

Vem ser feliz: estratégias de controle e manipulação discursiva das emoções nos domínios publicitário e corporativo¹

Come on be happy: strategies of control and discursive manipulation of emotions in advertising and corporate realms

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Resumo: *Este artigo investiga como os domínios publicitário e corporativo buscam controlar e manipular discursivamente as afetividades e subjetividades de consumidores e trabalhadores, atrelando-as aos valores organizacionais, com o fim de melhorar a eficiência produtiva, incrementar o consumo e maximizar seus lucros. Metodologicamente, procedeu-se à análise de publicidades e cases empresariais que evidenciam o papel das emoções no neoliberalismo, com base das proposições de Casaqui (2017), Castro (2013), Charaudeau (2016), Deleuze (1992), Elias (1994), Freire Filho (2010), Foucault (2004), Illouz (2011), Lazzarato (2004), entre outros. Como resultado da pesquisa, constata-se que atualmente as emoções são concebidas como um capital da empresa, assumindo a missão de vincular afetivamente consumidores e trabalhadores à alma da corporação.*

Palavras-chave: *emoção; controle; manipulação discursiva; publicidade.*

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Abstract: *This article investigates how advertising and corporate domains seek to control and manipulate discursively the affectivities and subjectivities of consumers and workers, linking them to organizational values, in order to improve productive efficiency, increase consumption and maximize profits. Methodologically, we analyzed advertisings and entrepreneurship cases that highlight the role of emotions in neoliberalism, based in Casaqui (2017), Castro (2013), Charaudeau (2016), Deleuze (1992), Elias (1994), Freire Filho (2010), Foucault (2004), Illouz (2011), Lazzarato (2004), among others. As a result of the research, we verified that today emotions are conceived as a company's capital, assuming the mission of affectively linking consumers and workers to the soul of the corporation.*

Keywords: *emotion; control; discursive manipulation; advertising.*

Introduction: consumer happiness and worker emotional management

Love, fun, happiness, satisfaction, success, excitement, well-being. Passions, emotions and affections play a fundamental role for advertisement, constituting powerful strategies which the creative frequently uses to call attention to an audience increasingly numb by multimedia super exposure. In this context, reinforces Casaqui (2011), advertisement promotes the materialization of the feeling of happiness through consumption: abstract dreams and wishes are made present by the advertisement discourse and concretized under the form of brands and merchandise. Castro (2013) points out that, more than selling products or services, companies want affectionate engagement from their consumers. Vaz (2010) reflects that in contemporary western societies, the right to happiness is the biggest motto of the individual.

This happiness to which we would have the right and our duty to pursue it is presented as residing in the private sphere and related to consumption of goods and services. Thanks to the omnipresent advertisement discourse, just by thinking about being happy we see images of a smiling family in a home filled with objects that would bring comfort and alleviate the harshness of domestic work (VAZ, 2010, p. 135).

It is what we can observe, for instance, from the famous slogans of Brazilian ads with the theme of consumer happiness, such as A place for happy people, from Pão de Açúcar, Be you, *Be happy*, by Riachuelo, and *Come on be happy*, by Magazine Luiza (Image 1).

IMAGE 1 – “Happiness” in advertisement slogans from Pão de Açúcar, Riachuelo and Magazine Luiza.



SOURCE – YouTube (Available in: <http://bit.ly/2rXhm7O>, <http://bit.ly/2nGFPJx> e <http://bit.ly/2D-V3fSg>, respectively. Accessed in: Feb. 2nd, 2018).

Oxymoronically, it isn't uncommon to realize that this affectionate rhetoric of happiness in advertisement pieces reveals itself to be very distant from the reality of these corporations. It is the case of the companies of the three ads above, known to have illegal labor practices. In 2013, for instance, Grupo Pão de Açúcar was ordered by Ribeirão Preto's Labor Justice so they stopped submitting young apprentices to deviation of the agreed position (exploitation of child and youth labor).⁴ And in 2020, the supermarket corporation was convicted by São José do Rio Preto's Labor Justice to pay R\$ 100,000 for collective moral damages due to maintaining employees in strenuous work hours.⁵

In 2017, Rio Grande do Norte's Public Prosecutor's Office of Labor moved a public civil action against Riachuelo, requesting a collective indemnization in the value of R\$ 37.7 million, due to irregularities in the apparel industry that worked for the corporation. The inspectors oversaw over 50 apparel industries in 12 cities in the state, and concluded that the tercerized employees would receive a much lower payment

4 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2DXFrNk>.

5 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2DXwsfg>.

and had less labor rights than the employees hired directly by Guararapes Confeções, controlled by Riachuelo.⁶

Finally, in 2013, Campinas' Labor Court sentenced Magazine Luiza to the payment of R\$ 1.5 million for cost reduction from the elimination of labor laws: the employees were submitted to workdays with excessive extra hours and the legally foreseen breaks were disrespected.⁷ Even with the sentence, the retail store kept subjecting their employees to debilitating shifts, which led to the Labor Public Prosecutor's Office to go in labor law, in 2017, asking a penalty of R\$ 5 million. The prosecutor Gustavo Rizzo Ricardo commented the case:

Magazine Luiza has self-declared one of the best companies to work with in Brazil. However, the documents gathered show that the reality is very different. Exhausting shifts of over 14 hours reveal that the company clearly disrespects the labor law. Even after the sentence, the company refuses to correct their conduct, which shows their disrespect for their workers and even for the legal decisions. Therefore, it is necessary to exercise a penalty with pedagogic-punitive purposes so that, finally, they change the way they act (cited in MPT/Campinas' website).⁸

These are just a few of the occurrences in which is evidenced the discrepancy between the affectionate position manufactured by advertisement and the predatory neoliberal practices adopted by the companies. Neoliberalism considers competition as the defining characteristic of human relationships. The neoliberal ideology re-signifies citizens as consumers that have the power of exercising democratic choices through buying and selling – a process that rewards merit and punishes inefficiency (BOURDIEU, 1998).

Individuals are divided into winners and losers, since each one wins what they deserve. Following the neoliberal principles, the market offers benefits that could never be reached with the anti-natural interference of external agents, especially with state or union intervention. And any

6 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2DXTfM9>.

7 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2nwMhDh>.

8 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2s0wdP3>.

attempt of limiting the competition are considered, therefore, hostile to freedom.

However, with the purpose of getting rid of a group of social climbers and greedy companies have been gradually recurring to management tricks and discourses aiming to mask or romanticize abusive neoliberal practices. Corporate gurus create, thus, heteroclite movements such as “conscious capitalism”, proposed by John Mackey, CEO from the North American chain of supermarkets Whole Foods Market (MACK-EY; SISODIA, 2013). The businessman advocates that the movement is positioned “contrary to the idea – very common in the business world – that every businessman wants to exploit everyone for selfish reasons” and believes that “creating a company can be a good act – often even heroic” (MACKEY, 2018, p. 89).

As a tactic to reinforce a more humanized image supposedly concerned in boosting morale and well-being of their employees – but always chasing, in fact, the growth of productivity and a bigger efficiency of the workforce – corporations have been resorting to psychologists, behavioral researchers, motivational speakers, coaching professionals and every type of “stage entrepreneur”. Casaqui (2017, p. 14) critically evaluates these inspirational narratives that publicize the idea of “entrepreneurial society”.

Entrepreneurship has turned into a *panacea*, the cure of all evil of our time: from unemployment to unhappiness, passing through the crisis of value, everything that is passible of solution, through the practice of entrepreneurial activity that combines a business plan, a positive psychology and inspiration.

In a similar train of thought about the imperative search for happiness in the corporate environment, Freire Filho (2010, p. 50) understands that “positive psychology, neuroscience and self-help guides are in charge of instrumentalizing it, redefining it as a potent organic fertilizer, a type of natural energetic additive. The researcher reproduces, still, the logic explicated in an important publication about “happiness at all costs” [Você S/A, May 11th, 2009]: “Happiness is an important fuel for

those who want to grow careerwise” [...]The feeling of doing what you like and being well with yourself allows the person to create more, stand out and, thus, to be able of filling a higher position.

The psychiatrist and writer from São Paulo Augusto Cury is one of the greatest representatives of this trend of enterprising with happiness, gaining national notoriety with his books and conferences about “emotional management” and “emotional coaching” to manage anxiety and improve professional performance (CURY, 2015). Therefore, breaking barriers between the financial and emotional universe, strategies of control and manipulation of affection in the work environment are being thought and incorporated to the foundation of economic action, in a radically new way of conceiving the process of production (ILLOUZ, 2011).

At the same time, the imbrication between economy and emotion have also been receiving relevance under the point of view of consumption. It is about the “commercialization of love” (COSTA, 2005), in other words, a continuous process of infiltration, through advertisement speech, of commercial stimuli in the consumer’s affections and the association between symbols and merchandise in love relations. According to Carrascoza (2014, p. 55), “advertisement is the mediator between the industrial production, non-humanized, and consumption, humanized, making the nomination, the individualization of products, for the consumer”.

According to França (2010, p. 218) “current society cannot give us the ‘key to happiness’ – because this society desires a key that opens many doors”. For the author, these appeals are incessantly broadcast by different media products, especially by advertisement and works of fiction, that remind us of the obligation and path to being happy. Bauman (2014, p. 67) also reflects about this “key to happiness” brought by advertisement messages:

Sometimes messages are clearly explicit, and other times are subtly hidden, but, more and more, they appeal to intellectual faculties to emotions or subconscious desires, promise, suggest and express happiness (or

pleasurable sensations, moments of joy: a portion of happiness to every life delivered little by little, in daily dosages or for hours and for a few bucks) forming part of the acquisition, possession and enjoyment of products provided in a store. The message couldn't be more clear: the path to happiness involves going shopping." (Our translation)

Therefore, goods or services can be converted into an affectionate commodity and become a "beloved" item. With that in mind, companies strive to measure and control what the consumer feels and what moves them. "Coherent with the current neoliberal concepts, one invests extensively and constantly in the affectionate engagement of consumer", affirms Castro (2013, p. 177). Still according to the author, "one work so that the consumer is simultaneously challenged and constituted as admirer, endorser and, eventually, partner and brand spokesperson with their peers" (CASTRO, 2013, p. 177).

As such, it is possible to argue that, either in the field of consumption or production, affectivities and subjectivities have been actively mobilized, shaped and controlled by neoliberal economic forces, making that subjects become, nowadays, simultaneous emotional and economic actors. In this sense, the innovation brought by the so-called emotional capitalism is precisely to understand the feelings of consumers and workers – agents traditionally located in different steps of the productive process – as equally fundamental for the affectionate capital of companies.

In this article, we defend that this phenomenon can be more well-articulated and understood through the issues generated around mechanisms of control, vigilance and manipulation of emotions in the corporate and advertisement dominions. How did the historic evolution of the social control of emotion as we know today come about? In what way the idea of emotional capitalism contributes for the change in the corporate perception about the role of feelings for consumers and employees? And how can it be seen in practice, in concrete examples?

In order to base our discussion, we primarily rely on Elias (1994a, 1994b), Foucault (1983) and Deleuze (1992), and perform a succinct

report of the ways as social control of feelings have been dealt since the end of the Middle Ages – period considered as the landmark of affectionate vigilance in contemporary days. Then, the research will turn specifically for the understanding of strategies of affective control used currently both in advertisement and in organizations, that aim to measure direct, regulate or even make a prognosis of feelings of consumers and employees of a company (ILLOUZ, 2011; ANDRADE, 2015). Later, we will explicit the main techniques of discursive manipulation of emotions listed by Charaudeau (2016), originally conceived for the analysis of the political discourse, being recovered and reconfigured here to our purposes.

Throughout the article, we will present advertisement pieces and cases, as well as news and information of the advertisement and corporate world, in order to exemplify and unravel theoretical discussions. Finally, with the goal of putting into action the model of analysis elaborated by Charaudeau (2016), we elected as object the “endomarketing discourse” – in other words, geared towards the internal marketing of the companies – since it contemplates the control and manipulation of emotions both in the advertisement discourse (of agencies that share their services of consultancy for enhancement of the work climate) and business discourse (of organizations that want their employees to engage in the mission and values of the company). Lastly, we selected for study the advertisement film *Endomarketing*, by the agency Angelcom, because it has the biggest number of views in YouTube among videos of similar content.⁹

A brief history about the social control of emotions

In many organization lies a crystalized conception in more traditional neoliberalism, but still well diffused into the current corporate imaginary: the duty of the adoption of a rational and objective posture of self-control of feelings in the workplace. In this conventional view, the

9 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2dZiNuE>.

emotional component would be attached to the final step of the productive process, when advertisement would play the role of affective charm and seduce their consumers, persuading them to purchase the good or service offered. However, that hasn't always been that way.

In the classic *The Process*, Elias (1994a and 1994b) analyzes the effects of forming the Modern State on individual's customs and personality. The author unveils the extensive historic mesh of profound transformations occurred in society since the Middle Ages through contemporary days, towards, civilization. One of the central points of the work is discussing in what extent these sociopolitical transformations influenced the construction of affections and the way they were socially shared until arriving to the modern conception of control of individual emotions by external imposition and by self-control.

The thesis sustained by the German sociologist is that the creation of National States in Europe exercised, throughout time, a decisive role in behavior, feelings and structures of control in western society.

This continuous, uniform and stable regulation of passions and affections will become a constitutive part of society. It is in this sense that, according to Foucault (1983), in the 17th and 18th centuries, the "disciplinary society" appears as a form of domination, introjected into social institutions and affecting human actions, habits and feelings. In modern society, industrial and capitalistic, the power economy concludes that surveillance is more efficient and profitable than punishment. In disciplinarian societies, the control of space, time and movement is submitted then to a "panoptic surveillance over docile bodies confined to prisons, schools, hospitals, barracks and factories (BRUNO, 2013, p. 60).

In the 20th century, with the end of the Second World War, emerge forces in society that found a new order, identified with changes in the capitalist world, especially regarding technological innovations. The use of these new technologies for social control is transformed in the most decisive manifestation of the exercise of power in current society. It is what Deleuze (1992) calls "societies of control". Instead of discipline and confinement, the modulation of societies of control is characterized

by the invisibility and the nomadism that is expanded along the networks of information. Control develops strategies increasingly less visible and material, and more and more subtle, virtual, dispersed, fluid, immaterial (HARDT, 2000).

Deleuze (1992, p. 223) still criticizes when affirming that currently he considers that “companies have a soul, which is effectively the most terrifying news in the world. Marketing is now the instrument of social control, and forms an imprudent race of our lords”. In fact, as Lazzarato (2004) reminds us, contemporary capitalism does not have an only goal of producing goods or services. Before, it desires to create worlds, subjectivities, affectivities. The company does not manufacture goods, but the world where the good exist in, it does not produce more consumers and workers, but subjects that inhabit this free world, playful and creative built by them.

A great example of how advertisement build affectionate worlds can be seen in a Sadia advertisement in 2017, titled Since 73 years ago, everyday + Sadia.¹⁰ The piece consists of a compilation of one minute of historic advertisements of the brand, broadcasted from 1969 to 2016, with strong sentimental appeal, perceived in the classic jingle, with children voices: “It is good to know someone really loves you / Good to know someone wants you well / For all your life, inside your chest / It’s so good to know there’s a love like this”. As revealed by Cecilia Mondino, brand director from BRF (Sadia’s controlling company)

The consumer has an emotional relation with Sadia, because the history of the brand is meshed into people’s history. We perceive in researches that the brand or the own products are capable of unlocking memories and marking moments of the consumer’s life. Because of that, we invested in a campaign that values that connection and relation of partnership built throughout these years. (*apud* LEAL, 2017)

More than twenty ads with unforgettable images and catchphrases compose the film, such as the scene of the boy identifying Sadia’s ham

10 Disponível em: <http://bit.ly/2BXw4f6>.

in a blind test, or the boys singing “Christmas Turkey”, or the lady that used to complain with “No way, Jose!” (Image 2).

Image 2 – Scenes from the ad 73 years after, every day + *Sadia*.



SOURCE – YouTube (available at <http://bit.ly/2BXw4f6>. Accessed in: Feb. 4th, 2018).

In order to motivate a greater affectionate engagement from the audience, a *hotsite*¹¹ was created so that people would share their memories about Sadia and these iconic ads. Among the testimonies, we could read several testimonials that narrate personal and family stories mixing with the professional life – theirs or their relative’s – within Sadia. In other moments, we see pictures that describe memories from employees. “How happy I was in my first day of work”, “It wasn’t just work, it was life, it was a family!”. And “it is touching to be a part of this story” (Image 3).

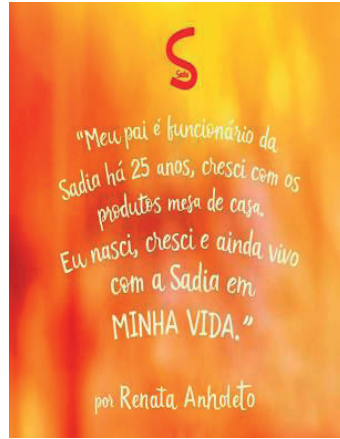
11 Available at: <https://www.sadia.com.br/nasuahistoria/home>.

Image 3 – Images/testimonies from the *hotsite*, “in your story”, by Sadia.



SOURCE – Sadia (available in: <http://bit.ly/2Ed5iEr>. Accessed in: Feb. 4th, 2018).

IMAGE 3 – Images/testimonial from the hotsite “In your story”, by Sadia.



SOURCE – Sadia (Available at: <http://bit.ly/2Ed5iEr>. Accessed in: Feb. 4th, 2018).

These testimonies reveal, therefore, the advertisement exploitation of affectionate aspects of their actors, in which consumers and workers share the same feeling in relation to the brand. Hence this “new” capitalism being called *emotional capitalism*.

The notion of emotional capital arrived as a specific field of human capital to receive investment. These emotions became seen as determining

elements of employee motivation, from decision-making, resistance of risks and changes in flexible organizations and the persistence of the search for goals, cooperation and the coordination of productive processes, the fidelization of clients and deviations considered irrational in the corporate behavior. [...] Emotions emerge, thus, as a capital of the company inseparable from the qualities incorporated in workers and consumers (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 730).

We will see that this discourse of “new” capitalism is nothing more than a set of remodeled tactics of emotional control of consumers and employees.

Affection control in the advertisement and corporate field

When discussing the fabrication of this affective world created by contemporary capitalism, Lazzarato (2004, p. 96-97) stresses that

[...] This world is constituted by arrangements of enunciation, by regimens of signs whose expression is called advertisement and whose manifestation constitutes a request, an order, that are, in themselves, an evaluation, a judgement, a belief about the world, about yourself and others. What is expressed isn't an ideological evaluation, but an incitement, a request to adopt a lifestyle, in other words, adopting a form of attire, a way of having a body, a way of eating, communicating, living, moving, having a style, a way of speaking, etc.

In this sense, it is up to the media, and, especially, advertisement, the mission of operating as a “pedagogical locus”, instructing the audience on how to behave in order of getting success in their daily life and fitting to the current social conduct (FISCHER, 2012; DOMINGUES, 2016). Advertisement arrives, thus, as one of the dominions that have developed the most in current days with the purpose of dictating new habits, values and beliefs, as well as teaching how people should behave, what they should buy, how they should feel. [...] Advertisement, much more than a tool in the field of marketing, that aims the persuasion of

consumers to generate sales of products and services, is a tool of social control (DOMINGUES, 2016, p. 15).

The search for understanding the role exercised by emotions and feelings in advertisement is not something entirely new. Since the 1920's, researchers seek to unveil this phenomenon, especially from a measurist perspective. In other words, most researches in this field present as main goal to find, through increasingly sophisticated technological resources, forms of quantitatively needing the audience's emotional response from an advertisement ad, and, consequently, an affectionate image of the brand (according to POELS; DeWITTE, 2006). And this eagerness for deciphering, monitoring and directing how people sensitively relate to brands is only increasing after the creation of the internet and digital media, where internet users are over stimulated to openly discuss their opinions, beliefs, likes and dislikes.

This exacerbated subjectivity, responsible for blurring borders between the fields of public and private, have been calling the attention of intellectuals of human and social sciences that already advocate an affective twist in this fields of knowledge (CLOUGH, 2007). It sustains the recognition of affectivity as one of the central elements for the understanding of subjectivity and the interactions among individuals in contemporaneity. The advertisement universe – always aware of the behavioral tendencies due to its market strategies – cannot ignore this phenomenon.

Specifically in the advertisement and corporate fields, the interest for the subject being generally treated within the logic of *fetichism of emotion*. Feelings are objectified, measured and made as commodity, in other words, disposed as goods to be consumed. Companies, advertisement agencies and research institutes tirelessly pursue the most accurate measuring method, capable of reading and interpreting affectivities in a more objective way with more productive (financial) results. With that, the intention is to value the “main asset of a company”, which is their brand – both in the consumer (“external client”) perspective and under

the prism of who works in the company (which begins to be called in the current corporate jargon as a “internal client”) (THOMSON, 1998);

On the other hand, there are those who criticize the technicity and the simulated reality of emotions in the corporate universe. It is the case of the sociologist Eva Illouz (2011), in her book *Love in the Time of Capital*, in which she defends that the corporate world have been turning into a system of production and management of feelings. That is manifested, according to the author, not only in the tireless effort to decode and create prognosis on emotional reactions of the consumer audience facing a brand or advertisement, but also regarding the control of emotional behavior of the employees themselves.

The difference is that, in fact, this control is no longer founded in the panoptic surveillance discussed by Foucault (1983). The strategies used nowadays are much more subtle and effective. This is what also affirms Andrade (2015, p. 738):

The techniques adopted by the corporate culture and by the economy of experiences seek to awake individual and/or collective excitement with the goal of affectively link workers and consumers to the company, obtaining their subjective engagement. The emotional and expressive rules promoted are the so-called “positive emotions”, the worker must feel and show himself motivated, committed, excited, optimistic and self-confident, developing, in relation to his colleagues and clients, moral feelings such as sympathy, empathy, loyalty, trust, responsibility, solidarity and teamwork spirit, even when the conditions of possibility of these feelings are undermined by job instability, the ephemerality of flexible relations, by fierce competition and the threat of unemployment. Workers, contrary to what happened in Fordism, can no longer manifest displeasure for their job and their co-workers, running the risk of being seen as unmotivated and non-cooperative, a mortal sin in the current work market.

According to Illouz (2011), capitalism only gave importance to the affective life of employees with the goal of obtaining better results in the production and, consequently, bigger profits. “The language of affection and productive efficiency were intertwining even more, one shaping the other” (ILLOUZ, 2011, p. 25).

This process is historically explained by Andrade (2015) from what the author calls genealogy of the anthropologic conception of the emotional economic man, linked to the concept of emotional capital. According to the sociologist, when analyzing the management discourse and the neoliberal economy on emotional capital, it is possible to determine an unprecedented coherence in the construction of emotional life of workers and consumers, being a constitutive part in history of the forms of feeling in contemporary society.

As clarified by the intellectual, from the 1990's, specialists from the company universe began to point out the role of emotions as the crucial factor in the competition between companies, defending, even, that emotional skills are decisive to establish the success or failure of a professional career. With that, entrepreneur, managers, consultants and researchers of this field began to try to understand better what are emotions and how they can be (self) managed to achieve more efficient results and boost financial profit.

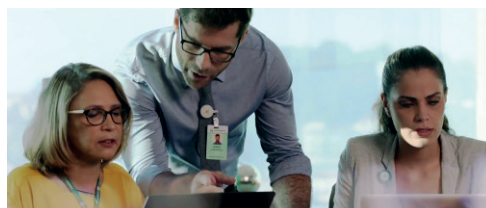
Therefore, "the conception of an emotional economic man concerns the management of workers; the devices of management power build the emotional life of individuals linking them to corporate objectives (ANDRADE, 2015, p. 727). The market logic of neoliberal governability, founded in the competition between companies and the maximization of income, becomes internalized by the individuals. They become, therefore, an "entrepreneur of self" (FOUCAULT, 2004, p. 232), taking on company values, such as control, performance, rationality, competitiveness (among their peers), etc.

In this scenario, the feelings are transformed into decisive factors to motivate employees of a company, from which it is expected to be proud and happy to "fill the shoes" of the company. They must identify themselves, thus, as part of the "team" or "family" in that corporation, cooperating to satisfy and create bonds of fidelity with the clients. When they apprehend as cognitively mediated strategies that, direct and indirectly, produce financial goods and generate contentment, emotions are converted into an object of management. According to Andrade (2015,

p. 730), “emotions emerge, thus, as a capital of a company inseparable from the qualities incorporated in workers and consumers”.

In order to attest the relevance of this discussion, it is interesting to notice precisely these circumstances in which there is a disruption, in other words, when this affective aspect ran out of control of the companies and what measures were taken to solve the resulting problems. A first situation can occur when a scandal happens in the corporation, such as involvement with corruption or an infringement of quality standards, tainting the audience’s feeling of trust and respect to the ethics and security before the brand. That is what happened recently with Petrobras and JBS. In both cases, the solution that was found was producing advertisement campaigns in which the employees give their voice/image to the company act as sponsors of the credibility of the brand (Image 4).

IMAGE 4 – Ads *Moving on*, by Petrobras, and *Quality is a priority*, by JBS.

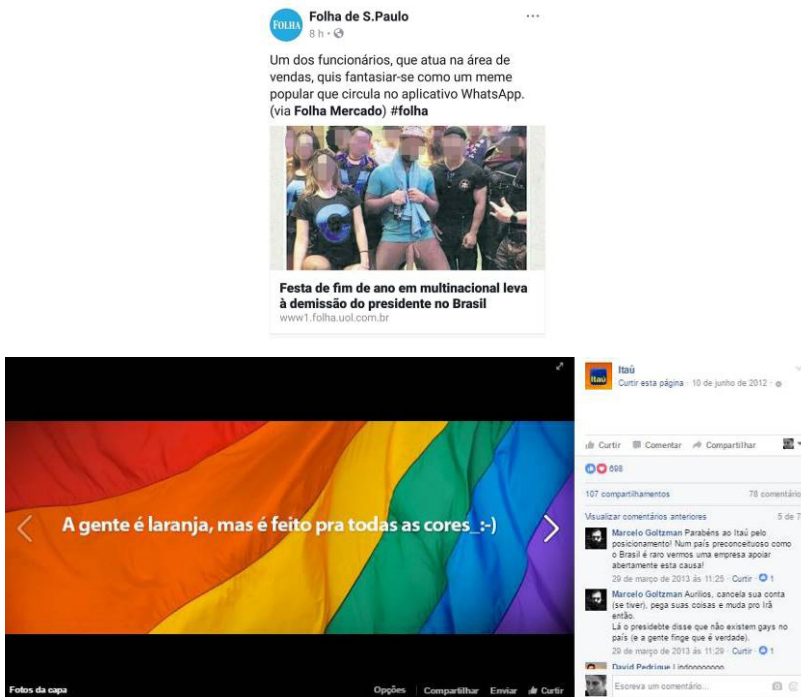


SOURCE – YouTube (available at: <http://bit.ly/2E03oUk> e <http://bit.ly/2GLlwTS>, respectively.. Accessed in: Feb. 4th, 2018).

On the other hand, employees that did not follow the value guide-book of the company can be penalized with a dismissal. Two recent cases gained media repercussion. In 2017, the Brazilian branch of Salesforce, North American software company, fired their president Mauricio Prado and other two employees after a controversy involving a costume

party in the company, in which one of the employees wore a racist costume (Image 5, left).¹² In another situation, also in 2017, an awarded manager from Banco Itaú was fired for posting a video on social media kissing his fiancée.¹³ The oxymoron here is that Itaú externally adopts a pro-sexual diversity discourse (Figura 5, right) what seems to indicate that what a company preaches is not always what is practiced.

IMAGE 5 – Employees fired for not complying company values: Salesforce and Banco Itaú.



SOURCE – Folha de S. Paulo's and Banco Itaú's Facebook page (available at: <http://bit.ly/2nGqpEY> e <http://bit.ly/2E222wo>, respectively. Accessed in: Feb. 4th, 2018).

Due to the importance given by the management of affectivities in the company, they frequently conceive new tools for control and

12 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2E00V0e>.

13 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2GL2zR4>.

surveillance of employee's emotions. One of the main management tools consists in endomarketing, whose goal – under the critical point of view – is to manipulate employee's feelings aiming at the increase of productivity and profits of the company. How it comes about will be the theme of the following section.

Endomarketing and the discursive manipulation of emotions at companies

Generally, the notion of endomarketing is related to strategies and actions typical of corporate practices geared specifically towards employees of the company (endo = internal), such as the enhancement of internal communication, the performance of events and initiatives of integration, the satisfaction survey or corporate climate, the promotion of motivational talks, etc. (BEKIN, 2004). According to the business consultant Saul Faingaus Bekin – who coined the term in Brazil in the 1990's – “endomarketing consists in marketing actions geared towards the internal audience of the company, with the goal of promoting among employees and departments values destined to serve the client” (BEKIN, 1995, p. 2).

According to Brum (2005, p. 34), the practice of endomarketing proposes to give the employee “education, care and attention”, with the goal of making them well prepared and well informed so they can also become, in turn, “a creative and happy person, capable of surprising, enchanting and exciting the client”. For the author, “today we can no longer speak of a company without thinking of love, because they are made by people, and love is something that surrounds each and every type of relationship” (BRUM, 2005, p. 27).

When critically evaluating this corporate practice, Andrade (2015, p. 738-739) exposes:

The marketing of experiences can be mobilized for the internal audience, promoting events, scenarios, internal communications, corporate competitions and awards in the form of experiences, in a way of transmitting emotional rules and linking the affective memory of employees to the

company. [...]In addition, in the post-Fordism era, not only awards, but the work itself can be approximated of the imperative of “experimentation” of consumption when characterizing by the variation, innovation, risk and emotional performance. The work is not presented in the managers’ discourse as something that only demands sacrifice and application, but also as something fun, emotional and sensorially exciting, like an adventure filled with risks and adrenaline, a liberating experience.

It is in this sense that the terminological repertoire produced by endomarketing manuals – such as those created by Brum (2010), Costa (2012), Cerqueira (1994), among others – discursively builds affective worlds in which employees are “collaborators”, “cooperators”, “associates” (NETTO; BRAZ, 2006, p. 217). With this control over the rhetoric of/in corporations, they seek to camouflage the deterioration of labor conditions of the working class, the growing precariousness and flexibilization of work, the deficiency and/or elimination of labor rights by politics committed solely with the neoliberal interests of the capital, among many other aspects that evidenced vulnerability in the employment bonds in Brazil and the systematic negligence with the quality of life of the worker.

This control comes about intrinsically through the manipulation of discourses that circulate in the corporate field. As highlighted by Fairclough (2017, p. 26), the “linguistic use is taking on a larger importance through means of production and social control within the workplace”. Until 1970’s, with the disciplinary control found preponderantly in Fordism, the surveillance of employees was based in a strict hierarchical structuration, in which the prime of order and subservience obedience is dogmatically assumed. Nowadays, the control over the work and productivity of employees is based on much more elaborate cognitive-discursive strategies.

According to Fairclough (2017, p. 26), “the goal is to establish new cultural values, in which employees are “entrepreneurs”, “self-motivated” and [...] ‘self-directed’”. Instead of the servile and resigned compliance of tasks, they stimulate the excellence in service, the favorable corporate

climate, competitive advantage, the channeling of strategic efforts, the synergy of company goals and their internal audience, the experience of personal satisfaction and accomplishment at work, the stimulus to meritocracy, the recognition for individual performance, among many other implicitly manipulatory clichés of the corporate jargon, easily found in the guides for internal marketing.

When investigating the manipulatory discourse, Charaudeau (2016, p. 68-69)¹⁴ points towards four fundamental characteristics. First, the manipulator does not reveal their real purposes, camouflaging them under the shape of a reverse discourse or assuming the appearance of being acting in benefit of the person who is being manipulated. This is what typically happens with the misleading argument that the recent Brazilian labor reform was made in favor of the worker, because it would generate more jobs. Historic legal guarantees were taken from employees under the allegation that this would improve the company conditions for hiring, which wasn't true.¹⁵

In fact, the increase of temporary and part-time jobs ends up creating a bigger feeling of insecurity and instability for employees. In addition, less strict laws on workhours and duration of contracts may enable the exploitation of workforce – without the legal protection of a minimum workload – and worsen the income distribution between employees and employers, on behalf of the holders of capital.

A second characteristic of manipulatory discourse happens when the manipulator, with the goal of impressing the person manipulated, makes use of a position of legitimacy, which is given by context. In other words, by being a “entrepreneurial director”, the capitalist owner holds a place of prestige and is socially recognized as a institutionally legitimated authority in that situation.

The spirit of capitalism is precisely the set of beliefs associated to the capitalist order that contribute to justify and sustain that order, legitimating

14 Charaudeau (2016) performs his analysis using as examples basically political discourse. In this article, therefore, we come from the proposal of the author, adapting it to the advertisement and entrepreneurial fields.

15 Available at: <http://bit.ly/2IMPayi>.

the forms of action and the dispositions coherent with it. These justifications, either general or practical, local or global, expressed in terms of virtue or in terms of justice, give a base to the accomplishment of more or less hard tasks, and, in a general way, to the adherence of a lifestyle, in a sense that is favorable to the capitalist order (BOLTANSKI; CHIAPELLO, 2009, p. 42).

In third place, the manipulatory discourse, the manipulator builds an image capable of paralyzing the opinion of the manipulated person, either through a threat, or through dissimulation. The corporate threat comes about, for instance, in cases of moral harassment within the corporate environment, with “tough bosses” submitting workers to degrading and offensive situations, in a frequent and everlasting manner, throughout the work journey and in the fulfillment of their functions.

In turn, the dissimulation in corporations have as main purpose to make workers believe they have a significant and essential participation in the decision-making process of the company, and that they are not mere pieces in the productive process. They conceal the fact that, in neoliberal capitalism, the employee is not a proprietary of the means of production, and, because of that, the only alternative left is to sell their workforce to guarantee their livelihood. With the purpose of promoting a cosmetic appreciation of their subordinates, organizations create, thus, the so-called Programs of Quality of Life in the Workplace, destined, in practice, to the enhancement of productivity and profit (SANT’ANNA; KILIMNIK; MORAES, 2011).

Finally, in fourth place, Charaudeau (2016) reinforces that the manipulator dramatizes their speech in a way of sensitizing the manipulated person, even terrorizing them. This last characteristic of the manipulatory discourse will be more detailed ahead, based in the analysis of the advertisement piece of a internal marketing company.

In synthesis, therefore, the capitalist manipulatory discourse desires, ultimately, to control the interlocutors/workers when provoking an incitation so that they can change their opinion about a determined topic, adhering to the position of a manipulator/proprietor of the means of

production. With that goal, this type of discourse often recurs to arguments of a moral or emotional nature (braveness, fear, compassion, motivation, satisfaction, etc.), being frequently associated to a potential sanction. This sanction can be positive, as it is the case of promises of obtaining future advantages, such as the offer of variable income, bonus and rewards, benefit and health plan, etc. Or it can be negative, recurring to the imminence of a tragedy and impeding a more pondered reflection of the manipulated person, such as the threat of being fired.

Charaudeau (2016) argues still that one of the most used resources of control by the manipulatory discourse for the creation of common sense is the manipulation by the seduction. In the corporate environment, the manipulator manufactures an ethos or a self-image of credibility (when based itself in the frame of rationality) or charisma (when it seeks a more affectionate framing), aiming to conquer the company employees when shoing a natural leader, a serious director, a competent manager, someone who “makes it work”, etc. Classic social symbols are retrieved, such as the hope of prosperity, the expectation of success by individual merit, the feeling of joy for a fulfilled duty and a worked victory, etc., always sustained by the image of the manipulator.

Charaudeau (2016, p. 90) reinforces that this unfolds through the “reenactment of a drama” in three acts. In order to illustrate for the present article, we can observe how this dramatization happens in the corporate discourse through the analysis of the advertisement piece of a Panamenian agency of internal marketing Angelcom (Image 6).

IMAGE 6 – The three acts of enactment in Angelcom’s advertisement.



SOURCE – YouTube (available at: <http://bit.ly/2dZiNuE>. Accessed in: Feb. 4th, 2018).

Initially, in the first act of reenactment, the manipulatory discourse makes a fuss of a crisis situation, bringing up the typified scheme of a social disorder in which employees are victims (social crisis, economic crisis, etc.). In the advertisement film in animation, we are presented to the daily life of the character Juan “one of many Panamanians, who, in their daily lives, work to bring livelihood to their homes”. Juan wakes up early, changes clothes quickly and after two hours in his commute, has to make an effort to be grateful to at least have a job. In the firm, Juan has to face the indifference of his coworkers and the discomfort of an inhospitable workplace. The employee is frustrated and clearly facing a crisis (Image 6, on the left).

Continuous act, according to Charaudeau (2016), the dramatization of the manipulatory discourse has to identify a source of evil responsible for the disorder, being found and claimed to be a scapegoat. The fault falls over Juan himself, who spends “all workday thinking about when he will leave”. Juan is cited as an example of “thousands of employees which, overtime, decrease productivity by being unmotivated and dissatisfied” (Image 6, center). The employee is also described as “without any feelings of identity with his workplace”. The concept that underlies

here is that Juan has to necessarily change to fit to what the company expects of him.

Finally, in the third and last act of reenactment, there is a saving solution, embodied in the image of a “savior”, committed in repairing the situation of disarray. The internal marketing agency offers themselves, in the end, as capable of generating a “better work climate, instigating the commitment [...], the culture of the organization and, specially, motivating people to work with passion so that everyone works towards the same goal: the company’s goal.” To do so, the brand, values and culture of the organization must be sold to the employee, with the goal of “reinforcing the empowerment and generating a climate of labor happiness” (Image 6, to the right).

In other words, it doesn’t matter, deep down, that Juan keeps having to wake up early every day, remaining trapped into a bus for two hours before arriving the office, that the indifference of his colleagues won’t necessarily go away, nor that his workload, tight deadlines and responsibilities will continue the same. What matters for Juan to keep his job – and not suffer the negative sanction of being fired or demoted – is that he basically shows himself as happy, fulfilled and productive in the workplace. If Juan does not feel that way, he is the main responsible for being incapable of “giving his best” and not sharing the soul of the company, for not having perseverance, motivation and self-confidence, for not being pro-active nor generating value, etc. Poor Juan...

Final Considerations

Throughout the article, it was possible to observe how the affective twist in the discursive field of corporations operates with the purpose of producing subjectified subjectivities and docile bodies, controlling and delimitating possibilities of feeling and acting, but making the subject believe to actively participate in the decisive process. In the advertisement field, that is manifested by the tireless search of companies for the measurement of the emotional response of the consumer, trying to understand how to direct behaviors, beliefs and desires to make them

affectively closer to the brands. In the corporate environment, in turn, this phenomenon is perceived in marketing strategies geared towards the control of emotions in the internal audience, having as the main purpose to camouflage the exploitation of workforce by the owners of means of production and promoting neoliberal values, such as competition, individuality and accumulation of goods. Furthermore, it was also discussed above how, under the optics of emotional capital, the connection between these two actors – consumers and workers – is increasingly closer and more intense.

In the analyzed case of the internal marketing agency, for instance, it became evident that the message of the advertisement animation ends up promoting the culpability of the weakest link of the employment relationship: the employee. In other words, initially, it would only be necessary for the company to adopt internal marketing techniques offered by Angelcom, to exempt of any decurring problems of the low performance of the employee and personally be responsible for his/her failure in the corporation. By being controlled about what, when and how they must feel and/or express himself affectively, the employee sees himself destitute of what characterizes him as human being on behalf of “a lot of rhetoric on individual freedom, autonomy, personal responsibility and the virtues of privatization, free market and free trade” (HARVEY, 2011, p. 16).

Finally, it is important to register that not always that neoliberal dynamic of emotional capitalism is accepted in a peaceful and unquestionable way. There are focus of resistance and dissidence, constituted by economic subjects that are committed to minimally conquering an autonomy, in a bigger or smaller degree, in the management of their emotions and subjectivities, outside big corporations. Deliberately, they propose themselves not to give up control over their feelings, not being subject to the advertisement consumerist logic and the values of corporations where they are clients or for who they work for.¹⁶

16 See Hollenbeck and Zinkhan (2006).

It is the case, for example, of the counter-hegemonic movements such as *Lowsumerism*, *Adbusters Media Foundation* and *L'Observatoire Indépendant de la publicité* – which warn for the harm made by capitalism, by the exaggerated consumption and fight for a more responsible advertisement; *Brandalism*, *Anti Pub (Résistance à l'agression publicitaire)* and *The Bubble Project* – which promote guerilla artistic actions in public spaces, with interventions on billboards, posters and street ads. These are collective initiatives of political consumption that intend to create some tension in the status quo and question the institutionalized forms of (re)production of domination by capitalist elite and the abuse of power over consumers and workers.

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