Diversitywashing: as marcas e suas (in)coerências expressivas

Diversitywashing: brands and their expressive (in) coherences

Fernanda Carrera[1]
Chalini Torquato[2]

Resumo: *Na problemática sobre discursos midiatizados e representação de corpos e sujeitos diversos, é perceptível a necessidade de aprofundamento do debate sobre os impactos e os limites das iniciativas publicitárias. Este trabalho busca, portanto, debruçar-se sobre o conceito de diversitywashing, entendendo que muitas estratégias de marca camuflam práticas inconsistentes, sobretudo em relação* às rotinas produtivas da publicidade e aos rastros de estereótipos imagéticos *e textuais, que revelam uma contradição daquilo que expõem discursivamente. Assim, propõe-se aqui discutir sobre as demandas contemporâneas acerca da relação entre mídia e diversidade, conceitualizando a noção de diversitywashing e apontando para seis traços comuns desta prática (representações inadequadas; atribuição de neutralidade; bastidores contraditórios; diversidade limitada; comportamentos incoerentes; e vida passada) à luz de pressupostos teóricos sobre performatização de si, gerenciamento de impressões e coerência expressiva.*

Palavras-chave: *diversitywashing; diversidade; publicidade; marca; coerência expressiva.*

Abstract: *In the problem of media discourses and representation of diverse bodies and subjects, the need to deepen the debate on the impacts and limits of advertising initiatives is perceptible. This work seeks, therefore, to focus on the*

1   Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil.
     https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5024-0860. E-mail: fernanda.carrera@eco.ufrj.br
2   Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil.
     https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2021-7795. E-mail: chalinibarros@gmail.com

concept of diversitywashing, understanding that many brand strategies camouflage inconsistent practices, especially in relation to the productive routines of advertising and the traces of image and textual stereotypes, which reveal a contradiction of what they discursively expose. Thus, it is proposed here to discuss the contemporary demands on the relationship between media and diversity, conceptualizing the notion of diversitywashing and pointing to six common features of this practice (inadequate representations; attribution of neutrality; contradictory backstage; limited diversity; incoherent behaviors; and past life) in light of theoretical assumptions about self-performatization, management of impressions and expressive coherence.

Keywords: *diversitywashing; diversity; advertising; brand; expressive coherence.*

Introduction

In the late 90's and early 2000's, while environmental impacts of global warming and the ecological unbalance coming from the oil crisis was discussed in the political and economic fields, the concept of greenwashing became strong among studies in communication, brands and society (ATHANASIOU, 1996). To the scientific efforts in communication, the term was and still is relevant, because it involves the construction of a discursive layer created over commercial practices recognizing that the appeals of sustainability are powerful stimuli to consumption.

If the strategies of greenwashing, therefore, arise in the context of emergency of demands of the market by companies environmentally responsible, in the attempt of calling the attention of the avid consumer audience by more accurate representations of the social reality, brands build advertisement discourses filled with the sign of diversity. However, while some proposals are well received, once they seem to represent an advance in the discursive construction of the imaginary of these bodies and the social identities, many emerge the doubt: there is a construction of a culture of diversity in the business environment or only superficial initiatives that conceal the lack of diversity of the brand? In fact, is there a concern from the brand with diversity or is it only diversitywashing?

We understand that, although the theme of diversity is in vogue (HOFF, 2009; SILVA; GONÇALVES, 2017), enabling that, for example, black individuals are more frequently seen in advertisement pieces (SACCHITIELLO, 2018), in fact this initiative does not advance into the discursive surface, since only 4,7% of the executive roles of the 500 biggest Brazilian companies are filled by black people and only 3,9% of companies offer some form of affirmative actions to raise the black presence in the work environment (SCRIVANO, 2016). This reality is repeated on other minorities[3], such as women (BOCCIA, 2018), the elderly (LAPORTA; CAVALLINI, 2018) and people with disability (LISBOA, 2018).

In order to understand, however, the importance of identifying these discrepancies for the localization of discursive strategy in the field of

tactics of diversitywashing, we propose here a deepening of the discussion and the conceptual dominion of the term, still lacking scientific problematization. We come from the presupposition that not only the concealment of diversity is manifested in this discrepancy, but how it could be inscribed in the own textual and image dominion of advertisement strategy. We understand that the perspective of diversity became one dimension of brand performance of self, in which are inscribed interactional dynamics that give the audience power over, especially, their perceptions. In this sense, the brand is inserted in the level of social interactions, in which it is not enough to recognize oneself in an identity, but to manage identity impressions that cause in the other (GOFFMAN, 1985).

Therefore, this study seeks to problematize the concept of diversitywashing, understanding its complex dimensions dependent from the effects of meaning of its strategies within the audience's perception. Inserting the brand in the interactional field, we propose here a conceptual gaze over these tactics under the aegis of the notion of "expressive coherence" (SÁ; POLIVANOV, 2012), understanding that the "diverse" brand identity is constituted as project of self (GIDDENS, 2002), in a constant and flexible management of impressions that cause in their audiences (GOFFMAN, 1985).

Media and diversity

In the path of social activism of free media and other globalization – for example, the Geneva's World Summit on the Information Society (2003) and Tunisia (2005) and, more recently, the Arab Spring and the Occupy Wall Street (2011), – contemporary social movements, strengthened by new tools, build their barricades against racism, xenophobia, stereotypes, sexism, homophobia and other violations, claiming more democratic social structures. There are dynamics that challenge the institutionalized political structures, but also make a strong questioning to media, seeking to build new versions of social phenomena. In this sense, Castells (2012, p. 23) says, "[…] The dispute of fundamental

power is the battle for the construction of meanings in the minds", in other words, it is a dispute of narrative geared towards, according to the author, reprogram the social institutions to more democratic values.

About the traditional media as institution, it is necessary to have in mind the potential of its structure in the everyday standardization of social values. Understood as the professional of narrative construction of the public social truth, the big responsible for the massification of information on contemporary populated societies, it becomes fundamental to put them under the analytical lens of how it conducts the construction of a collective unconscious. As the unknown on otherness is mediated my media discourses, therefore, it is fundamental to exercise the aware critical gaze on conditioning or legitimation of world views and what is the impact over the structuration of contemporary sociabilities – peaceful, mediators of tolerance or conflict, promoting social exclusion. This is important, for example, when it comes to stereotypes, super generalizations socially built that are put like archetypes of certain social groups, limiting their meaning and the social interpretation about the other (MERSKIN, 2011).

The own construction of messages destined to the massive audience dialogues with a standardization of perceptions, reinforcing daily what is understood as "normal" or "appealing", in a much more negotiated and seductive relation than authoritative. It is about the reproductive force of the symbolic violence of ideal standards (BOURDIEU, 1989), that, to the same extent in which establishes what is normal, also establishes what is not. Therefore, discussing media stereotypes is understanding the ways with which people's view is built over the Others and how its marginalization becomes imperceptible or banalized in the environment of media. These social constructs, transmitted as being the "truth", are socially conceived and institutionally reproduced in many spheres, in a way that the world's perception on the dominant culture are sold as something natural, obvious, unanimously agreed, defining, thus, beliefs, rituals and acts in a social order.

ARTIGO

It is through the reproduction of constrained standards, for instance, about gender, race, class, sexuality, and religion that archetypes (multidimensional and concretized signs about the Other), being potentially able to spread values that justify collective hatred, persecution and political atrocities against certain groups (MERSKIN, 2011). Thus, the daily contract with stereotyped media messages reproduces and socially reinforces prejudice –a dislike based on a distorted and inflexible generalization, a hostile attitude against a person who belongs to a certain group – and discrimination – behavior that comes as a consequence of prejudice, involving an unfair treatment to individuals, based on some stigmatized characteristics, like race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, country, sexual orientation, political views, disability, etc.

Because it is an excluding system perpetuating social conflicts, initiatives that indicate their overcoming usually are celebrated by activists earning for a social transformation. That is why, in disruptive, alternative and questioning contents, may be infinitely shared, appropriated and used as a light of the most real representation in the midst of a standardized stereotyping. They are ideas which, linked to a contemporary consumption of media marked by the complementary of information among the different types of media, are reinforced enough to conquer the power of disputing narratives with normative values of the traditional media.

These initiatives, however, emerge critical analytical biases that try to understand in what way the market appropriation of social issues can interfere on its essential coherence. In other words, it is indispensable to have in mind that the productive structure is dynamic and forces the actors present to adapt, as the natural logic of competitivity. Use the cause of diversity to get closer to the consumer audience may not be enough to conceal the absence of this representativity also in the workforce employed for the production of this content.

After all, could the subordinate speak? To them it is in fact authorized hearing? (SPIVAK, 2010). Who was these others so invisible or

historically preconceived to the media content that now seem curiously interesting to the dominant eye? There would be, according to Stuart Hall, a fascination of the global post-modernism to the exotic nature of the different: either sexual, racial, cultural, and, especially, ethnical. And he asks himself if he would be in this re-apparition of the "proliferation of difference" related to the western fascination with the bodies of black women and men of other ethnicities (HALL, 2003, p. 150). Although he nurtures this fascination for the exotic, and the search for the service of demand, it is possible to perceive a negotiation with dominant values which, sometimes, are rearticulated in an aggressive resistance to difference and the possibility of risk of his exclusivist privilege. The appropriation of the standardization tends to integrate the diversity through adaptation, correction and adjustment, especially when this production goes through the hands of the same social groups that always dominated these contents.

Perceived authenticity and expressive (in)coherences of the brand

One of the relevant observation keys to advance in the present analysis is the perception of authenticity of subjective constructions and the processes of identity validation that are continuously mobilized in the interactional context and that can help in the understanding of communicational interaction between audiences and brands. We come from the presupposition which, even when building business and market discourses, these brand subjects would be subordinate to similar relational apparatuses to those which individuals would be submitted, comprising tactics of construction of self, identity negotiations, perceptions of alterity and legitimation, as well as problematics that emerge from power relationships.

Under the sociological perspective, authenticity would be a negotiated construct, in a process of self-reflection (GIDDENS, 2002) subject to interactional formalities. Authenticity wouldn't be, therefore, a concrete

phenomenon, but an abstraction dependent on the social feedback, in other words, "the concept of authenticity must be understood not as ontological truth, but as a "shared story", built by the actor and negotiated with others (SÁ; POLIVANOV, 2012, p. 581), in a continuous system of legitimation and delegitimation.

To this perception of identity authenticity, Sá and Polivanov (2012) give the name of "expressive coherence", in other words, the subjective constancy that individuals seek in others and in themselves for validation of who they are and who are their interacting partners. Behavioral contradictions and intense transformations could product delegitimating effects, defining for individuals bigger or smaller "social competence as agents of interaction (SMITH, 2006, p. 97-98). Therefore, the final goal of identity building would be, therefore, "knowing if you would be credited or discredited" (GOFFMAN, 1985, p. 231). Constituent of elementary interactional processes, this regime of validation of authenticity is reinforced by dynamics of digital culture and contemporary materialities. Boyd (2008) points towards four fundamental properties of the digital context that can modulate the limits and potentialities of interactions that are inserted there: persistence, searchability, replicability and invisible audiences. The persistence would be the marking of prolonging acts of speech, in counterposition to the ephemerid of face to face contacts, since in these environments the register of discourse is facilitated (POLIVANOV; CARRERA, 2019); the searchability would be a deployment of persistency, since as the messages can be registered, they also can be accessed with agility in a few clicks of research, the replicability, in turn, would be the easiness of reproduction of the message in different context and audiences; arriving to the presupposition of invisible audiences, concept that admits the impossibility, in the digital environment, of controlling and measuring what is the reach and the audience of what is said. The mediation of digital materiality, therefore, is striking for the interactional systems of these environments, especially in comparison with spaces of face to face conversations.

Thus, this contemporary digital context would allow more material resources for identity and communicational validation of individuals and, as we want to discuss here, including brands. If, therefore, in context of individuals, we can call "performative ruptures" (POLIVANOV; CARRERA, 2019) the detachment between communication of self and social behaviors or the rupture located between identity intentions and those in which interactional circumstances and materials allow, in the brand context, the effects of these gaps are intensified by the cynicism foreseen and solidified in the relations between consumer and business communication.

In this sense, if in the context of individuals, the performative ruptures imply in management of self and situations, in a process of attempt of control on what is shown and what is concealed, in other words, the theatrical scenery of social roles, in which is defined what is exposed to the audience and what should be kept in the backstage (GOFFMAN, 1985); if in this interactional processes, what is at stake is the identity reputation of subjects, implying in maintenance of the social self-esteem, of the feeling of belonging and mental health, in case of the context of brands, what is at stake is its corporate image, which implies in management of identity on behalf of market permanence and the constant escape of the painful crisis management. Therefore, the perception of performance ruptures is manifested, in the context of brands, in perception of "washing", in other words, in the dissimulation perceived or evident expressive incoherence. In this sense, all the discursive and operational apparatus that involve the work of a company (for example, advertisement, sales points, labels, products, partners, suppliers, employees and hiring processes) can be used as a reinforcement or a obstacle for your expressive coherence.

To advance in this debate, therefore, are discussed here the six most common traces of expressive incoherence, in the context of attributing diversity, which can make the brand fall into the perception of "diversitywashing".

Six traces of Diversitywashing in the context of brands

The perception of diversitywashing is given as effect of meaning, i. e., depends directly not only on the intentions of the brand, but the codes that emerge from their audiences. We don't intend here, therefore, to discuss about the supposed truth of the messages or even less about what would be the real perception of the companies adopting the discourse of diversity, but perceiving what are the communicational and behavioral traces that brands offer the audience so that they locate them as acting of this practice. Therefore, we list six common traces of diversitywashing, inappropriate representations, attribution of neutrality, contradictory backstage, limited diversity, incoherent behavior and past life.

Inappropriate representations

Once advertisement communication is one of the forms of communication of branding identity that less imply in structural transformations in the company, to manifest support to diversity causes seems a mere enterprise. However, the lack of understanding of the different narratives that compose each body used there for commercial purposes, in addition to the lack of effort in looking for this critic discernment about their creative ideas, contributes for the construction of advertisement discourses that are often superficial and, above all, problematic and stereotyped.

It is the case of the campaign called "Somos Todos Paralímpicos" (We are all Paralympic) developed by the advertisement agency Africa for Vogue, showing the actors Paulo Vilhena and Cléo Pires as amputee athletes. The contradiction in the idea of representation of this piece was a target of controversy in the internet, reaching the *Trending Topics* at the time (August 2016)[4], because it chose to "give visibility" to athletes with disability, taking exactly these subjects from advertisement pieces and replacing them with two standardized bodies with "disabilities" built through photo editing.

4   Information available at: https://oglobo.globo.com/esportes/campanha-com-atores-paralim-picos-gera-polemica-cleo-pires-se-defende-19987262. Accessed in: Apr. 30th, 2019.

Another example is the advertisement "Be true to your pleasure" from Magnum, with trans people, transvestites and drag queens. When they associate the ice cream and the act of eating it to sensuality rituals in the bodies exposed there, the brand falls over the unawareness of the different narratives experienced by these bodies (PELÚCIO, 2005) about an already crystallized hypersexualization, which stops the access of these people to professional environments other than prostitution (JIMENEZ; ADORNO, 2009)

These examples, therefore, show the common issue of inappropriate representation in the advertisement proposals and emerge relevant debate on the possible limit of understanding about the narratives of subjects that are not a part of the creative production and approval of these pieces. If there is in the context of advertisement creation and management of advertisement agencies a predominance of heterosexual, middle-class men (SACCHITIELLO; LEMOS, 2016; MAIA, 2018) and white (DOURADO, 2015), as it is the same reality of management positions in Brazilian companies (IBGE, 2014, 2016; GOMES, 2018), the initiative for deepening the understanding on the one being represented under the aegis of diversity should be an amplified effort.

Attribution of neutrality

The attribution of neutrality to specific bodies is manifested in the choice of a few subjects to represent the standard, composing a supposedly invisible background for the marking of bodies that would be "different". This type of trace is common in advertisement campaigns that propose a "diverse" racial representation. In advertisements that intend to represent different individuals and suggest being aware of the race plurality in the Brazilian context, they appear to agree that the diversity is manifested in the non-white and the white becomes invisible in their racialization. In other words, in general, when they allow the existence of individuals of other races in their campaigns, this consent is given to one or two models in the midst of a white majority, reinforcing the idea

that there is an "timeless certainty" (FRANKENBERG, 2004, p. 310) and a "non-marked visibility" (MACHADO, 2018) of whiteness.

In December 2016, the black model Deddeh Howard revealed, in a project called Black Mirror[5], the reality of the advertisement world of big brands and their association with model agencies. Recreating different pictures from famous brands taken originally with white models, Deddeh wanted to show racism in the advertisement industry and the issues of a de-racialized view on whiteness. *"Even though I was told by those agencies that I have an amazing look and wish they could represent me, they already have a black model. Besides having an abundance of white models"* (HOWARD, 2016). With this speech, the model revealed the productive routine of advertisement and highlighted in a striking manner the "supposed neutrality of white racial identity that makes a big part of the society have privilege, even if they don't realize it (SHUCMAN, 2014, p. 92). *This neutrality can still be perceived in the advertisements below:*

5   er: http://secretofdd.com/?p=2703.

Image 1 - Attribution of racial neutrality
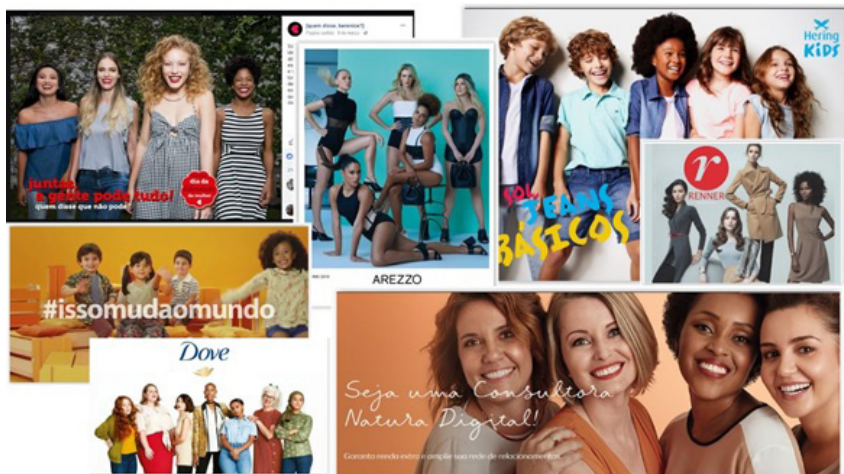
Source: Collection in brand's digital environment (websites and social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, from Quem Disse Berenice, Arezzo, Hering Kids, Itaú, Dove Natura and Renner)

Even though the concept of neutrality is born from the racial context, it can manifest itself in the conception that there is neutral bodies and non-neutral bodies, making evident that the different is the one that do not correspond to the normative standard of existing in contemporaneity: white, thin, heteronormative, young and without any disability. In this sense, if there is no representative equivalence and some bodies are cluttered in invisibility, not much is realized around the supposed enunciative transformation of advertisement around diversity, and what we see is another manifestation of expressive incoherence, since what is built is a diverse discursive concealment in foreground that is revealed in its standard in a more attentive look, in other words, diversitywashing.

Contradicting backstage

On may 2019, the Três store, fashion brand with stores in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, presented by the slogan "behind the clothing, people", shows in their tags the face of the seamstress that made it and have in their staff black women with afro hair, had to explain why this

discourse was not reflected in their daily practices (GONZALEZ, 2019). According to news posted on Portal Universa, the everyday life in the company, was actually filled with racism, fat shaming and harassment by the company's owners and associates. After the rapid negative repercussion on social media, the brand posted a note saying: "Our appreciation for diversity was never a façade, as people are currently accusing us".

The term "façade", used by Loja Três in their note, admits the understanding of the rules that conduct diversitywashing, in other words, it presupposes an identity construction of the brand presented for the appreciation of the audience and another that delegitimates them if it is exposed. In this sense, the Goffmanian theory about everyday social interactions proposes the theatre metaphor, dividing social life in stage and backstage, in other words, the space of exposition of self and a space of concealment. Analyst of face to face interaction, Goffman said that every social actor has as starting point the representation that is presented in front of them, but the comprehension and behaviors are not only given by the content of what is said, but from what unintentionally appears (GOFFMAN, 1985).

The breach of this system of montage staged by the one watching the representation is called "inappropriate interference" (GOFFMAN, 1985, p. 192), in other words, when the audience gets in the backstage of representation and reveals the actor by knowing elements of their life that may harm the maintenance of the social life theatre. In this sense, keeping the expressive coherence would be managing those elements so that they can only be legitimators of the identity process or avoiding that the audience gets in touch of contradicting elements.

Loja Três manifested a common trace of expressive incoherence because they obviously did not present, in their daily life what they communicated on behalf of profit and market positioning. Using the symbolic value of diversity, the brand seemed to only practice diversitywashing.

Limited diversity

This trace dialogues with the notions of expressions transmitted and expressions emitted, from the Goffmanian perspective, once they are significant actions in the process of management of self, relevant to the maintenance of the representative board of what is desired. According to Goffman (1985), the firsts are those of intentional character, which, through signs known by their audience, make efficient the communicative action. The second ones, in turn, include movements that seem symptomatic, unintentional from the actor, that can bring the impression that there are other meanings for that information that was transmitted like that.

C&A and the American brand Plus Size Baby recently had cases of limited diversity. In 2017, the Brazilian department store released a campaign with the goal of "promoting empowerment" (IZQUIERDO, 2016) with texts that said "I'm black, I'm blond", "I'm a girl, I'm a boy", and "I'm fat, I'm sexy". This last text followed a picture of model Malu Mendes, considered a "curvy model". However, the repercussion of the campaign was negative due to the choice of a curvy model that did not actually represent fat people. Plus Size Baby, in turn, on April 2019, posted on Twitter with the text "*#bigsize #curvygirls Sexy Lace Panties for Plus Size Women*", with a picture of a thin body stretching the piece to show its size. In these cases, therefore, the discourse on diversity and value of diverse bodies is given in the field of intentional expressions. However, they emit exactly the contrary to what they wished for, with a significant movement that reveals a proposition of an extremely limited diversity.

In the context of black subjects, this trace of limited diversity is already quite common. Brands prefer to illustrate blackness in their campaigns with light-skinned black bodies, with not a lot of negroid features (GOMES, 2006). Commonly, there is an attempt of whitening black folk as a way of making their existence palatable in this discursive space of power. Therefore, it is the mixed-race body (preferably more white than black) that interests publicity, the one perfect representative of the

dynamics of colorism (NORWOOD; FOREMAN, 2014) and represented by the image of the "mulata", the woman that preserves some black characteristics, but who is "one step closer to whiteness" (CRAVEIRO; CARVALHO, 2017, p. 65). In this sense, although they are enveloped by an apparent enhancement of the discourse of diversity, these choices denounce the expressive incoherence of these brands, that emit as an effect of sense of self the idea of those practicing diversitywashing.

Incoherent behavior

In March 2016, C&A released the collection "Everything beautiful and mixed" in an advertisement video that presented a male model wearing a dress, in a genderless discursive intention. However, although the campaign had caused a frenzy by the avant-garde initiative, it was quickly delegitimated by the audience, who exposed the contradiction of the brand from their own communicational apparatus and marketing: the division of male and female genders were kept in all spaces of the company, such as the website and the stores, as well as the new collection did not consider in their sizes the possibility of, actually, the clothing be mixed, as the slogan affirmed (GIUSTI; PAUL, 2016).

Unlike the trace of diversitywashing that presupposes the entrance of the backstage of representation (contradicting backstage), here the expressive incoherence is founded in the own business behavior that is put in evidence, in other words, there isn't an inappropriate intromission of the audience, but a discrepancy in the representation of self that the brand presents in their communicational apparatuses (as points of sale, websites and advertisement). They are intentional behaviors that, in themselves, contradict and delegitimate the desired identity representation, producing the perception of inauthenticity. "The campaign is called Everything Beautiful & Mixed, but when you go to purchase the pieces you see that they are beautiful pieces of clothing, male and female. And that's it. The advertisement itself suggest this exchange more as a fun experiment (CORRÊA, 2016).

Therefore, C&A manifests practices of diversitywashing, since it doesn't assume "coherent biographic narratives" (GIDDENS, 2002) nor it maintains discursive choices that evidence an expressive coherence towards identity routines, therefore, a continuity of the proposition of representation that shows a certain stability in the construction of self (SÁ; POLIVANOV, 2012). This coherence is a construct of thorough planning before the presentation, i. e., actors must be "prudent and circumspect when representing the spectacle, preparing themselves before for probable contingencies and exploring remaining opportunities (GOFFMAN, 1985, p. 223). This presupposition wasn't considered by C&A, which continued presenting the campaign with the proposition of genderless fashion, like the Valentine's day ad from the same year, but in their stores perpetuated and still perpetuates a well-defined separation between male and female.

Past life

In March 2017, in the Brazilian context, Skol presented their campaign Reposter[6], marking the brand repositioning on behalf, now, of more inclusive and diverse advertisement narratives. Recognizing their sexist standard, which impregnated their ads with female hyper sexualization, Skol proposes in this moment the reformulation of their old posters by feminist illustrators. Later, the brand released the campaign Skolors, which presented a limited edition of packaging with "colors of our skin[7]" creating cans with different colors to symbolize racial diversity of Brazil.

With a mainly positive feedback, especially in the digital environment (SILVA and GONÇALVES, 2017), the brand of beer, than, "appropriates the social issue" in an attempt of erasing their discursive past, which fundamentally, reinforced standards of oppression, especially in relation to female objectification (BRAGAGLIA, 2019 p. 86). In this sense, choosing now a "consumption ideology" (BRAGAGLIA, 2019 p. 95), which empowers bodies, subjects and narratives with diverse existences,
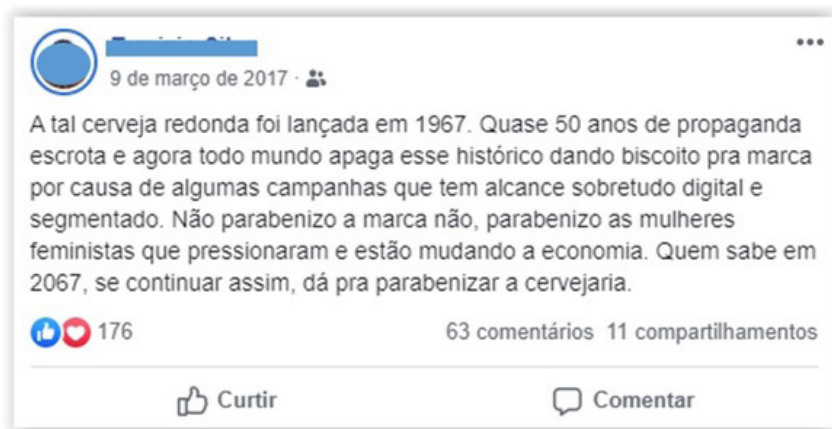
6 See vídeo atitário Reposter: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_8fnMtbdso.
7 See vídeo atitário Skolors: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQx_VmCQu5w.

Skol could, in fact, dissipate the imaginary of their audience the association of the brand with discriminatory discourses or it would be constantly reminded, in a process of continuous verification of authenticity of their new initiatives.

In the scope of management of social situations and representations of self, we can say that "the past life and the habitual course of activities of a certain actor contains […] Facts that, if they were introduced during the representation, would discredit or, at least, weaken the pretensions relative to their personality" (GOFFMAN, 1985, p. 192). This redemption from previous behaviors can be continuously mobilized, as a form to delegitimate current identity strategies, as we can see in the comment made below by a Facebook user.

Image 2: Facebook user remembering Skol's contradicting past and attesting the need for a long-lasting expressive coherence through the brand's repositioning.

9 de março de 2017

A tal cerveja redonda foi lançada em 1967. Quase 50 anos de propaganda escrota e agora todo mundo apaga esse histórico dando biscoito pra marca por causa de algumas campanhas que tem alcance sobretudo digital e segmentado. Não parabenizo a marca não, parabenizo as mulheres feministas que pressionaram e estão mudando a economia. Quem sabe em 2067, se continuar assim, dá pra parabenizar a cervejaria.

176   63 comentários 11 compartilhamentos

Curtir   Comentar

Source: Facebook

Considering that the practices of diversitywashing are manifested in the level of perceptions, the sudden identity transformation of the brand can demand some time so that the audience assimilates their new construction of self. This audience can recur, whenever possible, as product of their distrust and with the intent of delegitimated the current brand

representation, to the brand's "past life". In this sense, the digital context still favors this movement, since it registers each previous behavior of the brand, through the facilities of the "searchability" attribute" (BOYD, 2008). Thus, until the brand brings behavioral consistency, establishing new identity routines and coherent biographic narratives with this new performatization of self, at any moment we can be reminded of facts of this past life, causing embarrassment through the meaning effect of diversitywashing.

Final Considerations

When approaching an identity reality of a brand to the dynamics of construction of self of individuals, the discussion proposed here exposed an alternative look to those that, in general, seek to understand brand strategies only through the bias of their market objectives. In this sense, notions like authenticity and expressive coherence, common on studies on social interactions, can be important analytical operators for the understanding of often conflicting relations between the communicative intention of the brand, audiences expectations and effects of meaning that emerge from these connections.

We understand here that the concept of diversitywashing dialogues with sociological presuppositions already established for the study of social life of individuals, since it is inserted in symbolic disputes among the effects of what is said and the effects of what is practiced, in a constant game of legitimation and delegitimation of brand discourses, as well as in daily interactional negotiations. Therefore, the proposition presented here aims to conceptually articulate the notion of diversitywashing through this theoretical-methodologic apparatus, building a primary mapping for the understanding of these manifestations.

In the context of media communication in relation to the concept of diversity, it is important to recognize, still that when the marketing process has as its only goal in sales and profit, the essential presupposition tend to be emptied and citizens can have their values instrumentalized, as well as their life stories expropriated. The productive structure makes

standard individual actors have to adapt, that can be seen as a first advance, but only when these spaces are actually occupied by diverse bodies, narratives can be disputed, and new stories can be told.

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About the authors

Fernanda Carrera - Professor at the Communication School at Universidade Federal *do Rio de* Janeiro (UFRJ). Professor at the Post-graduation Program in Communication at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) and the Post-Graduation Program in Media Studies (PPgEM/UFRN). Leader of the research group LIDD - Lab Of Digital Identities and Diversity (UFRJ). PhD in Communication at Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF). Master's in Contemporary Communication and Culture at Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA). In this article, the author participated in the conception of the

research outline, the development of the theoretical discussion, collection and interpretation of data, the creation of the manuscript and proofreading the text.

Chalini Torquato - Professor in the School of Communication at Universidade Federal *do Rio de Janeiro -* ECO/UFRJ. PhD at the Post-Graduation Program in Contemporary Communication and Culture at Universidade Federal da Bahia (PósCom/UFBA) where she also finished her master's. She is a participant of the research group in Politics and Economy of Information and Communication (PEIC/UFRJ) and the Study Group Forms of Inhabiting the Present. She is the general coordinator of the Extension group Diversity Week at UFRJ. In this article, the author participated in developing the theoretical discussion, the collection and interpretation of data, the creation of the manuscript and proofreading the text.