

# Fashion, consumption and trends: how television and digital influencers instigate fashion in Brazil

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## **Fashion, consumption and trends: how television and digital influencers instigate fashion in Brazil**

### **ABSTRACT**

This article aims to discuss the relationship between fashion and the media and their influence on people's consumption actions. It aims to show that consumption trends are used by companies to endorse the process of buying a product. Such trends represent the inclinations of consumers and may indicate future changes in the consumption of products. The methodology used was a bibliographic study of how the development of the media, particularly television, in Brazil and also an analysis of two advertising campaigns with two different celebrities in order to understand how the endorsement was used by the company. It was realized that using celebrities or digital influencers is a marketing strategy that is effective when it comes to presenting or selling a product, as long as that celebrity has empathy and affinity with what is disclosed.

**Keywords:** Fashion. Consumption. Tendencies.

## **Moda, consumo e tendências: como a televisão e os influenciadores digitais instigam a moda no Brasil**

### **RESUMO**

*O presente artigo pretende discutir as relações entre a moda e a mídia e sua influência nas ações de consumo das pessoas. Tem como objetivo mostrar que as tendências de consumo são utilizadas pelas empresas para endossarem o processo de compra de algum produto. Tais tendências representam as inclinações dos consumidores e podem indicar as transformações vindouras no consumo dos produtos. A metodologia utilizada foi um estudo bibliográfico de como o desenvolvimento dos meios de comunicação, em particular a televisão, no Brasil e também uma análise de duas campanhas publicitárias com duas celebridades distintas a fim de entender como o endosso foi utilizado pela empresa. Foi percebido que utilizar celebridades ou influenciadores digitais é uma estratégia de marketing que se mostra eficaz quando se trata de apresentação ou venda de um produto, desde que tal celebridade apresente empatia e afinidade com o que é divulgado.*

**Palavras-chave:** Moda. Consumo. Tendências

## **Moda, consumo y tendencias: cómo la televisión y los influencers digitales instigan la moda en Brasil**

### **RESUMEN**

*Este artículo tiene como objetivo discutir la relación entre la moda y los medios de comunicación y su influencia en las acciones de consumo de las personas. Su objetivo es mostrar que las empresas utilizan las tendencias de consumo para respaldar el proceso de compra de un producto. Estas tendencias representan las inclinaciones de los consumidores y pueden indicar cambios futuros en el consumo de productos. La metodología utilizada fue un estudio bibliográfico de cómo el desarrollo de los medios de comunicación, particularmente la televisión, en Brasil y también un análisis de dos campañas publicitarias con dos celebridades diferentes con el fin de comprender cómo fue utilizado el respaldo por parte de la empresa. Se percató que usar celebridades o influencers digitales es una estrategia de marketing que resulta efectiva a la hora de presentar o vender un producto, siempre y cuando esa celebridad tenga empatía y afinidad con lo que se divulga.*

**Palabras clave:** moda. consumo. tendencias

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This article intends to demonstrate, through bibliographic research and analysis of advertising campaigns, how television and digital influencers play a relevant role in the consumption of Brazilian fashion. To this end, two advertising campaigns headed by two Brazilian celebrities were analyzed. It was noticed that one of them was totally assertive, while it denotes errors in the conception of advertising and the chosen celebrity did not endorse the product as the company expected.

The 20th century was marked by major changes in the technological and communications field. These changes brought transformations in people's lives in the countryside and cities. We are interested in knowing whether, with the advancement of the media, the consumption habits of urban cities population have changed.

The way fashion product brands and the media deal with social issues are relevant points to think about fashion. People want to consume products from certain brands, who supposedly think like them, who have the same values. This is a phenomenon that, although old, gained major proportion from the second half of the 20th century onwards.

Bourdieu (2017) brings us the concept of *habitus* that "are the generating principles of distinct and distinctive practices", they are the ways of acting, thinking and seeing the world of people according to their family upbringing. According to him, the subjects would act through an incorporated structure, a *habitus*, which would reflect the characteristics of the social reality in which they were previously socialized. The way to act, think, see the world. Each subject's action would thus tend to reflect and update the marks of their social position and the structural distinctions that define it.

Bourdieu (2017) also states in his theory of cultural good will that there is an effort to appropriate the dominant culture by those who do not have it. As an example we can mention the acquisition of a fake handbag of a famous brand, thus wanting to demonstrate belonging to a certain social group. There is also the opposition: the dominant cultural hierarchy aimed at reversing the position occupied by the dominated culture. For example, we can identify minimalist and "basic" clothing by a wealthy group that does not want to be identified by ostentation.

This denotes the stratifying character of social classes in fashion. In other words, the bourgeoisie copies the nobility's clothing, which then changes its clothing more and more frequently, as it cannot use the same models as an inferior social class. Simmel (2008, p. 23) reinforces the need for imitation when he informs us that it "provides the individual with the peace of mind to remain alone in his/her actions."

The 19th century is known as the time when fashion made more progress, and the meaning of the term is consolidated. The advance of the textile industry, the introduction of the sewing machine, the development of the ready-made clothing market favour the access to fashion, giving rise to a certain democratization, which does not mean equality. Rainho (2002, p. 19) tells us that "it is in the 19th century that a diversified production of discourses about fashion originated. At that moment, it becomes an object to be shown, analyzed and registered."

Lipovetsky (2009, p. 79) adds that it is from the 19th century and until the 1960s that modern fashion is characterized by two biases: haute couture and industrial clothing. Industrial clothing makes fashion take shape and present itself "under signs of marked differentiation in terms of techniques, prices, renown, goals, consistent with a society

divided into classes, with ways of life and aspirations neatly contrasted."

It can be seen that fashion is built from historical events that cause variations in clothing and in the way of dressing and behaving as a result of these same events. Political and social contexts increasingly influence fashion trends and fashion history itself. Roche (2007, p. 21) further reinforces that clothing becomes part of debates about what is necessary and what is superfluous, luxury and mediocrity, wealth and poverty after the historical movements of Catholic Reform and Counter-Reform and Protestant. The author also makes it clear that "the history of clothing tells us a lot about civilizations; it reveals its codes."

Fashion was and continues to be a mirror of society as well as of social and cultural manifestations. Since war times, world events have influenced society's consumption and fashion habits. Emily Durkheim, when defining social fact as the ways of exercising in the individual an external coercion that interferes in his actions and attitudes and that is general in a given society indicates that:

Most of our ideas and our tendencies are not elaborated by us, but come to us from outside, they can only penetrate us by imposing themselves, that is all that our definition means. It is known, moreover, that not all social coercion necessarily excludes the individual personality. (DURKHEIM, 2007, p. 4)

It is noticed, then, that fashion is present in our lives, in our decision-making and at the society in which we live much more than we imagine.

## 2 THE FORMATION OF TRENDS

We can define trend, first, from the etymology of the word. The term derives from the word *tendentia* that comes from

the verb *tendere*, from the Latin, meaning "tending to" or be "attracted to." In other words, since the beginning, the word has been loaded with the sense of alterity, originality. Dario Caldas, founder of the methodology of the Observatório de Sinais offices [1], which has been carrying out research and analysis of behavior and consumption trends since 2002, points out that:

The etymology also reports that the word remained in rare use until the 18th century – that of the Enlightenment, the Encyclopedia and the French Revolution, it is worth remembering – when it was resumed by scientific language as “force heading towards a certain sense, tending towards an end” or, simply, “dynamism”, “strength”, “effort”, “impulse”. It is here, then, that the concept of trend acquires another characteristic that defines it until today: its purpose, the idea of movement that exhausts itself. (CALDAS, 2013 p. 89)

We can see that human being's desire to research what was to come has been around for many years. Caldas adds that “the concept of trend that has become widespread in contemporary society was built based on ideas of movement, change, representation of the future, evolution and on quantitative criteria”. (Caldas, 2013 p.57) Trends’ study allows us a greater understanding of the principles and ideas that guide and motivate society, they are a fundamental part of our emotional, physical and psychological environment.

Riezu (2011, p.31) define trend as “an element that will walk through the market – more or less transformed – for about five years”. In the *coolhunting* world [2], there is also the term *fad* “which has a much shorter lifecycle, affects a very small segment of shoppers and has little potential. According to the author, another interesting way to differentiate trend from *fad* is to observe whether the product satisfies a need. For a product to remain on the market,

choosing the right time to launch is also extremely important so that this product does not become a *fad*. The author gives us as an example the case of the *Ipod*. Apple waited for people to become familiar with digital music players to just launch the product. Another important factor is the possibilities of accessing the trend. It needs to be "understandable, cheap, easy to get and attractive". And finally, the repetition of the movement, if there are similar manifestations in different segments, it is a sign that certain trend has spread. As for the *fads*, the author quotes:

The *fad* comes as fast as it goes. Its enthusiastic buyers promote word of mouth, but they are also buoyant. Today, they like one thing, tomorrow another, and the most important thing is not "what it is", but having it as soon as possible... Due to this volatility, *fads* are enemies of analysis, implementation and control. They arise spontaneously and have a really short life cycle: a sudden explosion, a *hot* period, and an abrupt sunset. They usually share a feature that is more fun than useful. (RIEZU, 2011, p.33)

Consumer markets' transformations that took place in the post-war period with the demarcation of new audiences, together with the growing influence of media products, were an extremely important factor in leveraging the study of trends.

Trends are used by companies to endorse the purchase process of a desired product. They represent the inclinations of consumers towards a particular sign and are responsible for figuring out the coming changes in fashion. Human being's needs are changeable, the desire to belong to something, to understand and to be understood are part of human being's essence. According to Thompson:

Products change and fashions have their ups and downs. But the architecture of the human

mind is ancient, and the most basic needs of the human being are eternal: the needs of belonging, escape, aspiration, understanding, being understood. That's one of the reasons why the causes and consequences of hits find parallel in History, and as we'll see, creators and audiences alike are forever replaying the anxieties and joys of past cultures. (THOMPSON, 2018, p. 15)

Trends are present in all areas of society, whether in fashion of clothing and accessories, which will be endorsed by celebrities, or in politics, consumption, leisure, music and several other areas. People are always looking for the new *hit* of the moment.

For Bauman (2013), the desire to be different and stand out from the crowd makes people look for the latest fashion trends.

Driven by the impulse to be different, to escape the crowd and the competitive rut, the mass pursuit of the latest fashion (of the moment) soon makes today's marks of distinction common, vulgar and trivial; even the slightest lapse of attention or even a momentary reduction in the speed of sleight of hand can produce effects opposite to those intended: the loss of individuality. (BAUMAN, 2013, p. 25)

It is also necessary to understand that there are micro, macro and mega trends. The microtrends are small innovations that can be applied in bulk and often turn on macro trend when repeated frequently. Macrotrends have a longer duration and are the result of multiple feelings in society. Lindkvust (2010, p.6) also mentions that macro trends can last "about a decade or two and will include changes and economic cycles, political winds and the emergence of new technologies". They are usually consequences of some change in economics, politics or technological developments. About megatrends, Lindkvist (2010, p.6) discloses: "these are profound social changes that

usually last for more than two decades." We can mention, as an example, the great advance of conservatism around the world. Many countries, including Brazil and the United States, elected as president of the Republic, politicians from the conservative wing.

### 3 FROM TV TO DIGITAL INFLUENCERS

Caldas (2013) points out that the *trickle effect* model was harshly criticized after the 1960s, as it was found that some innovations did not need the legitimacy of the elite as they reached the middle class directly, like the case with fashion launched by soap operas. Nowadays, fashion launched by digital influencers also doesn't need the elites' approval, because those who approve are the influencers themselves.

The trickle effect was criticized from the 1960s onwards, when consumer euphoria made it clear that certain innovations directly reached the middle classes, without needing legitimacy from the elites, that is, without necessarily originating at the top of the pyramid; today, in the same category, we could mention the fashions launched by soap operas, which directly reach various social strata. (CALDAS, 2013 p.351)

The printed media is among the first instruments of influence in society's customs. At the beginning of the 20th century, it was women's magazines that dictated fashion and customs. Women, in order to become excellent housewives, followed to the letter everything that these vehicles published. Then, with the advent of radio, news reached homes at a much faster rate than before.

Previously, cinema would already become a media vehicle that would influence thousands of young people as it had the ability to mobilize a huge number of spectators in front of a giant and colossal screen. Cinema was and still is capable of

suggesting ways of dressing, haircuts and speaking. Looking even deeper into the film industry, it's not just movies that will affect society in some way, but also festivals and media awards events like the Oscars, Emmys, Cannes Film Festival and others. Celebrities cruising the red carpets are prestige targets and viewers want to know who made the dresses, accessories and makeup. Thus, Freitas (2005) still informs us of the importance of the media as articulators of fashion trends.

The media is one of the greatest articulators of fashion trends, not only through publicity and advertising, but also through journalistic coverage of major sporting and artistic events. The screens of cinema, television, computers and luminous billboards play a preponderant role in this context. Today, fashion is, above all, consumption, whether of objects or ideas. From this point of view, we cannot only consider the commercial aspects, but all the ideological apparatuses that are produced or appropriated by the mass media. (FREITAS, 2005, p.126)

Thus, as artifacts created by design, the costumes of characters from movies, series and soap operas carry characteristics that will also influence viewers' identification with the character. The costume, according to Castro e Costa (2010), is the costume or set of accessories and clothing that will be used by the artist to compose his character. The costumes of film and television characters are of great importance because, in addition to composing the character, marking a character's change in personality, marking a change in time and epoch, determining the character of the character, it can also mark a time, become a fashion reference and, consequently, appear in store windows and become an object of desire and consumption by thousands of spectators.

Just like today, the public wanted to imitate their idols, and, for that, they dressed in a similar way, if not like them.

As mentioned before, fashion has always been the mirror of the great movements of society, as cinema, in the 1930s and throughout the 20th century, or television in the middle of the 20th century, and we can say that blogs too, nowadays, are the great showcases of these transformations.

In a very general sense of the costume, being an integral part of the art direction, is to create the look of the television narrative through the costumes of its characters. Thus, the costume designer will develop and/or choose clothes that understand the needs of the script and the direction, respecting the general concept of what the author and the director of the story want to show. The costume cannot be seen detached from a larger context. It works as an important auxiliary source to understand the narrative, and often plays a prominent role due to its importance for the vision that one has of what is intended to be accomplished with the television fiction program. (CUNHA, 2009, p. 32)

Lipovetsky (2009) shows us that mass culture has been in fashion since the 1950s, when stars and idols contributed to the industry's recovery.

If mass culture is immersed in fashion, it is also because it gravitates towards figures of prodigious success, who drive extreme adorations and passions: stars and idols. Since the 1910-20, the cinema has never stopped making stars, they are the ones that the advertising posters show, they are the ones that attract the public to the dark rooms, they are the ones that allowed the recovery of the weakened movie industry in the 1950s. With the stars, fashion shines with all its splendor, seduction is at the height of its magic. (LIPOVETSKY, 2009, p. 248)

In this context, celebrities become important actors in this endorsement process. If a renowned actor or actress starts to promote a certain product, the chance of that product being

successful in sales is much greater than without any endorsement, as quoted by McCracken (2012):

The endorsement process depends on the symbolic properties of the endorser celebrity. [...] An endorser celebrity is defined as any individual who takes advantage of public recognition and who uses that recognition in the name of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement. (MCCRACKEN, 2012, p.109)

Lipovetsky (2009) further reinforces that idolatry by the stars, however contradictory it may seem, reveals an individuality in relation to their family and social environment. And that this phenomenon is more evident among young people is "because at this age, aesthetic tastes and preferences are the main means of asserting personality". (LIPOVETSKY, 2009, p. 255)

When television hits homes worldwide, the influence that the media has on people's lives is already great, but it would turn into something much bigger. In Brazil, television from 1950 to 1964 was still considered a luxury item, as few houses had it. Often, the entire neighborhood gathered to watch talk shows or soap operas. Television arrives and is already becoming an important vehicle of communication and consumption influence for the masses. Williams (2016) further enlightens us on the importance of the emergence of technology for television and how this was decisive for the new communication systems that would come later.

Television today is still one of the medias that most influences people's consumption, as it is a showcase of what happens in the world. According to Thompson (2018), the first time Americans spent more time interacting with digital devices than watching television was in 2012.

Television has replaced film as the most popular medium for visual storytelling, along with a

huge shift in attention and dollars from once-a-week movie tickets to cable TV bills, whose monthly payments have supported a vast ecosystem. from live sports, dramas both brilliant and formulaic, as well as endless *reality shows*. (THOMPSON, 2018, p. 20)

Based on this thought, we can say that television is an important channel for the dissemination of trends and also their fixation. As people spend a good part of their lives watching programs in this media, they are subject to the influence of this information vehicle.

With the advent of the internet, information is transmitted faster and more frequently. Along with the internet, new communication models such as blogs and social networks emerge. In the early 2000s, blogs were very popular on the web as they were the fastest means of obtaining information, in the specific case of fashion, bloggers became the new trend references taking the place of style editors from magazines of fashion.

These people became a product sales phenomenon, directly influencing a large portion of consumers who followed their lead. It is believed that this phenomenon occurred because they are closer to the mass and thus the public has more access to the products, as blogger and currently digital influencer Camila Coutinho quotes in her book:

Unlike a magazine, which is born with a well-defined audience, the blog and social networks have the enchanting freedom to simply be whatever the writer wants. The audience finds the blog and stays on your side for that, for similar interests, as in a group of friends. The world began to value more and more personal opinions. Products recommended by ordinary girls disappear from the shelves. The phenomenon attracted the interest of the traditional press, which recognized and validated the strength of these new opinion makers. At the same time, vehicles began to feel in their pockets the discomfort of seeing part of

the advertising budget, previously guaranteed, being directed to girls who wrote from their rooms. There was a period of resistance and controversy, but it was a change in behavior with no return. (COUTINHO, 2018, p. 23)

In addition to blogs, social networks like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter have put these bloggers closer to their audience because they are where their followers are too, at the gym, the mall, the beauty salon and elsewhere. Today, bloggers from the early 2000s have given way to so-called digital influencers. According to Silva (2016, p.5), the term digital influencers refers to:

those people who stand out on the networks and who have the ability to mobilize a large number of followers, guiding opinions and behaviors and even creating exclusive content. The exposure of their lifestyles, experiences, opinions and tastes end up having a great impact on certain subjects. Among the multitude of individuals who exercise this role lately, we can highlight: Thaynara Gomes, Gabriela Pugliesi, Hugo Gloss and Kéfera. (SILVA, 2016, p.5)

Television and the internet also bring people closer to celebrities. They stop being those unachievable human beings from the cinema and start to visit people's homes every day. And because they have access to millions of people, given the extent of access promoted by the internet and television, they are able to become endorsers of products and ideas. The way a product is endorsed is usually the guarantee of sales success. It is not enough for a celebrity to appear using or promoting a product; consumers today know if that endorsement is genuine or something that was built just to get them to consume the product, according to McCracken:

An endorser's effectiveness depends, in part, on the meanings he or she brings to the endorsement process. The number and variety of meanings contained in celebrities is very

large. Distinctions of status type, class, gender, age, personality and lifestyle are represented in the pool of available celebrities, putting an extraordinarily varied and subtle palette of meanings at the disposal of the MKT system. (MCCRACKEN, 2012 p.114)

The choice of a certain celebrity will determine the sales success of a product or idea. Take as an example the choice of singer Sandy to endorse Devassa beer. It can be said that the endorsement of this public figure was not valid; the company was unable to reach the consumer through this campaign, perhaps because the celebrity in question had already announced, on several occasions, that she does not like beer, as reported by the site [Economia.ig\[3\]](#). Either the company did not bother to bring a true image to the consumer, betting that the singer, just because she was famous, would guarantee the success of the product, or intended to positively surprise the consumer with the unusual poster girl, who knows by insinuating that there will always be a "want"<sup>1</sup> where it is not expected, this would be another hypothesis raised by the site [vermelho.org\[4\]](#). In any case, the strategy did not work and consumers, for not identifying Sandy with the brand, did not buy the idea and the campaign was not the expected success.

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<sup>1</sup> In Brazil, the term “devassa” means the someone, especially a woman, is sexy and not afraid to expose herself.

FIGURE 1: DIVERSE ADVERTISING



Source: <http://tyrannusmelancholicus.blogspot.com.br/2011/05/associar-marcasprodutos-celebridades.html> Accessed: 27/03/2018

Fashion has changed a lot over the last 150 years. For Crane (2008), it is important to differentiate between class fashion and consumer fashion. These two types incorporate three aspects of fashion: meaning, diffusion and social differentiation. For this study, we will focus on consumer fashion, which, according to the author, "there is much more stylistic diversity and much less consensus on what is 'in' in a given period". Still quoting Crane, consumer fashion "is created to satisfy the supposed demands of different categories of consumers, particularly young people, who use it as a means of defining and expressing their personal identity."

In the next example, the endorser celebrity manages to show the consumer that the product is really part of their life. In Figure 2, former tennis player Gustavo Kuerten is the poster boy for the clothing brand Lacoste. In this case, the endorsement is perfect, as this brand was created by a tennis player and is still the sponsor of today's great players, such as Novak Djokovic and Alize Cornet. The endorsement here becomes clear and valid. The consumer does not feel cheated and can see the possibilities of purchase.

FIGURE 2: GUGA AND LACOSTE



Source: <http://br.fashionnetwork.com/news/Gustavo-Kuerten-eo-novo-rosto-da-campanha-Lacoste-Unconventional-Chic-,257511.html#.WrqvyIUfIFU> Accessed on: 03/27/2018

McCracken (2012) informs us of the importance of perfect endorsement:

It is precisely the meanings of celebrity that make it useful for the endorsement process. An endorsement succeeds when an association is forged between the meanings of the cultural world on the one hand and the endorsed product on the other. (MCCRACKEN, 2012 p.115)

People is interested in the world of celebrities because it is part of everyday life, and advertising uses these cultural meanings to promote products and promote trends in fashion, makeup, hairstyles and habits, as stated by Lipovetsky (2009, p. 248):

The stars aroused mass mimetic behaviors, their eye and lip makeup, their mimes and postures were largely imitated; there were even, throughout the 1930s, competitions for look-alikes by Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo. Later, Brigitte Bardot's hairstyles, "ponytails" or wavy, laid-back appearances by James Dean or Marlon Brando were prominent models. (LIPOVETSKY, 2009, p. 248)

The question is, how the consumer sees these transfer instruments. According to McCracken (2012), the consumer

perceives the people, objects and context of the advertisement that are contained in the products and, if they are well worked, the transfer process is almost immediate. Hinerasky (2014, p.7) corroborates by saying that:

The recognition of brands around the potential of personalities led to the recurring search for partnerships or hiring these individual operators in advertising, part of the strategies and understanding of the contemporary market. (HINERASKY, 2014, p.7)

It is also worth mentioning the use of T- shirts as panels for the dissemination of ideas, such as the global fight against breast cancer, the T-shirts of the turtle protection program of the TAMAR project, the Doctors without Borders t-shirts, etc.

Twenty First century's digital influencers have become capable of influencing a niche market and are able to change advertising investment strategies because they are able to act on the consumer preference of a new generation of consumers and audiences.

#### **4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As we can see, the changes that took place in all spheres of society at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century brought changes in the way in which people used to consume. Each country has developed differently, based on its social, economic and cultural conditions. Thus, there was a great migration from the countryside to the city and a significant change in the consumption needs of the population at the time.

During the 20th century, communication had a great influence on the consumption habits of city dwellers. With the arrival and democratization of television and the internet, people have more access to what we call fashion trends.

Television actresses become models of attitude and lifestyle because they are often in our homes and digital influencers have become part of our lives. We have the feeling that they speak directly to us, therefore the endorsement of a product and the legitimization of a lifestyle becomes more real than it used to be for movie and radio actresses and also on the runaway of fashion shows.

It was possible to see that the use of celebrities and digital influencers is assertive and effective when it comes to presenting and selling a product to the public.

It is also noticed that the media, in addition to helping influence the consumption of various products, can also disseminate ideas and lifestyles with a faster speed. People feel more confident in joining a trend when they realize that others are also using it, and when these people are soap opera actresses or digital influencers, product endorsement is much more efficient and quicker. The media manages to put on the agenda subjects, ideas, movements and fashion trends at a very high speed and reach.

[1] Signal Observatory is an office of strategic intelligence and trends. <http://observatoriodesinais.com.br/>

[2] Coolhunting is a term in the marketing world that refers to forecasting future trends and changes in consumption.

[3] <https://economia.ig.com.br/empresas/comercioservicos/piadas-sobre-a-sandy-e-devassa-se-espalham-no-twitter/n1238131968605.html>

[4] <http://www.red.org.br/noticia/148980-1>

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