

**Beyond Consumption: Shaping Values and Raising Awareness with
Advertising Campaigns**

**Para Além do Consumo: Formando Valores e Fomentando a Tomada de
Consciência Através de Campanhas Publicitárias**

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ABSTRACT: In this article, we look into the pervasive influence of advertising as a discourse, by analysing diverse public communication campaigns addressing social

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issues. To do so, the article refers to academic studies dealing with road safety, charity, child vaccination, AIDS treatment, and domestic violence across various cultural contexts. With this analysis, we are moving beyond the conventional view of advertising tied to consumption. Despite being often criticized for its manipulative nature, advertising can have positive impacts, notably when it raises awareness of social problems. Therefore, in this article, we delve into the social consequences of advertising discourse: for instance, insights into beauty product advertising highlight dual impacts on female self-image; on the other hand, campaigns promoting mental health can result in positive outcomes. This article is a contribution to a deeper understanding of advertising's role when it comes to shaping societal values and ideologies, by showcasing its potential to influence individual decisions for broader social benefits.

KEYWORDS: Advertising Influence; Social Campaigns; Discourse Analysis; Positive Impact Awareness; Societal Values

RESUMO: Neste artigo, debruçamo-nos sobre a influência generalizada da publicidade enquanto discurso, analisando diversas campanhas de comunicação pública que abordam questões sociais. Nesse sentido, o artigo explora estudos acadêmicos que tratam de segurança rodoviária, caridade, vacinação infantil, tratamento da SIDA e violência doméstica em vários contextos culturais. Com esta análise, ultrapassamos a visão convencional da publicidade ligada ao consumo. Apesar de ser frequentemente criticada pela sua natureza manipuladora, a publicidade pode ter impactos positivos, nomeadamente quando contribui para aumentar a sensibilização para problemas sociais. Deste modo, neste artigo, investigamos as consequências sociais do discurso publicitário: por exemplo, leituras sobre a publicidade a produtos de beleza destacam impactos duplos na autoimagem feminina; por outro lado, campanhas que promovem a saúde mental podem resultar em resultados positivos. Este artigo é uma contribuição para uma compreensão mais profunda do papel da publicidade quando se trata de moldar valores e ideologias sociais, mostrando o seu potencial para influenciar decisões individuais para benefícios sociais mais vastos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Influência Publicitária; Campanhas com Fins Sociais; Análise de Discurso; Tomada de Consciência sobre os Impactos Positivos; Valores Sociais

Introduction

Every day, each of us comes across dozens or hundreds of ads. Most of them reach us without notice and can be found everywhere: on social networks, in cell phone messages, in pamphlets left in our mailboxes, on buses, bus shelters, posters or in newspapers. This article defines advertising as a discourse that influences people to make decisions and that can change demand based on advertising strategies. This discourse can be seen as manipulative and is partly blamed for the existence of some social problems. However, advertising can also influence people to change their individual behaviours and is able to promote decisions that will generate social benefits. Therefore, this article analyses some ways advertising discourse can influence people through the promotion of specific values and ideologies.

1. What is advertising?

On an ordinary day, upon waking up, or even at breakfast, many people look at the cell phone, check their messages and, possibly, some social network or visit a website in search of the latest news. In the meantime, they will come across dozens of ads. Some of these may attract attention, whereas others will go unnoticed. During the day, inside or outside the home, on our cell phones, on television, on every computer screen, while walking the streets and going about their daily activities, people come across countless advertising campaigns and, if asked about the number of ads they have seen, they will not be able to say an exact number.

Cook (2001) states that advertising is a relatively new genre when compared to literature, and is generally associated with developments in the global economy. "In a world plagued by social and environmental problems, advertising can be seen as an incentive to consumption, making them feel dissatisfied or inadequate, appealing to greed, concern and ambition" (Cook, 2001, p. 2). Myers (1999), on the other hand, points out that, despite the fact that people avoid ads are sceptical of them, finding them manipulative, they probably have already wondered whether they work. And even if they think "it's just advertising", they probably remember some examples which, because they are fun or intelligent, they have kept in their memories, even if they don't even remember exactly which brand corresponded to the ad at stake. According to O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2004), this happens because such advertisements can instigate emotions in such a way that the product or an advertised idea has lost its

neutrality and is now marked as something that arouses some type of emotion. Both authors claim that provoking emotions can be one of the biggest goals of advertising, since this is how advertisements are able to connect to the concerns of their target audience. We can say that advertising has the power not only to move, impact and transform thinking, but also to trigger changes in public attitudes and perceptions (Simões et al, 2023).

In order to understand how this discourse can trigger emotions such as these, it is necessary to analyse the context of advertising's creations and the people who see them. Myers (1999) points out that, although it is possible to say that advertising has effects and can increase sales of products, on the other hand, it is still not possible to say exactly how ads work and how they influence consumer behaviour. Since the beginning of the development of advertising, its researchers have tried to determine ways of reducing the inherent unpredictability of the advertising market. In addition, according to this author, we live in a promotional and consumer culture, so it is difficult to define what the effect of advertising is and how we are affected by our immersion in a culture like the one where we live. The author states that promotional elements are everywhere, and can even be found in resumés and job application letters, descriptions of organizations and their activities, book covers and interviews with authors.

Wernick (1991) was one of the first authors to talk about promotional culture and describes this concept as the relationship between culture and the economy of increased promotion in several aspects. The author also points out that this was not a conflict-free situation, but it also brought new opportunities. Different publications began to be gradually understood as forms of advertising: "The enlarged referential meaning of 'promotion' corresponds, in short, to the phenomenon's real expansion in the world, which in turn corresponds to 'the penetrative powers of the price-system.'" (p. 262)

Nowadays, the great movement of social media and their high number of posts, especially among young people, makes us reflect on Wernick's premonitory words about promotional culture. A posted photo can be seen as self-promotion and can gradually become part of a brand. At which point can it start being described as advertising?

Belch and Belch (2018) claim that one of the fastest growing markets today is that of digital influencers, i.e. people who have become famous on social media and have reached a large number of followers and talk about products or ideas for a public, being financed by product brands or advertising agencies. The authors claim that this is due to

the fact that the so-called generation Y put their trust on their peers, much more than they trusts advertisements, thus being more likely to be impacted by advertising of a product in a photo with a caption from a digital influencer than by a traditional ad.

Additionally, according to these authors, marketers consider digital influencers to be a good form of advertising reach, because they are able to attain a specific target audience formed by their followers. They generate confidence in the product because they already have a certain degree of reliability among followers. They generate engagement through 'shares' that reach other people and are, therefore, able to effectively target an audience who is tired of paid advertisements.

The promotional culture and the large amount of advertising to which we are exposed on a daily basis has caused, as Moshe (2015) points out, a new form of media consumption, which, in turn, has resulted in new conditions of anxiety. The author defends, in the light of the structural-functional theory of anthropology, that media consumption is contingent on the social system that regulates the social order, as well as human activities in general. This author suggests a "break", i.e. a pause in media consumption, in the same way a pause from our routine activities can improve our productivity. It is, therefore, a coping strategy, which can be defined as a set of mechanisms to be used to deal with situations of stress and pressure (Pereira, 2015). Moshe (2015) also argues that the pause from consumption does not need to have a defined time or frequency, nor does it need to involve each and every content. However, the author stresses it is important that, in this pause, there should a release from any online obligations, even if it means a delay in responsibilities.

1.1. Advertising as a discourse that influences

Cook (2001) points out that the best way to define advertising is by means its function, also making it clear that advertising is a discourse and should be analysed as such. The author states that the main focus of discourse analysis must be on language. However, one must also be aware of the advertising context: who the advertiser is, what is being advertised, to whom the ad is addressed and why it was created.

Other pertinent questions that arise in the analysis of the advertising discourse, according to the author are: in what type of society and context is a particular ad launched? What means of communication are used and what is their scope? In addition, when images or music used in a campaign match the language used to change or add meaning, this must be reflected in the analysis at stake. The author justifies the need for

a broad scope in this analysis by stating that acts of communication and internal mechanisms of language cannot be understood separately. Thus, discourse analysis comprehends language and context holistically.

Discourse analysis is not a work of interpretation and does not intend to clarify the meaning of a text (Pêcheux, 1999). The author states that in the analysis of a discourse, procedures are constructed in order to expose the “reader's gaze” to the strategic action of a subject and expose it to the unsaid data that emerges from an utterance. Language, in this case, is thought of as a system, an approach introduced by Saussure (Cook, 2001; Pêcheux, 1993). Therefore, it is not the meaning of each word that must be interpreted, but rather its function based on the context in which it is said. It should also be noted that, in this way, discourse analysis does not understand language as an abstract system, but as a social institution, from the moment it analyses it based on its meaning in a given context in which the discourse was produced (Orlandi, 2005; Pêcheux, 1993). Understanding an advertisement as a discourse is to assume, that, as such, it can influence people and this can be achieved with different objectives or in different ways. An advertisement wants to persuade someone to buy a particular product. It can do this with images, phrases and music, or it can inform about possible lifestyle improvements we can get by using it, or both approaches can be used. An advertisement can also be a discourse with the aim of informing people and raising awareness about a health or a social problem and persuading them to behave as needed (Cluley, 2017; Cook, 2001). In all these examples, advertising is being used to change people's thoughts through communication: "in the mental field, advertising is authorized to open all doors: reason and emotion on a large scale." (Lendrevie et al, 2010. p. 113). It does this by means of strategies and approaches that will be described below.

1.1.1. Advertising strategies

The words, songs and images chosen for an advertising campaign are usually selected based on what is already known about the effect that these elements have on certain groups. Thus, the advertiser, when thinking about a particular ad, wonders about the effects a certain song or image can trigger. In addition, these elements, when put together, can cause different sensations (Cluley, 2017; Cook, 2001). In a film, for example, images can cause completely different sensations if they are accompanied by a tune that arouses a feeling of suspense.

Cook (2001) compares advertising to poetry, as both can produce effects that are predictable up to a point, but not necessarily consensual, since the intended effect may not be achieved. The author points out that the meaning might not necessarily lie in the discourse that is divulged, but rather in what the observer thinks about it. The meaning of the advertising message will be conveyed not only by the discourse used, but by the way the population interprets it. Advertising is a cultural practice and, as such, it is constituted by moments of articulation, which are called “advertising moments” (Johnson, 2008, p. 72), which consist of the combination of the advertisement itself with the media where it was released.

Cluley (2017) makes a case for the influence of psychology studies in advertising and points out that much of what we think or see in an image lies in the symbolic field, according to Freud and Jung. This fact made some advertising researchers believe that they could use symbolic connections to target consumers' unconscious motivations: the meaning of an image can be achieved from the symbolic meaning we have of similar figures. In his theory, Jung points out, for example, that our images of motherhood are linked to the ‘mother’ archetype. The archetype, in general, is the root of the models that encompasses a range of feelings, impressions, forms, senses and symbols about a certain concept (Jung, 2009). Taking these concepts into account, Cluley (2017) adds: “From a depth psychology perspective, then, advertising works when it creates meaningful objects of desire.” (p. 121).

In analytical psychology, ‘myth’ means the expression of archetypes in the collective unconscious, a psychic instance defined by encompassing archetypes (Jung, 2009). Myths have a cultural function in social communication and media narrative (Morales, 2013). They can be understood from the experience of reality, since they are a form of representing reality (Barthes, 1972). They address the origins and evolution of societies through a narrative and not just according to a descriptive intention. Myths can also be understood as forms of resistance to what Barthes (1972) called ‘obsessive reference to the concrete’. In this way, the use of myths is compared with media narratives and reality can be a referential cornerstone for historical narrative discourse. Media narratives constitute a form of blueprint and information source. They operate by means of a psychological process of identification, which implies the use of logical and mythical discourse, through the use of images and concepts, imagination and information (Barthes, 1972; Morales, 2013). Advertising, in essence, uses myths and meanings in images and words (Barthes, 1957). Barthes uses the phrase “little

advertising psychoanalysis” to refer to the use, in advertising, of images and phrases with mythological concepts, i.e. historically constructed symbols that may not correspond to reality in a concrete way, but rather refer us to it (Barthes, 1957, p. 59). In his study of mythology, Barthes (1957) states that any significant material, whether image or written text, must be considered ‘discourse’ and must be analysed as such, through the study of meanings. i.e. semiology. In this way, it is established that myth is constructed from a chain of meanings that pre-existed it. According to Cook (2001), the matter of ad interpretation still falls on how well done and well-conceived it was. If it was well designed, the interpretation was not only foreseen as possible, but also analysed in relation to the impact it would have on our goal (Cluley, 2017). In addition, the author points out that the most important thing in an ad is the connotation it elicits in its target audience and what feelings it can trigger. The author also states that when controversial interpretations exist, they can cause people not to comment on them with others and consider that that particular reading corresponds to their individual opinion, rather than that of a group. This silence can lead to a more powerful interpretation, since it would cause associations connected to experiences that will be difficult to describe, but would leave the remnant of a sensation that can be accessed at a later stage (Cook, 2001; O’Shaughnessy & O’Shaughnessy, 2004).

Stocchetti (2014; 2017) discusses the meaning of images with the concept of visual communication and the political role of digital visualization. In a first study (2014), the author questions the power of a digital image and its social and political effects. In it, the author rejects the approach of technological determinism that considers communication in a technological environment as the cause or origin of a social phenomenon, as if technological development were not enmeshed in the entire social system and did not reflect ideological assumptions in our society. Thus, the author points out that when we question the objective of an image, we must first question ourselves about the objective of the agents that use a certain image.

In a second study, the author questions the “revolutionary power” (2017, p.40) attributed to this form of visualization and states that the visual meaning is not a factor of the image itself but is, in fact, related to the social construction that the image has in each community, since the relations of meaning cannot be determined independently of the relations of social power. Thus, the image can acquire a revolutionary meaning or, conversely, be the representation of a hegemonic power.

The images also reached this revolutionary power questioned by Stocchetti (2014; 2017) from the high engagement they can trigger in social media. However, they are the target of analysis by communication researchers and pointed out as environments that can promote knowledge from the contact with different ideas and people (Belch and Bech, 2018). Piechota (2014) analysed the decrease in prejudice between different people of different cultures, nationalities and ethnicities through the interaction on social networks. In this study, the author analysed the relationship between the prejudices of students from Berlin and Krakow and their knowledge about multiculturalism and their engagement with people from other cultures and religions on social media. The study revealed that students in Berlin, living in a multicultural environment, had less prejudice towards other cultures than students in Krakow, for whom multiculturalism would still be a novelty. The author concludes that the virtual environment is a continuation and a reflection of our life outside of it.

Social psychology indicates that learning is a process of belonging to a particular world. Learning, by itself, is not something we do alone, but in society. In addition, social psychology clarifies that most of our behaviours are influenced by our desire to belong to a certain world. (Myers, 2014). The concept of social learning influences advertising and our sense of belonging to groups is used as a strategy in many advertisements (Cluley, 2017).

1.2. Advertising from a cultural perspective

One of the strategies used by advertisers, when they have to use written discourse, is to do it with metaphors, puns and sophisms. Metaphors can be used in several ways, including the use of visual connotation of words, where images represent a concept that does not need to be explicit in the advertisement (Cook, 2001; Forceville, 1996). From a semiotic perspective, ads always have two meanings: the denotative - or literal - and the connotative – the real meaning behind the metaphor or other figures of speech: "One way to think about this is to say advertisers always mean something they do not say." (Cluley, 2017, p. 156).

Barthes (1977) explains this by first stating that every image is a message and that, when presented in the media, it is composed of two structures that complement each other. These structures can be analysed with questions about the content of the photograph and what message that photograph would mean in the cultural context in which it presents itself. The first refers to the denotative sense, while the second refers

to the connotative sense. According to Cluley (2017), the function of semiotics is also to question, although not directly, the way people of a certain culture feel motivated by a certain advertising message, which allows the study of advertising from a cultural perspective.

The interpretation of an advertisement about its role in each historical-cultural context is called 'decoding'. In this perspective, ads are analysed as having a greater function than that of merely promoting the differentiation of a brand or a product: "advertising sells much more than products, it sells values and cultural representations such as success and sexuality." (Cortese, 2015, p. 65). Decoding an advertisement means analysing its political-ideological messages, based on its function in each historical-cultural context. Kropp (2015) stated, in an article that assesses the theory of coding and decoding, that every media production process involves meanings and encoded messages that need interpretation. Communication producers assume that a certain audience will decode the message transmitted using symbols, also stating that if there is no articulated meaning in practice, the message will have no effect on the target audience.

According to Johnson (2008), media culture affects us in different ways, influencing our behaviours and even the terms we use as a reference for protests against the ideology by which we are affected. The author also states that advertising is present in the media culture to such an extent that we are impacted not only when we are directly exposed to advertisements, but also by the dialogue in society and intertextual references.

Traditionally, most of the images represented in the ads have depicted white men and women with 'perfect' bodies with the aim of persuading people to buy their products and associate them with the desire to become more attractive, as well. The use of these images on a large scale in advertisements results in the creation of a myth of beauty and a standard body (Cluley, 2017; Cortese, 2015). It should also be noted that many products that have no gender association will resort to advertisements with half-naked women, who are portrayed as sexual objects (Cortese, 2015).

Ads promote ideal types of masculinity and femininity. With regard to femininity, the woman, when not depicted as an object of sexual desire, is represented as either a mother or a housewife. It is only seldom that we witness the use of the image of men in advertisements for products of cleaning or even child care products, as if those products were only intended for women (Cortese, 2015; Santos, 2015).

We must bear in mind, however, that these traditional portrayals of femininity promoted by advertising were still aimed at white women for a long time. Davis (1981) points out that the ideology of femininity was a by-product of industrialization in the period of establishment of the American manufacturing system after the Civil War. At that time, women were prevented from doing productive work in factories. As the ideology of femininity became widespread, white women came to be seen as inhabitants of a totally separate sphere from the world of productive work. The cleavage between home and public economics brought about by industrial capitalism has instituted the inferiority of women even more strongly. In fact, the woman depicted in the ads that represented the family within American manufacturing society was white. Black women still worked in factories or caring for white families. The black woman was not considered a housewife even though she also took care of the family. It was through the activity of taking care of the family that the black woman occupied a central place in the slave community, which gave her a degree of autonomy (Davis, 1981).

Nowadays, however, in a number of ads, some changes can be observed in relation to the role of the black woman, who has come to play the role of object and sexual desire. Davis (1981) states that the sexualization of black women refers to slavery, in which "sexual coercion (...) was an essential dimension of social relations between the master and the slave" (p. 180). In a controversial 2010's ad campaign for Devassa beer in Brazil, we can see the image of a black woman in a very revealing red dress, with a sensual and provocative stance, with the following legend: "A true black [woman] can be recognized by the body"⁴. In a smaller lettering and just below that phrase we could read: "full-bodied, dark ale style. Highly fermented, creamy and with the aroma of roasted malt". Using the decoding process proposed by Barthes (1977), the image brings a black woman with a sexy demeanour and wearing sensual clothes. When analysing the whole, together with the written message, it is possible to notice that the description of the beer is deliberately confused with the description of the woman represented by the adjective "full-bodied" and by the suggestion (in the first message) that it is by the body that the true black woman would be recognized. The other adjectives, in a connotative way, belong to the description of the woman. In a country that has as its social representation the "mulatto" woman of carnival as an object of

⁴ In Portuguese, this sentence reads 'É pelo corpo que se reconhece a verdadeira negra'. The word 'negra' can be read both as referring to black beer or to a black woman, such as the one in the picture.

sexual desire, we can perceive a message of naturalization of black women as a sexual object and with a body “for sale”.

Discussing female sexualization in advertising, Cortese (2015) states that decoding advertisements through a feminist lens and discussing the construction of gender in advertisements is necessary for the development of awareness of sexism and gender relations in our society. The author points out that the education of children in a culture where ads objectify and sexualize the female body causes the internalization of this perspective. The author also points out that women, when growing up, do not feel confident that they can play other roles. However, they are required to have a degree of empowerment that allows them, for instance, to escape domestic violence. Advertising produced to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence, often emphasises that need for individual strength and momentum, with messages aimed at the victim who encourage her to get out of a violent relationship. Nevertheless, it proves challenging for a woman to associate herself with the 'victim' role the ad is imposing on her, especially when confronted with fragility in her circumstances and the simultaneous expectation of taking responsibility for herself – also promoted by the ad (Nogueira et al, 2022, 2023).

Cortese (2015) analyses advertisements that portray the female body, with a special emphasis on phenomena such as its ‘dismemberment’ in advertising, i.e. the use of body segments in ad images, as well as the frequent use of the provocative and seductive woman (which corresponds to the concept of 'provocateur'). In the first phenomenon, parts of the female body, such as legs, lap and trunk, are presented in a dissociated way, which supports the notion of the woman disconnected from herself, from her mind and her soul. The author points out that, although this also occurs with male bodies, it is much more present in the depiction of female bodies. Regarding the image of the provocative woman, the author points out that most of the advertisements still represent young women, quite thin and with a sexually seductive appearance. However, as the author points out, “The provocateur is not human, rather, she is a form or hollow shell representing a female figure” (p. 74). In fact, these images are not real and can only be achieved with image editor programs like Photoshop.

These images create an unattainable body pattern, which can cause anxiety. This, as Cortese (2015) points out, is what defines the success of an advertisement for beauty products, since it will increase the likelihood of a woman purchasing them. However, after much criticism that associates this idealised image with the soaring of eating disorders, some companies started to include, in their public pieces, some institutional

campaigns for the valuing of all types of bodies. The author brings the example of the Dove campaign, named “Real beauty”, where the brand portrays women with non-standard bodies, black women and other ethnicities, who, in fact, are real women who were invited to pose for this campaign.

1.2.1. Institutional campaigns (social benefit)

As we have seen, the campaigns cited so far promote ideas while promoting a brand and a product. These ideas are planned and often useful for promoting the product or brand. Cortese (2015) points out that most of the profit earned on beauty products is spent on advertising. He also mentions that the reasons for the success of an advertisement are the increase in the level of anxiety, since people believe they have a need and that the solution to that need can be bought. However, advertising can also be used to promote ideas and influence decisions, not necessarily involving the purchase of a product. According to Lendrevie et al. (2010), advertising is increasingly being more used for non-profit purposes, either through public awareness campaigns about social problems, or to promote politicians, public services or even a company, without necessarily associating it to their products, but rather to a cause.

Thorson and Rodgers (2012), when defining advertising, remind us that political campaigns promote politicians to certain positions. In the same way, institutional advertisements can promote ideas, services and cause engagement in attitudes and behaviours to improve social problems. The authors also point out, when analysing the uses of advertising messages, that, in general, there are four uses in advertising: building a brand, attracting people to buy, driving purchases and changing life behaviours.

Timcke (2016) states that communication studies can contribute to the evaluation of political practices because they encompass a comprehensive field of ideas for evaluating complex phenomena, in addition to uniting diverse research traditions of their study objectives. The author defends the permanent questioning of beliefs and the construction of proposals other than the beliefs which are being questioned, using a dialectical-dialogical method of knowledge. Domonkos (2015) proposes, building on Habermas' theoretical perspective, that communicative action is a mechanism for coordinating social actions. The author questions, however, situations where there are obstructions between coordination actions by external actions such as violence in language. He then compares coordination actions with the ordering of therapist-patient

discourses in psychoanalysis or psychotherapy, proposing the deconstruction of dogmatic knowledge through criticism and questioning. Demeter (2012) also proposes the deconstruction of logical presuppositions through Aristotle's dialectical method to affirm that a certain axiom of communication studies, more specifically “one cannot not communicate” is false. Bognár (2013) analyses the problem of lack of communication between subsystems in social organizations from the perspective of Luhmann's social theory and defends the need for a more complex analysis of organizational communication. Thus, coordination actions based on the questioning of beliefs or dogmatic knowledge can be used by communicators in planning advertising actions to promote changing behaviour and awareness of social problems.

1.2.2. Public communication campaigns

In the field of advertising, public communication campaigns aim at promoting behaviour alteration (Thorson & Rodgers, 2012). The creation of an effective public communication campaign requires not only knowledge about the theories about consumer behaviour, but also awareness of the theoretical construction of the social problem that it intends to highlight with the campaign, so as to be able to identify the best way to reach its target audience (Atkin & Rice, 2012).

Public communication campaigns can be of two types: campaigns for the alteration of individual behaviour and public mobilization campaigns or public will campaigns (Coffman, 2002). The main difference is based on their respective target audiences: campaigns that try to change individual behaviours are addressed to the population segment that needs to modify their behaviour. On the other hand, campaigns that aim at a political change through the mobilization of public opinion are targeted to the entire population.

Regarding their purposes, the goals of an individual behaviour change campaign would be to influence individual beliefs, expand knowledge of a certain behaviour, affect attitudes and produce behavioural change. The aims of a public mobilization campaign, on the other hand, would be to increase the visibility of a problem and its importance, affect perception about social responsibility on a given issue, expand the possibilities of opinion about public policies and services aimed at an issue with public money (Coffman, 2002).

These campaigns also use different strategies (Coffman, 2002): many, if not most, campaigns to change individual behaviour use the social marketing strategy, whereas

public mobilization campaigns, in general, will use community organization and mobilization strategies, in addition to media defence, defined by Wallack (1994) as a strategic use of the media to draw attention to initiatives of public interest.

Prominent initiatives targeting individual behavioural change encompass areas such as tobacco and drug use, recycling practices, prevention of automobile accidents, as well as behaviours associated with education, justice, and childhood. Public mobilization campaigns, on the other hand, focus mainly on motivating the public to pressure the development of political actions (Coffman, 2002). However, the author points out that some campaigns that in general could be aimed at changing individual behaviour may use components of public mobilization, such as campaigns to ban smoking in public spaces, which focus on both changing individual behaviour and on increasing the legitimacy of the social cause.

1.2.3. The Social Marketing strategy

When discussing the possible contributions of advertising to improve the quality of life and our life in society, Balonas (2011) uses the expression “advertising with social characteristics”. However, the author points out that this way of referring to advertising can include institutional communication campaigns whose main objective is to promote awareness of a problem or social cause, as well as campaigns by commercial institutions which, in addition to promoting their own brand or product’s brand, will also promote issues related to social responsibility.

The basis of the difference between these two ways of using advertising to promote social causes is precisely the presence or absence of a brand associated with a certain company. Advertising with the goal of promoting awareness about a problem or social campaign and behaviour changing and social consequences can be described as “advertising in favour of social causes” (Balonas, 2011). On the other hand, the campaigns by companies that use advertising techniques in favour of changing behaviour for social benefit and relate their product or brand to this form of social responsibility are comprehended in the concept of social marketing (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Kotler & Lee, 2008). Thus, although the campaigns understood as social marketing can be characterized by the existing social commitment, they are perceived as a way of promoting the brand or the company through the association with the social benefit in point.

Kotler and Zaltman (1971) start their article (where the term 'social marketing' was first used) with a question from Wiebe, who, in 1952, asked why fraternity could not be sold in the same way soap is sold. The authors reply that, after Mc Ginnis's book "The selling of the president", in 1968, it may be possible to sell a president the same way we sell soap by using marketing techniques in ads whose goals are social. In the words of the authors, "It is the explicit use of marketing skills to help translate present social action efforts into more effectively designed and communicated programs that elicit desired audience response" (p. 5). The authors highlight the use of marketing techniques such as planning, prices, market research, communication and distribution.

Cheng et al (2011) highlight some factors that are essential for social marketing: it is one of the fields of marketing (although it is a different discipline), it aims at the good of society and the target audience and, mainly, has its theoretical-practical basis in the principles and techniques of commercial marketing, which researchers name the "4ps": product, price, place and promotion.

Kotler and Zaltman (1971) summarize the question of the "4ps" for marketing as "developing the right product, backed by the right promotion and put in the right place at the right price" (p. 7). Thus, the "4ps" can be described as knowing the need for a specific product for a specific target audience, choosing the best approach to advertise it, in addition to doing it in the most appropriate media to reach the chosen audience and establishing a price according to the reality of the product on the market.

Kotler and Lee (2008) highlight that one of the main points in social marketing is what was called the "marketing mix" by Bill Smith, vice president of the Academy for Educational Development. The marketing mix is the management and application of the "4ps" with the goal of changing behaviours. The authors also emphasize that social marketing is about changing behaviours through the management and application of these principles: "is about influencing behaviours using a systematic planning process that applies marketing principles and techniques, focusing on priority target audience segments and delivering a positive benefit for Society" (p. 7)

Thus, the social marketing product to be developed and advertised by the right ad is not just human behaviour, but desired behaviours, to produce a benefit for the target audience of advertising and for society in general. Grier and Bryant (2005) had already pointed out the uses of social marketing campaigns in issues related with public health. Kotler and Lee (2008) affirm that, in general, researchers in the area prefer the term 'to influence a behaviour', since the objectives are to accept a new proposed behaviour

(e.g., to separate garbage for recycling), reject behaviour that could be initiated and be harmful (e.g., smoking or drinking alcohol), modifying a particular behaviour (e.g., eating more healthy foods and increasing physical activity) or abandoning undesirable behaviour (e.g., driving after drinking alcohol). Among others, authors such as Lefebvre (2103) and French (2017) expand on this idea, pointing out more recent positive outcomes of social marketing campaigns in the area of public health and in wider societal issues such as personal well-being and the environment.

Kotler and Lee (2008) claim that the process for developing social marketing advertising involves adapting marketing techniques to the final objective, which is to influence people to engage in a certain desirable behaviour. Therefore, an analysis of the situation is carried out, to identify points to be strengthened in the organization, in addition to general opportunities and possible threats. From there, the target audience of the campaign is chosen, with clear objectives to be achieved in relation to their behaviours, in addition to conducting a survey to identify both barriers and benefits, which will strengthen the positioning of the campaign to be launched. Thus, a methodological evaluation is carried out, with results to be monitored and evaluated.

Kotler and Lee (2008) also emphasize that the field of study of social marketing was made official about 50 years ago, from the creation of the term by Kotler and Zaltman (1971). Social causes, while continuing to bring social benefit, have always been supported by people who also had other interests. Alonso (2012) reports on the various campaigns carried out by the Brazilian abolitionist movement, formed mainly by the elite influenced by the ideas of European abolitionism, but who also had economics interests in the abolition of slavery: movement of the economy and the formation of a working and consuming class. These campaigns had great artistic engagement and promoted shows and recited poetry that excited the population and gained repercussions throughout the country over the years leading up to the abolition of slavery in that country.

Kotler and Lee (2008) remind us that in addition to the abolition of slavery, several other movements throughout history, such as the right to vote for women and the right of women to work, were the target of campaigns. A quick survey even suggests that there were campaigns against and in favour of the themes. The authors point out that social marketing campaigns always have society as their beneficiary. However, this does not mean that the cause of a given campaign is necessarily beneficial to society.

Therefore, it is valid to emphasize the questioning of the authors: who determines which cause is good?

Kotler and Lee (2008) also emphasize that other questions to be asked before the organization of a social marketing are: who is going to implement them; what the objectives are; whether they stem from a commercial company or from a non-profit organization; and what their objectives are as an organization, in order to evaluate and outline the best strategy to be used. The main objective of marketing is to answer to the customer of your product according to their needs, attracting them to the company. Thus, large companies can use social marketing as a way to do so, something which Hastings and Domegan (2017) and Balonas (2011) call a “win-win game”, as there are benefits both for society and for the company. On the other hand, for Kotler and Lee (2008), even campaigns carried out by a non-profit institution can apply the concept of social marketing in their ads.

Social marketing, like everything else in our society, is implied in a larger system and that dispensing with its use therefore falls into the category of empty criticism (Hastings & Domegan, 2017). The authors cite studies with “marketing stakeholders” and the “social responsibility” sections of companies, whose descriptions emphasize commercial interest. However, the authors reflect that it is necessary to think about social marketing within a broader economic context and to use the maximum number of situations in the system itself for social benefit. In reality, they also emphasize that the essence of social marketing in the broad global economic context is to try to play this win-win game, which is, first of all, a principle of exchange of benefits.

Today, few things can be as controversial as corporate advertising that can be part of campaigns done in the name of corporate social responsibility (Belch & Belch, 2018). These ads are created to promote the company's social image by positioning itself on a particular cause or social problem. However, according to the authors, this type of advertising has been garnering criticism about its goals as a self-indulgence of the company, which may appear to be in trouble. In that case, advertising can come across as a way to socially redeem itself. These ads are often seen as confusing, either because messages are not clearly conveyed or because consumers do not understand the reasons underlying it. Thus, it can be seen as an advertisement without a specific target audience, which does not promote anything specifically. Thus, it is seen by its critics as a waste of time and money.

Nonetheless, this type of advertising is still being widely used. Advertisements such as these aim to create a positive image of the company, both internally, which favours working relationships, as well as externally, for new consumers and investors (Belch & Belch, 2018). The authors also highlight the importance of a good reputation and social image for a company. So, corporate ads can seem confusing because they do not have a defined target audience; however, they help to maintain a company's image with its consumers. Currently, with the advent of social networks, criticisms can be formulated and gain engagement in a short time, which shows the importance of building a solid image with society.

Considering the concept of social marketing by Kotler and Zaltman (1971), Kotler and Lee (2008), Cheng et al. (2011) and Hastings and Domegan (2017) consider that many campaigns of a social character (aimed at changing human behaviours or at social benefit) can be included in a broader concept of social marketing. Some campaigns may be linked to a company of a commercial nature, carry that brand in them and are often linked to the company's social responsibility sections. Others can be linked to government institutions or even non-profit institutions of a non-profit nature - or they can still be supported by advertising agencies, but they are basically generated from a chain of solidarity.

Therefore, it is possible to realize that advertising meant for raising awareness of social problems may encompass different concepts and different development strategies. However, regardless of the strategy used, there is a characteristic that helps differentiate it from other types of advertising: the focus is not (or not exclusively) on a product or service, but on an idea that is presented as beneficial to society. Ads intended for the presentation of products or services communicate to the “me-consumer”, while those that present ideas to society are centred on the “other” (Balonas, 2011). This form of advertising, according to the author, is mostly used by organizations that deal with different social problems, such as the United Nations - UN, Red Cross, Greenpeace, and similar ones.

As we can see, several authors in the field of advertising have been conducting various analyses of public communication campaigns and these studies cover different areas of social problems. Apart from several others that we previously mentioned, Fonseca (2012) studied communication campaigns to hinder the prevalence of road accidents and those campaigns' effectiveness in preventing automobile accidents by means of an online questionnaire. Penock-Speck and Saz Rubio (2013) analysed the

verbal and non-verbal strategies of five campaigns aimed at charity in the United Kingdom. Oku et al. (2016) analysed communication strategies used to increase the vaccination rate of children in Nigeria. Kaufman et al. (2017) analysed the communication strategies for increasing the vaccination rate in different routine contexts and campaigns in Cameroon, Mozambique and Nigeria. Duong (2017) looked into the campaigns of an American non-profit non-governmental organization to analyse the communication strategies used for social support and resource mobilization for the institution. Rochon et al. (2011) analysed the communication strategies used to increase adherence to the treatment of people with AIDS. Costa (2011) carried out a study to identify the success factors of advertising campaigns to combat domestic violence in Portugal over a period of ten years.

Concluding remarks

Understanding advertising as a discourse is to analyse it holistically, as something planned to influence behaviours and decisions, regardless of its relationship with consumption. It means, as we have seen, recognizing advertising as a deliberate and strategic communication tool designed to exert influence across various aspects of human life. Advertising does get a lot of criticism for its bad influence and, accordingly, several critics address the negative repercussions it may have on human behaviour. In fact, several authors (such as Cortese) point out that the persuasive techniques employed in advertisements can have detrimental impacts on consumers, since ads have the ability to influence individuals to make choices that are not attuned with their best interests or even their well-being. However, on the other hand, advertising also has the power to influence people in a positive way, since they provide information and raise awareness of social problems.

The questioning undertaken by Kotler and Lee (2008) about who determines whether a given cause of a campaign is worthy or not can generate another reflection: what social consequences can advertise discourse generate? And for whom are these consequences considered positive? And for whom can they be considered negative? Cortese's readings on the female self-image promoted by the advertising of beauty products (2015) point out to negative consequences for women's mental health and positive consequences for the make-up and beauty products industry and, according to this view, advertising discourse can be classified as "manipulative". However, campaigns that promote mental health, for example, can have positive consequences for

the population, as well as for those who promoted it and, in that case, they could be labelled as "inspiring", instead. This debate highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the roles advertising can, in fact, play in shaping societal norms - but also individual actions. These considerations demand a more conscientious approach to the process of ad creation and dissemination, one that is more thoughtful and ethically driven, within a framework that truly bears in mind the potential impact of ads in individuals and society as a whole.

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