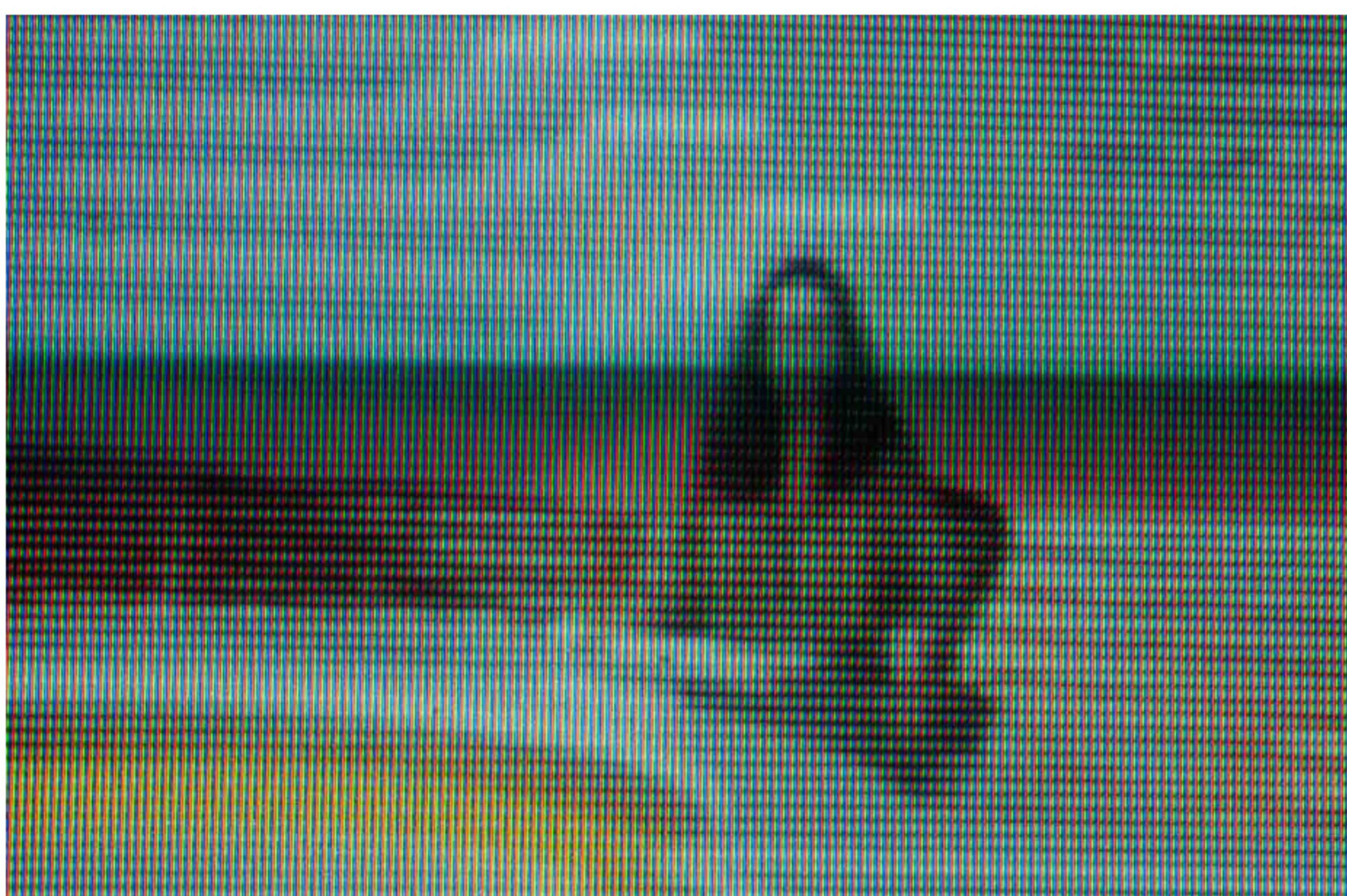


Analysis of the feminine beauty standards in TV journalism exposes lack of representativeness

Gabriel Jordani / 19 de dezembro de 2024 / In English



Communication | A study analyzed the physical traits of television journalists and detected not only a prevailing beauty standard but also an implicit requirement of makeup use

*By Gabriel Jordani

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*Photo: Flávio Dutra/JU. According to a study, Brazilian TV journalism is aligned to the country's current beauty standard

Slim figure, straight brown hair (never gray), faces with few or no wrinkles. This is the aesthetic standard for female journalists on Brazilian broadcast television according to a master's thesis defended in June and completed under the direction of the Graduate Program in Communication at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). The thesis analyzed the physical traits of female reporters and anchors from news programs on Record, SBT, Band and Globo.

The author of the study, Mariana Argoud Dias, confirmed this standardization after analyzing skin color, hair color, texture, and length, body shapes, makeup, wardrobe and accessories of 64 journalists that work in front of the cameras. Among the evaluated professionals, 92% were white, 62.5% were slender, 84% had straight hair, and 64% had no wrinkles. The research also identified the predominance of the use of sober colors, such as black and beige, and small accessories. The obtained data demonstrates that Brazilian television journalism is aligned with the country's current beauty standard. To better understand the impact of this information, Mariana interviewed four television journalists who work in broadcast TV. In these conversations, she came across Black professionals that had been victims of racism inflicted by their interviewees, for example.

Even though theoretically the use of makeup is not mandatory in the workplace, Mariana reports that one of the interviewed journalists admitted that women received a makeup kit from the technical team upon hiring. In this sense, it has been clear that TV journalism imposes certain requirements, even if those are not articulated verbally.

Despite such changes, lack of representation persists

Even though this is happening extremely slowly, Mariana has noticed progress in the representation of the female journalistic class over the years. She emphasizes that nowadays reporters openly displaying tattoos and piercings and wearing warm colors (like red) are becoming less uncommon, and there is also a growing presence of Asian professionals working in television.

"Things are changing slowly because people tend to give more credibility to a familiar standard on television, and television journalism reproduces what has already been seen. At great cost, through the work of social movements, this is gradually changing. The disruption of the standardization of media outlets causes discomfort in the population because they are used to a certain scenario, and when it changes, it has an impact."

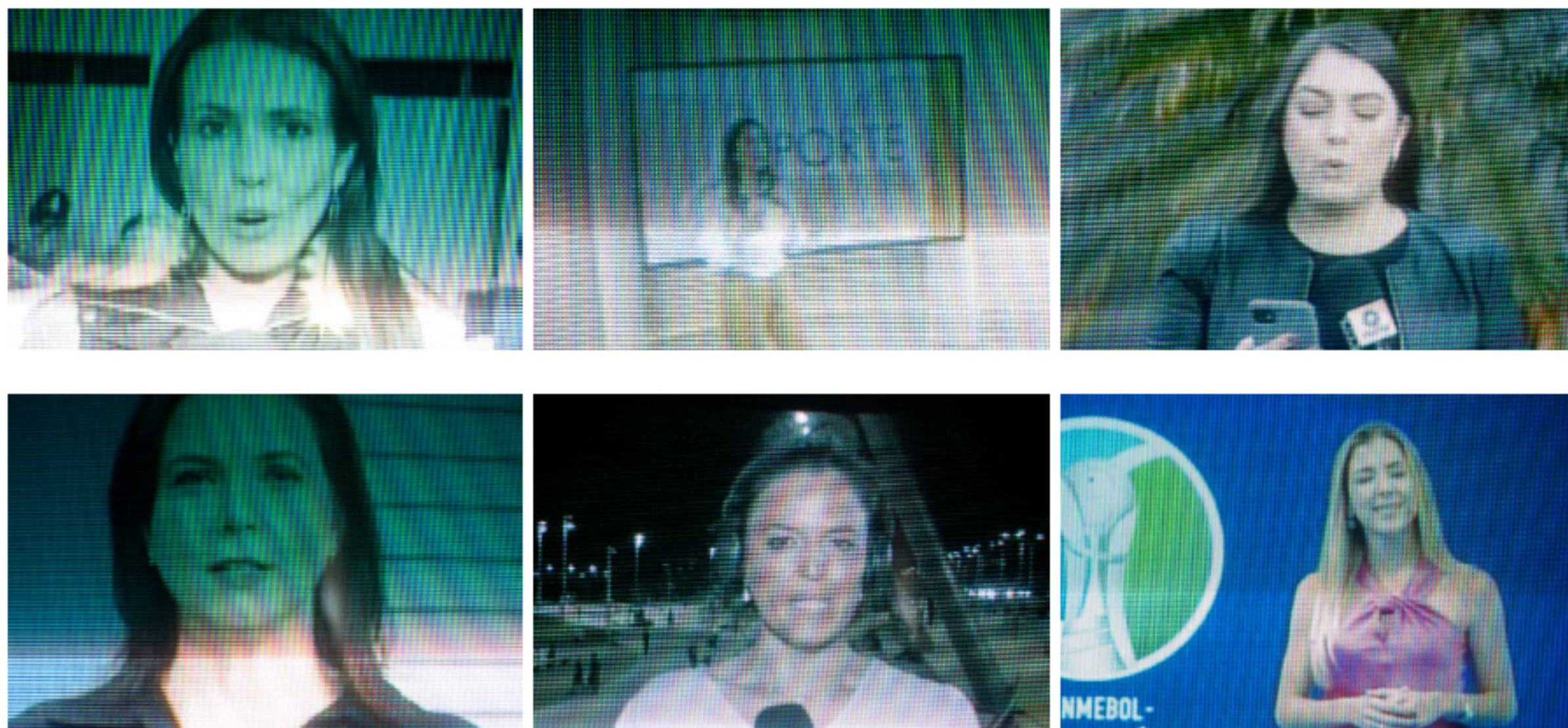
— Mariana Argoud Dias

As an example of moments that caused an impact on television and are now normalized, Mariana recalls when the anchors of Jornal Nacional, from Rede Globo, began to stand up and walk around the studio, abandoning the idea of a fixed desk. What was discredited by a portion of the population at that time now goes practically unnoticed. She adds that the inclusion of news anchors that enhance representativity should follow the same process.

The researcher believes that the lack of a significant number of journalists whose physical traits escape the standard characteristics deepens journalism students' disinterest in pursuing TV careers – after all, they believe that they do not fit in Brazilian television journalism. "We urgently need more representativeness so that our journalism students can have the TV as a prospective space for them. The change also begins by embracing representativeness, so this scenario starts to change more quickly," she points out.

According to her, reinforcing these standards, which are rarely seen in the daily life of the population, leads to the invisibility of various other body types, making it impossible for women who do not fit this pattern to pursue work in front of the cameras. The greater the alignment of a professional's characteristics with the prevailing standard, the higher the chances to enter this television industry and make a career in it.

"It is ideal for television that the female news anchor possesses all the characteristics. For example, there is no woman who is completely opposite to the standard. So, a plus-sized Black woman with curly hair and wrinkles does not appear on television. That's ground zero," reports Mariana. The complete work will soon be available on Lume, the digital repository of UFRGS.



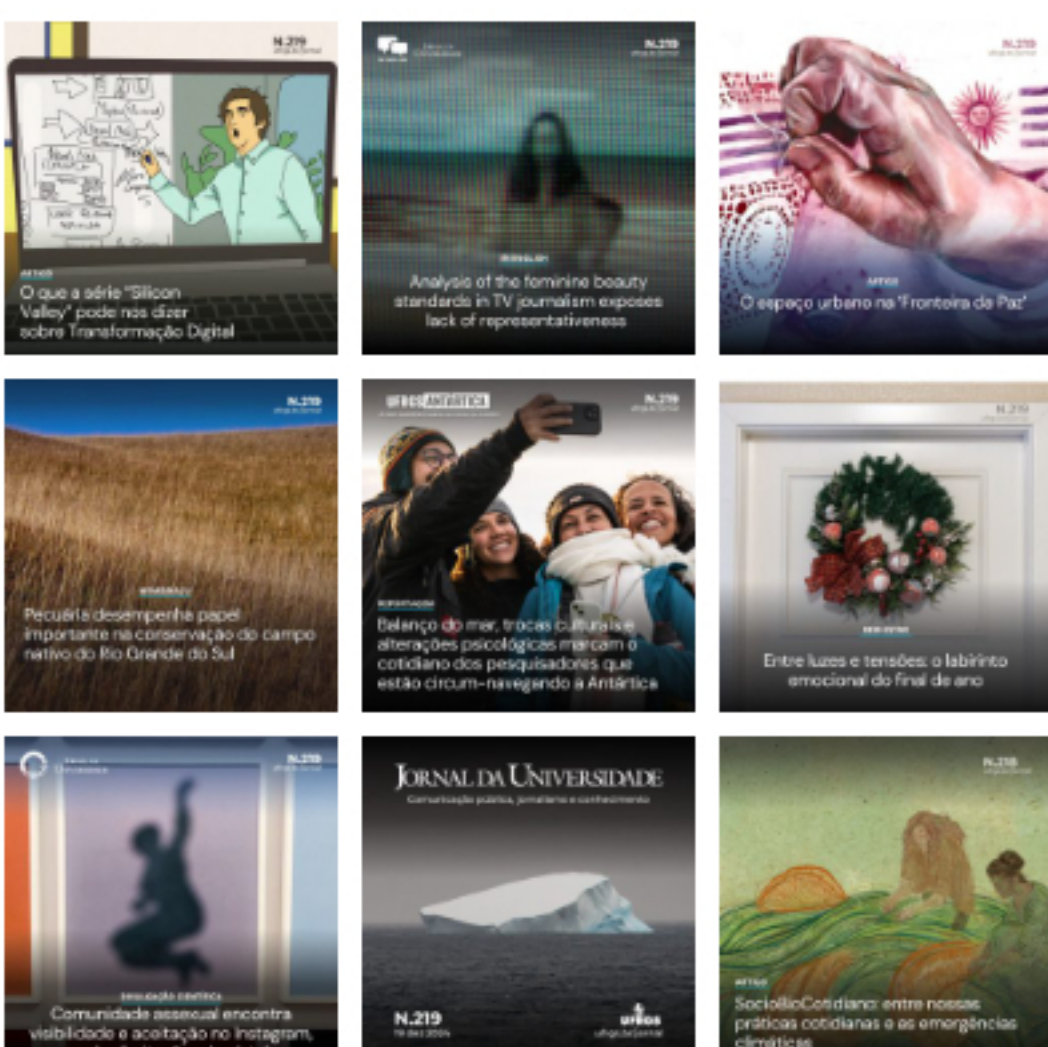
From left to right: Monica Simões, SBT, Programa Primeiro Impacto; Isa Severo, RBS TV, Bom Dia, Rio Grande; Maria Eduarda Ely, RBS Passo Fundo, Bom Dia, Rio Grande; Simone Lazzari, RBS TV, Jornal da RBS; Gabriela Lerina, SBT, SBT Rio Grande; Domitila Becker, SBT, SBT Rio Grande (Photos: Flávio Dutra/JU)

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