Monitoring Advertising in the Digital Age: A Challenge for Advertising Ethics[2]

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Abstract
According to John Keane's Monitory Democracy approach, in recent years the new digital environment has created new possibilities for political citizenship, including monitoring and scrutiny to the centers of economic and political power. This means communicational landscapes like social media are promoting and increasing the public debate. This paper argues that this phenomenon is also observable in Advertising, for which provides the distinction between normalized and citizen monitoring, as well as between subvertising and citizen media activism. Finally, this paper presents the ethical challenge that accompanies this process, by questioning the understanding of Advertising as a persuasive monologue.

Keywords*: digital environment, monitory democracy, monitoring, subvertising, advertising ethics.*

From a theoretical and critical perspective, Publicity has frequently been questioned as for of its persuasive methods (cfr. Qualter, 1994, pp. 81-95), as for its traditionally unidirectional character, meaning, the fact that this activity is a communicational exercise dominated by a few actors that through mass media, direct themselves to an eventually heteronomous audience without answering capability (cfr. Packard, 1972, pp. 11-16; Sartori, 1998).

The same way, in the field of Communication Ethics, the questioning to this discipline arise from its representation as a persuasive monologue which would make the audience incapable of answering, even forbidding complaining about its controversial methods (Torres i Prat, 2005, p.110; García Marzá, 2004, pp. 114-115).

The emerging of a new communicative environment which integrates the already classic methods for mass media (press, radio and television) with those that came up with the new digital era (multiple channels and tools where social media and so-called 2.0 web stand out), currently motivates to question that monological and unidirectional interpretation of the advertising gender. Furthermore, in the last years anti-advertising activist groups have either appeared or consolidated (f.e. Adbuster, Consume Hasta Morir, BLF and The Bubble Project) having part of their efforts centered on monitoring bad advertising practices (Pacheco, 2009; Lievrouw, 2011), and also the cases in which anonymous civilians have used the potential of social media to oppose themselves to certain persuasive methods have multiplied.

Taking this as a starting point, it may be said that Publicity has turned into a new focus for political activism, because slowly, people is getting organized to complain about tergiversation, falsification or even through-advertising manipulation cases (Castro Ávila, 2010). But the scrutiny is not only applied by external agents; internal actors, like advertising agencies, advertisers and media, show a growing preoccupation for the ethical quality of ads (García Marzá, 2004). This explains the instauration of multiple self-regulation mechanisms, with their final goal consisting in monitoring bad advertising and also achieving promotion of the internal good of such activity (Martín y Hernández, 2011, p. 8).

The following article's object is to examine the consolidated dynamics regarding the advertising ambit. For that purpose, it will be taken as reference the conceptual framework of the Monitored Democracy from John Keane (2009 and 2013) from where the advertising scrutiny will be analyzed.[3]

METHODOLOGY

This article, in what concerns to a social reality phenomenon interpretation, proposes a case analysis and a reflection about the conceptual dimension around the contemporary processes for civilian advertising monitoring. The cases description will allow to illustrate the complex, dynamic and uprising character of the study object, with the expectation of offering elements to move forward in the setting of a basic theoretical framework which may permit to interpretate this phenomenon and comprehend concepts like culture jamming, counter-advertising, crossumer, self-control and others. The novelty in the present exercise is based in the use of theoretical resources linked to the notion of Monitored Democracy, with a bibliographical review of the issue; then, through case description, different ways of monitored advertising will be analyzed; thirdly a reflection about the ethical challenges stated by that monitoring will be made and finally conclusion will be expressed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Monitored Democracy theory interpretates the current political moment as a change time in which the monitoring is consolidated as an uprising way for civilian political participation (Keane, 2009, pp. 686-698; Schudson, 1998). Monitorization, understood in this case as the exercise of a public scrutiny of the power centers and power relationships, is considered to be a growing trend, mainly because of the new digital environment potential (Keane, 2009; Alonso, Keane y Merkel, 2011). Basically, it's postulated that this new structure favors the consolidation of diverse ways of counter-power against the institutionalized power of governments and business corporations (Keane, 2009, pp. 686-690; Keane, 2013; Krastev, 2013).
The Monitored Democracy suggests that representative democratic systems as diverse as those existing in the United States, India, New Zealand and European Union countries are facing the uprising of new political dynamics which alter "the self-government architecture"; meanwhile, political parties, elections and parliaments, even though, still remaining essential, lose some spotlight against traditionally peripheral agents that perform a constant scrutiny and evaluation over those center where power is accumulated (Keane, 2009, pp. 686-692). This scrutiny is performed publicly and over public interest issues, being capable of influence through multiple ways over political, business and media issues: for example over amplifying the media and/or politics agenda, government or business decision, public information rectifications and resignations.

From this perspective, the current phenomena of civilian disaffection and disinterest that affect the representative structures, parties, parliaments and elections (cfr. Crouch, 2004; Rosanvallon, 2011) are not interpreted as a crisis of politics, but as a change processes (Rosanvallon, 2008, pp. 22-24; Keane, 2013) in which the monitoring storms as a way of emergent political participation. In this manner, alongside with the voting, diverse counter-powers acquire the chance of closely examining the decisions of business agents (Lievrouw, 2011, pp. 72-92) and politicians (Castells, 2009), and to alert when it's considered that there is something missing. This consolidation of the monitoring processes cannot be understood without paying attention to the novelties produced regarding digital communication, which allow the existence to something similar to a audiences' parallel government" (Keane, 2005, p. 19). In this way, the emergent digital environment would be the one favoring that the traditional power centers become pervious to the influence of counter-powers, and that new examining agents acquire more instruments to evaluate and value, through very heterogeneous monitoring processes, the action of those who institutionally exercise the political, economic and media power. Taking this lecture to the Publicity ambit, it can be said that the

emergent digital scenario, even though it offers new possibilities to commercial communication, it also allows that consumers on their own and activist groups alter its classical dynamics (Pacheco, 2009, pp. 62-63). Proliferation of social media over the internet has made that civilians count with technological instruments that allow them not only to receive messages and ads, but to alter, imitate, answer and even, potentially, produce them with an opposing meaning than the original one (Martín, 2005; Lievrouw, 2011).

The advertising space, previously controlled by a reduced number of enunciators, now it encloses numerous citizens, movements, associations and groups the may create or incorporate new discussions and issues to the public sphere (Gronemeyer, 2006, pp. 23-24; Casero-Ripollés, 2010).

In this emerging digital scenario, and leaving aside all the problems that, undoubtedly, may accompany it too (cfr. Sunstein, 2007; Chester, 2007), it starts to consolidate the diffusion of information from many-to-many against the transmission from one-to-many, and it progressively promoted the transparency against opacity (McNair, 2006).

Definitively, from the focus of the Monitored Democracy, digital technologies help to promote the public scrutiny as an emerging way of civilian political acting. That is why, current studies have been centered on the analysis of the monitoring dynamics that have emerged and consolidated towards the political ambit (Schudson, 1998; Munck, 2006; Keane, 2009 y 2013; Gutiérrez-Rubí, 2011, pp. 23-49; Feenstra, 2012, pp. 75-81; Krastev, 2013).

Nevertheless, given the global impact of the technological development in all the social life spheres, it seems plausible to apply these ideas to the study of the advertising-business ambit, where heterogeneous civilian monitoring ways are noticed. In this sense, it is proposed the differentiation of two main fields: the normalized scrutiny, of self-control, and the civilian monitoring of advertising. This distinction fundament is in the actors that perform the task: the normalized way is characterized by the promotion of inner actors monitoring (agencies, business, media), while the civilian is promoted by external actors (see Table 1).
Case Analysis

NORMALIZED MONITORING

The scrutiny of advertising activity is an issue that has been progressively centered on the efforts of inner participants worried of achieving a quality commercial communication (Aznar y Catalán, 2010). Over the last decades it has been instated, in multiple countries, self-control organisms where announcers, advertising agencies, communication media and advertising professionals associations participate, with the purpose of establishing an advertising monitoring structure centralized by those inner actors (Martín y Hernández, 2011, p. 8).

This kind of organisms are in charge of an ethical management of advertising through such mechanisms as deontological codes (or behavior ones) and ethical juries, with which they expect to guarantee that ads fulfill their moral responsibility and respect the principles of authenticity, veracity dignity, etc. (García Marzá, 2004). The self-control organisms are also in charge of studying the complaints from diverse agents (consumers, competing business, other agencies, etc.) regarding ads considered inappropriate or opposed to the advertising behavior code. Its ultimate job consists in collecting those complaints, analyze them from a deontological point of view and elaborate reports and resolutions of the cases about the denounced ads scrutiny.

The self-control organisms have been consolidated in a wide range of contexts. In Europe, its propagation has come under the umbrella of the European Advertising Standards Alliance (EASA), an organization in charge of promoting the diffusion of these organisms in the different countries. Today some standout, like the Advertising Standards Authority, in the United Kingdom; L'Autorité de Régulation Professionnelle de la Publicité (ARPP), in France, and the Asociación para la Autorregulación de la Comunicación Comercial, in

Spain (Fernando Magarzo, 2008, p. 71; Martín y Hernández, 2011, p. 8). In Latin America can be accounted the Red Latinoamericana de Consejos Nacionales de Autorregulación Publicitaria (Conared), that emerged as an initiative of the self-regulation systems from six countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru (Martín y Hernández, 2011, p. 13). In Canada it must be recognized the Advertising Standards Canada (ASC) –also known as Les Normes Canadiennes de la Publicité (NCP)-, in the United States, the National Advertising Division (NAD) and in Australia, the Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA).

These organisms present some differences in terms of their consolidation and specific applying of the different self-regulation mechanisms, and also regarding the limitations and problems that affect them, but they all share the fact of promoting a same scrutiny way based on normalized monitoring. The self-control organisms expect to achieve a better advertising communication through a self-regulation that foments the reflection about the moral dimension of Publicity and the messages scrutiny. Nevertheless, the job of self-control organisms is only one way of taking care of the reflection about the moral dimension of Publicity and the monitoring of their messages and formats. In this matter, it's key to observe the existence of other processes of scrutiny which initiative comes from the exterior.

CIVILIAN MONITORING

The field of civilian monitoring is mainly characterized by being a way of scrutiny that goes beyond the control from inner actors of Publicity: civilians o civil associations acquire the spotlight performing a focused observation, monitoring and reflection over the advertising activity. As it has been previously proposed (Table 1), that process can be divided into two main shapes: counter-advertising and the civilian media activism.

Both ways of monitoring coincide in their external origin, but differ in some fundamental topics. The first one is linked to organized groups and critics towards the consumption that have reinforced its action with the uprising of Internet and social media. The second one comes from anonymous civilians who, as consumers, make use of digital technologies to sporadically denounce that advertising considered being false, hurting or of bad taste.

Main fields of advertising monitoring	Definition	Advertising monitoring models
Normalized monitoring	Way of inner monitoring, dependent of the institutions involved in the creation and diffusion of advertising: agencies, announcers and media. The scrutiny is a process applied to evaluate the situation of the advertising and improve its quality.	Self-regulation agencies in different countries.
Civilian monitoring	Way of external monitoring made by anonymous civilians, consumers associations or activist groups.	Counter-advertising (radical monitoring)
		Civilian media activism

Source: Self-elaboration.

Counter-advertising: radical monitoring

Counter-advertising, also known in English as subvertising –a word mix that unites "subvert" and "advertising"- is considered to be "one of the tools used by diverse collectives to spread the word about social situations and promote a critical behavior against consumption and media" (Pacheco, 2009, p. 66). It's

defined as a way of civilian participation in which the activists dispute the public space occupied by the commercial brands. In this framework it takes the Publicity language as its own, in a way that with its altering, it returns it to the society in a critic and subversive shaped message (Ramiro, 2006, p. 67).

This way of civilian monitoring falls over incipient but determined and very active activists groups. It's been that much, that are numerous the organizations that have consolidated in different countries and whose actions have focused in unmasking certain evil uses of advertising, making their denounces resonate over the net and over public spaces. Among these groups, some of them stand out like: Adbusters, Sortirdunucleaire, L'Observatoire Indépendant de la Publicité, Observatorio Publicitario Sobre Sexismo, Consume Hasta Morir, The Bubble Project and The Center for Media and Democracy-PR Watch (Otálora Cotrino, 2010, p. 120).

The objectives of subvertising are diverse. Firstly, it stands for denouncing in a creative way the limits of the current consumption model, goal for which it is known as a radical way of monitoring as long as it tries to change or reformulate from scratch the politics-business system (Castro Ávila, 2010). Secondly, it dedicates to denounce some advertising bad practices: the abuse of stereotypes in advertising, green washing (false statements about good ambient management, to appear as "green") and the use of argumentative strategies by coaction (for example, exploiting fear or falsity), among others. Thirdly, it expects to erect itself as a tool of learning for civilians, who are tried to be conscientized about their transforming power and responsibility as consumers. The phenomenon of subvertising was born prior to the Internet. In fact, its most direct background is linked to the altering of advertising billboards in the United States in the first half or the 20th century. Concretely, it's preceded by what has been named as advertising piracy, that is defined by Klein (2001, p. 331) as "counter-messages that take over the communication methods of the own business and emit a totally contradictory message that the one trying to be transmitted". Nevertheless, that street advertising piracy, which was able to spread specially in the 80's of last century, with the action of the Billboard Liberation Front and with the birth of Adbusters in Vancouver, mutated these days into a model of "2.0 subvertising" in which the digital spaces are taken as used as main tools for organization and diffusion of their activism (Lievrouw, 2011, p. 78).
Variety of spaces and potential audiences over the web (for example, those linked to social networks) allow a viral spreading of the actions and complaints. The access to the public sphere of these groups has been eased precisely by the emerging digital environment, whose structure and dynamism help to consolidate a polyphony where, strong sometimes, the critical voices of activists are gathered.

Among the groups that exercise this way of monitoring, Adbusters Media Foundation stands out. Created in Vancouver it self-defines on their web[4] site as a "global network of artists, activists, writers, pranksters, students, educators and entrepreneurs who want to advance the new social activist movement on the information age". This group, whose funding is based on its followers donations and subscriptions to Adbusters Magazine, focuses its critical positioning against advertising and media, considering as one of its main objectives "changing the way we interact with the media and the way in which is built the meaning of our society (Pacheco, 2009, p. 69).

Adbusters performs what they define as cultural jamming, a way of cultural interference through which they alter the meaning of advertising campaigns with the goal of promoting the critical reflection of the consumer. Their action has the support of organizations like Greenpeace and their counter-campaigns catch not only global attention through their website (www.adbusters.org), but they also penetrate traditional media like Wall Street Journal and MTV. Among their campaigns stands out the Buy Nothing Day and the TV Turnoff Week. It is also well-known the Corporate America Flag, in which a catchy design, based on the substitution of the stars from the United States flag by multinational business logos is made, as an example of the graphical power of companies and their influence.

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[4] http://www.adbusters.org/about/adbusters

In Spain the group "Consume Hasta Morir" ("Consume until death"), an initiative of the "Asociación de Ecologistas en Acción" ("Ecologists in action Association"), whose goal is also the promotion of a critic behavior towards consumption, advertising and media. This group stands out because, besides their denounces and vindications that make in their website (www.consumehastamorir.com), it organizes workshops and lectures of a teaching character. Also, they publish material about Publicity and consumption. They have published too, alongside other groups, three editions of a magazine that, under the name of Malababa, analyzes the meaning of subvertising and gathers a catalogue of subvertising campaigns. Finally, another initiative of this same group are the "Premios Sombra" – "Shadow Awards"- (premisombra.blogspot.com) which is a parallel gala to the "Festival del Sol" in San Sebastian that gives alternative awards, such as the most consumist values, the most opportunistic face cleaning o to the most irresponsible values, among others.

This kind of scrutiny, performed over advertising is made, definitively, by groups or associations whose actions remain over time. Their doings are consolidated as a continuous denounce of bad practices, abuse or advertising misleading, and their goal focuses on unmasking them. Even more, it's frequent that this group of activists states a radical questioning about the joint economic-political system. All in all, in the current digital environment the advertising messages from companies, not only receive answer from these groups, but also in some occasions the anonymous civilians are the ones complaining about the advertising messages, sporadically and by different conduits than the denounces made by normalized monitoring associations. This second type is called civilian media activism.

Civilian Media Activism

As it has been postulated (Table 1), a second way of civilian monitoring comes from consumers themselves, anonymous individuals that make use of new information technologies to denounce possible advertising misleading or to contest ads that are considered to be erroneous, false or inadequate. This form has been named civilian media activism.

In this scenario, the traditionally unidirectional persuasive process of Publicity is altered by the possibilities that the digital environment offer: 2.0 platforms and social media have allowed civilians to become in producers and diffusers of messages, news or complaints (Allan and Thorsen, 2009), widening the possibilities of formats like blogs, micro blogging services (like Twitter), social networks (for example Facebook) and the social video portals (like YouTube), sometimes with a success that surpasses in attention or impact even the own advertising.

Against the subvertising, civilian media activism is not organized: its origination is spontaneous and answers a protest that affects an ad or a concrete campaign.

Sometimes it's about a complaint made by one sole consumer that gets the attention of other consumers, whilst there are other situations in which numerous consumers gather in a complaint against a concrete advertiser through a determined social platform.

A classical example of this form of monitoring was the Nike Sweatshop, in which the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Jonah Peretti achieved to put into injunction a Nike campaign, as well as extending a shadow of doubt on the labor conditions of their textile factories. The protest was framed in an initiative of the company that allowed clients to request through Internet the customization of their shoes by the means of a message (a word or phrase) below the company's logo. Peretti decided to use that opportunity to request shoes with the word "sweatshop", concept that defines factories, mainly textile, where labor conditions are exploitation-like. This request was denied by Nike by being considered an inappropriate word, starting an email exchange between the student and the company that later became virally spread over the web and through mass media (Lievrouw, 2011, p. 80). Peretti answered that the dictionary recognized the word "sweatshop" as "part of standard English" and consequently sued the company that advertised in its

NIKEiD campaign: "the freedom of choosing and expressing who you are". Facing the constant denial from the company, Peretti eventually gave up his shoes.[5]

What is mostly relevant in this case is what happened when Peretti made public the answers from Nike to his request. On January 17th 2001 he sent the messages to ten people and they were also collected by the websites shey.net, slashdot.org and plastic.com (where it was included additional information about the labor reality of the company); the messages quickly became viral and in a few weeks the news made it to mass media, among them The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, NBC, The Independent and The Guardian (Lievrouw, 2011).[6] Associations like Adbusters also used their media and networks to spread the complaints to Nike.

This case supposed a highlighted example of monitoring, with a campaign of advertising criticism that held no economic cost for the denouncer, in which two simultaneous aspects came to light. In first place, it put into injunction, the marketing campaign NIKEiD, questioning it alleged promotion of free expression and true will of the consumer. Secondly, it carried to the public sphere the debate about the work conditions in the factories of certain companies located on Asian countries. Definitively, the Nike's expensive ad-campaigns received a civilian answer that eased the irruption of an unexpected process of scrutiny that questioned some of its promotional ways and its work politics.

Another case of advertising monitoring was the one set in November 2011 by the airline Qantas with its advertising campaign of social media #qantasluxury. In this case, the Twitter users were who massively opposed to the campaign.

Qantas performed a contest through Twitter in which invited the users to narrate their best experience travelling with the airline under the hashtag #qantasluxury. The contest, that offered a gift kit and a pair of pajamas, expected to collect positive messages that would eventually give notoriety to the brand over the web. In spite of that, the presentation of this initiative coincided with an internal labor conflict and with a period of a large number of delayed and suspended flights.[7] The hashtag turned into a global trending topic and many clients seized the opportunity to complain about the bad services of the company. If that would not be enough, the company did not know how to react and instead of facing the mistake and the complaints received, published a daring message that said: "Wow! Some creative tweets out there. Keep the entries coming. Qantas."[8] This turned on the animosity even further, consolidating the trending topic worldwide with a great amount of tweets, which in great majority were of complaint to the company and the contest.[9]

This increasing process of scrutiny to advertising campaigns is not limited only to Internet. Also those performed on traditional mass media are frequently an attention focus and contestation by the audience.

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[5] Complete emails exchange between Peretti and the company can be found at: http://mat.uab.es/~alabert/Docs/nike.html

[6] Viral diffusion of the emails is also analyzed on: http://depts.washington.edu/ccce/polcommcampaigns/peretti.html and on http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/nike-id-sweatshop-email-controversy

[7] The Qantas campaign is analyzed in detail on the blog "ÁlexRbn I+D Márketing": http://www.alexrbn.es/2011/11/analizando-la-caja-negra-delfracaso-en-social-media-conqantas-airlines/

[8] The Sydney Morning Herald shows the Qantas campaign tweets. See them on: http://www.smh.com.au/travel/travel-news/qantas-makes-hash-of-tweetcampaign-20111122-1nsa4.html

[9] Consult the blog "ÁlexRbn I+D Márketing"

Even though being framed to a classical media process (one-to-many), the current technologies allow that the commentaries from consumers overcome that kind of communication, expanding virally and forging a many-to-many process.

The advertising campaigns that have become part of an increasingly critical digital public conversation are numerous. Complaints are often directed to racist messages, fear exploitation, violence, bad taste, green washing, exploiting woman as an object, machismo, among others ways of discursive representation. Expensive advertising campaigns, emitted through mass media, sometimes are echoed even strongly than the own ad and in some cases with pernicious effects to the brand image being tried to build.

Three cases from last years may be useful as an example of this phenomenon. One of them is the 2012 Donna Karan campaign in which the Brazilian model Adriana Lima posed with luxurious clothes in a town on Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world.[10] Another one, from the same year, is the H&M store campaign, in which the French model Aymeline Valade shows her extreme thinness.[11] While the first one was accused of imperialist, the second was blamed for promoting anorexia; this civilian rejection to bad taste triggered that in both situation a justification, but not a rectification, was given by the announcers.

A third case was the 2009 campaign of Nivea published on Esquire magazine; in the ad a black race man was shown, alongside with the slogan "Re-civilize yourself". The Facebook page of the company became saturated of critical messages and at the same time it was being commentated on other social media platforms. The protests forced the announcer to apologize for the ad qualified as "inappropriate and offensive", and to commit to not to use this kind of messages in the future. As it can be noticed, the digital environment creates new possibilities so that civilians and civil society actors may alter the traditional dynamics of Publicity. The audience voice may literally storm on the advertising campaigns, with diverse and unpredictable effects.

Monitoring as Ethical Challenge

The diverse processes of public scrutiny or monitoring of advertising shown in these pages differ in some substantial aspects. It has been proposed the term *normalized monitoring* for that one made by inner agents of the advertising market, while *civilian monitoring* for that one in which external agents bounce into the persuasive process. The first one expects to promote the advertising exercises and its advantages, while the second one looks for questioning certain practices. Therefore, the belligerency from the *civilian monitoring* is greater than the one from the *normalized*.

The *normalized monitoring* promotes a sort of stable and structural scrutiny, limited by institutionalized rules, while the *civilian* is more spontaneous, as in the unorganized flow of the *civilian media activism*, where no stable organizations operate, or in the so-called *subvertising*, its organized and structured form around consumers activists groupings.

Despite these differences, both major fields of monitoring observed, show common points: even though *civilian monitoring* is more belligerent than the *normalized*, they both seek to denounce the low quality advertising; also, they both publicly expose that misleading and fraudulent advertising and the demand, instead of their different styles, the respect of certain basic values (for example authenticity, veracity and respect for the audience dignity). In this sense, they both promote the reflection about the ethical

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[10] The civilian reaction, expressed through social networks against this campaign has been higlighted by El País and Diario Crítico. See them on: http://elpais.com/elpais/2011/12/19/

[11] The civilian reaction, expressed through social networks against this campaign has been higlighted by El País and Diario Crítico. See them on: http://elpais.com/elpais/2011/12/19/actualidad/1324280930_850215.html and http://www.diariocritico.com/ocio/moda/donna-karan/anuncio-polemico/404842

dimension of Publicity, because they coincide in the acknowledgment of the role that its messages in the formation of people (Schudson, 1981, pp. 11-12) and in the diffusion of society values.

All in all, the major coincident point is the ontological one: they both abandon the concept of Publicity as a persuasive monologue. The *normalized monitoring*, for example, allows the audience to express complaints about the messages received; offers the audience the possibility of (counter) argumentate ads and demand the fulfilling of that approved by announcers' ethical or behavior codes, and also it takes those reclamations to those responsible for the ad (the agency and the announcer), who obtain, the possibility of replica in a relatively dialog-shaped process, mediated by self-regulation entities. In the case of the *civilian monitoring* the contact is more direct, especially when made through the multiple channels offered by the web, and the message usually possesses a greater critic load. But in both cases the same final effect is produced: the emerging of civilian voices in the advertising communication process.

Basically, the advertising discursive management turns from unidirectional to bidirectional; despite the clear relevance of the actors linked to the advertising system (business, agencies and media), the audience acquires the possibility of replica. It is relevant to notice, nevertheless, that the advertising monitoring, specially that one based on subvertising, is object of debate y critics. It is usual to find commentaries naming this form of scrutiny as glamorous, minoritary, anti-advertising and illegal (Cfr. Curto, 2010, pp. 250-251). It has been said "the fascination for this type of anti-advertising activity cannot take us to forget the minoritary of its practice and the illegality of some of its activities" (Ibid.). Nevertheless, the key to understand these processes lies on appreciating them not as threat to Publicity as a discipline, but as an ethical challenge for companies: give answer to both *normalized* and *civilian monitoring*.

And it is that the reclamation or denounce of an ad, a campaign o an announcer does not automatically imply their *guilt.* From this perspective, the final source of legitimacy of the complaint depends on the capability of convincing, with arguments, the audience, which can be demonstrated even in the case of *subvertising*, the most radical way of monitoring, which object is to promote the debate and ethical reflection about the advertising activity. Consequently, the monitoring ways do not look to put on injunction Publicity itself, but to falsity, misleading, stereotype perpetuation, green washing and other common vices of commercial communication (Ramos, 2003, pp. 11-20 and 61-79).

It must have to be considered that the monitored subject may win in legitimacy, depending on its response capability in a crisis situation, its ability to adapt its messages to the moral criterion that are demanded by part of society (Halpern, 2008, pp. 49-52). Even further, the monitored subject can also question, via argumentation, the monitoring process, when it is considered that a determined scrutinized ad does not go against any moral value worth of protection.

The interpretation of the *civilian monitoring* as a complement to *normalized*, implies a challenge for the advertising activity ethics, regarding applied ethics.

And, more concretely, in the micro and meso-levels of such activity. Meaning that applied ethics as a discipline that promotes the inner goods of different activities from the social and economic spheres (Cortina, 1993, p. 20 and 2007, pp. 27-31) can favor itself by the emergence of new and different voices that use the digital environment to multiply the points of view, promoting that the affected ones by the advertising activity may make their voice heard regarding this social-business sphere, and that the advertising agents may know the worries of the audience they are focusing on.

CONCLUSIONS

The premise of this article, based on the principles of the *Monitored Democracy* (Keane, 2009), is that the new digital environment has created new possibilities for the civilian political participation, what includes the growing interest for scruting the attitude, behavior and messages from the traditional agents of the political and economic power. On that framework, it has been offered an application of this theory to the

ambit of Publicity, identifying and describing diverse ways of scrutiny that, according to the analysis of certain cases, apparently consolidate the emergent social-medial scenario: the *normalized monitoring* and the *civilian monitoring*, including in the latter the modalities of *subvertising* and *civilian media activism*.

The observation of these processes of advertising monitoring has allowed recognizing certain common aspects, such as quality evaluation of advertising interest, promotion of the reflection and the ethical debate regarding commercial communication and its methods. Nevertheless, the main novelty that incorporates the processes of advertising monitoring is the questioning they show to the comprehension of Publicity as a persuasive monologue, dominated exclusively be the sources of the ads.

It has been postulated that while *normalized monitoring*, allows the audience to participate in the advertising communicative process, the *civilian* is on itself a way of participation in which groups and individuals may take the lead when publicly complaining against certain campaigns. Evidently, the step from monologue to dialogue is made on unequal conditions, but at least the diverse forms of monitoring alter the traditional exclusively unidirectional dynamics of Publicity. And from there the ethical challenge that this shows to the advertising actors: the consolidation of this kind of processes that emerge in the digital environment.

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