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Vaporwave Microgenres in the Social Media Universe

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Abstract

If in the still recent past the process of creation and dissemination of artistic and cultural movements was conditioned by a structure led by artists, mediators and art connoisseurs or art critics who maintained relationships with entrepreneurs, patrons or curators of art museums and/or galleries, in the last decade, strongly marked by new technologies, social networks have assumed an increasingly important role in this process. This study aims to examine the proliferation of online communities, identify the digital platforms on which they manifest themselves, their importance as incubators for new artistic-cultural movements, and the changes in social behavior that accompany this process. This was done through the case study of the vaporwave phenomenon and its multiplicity in the social universe of the web. The results make evident the multiplicity and, simultaneously, the ephemerality of these micro genres, pointing to a paradigm shift in the production, distribution and consumption of audiovisual content.

Keywords: cyber culture; digital art; digital platforms; social networks; virtual space.



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1. Introduction

If in the still recent past the process of production and dissemination of artistic and cultural movements was conditioned by a structure led by artists, mediators and art connoisseurs or critics who maintained relationships with entrepreneurs, patrons or curators of art museums and/or galleries, in the last decade, strongly marked by new technologies, social networks have taken on an important role in this process. This study thus relies on three fundamental assumptions:

- The growing importance of social networks in the formation of opinion and, simultaneously, in the proliferation of influencing movements of that opinion.
- The paradigm shift in the formation, conception and dissemination process of artistic and cultural models.
- The affirmation of digital technologies, which are proving to be determinants in changing social behaviors and consequently in artistic processes, whether in terms of their formation or in terms of the positioning and relationship between author and observer (who are now involved in an increasingly interactive process).

In relation to vaporwave, the choice for this case study is due to the fact that this movement can be seen as a paradigmatic example of an artistic-cultural movement that emerges in and through digital platforms and has a strong ideological component.

2. Methods

This study is the result of exploratory research conducted through a bibliographic collection and a case study. Data collection was essentially through indirect documentation, which focused on bibliographic research, subsequent selection of collected information on the topic or related topics, and qualitative data analysis. The relevant bibliography "provides an opportunity not only to define and solve problems that are already known, but also to explore new areas where problems have not yet crystallized sufficiently" (Marconi & Lakatos, 1992, p. 44).

The choice of case study as a method of investigation is justified by the fact that it is a contemporary phenomenon, embedded in a real context, about which there is little scientific knowledge, leaving room to explore a situation that is not yet fully understood.

The investigation also involves a technical component of explanatory research, nonparticipatory intensive direct observation, applied to the identification and analysis of the digital platforms in which the vaporwave movement has more expression.



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3. The vaporwave phenomenon

Vaporwave is a digital subculture that emerged exclusively on the Internet in the early 2010s. According to Lupovich (2015), the movement's name is a reference to the term vaporware, which is used in the computer industry to refer to a product that is advertised to the public but whose development is abandoned before it is officially released, meaning it never materializes. Douaihy (2019) suggests that the name is a satire of the capitalist practice at the time (1980s and 1990s) of promising non-existent products, and illustrates vaporwave's interest in consumption and emptiness, both figuratively and literally.

The movement initially emerged as an offshoot of the chillwave music genre and "owes much of its development to the albums *Chuck Person's Eccojams Vol. 1* by Daniel Lopatin in 2010 and *Far Side Virtual* by James Ferraro in 2011" (Colton, 2018). As Whelan and Nowak (2018) suggest, a number of digital platforms were instrumental in the early development of the genre, notably Tumblr and Turntable.FM and later Reddit, 4chan and Bandcamp. In this sense, the platforms present in cyberspace not only enable new forms of connection and communication, but also new artistic practices.

Killeen (2018) argues that the genre has evolved in an eclectic way by incorporating a particular and iconic visual aesthetic. For Zavala (2018), it is the fact that it is closely associated with a visual aesthetic that sets this musical internet phenomenon apart from others. "More than just a musical genre, vaporwave has multiple articulations and valences among the online community" (Killeen, 2018, p. 626).

3.1 Origin and dissemination

Vaporwave is often referred to as an internet genre because it developed exclusively on and through digital platforms. This digital subculture first emerged as a subgenre of electronic music. According to Pereira (2017), the origin of this phenomenon is associated with the release of *Chuck Person's Eccojams Vol. 1* album in 2010, by Daniel Lopatin, who is considered the progenitor of the movement. According to Galil (2013), in its early stages, the movement developed essentially at the core of a virtual community created on Turntable.FM, a digital platform consisting of "streaming music through chat rooms" (William, 2011).

The 2011 album *Floral Shoppe* is considered the main culprit in popularizing vaporwave. Composed by producer and graphic designer Ramona Andra Xavier, who released this work under the pseudonym Macintosh Plus, the album remains one of the most well-known and celebrated of its kind and is commonly referred to as the epitome of vaporwave (McLeod, 2018). The album's most popular track, "Lisa Frank 420," has over 40 million views on YouTube alone.



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For Harper (2013), it was in 2013 that vaporwave exploded in popularity as a music genre, due to the large number of releases emerging in digital music sharing communities, such as Bancamp and SoundCloud.

The visual art of vaporwave, commonly known as "A e s t h e t i c s", appeared in 2011 as a visual complement to musical works and is present in album covers and music videos. The spread of the aesthetic associated with the movement first began on the blogging platform Tumblr and quickly spread to other digital platforms focused on sharing audiovisual content, such as Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube, and Reddit (Killen, 2018).

In 2015, the vaporwave aesthetic began to be embraced by mainstream or conventional pop culture. Currently, the influence of the vaporwave aesthetic is visible on different levels and in different pop culture contexts, namely internationally known artists, clothing brands, or even on TV (Gosling, 2020). "Vaporwave's aesthetics unintentionally bled into the mainstream, especially its visuals (...) the visual and aesthetic-first sense of vaporwave has long since left the confines of message boards and been embraced by the larger public, even if they don't recognize it " (Nordin, 2020).

3.2 Music genre

As a music genre, according to Glitsos (2018), vaporwave is influenced by chillwave, smooth jazz, new age ambient music, and especially the elevator music of the 80s called muzak. This opinion is reinforced by Mikhaylova (2017) who, in describing the genre, states that "the music itself sounds almost like elevator music". One of the most interesting features of the movement is the reappropriation and remixing of music from the muzak genre. This term is often associated with music classified as easy-to-listen music, elevator music, or corporate background music. Zavala (2018) describes muzak as a musical style used as background music in commercial and business spaces for purposes related to consumption or productivity, and to accompany different types of activities without interrupting or distracting the listener.

Vaporwave's reappropriation and manipulation of pre-existing music is inextricably linked to the process of creating musical works in this genre, which depends entirely on sampling, a process that refers to the use, manipulation, and reappropriation of excerpts from existing music or sounds. These excerpts are usually from "pop, rock, and R'n'B music from the 1980s, commercials, news clips, corporate music, and old video game sounds" (Killeen, 2018, p. 629). In this sense, vaporwave is representative of the practice of musical intertextuality (Glitsos, 2018).

When characterizing examples of the style, Glitsos (2018) mentions their repetitive structure, their short duration and their slow or dragged rhythm. Killeen (2018) highlights another particular characteristic of the genre, the deliberate destructive manipulation of sound, through the addition of distortion and noise or alteration of the rhythmic tempo and tonality of the music. Producers of this genre "digitally loop and fragment samples of pre-existent songs, altering the



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pitch and dramatically slowing the tempo to a lethargic state in which vocals and other identifying features of the original become almost unrecognizable.” (McLeod, 2018, p. 124).

Vaporwave music is often referred to as "hypnagogic pop", a term coined by David Keenan (2009) due to its sedative and dreamlike quality. In this sense, vaporwave aims to "transport the listener to a world they have never been to, dreamlike and surreal, but at the same time familiar and nostalgic, full of familiar references to get them emotionally involved" (Pereira, 2017).

3.3 Visual component

Vaporwave is proposed as an aesthetic experience that is evolving not only as a genre of music, but also as a kind of art. The aesthetic experience that vaporwave offers is closely related to its visual component. "Vaporwave isn't just something you listen to either, it's something you experience, and experiences include visuals." (Minor, 2016).

In terms of its aesthetic composition, vaporwave recycles visual elements from the past, namely from the 80s and 90s, which were disseminated through the media. Adam Trainer (2016) notes that the movement's digital artistic creations emerge in a context of cultural and informational oversaturation and are the result of the combination of popular collective memory and the personal histories of their creators, driven by digital technology but immersed in a desire to revisit the past.

In characterizing the vaporwave esthetic, Mikhaylova (2017) highlights that the movement is known for its use of imperfect graphics, images inspired by the early days of the Internet, Renaissance statues, cyberpunk imagery, Japanese characters, plants and trees (especially palm trees), the colors pink, purple, and turquoise, logos and icons from the 1980s and 1990s (especially from the computer industry), images of water, and obsolete computers.

Image recycling is a fundamental process in the creation of visual works of this type, performed through basic digital manipulation techniques such as cutting and pasting. Filho (2019) explains that the different visual elements (photographs, drawings, logos and other images) used in the compositions are downloaded from the Internet and overlaid and ordered using image editing tools until the intended esthetic is achieved, with no technical rigor required during the assembly process.

The vaporwave aestheticization exercise "can be understood as the collage and deterioration of the surface of media products being worked with. This is done in a very drastic way, by completely transforming the source files so that they lose their representative and referential character. Thus, they are no longer indexes of a seen world, but become pure digital surfaces consisting of an infinite number of points" (de Mello & de Arruda, 2017, p. 3).



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4. Vaporwave a microgenre turned microgenres

In *The Microgenre: A Quick Look at Small Culture*, Stevens & O'Donnell (2020) define microgenre as a subgenre of music characterized by its specificity and niche nature, pointing out that hyper-specific formulas and subgenres have always been found in popular culture. However, the authors add that despite its earlier history, the concept of microgenres has gained prominence in the digital age and is more often associated with later trends. "Although the concept of the microgenre as a highly specific generic phenomenon is not new, the unique iterativeness of microgeneric formation means we are more keenly aware of them in our era of cultural supersaturation" (Stevens & O'Donnell, 2020, p. 2). In the 21st-century, microgenres are multiplying at an accelerating rate. The speed with which they gain recognition and prominence has also accelerated considerably. This microgenre explosion was in part a result of "software advances, faster internet connections, and the globalized proliferation of music" (Kneschke, 2017). Marcus (2017) asserts that by the early 2010s, most microgenres were linked and defined across multiple platforms on the Internet, often as part of the popularity and hype generation for a newly noticed trend. "This belief in the power of the internet to create substantial musical scenes out of thin air was a very common one in the early 2010s; every new microgenre emerged with media fanfare about the utopian power of the internet to create new scenes, and every single one of them (...) used virtual space to transcend the physical realm" (Marcus, 2017). It is in this context that vaporwave emerges as a microgenre of electronic music.

Most of these online based microgenres have a very short lifespan, they are ephemeral phenomena that fade out at the same speed as they appear. "At the turn of the decade, kids whipped themselves into a frenzy by throwing together a few signifiers and plastering the results across a new constellation of social platforms. There was chillwave, witch house, seapunk, shitgaze, vaporwave, cloud rap, and countless other niche sounds with gimmicky names. As soon as one microgenre flamed out, another would take its place, and with it a whole new set of beats, buzz artists, and fashion trends" (Marcus, 2017). Stevens & O'Donnell share the same opinion, on how "microgenres can be overnight sensations that disappear as quickly as they appear" (2020, p.1), but mention the possibility that "they can develop gradually, collecting attributes each more nuanced only to be incorporated later on into broader and recognizable categories" (2020, p.1). Unlike other microgenres that emerged in the same spatial and temporal context and were almost immediately forgotten, vaporwave not only remains relevant more than a decade after its appearance, but also continues to flourish and multiply in the form of various microgenres. These emerge not only as a result of vaporwave's direct influence, but are closely related to it. It can be said that these microgenres are part of the vaporwave's expanding universe and cannot be dissociated from it.

Although it started as a microgenre of electronic music, vaporwave has continued to develop, exploring a particular and iconic aesthetic and solidifying its ideology, it has begun to acquire artistic and cultural importance. In this sense, vaporwave is no longer a microgenre, nor just a



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musical genre. It has matured into an artistic and cultural movement, sustained by a digitally structured subculture. “Vaporwave isn’t just a genre; it’s an approach and an attitude—not just to music, but to popular culture” (Chandler, 2016). “The underground movement of dreamlike corporate irony, vaporwave, is coming to mean more to us than just a

musical micro-genre. Originally stemming from sonic critiques of a media saturated, technology-laden, money-silenced society laid down by the wave-surfing pioneers mentioned previously, vaporwave has since become self-aware and is beginning to stand as a nostalgic form of rebelliousness that continues to experiment with the trends before it in everunpredictable ways” (Mallard, 2020).

Vaporwave in its original form can no longer be considered a microgenre, as it presents a very well-established sound, ideology and aesthetics, but it can be understood as a set of countless microgenres. Although this happens in other genres, what distinguishes vaporwave in this respect is the absurd amount of microgenres it is related to, which makes it almost impossible to differentiate and distinguish each one of them. For this reason, it's easier to just think of them as part of vaporwave. Both fans and artists have extended the microgenre's umbrella to include a wide variety of aesthetics (Mallard, 2020). When we refer to vaporwave, we include all the microgenres related to it,

The multiplication of microgenres associated with vaporwave is something highlighted by several authors. Chandler (2016) claims that “vaporwave artists have been quick to branch out, rising and falling in popularity until another supplants them” adding that “it seems that new subgenres, from mallsoft to vaportrap, pop up every day”. Broomfield (2016) states that “vaporwave seems to be having an identity crisis with all these child genres spawning off continuously”, suggesting that “this conundrum will either lead to the death of vaporwave, or be the kindling for something much greater” (2016). Since its inception, vaporwave has generated numerous microgenres of its own, “these countless versions show how all-encompassing this genre is becoming” (Jurgens, 2016). Despite the different designations, the vaporwave microgenres “share a similar aesthetic and philosophy” (Chandler, 2016). They reuse “some of the ideas from vaporwave and spreading them into new worlds and concepts” (Broomfield, 2016). While some microgenres within the sphere of vaporwave can be considered well-established subgenres (vaportrap, future funk), others are much smaller and less established, while still having a defined sound. Some have little to no defined sound, but a defined aesthetic.

The multiplicity of vaporwave can also be understood as the fragmentation of the genre into several subgenres. From this perspective, the microgenres associated with vaporwave do not correspond to an expansion or evolution of the movement, but are in fact a division into several categories, each focusing on a particular feature of the genre. “Many online subReddits and those on 4chan have attempted to invent sub-genres within vaporwave itself, but most faded away, and many didn’t make sense to begin with. There will always be hardcore fans compiling lists of their favorite, slightly different strains of vaporwave.” (Price, 2016).



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Vaporwave was a microgenre turned microgenres. Apesar do seu fim ser anunciado à muito tempo, a capacidade de se reinventar, e assumir várias formas, é o que mantém o movimento relevante. “Of all the various internet-bred genres that have come and gone over the years, vaporwave and its aesthetic seem to have had the most lasting impact” (Daly, 2020). The fact that it is connected to a vibrant online community that is established and has a strong presence on various online platforms helps the movement to develop and grow further. “Vaporwave as a genre takes many forms. Any form really. It’s a vibe. (...) It refuses to be reduced to anything, because it refuses to take a final form” (Daly, 2020).

5. Vaporwave microgenres in the social media universe

Since the advent of social networks, spaces have changed and with them the way we interact with each other. Thanks to the mix of private and public spaces, we can understand social networks as an evolution from physical social space to digital space. The emergence of new communication platforms has led to new types of relationships and consequently new behaviors.

The emergence and development of vaporwave in its various artistic manifestations took place exclusively on digital platforms, made possible by a number of features that these platforms offer. In this sense, social networks, online forums, blogs, streaming platforms, and websites play an extremely important role in the formation and organization of digital communities. In order to understand how the vaporwave movement manifests itself in the different digital platforms, it is necessary to identify the communication and interaction systems they provide to their users.

5.1 Social networks

Currently, the most relevant social networks in terms of number of users are Facebook and Instagram. For Rouet (2016), vaporwave's presence on Facebook is visible on artist pages, pages about a concept or personality, and private groups. For Rouet (2016), pages about a concept or a personality are particularly important for spreading the movement and fundamental for integrating new elements into the community. In relation to artist pages, Rouet (2016) notes that they are an essential resource for interaction between the artist and his audience. Facebook offers its users the possibility to create private groups whose content is restricted to specific individuals, as well as secret groups that are absolutely hidden and inaccessible to outsiders, which, according to Rouet (2016), allows artists and fans to organize themselves in a private environment. Organizing friendly private circles online is essential to building a social and cultural environment. We can equate this type of social behavior with the usual creation of a private circle of friends. The role of social media, by definition, is to create social environments.

The visual component associated with vaporwave is very present on Instagram, which can be explained by the fact that it is a social network known mainly for its functionality to share



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photos and videos between users. As the platform has grown in popularity, it has eventually replaced Tumblr as the main disseminator of the vaporwave aesthetic in cyberspace. In addition to the pages of the movement's artists, there are thousands of user pages, ordinary aficionados of the genre who can be considered digital curators of the movement, managing pages presented as virtual galleries dedicated to the exhibition of works by various vaporwave artists.

On Instagram, one of the main pages associated with the movement is Vapor95, a clothing brand that played an important role in bringing the vaporwave esthetic to the fashion world. The brand's Instagram page is used to showcase new products and spread the trend by sharing images associated with the movement. The brand initially appeared exclusively on Instagram and continued to evolve outside of the platform. Currently, the brand has a website, an app, and even a physical store in Los Angeles. Although the website functions mainly as a virtual store, it also has a blog that is regularly updated with articles about the movement. In addition to fashionable clothing and accessories, the brand also develops decorative items, books, tech objects, etc. All the illustrations and graphics used for the brand's products are made by some of the most famous artists of the vaporwave movement.

5.2 Streaming Platforms

Because vaporwave emerged as a digital-only subculture, the content it creates is tied to virtual space. Therefore, streaming platforms are fundamental to the distribution and storage of music, videos or other audiovisual content in the digital domain. Currently, the streaming platforms where Vaporwave is most present are Bandcamp, YouTube and SoundCloud. This can be explained by the fact that these platforms have tools that encourage communication and interaction between users, which distinguishes them from other similar platforms.

Bandcamp was one of the first platforms used by vaporwave artists and was quite important in promoting the movement as a music genre. The platform remains relevant within the community and attracts new users, whether they are artists or lovers of the genre.

According to Rouet (2016), most transactions of vaporwave albums take place on this website. It is essentially from this platform that labels and artists of the movement showcase, distribute, and sell their work, whether in physical or digital form. The platform allows artists to determine the value of their music themselves or distribute it for free. In return, the service retains a small percentage of the transactions made, which varies between 10% (physical sales) and 15% (digital sales).

A unique feature of the platform is the ability for artists and labels to customize the look of the site with simple editing tools that allow them to change text and background colors, include background images, and create headers and menus. "This freedom, the absence of fees, and the few taxes, allow the labels and artists of the vaporwave movement to organize themselves independently" (Rouet, 2016, p. 22).



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Bancamp's motto, found on the website itself, defines the platform as a virtual record store and music community that allows its users to discover, interact with, and directly support artists. It is this focus on interaction and proximity between fans and artists that enables the creation of a community on the platform, which also explains its importance to vaporwave, a movement associated with a digital community.

YouTube is a streaming and hosting platform for audiovisual content where any individual can post videos through a user account. It is one of the most popular websites in the world and allows videos to be viewed and shared on other digital platforms. In addition, the platform is also a social network. In this sense, Rouet (2016) explains that YouTube users can communicate with each other and with content creators through private messages. The platform also allows users to post comments on videos in a dedicated section that allows public discussions between users about any published content. YouTube offers users suggestions for other content based on what type of videos they are watching. This allows users to quickly discover new content that matches their personal interests.

Rouet (2016) points out that YouTube hosts many types of audiovisual content of the vaporwave genre, noting the existence of three types of distinctive content. The most common refers to songs released by artists, which are always accompanied by a visual component associated with the aesthetic of movement, whether static images depicting the artist and the work, or moving images such as video clips. This format is also used in compilations that include songs by various artists in the genre. The humorous content in the audiovisual format related to vaporwave is also quite present on the platform and, according to Rouet (2016), is essential to the style as it allows users to identify with it more easily. Finally, Rouet (2016) also highlights the informative content related to vaporwave. This type of content, visible in the form of album reviews, artist recommendations or documentaries about the movement, encourages users to think about the movement or certain elements of it.

In addition to Bancamp and YouTube, vaporwave content is also widely distributed via SoundCloud, a music and audio streaming platform. SoundCloud allows users to create an account from which they can publish music or audio files of any kind, completely free of charge and with few restrictions. In addition, the platform works similarly to a social network, as it offers a set of tools that allow interaction between users. It is possible to communicate publicly (via comments on artists' or creators' content) and privately (via private messages). SoundCloud's motto praises the diverse community of artists on the platform, which is known for its unique content and features, which include the ability to discover innovative music and exclusive podcasts. One of the benefits of the platform is the freedom it offers its users by connecting artists or content creators directly with their fans. In addition to publishing and sharing content, artists and creators can monetize content and receive detailed statistics and feedback from the SoundCloud community.



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5.3 Online Forums

Reddit is a community website organized as a kind of online forum where any registered user of the platform can create publications on any kind of topic. The peculiarity of Reddit, and what makes it particularly interesting for the vaporwave movement as a digital community, is that it consists of several unique sections called sub-Reddits, pages dedicated to a very specific topic and created by the users themselves.

In this context, the subreddit Vaporwave was founded in 2012 and has more than 200,000 members to date. In this space, community members share different types of content, such as reflections on the genre, album promotions or suggestions for new artistic projects. Rouet (2016) states that:

“Since it is a very active community, this platform allows a wide exchange among all the people gathered around this movement. Communication is done in a pseudo-anonymous manner, with the goal of communicating ideas to other unknown members. In vaporwave subreddit, the flow is very fast, a topic usually does not stay on the front page for more than a day. The voting system ensures that topics that users find interesting stay on the front page.” (Rouet, 2016, p. 12).

In 2014, the subreddit Vaporwave Aesthetics was founded. It is currently the space on the platform where the movement is most active and has 400,000 members to date. According to Rouet (2016), this space allows users to search or post audiovisual content related to the movement's aesthetics, such as a simple image that can be redirected from a blog like Tumblr, or a video that is usually shared through YouTube's streaming platform. In this way, users can access different sections of the community spread across multiple digital platforms as they are directed to the type of content they are looking for.

6. Digital communities in cyberspace

For Santaella (2003), cyberspace can be understood as a simulated environment in which people can interact, in an almost fictional representation of life in virtual space. Virtual space is no less real than a street, a beach, a restaurant or any other space, as the relationships established in this environment feed into all spheres of history, whether economic, political or social. According to Rouet (2016), a crucial point of vaporwave is that the style was born and developed exclusively in a virtual environment. Live performances by vaporwave artists or other physical representations associated with the genre are extremely rare. It is the establishment of this specific virtual space that allowed the movement to organize and flourish.

Vaporwave artists rarely specify their location and are not associated with or conditioned by a geographical identity. For Glitsos (2018), this is because, geographically, the vaporwave movement does not have a material origin. Lupovich (2015) reinforces this idea by explaining that the movement is characterized by not having a place associated with its origin, but rather



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by having its origin and development in the digital community that moves in different environments of cyberspace. Rouet (2016) highlights that vaporwave is also the first digital subculture, without a precise geographic location, to persist over several years. Before and after its emergence, microgenres such as sea-punk, witch house, chillwave, mallsoft, or hardvapor appeared on the Internet every year and quickly disappeared. Since 2011, vaporwave has populated cyberspace and its popularity continues to grow. It is the musical and social environment, organized in very specific spaces, that allows this style to endure. Regarding the paradigm shift associated with the emergence of digital subcultures, Jimison (2015) considers “the spaces in which these subcultures congregate to be a vital element in the development of their social and cultural capital, and essential to their phases of incubation and evolution. These spaces serve as sites for socialization, establishing a subcultural identity, and engaging in the economy of subcultural capital. Historically this occurred in cafés, bars, clubs, shops, and other physical locations, but in the past decade it has transitioned to either a completely online activity or a hybrid mixture of physical and virtual elements” (Jimison, 2015, p. 1).

Most art movements in history have always been associated with a location. Vaporwave, however, was born entirely on the internet. This is a fascinating feature of the genre; it clearly has no geographic location of origin. Moreover, it owes its existence only to the possibilities offered by the Internet. Through its global network, the community disseminates content and shares knowledge about the use of the software that produces the content. For Zavala (2018), the challenge of preserving an artistic movement that does not respond to a geographical location makes it difficult to identify the person responsible for preserving the content generated.

7. Conclusion

The vaporwave movement is the perfect case study to analyze the management and reappropriation of cyberspace by its users. This space and its organization are not specific to this movement, all globalized artistic styles are now largely organized around digital platforms in virtual space. Vaporwave, however, is the first subculture to emerge and organize exclusively in a digital environment and remain relevant in this space over a long period of time, in this case about a decade. The movement continues to be discovered and adopted by new cybernauts who contribute to the expansion of a digital community that includes artists or content creators in their various derivatives, publishers and fans of the music genre, esthetic curators, or even online shops specializing in products by notable artists of the movement.

The growing number of journalistic articles about this phenomenon, such as news and interviews with artists, reports, chronicles and opinion pieces about the subculture or reviews of artistic models of the genre, is an indicator that media interest in this phenomenon has increased from 2015, as evidenced by bibliographic research. As for academic studies, since 2017 there has been an increase in the number of scientific articles that take up vaporwave as a



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subject of study. Researchers' curiosity about this topic is becoming increasingly evident, as reflected in the bibliographic references cited in this study.

The identification and analysis of the presence of the vaporwave movement on different digital platforms made it possible to identify a social structure in specific virtual spaces with different characteristics and uses. These spaces determine the possibilities of their users and stimulate certain types of communication and, consequently, new behaviors. In turn, studying the behavior of movement agents allows us to understand the relationships that exist between individuals within digital communities. The movement is organized through different digital platforms, selected by users according to context and intention.

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