

*The Communication of World Youth Day to the Portuguese Youth*

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**ABSTRACT**

The present dissertation aims to understand how World Youth Day (WYD) is divulged to the Portuguese youth. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the communication tools used by WYD, to characterize any messages used by WYD, to identify the decision process that determines the communication established by WYD and aimed towards the Portuguese youth and analyze how the Portuguese youth receives and considers said communication. This dissertation follows a qualitative methodology research, based on the assortment of documents, elaboration of in-depth semi-structured interviews qualified elements and focus groups, and posterior analysis of the results. The research is based upon the idea of strategic communication, public relations, persuasion, the Rethorical Theory, and of the Coding and Decoding Theory.

The results show how the organization of the event considers that the WYD is structured by the Pope, and that the attending youth is in fact invited to attend by the Pope. Therefore, the content of the messages divulged through the various communication channels is mostly composed of the Pope's evangelical messages.

The organization's role is to create a plan of strategical communication that adapts those evangelical messages to a language more easily identified by the youth audience. According to an Aristotelian approach to rhetoric, Pope Francis' messages can be considered to *ethos*. As is, the youth recognize that *ethos*, and ascribe credibility to the Pope as the spokesman of a religious institution with a centuries old tradition. Furthermore, the decoding of the messages transmitted by the event's organization to the

youth, were noticeable through the dominant-hegemonic code. The research proposes innovation in the studies of religious communication, but shows some limitations, as it was not possible to obtain all the communications and messages of WYD, since this is an event that will only take place in 2023.

**Keywords:** Coding and decoding, strategic communication, World Youth Day, rhetoric