





The activism consumption of in the strategic dynamics of advertising campaigns: a semiotic approach

O consumo de ativismo na dinâmica estratégica de campanhas publicitárias: uma abordagem semiótica

El consumo de activismo en la dinámica estratégica de las campañas publicitarias: un enfoque semiótico

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Abstract: The article analyzes how brands use activism for social causes in the construction of their images in the contemporary scenario. He briefly digresses about the path that led corporations to this discursive practice, positioning themselves in the defense of causes, manifested especially in digital environments. It chooses as a corpus of analysis a set of narratives conveyed by the Brazilian beer brand Skol, which was one of the pioneers in this perspective, showing itself as a trend for many others. The theoretical-methodological basis is the socio-semiotic developed by Landowski, from Greimas, and Floch's studies in the field of plastic semiotics and advertising. The study shows how brands with a large market share have used activism as a figurative coating to make their axiologies feasible in strategic narratives that meet the demands of an audience eager for social participation and identification for the exercise of their subjectivity.

Keywords: Social causes. Publicity. Communication. Discursive semiotics. Sociosemiotics.

Resumo: O artigo analisa como as marcas usam do ativismo para causas sociais na construção de suas imagens no cenário contemporâneo. Faz uma breve digressão sobre o percurso que levou as corporações a essa prática discursiva, posicionando-se na defesa de causas, manifestada especialmente nos ambientes digitais. Elege como *corpus* de análise um conjunto de narrativas veiculadas pela marca de cerveja brasileira Skol, que foi uma das pioneiras nesta perspectiva, mostrando-se como tendência para muitas outras. A base teórica-metodológica é a sociosemiótica desenvolvida por Landowski, a partir de Greimas, e os estudos de Floch no campo da semiótica plástica e da publicidade. O estudo mostra como marcas de grande participação no mercado têm se utilizado do ativismo como revestimento figurativo para viabilizar suas axiologias em narrativas estratégicas que atendem aos clamores



de um público ansioso por participação social e identificação para o exercício de sua subjetividade.

Palavras-chave: Causas sociais. Publicidade. Comunicação. Semiótica discursiva. Sociosemiótica.

Resumen: El artículo analiza cómo las marcas usan el activismo por causas sociales en la construcción de sus imágenes en el escenario contemporáneo. Brevemente se desvía del camino que llevó a las corporaciones a esta práctica discursiva, posicionándose en la defensa de las causas, manifestadas especialmente en entornos digitales. Elige como corpus de análisis un conjunto de narrativas transmitidas por la marca de cerveza brasileña Skol, que fue uno de los pioneros en esta perspectiva, mostrándose como una tendencia para muchos otros. La base teórico-metodológica es el socio-semiótico desarrollado por Landowski, de Greimas, y los estudios de Floch en el campo de la semiótica plástica y la publicidad. El estudio muestra cómo las marcas con una gran participación en el mercado han utilizado el activismo como un revestimiento figurativo para hacer factibles sus axiologías en narrativas estratégicas que satisfagan las demandas de una audiencia ansiosa por la participación social y la identificación para el ejercicio de su subjetividad.

Palabras clave: Causas sociales. Publicidad. Comunicación. Semiótica discursiva. Sociosimióticos.



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1 Introduction and state of art

Currently, the term activism has been widely used in the various discourses that circulate in the social sphere, and take as its theme the most diverse practices, from ecology, education, and culture to consumption, mostly passing through politics. Its etymological origin, from the Latin, is the denomination *activus*, of *actus*, that indicates something done - *agire*, to act, to realize, accentuating related variations to the performative modality of the doing, that intent transformation. The reason why the term usually has its meaning associated with militancy. If we explore the formation of this word and its etymological definition, we will arrive at the action of the individual in the narratives of "active participation" in support of a cause. Political activism is on the rise. Some community organizers suggest that an increase of activism is due to the frustration of politically progressive organizations (VALDIVIA; GOLDBERG, 2007). Cavatorta suggests that activism is a developing relationship with professional associations (CAVATORTA, 2013). Another study discusses understandings of the role and their influence of insider activism in interactions with the governments (MCCAMMON *et al.*, 2017).

The term activism has gained increasing expression and visibility due to the consequence of recent economic, political and sociocultural transformations, which point to contexts of enunciation and discourse production. Those changes in a brief digression, concerning the subjective processes related to the transformations of late modernity based in a center the figure of multifaceted and multiple subjects, marked by individual choices in the midst of a plurality of possibilities (BAUMAN; DENTZIEN, 2007; BAUMAN, 2007). Going a little further, in the midst of the "information age" and the "network society," Castells call attention to the formation of global networks that connect and disconnect individuals, groups, religions, and countries, broadening the field of action of individuals in society (CASTELLS, 2007). Castells describes the changes



that have taken place with the advent of the Internet about a new system of communication and interactive relationships in which new symbols and codes are projected, observed in the use of words, sounds and images that assume personalization tendencies. In fact, new information technologies, especially internet and cellular telephone system, promoted the formation of connected and interactive networks that opened space for a more significant manifestation of the subjects in the public dialogues, especially from the popularization of the so-called new media, primarily digital social networks.

From the new dynamic of communication established, the traditional hierarchy in the production, dissemination, and control of information changed. There are new ways in which individuals can act in a wide range of contexts, with a more visible environment to deal with diverse issues, confronting, proposing new ideas, creating conflicts and controversies, instead of only consensual contractual relations. This voice-over, in the contest of spaces of visibility in the enunciative contexts, certainly boosted the activist performances. That traditionally activity had offline its field of action, and that comes to count on the possibilities of the online connection, pointing to constructions created in a context which we can call complex, often marked by online-offline performances.

The action of these new activists was very evident in the political field, which as a place of decision making, has been a traditional terrain of its action preoccupied with the most different causes. As a key example, we can cite the wave of protests that broke out between 2008 and 2011 from North Africa, when networking through social media platforms, taking thousands of people to the streets by rights claim were crucial in organizing a core group. Known as the Arab Spring, these events have shaken up instituted powers, promulgated renunciations and overthrow dictatorships, spreading further into a wave of occupations and protests around the world (CASTELLS, 2013), as well as the movement of the Indignados (Spain) and Occupy Wall Street (United States).



In Brazil, in 2013, one of its biggest waves of protests occurred from the issue of mobility with the involvement of different popular demands and multiple voices, inciting effervescent debates that later culminated in the establishment and execution of a presidential impeachment process. Although many analysts consider this a moment of misplacement in Brazilian recent history, it should emphasize that such manifestations played a fundamental role in the development of new practices of the occupation of public space in large cities and peripheries, giving further stimulus to the activist movements.

Although quickly co-opted by the so-called mass media, the going to the streets initiative transformed the daily life of the city from a way of use that was a little forgotten. The town began to be occupied as a stage of demands, organized, mainly, by groups denominated collectives that raise different flags, using the social network's platforms as a primary instrument. In this new dynamic of appropriation of the urban space are also the movements of occupation that gained high visibility in the mediatic environments, such as the Occupy *Estelita*, that took place in Recife against real estate speculation or the secondary students movement that occupied public schools throughout Brazil. Actions against a Proposed Amendment to the Brazilian Constitution (PEC) number 55/2016, which restricted public expenditure in the social area and Provisional Measure (MP) number 746/2016, which implemented the reform of secondary education were seen too.

In politic party activism field, more attention has been drawn to the actions of electorate engagement in US presidential campaigns on social networking platforms. As we know, the use of new digital technologies has promoted necessary changes in the way the campaigns produced, with attention to the dynamics of individuals' participation. The possibility of public online involvement brings the figure of political activism to the network since it potentiates the connection of different people. Virtual participation around an idea, in organizing actions and with information



sharing, “without passively accepting what broadcast on radio and television, but engaging and recreating those ideas” (PALFREY; GASSER, 2011).

It should be noted, as the Palfrey and Gasser (2011) point out, that this does not “fundamentally change the nature of political action. The internet [only] provides the tools that enable people, young and old, to have a higher-level formal policy process knowledge”. Even pointing to the commonly heard criticism about those who express their militant opinions only in the digital environment, limiting their action using convenient clicks, in the comfort of their homes, without, however, physical presence, in face-to-face confrontations that take place in the streets, site of efficient transformation.

However, what unites these people is precisely the possibility of voice-taking, more precisely in the issue of opinion on the most diverse themes, pointing, even to personalization issues, the seductive promise of social networking platforms. This authorial or, at the very least, co-authorial power, driven by digital culture, brings an individual protagonist to the subject, who finds a promising place to share information and express positions about the most diverse causes invisibility spaces, enjoying the effects of presence in reciprocity and in a connection that occurs in real-time communication. By acting in the reconfiguration of the categories of space and time in which the enunciative subjects enrolled, distance existence operates as a facilitator of interactional relationships, which tend to multiply on a large scale. It should be emphasized, however, that while this communicational structure propitiates and even incites debate, above all in social networks, also presents a mode of structuring, configured by algorithmic intelligence, in which interactions are oriented and monitored from groups of profiles that pass through “filters,” which create so-called “bubbles” of interests. These opinions, based on personalization and participation, play a central role in these platforms, an environment that conduct dissemination of self-referential



ideas to strengthen certain beliefs, polarizations, and radicalisms to emphasize the relations of cooperation, especially those of conflict.

It is true, however, that in this mode of social and representative organization, in which digital networks gain more and more centrality, more comprehensive and sophisticated narratives are increasing form and visibility, producing effects in what has been called a new economy, in which businesses are concentrated in services and permeated by network relationships. Inserted in this context and attentive to the active mobilization of social groups against unrepresentative and stereotyped messages, the corporate universe of trademarks has sought to construct, or reconstruct their values from broader discourses, which include issues, once estranged for invisibility, about gendered topics such as sex and gender discrimination, chauvinism, racism, etc., which are the subject of debate in society. This movement of redirection of the narrative and imagistic construction aimed at a more significant openness in its discourses. Adopting favorable positions, for example, to the diversity of gender and sexuality (as a protagonist by the Brazilian rival brands of cosmetics Natura and O Boticário in 2015), has pointed out for actions denominated as brand activism.

This dynamic of structuring, or restructuring, the identity of brands in the direction of so-called social activism given in a strategic approach with the recipient-consumer. Since, in the pursuit of adhesion, guided by images with which it projects itself and maintains a subjective relationship of identification, based on a lot of affinities, personal choices, moving affectivities that pass through cognitive and passionate contracts. Such a structuring of values, as well as their modes of presence in the narrative and identity construction of trademarks, directly touches the branding works that strive to construct narratives linked to questions of social life, ethics, ways of being in the world. It is precisely in this universe of discourse that the activism of social causes linked to the narrative construction of trademarks take place.



Branding management experts, Aaker and Joachimsthaler claim that

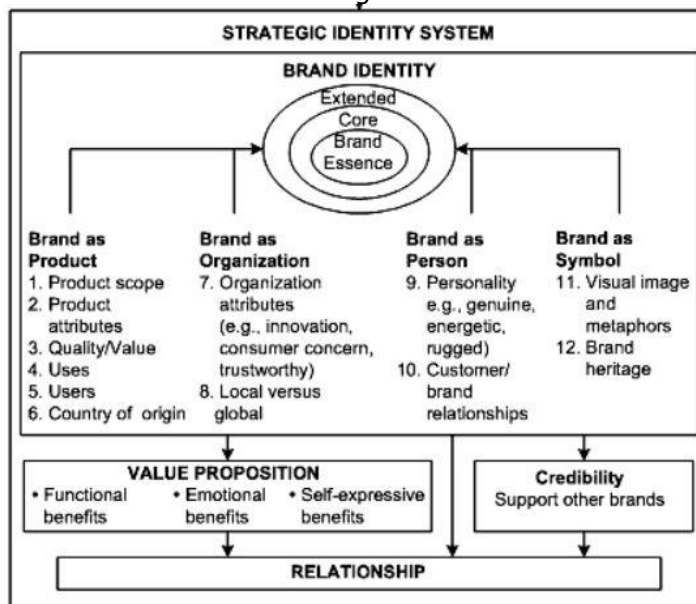
[...] brand identity is a conventional of brand relations that the brand strategist aspires to create or maintain. These relationships imply a promise to customers made by members of the organization. As brand identity is used to determine all branding efforts, it must have depth and richness; it is not a slogan or even a position statement (AAKER; JOACHIMSTHALER, 2009, p. 57).

Three elements draw attention when we relate this to the activist discourse: the "aspiration" maintained in the long run, the "promise" and the "depth." In the strategy of trademarks discourse subjectivation (ALLEN, 2009), which aims at the approximation with the recipient by the adhesion to causes, what degree of commitment do they assume with them and with the subjects adopted? Do these subsist even to the three responsibilities listed in the very manner prescribed by the experts? We return to the point of constructing a verdict contract, suspecting that such actors in the social scene are entering swampy ground for their continuity.

Following the analysis of the procedures given by branding professionals, we see that the same authors insert a planning roadmap in this model, according to which the brand owner organization should define such associations and transform them into value propositions (Fig. 1):



Figure 1 – Strategic Identity System. The model establishes twelve items to associate with the values of the desired brand identity to build the credibility of the recipient over the long-term.



Source: Adapted from Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000, p. 59.

As we can see in the figure that illustrates the model, the associations vary from characteristics of the product and organization (therefore wholly objective) to elements constructed in the attitudes of brands and their symbols (that is, considering them as subjects that can interact with the consumer subjects).

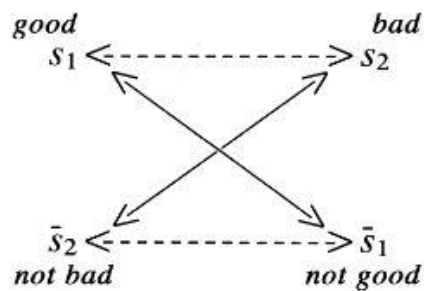
Floch (1988) realized a study that analyses the discourse of consumers in a hypermarket and demonstrates the different types of values ascribed by the consumers used to help establish zoning and define the interior architecture (Fig. 3). This semiotic study employed approach used by the Groupe de Recherches Sémio-Linguistiques directed by A.J. Greimas (FLOCH, 1988, 2001, 2002, 2014).

We can think of the semiotic square as a device that enables a researcher to create and encapsulate a discussion about the signification (meaning creation) of a given topic or situation (GREIMAS, 1987; FLOCH, 2001), as the following example of how the semiotic square works (Fig. 2): *good vs bad* is a relationship known as a “semiotic axis” and specifically the axis of contrariety. As shown bellow, Greimas places this



(type of) relationship of contrariety along the top horizontal axis of the square (FLOCH, 2001, p. 22; GREIMAS, 1987).

Figure 2 – The semiotic square



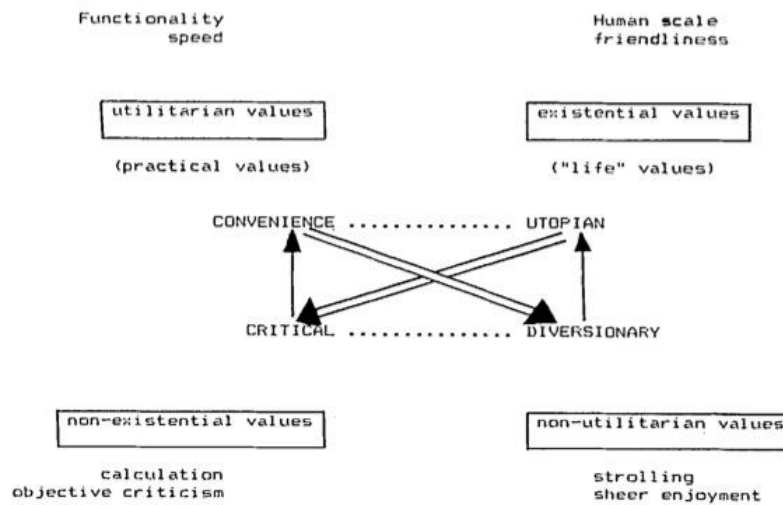
Source: Greimas, 1987, p. 52, modified.

Floch's typology of the logical structure of contrariety and contradiction relations allow us to categorize the items listed by Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2009), with the added benefit that we understand that the value propositions of brands more than considering the values of the target subjects with which they relate.

Of the twelve elements described by the branding authors, we have that the items related to the product and the organization can be considered as use values – utilitarian / functional, therefore – (among them "scope and attributes of the product, uses and users"), or non-existential, connected with the critical valuation proposed by Floch ("quality x value, innovation and local x global dimensions"). On the other hand, the "brand as a person" (that is, a narrative construction) reaches a degree of subjectivity that makes it focus on utopian and playful values. The "symbols", in turn, can cover both base and usage values, as they encompass metaphors, visual and historical images of the brand, mainly built in its communication actions and, therefore, can be related to any of these elements (FLOCH, 1988).



Figure 3 – The major values ascribed to the hypermarket



Source: Floch (1988).

When these items are inserted in the relationship with their consumers, when talking about the benefits offered by the brands, Aaker and Joachimsthaler divide them into functional, emotional and self-expression. The former still reside in the practical and critical dimensions of Floch (2001, 2002), while the latter two approaches utopian and playful valuations, respectively.

This exposition was necessary to account for the analysis of corporate brand manifestations, that overlapping products and services were selling and advance to the utopian axiology in their communications, summoning consumers to the emotional benefits and self-expression, through which the market has been calling, as mentioned, brand activism. About that, Holder discuss "Sex doesn't sell any more, activism does. And don't the big brands know it" and declares: "From Starbucks supporting refugees to Kenco taking on gangs, big businesses are falling over themselves to do good – and to let us know about it" (HOLDER, 2017).

The market experts also point out other implications of this attitude, according to them, necessary for the current conditions of competition. One of the world's largest corporate communications companies, (ARMANO, 2017), emphasizes in his studies that it is now essential for businesses to be concerned with five types of activism: consumer, brand,



employee, spokesperson (such as celebrities and advertising boys) and the media. Such implications make it possible to have a vision and risk management. For it is practically impossible to reconcile all these worlds, which reinforces the idea that taking causes requires connections to the organization that act as qualifying evidence of their discourse of credibility.

Semprini (1995, 2006) has appropriated the terms of Floch (2011, 2002) by arranging them on semiotic maps that punctuate ways of choosing brand placements. The author, therefore, organized several discourses in quadrants that demonstrates these selections strategies and utilizes these semiotic maps to analyze Benetton brand discourse evolution from 1981 to 1991. He clarifies how this subject begins by associating his products with his target audience (from 1991 to 1993), then goes on to a content of euphoria, when the communication intends to highlight the heterogeneity of its consumers (1983 to 1984), goes to the phase of duality (from 1985 to 1990), in which different identities collide and even conflict, but whose coexistence must ensure the dialogue, ending at the moment when the mark enters the discourse of its mission and seeks a value that associates Men, reaching the categories life and death.

According to the Semprini (1995, p. 214-215):

this insightful change in Benetton's speech, the prologue to authentic brand ethics, has two concerns about the topics chosen and his voice in the world. About the subjects, it is inexorable to note that to pursue the common for all men thoroughly refers to racial circumstances: violence, disease, degeneration, death. Regarding the voice of Benetton in the world the locus changes radically; now the brand has freely given up creating its possible world by simply showing circumstances and characters from the 'real' world.

Decades have passed since Benetton carried out such initiatives, by Art Director Oliviero Toscani, creating advertising campaigns to focus on



multiculturalism differences. At the time, the discussion based on a variety of reasons: the role of advertising, the aggressiveness of realistic photos, the themes listed, such as acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), racial prejudice, religious differences, etc.

We consider that these argument-causing event between people deserve care because it shows/tells about a certain discomfort in the face of a brand discussion. That does not respect the rules of the game and arise violently enough questions to essential issues such as the role of business communication position in a post-industrial society were the channels across which it is legal/real and true to spread around political talks/conversations are uncertain. The search for a meta-declarative positioning, the nature and limits of advertising address, and finally, perhaps, the power conflict concerning politics and the economy (SEMPRINI, 1995, p. 201).

Today, however, the practice of so-called trademark activism gains an air of commonplace, which leads one to think how it fits into the interactions between these trade names and their audiences. If in the case of Benetton, this attitude led to the discussion about the role of announcing, today we wonder how the visibility of advertising of significant brands raises or responds to causes.

2 Material and Methods

Methodologically, the research typology divided into three categories: the objectives, the procedures and the approach to the problem (DAYMON; HOLLOWAY, 2011; RAUPP; BEUREN, 2006; TONG; SAINSBURY; CRAIG, 2007).

Concerning the objectives, this work consists of descriptive research. We intend to analyze how activism is proclaimed by brands works. The hypothesis contemplated is that few initiatives go so far as their first aim to add good intentions to their brands since, in reality, they



would not be directly responsible for problems that they pretend to solve. The discourse of brands, moving away from critical and practical positions and moving towards the ludic and finally to the utopian position, is not a new strategy. The current movement, however, selects among the elements that could bring a load of utopian significance, issues of social, political and environmental scope. This practice leads to obtain values that go beyond the utopian making of brands connected with their business activity but taking the utopia of the recipients as theme and value.

Advertisement materials produced by Ambev, as a consequence of the reactions the Brazilian Carnival campaign of 2015 of Skol is taken as a *corpus* (Fig. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8).

In this sense, the approach to the problem of this research is qualitative, once values, beliefs, habits, attitudes, representations, and opinions are operationalized, deepening the complexity of particular and specific facts. In the qualitative study, the legitimacy of the inferred propositions is not necessarily in the number of cases or respondents, but in the way of dealing with the essential in the explanation of discovered regularities (COBLEY, 2002; CURWIN; SLATER, 2008; FERNANDES, 1980; MICK, 1986).

The *materialist* base of semiotics contributes to its effective intervention as research methodology in social sciences. The information we have about the "external" world is composed cognitively by mental images organized from the sensory perceptions and according to the enunciative forms in force at the moment and in the society at study. Such would be the materialist base of semiotic research. When contrasted with the requirement of capturing the reality of that external world, the possibility of obtaining a rigorous knowledge from the mentioned instances: *mental images, sensory perceptions and enunciative forms*, seems to be rather weak. (MORENTIN, 2008, p. 107).

The Greimasian Semiotic Theory is used with special focus on the concepts of figurativeness, value and strategy. In the definition of the



entry “value” (GREIMAS; COURTÉS, 2008, p. 483-484), the meaning that best fits our analysis is that “the discourse is presented in the form of an object-value”.

Methodologically, semiotics could provide appropriate and effective instruments to identify, describe and evaluate the grounds, consistency, and rationality of the process by which, at a moment of a given society, was attribute to a given signification to the social phenomenon at a study, like advertisement manifestations analyzed in this work.

The function of semiotics in social sciences is specified by its contribution as *epistemology* and as methodology. Indeed, I think that semiotics is providing (and/or will provide) appropriate and effective instruments to *support* (i.e., to justify rigorously according to the available knowledge) the explanation of the *signification* that, at a given moment and society, can be attributed (as a proposal for the future and as criticism of the thought performed) to a given *social phenomenon* (“social” insofar it is realized on social discourse, irrespective of the natural or social quality of its origin), being for all that, a *methodology*. (MORENTIN, 2008, p. 113).

3 Results and discussion

We select for this analysis the manifestations of a brand that, with some resemblance to the Benetton case, has reoriented its communication, seeking to reconfigure its positioning. The selected brand of beer Skol, one of the largest Brazilian advertisers, belonging to the Ambev group, that has almost 70% of the Brazilian beer market share.

The narrative that makes up the well-known slogan created in 1997 and which synthesizes the brand image, “The beer that descends round,” has been rewritten a few times, since then, assuming some variations about the syntactic and syntagmatic compositions manifested in the plane of enunciation. These variations also assumed different figurations, based on the construction of different effects of sense, which, in turn, manifest



different values, allowing us to reach the transformations in the dynamics of brand positioning. In 2006, for example, the slogan was "With Skol everything is round." However, it was accompanied by images of parts of female bodies that explored the figurativeness of the firmness of this body in association with the brand, highlighting its curves and volumes in a context of objectification of the feminine, manifesting what was hitherto customary in the marketing actions of the brewing industry concerning the figure of the woman.

With the advent of digital social networks and their relative reach and popularization, corporate brands start to assume the value of participation more effectively. Participation observed in the experience marketing actions, based on the stimulation of the involvement of the consumer in a ludic and sensorial experience through the entertainment to guarantee affinity and remembrance of the brand. It also appears in 2014 on Skol "Press on" campaign in which enunciator was invited to participate in its narrative by pressing the "button on." Appears in an emotional state bet, as in the Skoll Sumer campaign, starring the character "Bigodon," which narrated the qualities of the promotion - a weekend in a beach house, with everything you have right - ending all the words in "on." The accent on the adjective preposition of English "on," immediately associated with the action, shows as the primary objective the stimulus of consumer participation. This orientation of the brand, following the precepts of marketing experience, reiterated in the performance of the advertiser, aims to follow the values of its recipients, reinforcing the strategies of approximation in the pursuit of adhesion.

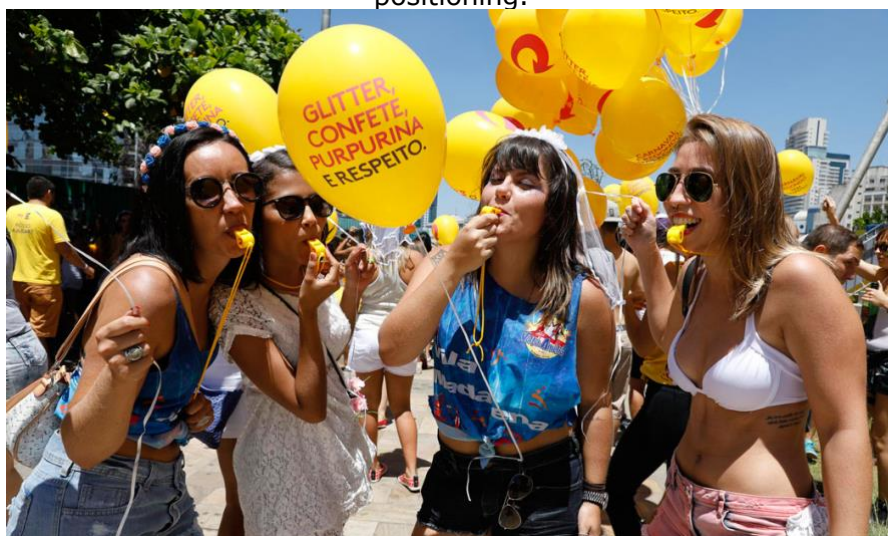
After a few problems in the image and brand construction among other things by the use of the "let 'no' at home" catchphrase used in the Brazilian Carnival campaign of 2015, because activists in the social networks, mainly feminists, expressed contrary opinions to the brand position, including sprayed their posters, as we will see later, the brand



assumed its error and changed its strategy in the approach with the enunciators, passing through a reorientation in its communication.

The advertising begins to adopt a broader tone regarding the representativeness of particular social groups by investing in the issue of diversity in its various campaigns on open TV, press media, the internet and street actions. At the Carnival of 2017, for example, Skol decided to support the "Whistle-blowing" campaign, developed by a group of women in the previous year. The campaign distributed the balloons with the brand's colorand statements such as "Glitter, confetti, glitter and respect" and "whistles of respect", which could trigger by women in case of unwanted harassment (Fig. 4).

Figure 4 – Carnival Scene of 2017. Photography shows the use of the promotional materials produced by Skol and its F/Nazca agency giving visibility to its new brand positioning.



Source: Dantas, 2017.

In the same year, after ordering extensive market research in Brazil, to a Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics (IBOPE) aiming identify the problems of prejudice in Brazil, Skol launched a limited edition of beer cans (Fig. 5), with Brazilian skin colors diversity, named *Skolors*.

This limited edition accompanied by a video (Figure 6) that circulated in social networks and whose production was highly praised by



internauts, for summoning Brazilian values, such as the rhythm of the percussion, the speed in the dynamics of the assembly of the scenes. The action counted with the consultancy of the MOOC Collective of art, music, audiovisual and fashion. The collective describes itself as a movement that intends to influence people to new looks, celebrating the original concept of diversity that the brand tries to aggregate as its value.

Figure 5 – Collection of Skol beer cans associating with the simulacra of Brazilian skin tones.



Source: Fernandes, 2017a.

Figure 6 – Skolors advertising campaign video frame, Skol brand.



Source: Fernandes, 2017a.

To legitimate the transformation above, in the last three years, the brand adopted as part of its strategy the slogan "Rotund is coming out of its square" and, further, seeking more force: "Rotund is leaving your past", released in the video "Rotund is coming out of your past" (Fig. 7). In this last action, it commissioned illustrators, among them, the graffiti artist Tainá Criola, known for her activism in defense of blacks, re-reading



her posters, in a new look, according to the brand, to show women "the way Skol sees them as strong and independent", so as to separate its image from offensive treatment of women. The narrator of the film says in the locution: "These images are part of our past. The world has evolved, and so has Skol. And that does not represent us anymore".

Figure 7 – Frame the video Reposter, when the announcer states that "this does not represent us anymore".



Source: Fernandes, 2017b.

Inevitably notice, in this case, the way the brand brings "mea-culpa" to its speech, trying to take what would be a mistake as a positive strategy for its repositioning, what is not new in the market. Moreover, this strategy is based on the activist consumers who carried out "re-readings" on the streets and on the internet, which in fact motivated the withdrawal of the posters (Fig. 8).

Figure 8 – Images reproduced on the internet from the graffiti of the street poster.



Source: Barbosa, 2015.



The performance of the brand in question shows predominantly acts from the regime of the sense of strategy (LANDOWSKI, 2006) in significant pursuit project, or its value object, which is the adhesion, not dispensing, also strategically, the regime of sensible adjustment, which gains relevance in the relations of identification, from the utopian values. It builds its narrative, which has always been dynamic, as are the tastes of the time, based on characteristic features of consumer identity, fitting into their expectations, contractually. Thus, it shares values that are determinant for the adhesion, and still more, for the loyalty. Determining the election of these values becomes the challenge of risk management, which is also characteristic of its mode of existence.

4 Final considerations

Strategies are placed precisely in this service, as shown by Ambev's research on the issue of racial prejudice in Brazil. In fact, the strategy of rapprochement with the customer has been refined, assuming personalization tendencies, actions condensed into representative profiles, instrumented by the dynamics of digital social networks, which points to higher visibility of brands as an element of belonging and social recognition. Thus, touching the issue of subjective construction, in which the discourses of publicity sediments.

Driven by a voice-over, these subjects increasingly place themselves as active, expressing their opinions in a network, positioning themselves in favor of the causes in which they believe, or adopting social purposes, in which they expect to see the discourse of their brands inserted. They show interest not only in the values that the brands idealize in their narratives, but also in the attitudes that they assume in their daily and structural performance. From this point of view, they are no longer just manipulated subjects, who have limited expression resources, but also manipulators, and activists.



It is precisely in the midst of this tension that the projects of adhesion searches directed. More than ever, brand image building must consider the values with which the enunciate identifies itself and defines itself subjectively. It seems to us that the dynamics of narrative construction of large brands, such as Skol, has assimilated this issue in the configurations and reconfigurations of their identities, playing with current values in circulation, which has pointed to some transformations in their field of activity, not losing sight of business logic.

And this, as we have seen, has proved to be one of the main obstacles to the narrative support of many brands that have recently launched from this perspective, as was the case with Dove, Unilever's brand of cosmetics, which had been building a discourse based on values of diversity and acceptance of different women's bodies and modes of presence. In a sequence of supposedly successful campaigns, it has recently been at the center of a major controversy, caused by an advertisement accused of racism and removed from circulation following an avalanche of criticism from users and an apology for the brand. In the advertisement in question, the narrative associate's cleanliness values with the white race, bringing to light, in fact, the reiteration of the racist history of soap brands in advertising, already shown by many studies.

These contradictory elements observed in the values that circulate in the narrative, taken in relation to the thematic and figurative manifestations, verified in the transit between the plans of the enunciation and the enunciation, which the semiotic analysis allowed us to enter, show that, on the one hand, the theme of activism is a seductive element in the process of seeking the adhesion of enunciator's, and hence, highly profitable for companies, since these offer the customer the possibility of exercising the defense of the social causes to which he sympathizes through consumption of products. On the other hand, imposes the challenges of the practice of the values they propagate, opening a field of



debate based on the dynamics of discursive strategies, which, strictly speaking, make up the very mode of existence of trademarks.

If what we consume represents us in some way, putting ourselves as meaningful signifiers, in the "open" of manipulation (LANDOWSKI, 2006), it seems to us that brand identity designs have never been so close to consumer identity projects. This is directly related to the issue of activism and representativeness, which has directed an essential part of the membership paths in today's corporate communication, highlighting the dynamics of strategies.

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