

O humanitário como *branded-content*

Humanitarian as *branded-content*

Fernanda Martinelli¹

João Guilherme Xavier da Silva²

Sofia C. Zanforlin³

Resumo: *Este artigo discute a relação entre dinâmicas do capitalismo e retóricas em torno das migrações internacionais e refúgio através da lente do consumo e dos discursos corporativos. Analisamos campanhas publicitárias e projetos de três grandes marcas por meio das narrativas por elas construídas para desenvolver estratégias de comunicação a partir dos processos de migração e da recente crise global de refugiados.*

Palavras-chave: *migração; consumo; capitalismo.*

Abstract: *This article discusses the relationship between the dynamics of capitalism and the rhetoric around international migrations and refuge through the lens of consumption and corporative discourse. We analyze advertising campaigns and projects of three major brands through the narratives they built to develop communication strategies based on migration processes and the recent global refugee crisis.*

Keywords: *migration; consumption; capitalism.*

1 Universidade de Brasília (UnB). Brasília, DF, Brazil.
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0196-048X> E-mail: nandamartineli@yahoo.com.br

2 Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). Brasília, DF, Brazil.
<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6091-0538> E-mail: jg.granja@gmail.com

3 Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.
<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4030-1329> E-mail: szanforlin@gmail.com

Introduction

This article discusses the relationship between the dynamics of capitalism and the rhetoric around international migrations and refuge through the lens of consumption and corporative discourse. We analyze advertising campaigns and projects of three major brands through the narratives built by them to develop communication strategies based on migration processes and the recent global refugee crisis.

The goal is to reflect about how capitalism defines its agenda in relation to social changes, and thus, updates itself, at the same time it covers its contradictions. We discussed how the strategies and agendas of migrants and refugees are associated to corporate values in three contexts: a) the global campaign of the whisky brand Johnnie Walker; b) the Better Shelter project, developed by the brand of furniture and décor items Ikea with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR - UN Refugee Agency), consisting in the manufacture of shelters for refugees; and c) the advertisement piece Born the Hard Way, from Budweiser, broadcast in the break of Super Bowl in 2017.

It is not fortuitous that the term branded-content is highlighted in the title of this study. It is a category of market that emerges as a new marketing tendency and strategy in the 2000's. This denomination, created in the media world, begins to be employed to define a type of advertisement that produces content in a particular manner, blurring the distinctions between what is traditionally perceived as advertisement content and editorial content. In the field of this study, this is relevant because it qualifies the actions of communication of corporations that link their advertisement discourses to the defense of migration as a right.

Associating to causes is not a new strategy. The traditional actions of social responsibility of business marked actions of brands in the most diverse sectors throughout the last decades, so that capitalism disseminates ideas of “conscious consumption”, “responsible consumption”, “citizen company” and a series of other qualifications attributed to institutions and to people, equalizing ways of consuming and producing the exercise of citizenship (MARTINELLI, 2007; SANTA CRUZ; MARTINELLI,

2010; MARTINELLI; MACHADO, 2010). Nowadays, this discourse acquires different outlines, in Burrowes and Rett (2016), who define as expanded advertisement, and social engagement emerges as communication strategy through the brands' "humanization". Big corporations begin to stand out from one another not only for the products and services they offer, but in many cases, for the causes they support. These companies attribute to themselves the role of (environmental, social, humanitarian) activists, and show off an awareness agenda and mobilization - around themes like the environment, public health, education, culture, poverty and social exclusion, urban violence, human rights and the most diverse issues that constitute the contemporary social agenda - which begins to be the engine of this strategy of communication (SANTA CRUZ; MARTINELLI, 2010). This is also frequently linked as a responsibility to act. What draws attention in this market dynamics is the form the capitalism is instituted as a universal value and is located as the terrain where social change indeed has possibility to happen, in which these mobilizations can be converted, through strategies of capital circulation - as consumption, production and the financial circulation - into something which dialogues with the individual without the mediation of other institutions of collective, political or solidarity action.

The attention mobilized around international migrations and refugee nowadays is explained by the context of the so-called global refugee crisis. The report *Global Tendencies 2016* published in June 2017 by UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) shows a total of 65.6 million people dislocated due to wars and conflicts until the end of 2015. According to the report, this is the first time the numbers of forced displacement surpassed 60 million people in the world (UNHCR, 2017). In Brazil, the publication *Refugee in Numbers (Refúgio em números)*, organized by the Justice Ministry which consolidates data of refuge in the country until the month of April 2016, Shows that the numbers of refugees recognized grew 127% from 2010 to 2016, reaching 9,552 people with 82 nationalities, after a couple of years of percentual growth even more intense in the requests made, which varied 2,868% at the same period (BRAZIL'S MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, 2016).

Different authors discuss how the engagement to the cause of refugees would translate to moral appeal to the atrocities shown by the media (NUSSBAUM, 2002; AGIER, 2016; ZANFORLIN, 2016). Martha C. Nussbaum (2002) reinforces that, in the age of global connectivity, the cosmopolitan ethos became a moral necessity, since it cannot be more distant to global humanitarian crises made visible through the flows of images and information that circulate in the transnational media. In consequence of the experience of contemporary international migrations, Agier (2016a) point towards media as a device capable of enabling exchange of common feelings and experiences. The citizen of the contemporary world is tied to global media, making knowledge and the real-time follow-up of events possible. Therefore, cultivating the good will of locals or nationals to become empathetic to foreigners, to create a sense of responsibility, especially with foreigners in vulnerability, mobilize empathy and creates a fertile path to the most diverse forms of participation and engagement.

Calling out the civil society and private companies for active participation of the management of humanitarian causes began to be a part of the agenda of the United Nations in a document released in October 2016, after a meeting about the theme which took place in September 2016 in New York (UNGA, 2016). After that, in an article published at *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*, under the title “Refugees, a good deal”, Nicolas Autherman (2017) reported about the performance of a fair of diverse exhibitors, on May 2016, Istanbul, alongside the first UN’s World Humanitarian Summit. In the fair, there were selling from “drones, photovoltaic bulbs and other food kits” to “companies of MasterCard financial services or big audit offices and reduction of costs of companies, Accenture and Deloitte Consulting” (AUTHERMAN, 2017). The news showed that:

This is huge sector nowadays. Some call them the “industry of help”. We know this represents at least 25 billion euros per year. “Evidently, from a commercial point of view, there’s money to win, and for this industry, a new efficacy to prove”, concludes Ben Parker, director until 2013 of the

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Unocha) in Siria and East Africa. (AUTHERMAN, 2017)

In this context, corporate humanitarian activism mimics some of the dilemma and ambiguities of a wider humanitarian action. And what is this field, which we relate to the idea of humanitarianism? Didier Fassin, synthetically, defines it from the experience lived and mediatized of the tsunami that hit wide regions of southeast Asia in 2004. The purpose of tragedies with large scale of destruction, the complex of reactions that unfolds in their repercussions activate profound articulations in an equally global scale:

For the attentive observant of the tsunami, the impressive magnitude of the impact, with its thousands of deaths, was as significative as the unparalleled demonstration of solidarity, with billions of dollars of assistance. We mourn their dead, but we celebrate our generosity. The power of this event resides in the rare combination of tragedy and ruin and the pathos of assistance. These disasters now belong to our experience in this mundanum, as well as the organizations of assistance, the operations of help and the humanitarian interventions. We get used to the global spectacle of suffering and the global exhibition of help. (FASSIN, 2012, p. ix, authors translation).⁴

Components of compassion associate both in the production of assistance and the emulation of feelings of loss and destitution. Formos of acting in the state and distinctive social actors, promoting alterations in the strategies of action of these authors as well as structural modifications in their own frameworks of action (XAVIER DA SILVA, 2017). Those elements are mobilized in the continuum generated between the imperative of acting and responding to a narrative of survival. This narrative, more than an accessory, is revealed as an ontological necessity

4 For the attentive observer of the tsunami, the impressive magnitude of the toll, with its tens of thousands of casualties, was as meaningful as the unparalleled deployment of solidarity, with its billions of dollars of aid. We lamented their dead but celebrated our generosity. The power of this event resides in the rare combination of the tragedy of ruination and the pathos of assistance. Such disasters now form part of our experience of this worldliness, just as do aid organizations, relief operations, and humanitarian interventions. We have become used to the global spectacle of suffering and the global display of succor. (FASSIN, 2012, p. ix)

of survival as constitutive, or re-constitutive, of the threat itself. Fassin evokes the classic meaning conceived to the word witness, in one of its Latin etymologies, *superstes*, in contrast with the etymology *testis*, which brings the neutral observation, present in the connotation received by the term judicial witness. In contrast:

Superstes is the person that “exists beyond” the event - in other words, who experienced it and survived. In the first case [*testis*], the witness was outside the scene, but he observed: to be more accurate, he does not have interest, and it is this supposed neutrality that forms the foundation to listen and believe in him, even in judicial processes. In the second case, the witness survived the event: it is, therefore, because he was present, but as a victim of the event and, therefore, a survivor, that his word is heard. One witness based in his observation, and the other based in his experience. (FASSIN, 2012, p. 204, author’s translation)⁵

While the validity of the judicial testimony is supported in the premise of neutrality and distancing, the meaning of witness of survival is extracted directly from the experience of capacity of production of affection inherent to his narrative - the capacity of re-constituting the tragedy as affective experience and again effective over the destinaries of this testimony. Beyond the first meaning, in which the humanitarian situation is testified, the capacity of activating affections of the testimony is a central component of the grammar of humanitarianism that we analyze in this study, as producing active affective reactions in the production of moral economies (XAVIER DA SILVA, 2017). We discussed how these aspects are dynamized in actions of communication in three global brands about the theme migration and refuge, in contexts that explore adversity, catastrophe and overcoming, having as background the resurgence of one of the biggest human displacement crisis in history.

- 5 Superstes is the person who “exists beyond” the event in other words, who experienced it and survived it. In the first case [*testis*], the witness was external to the scene but observed it: to be more precise, he has no vested interest, and it is this supposed neutrality that forms the grounds for hearing and believing him, including in legal proceedings. In the second case, the witness lived through the ordeal: it is therefore because he was present, but as a victim of the event and hence a survivor, that his word is listened to. One testifies on the basis of his observation, the other on the basis of his experience. (FASSIN, 2012, p. 204)

We go back to Foucault's argument (2006) about the new configurations of liberalism and how the exercise of power is capilarized in institutions, which include here the symbolic systems of communication. The methodology consists on the analysis of representation (HALL, 2013), insofar as we investigate the meanings of difference, in other words, the representation of alterity in these campaigns having two axes in the horizon highlighted by Hall: poetic and politic, the first referring to discourses of exhibition and the second referring to power relations (2013, p. 215). We observe how the meanings produced in the practices of media representation of migrants and refugees in the three campaigns are frequently reduced to those meanings that the brands (which control this media production) want to highlight, in a process defined by Hall as stereotyping (p. 216).

We identify as values and characteristics of narratives about migrants and refugees are highlighted or overshadowed to converge with friendly corporate narratives that talk about the challenges and irreconcilable frustrations under the biggest mark of capitalism. Examples of this dynamic are the emphasis on cosmopolitanism, entrepreneurship, resilience and hope, as well as the erasure of power relations, conflicts and sufferings that are rooted in these human displacements, or the growing number of victims of these contexts produced in its origin. In the analyzed pieces, communication is the bond between these elements.

Keep walking: Johnnie Walker and humanitarianism as trajectory

In 2016, the Scottish whisky brand Johnnie Walker released a documentary about the European migratory crisis directed by Talal Derki, who was a Syrian exiled himself. The film, titled *Ode to Lesbos*, has four and a half minutes of duration and registers testimonials of residents of the little town of Skala Sikamineas, that has only 153 inhabitants and is located in the island of Lesbos, in Greece. In 2015 these inhabitants rescued and gave different kinds of help to approximately 300 thousand refugees that arrived there (ODE TO LESVOS, 2017).

The first scene of the documentary is shocking and refers to a 1st person testimony of a survivor: the submersed camera focus on many lifejackets floating in the surface of the sea, against the sunlight. Then, the camera quickly reaches the surface, as if it needed to “take a breath” simulating the perspective of a person who could be drowning but manages to escape. What can be seen is little waves passing through the eye level and the infinite horizon, where the blue from the sea and the sky is blurred. The fade for the other scene brings the feeling of “eyes closing” in the subjective camera facing the horizon without land in sight and shows, in the sequence - or when “the eyes open”, mountains of lifejackets piled in the land getting mixed with the natural mountains in the background. At this point, the narrator explains: “All these lifejackets represent people who arrived here looking for a place to live” (ODE TO LESVOS, 2017). And then he continues talking about the arrival of boats with refugees, usually overcrowded and therefore wrecked in the vicinity of the island. The amount of people is shocking: there were thousands each day, to the point a local fisherman said: “We used to fish people instead of fish”. The documentary proceeds alternating testimonies of town residents, who tell their experiences of humanitarian help organized in a domestic spontaneous way. The film never shows stories through the point of view of refugees, so that the representation of this population is given through the inhabitants’ perspective. In the resident’s testimony, we highlight sentences like “we did what we have to do”, “we are not heroes because of that”, “you can’t sit and watch this type of thing happen”, “tomorrow it could happen to me, and I would like to receive this kind of help”. The final scenes show one of the local fishermen telling how the refugees thanked him for saving their lives: they put their children in line so that they would give him hugs. Visibly touched, he says: “That is a Nobel prize”. In the end, one lettering shows: “For the efforts during the refugee crisis, many residents of Skala Sikamineas were indicated to the Nobel Peace Prize as representatives of the Lesbos island (ODE TO LESVOS, 2017). Next, the slogan Keep walking appears and the logos of Johnnie Walker and Mercy Corps,

global organization that works in favor of humanitarian causes with the slogan “Saving and improving lives in the world’s toughest places” (MERCY CORPS, 2017). In the end, there’s a request for donation to Mercy Corps.

“Ode to Lesbos”, Johnnie Walker documentary, shows the spontaneous humanitarian response of Greek citizens living in the island of Lesbos, who helped almost half a million refugees forced to flee their lands.



Source: MERCY CORPS, 2017.

The island of Lesbos, an islander, Aimilia Kamvisi, and the fisherman Stratis Valamios.



Source: PNewsFoto/Johnnie Walker, 2016.


This initiative was reproduced in other local contexts that also became destinations of migrants and refugees. In Brazil, a version of this campaign was released, consisting in a series of testimonials published on Facebook in 2016. The pieces stood out for celebrating the joy of diversity brought by migration. In contrast with the campaign Ode to Lesbos, the pieces directed to the Brazilian context had a more local broadcast, with stories of the migrants themselves about their experiences of displacement and how they rebuilt their lives in a new country. Each story highlighted special realities and ended with the sentence “Change begins with a first step”, followed by the hashtag with the slogan #KeepWalking.

Johnnie Walker campaign published on Facebook in 2016 with migrants arriving in Brazil.

Johnnie Walker
13 de outubro de 2016 · 🌐

Tudo por terra.
O terremoto destrói.
Fim.
O sol nasce e carrega uma vontade maior que ela.
Um sonho que não era dela.
Uma alegria que ia com ela.
O nada se tornou um pouco.
Com vontade, foi mais um pouco.
E o pouco, com tão pouco, virou muito.
Sem cansar. Sem parar. Sem saber.
Geneviève Cherubin.
Seus passos encontraram a cidade do santo chamado Paulo.
Do Haiti, trouxe o sorriso e o francês.
Ensinando a brasileiros uma nova língua.
Sua nova terra.
Sem tremores nem temores.
Sua nova vida.
Recomeço.
A mudança começa com o primeiro passo.
#KeepWalking

Se beber, não dirija. Não compartilhe com menores de 18 anos.




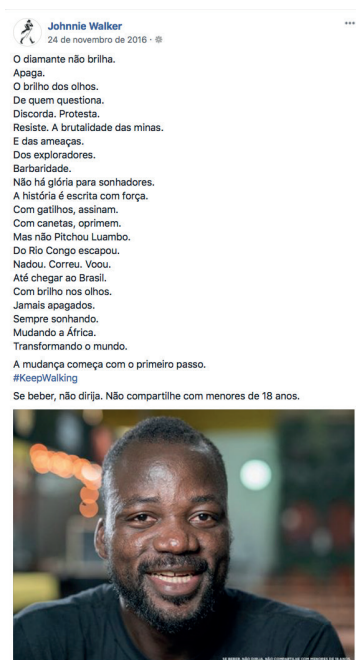
👍 Curtir 💬 Comentar ➦ Compartilhar

Johnnie Walker
20 de outubro de 2016 · 🌐

A bomba passa, mas fica.
Nunca some de fato.
Explode na memória.
Todo dia e com hora marcada.
Antes de dormir, só pensava: “Não errou”.
Adiou o encontro.
Fitou o horizonte.
Depois do Mediterrâneo.
Atravessando o Atlântico.
Subindo a serra.
Uma jornada de 10.815 quilômetros.
Finalmente.
Da Síria para o Brasil.
Talal Al-tinawi enxergou sua família dormindo tranquila.
Em cima do seu restaurante.
Onde continua acordado.
Não pela guerra na televisão.
Mas pela cozinha que sustenta o que a guerra jamais encontrou:
sua esposa e os três filhos.
A mudança começa com o primeiro passo.
#KeepWalking

Se beber, não dirija. Não compartilhe com menores de 18 anos.





Source: JOHNNIE WALKER, 2016.

Both the global and the Brazilian campaign highlight actions that focus a lot more on personal or community initiative than an action of a state institution and/or public policies. But while the global campaign highlight stories of residents about the refugees, the Brazilian one gives voice to wider perspectives and different personal migratory projects. An explanation for that might be the fact that these people who arrived the town in Greece are still undocumented and in a situation of extreme vulnerability, therefore, exposing their lives in a global campaign could have consequences in delicate bureaucratic processes of recognition of refuge and the inclusion in welfare system in European countries. However, in Brazil, the stories highlight a trajectory of solid paths, and the situation of the people who already overcame these struggles of the step of displacement and are facing now posterior challenges of social integration, to the point they can tell in retrospect a story of personal endeavor and certain distancing of their stories, structured around a past suffering,

in contrast with images of a present-future represented by pictures smiling, in environments, when possible to distinguish, referring to their personal identity, outside the contexts produced their displacements.

Beyond the focus on the individual, it is the community action the only collective instance activated in these narratives, distancing the role of the Country, both in the creation of conflicts as in the management of humanitarian crises and the population displaced by them.

Better Shelter: between emergency design and production of hope

Another brand initiative which associates to the theme of migration and refuge is the project Better Shelter from the Swedish company Ikea. It is about the creation of a modular emergency shelter, with 17.5 m², to work as a temporary residence for vulnerable people living in refugee camps. As explained in the company's website: "It attends the basic needs of activities in daily life, enabling privacy, safety and familiarity" (BETTER SHELTER, 2017). Despite not being a commercial product, the project brought public recognition for Ikea and even won the 9th Beazley Designs of the Year prize.

The Better Shelter project has its own website. In there, there are information about the product, which involve from its conception - "Designed with and by refugees" - to orientations about how to order it.

The exterior and interior of the Better Shelter.



Source: BETTER SHELTER, 2017.

Units of the Better Shelter hosting refugee families in transit between Greece and the border of Macedonia.



Source: MY NEWS DESK, 2016.

Unit of Better Shelter in exhibition at MoMa, in New York.



Source: MY NEWS DESK, 2017.

The conception of the project was dialogic, in a way that the design follows parameters defined after listening to refugees. Stories in the website indicate the reception of the product, as it is the case of the story of Iraqi Hamid Abdelraza, who lives in a shelter with his family. Abdelraza, his wife and children fled Fallujah, his hometown, under constant threat by ISIS. According to him:

We got so excited when we found out (about RHU / Better Shelter). RHU is a God's blessing for us in the desert. We are so grateful to ACNUR for giving us shelter. The low ceiling was the worst in the tent. During the summer it got so hot and you also could not move inside. At RHU there's space to move without restrictions and we began to buy things so we could feel at home, like a dresser and a TV. That gives us more privacy. My wife and sleep behind the curtain and my children sleep in this side, in the main bedroom. (...) The new shelters are the best because they give us privacy, which is extremely important for the values of our people. (BETTER SHELTER, 2017, author's translation). In the same website, other refugees give their testimony about the importance of the shelter in the process of re-building their lives. It is, however, a residence presented as temporary - even if some families spend a few years living in these shelters. This aspect of temporariness marks the shelter as a mediator between two steps of these people's lives, between a past marked by a tragic event and

the perspective of a better future. To some extent, Better Shelter re-signifies and brings a new respectability about living in a refugee camp - which is expressed in Abdelraza's speech when he highlights the difference between his old tent and his new home.⁶

The complexity of a refugee camp and the forms of life organized in this space is expressed in the following way by Michel Agier:

The refugee camps are always hybrid organisms, not reproducing any existing sociospatial form; they are new experiences for the place in which they are established, even if only by the permanent paradox of its existence means, between an indefinite temporality and a space which transforms because its occupants appropriate it so they could live in it. Originally conceived without any project other than mere survival, or the temporary positioning of a displaced, controlled population, these camps were transformed throughout time and with multiple uses the occupants made for themselves of the resource the humanitarian assistance represents. (AGIER, 2016b, p. 53, author's translation)⁷

Comparing Agier's description with Abdelraza's story, it is possible to assume that the notion of temporariness itself is a media construction. Despite the website announcing Better Shelter as temporary housing, Agier says the refugee camps are much more permanent than planned. Most of the time, people don't come back to their original homes, and

- 6 We were so excited when we found out [about the RHU/Better Shelter]. The RHU is a blessing from god for us in the desert. We are so grateful to UNHCR for providing us shelter. The low ceiling was the worst in the tent. During the summer it was very hot and you couldn't move inside either. In the RHU, there is space to move unrestricted and we started to buy things to make ourselves feel at home, like a set of drawers and a TV. It provides us with more privacy. My wife and I sleep behind the curtain and my kids sleep on this side, in the main 'room'. (...) The new shelters are better because they give us privacy, which is extremely important for our tribe's values (BETTER SHELTER, 2017).
- 7 The refugee camps are always hybrid organisms, not reproducing any social-spatial form that already exists; they are new experiences for the locality in which they are established, if only for the permanent paradox that their existence expresses, between an indefinite temporality and a space that is transformed because its occupants necessarily appropriate it in order to be able to live in it. Conceived originally with no other project than that of simple survival, or the provisional stationing of a displaced and controlled population, these camps have been transformed over time and with the multiple uses that their occupants have made for themselves of the resource that humanitarian assistance represents. (AGIER, 2016b, p. 53)

the situation at camp begins to acquire increasingly definitive outlines, configuring a structural drama.

The Better Shelter project is also mentioned in Autherman's article for *Le Monde Diplomatique* Brazil, quoted above:

Since 2010,, the Ikea Foundation, located in the Netherlands, integrally finances a company of social responsibility: the "Better Shelter". With headquarters in Sweden, this society signed a contract with Acnur for 30 thousand tents for an amount of approximately 35 million euros. The product in form of kit was sent to Acnur's refugee camps in Ethiopia, Iraq, South Sudan and Kenya. (AUTHERMAN, 2017)

The speech by Heggnes, CEO of Ikea, does not object any paradox between capitalism and humanitarian action and understands its commercial partnership is not opposed to humanitarian spirit: "For me, it is not about 'getting a profit' or 'making humanitarian work', but, overall, of obtaining profit on one hand, and at the same time, reaching development [...]". However, Ben Parker's speech, former director of the United Nations's Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), calls into question this view with the testimony of his experience:

When I was working in Kenya, in 2011, there was a huge draught in part of the country where this huge refugee camp for Somalis is located, the camp of Dadaab. They said at the time that Ikea would donate US\$ 60 million only for Dadaab. And it was linked with this concept of tents, of magic shelters that would be built to give to refugees formidable conditions of life. I wonder if Daddab camp really needed new interior designs at that time. Frankly, I'm not so sure. Sometimes, nowadays, the private sector tries to explore new markets through the sector of charity; it is probably what is happening with Ikea. That is good for shareholders; for refugees, I'm not so sure.

Still according to the article, in 2016, Ikea was ACNUR's first donator "in an amount of 32 million euros".

Questioned about the risk of seeing these companies taking a crescent place in the decision-making processes, Acnur answers invariably that their financial participation still remains marginal if compared to the

countries' contribution. However, partnerships conceived in the origin as simple donations assume new forms. According to Parker, the agency is involved in a system that is hard to get out: "The Ikea Foundation promised millions of dollars to Acnur. Now, they sent a person to Switzerland to see what they did with the money. At the beginning, I believe Acnur believed they could simply receive free staff and donations. They are learning that is not really how these things work in the private sector. [...] Companies will not come without conditions. What would they say if Ikea, for instance, decides to test materials in refugee camps?". And how would they react when European parliamentarians reveal, as it happened in February 2016, that Ikea is implicated in a huge tax evasion scandal, evading taxes precisely in countries that allow Acnur to finance their budget (La Tribune, Feb. 13th, 2016)? UN's agency never heard about that... (AUTHERMAN, 2017)

Born The Hard Way: adversity and resilience in the construction of the migrant as a self-made man

Born The Hard Way is the title of a film of the North American brand of beer Budweiser. The narrative begins with the story of the hard journey of migrants by sea and land, facing many risks and hostility along the way until they finally find hospitality in their final destination. The film is filmed with short dialogues, and as images are shown there are sentences on the screen with the sayings: "You don't seem like you're from here", "We don't want you here" and "Go home". This narrative, as shown in the final scenes, intends to show how two migrant German businessmen - Adolphus Busch and Eberhard Anheuser - met in Saint Louis, in the United States, in 1850, and founded the Anheuser-Busch, company owner of one of the most emblematic brands of American beverages, Budweiser (SCHULTZ, 2017; BELAM, 2017).

Scene from the advertisement piece *Born the Hard Way*, from Budweiser.



Source: BELAM, 2017

The scenes show the displacement from Germany to the United States filled by adversities of different kinds: since the tension with xenophobia, storm in open sea, precariousness in the boat and a fire in the ship. Thus, despite the European white migration shown in this advertisement is located in a historic period and conditions different from the other situations linked to the brands Johnnie Walker and Ikea, the representation of the displacement of these migrants in the Budweiser's advertisement seeks to blur these distinctions. There are scenes that show one of the brand's founder travelling in the basement of a ship in poor conditions, others show walks in dangerous terrains, other revealing in one point of the path, that his travel mates are all black.

A significant point is that this film was released during the finals of Super Bowl, in which the breaks are considered the most expensive advertisement spaces in the American advertisement industry⁸. In addition, the release happened a few days after the enforcement of an executive order of president Donald Trump, suspending temporarily the entrance of refugees and any citizen of seven countries of Muslim majority in

8 Um comercial padrão de 30 segundos no intervalo da final do Super Bowl, em 2017, custava \$5 milhões de dólares. O filme *Born the Hard Way*, da Budweiser, tem 60 segundos de duração, logo o custo de veiculação foi de \$10 milhões de dólares por exibição (Ad Age).

North American lands. In a few hours, the film reached record repercussions, with 21.7 million views (ATKINSON, 2017), but it also generated a wave of conservative manifestations, with people proposing a boycott to the brand on social media (BELAM, 2017).

Final considerations or Humanitarian as communication strategy

Stuart Hall says that “the global culture needs ‘difference’ to prosper” (2006). Throughout the analyzed pieces, this relationship between difference and production of an economic and cultural value is fed from the image of the refugee, outlined in an ambiguous way, simultaneously as an entrepreneur and enterprise, presented sometimes as subject, sometimes as recipient of social and economic transformative forces. This relationship is presented for the viewer of advertisement pieces as intrinsically mediated by symbols and material artifacts inscribed in the economy of Capitalist production and consumption. This mediating position is filled by the sponsored brands, which suggest the possibility that, through consumption, subjacent meanings to the presented migrant identities, as personal initiative, solidarity, boldness and inventivity, can be shared by a community without borders, linked through consumption.

They are pieces that, from an advertisement standpoint, reached some type of distinction, either through recognition linked to awards, as it is the case in Johnnie Walker and Ikea, or the investment for their release, as it is the case in Budweiser’s ad. It is important to see how the representation of humanitarian follows some patterns, considering the geopolitical north as place of symbolic production of these three brands.

These three actions share elements that refer to an aesthetic and a discourse common to humanitarianism, as described by Didier Fassin (2012), as mediated by a logic of compassion and assistance in context of crisis, precariousness and catastrophe. The pieces reproduce an intermediate space between subjects who act in humanitarian interventions

(giving assistance) and those who survive these dramatic situations (migrants and refugees), exercising a testimonial and mobilizing function. This testimonial function presents the experience to people dedicated to assistance (the experience of residents in the little community of Lesvos, for instance) and refer to the narrative - outlined in epic shapes - of entrepreneur-migrants, who find solidarity and recognition after long journeys - the encounter of Adolphus Busch with Eberhard Anheuser, linked by immediate solidarity in a shed where the skill and life plans of the newcomer to Saint Louis find an echo in the new land.

In relation to the experience transmitted to audience in the analyzed pieces, the central element for the construction of testimonies is operated with the sense adversity-solidarity-entrepreneurship, filling a gap between the testimony of those who suffer and those who only tell something observed in an exercise of a task of emergency assistance. This distinction is also evidenced by Fassin (2012) when he ponders that the formation of testimonies on behalf of humanitarian agents has some distinctive characteristics in relation to those who directly go through these tragedies:

The humanitarian agents witness not only based on what they lived but based on what they saw. They didn't go through the suffering, since their intervention presupposes that safe spaces named "humanitarian corridors", in which they are protected against hostilities, were established, but become spokespersons for the victims. Even if they try to analyze the political issues involved in the situations they go through, the register in which they establish their public testimony corresponds logically to the way their legitimacy is built in the public arena: it is compassion. They talk about bodies, wounds, suffering. (FASSIN, 2012, p. 206, author's translation)⁹

9 Humanitarian agents testify not on the basis of what they have lived through, but on the basis of what they have seen. They have not endured the ordeal, since their intervention presupposes that safe spaces termed "humanitarian corridors", in which they are protected from hostilities, have been set up, but they render themselves the spokespeople for the victims. Even if they attempt to analyze the political issues involved in the situations they face, the register in which they set their public testimony corresponds logically to the way in which their legitimacy is constructed in the public arena: it is that of compassion. They speak of bodies, of wounds, of suffering (FASSIN, 2012, p. 206).

The dimension of what was lived and suffered is reproduced by the media and advertisement language of the actions that were portrayed, which puts a third layer of complexity about this production of testimonies, the mediation of circuits of production, consumption and solidarity, supported by different ways of engagement and mobilization, reached by the identification which what those who survived can or could do with their own lives. These migrants and refugees are presented through a discourse that highlights the potential of transformation and inspiration that their trajectories cause. There is an articulation between mobilization of personal and cultural story of the migrant/refugee as a factor of calling attention and engagement of action of economic actors, as analyzed in this article, as governmental political actors¹⁰, both through the creation of affections as a moral feeling around a humanitarian cause of refuge and the so-called “migration crisis, term widely used in Brazilian and international media to refer to the set of interactions amongst group of migrant people in contexts of insufficiency of public services in the country.

These campaigns can suggest the erasure or generalization of individualities, of cultural particularities in a “menu” of people and personal stories of suffering homogenized by the term “refugee”. These individualities would join themselves to become artifacts, potencies of an experience linked to the tourist cosmopolitanism, close to, therefore, cultural consumption, as explicit by the authors Cohen and Vertovec (2010, p. 284): “The massive transference of foods, artistic products, music, literature and fashion. Such processes represent the multiculturalization of society, but also the advanced globalization of capitalism”.

Besides first person testimonies of catastrophes and human displacement, and third person witnesses formed by entities that mediate actions of assistance, there are messages proposed by the media discourse which establishes an involving experience working towards the expectator. If, as Fassin (2012) observes, to produce compassion this language of

10 Como, por exemplo, em XAVIER DA SILVA (2017b) a respeito da relação entre visibilidade midiática e comportamento de agentes governamentais.

testimony focuses bodies, wounds and suffering, the engaging narrative of experience of consumption and production emphasizes resilience, solidarity and inventivity - all necessary to survival in the contexts where they are extracted to - to produce the action in different circuits. Displacements and migratory processes discussed here are phenomena of the capitalism itself, which has a dialectic relationship with the development and the faces taken by the different forms of contemporary humanitarianism. From this experience, we say: keep walking, reader, persevere the hard way, contribute to lower the suffering through solidarity circuits, without disconnecting from the consumption circuits.

References

- ACNUR. *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016*. Disponível em: <<http://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5943e8a34/global-trends-forced-displacement-2016.html>>. Acesso em: 13 out. 2017.
- AGIER, M. *Borderlands: Towards an Anthropology of the Cosmopolitan Condition*. Malden: Polity Press, 2016.
- AGIER, M. *Managing the undesirables: refugee camps and humanitarian government*. Malden: Polity Press, 2016.
- ATKINSON, C. Budweiser's Super Bowl ad was the most-watched online. *New York Post*. Nova York, 7 fev. 2017. Disponível em: <<http://nypost.com/2017/02/07/budweisers-super-bowl-ad-was-the-most-watched-online/>>. Acesso em: 7 mar. 2017.
- AUTHERMAN, N. Refugiados, um bom negócio. *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*. São Paulo, 27 jul. 2017. Disponível em: <<http://diplomatique.org.br/refugiados-um-bom-negocio/>>. Acesso em: 10 out. 2017.
- BELAM, M. Super Bowl ad prompts Trump supporters to #BoycottBudweiser. *The Guardian*. Londres, 6 fev. 2017. Disponível em: <<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/feb/06/super-bowl-ad-prompts-trump-supporters-to-boycott-budweiser>>. Acesso em: 10 set. 2017.
- BETTER SHELTER. Disponível em: <<http://www.bettershelter.org/press/>>. Acesso em: 5 out. 2017.
- BURROWES, P. C.; RETT, L. Obs. Observatório de Publicidade Expandida: uma proposta de leitura crítica da publicidade. In: *Revista Comum*, n. 17, v. 39, 2016.

FASSIN, D. *Humanitarian Reason: a moral history of the present*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2012.

FOUCAULT, M. A Governamentalidade. In: MOTTA, M. B. (Org.). *Estratégia, poder-saber*, vol. 4. Rio de Janeiro: Forense, 2006. p. 281-305.

HALL, S. *A centralidade da cultura: notas sobre as revoluções culturais do nosso tempo*. *Educação & Realidade*, Porto Alegre, v. 22, n. 2, p. 15-46, jul./dez. 1997.

HALL, S. *A identidade Cultural na Pós-Modernidade*. 11. ed. Rio de Janeiro: DP&A, 2006.

HALL, S. The Spectacle of the Other. In: HALL, S.; EVANS, J.; NIXON, S. (Orgs.). *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. Londres: Sage Publications, 2013. p. 223-286.

JOHNNIE WALKER (@JohnnieWalkerBrasil). *Facebook*. Publicações em out. 2016. Disponíveis em: <<https://www.facebook.com/JohnnieWalkerBrasil/>>. Acesso em: 15 dez. 2016.

MARTINELLI, F. Siga a Etiqueta: marcas na paisagem urbana, emblemas sociais no universo do consumo. In: XIII Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia: desigualdade, diferença e reconhecimento, 2007, Recife. *Resumos do XIII Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia*. Recife, 2007.

MARTINELLI, F.; MACHADO, M. Política como mercadoria: consumo, cidadania e cultura jovem nos discursos publicitários. In: Centro de Altos Estudos de Propaganda e Marketing da ESPM. (Org.). *Arenas da Comunicação com o Mercado: articulações entre consumo, entretenimento e cultura*. São Paulo: Alameda, 2010. p. 357-378.

MERCY CORPS. Building a Stronger Tomorrow – Johnnie Walker Supports Mercy Corps. Disponível em: <<https://www.mercycorps.org/u/donate/JohnnieWalkerenglish-eu>>. Acesso em: 20 mar. 2017.

MY NEWS DESK. Successful assembly of Better Shelter units in Europe. *BetterShelter.org Press Release*. Publicado em 2 out. 2015. Disponível em: <<http://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/better-shelter/pressreleases/successful-assembly-of-better-shelter-units-in-europe-1228006>>. Acesso em: 21 out. 2016.

MY NEWS DESK. MoMA includes Better Shelter in its permanent collection. *BetterShelter.org Press Release*. Publicado em 13 out. 2016. Disponível em: <<http://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/better-shelter/pressreleases/moma-includes-better-shelter-in-its-permanent-collection-1603311>>. Acesso em: 21 jan. 2017.

MINISTÉRIO DA JUSTIÇA DO BRASIL. *Sistema de Refúgio Brasileiro: desafios e perspectivas*. Balanço até abril 2016. Disponível em: <<https://www.slideshare.net/justicagovbr/sistema-de-refugio-brasileiro-balano-at-abril-de-2016>>. Acesso em: 13 set. 2016.

NUSSBAUM, M. C. Education for Citizenship in an Era of Global Connection. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, v. 21, p. 289-303, 2002.

ODE TO LESVOS. Johnnie Walker YouTube Chanel. Publicado em 20 set. 2016. Disponível em: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INkT00ewy48>>. Acesso em: 10 out. 2017.

PR NewsFoto/Johnnie Walker. *Ode to Lesvos*. Disponível em:

<<http://photos.prnewswire.com/medias/switch.do?prefix=/appnb&page=/getStoryRe-mapDetails.do&prnid=20160919%252f409341&action=details>>. Acesso em: 15 nov. 2016.

ROQUE, T. Subjetividades no ponto cego da esquerda. *Le Monde Diplomatique Brasil*. São Paulo, 3 fev. 2017. Disponível em: <<http://diplomatique.org.br/subjetividades-no-ponto-cego-da-esquerda/>>. Acesso em: 4 fev. 2017.

SANTA CRUZ, L.; MARTINELLI, F. O engajamento social como estratégia de comunicação: consumo e responsabilidade no discurso empresarial. In: Centro de Altos Estudos de Propaganda e Marketing da ESPM. (Org.). *Arenas da Comunicação com o Mercado: articulações entre consumo, entretenimento e cultura*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Alameda, 2010. p. 251-271.

SCHULTZ, E. J. Budweiser's (Topical) Super Bowl Ad Is an Immigrant's Tale. *Ad Age*. Publicado em 31 jan. 2017. Disponível em: <<http://creativity-online.com/work/budweiser-born-the-hard-way/50740>>. Acesso em: 3 jan. 2017.

UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). Seventy-first session. *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*. Nova York, 03 out. 2016. Disponível em: <http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1>. Acesso em: 10 out. 2017.

VERTOVEC, S.; COHEN, R. Conceiving Cosmopolitanism. In: COHEN, R.; TONINATO, P. (Orgs.). *The Creolization Reader*. Studies in Mixed Identities and Cultures. New York: Routledge, 2010. p. 278-288.

XAVIER DA SILVA, J. G. C. M. L. G. *Por razões humanitárias: cidadanias, políticas públicas e sensibilidades jurídicas na reforma migratória brasileira*. 2017. 415 f. Tese (Doutorado em Direito, Estado e Constituição) – Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, 2017.

XAVIER DA SILVA, J. G. C. M. L. G. Media visibility and the balance between humanitarian and crisis perceptions in migration and refugee policies: the reception of Haitian flows in Brazil 2010-2016. *IAMCR Conference*, 2017.

ZANFORLIN, S. C. *Etnopaisajes en las Metrópolis Brasileñas: migración, comunicación y sentimiento de pertenencia*. Barcelona: Editorial UOC, 2016.

About the authors

Fernanda Martinelli - Professor at the Post Graduate Program in Communication and Society in the Communications course at UnB. PhD in Communication and culture by the School of Communication at UFRJ.

João Guilherme Xavier da Silva - Professor at the National School of Public Administration (ENAP). PhD in Law by the Course of Law at UnB, leader of the research group Humanitarian Hub (CNPq).

Sofia C. Zanforlin - Researcher associated to the Interdisciplinary Nucleus of Migratory Studies (NIEM/UFRJ). PhD in Communication and Culture by the Communication School of UFRJ.

Data de submissão: 03/04/2018

Data de aceite: 19/10/2018