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REESTABLISHING CONNECTIONS: VINYL CONSUMPTION AS A MUNDANE ESCAPING EXPERIENCE

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Master Thesis presented to COPPEAD Graduate School of Business, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, as part of the mandatory requirements in order to obtain the degree of Master in Business Administration (M.Sc.).

Supervisor: Prof. Maribel Carvalho Suarez, D.Sc.

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ABSTRACT

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As time goes by and technology development hastens, shifts in paradigms occur at faster rates than ever and people are expected to embrace more and more social roles. As this process takes place, the escaping desire seems to play an increasingly relevant role in individuals' lives. While past consumer research on escapism centered mainly on extraordinary experiences or depicted mundane forms of escape as self-suspension means to lighten the load, this study set out to investigate the value created in vinyl consumption as a restorative mundane escaping experience within a context of social acceleration. Thirteen in-depth interviews were conducted with Brazilian vinyl consumers in order to understand how meanings were derived from and constituted consumption practices. This qualitative study led to four main findings. First, as music consumption is increasingly conceived as a dispersed practice, consumers find in vinyl a way out to disengage from the fragmented and shallow logics in which music is broadly consumed nowadays and experience it as an integrative practice. Second, through its materiality, aesthetics and associated narratives, vinyl consumption is embedded with a sense-making value as consumers engage in sustained interactions that involve multiple senses, being able to detach themselves from an ethos marked by uncertainty, fluidity and chaos and establish a connection with a realm of intimacy, ease and discernment. Third, the commitment nurtured throughout all stages of the consumer journey was found to be decisive in making them more thoughtful and robust to discontinuity, experiencing time in a smoother manner. Finally, the research proposes a more comprehensive conceptualization of mundane and restorative escapes as it has been revealed that spaces might be embedded with meanings that allow for recharging the batteries as a consequence of the configuration of mundane consumption practices.

Keywords: Consumption Experiences, Escapism, Practices, Mundane, Social Acceleration, Vinyl

LIST OF BOARDS

LIST OF TABLES

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

While attempting to domesticate the wheat, humans did not realize that, instead, they were the ones being domesticated by it. That moment, according to Harari (2015), set the juncture to what would be the history's greatest fraud.

Since then, the search for convenience and efficiency has driven society to broadly think in terms of optimizing time and efforts. However, to what extent has the exploitation of technological advancements led individuals to experience improved lives? One could argue that - despite all of the potential benefits - an increasingly fast-paced consumer culture has been fostered, of which anxiety can nowadays be depicted as one of the most striking byproducts.

It seems that the reasoning behind this relentless search generally fails to acknowledge what may be lost throughout the path. Very often, time and sustained engagement are precisely what must be invested and respected in order to properly absorb inputs and achieve thoughtful, meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

By the time of this research, as society faces a global challenge imposed by COVID-19 to which there exists no shortcut, aspects of production and consumption that were theretofore largely neglected become resonant. As social distancing became a norm, it seems to have also become indisputable how much humans rely heavily on solid bonds, and how important it is to extend the range of this idea beyond one's narrow perspective in order for society to thrive as a whole. In this manner, blurred fragilities from our ethereal times receive a new outlook that tries to capture deeper layers of meaning on human action and the externalities (re)produced by it.

Rooted in the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) – a stream of research that moves the study of market-related experiences beyond specific firm-customer encounters by extending the temporal and social scope of experience and situating it within an evolving cultural frame composed of heterogeneous meanings and multiple viewpoints (Akaka, Vargo & Schau, 2015) - the present work aims to explore and let reverberate the underlying reasons behind the value created by consumption experiences that stand outside the above-mentioned convenience/efficiency logics.

Far from assuming an averse approach towards the endorsement of technological advancements (and arguing for a hunter-gatherer lifestyle), the objective here is to criticize the character of their adoption, expectantly contributing to a richer understanding on healthier ways to interact with technology in daily lives. In order to do so, this research builds on the work of Humayun

and Belk (2020) on analogue-based escaping experiences in postdigital times, bringing the discussion to the realm of music. Hereafter, hence, an iconic and timeless format of music consumption is to be investigated: the vinyl.

Despite being the most expensive and least portable mode of music consumption in times when high quality electronic formats are largely available, vinyl grows in stature amongst some listening communities and artists (Bartmansky & Woodward, 2015). According to 2019's Global Music Report from the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), vinyl sales sustain their upward trajectory, posting growth for the thirteenth consecutive year[1]. Such tendency suggests that vinyl consumption remarkably transcends the utilitarian function of music listening.

While some scholars have researched the context of vinyl resurgence in terms of its materiality (Magaudda, 2011; Fernandez & Beverland, 2019), nostalgia (Yochim & Biddinger, 2008), iconicity, ritual, aura and the sensibility of coolness (Bartmansky & Woodward, 2015; 2018), operational challenges (Palm, 2017), authenticity (Goulding & Derbaix, 2018) and social distinction (Webster, 2019), the phenomenon has not yet been assessed through an escaping lens.

In past consumer research, escaping has been commonly depicted as "akin to breaking away from mundane reality because that reality cannot be transformed" (Cova, Caru & Cayla., 2018, p. 447). The body of work from which this consideration is drawn has centered on highly participatory and extraordinary experiences that provide "escapes from" structure and/or "escapes into" anti-structure (Belk & Costa, 1998; Kozinets, 2002; Goulding, Shankar, Elliot & Canniford, 2009; Canniford & Shankar, 2013; Scott, Cayla & Cova, 2017; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019).

Jones, Cronin and Piacentini (2020) argue that consumers seek escaping experiences not necessarily as a way of getting lost; rather, in many forms and representations, it is a sense-making activity, through appealing to what is somehow familiar, discernible to them, not necessarily apart from their mundane reality. In this manner, in such ventures they might also seek to reestablish a connection to themselves and make sense of it.

Recently, thus, forms of escape that lie in everyday lives are receiving growing attention from consumer scholars (Cova *et al.*; 2018). Whether examining the musicalisation of running

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[1] https://www.ifpi.org/news/IFPI-GLOBAL-MUSIC-REPORT-2019

(Kerrigan, Larsen, Hanratty & Korta, 2014), binge-watching (Jones *et al.*, 2020), sexual play (Piha, Hurmerinta, Järvinen, Räikkönen & Sandberg, 2020) or the use of analogue objects (Humayun & Belk, 2020) to cite a few, such stream of research reveals the potential of the mundane in addressing escaping desires.

Broadening this field of knowledge avoids falling into a "romantic fallacy" (Cova *et al.*, 2018) that very often puts excessive emphasis on extraordinary experiences. Rather, the study of mundane escaping experiences addresses more feasible/accessible ways to lighten the load. As a matter of fact, Cova *et al.* (2018) conceive mundane escaping experiences as ephemeral and unremarkable instants that allow for consumers to disidentify with various aspects of their lives. This research intends to advance this perspective by understanding to what extent such experiences might affect the well-being of consumers.

For instance: beyond a certain point, binge-eating and binge-drinking – which are depicted by Cova *et al.* (2018) as pertaining to the realm of mundane escaping experiences – can be seriously harmful for health. Along these lines, Kwon, Chung and Lee (2011) point to the risks of addiction pertained to internet-based escaping experiences such as videogames.

In this sense, it is necessary to expand the debate about mundane escaping experiences not only due to the character of its accessibility, but perhaps even more important: to what extent do they regenerate the saturated self? To what extent are they healthy to consumers in the long-run? To what extent engaging in such experiences feeds back the sources of one's anxieties?

Rather than being a quest for self-loss, analogue consumption in postdigital times seems to be based on a different pursuit. Humayun and Belk (2020) argue: "The goal is a more thoughtful consumption and an ethos of living more patiently in a way that situates us in time and place in a world that is increasingly fluid."

Initiatives such as the 'slow movement' – encompassing cities (Radstrom, 2014), tourism (Fullagar, Markwell & Wilson, 2012), food (Petrini, 2003), fashion (Fletcher, 2010), media (Rauch, 2011) and even academia (Berg & Seeber, 2016) to name just a few – are responses to this urge that are gaining momentum and expanding their reach as individuals feel overwhelmed by the treadmill of life and seek to unhook from their technology-addicted and production/consumption driven lives. They seek to make sense of their activities, to experience presence and reconnect to themselves

Along these lines, "JOMO" (Aranda & Baig, 2018) – standing for the Joy of Missing Out – is a trend that shows how younger consumers seek to shift their responses to the overload of stimuli and find joy and serenity in their consciously reduced ventures.

Based on the contextualization presented, the following question is posed:

How might vinyl consumption - as an escaping experience – help consumers to better navigate amongst what is increasingly unknown, fluid and chaotic?

In understanding how the experiential value of vinyl consumption is created in the light of such context, this work intends to allow for the expansion of the insights to a broader set of mundane experiences. By exploring alternative ways to rethink the relationship with the digital world and the role of technology, managers might devise new formats of offerings to meet these growing demands from postdigital consumers.

The departing point of the research is a literature review on consumption experiences, establishing their phenomenological nature in the light of the context in which they are created and assessed, as well as their role in addressing escaping desires. The macro context driven by forces of social acceleration, thus, is broadly explored and further analyzed in the realm of music in order to understand how consumption practices are resignified throughout this process and how vinyl can be depicted as a resistance to such forces.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCES

Until the early 80's, consumer behavior was studied within the field of marketing theory and consumer research based on the assumption that individuals' decision making was oriented fundamentally through an information-processing view; through an economic rational perspective (Holbrook, 2018).

However, in a seminal work published in 1982 - motivated by the assessment that such view constrained the understanding of consumer behavior by lacking explanations regarding consumer's thoughts and feelings about consumption activities - Holbrook and Hirschman developed a supplementary view to the information-processing model that would also encompass experiential aspects of consumption (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982).

In such experiential view, instead of an objective and utilitarian focus, the consumption process is seen through a phenomenological lens, with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses and esthetic criteria. Consumption, hence, has an important hedonic component and involves a steady flow of fantasy (unconscious thoughts, mental images and dreams/daydreams), feelings (wide range of emotions) and fun (playful or creative consumption activities associated with product usage) (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, 2018).

Acknowledging the growing importance of experiential aspects of consumption, Pine and Gilmore (1998) propose a framework called "Progression of Economic Value" in which they explain the path through which experience has achieved its relevant position as a source of competitive advantage. As firms understand how they can potentially enhance their offerings and thus propose higher value to their customers, there is a progression from extracting commodities, to making goods, to delivering services and ultimately staging experiences. From that moment, the experiential marketing started to flourish as a field of study, and the concept of immersion increasingly became to arouse the interest of researchers, managers and consumers (Caru & Cova, 2003).

On the following decade, Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2002, 2004) argue that the consumer ultimately has a central role in creating market related experiences, contending that the notion of value is fundamentally experiential. In this sense, rather than conceiving the idea that value is created by the firm, instead, it is acknowledged that it can only be proposed; experiences are

subjective, co-created through interactions between firms and customers, being a function of customers' needs and competencies – which are deeply influenced by the context and how individuals assess it.

Bringing the discussion to the field of CCT, Akaka *et al.* (2015) broaden the context of experience by considering the influence of four major aspects of culture proposed by Arnould and Thompson (2005) that are mediated through market interactions on to the co-creation of experiences: 1) symbolic and material resources (market understood through a sign system, where each category has its particular sign system, in which more important than the signs are the meanings associated with them); 2) social resources (social structures – such as class, community, ethnicity and gender - that systematically influence consumption considering social roles and the positions consumers hold within a particular group); 3) consumer ideology (which very often diverge from idealized messages firms communicate); 4) lived culture (which has to do with the co-construction of context through interaction among consumers in particular market-related subcultures). It is within such context, therefore, that consumption experiences are conceived in the present work.

2.1.1 Escaping Experiences

A paramount conception that underpins the development of consumption experiences is the relationship between the pursuit for sensory-emotional arousal and escape from reality (Hirschman & Holbrook 1982).

Caru and Cova (2003) contend that such development led to an obsession by researchers and marketers with extraordinary experiences; events characterized by their intense, hedonic, transcendent and transformative nature that happen outside daily lives - marked by rationality, rules and stress (Arnould & Price, 1993; Tumbat & Belk, 2011).

The present work, however, seeks to build on the stream of research that explores mundane forms of escape from reality; alternatives that lie in everyday lives. Cova *et al.* (2018) suggest that such forms of escape are identified by their self-suspension character. They term *restorative escapes* a category of escape that is neither completely mundane nor extraordinary, related to the existence of third places between workplace and home that provide a "primitive feeling of being secure", where consumers look for refuge from a turbulent outside world perceived as violent and dangerous.

It is proposed here that mundane escaping experiences are not always defined by self-suspension. Rather, these can also be restorative and address similar issues through the configuration of practices within particular contexts.

According to Shove and Pantzar (2005), practices are depicted as the product of the performative relationship in three dimensions: 1) that of meanings and representations; 2) that consisting of objects, technologies and material culture in general and; 3) that represented by embodied competences, activities and 'doings'.

Hereafter, a light is shed on the escaping desire that is triggered by a phenomenon defined by Rosa (2013) as *social acceleration*.

2.2 SOCIAL ACCELERATION PRESSURES

It is acknowledged here that although the content of reality that disturbs individuals is personal and subject to constant change, some of its elements provoke shared feelings by everyone to varying degrees.

Rosa (2013) argues that we live in an accelerated society, in which the material, the social and the cultural world are set in motion at an ever-increasing speed. Three fundamental elements interact with each other in reinforcing ways, leading to social acceleration: firstly, there is the acceleration of technology, which has to do with advancements in transportation, communication, production, etc. Secondly, there is the acceleration of pace of life, which implies increasing quantity per unit of time (e.g., work tasks, family obligations, social activities, number of intimate partners, number of messages sent, etc.). Finally, there is the acceleration of social and cultural rate of change, which refers to the fast pace of change in politics, economics, research paradigms, family configurations, etc. that happen to alter in consequence social and cultural institutions of society in a fast tempo as well.

Cova *et al*. (2018) assert that by endorsing such multitude of social roles, "Western individuals increasingly describe feeling exhausted, depressed or overwhelmed by the quantum of activities they are expected to carry out; young people feel it in their increasingly vulnerable sense of existence; older individuals feel it when they can no longer look after themselves".

Along these lines, Humayun and Belk (2020) argue that despite recent evidence on the fragility to which our lives are exposed as we go digital (such as data breaches, fake news and biases in social media websites), society remains complacent to this pervasiveness. Nevertheless, they hold that – especially in times of rapid technological change - the desire to escape from the anxiety imposed by the relentless march of digitalization is constant.

They claim that we might be living in an era that could be referred to as "postdigital", which represents a disenchantment with pervasive digital forms of being and is depicted by Cramer (2015) as "the messy state of media, arts and design after their digitalization".

Therefore, a fundamental issue that comes along with this process is the constant disruption of our assumptive world. The term is defined by Beder (2005, p. 258) as 'an organized schema reflecting all that a person assumes to be true about the world and the self on the basis of previous experiences; it refers to the assumptions, or beliefs, that ground, secure, and orient people, that give a sense of reality, meaning, or purpose to life'.

Brown, Kozinets and Sherry Jr (2003) term 'antimony' the paradoxical desire to return to simpler, slower, less stressful times of unstoppable scientific and technological progress that creates a sense of insecurity about how to navigate in such a rapidly changing world.

A sense-making quest, in turn, increasingly entails time management in order to process information. Consequently, contemporary society values time more than ever. And although time is individually assessed, the temporal logic that prevails in society ultimately determines our perception, which also contributes to individual's increasingly need to escape today's fast-paced consumer culture and find "territorial and social niches" that resist forces of acceleration and allow people to have a slower experience of time (Rosa, 2013; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019).

According to Woermann and Rokka (2015), consumer's perception of time during experiences - defined by the concept 'timeflow' - is determined by consumer practices, which are shaped by different constellations of elements. Depending on the alignment of these practice elements, experiences of fastness or slowness will be felt in a smooth way or they can evoke temporal drag (boredom) or rush (stress, hecticness) (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019).

Hereof, even though our time is increasingly constrained, there exists the possibility to experience it in a more pleasing way through the configuration of our practices.

By investigating the use of analogic notebooks and film cameras, Humayun and Belk's (2020) findings revealed that the resurgence of analog consumption is strongly related to an attempt from consumers to escape from the pervasiveness of digital, and the discourses associated with such postdigital consumption are related to mindfulness, slowness and sustainable consumption.

Such characteristics are also related to 'consumer deceleration', which is defined by authors Husemann and Eckhardt (2019, p. 5) as "a perception of a slowed down temporal experience achieved via a decrease in certain quantities (travelled distance, use of technology, experienced episodes) per unit of time through altering, adopting or eschewing forms of consumption".

2.3 MUSIC CONSUMPTION AND IDENTITY

Unquestionably, rearrangements of socio-technical infrastructure have allowed for the integration of music to a much broader range of occasions and enhanced consumer's agency through new modes of producing and consuming music (Fuentes, Hagberg, & Kjellberg, 2019).

If once music listening was a constrained activity in terms of affordances and/or occasions, it evolved to a mode of consumption in which it became increasingly affordable, mobile and could be consumed individually through personal objects.

This tendency has been intensified during the digital age, which – with regard to music - imply several repercussions related to the way we understand and communicate our identity in the light of our possessions (Belk, 1988, 2013; Sinclair & Tinson, 2017; Webster, 2019), to the way may respond to the digitally saturated world (Humayun & Belk, 2020) as well as to the very role of music as an end (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017; Fuentes *et al.,* 2019).

Magaudda (2011) adopts a theory-of-practice approach to show that the social role of material objects within music consumption remains relevant despite music digitalization. As the three dimensions of practices (meanings and representations; objects technologies and material culture; embodied competencies, activities and 'doings') interact with each other in a 'circuit of practices', the relationship between materiality and culture is reconfigured throughout this process, leading to new interpretations and uses of material objects by people (Magaudda, 2011).

To a large extent, going digital implies that music has come to reside somewhere inside digital storage devices or on servers whose location we will never know, thus we can no longer handle, rearrange, examine and dust these records (Belk 2013).

Belk (1988) contends that our possessions are a major contributor to and reflection of our identities; people seek, express, confirm and ascertain a sense of being through what they have.

The streaming poses some issues when we think about the relationship between possessions and the understanding of ourselves. To begin with, since we become users instead of owners, our degree of control over the music is relatively lower. One of the main drivers of psychological ownership, according to Dittmar (1992), is gaining control over one's environment and achieving desired outcomes through their possessions. In a similar vein, Belk (1988) suggests that external objects become viewed as part of self when we are able to exercise control over them.

By investigating the perceived equivalence of e-mail, e-card, e-books, digital journals, photos, newspapers, audio/video files, and musical instruments, Siddiqui & Turley (2006) found that there was uncertainty about control and ownership of many of these digital goods when compared to their physical counterparts (Belk, 2013).

Our sense of identity is, thus, somehow altered regarding the consumption nature of streaming services. Hence, a question that is raised is whether digital products can be integral to our self in the same way as its counterpart can be.

Drawing on psychological ownership and investigating how experiences of ownership are articulated through music streaming formats, Sinclair & Tinson (2017) suggest that consumers do experience psychological ownership with streaming. The authors argue that this experience would also apply for streaming since: 1) the technology encourages discovery and provide opportunities for control and individualization (Kirk, Swain & Gaskin, 2015); 2) consumers use music streaming applications to structure their music consumption; 3) there is time and effort invested in personalizing streaming apps (learning to deal with the platform, creative effort put into production of playlists, etc.) and; 4) consumers experience feelings of pride and are able to achieve social distinction through their cultural capital (Webster, 2019). However, their findings also suggest that the lack of tangibility and the access-based nature of streaming does not lend itself to the same sense of security in psychological ownership as the physical music product.

Along these lines, Belk (2013) argues that the soft tactile characteristics of physical goods such as clothes and furniture are those that make it possible to almost embed our essence or aura (which the author describes as the soul of the person rubbing off on or impregnating the object) in such possessions. Moreover, the author advances that digital possessions, which are endlessly replicable, are difficult to be regarded as unique, non fungible and singular.

Building on the notion that musical taste can be depicted as a means to say a great deal about us (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2003), digital technology has allowed for presenting the self like never before by sharing our musical tastes with a much broader audience (Born, 2001). In this sense, digitalization implies a new kind of intimacy, as what was previously a more private act of music acquisition and appreciation can become more of a group practice (Belk, 2013). The visibility of activity in streaming applications, for instance, allows for a greater identity signaling, and for many it represents the opportunity for consumers to display their taste to their social networks.

Webster (2019) depicts taste as being able to consume the 'right' culture in the 'right' time, and the author argues that it might be regarded as a cultural capital if the individual who possesses it has the potential to achieve social distinction and even convert it into social advantages such as employment opportunities or expanded social networks.

We start to understand the ways in which these symbolic meanings are resignified, especially as the access to music grows and the occasions of consumption get expanded. In such scenario, controlled consumption grows along as music streaming companies seek to manipulate what and how people consume music by leveraging the expertise of music editors and the latest advancements in music recommendation technologies, making it easier for people to find relevant music for different situations, activities and moods (Morris, 2015; Webster, 2019).

One of the consequences of integrating music into our daily lives in a much wider range of activities instead of a stand-alone one (Hagberg & Kjelberg 2017) is that music consumption becomes much more a 'dispersed' practice rather than an 'integrative' one (Schatzki 1996; Fuentes *et al.*, 2019).

In this regard, music has increasingly acquired a peripheral role, where consumers engage in a mode of consumption termed by Fuentes *et al.* (2019) as *soundtracking*. In such mode, music functions as a way to accompany various everyday practices such as driving, cooking, studying, commuting, exercising, walking, working, studying, partying and so on.

However, the authors argue that in order to successfully integrate soundtracking into multiple integrative practices, flexibility and fluidity are paramount conditions to be pursued, which makes soundtracking more susceptible to change at an accelerated rate.

Thus, as digitalization makes music more accessible, mobile and adaptable (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017), the role of music as an end is relatively diminished. Fuentes *et al.* (2019) argue that, throughout this process, owning music and the audio quality become less important for the consumer.

Nevertheless, as the dynamics of practices change, if on the one hand soundtracking (with its material and technological devices involved such as smartphones, earphones, streaming applications and so on) becomes the mainstream mode of consumption, on the other, it resignifies the consumption experiences that conceive music as an integrative practice.

It is this tone that vinyl consumption seems to be increasingly valued as a means to experience music in a distinguished manner.

2.3.1 Vinyl Experience

The concept "value-in-context" proposed by Vargo, Maglia and Akaka (2008) helps us to understand how the new symbolic meanings associated with vinyl are constructed. In such a perspective, an individual's notion of value is fundamentally influenced by a particular social, spatial and historical context (amongst other environmental aspects).

In order to grasp which are the key elements related to vinyl's resignifying, it is adopted as referential the macro context of *social acceleration*.

Addressing the lack of privacy in a digital world, Humayun and Belk (2020) deem that we came to allow constant interruptions through digital devices' pervasiveness - which happen to mold our behavior. Analog objects under their private nature, however, offer the possibility for consumers to regain control over their time, privacy and avoid controlled consumption. Postdigital consumption, according to the authors, allows for a form of hybridity that encompasses both analog and digital coexistence in which they remain entangled with each other.

If, on the one hand, consumers might feel that streaming entails discontinuity and detachment due to its flexible and fluid nature, on the other, Bartmansky and Woodward (2015) contend

that vinyl is materially designed for the album listening experience. It preserves the musical character, the trajectory and the narrative, being best appreciated in the continuous long-playing context in which songs are interrelated to each other. Additionally, LPs often contextualize the production process, enriching the consumption experience for those more avid for the whole context, the 'serious' listeners (Bartmansky & Woodward, 2018).

Hereof, while music streaming services 'trap' consumers at an unending cycle of consumption (Arditi, 2018), vinyl is rather a ritual that demands time and sustained engagement; it is a way to slow down the experience of consuming music and recreate the conditions to appreciate music for its own sake (Webster, 2019).

Humayun and Belk (2020) hold that analogue tools avoid unthinking consumption and passivity; they require a pause, a slower, more thoughtful contemplation before consuming. Vinyl ritual entails a multi-sensorial experience, involving unique sonic value, the visual aesthetics, the monitoring of the turntable and the object manipulation. It is a care-intensive artifact that implies, hence, more commitment from consumers, which creates embodied, emotional connection to listening practices (Bartmansky & Woordward, 2015; 2018).

Along these lines, Goulding and Derbaix (2018), analyzing the realms of authenticity embedded around vinyl, terms 'intrapersonal authenticity' the bodily felt experience; concerning relaxation, spontaneity, deep immersion and transformation. Authors assert that such experience is largely influenced by emotional and physical connections between the object and the practices of the user.

Webster (2019) asserts that the mobilization of resources dedicated to owning vinyl might allow individuals to achieve social distinction given its characteristics of production and marketing; each record is a physical copy relatively scarce and has a handcraft appeal.

Furthermore, the quality of warmth through analog objects' imperfections add a sense of humanity, authenticity and rawness to them (Yochim & Biddinger, 2008; Gouding & Derbaix; Humayun & Belk, 2020). In times when markets are characterized by constant updates and disposability, analog objects evoke a sense of permanence and continuity (Humayun & Belk, 2020). In these circumstances, vinyl is regarded as an icon of durability and stability, which contributes to its authentic, classic connotation (Bartmansky & Woodward, 2018).

Humayun & Belk (2020) argue that such iconic and classical characteristics of analog objects evoke a collective nostalgia. Brown *et al.* (2003) contend that in times of threat or sociocultural

and economic turbulence marked by feelings of unsafety, nostalgia offers a 'safe heaven' for individuals.

In this regard, vinyl seems to offer a time-travel experience to consumers. Not only due to its vintage aesthetics, but it also proposes a connection to its narratives: its long publishing tradition with multiple references and stories attached to - from the release of legendary albums from artists such as Miles Davis, Bob Dylan and The Beatles when it was the mainstream to the rise of vinyl on the underground scene from the 90's (Bartmansky & Woodward, 2018).

2.4 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH

Under the wide umbrella of consumption experiences, the present research investigates mundane escapes within the context of social acceleration.

The central idea is that such process provokes significant changes in social practices, leading individuals to experience time in a different manner, neglectfully distorting some integrative practices into dispersed ones in a fragmented logic and implying ever increasing disruptions of their assumptive worlds.

As a consequence, postdigital consumption arises as a means for individuals to detach themselves from such pressures and establish a distinguished standard of consumption, often searching for ways to decelerate through diminishing their exposure to stimuli through the reconfiguration of their practices – although deceleration may not always be the ultimate goal.

Particularly relevant it is, thus, to present existing distinctions in the literature among extraordinary escaping experiences, mundane escapes and restorative escapes to further propose a more comprehensive conceptualization of escapism.

Board 1
Main Theoretical Concepts

Concept	Definition	Source
Consumption Experience	Subjective process involving social practices and interactions among a network of actors (e.g, consumers, firms) within particular contexts embedded with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses and esthetic criteria.	(Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Akaka, *et al.,* 2015)

Social Practices	The product of the performative relationship in three dimensions: 1) that of meanings and representations; 2) that consisting of objects, technologies and material culture in general and; 3) that represented by embodied competences, activities and 'doings'.	(Shove & Pantzar, 2005)
Extraordinary Experiences	Consumption experiences that take place in liminal spaces and borderlands, offering consumers some respite from everyday constraints and market logics; intimately connected to the romantic belief in more exciting and emancipatory life possibilities outside mainstream society.	(Cova *et al.*, 2018)
Mundane Escapes	Forms of escape that lie in everyday lives defined by the search for self-suspension.	(Cova *et al.*, 2018)
Restorative Escapes	A form of escape that is neither completely mundane nor extraordinary, related with the existence of third places – between work and home – where consumers might find shelter from a turbulent world outside.	(Cova *et al.*, 2018)
Social Acceleretion	A process in which the material, the social and the cultural world are set in motion at an ever-increasing speed, led by the interwoven acceleration of technology, pace of life and the social and cultural rate of change.	(Rosa, 2013)
Assumptive World	'An organized schema reflecting all that a person assumes to be true about the world and the self on the basis of previous experiences; it refers to the assumptions, or beliefs, that ground, secure, and orient people, that give a sense of reality, meaning, or purpose to life'	(Beder, 2005, p. 258)
Postdigital Consumption	Represents the disenchantment with pervasive digital forms of being; a hybridity that allows for both analogue and digital to coexist.	(Humayun & Belk, 2020)
Consumer Deceleration	'A perception of a slowed down temporal experience achieved via a decrease in certain quantities (travelled distance, use of technology, experienced episodes) per unit of time through altering, adopting or eschewing forms of consumption'	(Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019, p. 5)
Integrative Practices	Complex practices that consist of routinized forms of bodily and mental activities and involve understandings, know-how, meanings, emotions, things and their use.	(Schatzki, 2002; Fuentes *et al.*, 2019)
Dispersed Practices	Straightforward practices, often involving a single type of action that seldom have a teleoaffective structure of their own, relying on the teleoaffective structure of the integrative practices that they are integrated with	(Schatzki, 2002; Fuentes *et al.*, 2019)

Source: own elaboration.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

The aim of this research is to broaden the scope of knowledge on the value created by mundane escaping experiences in a socially accelerated context.

Culture, on the framework of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), is conceptualized as "the heterogeneous distribution of meanings and multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader sociohistoric frame of globalization and market capitalism" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869). Consumption experiences, hence, are studied considering their multifaceted nature that encompasses the social practices within a broad network of actors and how the interactions among them affect assessments on value (Akaka *et al.*, 2015).

A qualitative approach, thus, proves more suitable to regard in depth the aspects studied by CCT and assess the insights appropriately to meet the research question. Employing a phenomenological design (Creswell, 2013), the research adopts an interpretivist approach in which, rather than pursuing scientific explanation, the goal is the understanding of the subjective 'meanings' of a social phenomena, (Schwandt, 1994).

In order to assess how the elements that constitute consumptions practices of vinyl might help individuals to better navigate amongst uncertainty, fluidity and chaos, the lived experiences of vinyl users with the format were investigated through in-depth, semi-structured interviews.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Using a mixture of purposive (Merriam, 2015) and 'snowballing' (Belk, Fischer & Kozinets, 2012) sampling techniques, informants were recruited based on their noteworthy relationship with vinyl format. Seeking for a more comprehensive view, the group of informants encompasses both new and long-time users, different scopes of relationship with the format (from audiophiles, collectors, musicians, DJs, blogger and record store & label owner) and ages ranging from 18 to 52 years old.

Some of the participants were known to the researcher, but most of them were identified and recruited based on their social media activity of public sharing vinyl-related content.

Interviewees also enabled connections to other participants known to them. Further details of the sample can be found in table 1.

Table 1

Participants Sample

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Occupation
Arthur	19	Male	Plastic Artist / Musician
Felipe	30	Male	Public Relations
Paula	51	Female	Entrepreneur
Carlos	46	Male	DJ / Label & Record Store Owner
Diego	27	Male	Pet Business Professional
Affonso	41	Male	Photographer
Guilherme	29	Male	Cinema Student / Blogger
Bernardo	29	Male	Software Developer
Danilo	29	Male	Architect / Baker
Marcos	30	Male	Marketing Manager / DJ
Thiago	52	Male	Social Scientist / Blogger
Augusto	31	Male	Geography Teacher
Bruno	18	Male	Geography Undergraduate / Musician

Source: own elaboration.

Due to the pandemics context in which the research took place, the interviews were conducted remotely via Google Hangouts and Whastapp Video between June and July (2020). They took from 49 to 116 minutes, averaging 66 minutes in length. The sonic data was recorded.

The conversations did not follow a fixed script of questions. Instead, a protocol was designed based on the literature review and applied privileging a smooth flow, starting with grand tour questions (Belk *et al.,* 2012) and then gradually exploring specificities, often revisiting previously discussed issues to gain greater depth. The topics covered assessments on social acceleration dynamics (technological advancements, sociocultural paradigms and quantity of inputs per unit of time), the evolving relationship with music in the light of shifts in production and consumption (covering aspects such as when, where, how and why) and how vinyl's experiential value is created in the light of this process.

The board below provides further information on how the themes were approached throughout the interviews.

Board 2
Interview Protocol

Topic	Questions
Social Acceleration	Start by inviting the interviewees to talk about their life trajectories, friends, family, occupations, interests, etc. Ask about where they source content, information, knowledge. Using the probes, explore how they assess the pace of changes that is embedded in their lives in terms of technological advancements, sociocultural paradigms and quantity per unit of time (data produced and processed, social activities, work tasks, etc.). How do they assess the pervasiveness of digital? Are there major sources of anxiety identified in this regard? Ask them to talk about it. Is there a pattern observed? How was time experienced now and then?
Music Consumption	Ask them to talk about their relationship with music, assessing taste & identity in the past and in the present. What are the occasions in which they consume music nowadays (cover aspects such as when, where, how and why)? How do they perceive the major changes that occurred in music consumption throughout the time until the streaming era? How do they feel about the ubiquitous nature of music consumption nowadays? Do they feel in control of the music consumed by them? To what extent these changes contributed to resignify the meanings associated to music? Ask them to tell more about it. How do they assess the role of music as an end nowadays?
Vinyl	Ask them to talk about their first experience with vinyl, what motivated them, what were the circumstances, influences, etc. What are the occasions in which they consume music on vinyl? What are the main reasons that make them engage in such a record playing form instead of using streaming?

	Probe on perceptions about:
	· the album listening experience;
	· immersion/mindfulness;
	· authenticity;
	· aesthetics;
	· nostalgia;
	· timeflow;
	· intimacy/privacy;
	· active/thoughtful consumption;
	· ownership/manipulation;
	· social distinction;
	· risk of symbolic pollution;
	· reconnection.
	What kind of people are the vinyl users? What do they have in common? What about the artists?
	Ask if there is something that they would like to add on the interview regarding the topics covered that I should consider for my research.

Source: own elaboration.

3.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to interpret consumers' stories with the format and derive strategically useful patterns of meaning from the qualitative data, it was adopted the hermeneutically grounded interpretive framework proposed by Thompson (1997). Undertaking the part-to-whole procedure, interviews were listened and read in their entirety to gain a sense of the whole and compared in order to find patterns and differences across the narratives.

After the interviews were concluded, the audio files were fed into the qualitative software package ATLAS.ti and underwent the following process:

1. Each audio file was fully listened to paint a picture of the whole
2. The interviews went through a descriptive coding procedure (Saldaña, 2013), in which relevant topics identified on excerpts were summarized in words or short phrases;
3. These excerpts were grouped together according to their codes in separate sections;
4. The audio files were listened to again in sections and the excerpts were transcribed;

5. Each fragment of data was individually themed in sentences to identify the associated meanings (Boyatzis, 1998);

6. Through an abstraction exercise (Spiggle, 1994), the codes were grouped into more conceptual classes

7. Each broad class underwent a memoing process (Birks, 2008) to articulate the perspectives themed on each excerpt.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The shift in music consumption from an integrative practice to a more dispersed one takes place within a process in which individuals feel overwhelmed with the quantity of potential stimuli knocking on their doors. As Rosa (2013) argues, such accelerated pace of life implies that people are expected to perform increasing roles that rely on dizzying loads of information. They want (and need) to be able to benefit from technological advancements and broaden their access to information. However, the mismatch between the flow of inputs and the capacity to properly process them triggers an impulse for individuals to respond, as a default, by trying to make the most of the shallowness; a fragmented mode of consumption, hence, is promoted as consumers engage in such quest for multitasking.

This chapter is organized to reveal how vinyl consumption offers a way out from forces of social acceleration, and how the arrangement of practices involved might configure it as a restorative escape. The first section explores how - as music consumption increasingly assumes a soundtracking role - vinyl allows for consumers to establish a deeper relationship with music and experience it in a more sustained way, escaping from music vulgarization and the interrupted logics in which it is conceived. The second section delves into vinyl's consumer journey to show how the commitment fostered in different stages makes users more prone to sustain their engagement, and how this process might influence their timeflow in a smoother manner. The third section explores the sense-making value created in vinyl consumption through its materiality, aesthetics and narratives; how it might help to anchor notions of identity and find a sense of permanence under uncertainty.

4.1. THE PURSUITT FOR MEANING OUTSIDE AN OCEAN OF NOISE

As shifts in the production and consumption of music occurred throughout the years, the relationship between consumers and artists has fundamentally been impacted. One of the participants, Bernardo, a software developer, reflects on the vulgarization[2] of music as a consequence of the expanded access:

> Perhaps people nowadays do not have as much involvement with music as people back then, of having a favorite band, for instance, because you end up listening to hits from each one, and then you keep broadening your reach. And also, access relates to value; if you have something too accessible, you end

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[2] Vulgarization, here, is related to losing originality; to what once was distinct, special, becoming ordinary, banal.

up not valuing it so much. So, long ago, you would have a radio and this was the only means to listen to music, I think people used to appreciate it more, in the sense of "what is this artist saying, what does he/her mean by that?" (…) In Brazil, I feel that the biggest artists barely release albums; they keep releasing single after single, because this has become the consumption pattern. (…) I consider that the album is a movie, and the songs are the scenes of the movie. So the album for me is that moment when the artist is trying to tell something. So I like to appreciate music in this manner. I believe that this supply has vulgarized music that turned into "listening to a cool rhythm for us to dance and be happy". And I'm not criticizing, I think it's personal. And people start to see individuals less like artists that seek their art, in the sense of "what does this person wants to express? What is the intention? Why did he/she write this song? Was it just to make money?" There are artists that do that, and there are artists that want to tell a story, to transmit a feeling. So this super access to music ends up vulgarized. (Bernardo, 29 years of age, software developer)

The expansion of access is depicted as a paramount factor for people, in general, allocating less and less devotion to deeply grasp what artists are trying to express; as consumers have endless possibilities, it seems to become harder and harder to sustain the same degree of engagement as before.

The market response to such movement is largely favoring the promotion of singles over albums nowadays. As Fuentes *et al.* (2019) argue, the integration of soundtracking to multiple integrative practices implies flexibility and fluidity, in such a way that there is a growing pressure for music to be as adaptable as possible. Webster (2019) highlights how streaming companies increasingly make it easier for people to find relevant music for different occasions in such fragmented logics by leveraging their expertise in curatorship and recommendation technologies. One could argue that, as a result of this convenience-driven process, the concept or the message becomes widely disfavored and, consequentially, loose. Augusto, a geography teacher, expresses his apprehension on mainstream pressures:

We live in a country that is not that democratic; there are many people that consume what TV pushes, what's on, the top 100 of Spotify, and then it goes. This worries me a little, because mainstream is selective; what is profitable they're going to replicate until it boils down. (Augusto, 31 years of age, geography teacher)

Magaudda (2011) argues that there is a sense of loss of meaning and cultural value around musical experience as shifts in material activities and forms of doing occur within music consumption. A 'dehumanization' feeling on the relationship between listeners and artists is considered to represent a crisis of 'authenticity' of the musical experience.

As such movement takes place, thus, there is a growing concern from those who want to appreciate music as an integrative practice; to have a deeper relationship with the artists' work. Augusto continues:

> I like when the artist cares about the art conception of his/her project, the issue regarding the order of songs. This is something that the young folks nowadays are not aware, right? If that song is the first one, there is a reason for that, so I still have this strong relationship. I consume streaming, but I feel that it is a shame to think about how everything is fragmented. (…) I've seen in some interviews artists saying when answering about next albums: "we don't know if we are releasing a full album, perhaps it's gonna be a single…" So the artist is already thinking about the market fit instead of taking the time to sit down and latter reflect on the possibilities of releasing. (Augusto, 31 years of age, geography teacher)

Nevertheless, although there seems to exist a general fear of betting on the album concept as a more fragmented logic dominates the mainstream, Danilo – who is a baker and architect - considers that artists that are trying new things might thrive precisely because there are consumers searching for this whole:

> In this new scenario of new bands, people trying new things, initiatives like vinyl record clubs, new labels producing new artists that are pressing in vinyl, I think it`s a rescuing of perhaps what was this music outside the single logic; that is an idealized album that had a particular logic and represented that band in that moment, which were the influences. (…) As a matter of fact, you were not there to sing that song; you were there to absorb what the artist was trying to say in terms of sound, in terms of message, and I believe that these new artists that are being released especially by these new labels in vinyl are trying to give this meaning to their work. The single is important; it is what is going to release the artists, for people to know you, but afterwards it's super possible to exist a concise work inside a super conceptualized that has a proper and strong identity and talks about issues that others have not yet addressed. I feel that these new artists are trying new stuff, and I'm very happy about it. (Danilo, 29 years of age, architect and baker)

As digitalization implies a new kind of intimacy with music (Belk, 2013), what once was a more private experience became increasingly diffuse. In this sense, there also seems to exist a growing search for a space outside the mainstream where artists and fans are trying to meet each other, to relate in a more engaged, sustained way. Bernardo continues:

> When you vulgarize music, you end up developing an emotional attachment to the records that you buy. It's not just one more on the pile, it's sentimental. (…) You enter inside a vinyl store, man, you see those big records, you start digging, and it affects you. (…) Always when I travel I try to do this movement of going to the stores. I believe that it has a lot to do with unconsciously getting disturbed by music vulgarization. (Bernardo, 29 years of age., software developer)

Lofland (1998) names *parochial* the third places characterized by "a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbors who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within communities". Cova *et al.* (2018) deem that in such spaces consumers might experience restorative escapes, functioning as refuges that provide relief to consumers and allow for them to somehow recharge. Bernardo finds in record stores a kind of sacred place, an atmosphere capable of fostering a superior connection to music. Marcos, a DJ and marketing manager, expands the idea and highlights the cultural value in the interactions that take place in records stores:

> Ultimately, music is culture. A way of signifying our relationship with things. Semiotics, symbols, meanings, on marketing we work a lot with this. So I believe that there are three ways to get familiar to places: one is to walk on the streets and observe, the second is to eat, and the third is to visit record stores. When I travel, if people ask me "Do you want to go to that fantastic museum or to that fantastic store?", I'm more interested in going to the store. Not because I'm audiophile, vinyl addicted - I don't have 3.000 records, I have 600, 500, it's not my life – but because I believe it's a better place for you to go and grasp a little about where you are. And you talk to other people; I think that music has this interesting aspect of bringing people closer, it breaks several barriers. (Marcos, 30 years of age, DJ and marketing manager)

It is interesting to notice that such value is not directly related to being a vinyl addicted, as Marcos states; it is more about the signs and dynamics around vinyl consumption, which become increasingly pursued by individuals who feel a sort of emptiness, loose relationship with music, trapped into an interrupted mode of consumption or just constrained to what the digital realm has to offer.

Marcos represents consumers who are majorly motivated by value created in the research activity:

> I was lead to vinyl records because I felt that I was constrained to what was available online in my research. So much that most of the things I have in records, almost anything you can acquire digitally. I'm not the guy that needs to own the record. I'm the guy that needs to have that song. If it's only available on records, I'll buy the records. (Marcos, 30 years of age, DJ and marketing manager)

He continues:

> Consuming vinyl and researching vinyl are very different activities. Because the graphic aspect changes everything. Being able to read and know what was the year, what was the band, what was the label, who played the keyboards on this fucking album, and then you start to realize that every album that features this guy is amazing. You know? It's a distinguished depth on the relationship with the artist's work, in an era that everything is disposable (digitally). (…) When you start to dig into these clues, you find

some remarkable individuals that were part of the foundations of disco and house. And I don`t believe you reach this depth through a digital file that has a name. (Marcos, 30 years of age, DJ and marketing manager)

The visual information delivered to consumers, hence, opens up particular possibilities for discovering, embedding vinyl with a distinct value originated in this treasure hunt. Other interviewees also shared how researches driven by traces identified in vinyl wouldn't otherwise through digital means lead to some extraordinary discoveries.

The graphic content that comes along with music does not only enrich the experience for those who are more keen on the research as a means to broaden one's musical knowledge; for Diego, who works in the pet business, it is depicted as an essential part of the consumption experience:

I believe you really consume the maximum possible of the peace of work intended by the artist when he/she was producing it, for you to at least understand a little bit about what was in his/her mind. You pick a double record, for instance, with that cover that opens, and then there is an amazing art work, everything aligned with the production concept. Merely this breaks all of the concept of streaming, mp3; it`s so cool. Even comparing with CD, because it`s really small, simple, fragile. It`s a much more complete experience. (Diego, 27 years of age, pet business professional)

Likewise, for Affonso, a photographer and plastic artist, the consumption experience of an album is incomplete if it happens through streaming, so the eagerness to integrally absorb the artwork essentially encompasses a whole context that merely songs cannot provide:

I understand that the album released by the artist is a complete work. So it has a whole context, a whole meaning, the sequence of songs is carefully thought. (…) And then there is the art of the cover, the art inside the record, the pictures, the lyrics, so for me, all of this compose the artwork that is the album that the artists have released. So I feel that if I'm listening through streaming, I`m half consuming this work of art, I`m not integrally appreciating it. Hence, if I listen to only one song or if I listen in shuffle mode, I`m distorting their work. (Affonso, 41 years of age, photographer)

Felipe compares consumption occasions as dispersed and integrative practices, and reflects on how the ritual involved in the latter allows him to disengage from the buzz and establish a distinguished relationship with the act of consuming music:

When I consume music nowadays? When I'm on the street, going to work, coming from work, or going to meet someone, then you have this: "Get on the bus, get off the bus, get on the metro, get off the metro". Exchanging messages, checking on Instagram. It's a buzz that constantly draws your attention. And there is stuff that I listen that it's ok to listen to in this dynamics. (…) But listening to music at home, there is this moment of pause, you know? I'm gonna sit, open a beer, prepare something to eat, put a record and listen to it entirely. Without interruptions. I'm on my place, on my moment. (…) And this is fantastic, even records that I have here, if I was listening to it on shuffle, I wouldn't pay attention.

> So there are songs that you rediscover, you know? You create a different relationship with that. You pay more attention to the lyrics, to the melody, you rediscover something that if it was on the app, you wouldn`t experience in the same way. (Felipe, 30 years of age, public relations professional)

Likewise, Arthur, who is a plastic artist and musician, shares how sometimes he struggles to consume albums via streaming, and how listening to them on vinyl allows for a superior absorption:

> On streaming, music consumption is much easier to be vulgarized. (…) Sometimes I listen to an album on streaming and it does not hit me right, and I keep waiting to purchase the record on vinyl to listen. I'm now facing this with Clara Crocodilo from Arrigo Barnabé, that I listen and think: "I'm failing to absorb it", I'm always very distracted, always on the street, so I want to have the record so that I can hear it. (…) There are records that I cannot listen to if not on vinyl. (Arthur, 19 years of age, plastic artist and musician)

In a similar vein, Carlos, who is a DJ and owns record store and a label, associates the vinyl listening experience to a more superficial state of meditation; a fruition in deepness that allows for consumers to transcend their relationship with music:

> You grab a record, listen to it, and in that moment you are thinking about the musical arrangements, the musicians, you identify them, you think like: "When that particular musician appears on the record, you immediately know it's him." (…) I believe that there is a deepness beyond listening and singing the chorus and thinking whether Roberto Carlos is cool. It's something more like: "Damn, what an arrangement, what a bass line" or "the songs of this year, or this time, I'm really passionate about". (Carlos, 46 years of age, DJ and label & record store owner)

Guilherme, one of the interviewees who is a cinema student, completes:

> Vinyl is a means to transport you to this kind of mood, to establish a pause on your activities and put you in a more reflective state of mind; it allows for a different point of view. (Guilherme, 30 years of age, cinema student)

The pursuit for a moment of pause, hence, is depicted as a paramount condition to establish such state of immersion. However, establishing and sustaining a deeper degree of intimacy with music nowadays is far from trivial.

Precisely because individuals are immersed in constantly interrupted dynamics and very often trapped in controlled consumption, it seems to be paramount to develop and rely on robust mechanisms to disengage from this pattern; mechanisms involving a broad set of practices that, ultimately, aim to reinforce consumer's agency. These might or might not be consciously planned, but as individuals feel this urge, practices are naturally embedded with new meanings,

consequentially driving one's pursuit. Practices associated to vinyl consumption, as explored so far, seem to constitute a resistance and offer an escape from mainstream-related dynamics.

4.2. COMMITMENT AND CONSUMER'S AGENCY

> I've realized that I was working and soon I would have my phone on my hand for some time doing nothing on social media, only scrolling the feed. So it happens a lot, especially now that my job is virtually on the front of the computer. I regard this as a problem. (…) For instance, it pops up a notification from a channel I follow on Youtube, and then it arises that temptation: "Should I click on it now and spend 25 minutes or should I continue my work and I do it afterwards?" Hence, this choice is always happening, these mini-decisions to assess whether it disturbs or not the productivity. But I believe that nowadays it's super complicated. Shutting yourself down is very complicated. (Augusto, 31 years of age, geography teacher)

Reflecting on the relationship between the individual and time nowadays in the light of the overload of stimuli, Danilo says:

> I have the privilege to work from my place. So if I used to have time, now I have more because I do not waste time commuting. And I have been noticing a different relationship with time. But this overload of news and things that happen at every moment makes time fly. It seems that you've stopped to read news, did a little something, stopped to read another, did another little something, like, daily information on Covid, and then the day is over. So it has been a personal struggle to separate a moment apart to do these stuff. (Danilo, 29 years of age, architect and baker)

Guilherme shares his opinion on how consumer behavior is broadly transformed throughout this process:

> We live in an era in which we want everything really fast. Things come really fast at us and it fosters an involuntary process of desiring to consume faster. Using TV series as an example: a while ago, we used to watch one episode per week and we had to wait until the next week. It's not the case anymore. All content is at our disposal and we create our pace of consumption. This digital era, for me, is accelerating a lot the way we absorb stuff. (…) The fact of having a massive amount of content for a short amount of time generates a natural anxiety. (Guilherme, 30 years of age, cinema student)

Timeflow is determined by the alignment of different constellations of elements that constitute consumption practices, in a way that, depending on such arrangement, it might lead consumers to experience it in a smooth way, feel temporal drag, or rush (Woermann & Rokka, 2015; Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019). From what Danilo and Guilherme express, there is an intense rush evoked in these dynamics that makes it difficult for them to rely on the alignment that is shaped under the autopilot.

As individuals acknowledge the difficulty to unhook from the pervasiveness of stimuli that are constantly fighting for their attention, they find in vinyl a format particularly capable of sustaining their engagement; a means to construct a territorial and social niche (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019) that resists forces of acceleration.

Danilo expresses:

> I use it as a tool, I say "I'm putting vinyl, I'll take the opportunity to fully listen to it". If I am to look on the cellphone eventually, I do it when I'm turning the record. But it's a ritual, I get connected with the stuff that I'm doing. It creates a protecting shield. (Danilo, 29 years of age, architect and baker)

Hereafter, we examine how the commitment nurtured throughout the consumer journey contributes to forge such shield.

Diego expresses how the research activity is the starting point to create a more profound relationship with the music one seeks to consume:

> From the moment you started your research to acquire an album, on the market, on Discogs, the press information, you interact with the product in a different way (…) I think that in most times it is difficult for someone just to look at the cover and say "Oh, I like it, I'll take it". You first have to research. You will listen to related bands, you will listen to the artist, you like him/her, you search for his/her discography, and then you will search for the pressings, and then you'll see that there's the blue, the yellow, the orange, etc., and then you have the Brazilian pressing, the American, the Japanese, the Chinese, etc. and it goes. And this is a research for a simple record, which takes you hours of research, not even on the songs per se, but the format, because it adds value. (Diego, 27 years of age, pet business professional)

Augusto highlights the role that price plays in the purchasing process, the domestic planning involved, and how these reinforce the propensity to develop a higher esteem for records or simply to be more thoughtful on your curatorship:

> With the exorbitant price of records nowadays, the person will do many considerations on the purchasing decision. So the person is going to buy something that he/she has a previous relationship with, or if it`s something that he/she is really interested in. (…) One more thing: it occupies physical spaces. So, having a shelf of records is something that demands from your domestic planning. (Augusto, 31 years of age, geography teacher)

Regarding the process involved while deciding what is to be reproduced, he continues:

> The time you spend choosing a vinyl, picking it up on the shelf, turning your record player on and putting it to play is something that makes you more compelled to appreciate it, even though you are having dinner or doing something else. (Augusto, 31 years of age, geography teacher)

Prior to dropping the needle, thus, there are some steps that the consumer must have been taken, which already contribute for a higher propensity of experiencing a deeper immersion.

In the sequence of our consumer journey, Carlos highlights how the manipulation involved during the listening moment reinforces a mindful state:

> The physical handling of the cover is something really nice; it has to do with this slow food trend. You have this physical moment of grabbing the record, inserting on the player, manipulating through the experience. I think this flow is very different from streaming. In general, it leads to something in which you pay more attention to music. (Carlos, 46 years of age, DJ and label & record store owner)

Guilherme shares his opinion on how the listening ritual makes consumers more robust to hedonic temptations:

> I find vinyl`s value proposition very interesting in present times because it rescues the respect for what the artist has created. We do not have the control to freely alternate the music. It's everything or nothing. And we're gonna listen to everything. Independently if there are songs that we do not like that much, we are there respecting the work that the artist conceived for months or even years. (Guilherme, 30 years of age, cinema student)

Interestingly, although individuals seek to leverage their agency throughout the process that lead them to engage in such consumption, from the moment they decide to listen to an album on vinyl, they freely give up on exercising control; as a matter of fact, they fundamentally count on how the format makes it harder for them to break the flow. Thus, it is a mechanism that reinforces the appreciation of the work as a whole.

Finally, Diego - who makes his living by taking care of animals – compares the dedication employed on vinyl with that required when you have a pet. As such, the sustained routine of caring is also depicted as something that reinforces an emotional attachment:

> You have to dedicate. Like if you had to practice a sport, or play a game, or take care of a bird. You need to have a certain type of dedication. Not to mention that you have to conserve it well, clean the dust on the player, on the records, so it`s very immersive. (Diego, 27 years of age, pet business professional)

Vinil's consumer journey, therefore, requires a sustained commitment from users that does not follow the fragmented, convenience-oriented mainstream. As a result, the higher the effort dedicated to build a relationship with possessions and be acquainted to them, the greater one regards them as an intimate, safe places (Sinclair & Tinson, 2017). Furthermore, the emotional and physical connection between the object and the practices of the users that is fostered throughout the consumer journey allows for them to experience intrapersonal authenticity

which, beyond evoking relaxation, spontaneity and deep immersion, it has a transformative potential (Goulding & Derbaix).

4.3. RESTORING ASSUMPTIVE WORLDS

> The first album that I played on my new record player was from Chico (Buarque), and it was during one of the first days of intense panelaços. I would hear Chico, and then I see Chico nowadays, and I think: It came and went. You know? Somehow, it's a warming relief. (Danilo, 29 years of age, architect and baker)

The term panelaços employed by Danilo refers to a form of protest in which casseroles, pots, pans and other kitchen utensils are used in order to draw attention to the noise made when hitting these utensils. He makes reference to the daily panelaços that took place throughout the country in Brazil in the beginning of quarantine imposed by covid-19. The turmoil largely reflected feelings of angst and unpredictability regarding the present and the future, in which individuals' assumptive worlds (Beder, 2005) would be deeply disturbed. Nevertheless, he shares how listening to Chico Buarque on vinyl provided him with a relief feeling as a noteworthy part of the artist's work also was conceived in times of uncertainty and uneasiness, and addressed comparable feelings; as he connects to the artwork in the light of its context, finds essential commonalities in present times and realizes that adverse circumstances are eventually overcome, it helps him to shift the lenses through which he sees reality: from a myopic that might lead to see only what is in front of him to another that provides sight with a broader perspective.

Revisiting the past through an artistic perspective, hence, might offer a path to anchor at least part of one's assumptive world. Arthur expresses:

> On the other day I was tripping thinking about these pictures of the old Rio, from 1960s, 1970s, and reading the biography of Caetano (one of the most prestigious and influential musicians in Brazil); you realize that not much has changed, in terms of music, culture, people. (Arthur, 19 years of age, plastic artist and musician)

He is from a generation that already grew with the availability of digital music. Nonetheless, he sees in vinyl a transcendental way to connect to the context in which albums from the past were conceived:

> The records that were made for vinyl on the 60's, 70's, 80's, I think they are much more interesting on vinyl, because you have the experience of the person that had to turn the sides, that would hear the

imperfections. (…) It's a nostalgia about something that we've never lived. Because I think that when you consume much old music, you end up on that mystique like: "on those days it should be so cool". So I believe it's a means for those who are older to remember, but for those who are younger, to have this dazzle, of wanting to be part of an era, or wanting to insert yourself in a stage. Because vinyl has this timeless quality of which you only need a record player. I think it's a ritual that transcend eras for people. (Arthur, 19 years of age, plastic artist and musician)

In this sense, there exists a playful value created in such consumption experiences, in which individuals might find amusement while being transported to imaginary contexts and interacting with associated narratives. Danilo continues on how vinyl's ludic qualities helped him to deal with feelings provoked by the pandemics circumstances:

There are also memories evoked of times when we were not facing this situation. When you buy second hand records, they carry an additional story. I have a lot of records with signatures, with old dedications, and it creates a fiction that somehow occupies the times. Recently, I bought a vinyl from Villa Lobos and afterwards I discovered that it was a French press and behind the record there was a dedication in Portuguese signed Paris, 1970. And then I found myself thinking: this is so nice, there was someone listening to this during that time, and they were living a different reality. All of this provides a warming feeling. (Danilo, 29 years of age, architect and baker)

Marcos expresses how the aesthetics provide a sort of map to navigate into his memories and feelings as he performs as a DJ, potentially enabling him to connect to and grasp what kind of emotions might be fostered by each record:

It becomes visual, a more visual memory than with a pendrive. Pendrive is also visual, but I organize more through the folders, that I create for each event and they gradually stick in my memory. (…) The issue with vinyl for me is about hitting the eye and visually it fostering an emotion. (…) It creates interesting shortcuts in your head that you associate with affective memory about what that music provokes or might provoke. (Marcos, 30 years of age, DJ and marketing manager)

There exists, hence, a dynamic in which references are constantly being exchanged; from the past, from the present and imagined ones. And from such multisensory interactions, one's assessments of reality, of possibilities, seem to be recalibrated as the process takes place.

Affonso reflects on how vinyl constitutes an important means to provide a sense of permanence and to build on his personality:

I like things to remain. Even though we live in a world of constant changes nowadays, I like the idea of things remaining somehow. And I believe things remain in objects; they solidify these things. Whether the paintings, the sculptures, or the records that I have solidified and that will remain in my collection. (…) All of this, to me, is reference. It's visual reference, it's auditory reference, it's aesthetic reference, it's a language reference. I don't know. I, myself, as a photographer, artist, I'm a mix. (…) Art is this,

art is reference. We do not make art without first studying artistic streams from the past. Anything I'm going to photograph, the first thing I do is to search for references on that subject. And then I kept thinking a lot about this. All of these objects that I have in my house are references; to which I look every day. And they will reverberate in my work somehow. Just like as when we pin things on the board so that we don't forget, I think it's something about that. (…) My personality is here. And the records are part of this personality. (Affonso, 41 years of age, photographer)

Likewise, Danilo expresses how being a vinyl consumer is also a matter of self identification:

Vinyl brings representativeness about what I like, what I am, of what are my references, who I do admire and who I do not. So there's a little bit of myself inside the records. Whatever vinyl I have, there is a reason for me to having it. And this tells a lot about me. (…) Vinyl touches a lot on what we are. And I think that collections are these; forms of representing ourselves through objects. And every vinyl user wants to see himself in this. (Danilo, 29 years of age, architect and baker)

Paula, an entrepreneur, assesses that vinyl carries a distinguished value as being something that physically represents the relationship of consumers with music precisely in the light of the ethereal characteristics of present times:

Vinyl fulfills the role of providing substance to this ethereal thing of music, that is surrounding us but not in a physical space. It materializes what Spotify and Itunes left loose. (Paula, 51 years of age, entrepreneur)

The materiality of vinyl, hence, seems to be deeply related to the understanding of the self, especially in the light of constant disruptions of assumptive worlds. In this manner, as consumers engage in these sustained interactions that involve multiple senses, they are able to detach themselves from an ethos marked by uncertainty, fluidity and chaos and establish a connection with a realm of intimacy, ease and discernment, being able to reframe their reality.

5. FINAL COMMENTS

This research set out to explore the value of vinyl consumption as a mundane escaping experience in addressing the forces of social acceleration.

It was adopted a theory of practice approach to problematize some externalities of the relentless search for convenience and efficiency. In the case of music consumption, the dislocation of once integrative practices into dispersed ones is manifested through the soundtracking process, marked by pressures that end up altering the whole structure of consumption and production modes. If, one the one hand, consumers in general indisputably acknowledge that the convenience of streaming as it is today being positive, on the other, many of them experience a loose relationship as music consumption becomes largely a fragmented, interrupted activity. And although it is also acknowledged, it is far from trivial to reestablish the same degree of intimacy as the macro structure keeps changing. Therefore, vinyl consumption is embedded with a distinct value as it provides a way for consumers to disengage from these fragmented logics and experience music as an integrative practice.

Another remarkable trait of social acceleration is the constantly disruption of one's assumptive worlds as paradigms change at faster rates than one might try to fully process. Through its materiality, aesthetics and narratives, however, this study revealed that vinyl is embedded with a sense-making value that potentially helps consumers to anchor their notions of identity and experience a sense of stability.

Humayun and Belk (2020) approach the value of the labor employed when using analogue objects, arguing that, given the finite nature of analogue camera films and paper notebooks, they imply a more thoughtful consumption. Here, the concept of labor was expanded to the commitment nurtured throughout all stages of the consumer journey. Although vinyl records are not consumable as other analogue objects, thoughtful consumption is also deeply related to the experience. Furthermore, as users fully engage in vinyl consumption practices, there has been revealed a smoother timeflow during the listening moment.

Another important contribution of this work is that vinyl's consumer journey allows for the conception of momentary physical spaces that offer restorative escapes. While Cova *et al.* (2018) argue that restorative escapes are related to the presence of third places that might offer shelter and relief to consumers and help them recharge their batteries, restorative spaces not necessarily need to be away from one's home. As a matter of fact, in the case of vinyl, spaces are embedded with meanings given the configuration of practices throughout the consumer

journey and the ritual involved; meaning that one's bedroom might also lead to restorative escapes.

Vinyl as an escaping experience, thus, illustrates how mundane escapes might be vitamins rather than merely analgesics. It functions as an anchor for consumers to realize the importance of being thoughtful on their actions; to often disconnect from the noisy environment, take a pause, and connect to their inner worlds. As a matter of fact, postdigital consumption allows for achieving a sustainable balance between what is familiar, tangible, provides us as sense of security, identity, permanence, and what is unknown, fluid and chaotic in contemporary society.

While this research centered the attention on the dismantlement of integrative practices and its consequences in the realm of music, more should be learned about the full range of side effects produced by fragmented logics of production and consumption; identifying and studying forces that constitute resistances is paramount to gain deeper understanding on more harmonious and sustainable ways to integrate technology to our daily lives.

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