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# Building Children's Identity in the Disney World

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## Abstract

**[ES] Introducción.** Las industrias de la comunicación se convierten en instrumentos poderosos de dominio y sumisión, situándose de forma estratégica en la economía, la política y la cultura. En todos estos aspectos de la representación humana podemos encontrar la influencia de las industrias del entretenimiento, cumpliendo así con el objetivo de someter a su audiencia manipulada hacia la pasividad. **Metodología.** A través de una metodología mixta y la triangulación de los datos obtenidos, el estudio arroja resultados significativos sobre la influencia de las industrias del entretenimiento, que se ve reflejada en los discursos de los sujetos entrevistados. **Conclusiones y discusión.** Nuestros análisis y reflexiones nos llevan a la conclusión de que la cultura *mainstream* ha repercutido en la cultura popular, pero no para convertir al público en protagonista, sino para imponer los mensajes formulados por la clase hegemónica.

**[EN] Abstract.** Communication industries have become powerful instruments for dominion and submission by locating themselves strategically in economy, politics and culture. All these aspects of human representation are influenced by the entertaining industries, thus achieving their goal of subduing their manipulated audience towards passivity. **Methodology.** Through a mixed methodology and the triangulation of obtained data, the study yields significant results concerning the influence of entertaining industries, as reflected in the statements of the subjects interviewed. **Conclusions and discussion.** Our analysis and reflections lead us to conclude that *mainstream* culture has had an impact on the popular culture, not to make the public the true protagonist though, but to impose messages phrased by the hegemonic class.

### Keywords

[ES] competencias; comunicación audiovisual; audiencia social; medios.

[EN] competencies; audiovisual communication; social audience; media.

### Contents

[ES] 1. Introducción. 2. Método. 2.1. Estrategias metodológicas. 2.2. Instrumentos de recogida de información. 3. Resultados. 3.1. Interpretación de los datos obtenidos del cuestionario. 3.1.1. Hipótesis: la influencia de la Alfabetización mediática y la transmisión de valores a través del cine infantil. 3.1.2. Análisis de entrevistas a informantes clave. 4. Discusión y Conclusiones. 5. Notas. 6. Referencias.

[EN] 1. Introduction. 2. Method. 2.1. Methodological strategies. 2.2. Information collection instruments. 3. Results. 3.1. Interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaire. 3.1.1. Hypothesis: the influence of media literacy and the transmission of values through children's films. 3.1.2. Analysis of interviews with key informants. 4. Discussion and Conclusions. 5. Notes. 6. List of References.

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## 1. Introduction

An oligopoly is a market where a few companies supply goods or services, generating a high level of interdependency among their decisions. In terms of commerce, the oligopoly is characterized by the fact that there is no competition with other companies of the sector. For the consumers of these companies' products it is very difficult to select items, since their outlook and advertisement are usually focused to modifying the behavior of those who need to distinguish them. Regarding the number of companies, we observe that a few absorb the rest of competitors, in order to create a *de facto* monopoly. In this situation the institution operates as if it were official, but in reality, it is not legally authorized to operate in the field where the economic activity is performed. This way, the audiovisual market is divided into four categories (Albarrán, 1996; Edwards, 2012; Llorens-Maluquer, 2001; Onozaki & Yanagita, 2003):

- Monopoly: a single company dominates the market. For instance, a local cable franchise.
- Oligopoly: a few companies dominate the market. Such as free-to-air TV broadcasters.
- Monopolistic competition: it is a market where apparently there are many sellers of a product, although in reality only a few are competitors with differentiated products. This category is found on radio and magazines.

- Perfect competition: it is almost non-existent, and it is present during the earlier stages of birth of a market. This is a stage where there are so many sellers that their actions do not interfere with the actions of the rest. Products offered are similar and there is freedom to entering and exiting the market at any time.

In the audiovisual industries there is a tendency towards the creation of large multinational corporations that operate in different audiovisual and entertainment media and, at the same time, show clear oligopoly-like trends worldwide. In this sense, the statements of Nich Nicholas, Time Inc. former president, are revealing when signing the merger with the Time Warner group in March 1989:

The industry of entertainment and media will be constituted by a limited number of large worldwide firms. These companies will be structured in a vertical manner, will be large enough as to produce, commercialize and broadcast globally, and flexible enough as to assume the expenses of said activities through an extensive and progressively increasing distribution network. (Llorens-Maluquer, 2001: 109).

In the eighties during the XX century there was an internal crisis in the United States in the audiovisual and entertainment market that forced big firms to look for larger markets. Considering this situation, they decided to seek new markets or absorb competitors (Alexander et al., 1993). In the year 1995, there was a burst of the greatest period of mergers among media firms. The business volume was led by the mergers of only four companies: Westinghouse acquired CBS (5.4 billion dollars), Seagram purchased MCA for 7.6 billion dollars, Time Warner merged with Turner Broadcasting System, also for 7.6 billion dollars and, naturally, Walt Disney, the multinational corporation took over ABC/Capital Cities for 18.2 billion dollars.

During this time, contents producer firms allied with distributors, such as Disney with ABC, in order to guarantee the commercialization of their products under many formats. From this commercial strategy there emerged the first signs of transmedia among entertainment industries. The integration of production and distribution stages achieved the commercialization of specific products in different formats and platforms, being projected in the stage of reproduction and distribution; “while in other industrial sectors the value added concentrated in the production stage, in this sector the value added, the focus of business activity, concentrated in the production and distribution stages instead” (Richeri, 1994: 236). This way, we notice that audiovisual companies that continue to be sector leaders, do not rely their benefits solely on box office gross (Jaramillo, 2016), since this is only a part of the activity of large conglomerates.

From this perspective, Disney, Time Warner and other large groups of production media corporations, tend to establish the agenda for all competitors. Now, there is a trend to globalize firms and branch out into other consumption sectors, just as Disney did with the opening of retail chains, theme parks and the manufacture of new commercial products. For instance, communication systems in the United States “are molded today by a handful of companies that comprise USA-based firms like General Electric (NBC), Viacom (CBS), Walt Disney Company (ABC) and Time Warner (CNN). There are others that include non-USA-based firms, such as News Corporation (Fox), Bertelsmann and Sony” (Mosco, 2006: 14). Today, competition is still a trending topic in the audiovisual business sector, despite the mergers of firms are increasingly focusing towards clear oligopolies. The situation is rather complicated, because we are facing an era of growing mergers, characterized by the creation of large financial and economic conglomerates; although, divided into networks and with an internal structure

that is, at the same time, autonomous and connected. In the interview conducted to Castells by *La Vanguardia Digital*, this author states that today the competition is more complicated, since the large financial and economic conglomerates are diversified as networks and, even though there are “large conglomerates collecting resources, [there is also] a huge competitive decentralization of economic agents responsible to bring money to that conglomerate. Therefore, we have an extremely competitive situation, but not among small firms, but instead among large-size oligopolies.” (Goula, 2000).

This way, in the United States there are six large companies that control all audiovisual products and that, in addition, extend to the rest of the world. Large media oligopolies hinder the participation of independent projects and, hence, alternative discourses that may develop from this hegemonic power. These six companies are: Time Warner, Walt Disney, Viacom, News Corp, CBS and NBC Universal (General Electric). There were fields not controlled completely such as radio and Internet, but now they are also being hoarded by quasi-oligopolies, such as Clear Channel which has more than 100 radio stations in the United States or Google, Microsoft and Facebook, which control a considerable part of Internet.

As we can see, a monopoly consists of the presence of a single company dominating the scope, although there are also firms like Disney which, through the years, has been steadily incorporating companies in the children’s entertainment sector in order to eliminate competitors of any kind. Thus, a “group” is created, which under the name of “parent company”, it blurs its level of authoritarianism in the market and becomes the invisible enemy of democracy and market freedom. This becomes utterly serious when dealing with leisure of children, where neither the public, who lacks information as to detect indoctrination of any kind (Osuna-Acedo, Marta-Lazo, & Aparici-Marino, 2012), neither family nor educational context, question the hegemony this sort of companies may entail in the popular culture (Sandlin & Garlen, 2017). -Blindly- responding to their interests and symbolic dominance; but, how was this mega-empire created and what is the reach of its media networks?

The aim of this paper is to contribute to understanding the commercial framework of the Disney multinational corporation, determined by the vertical integration and the disproportionate control envisioned over the children’s cinema market. However, the gathering of information has been rather complex due to the lack of transparency in data, since these multimedia companies are interconnected and protected like a bunker, which in addition has been favored by the recent incorporation of global multimedia networks to organize strategic alliances and, “which goal is the privatization and commercialization of Internet to expand and exploit these new markets” (Castells, 2009: 111). Therefore, we formulate the following question: How did the Disney oligopoly emerge and what were its origins?

The journalist of Chile Ernesto Carmona published in 2007 a paper in the journal *Firgoa* entitled *Diez mega grupos controlan la prensa, radio y televisión de EEUU e influyen en América Latina*. There, he states that these ten media empires control the entertainment business and mass culture, including the editorial world, cinema, music, production and distribution of television contents broadcasted from the “smart box” (Cascaroja, 2015), theaters, Internet and Disneyworld-like theme parks spread worldwide. This author said that the dominant discourse of the ten large communication empires introduces political propaganda favoring the conservative ideology of citizens, molding their minds and washing their brains (Carmona, 2007), besides justifying media control in the field of entertainment, when counting the firms owned by the Disney multinational corporation. Included in this display of products and media scenarios, there are films and accessories, TV programs and theme parks, radio stations and food brands, in such a way that the Disney essence rises as an omnipresent entity in the popular culture

of the United States, in particular, and around the world, in general (Asante, 2014; Crothers, 2017; Forbes, 2017). An immeasurable empire, where we do not dare to state that we comprised the ‘Walt Disney Productions’ multinational corporation in its entirety, without leaving any establishment behind.

Based on the aforesaid, we developed the following sections to raise awareness about some contents meticulously designed to satisfy the commercial interests of the Disney oligopoly, which works as an informal “education institution” through the invisible messages of its innocent productions to which, especially, underaged citizens are exposed to (Hudders *et al.*, 2015).

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Methodological strategies**

It is useful to recover the concept of paradigm in the study, following the approach of Thomas Kuhn that conceives it as a theoretical perspective that is agreed and recognized by scientists of a specific discipline, based on the achievements preceding said discipline, which orientate the research through the identification and selection of relevant facts to be studied, formulation of hypothesis that explain the observed phenomenon, and the preparation of the necessary empirical research techniques. Furthermore, according to this author “one of the functions of a paradigm is to define the research techniques and methods acceptable for a discipline” (Corbetta, 2003: 9). The two paradigms that have oriented the research in social sciences have been Positivism and Interpretivism. These are two organic branches of social reality and the ways to approaching it, which generated two kinds of coherent and differentiated research techniques, but not incompatible though (García-Pérez, 2011). On the one hand, the positivist paradigm assumes the existence of a sole reality; it is grounded on assumptions such as the fact that the world has an existence of its own, independently of who studies it and it is governed by laws that allow to explain, predict and control phenomena. The purpose of sciences is aimed to discover said laws, stablishing theoretical generalizations that contribute to the enrichment of a knowledge of universal nature. It is distinctive of natural sciences, which interest is focused in seeking new knowledge and its generalization. The quantitative approach is based on the hypothetical-deductive method (Novás, Machado, & Calviño, 2011).

On the other hand, the interpretative paradigm attempts to comprehend reality and social nature phenomena from their unique and specific nature. It aims to discover why an event has evolved in a way and not a different one. It is interested on describing what is individual, distinctive, the existence of multiple realities, the specificity of the object of study, by studying particular cases and then comparing them with others studied in an equally thorough manner. The idea is to transform a framework and contextualized reality, trying to discover the meaning of human actions and social life; the tasks are oriented towards an approach to the personal world of individuals, delving on the underlying drivers and beliefs. The qualitative approach is based on the holistic-inductive method. These considerations engage us in a methodological perspective: the view of the world, the transfer of that concept to the research issue and the research process. It is all about choosing or combining the methods that best adjust to our study object between both paradigms. Understanding methods as ways to gain knowledge, in compliance with the methodological perspectives.

Once the social paradigm has been delimited, we needed to do a more pragmatistical research design, by responding to three essential questions. “Is there (social) reality? is it knowledgeable? How? In other words: Essence, Knowledge and Method” (Corbetta, 2003: 8), which are rather indispensable to approach the ontological (what), epistemological (who) and methodological (how) issue.



Considering the aforesaid, the context of deep transformations in the audiovisual communication sector requires an assessment of the education received by professionals, in order to suggest certain reconsiderations in study programs. Thus, the general aim of this study is to contribute to this debate, by determining what are the competencies considered more relevant for the performance of tasks specific of audiovisual communication among the professionals of the sector, as well as professors and students of the Degree on Audiovisual Communication in Spain, in order to offer a knowledge useful for the adaptation of said studies to the needs of the current labor market and the expectations of its students.

To offer a response to these issues, we formulated a main question, interwoven with objectives, hypotheses and research techniques and, that entail the seed of the articulation of quantitative and qualitative techniques planned in this study. As Callejo and Viedma state, the articulation of techniques is an adequate methodology "... when the use of several techniques or research practices is established on the logic that the outcomes of the former are used by the latter. In such a way that, [...] this kind of design is of a mandatorily diachronic nature, where some techniques are done before and others afterwards" (Callejo & Viedma, 2005: 57). Therefore, we chose this type of methodology, because it offers the possibility to gather information about a same reality from different approaches and to ensure results using several methods.

MAIN OBJECTIVE	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	HYPOTHESIS	MAIN QUESTION	RESEARCH TECHNIQUES USED
- Thoroughly analyze the images and underlying discourse in the films of the Disney multinational corporation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Study the social discourse produced in global citizens.</li> <li>- Identify whether the messages of Disney's audiovisual storytelling are perceived as educational contents and whether their interpretation is within our possibilities.</li> <li>- Identify the influence of media literacy and the convey of values through children's cinema.</li> </ul>	- The images used on Disney films influence the construction of identity.	- What are the interests behind these images?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Questionnaire.</li> <li>- Interviews.</li> </ul>

We considered the use of chained articulation as the most adequate strategy to meet the needs of our study. Likewise, the concatenation of research techniques used impacts the itinerary that determines the different research steps, needed in the documentary research stages as well of analysis of literature dealing with our research object, data collection and review of these documents in order to build the theoretical background supporting the grounds of research. Once the theoretical framework was consolidated we conducted personal interviews to delve into the perception of the object of study, the terminology, experiences, etc., in order to identify the most relevant issues to be treated in the questionnaire, as well as to confirm the theories developed in the theoretical background. In order to do this, we used a series of semi-structured techniques, where we elaborated a guide of issues to be handled but the order and the way to manage them developed depending on the conversation dynamics (Corbetta, 2003).

A distinctive element in the approach of a research either from a quantitative or qualitative perspective depends on the hypothesis presented. According to Sampson & Laub, the operational strategy is clearly different, “it didn’t start with a clear hypothesis on mind, but instead, it was built on a rolling basis.” Therefore, the research presented “gives preference to the understanding of subjects studied, even at the risk of missing the monitoring of atypical situations and non-generalizable mechanisms” (Corbetta, 2003: 48). Furthermore, the primary hypothesis does not aim to generalize results: it is limited to the study and comprehension of a specific reality as well as to what is the impact on the study population.

## **2.2. Information collection instruments**

Initially, the qualitative research allowed to explore issues related to perceptions, experiences, feelings, emotions, ideas, that could have hardly been analyzed from a quantitative approach; although “both kinds of research show biases and, in fact, it would be optimum to complement qualitative collected data with quantitative data” (Campbell & Stanley, 1995: 75). In order to meet this, we designed a questionnaire that asked to assess the level of relevance granted to competencies related to the practices of professions linked to audiovisual communication. This data collecting instrument was suitable to meet the study objectives since it provided a structured set of data that allowed to describe and compare the features of the different cases in a quantitative manner and using statistical techniques. In this sense, the study provided numeric values associated to different levels of relevance that enabled calculations such as means, standard deviations, modes, medians and correlations between variables.

The competencies definition process for the questionnaire consisted of an update and simplification of competencies included in the White Paper of the Degree in Communication (ANECA, 2005). Thus, we reduced the statements in order to make reading easier and avoid potential abandonments of surveyed individuals; we grouped knowledges into new competencies; and added new aspects to already existing ones in order to adapt them to the current context, for instance, by including digital or interactive multimedia platforms. We also added other competencies not included in the ‘White Paper’ and that the literature in the field considers relevant, for instance the capacity for critical thought, education in values or competencies associated to documentation and web usability. In total, we evaluated 62 competencies for the practice of professions related to audiovisual communication. In addition, these competencies were grouped into four dimensions, which are the same we find in said ‘Paper’: disciplinary competencies (knowledge-related), professional competencies (know-how-related), academic competencies (referring to knowledge needed for the research in audiovisual communication) and specific competencies (others of more transversal approach that are not exclusively related to professions linked to audiovisual communication).

This way, we ensured the comparability with the results of said study, at least in regard to these dimensions, and additionally, we obtained global results that facilitated the analysis and the compliance of the specific objective. To determine the relevance granted to competencies included in the questionnaire, every competency was valued using a 1 to 5 scale, whereas 1 means the competency is not relevant at all, 2 means that it is slightly relevant, 3 means that it is moderately relevant, 4 that it is highly relevant and 5 that it is very relevant. Competencies were presented in four clusters corresponding to the four competencies dimensions in a form created using ‘Google Forms’.

The questionnaire was sent through email to different Spanish Communication Faculties so that it could be spread among students and professors, and also distributed to associations of producers, directors, audiovisual scriptwriters and producer firms in order to be disseminated among members and workers. Whenever possible, we also sent the questionnaire to the people of this professional field, whose emails address was public. We tried to include a wide scope of professional profiles and

subsectors representative of the collective that is object of study: direction, performance, production, post-production, scriptwriters, photography, responsables of staging, sound, managers and editors, both in the field of cinematography as well as the radio and TV broadcasting and the digital field, including professors and students. However, considering the way surveyed individuals were contacted, in this case we cannot talk about a completely randomized sample nor a stratified sample, hence the margin of error is not applicable to results. The questionnaire, available in May and June 2017, could be filled in a completely anonymous manner, since personal data –beyond occupation– of surveyed subjects was not collected. Participants were informed about study objectives and received guarantees about the storage and treatment of data.

A total number of 402 individuals completed the questionnaire, of whom 289 were professionals from the sector and 113 were students and university professors. The diversity of professional profiles among interviewees was rather high, since we obtained responses from all sub-sectors (radio and TV broadcasting, cinematography, multimedia and digital media). Results were analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics (Castañeda, Cabrera, Navarro, & De Vries, 2010).

Other data collection and analysis methods used in this research were interviews, which primary aim consisted of capturing the message of participants without any previous filter. Therefore, interviews allow a greater freedom of initiative both for interviewer as well as interviewees; the conversation eases and encourages a freer expression with spontaneous responses, considering that questions formulated are usually open-ended and the interviewee must elaborate the answer. This technique requires a more specific preparation that allows to obtain relevant information about the meaning constructed by the user of the proposal. In our case, we conducted interviews to key informants who provided a multidisciplinary view about the study issue.

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1. Interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaire**

Considering the objectives and hypothesis specified herein, the analysis of results presents the data we have worked with in this study and which we got conclusions from. It is worth mentioning that data registered on questionnaires was analyzed using the statistical package SPSS, which outputs reveal that the input complies the criteria needed for a comparison of means and subsequent correlation of variables, in such a way that the suggested hypothesis can be validated. Statistics are based on all cases that include valid data for the variables of the model, analyzed using a Unianova v15.

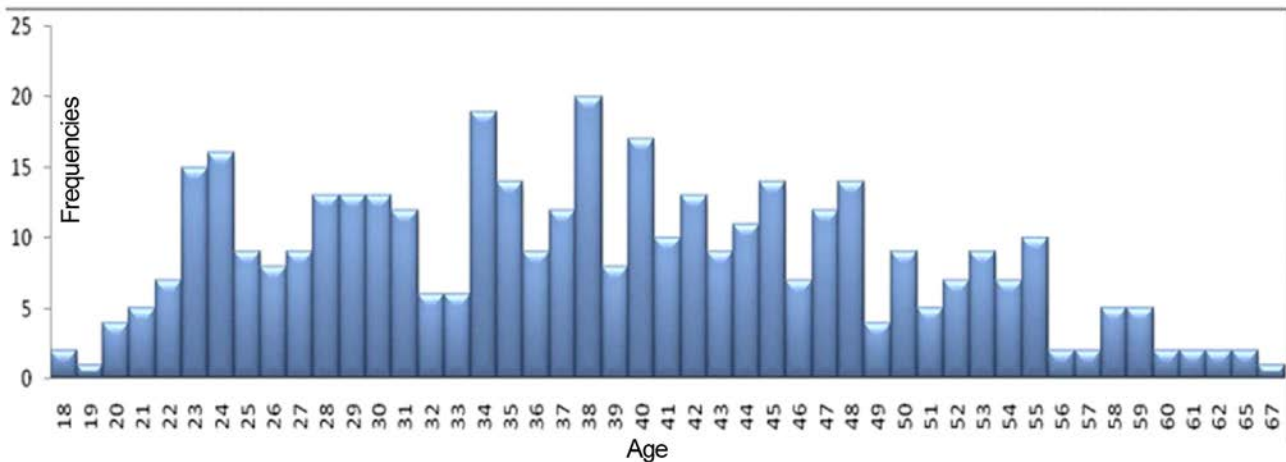
Values gathered through the questionnaire's items can be seen in the frequency tables below, which are rather characteristic for the quantitative analysis of information; on the other hand, we also used data exposure techniques that allow showing the information in a more systematic manner, like matrix tables, networks and conceptual maps. Graphic representation of results provides a more intuitive view of data behavior. Moreover, in some items and due to the qualitative treatment of information, we present a connection of results with the initial research scheme (objectives and previous hypotheses). The questionnaire includes both, quantitative and qualitative information to avoid the error of previous interpretation of content and confirmation of a specific hypothesis beforehand. It is a flexibility offered by qualitative data, because the initial hypotheses do not have a static nature and are helpful in shaping the explanation, as well as its later triangulation with other techniques.

On a first stage, we presented the profile of the four-hundred two participants of the sample, split by gender in 24.48% men and 75.12% women, distributed across different age frequencies, as seen on Table 1. In the academic level, 54.98% of participants had completed university studies, 33.83% had



completed post-graduate studies, 8.21% had completed high school, 2.24% had completed secondary school and 0.75% primary school.

**Table 1. Frequency distribution table (by age). Source: authors' own creation.**



### 3.1.1. Hypothesis: the influence of media literacy and the transmission of values through children's films

The first question in the questionnaire "1.- Through what media do you receive education?" allowed us to correlate with other variables in order to know whether there is any alteration between analyzed variables. Although the correlation indexes obtained were not interpreted as a demonstration of a causal relationship. This way, 84.08% mention school, 76.12% family, cinema is highlighted by 61.69%, street with 59.45% and other fields, with a 55.57%. Based on the difference among those who consider cinema as an educational agent (242 individuals) and those who don't (160 individuals) we calculated the following relationships between variables, hypothesis and research objectives:

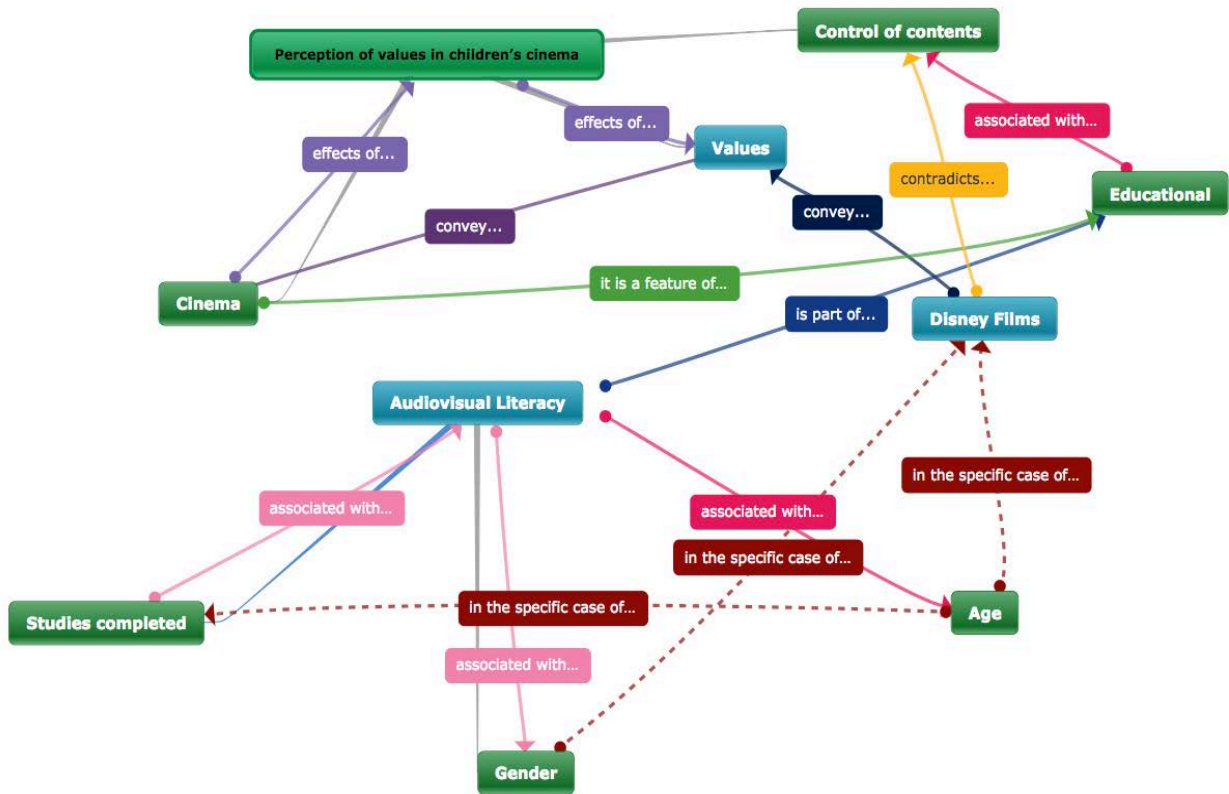
**Objective:** Considering the past and current impact of informal education in the different generations, we need to know the influence of media literacy and convey of values through children's cinema.

**Hypothesis:** Images used in Disney films (a company with commercial interests) exert pressure on the construction of identity; therefore, we need to know whether these are perceived as educational contents and if it is possible for us to interpret them.

To reject or confirm this hypothesis we performed a deductive organization of the outcomes-related items, in such a way that, the ideas could be contrasted in a parallel manner (from a quantitative and qualitative plane) and with which we could reaffirm our approach; therefore, we considered that if the cinema is an educational agent that conveys values and individuals associated an adequate audiovisual literacy to detect values, then how would this premise impact in their considerations about Disney's children films? (on which we questioned earlier whether there was any kind of control by educational institutions whatsoever)

In order to analyze these categorical values, it is very important to know their context and hence, we kept sociodemographic aspects mentioned earlier in mind (gender, age and completed studies), with which we can distribute frequencies and assess the homogeneity/ heterogeneity of resulting information.

**Semantic network 1. Deductive organization of items. Source: authors' own creation**



We began with the analysis of quantitative data, because the relationships among variables could be calculated using the differentiating scores and, later, project their correlations. The first correlation was done using the question “4.- What is the relevance of audiovisual storytelling on education?”, shown in the questionnaire under the following descriptions:

- A lot of relevance: should be studied like any other mandatory discipline.
- Considerable relevance: it is a complement of the didactic material.
- Moderate relevance: only educational programs influence education.
- Slight relevance: scant relevance. It is part of the informal field.
- No relevance at all: it is not related to education.

All responses obtained from the quantitative study sample (despite the fact they consider cinema as an educational media) grant a great relevance to the education in media as an agent associated with the human development and individual and collective wellbeing. A 49.12% of the sample shows special interest for its incorporation in the study plan, 45.36% manifests a considerable interest and only 5.51% scores as a moderate, slight or null relevance. However, when correlating the question about the relevance of digital storytelling on education using the variables: age, gender and studies we notice there is a significant difference, although sociodemographic data do not influence.

These are not significant data, resulting a (Mean)  $\bar{X}$  = 3.52 in the case of the 242 individuals who consider cinema as educational. In the case of the other educational agents there is a (Mean)  $\bar{X}$  = 3.11

for the 160 individuals studied. The dispersion level compared to the mean (standard deviation) is shown as  $\sigma = 0.639$ . In addition, analyzing Levene's Test for equality of variances, we have an ANCOVA of  $F = 1.666$ , which demonstrates there is no error<sup>a</sup> in the intersection suggested and contrasts the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is the same across all groups.

**Table 2. Levene's Test – Sociodemographic data.**

Levene's test for equality of error <sup>a</sup> variances (a. Design: Intersection + Age + Gender + Completed studies + @1.Through what media did you receive education?)			
F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
1.666	1	400	.197

The second correlation was done using the question "Do you believe that an adequate audiovisual literacy (education on media) would evidence the conveying of values in cinema and would avoid the manipulation of its viewers?", where a massive response can be seen regarding the relationship between media literacy and its influence in an education in values, highlighting the 85.07% who answered positively, against the 8.71% who answered negatively.

In this question's correlation, the information obtained with question 1 and the interrelation with sociodemographic data, significant differences weren't found either, as shown in the following table with the frequencies distribution:

**Table 3. Measures of central tendency**

Through what media do you receive education?	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Others	.99	.595	159
Cinema	1.09	.595	242
Total	1.05	.596	401

We observe that the mean in a case is  $\bar{X} = 0.99$  (159 individuals that do not consider cinema as an educational agent) and  $\bar{X} = 1.09$  (in the case of the 242 individuals that consider cinema as an educational agent). The standard deviation in both cases is  $\sigma = 0.595$  [1], confirming that the sociodemographic data do not influence as a covariable in the difference between variables either, considering that SPSS outputs include a correlation level that is higher than the significance level used on studies in the educational field (0.05), concluding that the relationship between analyzed variables is not significant.

**Table 4. Levene’s Test – Sociodemographic data.**

The Levene’s test for equality of error <sup>a</sup> variances with this dependent variable contrasts the null hypothesis that the dependent variable’s error variance is the same across all groups <sup>a</sup> (a. Design: Intersection + Age + Gender + Completed studies + @1.Through what media did you receive education?)			
F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
.102	1	399	.749

In the case of the question “Do you believe that educational contents are subjected to control and analysis?”, we notice in the quantitative analysis that 53.23% of population believes educational contents are controlled, against a 40.55% who think the opposite. To contrast the information reflected in this question we included the item "Do you think that education conveys values?", to which almost the entirety of surveyed individuals answered affirmatively (96.02%). In the same set of questions about education there was the following: "7.- Do children’s cinema conveys values to its audience or is it just a sort of entertainment?", whereas cinematography contents are granted the capacity of conveying values; therefore, and as “control question” we decided to add a question at the end of the questionnaire, where we could collect information about Disney multinational corporation in a more specific manner. As a result, 93.78% considers that cinema is an agent that conveys values, compared to 5.97% that only considers it a sort of leisure and entertainment.

In this case, we refer to the question “Do you believe that children’s contents of the Disney multinational corporation have any kind of control by educational institutions?”, which we used to specify even more the responses we correlated to confirm our initial hypothesis. The high percentage of individuals who do not consider there is any kind of control by educational institutions over these contents is significant. On initial issues, in nº 1, where a high percentage indicated cinema as educational agent, as well as in nº 7 where, in addition, the capacity of educating in values was granted; however, with this issue we confirmed there is a certain reluctance (that will be later triangulated with the categorization of qualitative responses) about reliability and compliance to pedagogical principles of the guidelines on education of these media products.

An example of this is that 73% (291 individuals) deny that, in these cases, educational institutions ensure the correction of these contents and safeguard children’s education, since they are not considered applicable as instruments of improvement of the human condition. We understand that this desire responds to a historic interest for education and the value assigned to stakeholders that influence in human development, which identify the pedagogical principles that must rule the educational system and, that are supposed to be translated into normative formulations.

Considering the descriptive statistical data, we haven’t found significant data either, nor with the items commented before, nor with the sociodemographic characteristics of the surveyed population. The Means are close  $\bar{X} = 0.64$  (in the case of the 160 individuals who did not consider cinema to be an educational agent) and  $\bar{X} = 0.51$  (out of the 241 valid responses out of the 242 individuals that granted an educational value to cinema). Results are expressed in frequencies distribution tables:

**Table 5. Descriptive statistics**

1.- Through what media do you receive education?	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Others	.64	1.084	160
Cinema	.51	1.025	241
Total	.56	1.050	401

**Table 6. Descriptive statistics**

1.- Through what media do you receive education?	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Others	3.11	.897	160
Cinema	3.52	.639	242
Total	3.36	.778	402

**Table 7. Levene’s Test – variances**

Dependent variable: 30.- Do you believe that children’s contents of the Disney multinational corporation are subjected to controls by educational institutions?			
F	gl1	gl2	Sig.
1.958	1	399	.163

It contrasts the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across all groups<sup>a</sup> (a. Design: Intersection + Age + Gender + Completed studies + @1.Through what media did you receive education?).

**3.1.2. Analysis of interviews with key informants**

To complement the exploratory analysis with the previous instruments, we conducted open interviews to informants offering a greater clarity to the field of study, focusing the terminological and linguistic accuracy expressed in this paper’s introduction; because

To analyze the interviews, we must consider both interventions of interviewees as well as interviewers, considering the baseline theoretical background, since it is precisely the ideas that comprise the social theories of reference what guide the empirical analysis (Gordo & Serrano, 2008: 132).

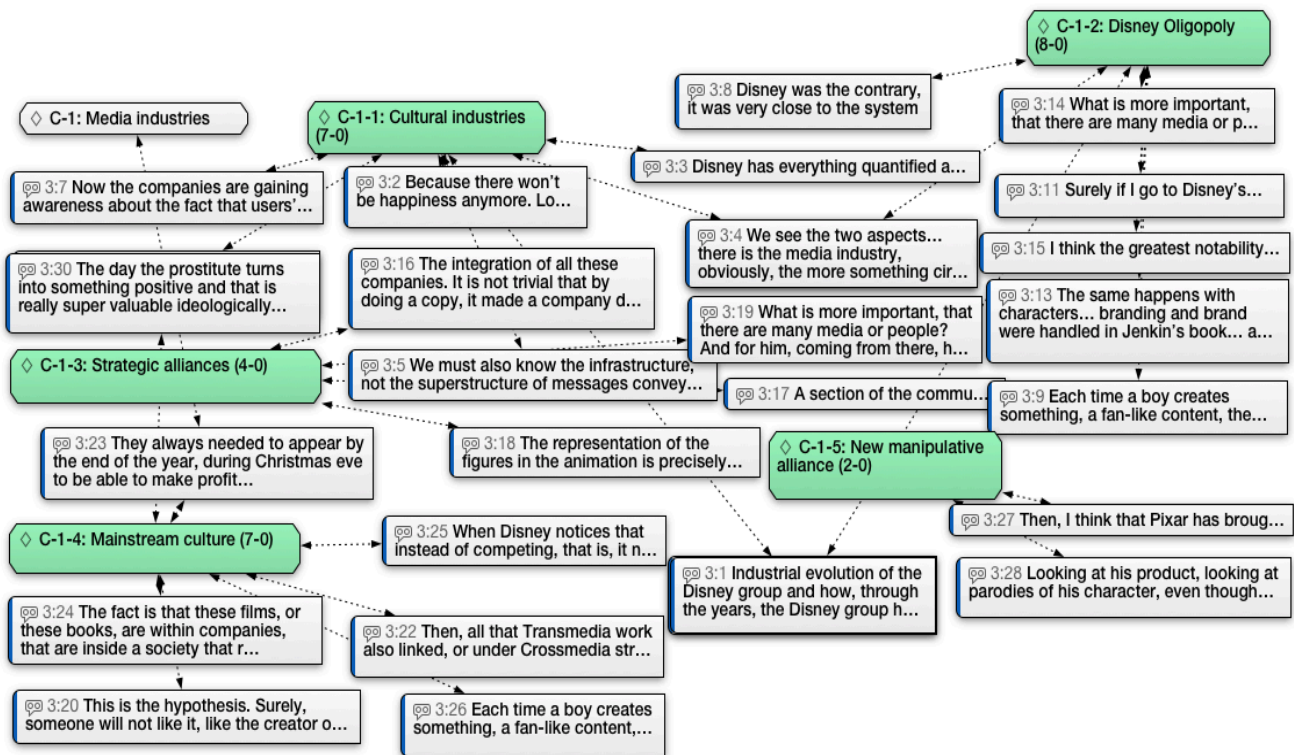
The coding of information produced allowed to establish the following categories:

Category C-1: Media industries



Once the messages were analyzed, we approach the main question: What are the interests behind these images? Discourses analyzed point out to commercial interests we already described in the state of the art and analyzed hereinafter.

### Semantic network 2. C-1: Media industries



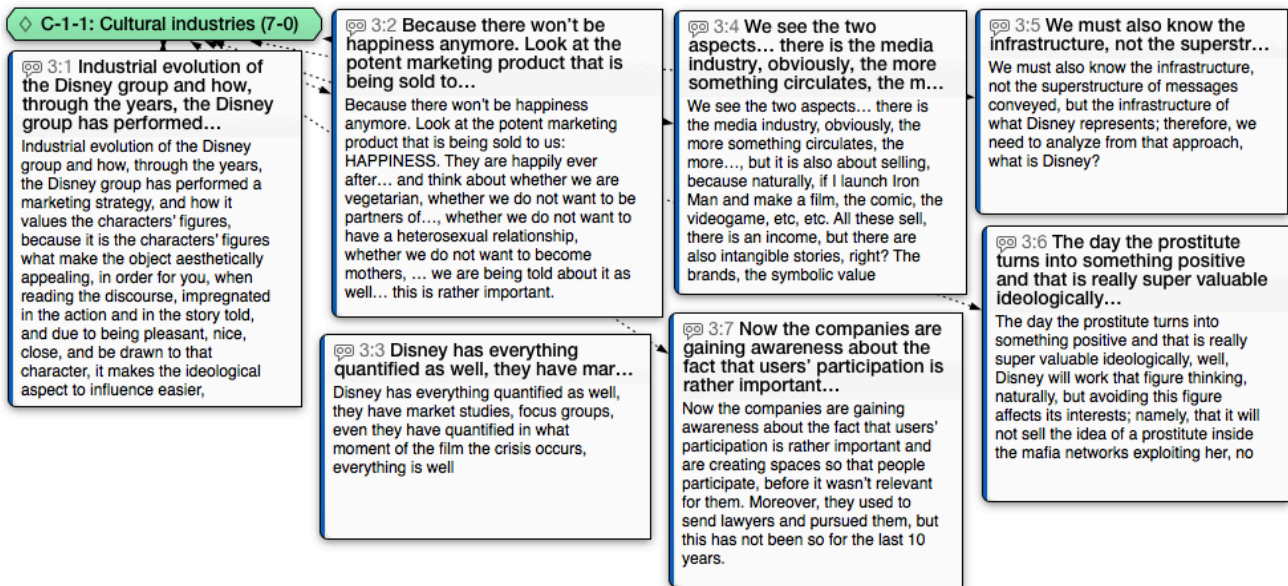
#### Subcategory C-1-1: Cultural industries

The influence of entertainment industries have a sole tenet: to obtain profit by turning their messages into a network of meaning that turn the sensitive into a signifier and the signifier into richness and, to reflect about this issue we created sub-category C-1-1 "Cultural industries", which represents the starting point to delve into the comments issued by respondents.

The industrial evolution of the Disney “group” is reflected in the comments of Interview A. 6:56, when raising awareness about this corporation’s marketing strategies. Furthermore, when Interview A. 6:10 specifies that it is necessary to know “What Disney is?” as well as its infrastructure, which is confirmed by Interview B. 7:38 when stating that “Disney has everything quantified”, just like any other company dedicated to “the media industry” (Interview B. 7:14).

Commercial practices must progressively mold to get to the public, this is their *raison d'être*, therefore “the relevance of user’s participation” is envisioned (Interview B. 7:2), thus the model of women that sell best will be used by Disney, although without detriment “of this figure towards their interests” (Interview A. 6:74), since its intentions are oriented to turning its creations into “marketing products” (Interview C. 411:9) as a clear example of a cultural industry with notoriously economic interests.

**Semantic network 3. C-1-1: Cultural industries**

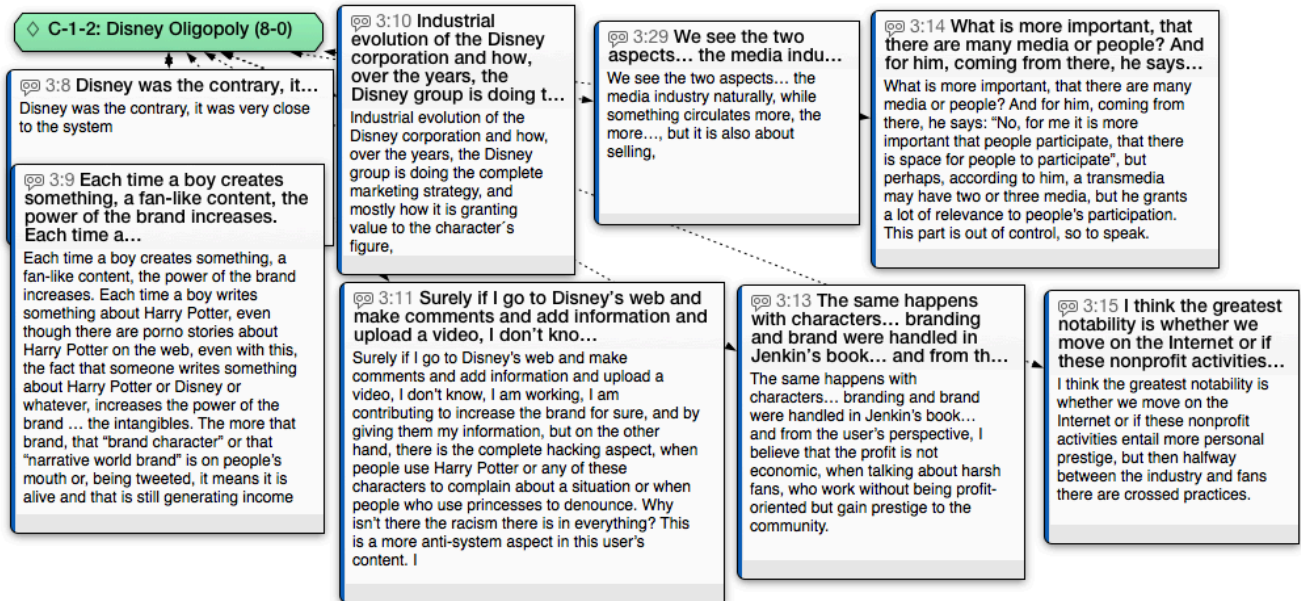


**Subcategory C-1-2: Disney Oligopoly**

In the beginning of this paper we said that an oligopoly is characterized by the absence of competitors from the sector or the fact that competitors are too weak, therefore in order to analyze how these representations of the business world are perceived we created the sub-category C-1-2 "Disney Oligopoly" because we think that today the oligopoly spaces "blur" so that it is difficult to differentiate articles and choose between them.

Considering the statement that "Disney is very close to the system" (Interview B. 7:54) and that it has experienced an evolution (Interview A. 6:56) to create a "de facto monopoly", allowing the "participation" into its "narrative brand world" so that "it keeps generating profits" (Interview B. 7:6.) This involves the emergence of the "fans phenomenon" (Interview B. 7:14). A world studied by Henry Jenkins which values participation more than the mere existence of media where to participate in (Interview B. 7:19) and where that participation is done simply for and in order to achieve "prestige in the community" (Interview B. 7:15); despite the fact there might be "crossed practices" that could even provide profit to fans (Interview B. 7:17). Although, it is clear that while the product is kept alive, the Disney oligopoly "keeps generating incomes" (Interview B. 7:6) and, in addition, without entailing expenses for the company.

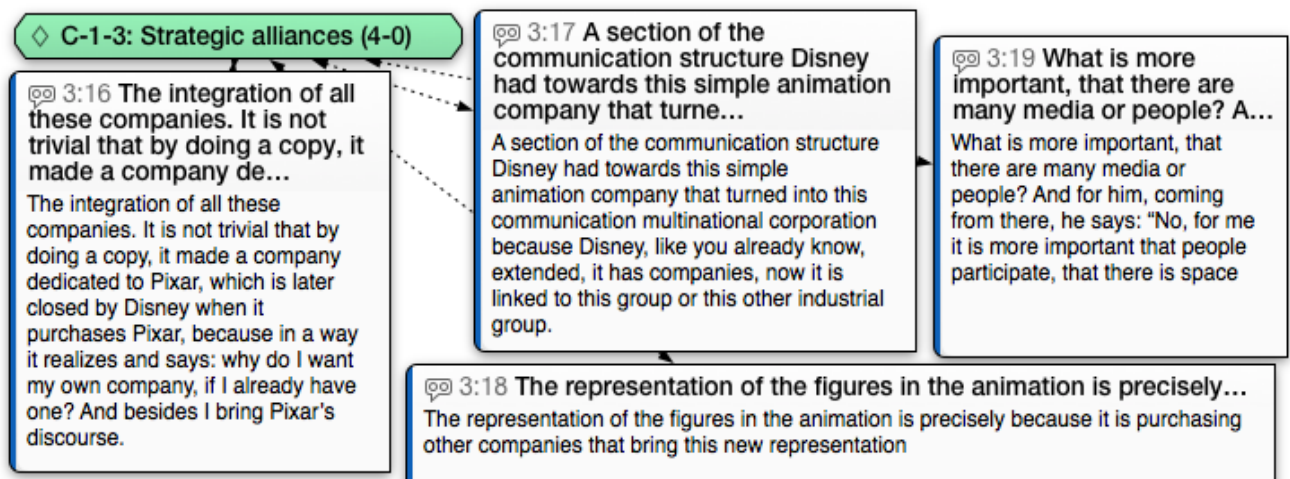
**Semantic network 4: C-1-2: Disney oligopoly**



**Subcategory C-1-3: Strategic alliances**

The expansion of the Disney multinational corporation has been reflected in its productions as analyzed in the subcategory C-1-3: "Strategic alliances".

**Semantic network 5, C-1-3: Strategic alliances**



The expansion of Disney has been based on the purchase of competitor firms (Interview A. 6:76), acquiring those companies that entailed new forms of representation (Interview A. 6:17) or when linking to other groups with power in the field of communication (Interview A. 6:12), although, in the opposite pole there is a comment in Interview B. 7:19, and referring to Henry Jenkins, that prioritizes the participation of people before the multiplication of spaces with a same discourse; therefore, we

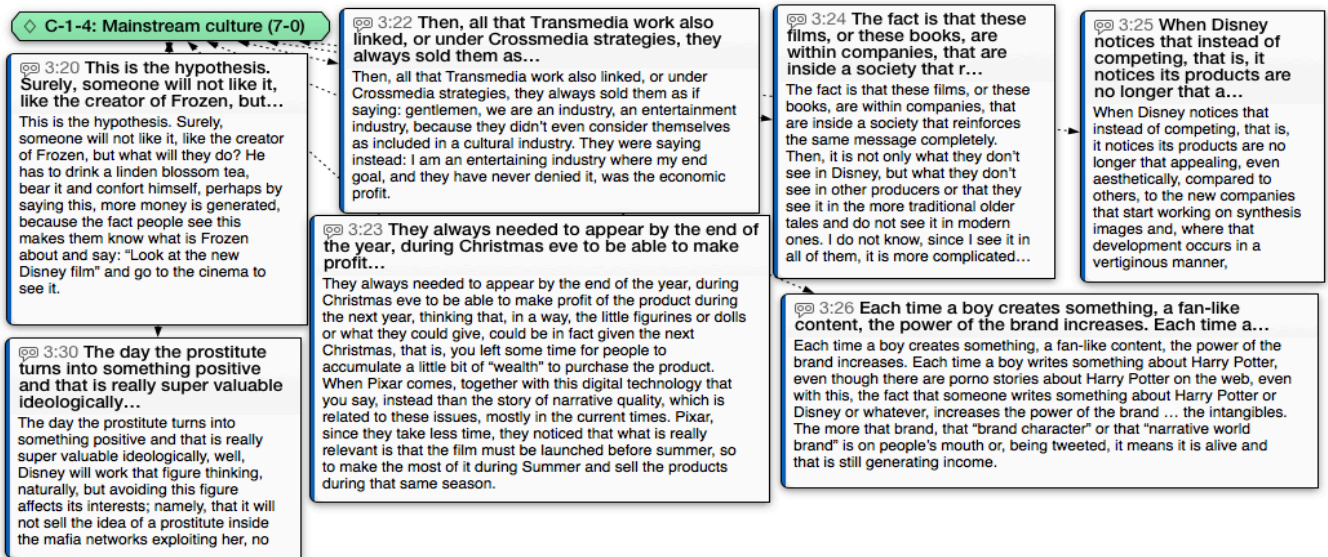


need to be attentive to the representations of a cultural capitalism (result of alliances between multinational corporations) that use children’s leisure and entertainment as standardized product to reach their market shares.

Subcategory C-1-4: Mainstream culture

The industry of globalized entertainment, which was analyzed in previous subcategories, is reflected in the mass culture and it is the ‘soft power’. Therefore, we designed the subcategory C-1-4 "Mainstream culture", with which we can reflect about this dominant tendency turned into a formatted and even culture (Martel, 2012).

Semantic network 6. C-1-4: Mainstream culture

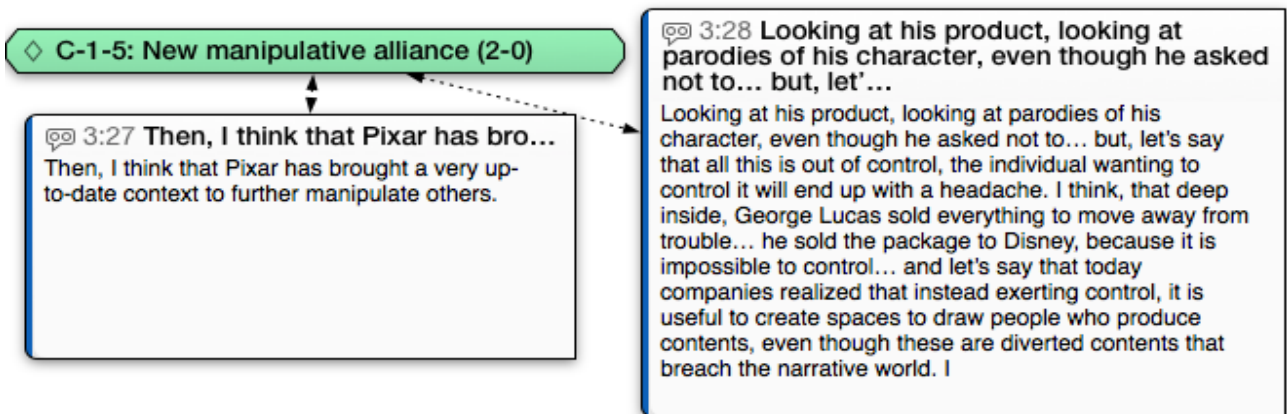


The idea originates from the conception of the Disney company “I am an entertainment industry, and my final purpose is profit” (Interview A. 6:48) and, since everything “generating money” (Interview B. 7:37), allows new advertising forms that circulate on social networks and encourage their products to be purchased and “keep people talking about them” (Interview B. 7:6) because this allows them to avoid limiting to a single season “they always needed to appear by the end of the year [...] so to make the next year’s product profitable" (Interview A. 6:37). Now they are “purchase mode ON” the whole year through, they present in the different formats the public expect, because that gives money (Interview A. 6:74). In addition, “synthesis images” are used, which are cheaper and produce greater profit (Interview A. 6:77), therefore, “the society in its entirety reinforces the same message”, a message that is commercial and indoctrinating (Interview C. 411:13.)

Subcategory C-1-5: New manipulative alliances

Disney multinational corporation does not waive to establishing alliances with other media firms though, as long as it keeps its ideology. This is rather clear on comments associated to subcategory C-1-5 "New manipulative alliances ", represented in the following semantic network.

### Semantic network 7. C-1-5: New manipulative alliances



The comment of Interview A. 6:54 is quite categorical in this sense, when it is stated “that Pixar brought a very up-to-date context that allowed to manipulate more”. Afterwards, Interview B. 7:5 also justifies that some companies relinquish before Disney’s pressure, since they do not have the resources to control “diverted contents that breach the narrative world.”

#### Reflections of Category C-1: Media industries

The economic interest of this company was reflected in almost all comments analyzed, besides, they are visible, because “even a 10 year-old boy knows that what a company wants is earning money” (Interview B. 7:33), but its commercial practices have been adapting to the public’s tastes, even making them part of the story and achieving that the Disney oligopoly “keeps generating incomes” with the free advertising (despite of being positive or negative) (Interview B. 7:6).

On its part, Disney keeps purchasing companies to gain control of competitors (Interview A. 6:76), blurring the spaces and times so that its products are purchased the whole year through (Interview A. 6:37) and that “the whole society reinforces the same message” (Interview C. 411:13); therefore, the mainstream culture has not entered to provide a leading role to the popular culture, but it has been imposed instead, from the entertainment, so that the messages formulated by the hegemonic class keep reproducing and, now created for free, by “these people who produce contents” without asking anything in return (Interview B. 7:5.)

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

This study aims to respond to an initial issue, although the validity of results, confirmation of hypothesis and the empirical contact with the analyzed reality made us have contact with heterogeneous and complex dimensions of the social context. In this sense, and to support the conclusions under a more robust empirical ground, we fragmented the general objective into several sub-objectives that deal with the main questions more accurately, and when studying the relationship between images and the social discourse generated in the global citizenship, we discover there is a permanent connection between discursive practices of our communicative environment and society. There is such an avalanche of images and discourses perceived daily through all channels, that undertaking a calmed and critical reading of information is rather impossible (Amiama-Espailat, & Mayor-Ruiz, 2017).



The burst of the ephemeral constantly widens its scope of attention and caresses our emotions with “illusions, dreams and imagination” (Gil-Quintana, 2016<sup>a</sup>: 2). The aesthetics of images used by the Disney multinational corporation uses seduction techniques that impact our emotions and are designed as commercial strategies that Lipovetsky & Serroy (2009) have called “aesthetic capitalism”. With the first items of the questionnaire we confirmed different aspects that granted an educational value to cinema, besides recognizing it as an agent influencing in the construction of children’s identity.

People interviewed also pronounced about the economic interest of this company, typical from current capitalist societies that evoke an attraction towards objects, positioning the cause in the aestheticization created by sellers to encourage sales. This way, by integrating the aesthetic dimension as another more economic aspect, the commercial practices adapt to public’s tastes, making the them part of the story and, thanks to its free advertising, succeeding on the fact that the Disney oligopoly “keeps earning incomes.”

Another aspect considered is that Disney keeps purchasing companies to gain control of competitors, the spaces and seasons have been blurred, so that its products can be purchased the whole year through, although this hybridization logic also encourages that “the whole society reinforces the same message.”

The identification with media idols created by marketing configures as an agent that builds children’s identity. The mainstream culture has impacted in the popular culture, but not to grant a leading role to the public, but instead to impose the messages formulated by the hegemonic class and that keep being created for free. (Cantillo, 2015)

This was demonstrated in the level of identification towards these characters shown by surveyed individuals. We found a certain reluctance among men and a greater tendency among women about feeling more attachment towards these children’s models (Coyne *et al.*, 2016; Murnen *et al.*, 2016). We see a clear tendency to consider cinema as a media that conveys values, because it uses images that encourage behavior models, where the attributes of their characters generate a need for imitation. Furthermore, this feeling together with the semiotic nature granted to the cinematography storytelling (Garín Boronat, 2017) influence in the construction of meanings in the minds of their audience (Aparici *et al.*, 2011).

In this paper’s introduction, dedicated to present the state of the art, we confirmed that the power of media lies in having authority to use instruments that create thinking patterns, set of ideas and reference frameworks to understand how life is desired to be lived (Mander, 2009; Levine & Murnen, 2009; McLean, Paxton, & Wetheim, 2016); although these patterns also produce a lot of dissatisfaction. The semiologist and theorist Christian Metz introduced a differentiation to analyze cinema’s language, where on the one hand there was the film aspect, related to the cinema industry and, on the other hand, the cinematography aspect, dedicated to the films’ meaning. Currently, the line separating the cinematography industry from the impact these meanings cause is rather thin, based on marketing strategies. In this sense, the study performed by Nielsen, Patel and Rosner (2017) is rather interesting, where they analyzed the relationship there was between law and morality in a selection of Disney’s animated films released between 1960 and 1998. They found a lack of relationship between law and morality and stated that sometimes the law becomes an obstacle for justice. These authors wonder about the role of media and popular culture in children’s moral development.

Our role is to “trace this complex pathway with a view in the social democracy and a spirit of learning and innovation that approaches us to reality in order to modify it, to re-create it.” (Gil-Quintana, 2016b: 86). The competencies development in the field of communication as well as the pedagogy of agents of social change is indispensable (Fernández-Cruz & Fernández-Díaz, 2016). The social discourse is built from schools, which turn into a Disney version metaverse of children’s culture, therefore, we consider that the commercial connotation is another area of analysis to be taken in mind in the study of the digital storytelling that, especially in the children’s animation cinema, is an additional obstacle for its scientific focus.

Dates:

- Start of research: September 7, 2015
- End of research: June 31, 2017

## 5. Notes

[1] Usually, if between these data there is no significant difference, since the other statistic graphs managed by SPSS also show the absence of correlation between represented variables.

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