, with data about spending and revenues, for example, among others. (CORRÊA; et. al., 2020, p. 95-96) (free translation)

The most significant changes in the websites and social networks came in the following administration, starting in 2017, with the planning developed to think an integrated communication system with content management, use of tools to analyze interactions in social networks and access to the website, multiplatform work (computer and mobile devices), depersonalization and focus on services, and the search to highlight social networks as a means and tool for interaction and dialogue between the City Hall and society, which had not yet achieved the desired effects by the 2013 to 2016 administration.

The reformulation of the staff started in 2015 was continued and ASCOM has a team of communicators, from photographers to editors, all with appropriate training for the area. These professionals are considered, according to ASCOM, "multitasking, multimedia, and multitalented". This helps in finding and learning specific ways to deal with each social network or digital platform used. They have also been working and dialoguing with teams from other cities in the country through a network that was formed to discuss public communication policies and communication management, exchanging experiences and ideas with each other at least since 2017.
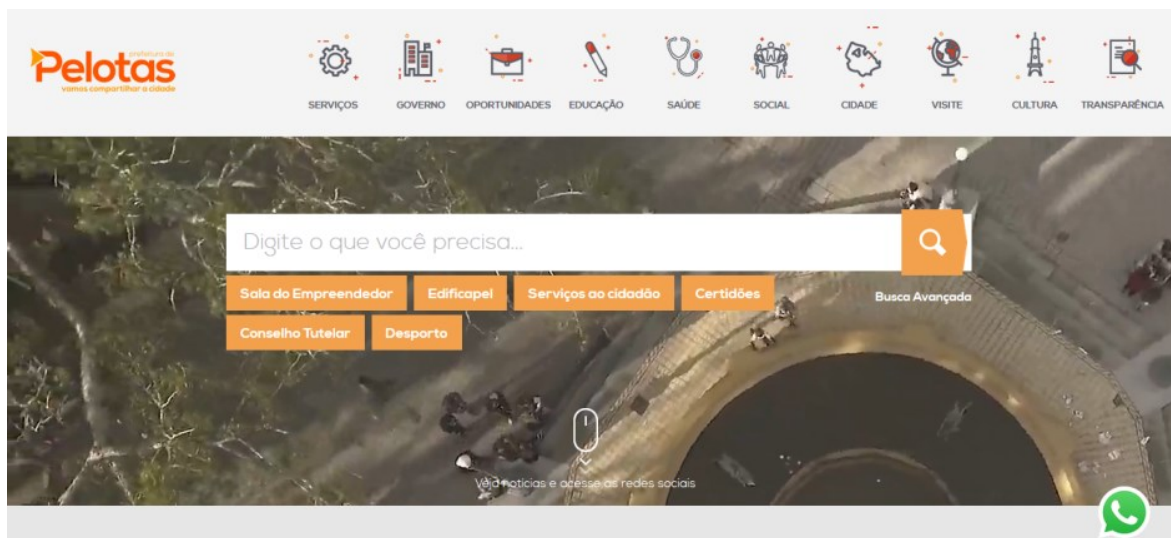
Image 5: the City of Pelotas' homepage until August 15, 2020, one day before the electoral period began, which imposes limitations on the communication policies of public administration bodies.

Part of the references used by ASCOM for the new site standardization came from the UK, especially in the aesthetic aspect (site with the standard color in white and a search bar located in the center of the main page). Also relevant were the experiences in the State of Utah, USA, the Brazilian cities of Curitiba, Santos, Rio de Janeiro, Niterói and Novo Hamburgo, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and London, UK. These last ones guided the strategies on how to act in the social networks and in the interaction with the population. The experience in Curitiba was very relevant and there was an exchange among the teams, reinforcing the idea of the model suggested by the Secretariat of Communication of Curitiba's City Hall, as mentioned before.

The analytical phase of the redesign process started in 2017 took at least two months to be developed and resulted in a survey based on user experience and the use of flow and interaction analysis tools, both on the website and in social networks. The data from this stage generated ideas and guidelines, which were materialized in other stages:

> [...] It was also sought to ensure ease of access and simplification of information, so that any resident with internet access can autonomously access what they are looking for, reducing deviations and clicks in this process. In addition, the project includes a content curator, who continues to monitor and produce the content to be shared with the population. All of this aims to improve the interactions between the public authorities and civil society, so that there is adequate communication of the initiatives of both, and that the decision-making process is better grounded.

> In one of the initiatives proposed by ASCOM, knowledge marathons were held within the City Hall's own departments and with local educational institutions. The city of Pelotas has characteristics of a university city, hosting at least two federal educational institutions and private institutions. Thus, it was possible to collect and organize a lot of data about the city and produce information in a clear way, which is available in the Pelotas Data Portal, which can be accessed through the City's portal with just one click.
>
> The work of the curator allowed the simplification of this information, with didactic infographics that present the city in a broad perspective and even compared to the reality of the rest of the State of Rio Grande do Sul and Brazil. The indexes appear with their sources, which enables external checking. It is an example of transparency that can be reproduced in other cities, since several of the indexes used have their origin in researches made available by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), which maintains open platforms for consultation of these data, but that may be difficult for some people to read. (CORRÊA; et. al., 2020, p. 96-97) (free translation)

For each social network there is a different approach, the result of the analysis developed since the beginning of the management. It was realized, for example, that *Twitter* was an irrelevant network for the city's public, a conclusion that led to the contingency of resources used to maintain it, since ASCOM's team is lean in human and financial resources, leading it to focus on what effectively works. *Facebook* and the instant messaging application *WhatsApp* are the two main fronts of interaction with the public outside the website and the Ombudsman's office by phone. Each person who is responsible for one of these tools and means of communication receives specific training to learn their particularities, mechanisms to enhance the reach using the algorithms, and when and how it is necessary to increase the strategies.

There is, however, an internal information management system that acts in an integrated and dialogical way, collecting data and information. ASCOM does this work through the social networks, and the Ombudsman's Office through telephone calls. The teams gather their material and discuss it with the other members of the administration, including the mayor herself. The demands that arrive are given a deadline for a response, and this is monitored.

The work of content production that has been developed on the website has managed to fill some gaps that have existed since the period indicated by the aforementioned research. The top menus give access to services and information about the city, with a simplified and easy-to-understand navigation. Besides the top menu, the site map at the bottom of the page allows a complete view of what is available to the user in the form of a list, without the need to navigate from menu to menu, if you don't want to. On the lower right side there is an icon that refers to the *WhatsApp* application, which facilitates direct contact with the City Hall.

SERVIÇOS	GOVERNO	EMPRESAS	EDUCAÇÃO	SAÚDE	SOCIAL	CIDADE	CULTURA	TRANSPARÊNCIA
Serviços ao Cidadão	Prefeita	Sanep	Desporto	Portal da Saúde	Cadastro único	História	Procultura	Diário Oficial
Serviços ao Servidor	Vice-Prefeito	Coinpel	Central de Matrículas	Chamamento Público	Habitação	Dados Gerais	Carnaval	Lei de Acesso à Informação
Telefones Úteis		Eterpel	Escolas Municipais	Credenciamento	Conselho Tutelar	Símbolos	Patrimônio e Ações	Leis e Decretos
Sala do Empreendedor	SECRETARIAS		Portal da Educação	Diretrizes da Atenção	Conselhos municipais	Mapas	Editais	Portal de Dados
Atendimento ao Cidadão	SMG	SECRETARIAS	Credenciamento Público	Básica	Chamamento Público		Plano municipal de Cultura	Transparência
	Assessores Especiais	SECULT		Diretrizes da Saúde Bucal	Credenciamento Público	VISITE		Licitações
	CONSSEDI	SDR	EMPREGO	Plano Municipal de Saúde		Pelotas Turismo		Chamamento
	ASCOM	SSUI	Concursos / Estágios					Credenciamento
	PGM	SMF	Empreendedor					MIP Centro Administrativo
	COINPEL	SMS						Procuradoria
	SANEP	SQA						
	ETERPEL	SGCMU						
	PREVPEL	SEPLAG						
	SARH	SMOP						
	SDETI	SMED						
	SAS	SSP						
		SHRF						
		STT						

Image 6: Map of the City Hall of Pelotas website - All the menus and submenus available to the internet user.

This has been the focus of the website redesign since 2017: to fill in those gaps and make it smarter. There are nine menus at the top of the site, divided into Services, Government, Opportunities, Education, Health, Social, City, Culture, and Transparency. The "Visit" icon, shown in figure 5, was removed from the main bar because the section on tourism was being modified in partnership with SEBRAE. ASCOM stated that the popular demand for the services and opportunities sections was greater, especially in the contests section. Other areas, such as the historical part of the city and general data, in the "City" menu, received infographics with data collected both by ASCOM and by partnerships with other institutions.

In the links Maps and GeoPelotas, in the "City" tab, it is possible to access maps produced by the technical teams of the City Hall in a thematic way, using georeferencing to assist in the localization and in the design, with data from the very base of the Municipal Secretariat of City Management and Urban Mobility and from IBGE. There are maps referring to the Master Plan, its subdivisions and specific instruments, tourist maps, historical maps, 3D modeling, IPTU identification by region, topography, population density, mapping correlated to the 2010 Census data, among others. These are very important instruments for those interested in developing research or investing in the city and are available for free.

The parts that are at a greater stage of lagging are the menu items related to Education and the Transparency Portal, which still follows the *layout* of the 2013 to 2016 management. ASCOM intended to make modifications to these topics, but was forced to back off planning due to the new Coronavirus pandemic, when all efforts were redirected to a more urgent challenge, which is to inform about the disease and the situation in the city during this period.

The strategies in the social networks follow a similar line to the Curitiba experience from 2013 to 2016, using aspects of *pop* culture to dialogue with younger audiences, but not in the same intensity and language as the one adopted by that team. In fact, each of the networks ends up having a specific language to deal with different audiences. In addition, the City Hall website and *WhatsApp* are more popular than the social network channels when seeking information or public services. It is a different focus, because the local reality and culture are also distinct.

What can be highlighted and analyzed in the Pelotas experience:

- There is a history of concern of the Pelotas Public Power with communication policies and the insertion in the world of information technology, which can be seen by the existence of a public company specialized in this type of service since 1989. The investment of resources in this segment since before the popularization of the home computer, internet and mobile devices indicates the perception, at least, of criteria of opportunity and convenience;

- There is a path of continuity of the policies initiated, maintaining and improving what is good, while rethinking what did not work so well. The case of the Transparency Portal is a good example for analysis: they have maintained the work done by the 2013-2016 management, despite having listed it as something to be improved. It is a functional portal, but it is inadequate for the ecosystem transformed by the 2017-2020 management. The team preferred to allocate its resources on points it considered more critical, such as the work of content curation and the use of tools to make the interactive processes more intelligent and efficient;

- The urban municipal communicational system of which the Municipality of Pelotas is part seems to be in constant autopoietic movement. It demonstrates continuous internal interactions of conflict, cohesion, dialogue, order and disorder, adding meanings to the changes made and to the decisions taken by the Public Power, which has the duty of coordinating and managing these internal transformation processes, acting together with other sectors of Civil Society to execute these transitions;

- Even with the limited resources, both human and budgetary, ASCOM affirmed that it is able to do an efficient job because it uses the dialogical capacity to apprehend needs, strengths and weaknesses, and to encourage collective action for common purposes. As for the data collection carried out in partnership with companies, educational institutions and the City Hall itself, the final products developed by the curatorship and other parts of the municipal management allow to have a wider and more accurate view of the local reality, sometimes even comparing it with other realities near or far;

- The existence of a network for sharing experiences in communication among municipalities was a positive surprise. This shows that the theme is necessary and that the systemic approach makes sense, since each of these cities represents its own system that interacts with itself, its

components, and other cities, being able to do this at a distance thanks to the tools and means of dialog provided by new information and communication technologies.

3) Some recent experience in Viçosa-MG (2014-2020): dialogical challenges in a university town and strategies for diverse audiences[3]

The municipality of Viçosa-MG is located in the Zona da Mata region of Minas Gerais, in a region that is difficult to reach by road due to its altitude, but which, historically, has relevance on the national and international scenes. One of Brazil's presidents, Arthur Bernardes, was born in this city and left important legacies, among them the former Escola Superior de Agricultura e Veterinária (ESAV), created by a decree of this president in 1922, which was transformed into the Universidade Rural do Estado de Minas Gerais (Uremg) by the Government of Minas Gerais in 1948 and later federalized in 1969, when it adopted the name Universidade Federal de Viçosa (UFV).

It is a municipality that has, according to IBGE Cidades, an estimated population of 79,388 people (2020). These numbers, however, do not take into account the floating population, which according to estimates announced by the local government reaches about 20,000 inhabitants, among which are high school and college students, teachers, seasonal workers, among other categories that seek in Viçosa-MG better conditions to live and end up using the local public services, without, however, formalizing the political bond to the city. In other words: those people who are in the city but have not transferred or do not have a voting title.

Being a medium-sized city and marked by an economy with emphasis on commerce and services, Viçosa is a center of attraction for people from all over the country and also from all over the world, especially for those who seek an academic education. It has as its attraction a prestigious Federal University, with 56 undergraduate courses, 46 *stricto sensu* graduate programs, some *lato sensu* graduate programs and a high school (COLUNI) (UFV, 2020). The COLUNI is even indicated annually as one of the best public schools in the country in the indexes that evaluate results in the Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (National High School Exam) (ENEM), having been ranked eighth overall and first among public schools in the country in the 2019 numbers, as pointed out by Correio Brasiliense (ARAÚJO; SILVA, 2020) on data released by the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (Inep).

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[3] The information related to the Municipal Government of Viçosa, its history, its communication policies and strategies adopted during the fight against the coronavirus are derived from consultations conducted in the year 2020, from May to August, through videoconferencing, digital correspondence with the Municipal Communication Directorate and access to social networks and the official website of the Municipality.

The cosmopolitan presence did not make the city lose its identity roots with the regional culture. There is coexistence between natives and non-natives with the presence of constant conflicts, but which do not lead to chaos. On the contrary, the interaction between different peoples benefits the city by criticizing itself. Quoting again Caetano Veloso and his song "Sampa" (1978), "Narcissus finds ugly what is not a mirror", and, for this reason, he needs to confront himself with the difference to then recognize the similarities and walk together.

In Viçosa it is possible to see how two distinct communicational systems can act in a symbiotic way and be, at the same time, parts of a more complex urban macrosystem. This is the result of the coexistence between a Federal University *campus*, which has administrative autonomy, and the urban perimeter of a city, where several sectors of the economy and local administration are concentrated. There is a concentration in the areas where the two meet territorially, but this relationship is not limited to this space. To think about this city is also to think about the university, and vice-versa.

Local politics needs, consequently, to know how to deal with the different publics that inhabit the city, including those who contribute and also seek services without being part of the official electorate. It needs to produce communication policies that understand and embrace these different publics, so that information and dialogue can reach all those who interact with the city in some way, within the possibilities of the Administration. This is true for municipal politics as well as for university administration. These two, which also reproduce dialogical dynamics of cooperation and conflict, end up giving each other support in common demands and support in decision-making processes.

That said, the focus of this section will be on the recent experience of the Municipal Government of Viçosa in public policies related to communication. We used a consultation script that keeps the following axes: 1 - History and legislation; 2 - Team, structure and strategies; 3 - Participation and collaboration.

First, there is no specific secretariat for communication. There is a Directorate of Social Communication (DCM) subordinated to the Superintendence of Public Management and Governance, which has the status of a secretariat. There is a common aspect in Viçosa-MG that is the close relationship of the politicians with the local media, in which the journalists and personalities who work in the local media directly seek the mayor or his secretaries to guide the news. In this way, the Communications Office (ASCOM), linked to the DCM, performs a content checking job, because it happens that some information is given to the press even before ASCOM itself knows about it.

The ASCOM and DCM teams have always had technical staff, made up of journalists and communicators. Until 2014, they worked in a more practical and operational way, focusing on the work of checking information previously passed on by political agents in the local media, either through the

City Hall portal or through direct contact. From then on, we began to think about the use of social networks in the communication processes between City Hall and Civil Society, initially in a more institutional way. Around 2018 a process of organizing a communication policy for the city began, thinking about restructuring the strategies used in communication tools and media.

Some City Halls served as reference, some called inspiration references: Salvador City Hall served as an aesthetic reference and also for the production of content, highlighting the way audiovisual resources are used. The Juiz de Fora City Hall appears as a reference from the Zona da Mata region of Minas Gerais, with problems similar to Viçosa's, but in a bigger size, also serving as a reference for monitoring, which are nearby cities and that ASCOM uses to understand comparatively how the readjustment process of the communication policies is being done. The cities of Ubá and Muriaé are cited as other reference experiences.

The work that had been developed since 2018 managed to establish specific strategies and characteristics for each communication channel used:

Facebook: according to the DCM, it is the main social network for its audience spectrum. The City Hall talks to a mixed audience, which is composed of people of all age groups in the same medium. It adopts a female persona, but with a language that is close to a light institutional neutrality, in which it interacts equally with the various audiences with politeness, without, however, adhering to a robotic rigor, which helps to humanize the dialogs. In it, audiovisual content, texts, live pronouncements, news of local interest, documents, among other relevant information, are posted. Some productions from other social networks are shared through this channel, in order to increase its reach.

Instagram: As a social network with a more visual appeal, the audience of this social network ranges from young people to older people. For this reason, the language used in this network is perceived in tones that lie between the informative neutral and light, without the need for an institutional rigor, but also without appealing to what DCM calls " debaucherous tone", present in the *Twitter* network. According to DCM's survey, it is the 12th city hall in number of followers in this social network among the cities of Minas Gerais State, passing cities that have tourist activities as an attraction.

Twitter: is a social network used to talk to the young public. With a more debaucherous language, it is a channel where *memes* are used and where the dialogue with the university audience predominates, taking information in a different way than other networks, including shorter texts. A female *persona* is adopted. Direct references to the "model" of Curitiba's experience in the 2013-2016 administration are perceived in the shared content, in the way of interacting, including the use of humor in a recurring manner, the appeal to pop culture productions and jokes made with elements of

local culture, in addition to the pseudonym adopted by the City Hall *persona*, which is also called "Prefs", exactly how the City Hall of Curitiba was known at that time. The DCM team says it should change this name soon.

Whatsapp e Telegram: function as portals for the dissemination of information. Groups and mailing lists have been created, in which people register to receive information, such as links to articles of public interest. The language adopted is neutral and institutional, since there is no control of public input, which requires a linguistic strategy that embraces this diversity.

Youtube: is a content deposit channel. There is no interaction with the audience of the video channel. The *links* of the videos published on this platform are shared on the other social networks, where this interaction actually occurs.

Institutional website: functions as a place to check information, including for the press, and provides services and contacts of public administration institutions. The new policy included the production and dissemination of original content as something to be developed for the site, something that resembles the curatorship done by the ASCOM of Pelotas City Hall, but with a greater focus on news. It is known as the City Hall's noble vehicle: it is where the complete news are kept, which are shared with the press and also in summarized form by the City Hall's social networks. The idea is to get people who want to know more about a subject to access the site to read the full articles, reducing the repetitive demands on social networks.

Ombudsman: this is a telephone channel for incoming demands and questions to the City Hall. It is through the Ombudsman's Office that part of the repetitive demands are filtered, which will give rise to specific content to answer questions and/or solve problems. Some demands that come in through social networks can be passed on to it, especially when there is a need to make a notification, but the tendency is that the social network teams filter what comes in through interaction with people and try to respond directly. The Ombudsman also manages a WhatsApp channel, which works in conjunction with the phone lines*.*

The City Hall was able to organize a communication ecosystem in which it is possible to control the perception of the population, online and offline, regarding the city and the local living conditions. Through the data collected through the interactions in the communication channels, DCM and the other bodies linked to the Municipal Administration are able to have a broad view of the local reality, draw strategies, partnerships, and plan, thinking about solutions and resource management.

The ideas were developed internally, by the ASCOM and DCM teams, which include 4 journalists and an intern from the journalism course of UFV, and there were no third parties in the elaboration process of the communication policy of Viçosa's City Hall. Contracts were signed with

sectors of the local press only for the realization of advertising campaigns and for institutional space. There is not, for example, a joint work with a company that develops applications, as is the case of Curitiba with Colab.re. There is also an execution contract held by bidding with a communication agency, which can be engaged to produce audiovisual content, uniforms and signs, for example.

The construction of a communication policy, structured and documented in early 2020, was very important to meet the challenges that arrived with the pandemic, as will be seen in the following section. What can be highlighted, until the closing of this paper, is that:

- The local reality has been taken into consideration in the development of public communication policies. Cultural traits and customs, such as the intimacy of political agents with the local press, are used in order to benefit the communicational process and give efficiency to DCM's work;

- As there is public diversity, reading the channels and adapting the language used in each one to the publics present is efficient, producing communicational environments in which understanding is facilitated, both between the Public Power and the people, and between the people themselves;

- However, no internal communication strategy has been established among the secretariats to resolve demands. The transfers are made through messages exchanged between the people who work in each Administration body, without the definition of input, filtering, forwarding and response channels;

- The experience of Curitiba 2013-2016, even not being mentioned directly, appears as a reference in the actions developed by the Viçosa City Hall, either by the interactional methods used or by the adequacy of the language to inform and increase the reach of its networks.

4) COVID-19 and the election period

It is hard to imagine any urban reality in Brazil that was prepared for the challenges that the pandemic brought with it. Drastic changes were necessary in people's lifestyles since March 2020 because of the advent of COVID-19 in the Brazilian territory, a poorly known disease, highly contagious and that still does not have a specific treatment capable of defeating it. According to studies (AQUINO, et al., 2020), the most effective methods to reduce contagion are: distance and isolation of bodies, quarantine of infected people, use of hand sanitizer and soapy water to clean hands and surfaces, use of masks and faceshields to protect the airways and mucous membranes, mass testing and tracking of cases among the population. All this must be done in a joint manner, because measures alone are not

as effective in the combat process as coordinated action. On another front, economists, as is the case of De Bolle (2020), indicate that there will be no conditions for economic recovery while the pandemic is not treated.

This demands organization and cooperation from society, as well as communication strategies that are fast, accessible, and massifiable. The government and the traditional media have the duty and power to provide reliable information to address this problem and ensure that the population receives accurate guidance so that as many lives as possible can be saved. In addition, it is up to the government to articulate its internal communication chains to manage its resources and to know how far the conditions of service to the public go in a period of crisis, in order to ensure the maximum possible assistance to those who need care. The fight is against the virus, but it is also a fight to make sure that health systems and living conditions do not collapse.

To combat the pandemic, it is necessary that the communicational system be articulated in the following directions: The protective measures must be disseminated and encouraged among the members of these systems, managing to win the scientific argument of the need for these to give survival to the health systems and help in the recovery from the crisis period; there must be clarity about the information provided and about the pandemic data, in order to be able to follow reality in the step by step scientific development; if there is some kind of contingency or conflict of divergent information, this must be solved immediately by the reference institutions, reaffirming the confidence and integrity of these institutions with the society, providing subsidies for this.

It is necessary, therefore, to ensure that truth is built by consensus, as in the perspective of Habermas (1989), but without ceasing to deal with conflicts by institutional means. This is because communication networks are complex and full of levels of legitimation through trust and affect. It is necessary to establish the place of the speech of science as the discursive paradigm, the guide to walk the paths of confronting the virus, more than through politics or religiosity. The virus does not understand creed, nor political alignment to affect anyone. It affects our biological systems first. The social and economic consequences, which are also systemic, are posterior to the arrival of the disease and depend on how intensely and for how long it will continue to contaminate the population. For these reasons, the language and the theoretical lenses to deal with this event must be those of Science.

The municipalities mentioned above, like all those that had to face the pandemic in some way, adopted specific strategies to deal with the arrival of the virus and the disease. The political choices on how to achieve social distancing, when to make the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) mandatory, and what specific measures should be adopted, given the local realities, were quite distinct. In communication, at least two strategies are common: the social networks of these city halls

bring daily bulletins informing the number of confirmed cases, tests performed, cases discarded, confirmed COVID-19 deaths, clinical beds available and occupied, ICU beds available and occupied, and suspected cases and/or under observation; on the websites, the teams made specific pages to address the pandemic, bringing together legislation, information, contacts, and services to make people's lives easier, reduce repetitive demands, and avoid crowding in public service locations.

The Pelotas City Hall played an important role in making the population aware of the risks and dangers of the disease. It managed to keep the city in a situation with no deaths and no severe isolation until the month of June. ASCOM pointed out as a difficulty the distinction between the discourses emanating from the Federal Government, the State Government, and the Municipal Government: while the Federal Government did not carry out campaigns in favor of distancing measures and mandatory use of PPE, sometimes doing the opposite, the State Government adopted a middle ground discourse. Meanwhile, it was up to the City Government to manage and confront the disease directly in its territory, leaving it with the arduous task of making people aware of the importance of protective measures.

With the first death registered on 06/20/2020 and the perception of a relaxation in the population's protection measures, the City Hall started to adopt other measures to try to contain the collapse of the health system: for each daily death, a publication stating the total number the city had reached; the *lockdown* was instated, with the total paralysis of non-essential activities from August 8th to 11th, in order to restrict the circulation of people; with the end of the *lockdown*, employees were placed in the streets holding signs with the question "Do you really need to be here?" encouraging the voluntary closure of non-essential activities and social isolation. In this period Pelotas already counted 45 deaths.

Image 7: publications about Covid-19 on August 15, 2020 on the social networks of the Municipality of Pelotas. Source: ASCOM.

The Viçosa Municipality followed a similar path, but maintained more severe restrictions: health barriers were adopted to prevent the entry of people without authorization, forced quarantine and screening conducted by the public health system; a rotation of the last number of social security numbers was also adopted, in which people would have specific days to be able to leave and have access to essential activities or commerce, which opened after a biosecurity planning was made together with a committee formed by the municipality's health teams with members of the Universidade Federal de Viçosa. The institution has developed partnerships with the municipality, providing and funding PPE, scientific knowledge, care to the population, and testing, besides having started the development of research that can help in the fight against the pandemic, including vaccines and supplies.

The mayor's presence in live broadcasts was constant, and his participation had no previous direction. In Pelotas City Hall it was also possible to notice the mayor's personal engagement in awareness campaigns. However, due to the special characteristics of Viçosa, the mayor's personal appeal, adding elements of emotion and commotion to the speech, drew the attention of the DCM team for the positive results that were achieved in the social networks, in which, according to this Directorate, it was built a collective consciousness that acts in defense of restrictive measures and social distancing adopted by the City Hall, with manifestations of support and organic response when any criticism of these measures appears in the dialogue environments of these networks. On the other hand, this same population has not failed to criticize when there has been a relaxation of these protective measures or when the inspection agencies have failed to act. The case of the health barriers is emblematic, because the population defended the City Hall when a court request was granted to an intercity transport company to be able to continue making transfers to Viçosa, which contradicted the determination of the Municipal Administration to the contrary; while there was criticism because there were rumors about public officials at these health barriers giving undue permission for people to go ahead, even without going through the official procedures.

Nevertheless, both the ASCOM team from Pelotas and the DCM team from Viçosa managed to separate the figure of the politician from the institutional role exercised, making a clear distinction between the pages of the respective city halls and those of political personalities. The appeal of the institutional pages is to legitimize the biosafety measures and other forms of action in favor of the public interest, not promoting the person of the mayor or the mayoress, but the community and public institutions.

The new communication policy of the Viçosa City Hall has been maintained in its structures and strategies for each channel, considering the same public and the ways to communicate dialogically

with them. The services provided by the Ombudsman and the *chats*, however, have undergone some changes: a technology based on automatic responses to repetitive demands was adopted, in which the person sends messages to the agency and ends up navigating through menus with pre-programmed possibilities. The contents of the answers were pre-programmed and fed by the doubts that appeared in the interaction environments with the public in social networks, phone calls and *chats*. There is a similar system used by the City Hall of Pelotas, which was also present in the website, as well as in Curitiba.

The answers to frequently asked questions and all the information related to the new Coronavirus are in a specific section of the Viçosa City Hall website, being fed by the team in the same way as the robot system used by the Ombudsman. It was also adopted a data integration system, controlled by the Health Secretariat, in which there is a record of everything that happens about the subject, from tracking suspected cases to the availability of supplies and beds. This system, called Coronazero, is shared with other public health agents in the region, helping in the regional planning for the care of the sick and in decision making.
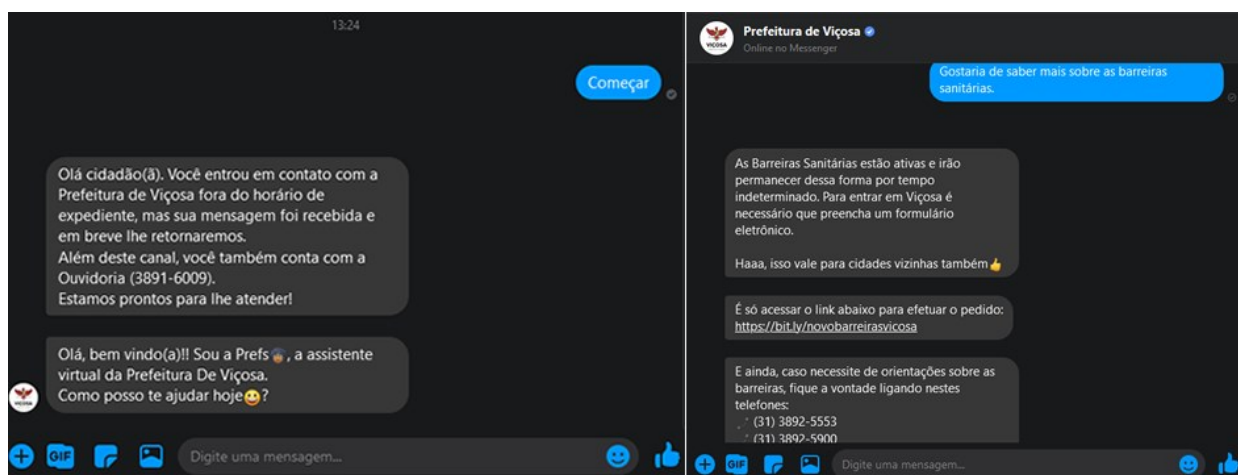

Image 8: example of support through the *Facebook chat* of Viçosa's City Hall.

Image 9: The City Hall of Viçosa's Instagram page has "highlights" to facilitate access to publications with public information about the fight against the pandemic and access to services.

The first death by COVID-19 was registered in Viçosa on 08/15/2020, the same day that Pelotas had reached 47 deaths. On that same day the city halls announced that they would have to make changes in their interactional and communicational processes due to the electoral law:

Image 10: publications from August 15, 2020, informing about changes in communication policies due to electoral legislation. Sources: *Instagram* **of the Curitiba City Hall, ASCOM - Pelotas City Hall,** *Instagram* **of the Viçosa City Hall**

Each city hall chose different ways to deal with the election period, a time when institutional promotion that could become the object of electoral propaganda for the groups that are in power, something that could unbalance the conditions of the election, is forbidden. Curitiba's City Hall was the one that acted most severely, deactivating and deleting the content of all its social networks, except *Instagram*, where it disabled all the posts that did not have content related to COVID-19, including those from previous administrations. Several sections of the website were also disabled for

the same reason. This made it difficult to carry out this work, as it was not possible to collect materials produced between 2013 and 2016, nor to make the comparison with the following administration, except for the occasional collections for other purposes that had already been carried out in the years between 2016 and 2019.

The Municipality of Pelotas and the Municipality of Viçosa maintained publications on *Instagram*, *Facebook*, and their respective websites, within what was allowed by the Electoral Justice, taking into consideration the public interest and the pandemic situation. They did not delete, however, the publications of any nature prior to the electoral period. The most relevant change was the cessation of interactions between humans from these City Halls and the population in general. Even in the *chats*, only the automated answers were kept, as a way to give the impersonality required by the electoral legislation.

This election period that took place in a moment of public health crisis ended up limiting the possibilities of public communication policies, which needed to reach diverse audiences, and therefore, equally diverse channels and languages to be able to dialogue with everyone. It can be seen, however, that with a well-structured policy, which follows ethical, technical, intelligence-led, and legally aware parameters since its conception, it can go through this with less significant losses in terms of access to information and capacity to dialogue with Civil Society.

d.   Conclusions and final considerations

What has been presented so far allows us to say that the idea of communication, understood in a systemic-dialogical logic, can be applied theoretically and empirically in public policies to improve the contact between Public Power and Civil Society. With the understanding that cities are complex systems, which guide their ways of making, unmaking, growing and regressing through the bundles of meaning captured by the strength of dialogical and interactive communicational processes, thinking about how these interactions will be carried out and who will participate in these dialogues is essential, especially in times of crisis, but not only in them.

First of all, the chosen theoretical approaches brought a philosophical-sociological-anthropological framework that provides subsidies for guidelines that foster public policies that recognize diversity and the possibility of dissent in communication processes, guiding public debates from an ethical model that brings the way of thinking of political agents and State agents closer to the interests of the population in its complexity. These ideas point to the need for prior recognition of the human condition of each participant in communicational relations and of the dialogical aspect of these

processes, of being able to be emitter and receiver at the same time, of constructing meanings in the process of exchange with the other. These guidelines, however, are open, subject to criticism and collaboration.

Next, the experiences presented show that the application of these ideas in the 21st century is related to strategies to turn the contact between the Public Power and citizens, until then merely institutional, with a language understood as formal and neutral, into something closer to the dialogue between two human persons, subjects of urban daily life. One provides services and the other seeks these services, but both inhabit the same environments and use the same tools to communicate with each other. It takes into consideration the ethics of recognition suggested by Honneth, while understanding the importance of Habermas' model of discourse ethics and the systemic diversity perceived by Maturana and Varela, Luhmann, and other authors who work with systems theory.

From this movement to simplify the complexity of these processes arise opportunities to include more people in public debates, reduce the need to meet repetitive demands, reallocate resources and make decisions that make more sense, from the use of tools that can collect data from the interactions produced in communicational environments. In this aspect, the use of social networks by municipalities, as presented in this paper, shows how communication can act, at the same time, as a means and as a tool to develop public policies for city management. Means where interactions happen, tools to enable them and collect meaning from them.

Finally, the pandemic brought up the need to develop strategies and policies to provide access to information and to carry out direct communication with the population on a large scale. To make sure that the information reaches people, but not only that, to make this information become legitimate, that it can dialogue with the reality of each one of them. It also showed the challenge of making sure that the information about people reaches the state, how difficult it has been to count the numbers of infected, suspects, and deaths. How difficult it has been to know how many people are starving, how many have lost their jobs, how many were already unemployed before the arrival of the disease. The systemic disease, to paraphrase De Bolle (2020), has exposed the disease of the system. And, with the arrival of the election period, also comes the double meaning of the word crisis: change; be it a movement of regression or of development.

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