

# “Work forever. And without drama”: neoliberalism and dystopian pedagogical constructions in Exame

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## **Abstract:**

Understanding the discourse of the media, their circulation in contemporary society and the different managements that occur as a result of them, we analyze the discursive construction around the theme of work nowadays, which shows the winds of neo-liberalism. The empirical analysis is made up of two editions of Exame magazine, a business and economics publication that develops narratives about this doctrine on a monthly basis. Using theoretical and methodological presumptions from Foucault’s archeology, we can understand the discourse as a practice with historical conditioners that is permeated with relations of knowledge and power. The results show the discourses on work found in the magazine constitute social practices that produce meaning, sociability and subjectivities.

**Keywords:** Media Discourse. Work. Exame magazine. Sociability. Neoliberalism.

## **Introduction**

Discussions on the subject of work as a practical-social activity that is part of human sociability already has been largely researched in the most diverse areas of knowledge with several consistent interpretations (ENGELS, 1986, MARX, 1988, ANTUNES, 2005; GORZ, 2004, 2005). However, even in the face of this interpretative framework, the debates on the subject are still intense (SAFATLE, 2016; ANTUNES, 2014; BALTAR, 2010), since it is a social factor and undergoes historical transformations which, for the moment, feed on a new cycle of capitalism centered on pro-neo-liberal forces. In Brazil, a difficult economic situation is currently observed due to the structural changes in economic policy, the fall in the prices of oil and other commodities. Political and economic instability also calls into question processes of change on how to narrate the theme of work and its axioms, such as employment and labor relations. It turns out that business elites and political oligarchies are now showing a great capacity to manipulate, deceive and mislead sectors of the population, thanks to the help of media monopolies. To do so, they construct narratives that appeal through sentimental recipes, aimed at convincing the population to accept the vulnerability of existing jobs, with low salary and limited social protection.

In the meantime, the media begin to construct narratives not only about work, but also about ways to achieve it, behave or deal with its challenges to achieve success. Journalism - one of the main constituent fields of the media and its discourses - mobilizes this theme with recurrence. In journalism, a genre that has one of its basic characteristics in the segmentation (SCALZO, 2013), the issue usually has special treatment, particularly in publications focused on business, economy and the world of work itself.

In order to reflect on how the theme of work is discussed in the media, analytical observation dwells on the discursive construction on the topic and its fabulations, at a time when the discussions on its omnipresent aspect are intensified, the extension or reduction of working hours, pension reform and reduction of labor rights, among other implications that accompany the winds of change. In fact, two editions of Exame magazine, a biweekly publication of the Abril publisher, focused on the business and economic sector, which has been repeatedly constructing narratives on the subject, are chosen as an empirical analysis.

The choice of this publication for analysis is justified by the wide debate and circulation it promotes about work. The selected clipping - two issues, one of October 2012 and another of January 2017 -, refers to the repercussion that both had on social networks (with a large multiplication of memes, due to the approach on the subject); and because they are symptomatic of the perspective by which the journal treats and elaborates its discourses on the work. Considering this premise, the observation of journals with a different period of time (almost 5 years between one and the other) is justified beyond repercussion, due to the need to analyze the possibilities of changes in the treatment of the labor question within this time interval, account, above all, the transformations around the labor activity itself. In this sense, it is questioned not why the subject of work is presented in such a way, but how its representation occurs in each edition, considering its emergency conditions, its assemblages and relations of knowledge and power.

Exame magazine is part of the Exame<sup>1</sup> brand of Abril Publishing house and was launched on the Brazilian market in 1967. According to its website, the publication is named “the largest and most influential publication of business and economy in the country” and publishes “around 150.000 copies, of which 115.000 are signatures”. In addition to being able to be acquired through subscriptions, it is also possible to find it on newsstands - each edition sells for R\$18.00 - and on specialized online platforms. In the “about” section of the magazine, it is stated that “according to research by the Ipsos-Marplan Institute, the publication is read by 91% of the presidents of the 500 largest companies installed in Brazil”<sup>2</sup>.

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1 Under the Exame brand are the exame site.com, Exame magazine and the Better and Largest yearbook, according to the brand's website, the main financial ranking of large companies in the country. Available at: <<http://exame.abril.com.br/sobre/>>. Accessed on: 02 jan. 2017.

2 The information enclosed in quotation marks in this paragraph is presented in the ‘About’ section of Exame magazine. Available at: <<http://exame.abril.com.br/sobre/>>. Accessed on: 02 jan. 2017.

As seen, this is a periodical that has as specific editorial niche the business and economy segment, a factor that gives conditions for the production of discourses about the world of work. However, more than publicizing discussions around this context, guidelines are observed that aim to account for the ways in which people can experience the work.

For the study, the theoretical and methodological assumptions of Foucault's archegenealogy (FOUCAULT, 2013a, 2013b, 2011) are followed to carry out the analyses; understanding the discourse as a practice that possesses conditions of historical possibilities, besides being crossed by relations of knowledge and power. In this wake, it is emphasized that the discourses about the work in the journal investigated constitute themselves as practices producing of senses, sociabilities and subjectivities. On the other hand, the analytical view is directed specifically to: 1) the covers, seen as the showcases in relation to the contents that will be treated in the course of the magazine as a whole, because its function is precisely to arouse the attention of the readers, invite them for the reading and delight of what is promised through their prominence and; 2) Cover materials.

It should be noted that the franchised access to the editions came from the platform of digital magazines Go Read<sup>3</sup>, in operation in Brazil since October 2016. It should be noted that the contents of the magazines arranged in the platform are totally similar to the editions printed in being of the text, the only difference being the presence of a few animations.

## Work and sociability

Before the analysis itself, the historical construct about the notion of work is thought, so that from this we arrive at the empirical cut of the analysis, already bringing the theme to contemporaneity.

Of Latin origin, the word "work" comes from the entry *tripalium*, which characterized an instrument used in farming. In the course of the sixth century, it was renamed as an object of torture. It is observed that even before being associated with this aspect, the term labor was already related to the loss of freedom, since those who worked in Ancient Rome were slaves, while those who were more affluent were entrusted with other activities, such as policy. From the Renaissance period, the issue is gaining new ground, especially with the formation of the States and its economic systems, when work gains more and more importance, being seen as something ennobling and having a social function. With the development of urbanization and commerce, work activities are more valued (ANTUNES, 2005).

During the Industrial Revolution, work is seen not only as a means of production but also as a social function, being identified as a way in which people could, from the sale of

<sup>3</sup> From a monthly subscription worth \$22,90 - except the first month, which is free - the user can have access to more than 100 magazine titles, which can be accessed on computers, tablets and smartphones. Available at: <[https://www.goread.com.br/?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=google\\_search&gclid=CPr62rrPxtECFQgGkQodO94Puw](https://www.goread.com.br/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=google_search&gclid=CPr62rrPxtECFQgGkQodO94Puw)>. Accessed on: 02 jan. 2017.

their workforce, meet their needs, even though it is incipient, considering, as Marx (1984) proposes, that the relation between the exploitation of this force and the payment for it results in the production of surplus value, and the worker is not rewarded as he should, to the detriment of accumulation of wealth of employers.

According to Engels (1986, p.35), work can be understood as “the first basic condition for all human existence, and to such an extent that, in a certain sense, we have to say that work created its own men”. The meaning of the theorist demonstrates the importance of work for the life of man in society, or more than that, for his formation, at least in the way we know and conceive the notion of modern man.

In Marxist theory, work is conceived as an established relation between man and nature, from which processes of action are triggered on the part of the former on the second, effecting, from this, changes in the constitution of man himself. Moreover, for Marx (1984, p.202), work is something that is exclusively linked to man. In his words, work is

[...] a process involving man and nature, a process in which being by its own action drives, regulates, and controls its material interchange with nature [...] sets in motion the natural forces of its body, arms, legs, head and hands, in order to appropriate the resources of nature, imparting them useful form to human life. Acting thus on external nature and modifying it, at the same time modifies its own nature (Our translation).

In this sense, Marx (1984) view of work presupposes that labor activity acts directly in the construction of the working subject, which can be extended to its sociabilities and subjectivities. For Marx (1984, p.209), the worker exerts his labor potential under the control of the capitalist, so that it is the latter to whom his work belongs. The capitalist is responsible for the means of production and always seeks that the work be carried out in accordance with its principles, in order to avoid the waste of raw material, in order to achieve higher productivity.

Marx (1984) argued that the ways in which individuals produce their material lives have a direct relationship with models of political, cultural, and social development. In this way, work is identified as an ever-changing activity in history, according to the conditions of its time of existence. Many significant changes have already occurred and continue to occur and, in our days<sup>4</sup>, the passage of new ruptures<sup>5</sup> is evident, which may possibly trigger

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4 In Brazil, the most striking changes are associated with the consolidation of Labor Laws in the Vargas Era (1943), when the rights to a minimum wage, an eight-hour day, paid leave, social security and weekly rest became guarantees. Recently, significant transformations have also occurred, for example, through the extension of these rights to domestic workers (in force since June 2015), who have their professions regulated.

5 Like what has happened with the approval of the labor reform, in 2017, which amends several articles of the Consolidation of Labor Laws, especially outsourcing services. Available at: <<https://www25.senado.leg.br/web/atividade/materias/-/materia/129049>>. Accessed on: 07 jun. 2018.

other changes in the production relations of today's economic systems, reflecting directly on workers and their forms of life.

Considering this problem, we highlight the implications that the work has for the construction of the identities of the subjects, as well as for their sociabilities, in the sense of being one of the aspects or points of anchorage that mark the notion of itself before the others. Observing the thinking of Simmel (1983), one can affirm that the sociability constructed from the labor activities is a form, where associations are established. The association, on the other hand, refers to a “permanent process of the becoming of social life, a process always in fieri, which is happening without it being possible to say that it has already happened” (SIMMEL, 1983, p.31 - Our translation). With an open and transient character, the associations can be established in different ways and from different territories, not having an end in itself. Moral precepts, models of government, the modus operandi of society, working conditions, among many other aspects constitute sources for sociability. It is therefore imperative to approach this relationship by thinking about the current capitalist mode of production, especially in the midst of productive restructuring and the capital crisis, which has indicated the (re) rise of neoliberalism, leading to deregulation and/or labor laws, precarious work, their invasion of private life etc.

These structural, social and cognitive changes seem to be expanding in a society in which information and relationships are effectively mediated and mediatized. Through its discursive productions and its great circulation, in the present day, the media places itself as an agency that assembles meanings about the problematic, a factor that is now being analyzed when reflecting on two editions of Exame magazine, with the theme work as cover call.

### ***“Work forever. And without drama”***

The editions analyzed are, respectively, from the years of 2012 and 2017, as already mentioned. The first is the edition 1.027, year 46, n° 21, of October 31<sup>th</sup> of 2012. The second is the edition 1.129, year 51, n° 1, of January 18<sup>th</sup> of 2017.

Figures 1 and 2: Covers Exame - October 2012 and January 2017



Source: Prints made by the authors from the access to the magazine by Go Read.

Using a similar aesthetic composition (backgrounds in neutral colors, carefully positioned central characters and flashy verbal utterances), both covers have the work as central aspect.

In the first cover, one has the figure of a woman still young with a distant look towards the horizon - probably the future - at the same time that it demonstrates a haughty and safe position. This is Marissa Mayer, American executive president of Yahoo!. As the main statement, there is a common question about the world of work: “Do we have to work so hard?” Just below, another affirmative statement says, “More hours in the office. I work on every weekend. Just 10 days’ vacation - so is business life today. Why it is so difficult to balance personal and professional life - and what to do about it” (COVER EXAME, edition 1.027, 2012). These passages, in addition to being constructed assertively, seem to indicate immediately the position of the journal: to build a link with the reader and to place itself as a guiding agent, since it proposes, as observed at the end of the second statement, what to do about the indicated point, ie how to deal with the complicated work regimes presented. To that end, the cover character is not a random person, but someone who was “back to work only two weeks after having his first child” (COVER EXAME, edition 1.027, 2012) and has successful experiences in handling of sensitive situations.

In the 1.129 edition of January 2017, the cover artist is Mick Jagger, an internationally known artist for leading one of the most successful rock bands on the planet in recent years, the Rolling Stones. With his eyes focused on the reader, Jagger is strategically put on the

cover to show what you - the reader, and he - Mick Jagger, have in common, this, in relation to work during old age, which may become mandatory in Brazil, if the indicators of change in the pension system - which according to the new proposal of the Government seeks to extend the time of contribution to retirement - are approved. According to the magazine, what the reader and Jagger have in common “may not be the fortune, nor the rolling, nor the eight children. But, like Mick Jagger, you will have to work old age inside. The good news: preparing for this will be great” (COVER EXAME, edition 1.129, 2017). In effect, in a generic way, the reader is then placed by the magazine in a situation that, if the social security reform takes place, will make them similar to Jagger - with old age work inside. Aside from this comparison, the magazine once again puts itself in the position of expert of the subject and postulates that if there is a preparation for it, it will be great, discoursing precepts and arranging states of mind.

No wonder the characters that illustrate both covers are subjects of professional success, whether in youth or old age, thus, examples to be observed and followed. The subject positions that they assume are relative to those people who from a given knowledge, have managed to be in such a position today. In his archegenealogy, Foucault (2013a, 2013b, 2011) indicates that knowledge does not exist without power and vice versa. In the verbal and non-verbal statements of the covers, the knowledge obtained by the characters can be apprehended by the reader from some prescriptive models, based not only on success stories at work, but on true steps to success, which are described in the unfolding of materials. Not unlike this, the knowledge that guides, discursive by the magazine, is also crossed by the relations of power.

From the brief description of the covers, approaches that may seem contradictory are evident, since while the 2012 edition questioned the excess of work and how to deal with it, the one of 2017 seems to defend exactly the prolongation of the working time. However, once the materials of the covers are analyzed, what is identified is that both have a bias that can not be dissociated, the prescriptive.

In the 2012 edition, the subjects related to the cover were produced by Cristiane Mano, of New York and Patrícia Ikeda, of São Paulo. The content is divided into two parts, totaling 20 pages. The first one, along the lines of the cover story, is entitled “what is the limit” and its subtitle reads as follows: “with more and more intense working hours, the balance between a successful career and life personal becomes a goal as long-sought as it is distant. But even without a simple formula, there are those who can get closer to it” (EXAME, edition 1.027, 2012, p.2<sup>6</sup> - Our translation). The second article deals with examples where the balance between work and personal life is easier, as in Denmark, which

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<sup>6</sup> Since the access to the magazine was by Go Read, it was observed that the numbering of the pages was different in relation to the printed magazine, so that in the digital platform the numbering was always restarted with each new session of the magazine. Here, the page we use to reference the quotes taken from the Exame corresponds to the digital version.

is not the case in Brazil and in other countries, such as the United States, where the cover character lives and Works, the cover character, who managed to get to her post because of her dedication, even being blonde and beautiful, a fact that caught the attention of many other. The achievement of all this success for Marissa, despite the difficulties was not easy, says the magazine, but resulted in up to 90 hours of weekly work, including Saturdays and Sundays, which provided despite all the wear and tear positive results, to be the first female engineer to be vice president of Yahoo! and the youngest to become president among the top 500 US companies.

The exception (woman, blonde and beautiful) and the challenge (strenuous work, return only two weeks after having a child) appear as characteristic marks of the discourse built on Marissa's trajectory, evidencing perseverance as an inherent factor. The knowledge that brought it to the upper echelons of power in the business world was thus instituted thanks to its extreme dedication to work, bringing forth other discourses such as that of facing adversity, in turn imposing a mark of meritocracy, entry from the Latin *meritum* - merit, associated with the suffix *cracia* - referring to power, that is, the power of merit as mechanism of justification of the professional ascension. The identification of this interdiscourse is essential to delimit the analyzed discursive formation, starting from the assumption that the discourse is always made and redone of several other (inter) discourses, which allow to reflect not on why it presents itself in this way, but which allows its emergence in this way and not another (Foucault, 2013a), thus revealing its positions and mechanism of power.

The expressive increase in the workload, apart from the times when one takes work home and is not placed in this account (the 90 hours a week formally worked), is seen as something that has a positive and direct implication for those who seek success at work, just as it was for Marissa. This “is the new rule of the game,” says Bethania Tanure, a consultant who is the source for the construction of the story and the narrative that is being built. According to Tanure, “work increasingly requires extreme dedication” (EXAME, edition 1.027, 2012, p.3 - Our translation), which results in a greater number of hours worked and is stated by the Exam as having good reasons: “[...] we are working as never before. Even for good reasons, let it be said. The livelier business environment has contributed to stir up the day-to-day business of Brazilian executives” (EXAME, edition 1.027, 2012, p.5 - Our translation), even if this causes flattening of the personal agenda or the omnipresence of work, since “compensation also became more generous” (EXAME, edition 1.027, 2012, p.5 - Our translation).

In this perspective, Exame magazine journalism is shaped by a pedagogical bias, seeking from its discourses to act on the ways in which subjects should proceed and be in the world. For this, it makes use of the voice of experts, subjects who hold true and legitimized knowledge (FOUCAULT, 2013b; 2011) to deal with the problematic, which

co-exist for the coherence of the constructed narrative, reinforcing it. “The new rule of the game”, “financial compensation”, and “good motives” may be the statements that best characterize the magazine’s position in relation to work. In addition to the specialized sources, entrepreneurs (the knowledge of experience, overcoming and success) give their testimonies and reinforce that despite the difficulties and possible complications for personal life, the work is worth, in view of their compensation. The positions assumed by these subjects resemble, then, the one of the cover character, Marissa, inspiring projections of productivity and satisfaction.

At one point, the magazine even goes so far as to argue that overwork can lead to problems in one’s personal life - terms of relationships, not having close relationships with children and other family members; and health - anxiety, insomnia etc., giving rise to dissent or discursive struggles for the construction of meaning (GREGOLIN, 2003, p.2). However, circumventing this prerogative, examples are used to deal with certain situations of difficulty, as in the case of the president of the telephone operator Nextel, Sergio Chala, who found a way to reduce anxiety by spending 45 minutes a day for meditation. The stories that have been drawn up lead to the construction of a narrative without major contradictions, despite the fact that they demonstrate other (inter) discourses (caring for oneself, the need to maintain an affective network), which are used to reinforce and naturalize what is said. It is the operation that involves the control and exclusion of what can be said. Thus, the order of discourses (FOUCAULT, 2011) expressed by the space given to a single bias - the extension of work as something ordinary, positive and productive, at the same time as any opposing position is interdicted and placed outside the order of the magazine’s speech.

The balance between work and personal life, according to the magazine, is in the discipline. A form of discipline that does not necessarily concern the reduction of work, but a self-discipline that gives account of it and personal life. The answer to be woven from the initial questioning - do we need to work so hard? - seems, then, to be yes, since with discipline to know how to cope and self-manage in work and in other forms of social life, silencing other possibilities and forms of life, as if it were not only common but the most satisfactory. In analytical tension, it is noticed that despite constructing a narrative that allegedly seeks to question the workload in the cover stories of edition 1.027, of October 2012, Exame rather than problematizing the edition, seems to reinforce it, showing dedication to work as the road to success. Thus, the neoliberal prism adopted by the journal is verified, defending self-regulation and motivating an entrepreneurial and self-managed sociability to deal with adverse situations.

Neoliberalism refers to the mid-twentieth-century rescue of the liberal ideals that theoretically and intellectually supported the emergence of capitalism. At first, it would be an attempt to retake classical liberalism - free competition and initiative, private property etc. (MORAES, 2001). Its development, however, did not occur as planned initially, and

its fate turned out to be quite different from those ideals that emerged at the rise of the bourgeoisie, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution - bases of liberal ideas. The new current sought, in turn, to respond to the capitalist crisis that occurred in 1929, going against the welfare state.

According to Moraes (2001, p.17), in Brazil, neoliberal politics began with the commercial opening of the Collor government, and continued with the governments of Itamar Franco and Fernando Henrique Cardoso. For some intellectuals, the adoption of the neoliberal system - which promoted the privatization of large companies and the free trade movement - meant a disaster for the national productive chain, since many local companies were closed - given the strong foreign competition. In the labor field, it provoked the precariousness, flexibility in its laws, the spoliation, dismantling of unionism, among other factors. Under the aegis of neoliberalism, the discussions about the workday - a theme addressed in the analyzed discourses - are shown as a real battlefield, as production becomes more extensive and the work force is more exploited.

According to Foucault (2008), neoliberalism can be understood as a rationality of government. Seen in this way, it indicates a practice in which there is a good adaptation and articulation of the principles of government, the techniques of power and the conduct of the individuals themselves. Understood as a rational-oriented action for a specific purpose (COHN, 2003, p.231), this rationality proclaims for itself the valorization of individual liberties, demanding an economy endowed with autonomous and spontaneous processes. These particularities have direct implications on social relations and on the subjects themselves, says Foucault (2008). For him, the image of the neoliberal individual can be defined by practices that reveal a subject who seeks the highest probability of earnings by calculating his actions for increasing income. According to neoliberal ethics, the subject is placed as someone who must be an entrepreneur, a capital that requires continuous investments, in order to be trained or seek training in order to be able to deal with the most diverse attributions, be it public or private life. This model is enunciated by the Exam, which mediates and places it as a way of feeling, thinking and acting in relation to work.

For Couldry (2008, p.25, our translation), neoliberalism is about “[...] a particular mode of socio-economic organization built around the primacy of markets [...]”. In his view, discourses based on this economic system operate through the sense of common sense, placing the discipline of the subject as a way to balance work and personal life. Although imminently social, its practices are naturalized in order to legitimize the market and devalue any criticism. Regarding the alleged naturalness and exemption - ways in which neoliberalism presents itself and is enunciated, it is worth retaking Foucault (2013b) and his discussion on power relations, because, as he asserts, the densest concentration of power is precisely what is given as common or natural.

The Exame makes use of strategies of knowledge and power that echo the ethics of neoliberalism. In their discursive practices, control and discipline are repeatedly objectified in order to produce models of sociabilities and performative subjectivities about work as something natural. The success or failure of the subject happens to be the result of his or her effort alone, regardless of the current socioeconomic conditions, strengthening entrepreneurial, autonomous and meritocratic thinking and composing the design of neoliberal subjectivities: flexible, supposedly free and capable to govern oneself autonomously (FOUCAULT, 2008). Despite its composition and different temporality, this bias is also presented in edition 1.129, of 2017, when the work theme is taken up from the discussions about the increase of working time necessary for retirement in Brazil, based on the proposal of the Federal Government to change the minimum age and time of contribution<sup>7</sup>.

The approval of the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution (PEC) - number 287/2016, referring to Pension Reform has already been reviewed by the Chamber of Deputies Commission on the Constitution of Justice (CCJ) at the end of December 2016 and was approved after changes. The next step would be to vote in the House Plenary, but after a few unsuccessful attempts, the proposal was temporarily suspended in February 2018, in view of the Decree that provides for Intervention in the security area of the State of Rio de Janeiro, whose validity (until December 31, 2018) prevents, by virtue of the law, that any reform be approved. In spite of the contrary popular manifestations<sup>8</sup>, the government justifies the need for reforms due to the increase in the life expectancy of Brazilians, considering also the tendency of reduction of the economically active population, defending the changes as of paramount importance for the balance of the finances of the Union.

Although it is still under consideration, if these modifications are approved, Exame suggests that Brazilians will have something in common with rock star Mick Jagger: the fact that they work during old age, which according to the magazine is a planetary trend, aligning his thinking with the political forces in power. Jagger and the Rolling Stones, says the publication, are “[...] symbols of an age when work can advance old age inside” (EXAME, edition 1.129, 2017, p.1 - Our translation). The discussion of working time is, in different ways, the subject of the editions of 2012 and 2017. In this regard, Thompson (1967) argues that time is still the most extensive focus of conflict in labor relations.

“*Work forever. And without drama*”, a statement that calls this topic is the same as the cover story of edition 1.129, 2017. Linked to a wider network of senses, given that meaning is never given in isolation or neutral, the enunciation of the title corroborates the meanings of the work for the Exame, reinforcing its positioning from the explicit treatment.

<sup>7</sup> Access more information about the proposed changes. Available at: <<http://www.previdencia.gov.br/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Perjetos-e-Respostas.pdf>>. Accessed on: 08 jul. 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Research conducted by the Planalto Palace in January 2018 shows that only 14% of the population is in favor of Pension Reform. Available at: <<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2018/01/1954879-pesquisa-do-planalto-mostra-14-a-favor-da-reforma-da-previdencia.shtml>>. Accessed on: 04 mar. 2018.

Its approach is similar to that of edition 1.027, 2012, because in both the work is placed as a driving force for the development not only of the economy, but of the subject itself - a self-development or self-production, spelling out the neoliberal bias.

Couldry (2008) classifies neoliberalism as a system of cruelties, which like any system of cruelty, requires its own theater. With this, ritualized performances are constructed as a form of legitimation of this system (COULDRY, 2008, p.25). These performance models are identified - of success, happiness and personal and professional fulfillment, even if they work 90 hours a week or during old age - in the Exame, which demonstrates their will of truth (FOUCAULT, 2013b) on the relations between work and social life.

If finding the balance between work and personal life through subjects' (self) discipline was the key to success in the 2012 edition, now, working is also pointed as a source of happiness after age 65 - “More and more retirees are discovering that you do not have to live on the beach to be happy after 65 years. Learn how to get there” (EXAME, edition 1.129, 2017, p.1, our translation), as postulated in the subtitle of the cover story of 2017, produced by Giuliana Napolitano, Luciano Pádua and Patricia Vale. The ideal of prescription is again put into action, referring to the concept of self-help journalism, a term coined by Freire Filho (2011) to refer to the media productions of journalism that directly target the subjectivities of consumers, usually geared towards obtaining of immediate gains, whether in terms of social adjustment or professional advancement.

With seductive statements, a factor propitiated by assertive assertions, sociability models are built based on the excessive increase of work, an aspect that is seen as engraving, synonymous with successful people, and other sources of experience for the formation of the subject. Jagger, in this sense, is put as an example to be followed, because he is working and adoring at age 73, states the article, even without having conducted any interview with the artist, which sets up a posture at least contradictory in terms of consistency, since it is precisely the singer who illustrates the prerogative advocated by the edition. Other professionals working at more advanced ages also give their testimonials. All, he points out, continue to work of their own accord, as is the case with Mick Jagger. Many are already retired. None of the sources works by obligation of the State, which is shown as incongruous to the narrative, based on a discursive position linked to the Government's proposals for the Pension Reform.

It is true that the magazine is aimed at a more economically affluent public, which allows the presence of subjects always linked to large companies, but in an edition that deals with work and retirement, defending significant changes to the Social Security, generalizes the cases and belief that working after old age is a matter of choice by the Brazilian population, elaborating a dystopic discourse, because when treating Brazil and its people in a homogenous way, it does not allow a recognition of a reality marked by disparities.

Strategically, old age itself is resignified, as is the conception of youth - “If it passes through Congress [the Reform Proposal], it will be very difficult to see retired 50-year-olds as they are today [...]” (EXAME, edition 1.129, 2017, p.5 – Our translation), promoting a new use value of these subjects for capital through the prolongation of the sale of their labor forces. Briefly, Exame even mentions that “[...] it is difficult to go ahead in jobs that require physical effort or imply a strenuous routine of travel and meetings. Anyone who has not prepared to change jobs, or even a profession, may be in a dead end” (EXAME, edition 1.129, 2017, p.8 – Our translation), he says. As a possibility of contradiction, as occurred in the 2012 edition, the argument is soon suppressed and some prescriptions for the preparation and management of the challenges are listed, reinforcing the concept of self-help journalism. The prescription demonstrates once again the rubric of the neoliberal model, since it is focused solely on the subject who must, besides being open and flexible to the changes, discipline himself in order to overcome them. At no time, the state aid or intermediary is mentioned.

Values and representations are shaped by the magazine’s narrative, engendering certain types of social relationships and interdicting others through their silences (FOUCAULT, 2011). Therefore, sociabilities and subjectivities are (re) produced compatible with the needs and premises of the neoliberal mode of production. The Exame presents a discourse that it makes when saying as they are - or they should be - the relations in the world of the work. In describing it, it prescribes appropriate or desirable behaviors in order to manage ways of being and being. The discipline, indicated key to the balance between work and personal life in the 2012 edition, shows itself as an outlet for the problematic stated in the edition of 2017. In both, self-management and power in itself are more than keys, mechanisms of discursive support.

## **Final considerations**

The discussions on the topic of the work in the Exame magazine guided the reflections presented in this article. Being a publication focused on the economic and business market, the constructed and fabulous narratives reinforce its strong connection with the wealthiest sectors of Brazilian society – old political oligarchies, financial agents, entrepreneurs, owners of rural and urban goods, and rentistas – especially when it is perceived as narrative as well as pedagogical – as is common in journalism and other media products –, dystopian, since it does not dialogue with society as a whole, only with the business and political elite. Their statements do not reconstitute social facts, but recontextualize them in variables of performative cognitive experiments that appeal to the subjectivity of the citizen, as if he could reposition his discursive premises related to work instead of everyday events and in the center of the global imaginary network.

Even promoting the analysis of two editions that have different temporalities, a continuity of positions and narratives was identified, revealing the absence of discursive and argumentative heterogeneity on the facts portrayed, as well as the distancing of their representations with respect to the majority of the workers Brazilians, even in the great centers of the labor market. The constructed discursive representations reveal dystopic scenes, they repeat enunciations of order that in themselves are redundancies of the neoliberal ideals. The cover figures, to have a notion, do not even live in Brazil. How to recognize them, as well as their lifestyles and associate them with the local context? According to the convergent narrative of the issues, the answer to this question can only be in the subject itself and in its interest not only in recognizing Marissa and Jagger as characters but as inspiring possibilities for success that must be followed, whether in youth or old age.

The discourses of the editions analyzed here are shown as insidious, minutely sewn and articulated forms that neoliberalism seems to have found to be inserted in our imaginary and propagate their presuppositions, to silence their contradictions and to foment their practices, what in the Exame is done as if it were something common and natural. However, a closer look soon reveals the presence of a network of powers that seeks to shape the ways of living the world of work and to build the sociabilities and subjectivities that derive from it.

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