

# *Sponsorship of the LGBT parade by the tobacco industry and promotion of its heated tobacco product from the perspective of critical discourse analysis*

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**Abstract:** Brazil has advanced in tobacco control actions, with a significant decline in the prevalence of tobacco use. However, it is essential to identify more vulnerable populations, such as LGBT persons. This study aimed to analyze the discursive production sustaining the search for support and penetration of the tobacco industry among the LGBT population, taking the sponsorship of Philip Morris Brasil to the LGBT parade in São Paulo in 2019. We employed the critical discourse analysis of a report published on a blog. The analysis of the piece points to the use of vocabularies such as diversity, inclusion, modernity, and innovation, which concern the LGBT cause and the launch of its new product. The text conveys a high commitment and a courteous tone, using discursive resources that associate the company with technical and behavioral innovation ideas. It communicates intertextually with regulatory bodies about introducing its new product in the Brazilian market (prohibited in Brazil). It uses different ideological operators, such as the euphemism of the smokeless or smoke-free future. The work shows a tobacco industry strategy to promote its heated product while supporting LGBT cause and promoting a positive corporate image.

► **Keywords:** LGBT persons. Tobacco industry. Social responsibility. Tobacco products.

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## Introduction

Tobacco use is a severe public health issue and a causal factor for several types of cancer, cardiovascular, and respiratory diseases (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (US) Office on Smoking and Health, 2014). Furthermore, tobacco harm the environment throughout their life cycle, including planting, production, consumption and disposal. (WHO, 2017a). In contrast, the interest of transnational tobacco companies is to keep their businesses, win new customers, and retain existing ones. They influence governments, legislators, opinion makers, and organizations to promote their products, interfere, and prevent the adoption of tobacco control measures (GILMORE *et al.*, 2015).

Brazil has been achieving essential results in addressing this problem (BRASIL, 2018) as a result of coordinated and intersectoral tobacco control actions since the 1980s, strengthened by the ratification of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (INCA, 2015), with reflections on the percentage of smokers in the country, which abruptly declined from 34.8% in 1989 to just 12.6% in 2019 (IBGE, 2020; MONTEIRO *et al.*, 2007).

However, countless challenges lie ahead, and tobacco use manifests itself unevenly in populations. The prevalence of tobacco use is higher among the poorest and less educated (WHO, 2022; IBGE, 2020). Moreover, the tobacco industry targets its marketing very carefully to different genders (WHO, 2010). As a result of this observation, worldwide documents guiding health policies mention in their texts the importance of considering gender and health vulnerability (OPAS; WHO 2018; INCA, 2015).

However, a broader and more current concept of gender – including lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, transgenders, and others (LGBT) – is barely visible in such documents, reports, studies, and actions aimed at tobacco control in Brazil. In contrast, some foreign studies indicate that health indicators among the LGBT population tend to be worse than the general population, which includes a greater consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs (CACERES *et al.*, 2019; SIMONI *et al.*, 2017). A paper published with Brazilian data shows that higher consumption of regular cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, and narghile was found in non-heterosexual people (BERTONI *et al.*, 2019). There are many possible explanations for these findings, such as the exclusion that often begins

with the family core and is perpetuated in different spheres of society, including access to and quality of health care. There is also the continuous process of violence suffered throughout life. Finally, a set of factors configure a greater vulnerability of this population (FERREIRA; BONAN, 2020). A review of tobacco use by sexual minorities highlighted that two groups of factors might be related to greater use in this population: the specific, such as homophobia; and others common to the general population, but with greater intensity, such as the use of other drugs, having been a victim of violence, and having been diagnosed with mental disorders (BLOSNIICH *et al.*, 2013).

On the other hand, the tobacco industry uses strategies to reach this population, which can also explain the higher consumption of tobacco derivatives in this group (SMITH; OFFEN; MALONE, 2005; SMITH; MALONE, 2003; WASHINGTON, 2002). It is common to support groups or initiatives that can strengthen the social responsibility industry's argument, also indirectly gaining allies for their current and future actions and positions (FOOKS *et al.*, 2013). An example was Philip Morris Brasil sponsoring the 2019 LGBT Parade in São Paulo, the main object of our analysis in this paper (Philip Morris Brasil apoia..., em Athosgl. 2019).

We can observe a discursive production effort that aims to seize a specific audience. In this sense, we could resort to Fairclough, which recognizes discourse as a social practice, a way of acting on the world and others. The discursive relationship points to a dialectical relationship between social practice and social structure, and the latter is both a condition and effect of the former (FAIRCLOUGH, 2008).

According to Fairclough (2008),

[...] the specific discursive events vary in their structural determination according to the particular social domain or the institutional framework in which they are generated [...]. On the other hand, the discourse [...] contributes to the constitution of all dimensions of the social structure, which directly or indirectly shape or restrict it (p. 91). [...] social practice has several orientations - economic, political, cultural, and ideological - and the discourse can be involved in all of them [...] (p. 94).

Fairclough (1999) recognizes that discourse analysis contributes to social change based on the individual's involvement in becoming aware of and acknowledging how discourse works, questioning "*the existing relationships of domination and marginalization between discourses*" (p. 75). From this perspective, the understanding of the practices of big companies in promoting their products

through the critical analysis of the statements brings individuals the possibility of acting on this reality and transforming it. It allows perceiving the ideological and dominant relationship between invested and reinvested statements with noble meanings, such as corporate social responsibility, clear sales discourse, gaining market niches, and product promotion.

Given the above, this study aims to analyze the discursive production that sustains the search for support and penetration of the tobacco industry among the LGBT population, taking as a case the PMB sponsorship of the LGBT parade in São Paulo in 2019.

## Methods

This study initially used the report “*Philip Morris Brasil supports the programming of the 23<sup>rd</sup> LGBT Pride Parade in São Paulo*” as index material to be analyzed, published on the Athosgls website (“the largest LGBT-focused online news portal with 20 years of experience [...]”, by its definition) on June 19, 2019 (Philip Morris Brasil apoia..., em Athosgls. 2019).

Knowledge of the referred material occurred by its sharing in a WhatsApp group of tobacco control experts. Subsequently, an exploratory search was carried out through the Google research site to verify other materials available on the internet, especially news, that would help to compose and corroborate the observed in the initial piece about the approximation between the tobacco industry and the LGBT population. The site returned 112 results. Those who did not meet the following criteria were discarded:

- Talking about PMB sponsoring the LGBT parade
- Showing or indicating that they would address Philip Morris’ or other tobacco companies, relationship with the LGBT population in any other way or a situation other than the sponsorship mentioned above.

Thirty links were selected for a more accurate reading, and the result is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Links selected from the search on the Google search site on Dec. 12, 2019

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Address</b>
Sites that report in more detail on Philip Morris Brasil's sponsorship of the LGBT parade	<a href="https://gay.blog.br/gay/philip-morris-reforca-politica-de-inclusao-e-patrocinacao-parada-lgbt-de-sp/">https://gay.blog.br/gay/philip-morris-reforca-politica-de-inclusao-e-patrocinacao-parada-lgbt-de-sp/</a> <a href="https://www.mundorh.com.br/philip-morris-brasil-apoia-programacao-da-23a-parada-do-orgulho-lgbt-de-sao-paulo/">https://www.mundorh.com.br/philip-morris-brasil-apoia-programacao-da-23a-parada-do-orgulho-lgbt-de-sao-paulo/</a> <a href="https://athosgls.com.br/philip-morris-brasil-apoia-programacao-da-23a-parada-do-orgulho-lgbt-de-sao-paulo/#prettyPhoto">https://athosgls.com.br/philip-morris-brasil-apoia-programacao-da-23a-parada-do-orgulho-lgbt-de-sao-paulo/#prettyPhoto</a> (initial piece)
Sites that report the LGBT Parade where Philip Morris Brasil is mentioned, alongside other companies, as a sponsor of the event	<a href="https://www.opovo.com.br/blogsecolunas/emersonmaranhao/2019/06/18/chamar-de-viado--para-mim--e-elogio.html">https://www.opovo.com.br/blogsecolunas/emersonmaranhao/2019/06/18/chamar-de-viado--para-mim--e-elogio.html</a> <a href="https://www.meioemensagem.com.br/home/marketing/2019/06/21/parada-lgbtq-e-oportunidade-para-patrocinio-b2b.html">https://www.meioemensagem.com.br/home/marketing/2019/06/21/parada-lgbtq-e-oportunidade-para-patrocinio-b2b.html</a> <a href="https://falauniversidades.com.br/pride-o-que-rolou-na-parada-lgbt-2019/">https://falauniversidades.com.br/pride-o-que-rolou-na-parada-lgbt-2019/</a> <a href="https://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/brasil/2019-06-22/desafiada-por-diretrizes-do-governo-parada-lgbt-espera-reunir-3-milhoes-em-sp.html">https://ultimosegundo.ig.com.br/brasil/2019-06-22/desafiada-por-diretrizes-do-governo-parada-lgbt-espera-reunir-3-milhoes-em-sp.html</a> <a href="https://catracalivre.com.br/cidadania/parada-lgbt-e-espaco-para-diversao-e-luta-ressalta-organizadora/">https://catracalivre.com.br/cidadania/parada-lgbt-e-espaco-para-diversao-e-luta-ressalta-organizadora/</a> <a href="https://propmark.com.br/anunciantes/parada-lgbt-atrai-patrocinadores-comprometidos-com-a-causa/">https://propmark.com.br/anunciantes/parada-lgbt-atrai-patrocinadores-comprometidos-com-a-causa/</a> <a href="https://odocumento.com.br/desafiada-por-diretrizes-do-governo-parada-lgbt-espera-reunir-3-milhoes-em-sp/">https://odocumento.com.br/desafiada-por-diretrizes-do-governo-parada-lgbt-espera-reunir-3-milhoes-em-sp/</a> <a href="https://berainbow.com.br/avon-patrocinacao-parada-lgbtq/">https://berainbow.com.br/avon-patrocinacao-parada-lgbtq/</a> <a href="https://viajabi.com.br/programacao-parada-lgbt-sp-2019/">https://viajabi.com.br/programacao-parada-lgbt-sp-2019/</a> <a href="https://pt-br.facebook.com/CapaoAtento/posts/2421845341170687">https://pt-br.facebook.com/CapaoAtento/posts/2421845341170687</a> <a href="http://www.oniversoabominavel.com/cultura/com-o-tema-de-50-anos-de-stonewall-parada-lgbt-de-sp-pretende-levar-cerca-de-3-milhoes-para-a-av-paulista/">http://www.oniversoabominavel.com/cultura/com-o-tema-de-50-anos-de-stonewall-parada-lgbt-de-sp-pretende-levar-cerca-de-3-milhoes-para-a-av-paulista/</a>

continue...

Contents	Address
Sites that report Philip Morris Brasil's commitment to the inclusion of the LGBT population in its staff (participation in business forums)	<a href="http://revistaviag.com.br/2019/05/17/14647/">http://revistaviag.com.br/2019/05/17/14647/</a> <a href="https://observatoriog.bol.uol.com.br/noticias/2019/05/grupo-dignidade-promove-seminario-sobre-diversidade-em-curitiba">https://observatoriog.bol.uol.com.br/noticias/2019/05/grupo-dignidade-promove-seminario-sobre-diversidade-em-curitiba</a> <a href="https://gay.blog.br/noticias/philip-morris-brasil-pmb-passou-a-fazer-parte-do-forum-de-empresas-e-direitos-lgbt/">https://gay.blog.br/noticias/philip-morris-brasil-pmb-passou-a-fazer-parte-do-forum-de-empresas-e-direitos-lgbt/</a> <a href="https://naoegayse.tumblr.com/post/174225250056/philip-morris-brasil-pmb-passou-a-fazer-parte-do">https://naoegayse.tumblr.com/post/174225250056/philip-morris-brasil-pmb-passou-a-fazer-parte-do</a> <a href="https://www.forumempresaslgbt.com/post/o-14%C2%BA-f%C3%B3rum-celebrou-5-anos-do-f%C3%B3rum-de-empresas-e-direitos-lgbt-com-a-presen%C3%A7a-de-nove-presidentes">https://www.forumempresaslgbt.com/post/o-14%C2%BA-f%C3%B3rum-celebrou-5-anos-do-f%C3%B3rum-de-empresas-e-direitos-lgbt-com-a-presen%C3%A7a-de-nove-presidentes</a> <a href="https://www.baguete.com.br/noticias/09/02/2018/grupo-debate-inclusao-lgbt-no-rs">https://www.baguete.com.br/noticias/09/02/2018/grupo-debate-inclusao-lgbt-no-rs</a> <a href="http://revistaviag.com.br/2018/05/23/encontro-reune-lideres-em-sao-paulo-para-discutir-inclusao-de-lgbt-nas-empresas/#gallery[2]/3/">http://revistaviag.com.br/2018/05/23/encontro-reune-lideres-em-sao-paulo-para-discutir-inclusao-de-lgbt-nas-empresas/#gallery[2]/3/</a> <a href="https://divirtasecuritiba.com/2019/05/15/diversidade-e-inclusao-mobilizam-empresas-em-curitiba/">https://divirtasecuritiba.com/2019/05/15/diversidade-e-inclusao-mobilizam-empresas-em-curitiba/</a> <a href="https://twitter.com/dignidadelgbt/status/1129775840982708227">https://twitter.com/dignidadelgbt/status/1129775840982708227</a> <a href="https://bandnewsfmcuritiba.com/evento-debate-inclusao-da-populacao-lgbti-no-mercado-de-trabalho/">https://bandnewsfmcuritiba.com/evento-debate-inclusao-da-populacao-lgbti-no-mercado-de-trabalho/</a> <a href="https://revistaladoa.com.br/2019/04/noticias/seminario-de-empresas-networking-diversidade-e-inovacao-acontece-em-maio-em-curitiba/">https://revistaladoa.com.br/2019/04/noticias/seminario-de-empresas-networking-diversidade-e-inovacao-acontece-em-maio-em-curitiba/</a>
Philip Morris Brasil job offer sites with an emphasis on diversity – partnership with an initiative called trans-employment (job offer with a specific profile for transgender population)	<a href="https://www.guiaglbs.com.br/blog/?p=3748">https://www.guiaglbs.com.br/blog/?p=3748</a> <a href="https://empregobahia.com/quer-trabalhar-em-uma-multinacional-envie-seu-curriculo-para-a-philip-morris/">https://empregobahia.com/quer-trabalhar-em-uma-multinacional-envie-seu-curriculo-para-a-philip-morris/</a> <a href="https://divulgaempregos.com.br/2018/10/philip-morris-abre-vaga/">https://divulgaempregos.com.br/2018/10/philip-morris-abre-vaga/</a>
<i>Pink Money</i> concept approach	<a href="https://economia.uol.com.br/noticias/redacao/2019/06/13/parada-lgbt-sp-marcas-marketing-patrocinadores.htm">https://economia.uol.com.br/noticias/redacao/2019/06/13/parada-lgbt-sp-marcas-marketing-patrocinadores.htm</a>
Philip Morris website that highlights commitment to gender diversity	<a href="https://www.pmi.com/who-we-are/inclusion-and-diversity">https://www.pmi.com/who-we-are/inclusion-and-diversity</a>

Source: The authors.

After reading the researched material, we decided to maintain the initial piece already mentioned as the central document of the analysis. The other papers provided supplementary information about the company's efforts to bring the LGBT public closer and publicize this fact. This decision was made due to the rich discursive elements in the index piece, which allow identifying the investment of this tobacco company in the LGBT theme and its use of this relationship to promote its products.

The Critical Discourse Analysis proposed by Norman Fairclough (2008) was adopted to analyze the discovered material. Fairclough (2008) emphasizes the importance of language as social practice, which along with the text and the discursive practice, composes what he calls the three-dimensional conception of discourse. The textual analysis encompasses vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and textual structure. This analysis prioritizes vocabulary, cohesion, and textual structure elements. At the second level, in the analysis of the discursive practice, we explore the concepts of strength of the statements, which are “the types of statement acts (promises, requests, and threats) they established” (p. 103), and it is necessary to understand the context situation in which it was produced; coherence, which is the property of a text to make sense, where it is fundamental to whom this text makes sense to and what the purpose of this is, the ideological assumption; and intertextuality (property of a text including and adapting other texts or dialoguing with them). At the third level, the concept of discourse as a social practice is discussed concerning ideology and hegemony (as a conception of power). The ideology operation model proposed by Thompson (RAMALHO; RESENDE, 2011; THOMPSON, 2011) was employed as a complementary guiding theoretical element in analyzing ideological aspects.

The piece used for the analysis was written in Portuguese; therefore, the critical discourse analysis was performed in the same language. As a result, the translation will probably never be precisely faithful to the original analysis, given the specific nuances of each language.

## Results and Discussion

The piece selected for analysis can be characterized in terms of a hybrid discursive genre, both as a report or news about the company's sponsorship of the LGBT Parade and promotion of its new product and new market strategy (“smoke-free future” – company's investment in so-called heated tobacco products.

**Table 2.** Index piece “*Philip Morris Brasil supports programming for the 23<sup>rd</sup> LGBT Pride Parade in São Paulo*”

**Title:** PHILIP MORRIS BRASIL SUPPORTS PROGRAMMING FOR THE 23<sup>RD</sup> LGBT PRIDE PARADE IN SÃO PAULO

**Subtitle:** *Company reinforces LGBTI + inclusion policies and celebrates diversity and innovation*

For the first time, **Philip Morris Brasil (PMB)** is the sponsor of the 23<sup>rd</sup> LGBT Pride Parade in São Paulo, one of the largest diversity events in the world. This initiative takes place at a critical time when the company reinforces its policies aimed at this community.

**Excerpt 1** [To promote a diverse and inclusive work environment, the company has already extended some benefits to its employees’ partners, such as health insurance and national/international transfer assistance. From now on, homoaffective unions are considered in their benefit guidelines for all purposes, guaranteeing the LGBTI + population, for example, rights such as childcare allowance and marriage leave.]

**Excerpt 2** [But the main novelty is the 120 or 180-day paternity leave, guaranteed to same-sex couples and single parents, equivalent to maternity leave for heterosexual couples.]

**Excerpt 3** [PMB’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is supported by its affinity group **#bold**, created by a group of employees to celebrate diversity, attract and retain LGBTI + talent within the organization.]

**Excerpt 4** [Among its actions is also the publication of the transgender and gender transitional people policy, which brings concepts to ensure understanding on the topic, and rules on the use of the social name and the right to privacy, for example.]

**Excerpt 5** [Respecting and accepting differences are fundamental values for our company. Sponsorship of the São Paulo LGBT Pride Parade reinforces Philip Morris Brasil’s commitment to being an inclusive company that values diversity.]

**Excerpt 6** [Also, *it shows the important role of diversity in the transformation of the company, which proposes a smoke-free future, based on innovation and the development of products that are a better alternative than cigarettes*], says Karen Ramirez, Director, People and Culture, Philip Morris Brasil.

**Excerpt 7** [In May 2018, Philip Morris Brasil became part of the **LGBTI + Companies and Rights Forum**, alongside other large companies working to respect the human rights of this population, within the Brazilian corporate universe.]

continue...

### For the inclusion and diversity

The company will sponsor the Cultural Fair of LGBT Diversity, which will take place on June 20, at downtown Praça da República. Traditional within the week of the LGBT Parade in São Paulo, the Fair reaches its 19<sup>th</sup> edition, gathering thousands of visitors. It has booths of different products in fashion, accessories, books, plastic arts, decoration, and music.

**About Philip Morris Brasil.** Affiliate of Philip Morris International (PMI), a leader in the tobacco market, dedicated to the manufacture and sale of cigarettes, heated tobacco products, electronic devices and accessories, Philip Morris Brasil has been operating in the country since 1973.

**Excerpt 8** [The company is spearheading a transformation in the industry to create a smoke-free future, replacing cigarettes with smoke-free alternatives] which, while not without risk, are a much better choice than continuing to smoke.]

**Excerpt 9** [With multidisciplinary areas under development, state-of-the-art facilities and scientific evidence, **Excerpt 9A** [PMI aims to ensure that its smoke-free products meet the preferences of adult consumers] **Excerpt 9B** [and strict regulatory requirements], **Excerpt 9C** [for the benefit of society, company and its shareholders].

**Excerpt 10** [PMI's new portfolio includes heated tobacco and nicotine-containing e-cigs. PMI estimates that, on May 1, 2019, approximately 7.3 million adult smokers worldwide have already stopped smoking and migrated to the use of their heated tobacco product, IQOS, which is currently available for sale in 47 markets. For more information, visit the PMI, PMIScience, and [www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/science-and-innovation](http://www.pmi.com/markets/brazil/pt/science-and-innovation) websites.]

**Source:** Own elaboration based on Athosgls website (Athosgls, 2019).

As already mentioned, the material was released on the Athosgls website (LGBT population-focused) in the news section. It was generically signed by the vehicle where the dissemination takes place (“By Athosgls, on June 19, 2019”). The news-type textual genre reinforces the idea of supposed neutrality, impartiality, impersonality, and can lead readers to evaluate the material in the same way: apparently neutral content, without conflict of interest, without bias. In other words, news, in principle, it would fundamentally aim to inform about facts and not to present an opinion or analysis on the subject (LAGE, 1993). Thus, it helps neutralize the fact that the text promotes a product and the supposed intention of divulging the positive achievements of the company, whose products are known to be harmful.

On the other hand, at the end of the text is a subtopic that reads “Information: Oboé Comunicação Corporativa”. This credit comes just below an excerpt subtitled “About Philip Morris Brasil”, which provides more direct information about its

new strategy to promote smokeless tobacco products, where one can even see the commercial name of one of them.

On the Philip Morris Brasil website, the company Oboé appears as responsible for serving the press and for preparing the “infographics developed to talk about the history of the company and its innovation, sustainability, governance, inclusion & diversity programs” (OBOÉ COMUNICAÇÃO, 2021), as per a post made on its Instagram profile (@oboecomunicacao). Several other infographics are available on the PMB website without mentioning their authorship (PHILIP MORRIS BRASIL, 2020).

Furthermore, another fact is that the same content used in the analysis of this study was published on another website aimed at the LGBT population, “signed” by the website itself (despite the identical content) and in a second, with minor changes in the text (Table 1).

Therefore, the fact that the same content was published in different vehicles, without the recognition of material replication, and knowing that the Oboé company provides services to Philip Morris, reinforce the hypothesis that the text may have actually been prepared by this communication company at the service of PMB. And as such, also contributes to corroborate the supposed promotional purpose of the piece, aimed at promoting the company’s new product.

We should portray here the broader context englobing this fact. As mentioned earlier, the tobacco industry has invested in so-called electronic smoking devices, including e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products, in recent years. PM has invested primarily in the latter, with arguments of supposed risk reduction, compared to regular or burning cigarettes. They also argue that they would be a smoking cessation instrument (CUNHA; MOTTER; BRANCO, 2022; PHILIP MORRIS INTERNACIONAL; GAMA, 2018).

However, several studies have accumulated to date demonstrating the toxicity of the components of electronic smoking devices and their already observed effects on human health (BANKS *et al.*, 2022; CHIDARLA, 2022; SIMONAVICIUS *et al.*, 2019). There is also no conclusive evidence about its role in smoking cessation. Fundamentally, there is concern about the impact of including new products in successful tobacco control policies and the undue influence of the tobacco industry (WHO, 2021). Of note is the creation of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (<https://www.smokefreeworld.org/>) by Philip Morris International.

One of the pillars of this foundation is the concept of risks reduction associated with tobacco products, publicly assuming this commitment. To this end, it has been successful in co-opting important names in global tobacco control and seeking partnerships (not consistently successful) with respected global health institutions and bodies, which has also generated criticism and contrary reactions from tobacco control experts and opinion-makers (VAN DER EIJK; BERO; MALONE, 2019; MALONE *et al.*, 2017; WHO, 2017b).

In Brazil, the sale of such products is prohibited (BRASIL, 2009). Representatives of the tobacco sector escalated the pressure on this Agency to review this Resolution, including when the actions related to the sponsorship of the LGBT Parade occurred and the news on the subject, object of this article (ASSUNTA, 2020; SILVA; MOREIRA, 2019).

Another point that helps to compose the setting in which the index piece was produced concerns the legislation in the country that prohibits the advertising of tobacco products in any media and even at its points of sale (BRASIL, 2011). This is a measure recommended by the FCTC in its article 13 (INCA, 2015), mainly to prevent the initiation of the use of tobacco derivatives, which usually occurs in childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood.

Thus, in a setting where a company that promotes a product (heated tobacco) and a strategy (“smoke-free world”) in a country where the advertising of tobacco products and the sale of the product in question are prohibited, it is obviously necessary to use strategies that can somehow circumvent such prohibitions to make the dissemination of these new products/strategies reach their target audience. Apparently, there would be two purposes: to say that the product exists and what would be its advantages; create a favorable and supportive environment to reverse the ban on its sale in Brazil.

In this sense, the use of the news textual genre, as explained, would fulfill the role of diluting the idea that the company would be promoting its product, which would constitute a violation of current legislation. At the same time, it leads the reader’s attention to the positive facts presented there, also contributing to their engagement in the agenda presented by the company – a smoke-free future and market entry of its new product.

At the end of the news, there is an apparent disclosure and promotion of the product, in the paragraph that follows the subheading “About Philip Morris”.

Noteworthy is that, in the same way that the full text was replicated in different vehicles, this paragraph was also published in other media related to different themes and on other websites targeting the LGBT population (RS: CORONAVÍRUS..., 2021; PHILIP MORRIS BRASIL TRANSFORMA..., 2021; PHILIP MORRIS BRASIL TEM ..., 2021; PHILIP MORRIS BRASIL CELEBRA..., 2021). A common feature to all are positive guidelines, and somehow also permeated by the concept of innovation: artificial intelligence focused on monitoring retail; publication of the company's integrated report, with innovation achievements and alleged corporate social responsibility actions; announcement of a new marketing manager. It denotes, therefore, the intention to publicize its new strategy/product and a supposed intention to support and seek support from different opinion-makers and strategic groups to introduce these new products in the Brazilian market.

The text is full of linear connections and arguments as if it shows a single common thread: PMB's concern and commitment to supporting diversity in the LGBT population and its new smoking products.

Concerning modalization, it is a text with a high level of commitment, starting with the title and the first subtitle, followed by excerpts 3 and 5. The highlight for the terms *supports*, *reinforces*, *commitment*, *endorsed*, *values*, *inclusive*, and *valorizes*, which seem to fulfill the function of denoting the high level of commitment of the company to the theme. It can also be considered a courteous, non-attacking text with positive content throughout its extension.

Worth mentioning is that seeking an association with positive guidelines to make their image more favorable to society, fleeing or minimizing criticism, attacks, or even lawsuits is a common practice of companies whose products are controversial, including the tobacco industry (MCDANIEL; MALONE, 2009; SMITH, 2012; SZCZYPKA et al., 2007; TESLER; MALONE, 2008). Some reports of the approach of the LGBT population not only by the tobacco industry, the object of this work, but other companies whose products are criticized by society are observed, especially for the harmful effects on health, such as alcoholic beverages and food industries. Therefore, they seem to fulfill a similar function of promoting products and guaranteeing or increasing the market, associated with supporting their actions. (OLIVEIRA, 2021; BELLONI, 2015; PEPSICO; HEINEKEN..., 2022).

Several strategies are used, some of which were identified in this journalistic and promotional piece, such as using a positive approach and the association with the

agenda of inclusion and support for diversity. The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World website, makes a broad approach to the concept of gender, including intersectionality, with a yearning to connect to the black feminism discourse. The tobacco industry's use of the strategy of supporting causes and minority groups as a hybrid way of promoting their products and improving their corporate image has already been described vis-à-vis blacks, Hispanics, and the LGBT population (LEE et al., 2014; THOMPSON et al., 2020; WASHINGTON, 2002; YERGER; MALONE, 2002). The approach to minority groups by the tobacco industry has been going on for years, a strategy reported in internal company documents (which were made public by a lawsuit in the United States). Selecting these target audiences seems to be justified by some factors: greater social vulnerability; the need for these groups to receive support (including financial support), visibility and acceptance by society (which would facilitate the company's relationship with them); companies seek recognition as socially responsible by supporting minorities (WASHINGTON, 2002).

A recent example of this strategy's success is the recognition of Philip Morris Brasil receiving the Municipal Seal of Human Rights and Diversity, granted by the City of São Paulo. The company received the Seal in the Transversalities category for its work supporting female leaders, respecting diversity, and guaranteeing LGBT professionals (PHILIP MORRIS BRASIL RECEBE..., 2020).

Regarding the vocabulary used, the terms *diversity* and *inclusion* (with the diverse and inclusive variants) are used several times and communicate very directly with the LGBT agenda, besides other movements or concepts of the search for equality and social justice.

The text also highlights the support to the LGBT population through labor strategies for recognizing and valuing this workforce, which can be seen in excerpts 1 and 2. These strategies can also be observed in the documents identified in the search and quoted previously related to offering jobs for transgender people and emphasis on respect for gender-related diversity in their work environments (Table 1). In 2020, the firm published on its website and some news sites its "Global Policy for Transgender People and People in Gender Transition", which brings the discourse of the inclusive work environment, support for diversity, respect for Brazilian legislation, and guidelines to support transgender employees (PHILIP MORRIS BRASIL ADOTA..., 2020; PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL, 2020; REDE ABERJE, 2020).

Following the line focused on corporate issues, emphasizing the management of its human resources, excerpts 7 and 9C communicate very clearly to their investors and the market, conjuring up neoliberal ideas about the alliance between the market, society, and the common good. Some reports emerged on the subject in the search on this subject, especially regarding PMB's participation in that Forum (Table 1).

Excerpt 9A denotes the company's assumed commitment to publicize, promote, and sell its products to adults only. However, one of the tobacco industry's biggest criticisms concerns the marketing and promotion of its products to children and young people (CAMPAIGN FOR TOBACCO-FREE KIDS, 2010). Therefore, this choice of vocabulary seems to fulfill the task of associating the company's image with social responsibility concerning the protection of children and youth, placing itself as a partner of public health and observant of laws and rules (after all, some Brazilian laws restrict the sale of cigarettes to minors, while other laws aim to inhibit both the sale and the promotion of products for this age group) (BRASIL, 2013; BRASIL, 2008; BRASIL, 1996).

It is important remember the relationship between tobacco companies and tobacco growers through an integrated production system that ends up creating a dependence relationship between them. Tobacco plantations are primarily focused on the family farming model, which implies involving the whole family, including children, all of whom are subject to some diseases, besides the exploitation by the companies and indebtedness of a large part of these families. Hence an inconsistency with the image of corporate social responsibility sought by the tobacco industries (KORNALEWSKI, 2021; WROBLESKI, 2014; INCA, 2021; GUIMARÃES *et al.*, 2021; PINHO; DORNELLAS, 2021).

Words like *innovation*, *transformation*, *future*, and *last generation*, associated in some points with the lexicon *diversity*, help align the idea of "acceptance" and support to LGBT diversity, the new tobacco products, bringing a modern posture to the company. The idea conveyed is that of a company ahead of its time, innovative, attentive to trends and transformations, both for society as a whole and its products and customers, as can be seen in excerpts 6, 8, and 9.

Support for the LGBT cause (seen implicitly as an "innovation") is used as a thematic or ideological bridge to enter the company's current theme, which would be the launch of smoke-free tobacco products (the second "innovation"), pointed out as a transformation, a vision of the future. The discursive strategy here is to associate

the company with innovation, whether cultural/behavioral by supporting inclusion and LGBT rights, or technological, when launching new “alternatives” to cigarettes.

On the same theme, in 2019, the company made disclosures through various vehicles, including widely circulated newspapers, of its campaign “We need to talk” (PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL, 2019), which included a website (which was taken off the air). In this one, people could read, right on the home page, the question “Why do we need to talk about alternatives?”, with some answers like “It is bad to look at you crooked”, “It is bad to get away from you”, and “It is bad to be judged and excluded from the discussion”. Such statements used to describe what appears to be supposed discrimination against smokers could be applied to the prejudice suffered by the LGBT population.

In excerpt 5 and the recent materials disclosing the policy of including the transgender population in its workforce, the company again links gender diversity and its products, highlighting its new “smoke-free” line: “Respecting and accepting differences are fundamental values for our company. We are committed to being an inclusive company that values diversity, as we know its importance for the transformation of our firm, which proposes a smoke-free future, based on innovation and the development of products that are a better alternative than the cigarette” (PHILIP MORRIS ADOTA..., 2022; REDE ABERJE, 2020).

In excerpt 9B, addressing the topic of smoke-free products, using the expression “**meet [...]** the **strict regulatory requirements...**” communicates intertextually with the regulatory bodies, in the case of Brazil, the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), which has a sector responsible for regulating tobacco products. Using the word “strict” can be seen as a criticism of the resolution adopted as excessive. In association with the “We Need to Talk” campaign run by the company, there also seems to be an intention to characterize the agency as refractory to dialogue. Another point would be the antithesis to the concept of freedom regarding the neoliberal ideal of diminishing the role of the State in regulating the actions of large corporations (which favors them in promoting their products and maintaining their markets) and the very concept of freedom, often used by the tobacco industry in different situations (including a brand of cigarettes) (INSTITUTO BAT, 2013; MATTOSO, 2013; BIALOUS *et al.*, 2010; AMOS; HAGLUND, 2000). Not infrequently, it is associated with other agendas to enlist allies in this common cause, and so dear to everyone – freedom – and indirectly to the current company’s

agenda. Finally, in the same way as already explained regarding respect for the legislation to protect minors, here the company also shows itself to be an observer of the legislation referring to electronic smoking devices, albeit rigorous, reinforcing the discourse of corporate social responsibility.

The intention to sell and promote products is explicit in excerpt 10, with the expression “*new portfolio*” followed by the commercial name of the heated tobacco product and links to access the company’s websites, where more information is available on the subject.

Even concerning the discursive practice, it is a text with significant strength in its statements and reports of assertive actions. The whole piece is very purposeful and affirmative, deftly shifting support to the LGBT population, highlighting values of commitment to inclusion and diversity, affirming them as marks of the company’s innovative nature, and then presenting its new product, advocated as equally innovative.

A constituent part of the triad for the critical discourse analysis proposed by Fairclough, the social practice includes the concept of ideology as an instrument for maintaining power relationships, ensuring, albeit temporarily, hegemony. As already described in the introductory part of this work, it is worth mentioning here that this is the power exercised by a tobacco transnational, representing a massive concentration of economic power in the current globalization model.

The piece analyzed here also allows identifying some criteria proposed by Thompson to evaluate the ideology’s operating modes. Rationalization (use of a chain of reasoning, of rational, sometimes legal foundations) and narrativization (stories, facts, traditions, and customs legitimizing performance) elements are found in the text. Narrativization is presented in a logical and temporal chain, justifying Philip Morris’ role and commitment to supporting diversity, whether of the LGBT population or developing new products, always attentive to global changes. The excerpts already cited here addressing benefits (childcare allowance, marriage leave, and paternity leave) mention the use of the social name and the right to privacy by transgender people. Finally, the expression “*smoke-free products meet [...] the strict regulatory requirements*” bring clear rationalization elements, with arguments related to the legality of the actions. Universalization elements (specific interests treated as general interests) can also be seen in excerpts 9A and 9C of Table 2: “[...] *the PMI aims to ensure that its smoke-free products **meet the preferences of adult consumers** [...], for*

*the benefit of society, the company, and its shareholders*". In other words, it assigns a commercial interest of the company to adult consumers and society as a whole.

Concealment (hiding, denying, or obscuring relationships of domination) is used not only by the tobacco industry, represented here by Philip Morris but by other corporations whose products may harm the population. The use of euphemism in the terms "Smoke-free future" and "Smokeless future" stands out here. The text points out how Philip Morris has been investing and focusing on the topic of smoke-free products, failing to mention, or hardly mentioning the regular cigarette, besides highlighting its "good deeds" in the field of supporting diversity linked to the LGBT population, more than its most popular product whose social acceptance is negligible today, and on which there is exhaustive scientific evidence accumulated about its harm (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (US) Office on Smoking and Health, 2014).

The use of aspects of unification (building a form of unity that links individuals in a collective identity), which gains much concreteness with creating the *hashtag #bold* (excerpt 3 of Table 2), can be identified in the text. It is, therefore, a clear example of symbolization (*#bold*), understood as the "construction of symbols of unity and collective identification" (p. 27) (RAMALHO; RESENDE, 2011).

Curiously taking its product – the regular cigarette, most widely used and which produces smoke – as an enemy of the tobacco industry, the idea contained in this analyzed piece, the presentation of a new product line and a "smoke-free future", works as a kind of purge of the other (symbolic construction of an enemy – in this case, the regular cigarette). The tobacco industry makes use of this resource throughout its existence, as has already occurred regarding cigarettes with filters and those using descriptors such as light or ultralight, always aiming to minimize the negative impact of their products, waving to others supposedly of better quality, less toxic, and with solid marketing actions crucially supporting such a strategy (POLLAY; DEWHIRST, 2002).

Finally, the concept of social change should be revived from the perspective that increasing knowledge and awareness of the tobacco industry's discourse aimed at the LGBT population transforms the power and domination relationships imprinted there. In this sense, this analysis can contribute to bringing this topic to the fore of debate in the health field, more specifically in tobacco control and the health of the LGBT population. Thus, can contribute also to highlight the relevance of including

the statements and participation of minority groups in the decision-making and formulation of tobacco control policies (MALONE, 2014) and including the topic of tobacco control (and its representatives) in the health programs and actions aimed at the LGBT population.

## Limitations

The study did not identify and, thus, did not bring as elements of analysis the views of representatives of the LGBT population on the facts reported and discussed here. How, and if so, are such strategies employed by the tobacco industry (and even other corporations) perceived, and possible reactions on this issue by the LGBT community, are points not addressed in this work and may bring essential elements to future analyses.

## Conclusions

This work brought an example of action by the tobacco industry to gain and preserve new markets. It is about the association with groups and themes (in this case, the LGBT population) that can somehow neutralize the attacks and criticisms suffered by the type of product sold by this industry. We observed the intention of promoting a new product associated with the approach and nearing of opinion makers, respected institutions, and the general population in the last resort. A strategy that can lead to an increase in the consumption of tobacco products in the LGBT population, improve the corporate image, and disseminate and promote its new products to the general population.

Noteworthy is that the material analyzed here reveals that the information about this approach was retrieved from an advertising piece that takes the form of news on a website aimed at the LGBT population. This format seems to fulfill a function of circumventing the legislation banning the advertising of tobacco products and the sale of electronic smoking devices, while transmitting neutrality, impersonality, and facilitating the disguise of the real intention and strategy employed.

Thus, this study briefly portrays the performance of the tobacco industry with this public, indicating the need for further research on the strategies adopted and the impact on the prevalence of consumption of tobacco derivatives in this population (information on the LGBT population in extensive population surveys is

critical). It is noteworthy that smoking and its discursive cooptative strategies must be addressed in tackling the vulnerability and inequality related to health issues in the LGBT population.<sup>1</sup>

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## Note

<sup>1</sup> A. de M. Carvalho: design, analysis and interpretation of data; article writing; final approval of the version to be published. V. de M. Fonseca: conception; relevant critical review of intellectual content; final approval of the version to be published. S. F. Deslandes: design, analysis and interpretation of data; relevant critical review of intellectual content; final approval of the version to be published. The authors are responsible for all aspects of the work in ensuring the accuracy and integrity of any part of the work.

## Resumo

### *Patrocínio da parada LGBT pela indústria tabagista e promoção de seu produto de tabaco aquecido sob a ótica da análise crítica do discurso*

O Brasil tem avançado em ações de controle do tabaco, resultando em grande declínio da prevalência de tabagismo. Entretanto, é fundamental identificar populações mais vulneráveis, como as pessoas LGBT. Este estudo teve como objetivo analisar a produção discursiva que sustenta a busca de apoio e penetração da indústria tabageira junto à população LGBT, tomando o caso do patrocínio da Philip Morris Brasil à parada LGBT em São Paulo em 2019. A metodologia utilizada foi análise de discurso Crítica de notícia publicada em um blog. A análise da peça aponta para utilização de vocabulários como diversidade, inclusão, modernidade e inovação, que dizem respeito à causa LGBT e ao lançamento de novo produto. O texto traz alto grau de comprometimento e tom cortês, fazendo uso de recursos discursivos que associam a empresa às ideias de inovação técnica e comportamental. Comunica intertextualmente com órgãos regulatórios acerca da entrada no mercado brasileiro de seu novo produto (proibido no Brasil). Faz uso de diferentes operadores ideológicos, como o eufemismo do *futuro sem fumaça ou futuro livre de fumaça*. O trabalho apresenta uma estratégia da indústria do tabaco para promover seu produto de tabaco aquecido enquanto apoia a causa LGBT e promove imagem corporativa positiva.

► **Palavras-chave:** Pessoas LGBT. Indústria do tabaco. Responsabilidade social. Produtos do tabaco.

