Necrocapitalism as the Exploitation of Established Death Worlds

ABSTRACT

Neoliberalism granted an significant power to companies and shifted the societies mind to change our values. This study revises Neoliberalist concepts and Necrocapitalism theories to understand some behaviors in the Brazilian society during the Covid-19 pandemic. For that, I analyze practices in three layers of society – the government, the market and the people – to show how the Necrocapitalist mindset presents itself on the diverse spheres of society and without the need to create those death worlds.

KEYWORDS

Capitalism; Necrocapitalism; Necromarketing; Neoliberalism; Coronavirus.

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INTRODUCTION

> If money comes into the world with a congenital blood stain on one cheek, then capital comes *dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt. Marx (1867: 926)*

Necrocapitalism studies how people accumulate capital through violence, by exploiting others, and by creating death worlds (Banerjee, 2008). It focuses in situations where the capitalist establishes a context with may harm, kill and exploit communities and whole societies related to their businesses or in the way of their interests. In those extreme capitalist scenes, Marx`s morbid initial quote remains vivid.

Although the term applies to when those markets are created, situations as the Covid-19 pandemic are the perfect stage for a Necrocapitalist act. By June 24th 2020, we reached 52.771 deaths in Brazil and 476.911 worldwide (World Health Organization – WHO, 2020). With a disease surrounded by fear, uncertain information and, of course, products and capital, establishing the perfect context for making money.

This analysis focuses on how Neoliberalism creates spaces for Necrocapitalist practices on established death worlds, in contrast to situations in which governments and the private sector create those contexts themselves. My focus lays on how the crisis affected the government, the market and the individuals trough decisions taken in alignment with Neoliberal and Necrocapitalist practices: The government prioritizing the economy over people`s life; The market manipulating prices of essential products'; And consumers stocking products without considering the effect on other and in public well-being.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

To develop a deeper discussion on how capitalism impacts the market relationships, I divided the theoretical background in three parts. In the first section I will introduce some concepts about *Neoliberalism* and its effect on Governments, Markets and People. After, I will explore *Necrocapitalism* - the origins of the concept, the connection to marketing, some applications of it and *Necromarketing*. Finally, I present the *coronavirus pandemic* context. The specific behaviors and events resulting from this context will be presented in the individual sections of the discussion.

Neoliberalism

Reinventing itself is the capitalism`s characteristic which has made it last for so long, without a perspective of change to another economic model or societal mindset (Dardot & Laval, 2014; Harvey, 2003). Capitalism`s current form is the result of a partially unplanned process which started in the 1930`s, with a dual side: in one we had an accumulation crisis and, as a response, in the other the ones with control over capital started questioning the interventions of the government on markets and population. By the end of the 1970`s, neoliberalism was understood as an economic policy and an ideology inspired on the liberalism, a direct application of the *laissez-faire*, a line of thought based on the understanding that the government intervention on markets would only disturb its natural autoregulation. (Dardot & Laval, 2014)

Although the central perspective of neoliberalism focuses on the economic sphere, the mindset related to it sprinkles on other spheres of life. Neoliberalism became the new way of the world, it changed the way governments, companies and people interact. It became a new rationality in which everyday life became a huge competition – companies have to sell more, have to own the largest market share, have to offer the best prices and, at the same time, have the best profit margins. People have to get the best job positions, to speak more languages (or to be more prepared in whatever skills they offer to the job market); to get the best, most beautiful and the most intelligent partners and to be the best in their hobbies – even when we are in our leisure time, we are competing. What about the government? It should stay out of the way and allow companies to negotiate with society and buy their work force, letting the markets regulate themselves – *laissez-faire*. (Dardot & Laval, 2014)

Dardot & Laval (2014) underline that neoliberalism changed society in 4 dimensions. The society`s *political sphere* adapted to the neoliberal logic; The fast growing of the global *economy based on competition*; *Individualization of people*; and the *creation of a new subject* which leaves under the same mindset a company does.

The governments see themselves emerged in the same logic as companies, submitted to competition with other countries and other parties. Internally, the public partitions also work every day more comparable to the routine of a private corporation. To society, public administrators implement techniques and procedures to direct the conduct of people. The government oversees all actions through freedom, allowing people to make their own choices and to adequate themselves to social norms. The state

became part of the ideology rather than the mere guardian of the neoliberalist logic. (Dardot & Laval, 2014)

The focus on `natural` competition makes the government deal with other instances of society using with the same mindset. Members of society are instigated to compete against each other with their skills to achieve the best spots: best salaries, job positions, living conditions – best everything – creating a superficial 'social hierarchy'. The intervention of the state would be to intervein only to guarantee a place to competition and to allow markets to regulate themselves. Therefore, the state is not responsible to build social well-being, but it transfers this responsibility to the individuals, embedding them onto the neoliberal logic (Dardot & Laval, 2014)

The drive to compete separate people. Herbert Spencer, in the late XIX century, was an icon of the anti-reformatory policies. His thought was built upon a so-called 'social Darwinism', which considered the competition as a pillar of natural evolutionism. Thus, permitting people to fight for their goals was a manner to improve society by allowing the most skillful to win, in a form of social natural selection. Justice relates to merit, so people acquire what they deserve. In his view, whoever defended reformatory interventions seeking for the common welfare was called a socialist who stayed in the way of the society`s development (Dardot & Laval, 2014)

The competition drive brings scarcity as the cornerstone of social education. When shortage is absent, it is created to make equals – who could be fighting together for their improvement as a class – to dispute for a position, in whatever context possible: schooling, job market or in personal lives. In the end, the system imputes each individual`s responsibility for their misfortunes as high indebtments, unemployment, low education and so on to themselves. As a result, we naturalized individualism and people are 'allowed' to always put their needs first and forget about the common well-being.

The responsibility people hold for all their choices and paths changes the mindset to a new subject, who should have an analogous behavior to a company. People acquire the responsibility for their training on the areas they intend to work on, for their ever-growing knowledge, named human capital. Self-managed employees hold responsibility for delivering results based on subjective objectives, and the evaluation of their work and compensations for it. This becomes a naturalized process and peers start to see each other as opponents, who had merit for their conquers and to blame for their losses (Dardot & Laval, 2014)

These neoliberal subjects became the masterpiece of the industrial society. Their training taught them to maximize all the pleasures and results. The competitivity made them more resilient to long hours of work, to harassment, to keep their emotions to their private time (a rational subject, after all), to take full responsibility for their deliverables and to believe that the success of the company is equivalent to their own. They adapt themselves to the company`s culture and follow a conduct expected from them. They take all the risk of the work personally – even more for the ones who work with sales – but in general for being accounted for their health, education and employment, and finally, when people get too senior for the market, all the experience they have end up discarded. They have no rights, only benefits in exchange for something good for the business. In that logic, everyone became an *entrepreneur* who will compete with their working mates, just like companies do (Dardot & Laval, 2014).

The market, by its turn, stands as an unnatural institution which requires the governments regulation. Although the market should be free to interact with other companies and consumers and autoregulate, it relies on the state to guarantee the right to compete – the essence of neoliberalism –, making sure all the economic agents are onboard. For the market, *laissez-faire* should represent the ability to regulate itself, though it actually stands for the freedom to take actions against common interest, disrespecting consumers and suppliers. The *laissez-faire* economic system emerged as counter movement to a series of policies to protect the workers, such as limited hours of work, prohibition of child labor and restrictions to women`s work on dye factories (Dardot & Laval, 2014).

Although those atrocious practices seem a bit more distant to our reality than in the times the *laissez-faire* got strength, neoliberalism opened space for other morbid practices. The Necrocapitalist studies focus on how the market and the state develop death worlds to increase their accumulation.

Necrocapitalism

The concept refers, in short, to "forms of organizational accumulation that involve dispossession and the subjugation of life to the power of death (Banerjee, 2008:1541)". The author believes that the capitalist way of production impacts on the subjugation of life. Most authors` exemplify in the context of war and corporative appropriation of territory or natural and essential resources. The author builds up from theories of necropolitics, with "contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death"

(Mbembe, 2003:39). Those practices which are based on violence, dispossession, and death happens as if the responsible were free from any responsibility and immune from any legislation or political intervention. In diverse scenarios, even with public power use to private interests (Banerjee, 2008).

Those situations commonly appear on a state of exception, in which the sovereign creates and adapts the context to guarantee the validity of whatever move they intend to. Those states of exception got established for diverse governments for extreme situations, such as the German Nazism, the current Palestine government or the US Naval Station at Guantánamo Bay. Those spaces of exception guarantee to the sovereign the right to torture, violate and kill without any intervention. It grants power to the state to define the value of life in general and in individual cases. The value of live, then, becomes a subjective point to be decided by whoever is in power, who define which lives are relevant to society, to politics and to the economy. The Nazis killing of handicaps took place under the justification of the life unworthy to be liven Agamben (1998). This power instated by the government grant it the authority to kill those who refuse "to allow themselves to die" (Montag, 2005:15).

Those practices get intensified under the neoliberalist flag disseminated throughout the most powerful entities in the world, acquired an 'radicalized capitalist imperialism' aura in developing countries (Ong, 2006: 1). In those contexts, and in the name of social security, the market logic assumed a relevant part in politics and develop subjectivities under its interests. Under a neoliberal regime, the forces of the market and politics gain and loose forces in different battles, with each one defending its interests and with public power adopting market agendas as its own with the veiled objective of acquiring personal gains, resulting in markets indirectly creating states of exception to achieve their goals (Ong, 2006). All that setting allows a scenario in which the government controls the democratic state, but the continuing exploitation, violation and domination happens trough other institutions (Wood, 2003) .

The biggest concern on Necrocapitalism context lays on the alliance between capitalist and political powers, defending the interest of the ones who want to accumulate capital above the basic human right of existence. This practices appeared under the use of political power to establish states of exception in order to create death worlds to profit from the disgrace of others (Banerjee, 2008). Those contexts often happen through the practice of

> forceful expulsion of peasants, conversion of public property into private property, restrictions on public use of common property resources, neocolonial practices of asset appropriation, control over natural resources in the former colonies, and the suppression of alternate, indigenous forms of consumption and production (Harvey, 2005: 145).

Necrocapitalism prioritize the capitalist and the accumulation of capital through the exploitation of death, commonly caused or influenced by its own practices. It denies to the working class the access to whatever is essential for their existence. In a smaller dose, the use of death arguments to profit are also used in communications. The expanding concept of necromarketing encompasses those cases.

Necromarketing

Death acquired different meanings in the history of humankind. Kisvetrová, Kutnohorská, (2010 apud Ł. Wojciechowski & Shelton, 2014) identified five understandings of death, dying and deceased people, trough cultural and historical analysis: the most primitive, *domesticated death* refers to the understanding of it as a common part of society, sometimes necessary for the survival of the group. This understanding is still found in few isolated communities (Harari, 2011); In the 11th century death acquires a personal tone, being perceived as *death of an individual, which* defines death when understood as a person`s last drama; *Death close and distant*, in the 11th century, referred to the feeling of ever approaching death, but as a far disclosure of life. In the 19th century the death of loved ones became more threatening and sadder than the fear people had about their own death. Nowadays, starting in the 20th century, we entered the era of *reversed death*, in which people try to avoid death and everything related to it, such as ageing or disease, selling products and services that will postpone or cure those processes (Ariès, 2013). Marketing follows the ‘reversed death` mindset by developing strategies using morbid contexts to selling products.

Necromarketing research derives from Necrocapitalism and focuses on the use of death related arguments to sell, leaning on fear of death as an ultimate argument to catch the eye of consumers. When using this strategy, advertisers rely on both explicit and implicit messages. Wojciechowski & Babjaková (2016) define explicit messages as the uses of direct images or icons related to death, such as catastrophes, skeletons or coffins. Implicit messages, by its turn, are the display of indirect messages that, in the end, refer

to death as well, as aging processes or sickness. Those arguments go against the willing of being young and living forever, dealing with an already existent fear of the inevitable faith (Ł. Wojciechowski & Shelton, 2014).

Using death as an argument in advertising became accepted, with the threshold between the adequate and the inadequate thinner every day. Ł. Wojciechowski & Shelton (2014) identified four patterns of manipulation through the use of death in communication: 1) *Contrast*, which opposes a negative situation on what would normally be a positive context (e.g. a vulture instead of a stork bringing a newborn to their parents); 2) The display of *sexual content* in a morbid scenario; 3) *Deceased referrals*, in which dead people (e.g. celebrities) resurrect in an ad or they pretend to be dead for a campaign (e.g. Kim Kardashian pretending to be dead); and 4) *perfection*, which appeals do the willing of avoiding death or anything related to it. Communication which uses the 'perfection' argument to manipulate consumers approach the fear of getting older and become imperfect (e.g. wrinkles or skin marks) or unhealthy. The following images exemplify those strategies.



Figure 1 - Manipulation by contrast



Figure 2- Manipulation by sexual content



Figure 3 - Manipulation by Deceased referrals (Elvis Presley in the image)



Figure 4 - Manipulation by perfection

Markets related to death are old in businesses. Since memorials became standard to honor a person`s memories, coffins, tombstones and all the services related to the burials. However, the social understanding of inadequate uses of death in a commercial context allowed the industry to develop products referring to death (such as dolls), realistic videogames, movies and TV shows portraying as vivid as possible corpses, deaths, ill or dying people. Necromarketing became a common practice in communications and business, making our final destination a present in our routines (Ł. P. Wojciechowski & Babjaková, 2016). For now, studies in necromarketing focus on the advertising side of marketing, but organizations have taken advantage of death worlds in other aspects as well. The following section will describe the Coronavirus pandemic so far, which is seen by some as an opportunity to get the economy running.

The Coronavirus Context

The WHO (2020) describes coronaviruses as:

> [...] a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. In humans, several coronaviruses are known to cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19. [...] COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

The symptoms of COVID-19 tend to stay mild and start gradually. They are "fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea". About to 80% of cases will need no assistance, while some groups (smokers, older people or people with underlying diseases, such as high blood-pressure, diabetes or heart problems) are more likely to develop more serious complications. The viruses are spread through droplets release from sneezing or breathing. To reduce the chances of getting infected, it is recommended to thoroughly and regularly wash hands or clean it with alcohol-based hand rub; maintain 1 meter distance, at least, from other people and to wear masks at all times while out of home (Gambaro, 2020); To avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth; to cover your mouth to sneeze or cough, so you avoid spreading droplets which may be infected into the air; and to stay home if you are feeling unwell (WHO, 2020). The last recommendation has been taken to the whole population in several countries and in some Brazilian regions to avoid 1) that the people disregarding social isolation would become vectors of the virus and 2) to avoid asymptomatic people to infect others.

In December 2019, China started having an unusual amount of pneumonia cases. In the following days, the Chinese health system identified an unprecedent virus to humans before as a common cause of those cases. In January 11th 2020, the first patient died from the disease. By January 20th 2020, the epidemic situation in China had already became a pandemic, reaching Thailand, Japan, Korea and the United States. Three days later, Wuhan, the city where the outbreak happened, was isolated by Chinese authorities – no airplanes or trains would go in or out and buses, subways and ferries were all suspended. A week later, by January 30th, the *World Health Organization (WHO)* declared a global health emergency. In January 2nd, the first death outside China was confirmed by the Philippines. The WHO named the disease as Covid-19, acronym meaning *coronavirus disease 2019* in February 11th, and by February 14th the first death was announced in France. The amount of cases in Italy become more alarming than in most countries, causing the country to lock down several cities by February 23rd. The first case in South America was recorded in February 26th, in São Paulo/Brazil – A businessman traveling back from Italy. By the 29th, The USA registers the first death in the country announces domestic and international flights restrictions. By April 2, roughly three months after the outbreak, more than 1 million people presented symptoms, and more than 50 thousand people died from the disease (Taylor, 2020).

This short description may seem like the beginning of a science fiction movie, but unfortunately, this blockbuster description from Hollywood belong to our current context. Covid-19 has reached 9.394.558 confirmed cases and 481.078 deaths worldwide. The next chapter will bring up situations in which the presented concepts of capitalism relates to the context above.

DISCUSSION

Although Necrocapitalism refers mostly to the development of death scenarios to profit from, I want to present a perspective in which the morbid scenario is presented a priori and people take individualistic decisions on how to deal with problems emerging from that. Besides the individual decisions, the standard Neoliberalist behavior applies to the decisions taken in the three situations analyzsed. To develop the discussion, I choose situations in which the *government (`s denial of the pandemic and the capitalist priority)*, the market (*Increase on product prices related to the pandemic*) and the subjects reaction (*Individualism on the pandemic: stocking "essential" products*) in the pandemic situation are clear examples of the neoliberalist context. Other examples will be presented in the conclusion as a suggestion of further development of this analysis.

Governments` denial of the pandemic and the capitalist priority

> Some people will die, sorry […] You cannot stop an automobile factory because there are going to be deaths on the roads every year.
>
> Jair Bolsonaro (MSN, 2020)

Although the outbreak of the disease happened in Brazil almost three months after the first case, and more than one month after the first country – Italy – got into lockdown (WHO, 2020), allowing the president and other governats to learn from strategies adopted in other countries, Jair Bolsonaro – Brazilian`s president – follows the same strategy of the United States in the beginning of the outbreak in their country: to prioritize the economy and allow people out of the isolation, working (and consuming). The discourse of both the USA and the Brazilian presidents are the same: "our lives have to go on, the jobs have to be held, the families` sustenance must be preserved. We should come back to normal [...] What happens in the world shows that the risky group are people over 60 years old, so why to close schools?" (UOL, 2020). In some Brazilian states, governors aligned their strategies to the will of the president: Rio Grande do Sul`s governor, for

example, will ease the isolation depending on the relevance of the industry to the local economy (GauchaZH, 2020).

A similar movement happened in the September 11Th incidents, in 2001, in New York, when people stopped buying products and services after the incidents. The federal and local government started a campaign asking people to come back to the capitalist life, returning to their regular buying routines. At the time, president George W. Bush, worried about the decline on flight tickets sales, told the society to forget their fear of flying, and to "get on board" to enjoy some time off (Gregory, 2004).

Other examples can also be found in the States` Governments. In the south of the country, in the Rio Grande do Sul State, Governor Eduardo Leite is proposing a flexible social isolation in which, among other criteria, the importance of each specific industry to the economy will be taken into consideration to decide whether their employers will still in quarantine in May 2020 (GauchaZH, 2020). Again, we see another case in which the sovereign contextualizes the state of exception in order to protect economy.

Although the discourse of protecting families` income and jobs (UOL, 2020), as well as they right to transit wherever they want (G1, 2020b, 2020a), there are several indications of underlying governmental and private interests ignoring the WHO`s (2020) indication of social isolation. First, this narrative is completely coherent to the essence of neoliberalism: the government would only regulate the market if something interferes in the possibility of competition (Dardot & Laval, 2017). Locking down the main cities (or the entire country) which would be the recommended action to stop the virus spreading and the pandemic would stop the economy and, as a consequence stop most markets and any physical competition whatsoever.

The creation of a context in which the global history of occurrences is denied to the Brazilian reality, and social policies are defined in the name the citizen rights and economic stability, places economy (or capitalism) in the first place over public health. This construction of reality is directly analogous to the creation of contexts to create a state of exception to follow the governors and private interest. While the empty speech of national security is used to create panic and to validate the use of violence and torture against so-called terrorists (Banerjee, 2008), the aforementioned speech based without any scientific or historic support develops the false sensation of security, allowing the government to keep the economy running and following private interests.

Although the role of the government would be to protect society as a whole as a priority, keeping everyone safe and assisting the needed with adequate financial support,

the government acted towards protecting the circumstance in which companies can sell and compete. However, the people held responsibility for their living costs - while the Brazilian Government offered less than 125 USD a month, the USA government aided their needed with 1200USD a month and Singapore with 680USD are only examples of how other countries are helping their population (BBC, 2020). Each individual had to deal with their decisions and (lack of) savings. If they had no preparation for a context as the pandemic, they should deal with their own consequences. An action Spencer would be proud of.

Secondly, the government is known for its strong ties with the private sector, with the sponsorship of several national brands (Fragão, 2020; Soares, 2020). With people isolated in their houses, the sales of non-essential items diminishes (Gambaro, 2020), but they still have to pay their bills and salaries. Weeks before creating an aid for the population parcel impacted by Covid-19, the government had already altered the employment law, allowing the employers to suspend hiring contracts for up to two months, releasing them from the obligation of paying salaries for this period. Those actions of the federal government show its priorities: first we have to defend the competition (costumed as the economy), then we will take care of the individuals, who hold responsibility for saving their own jobs. In another reading, first we take their jobs, then we provide them with a minimum aid. The alignment between the private sector and the government emerges: besides the consonance in the discourse of the government and their sponsors (Araújo, 2020) only 14 days after the decree allowing companies to suspend contracts, Havan, a store chain owned by one of the main private supporters, adhere to its new right (Mota, 2020).

The neoliberalist government works on the same logic the companies do – to compete with other parties and establish their political view, they need a budget to thrive. This dual agenda – seeking public well-being and maintaining oneself in power – brings governments to inconvenient situations which ends in social decisions made through the bias of private interests.

Increase on product prices related to the pandemic

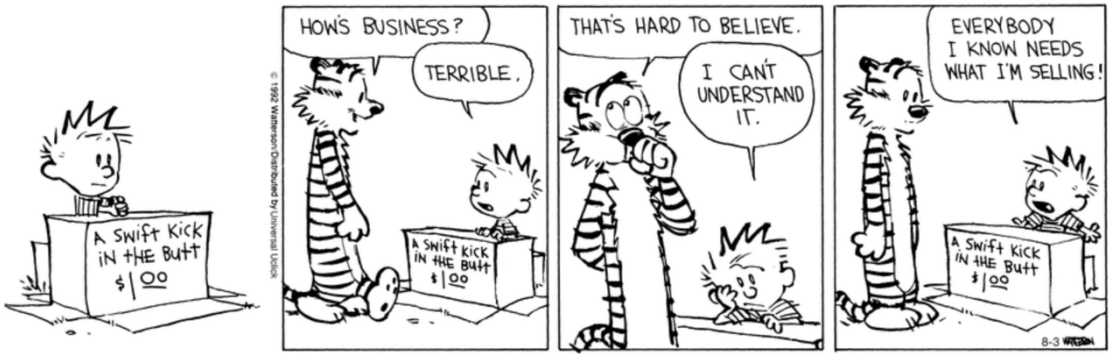


Figure 5- Calvin and Hobbes (Watterson, 2016)

When everybody needs what you produce, the high demand may increase the prices of a product in the market. The Institute of Research and Post-Graduation for the Pharmaceutical Market (ICTQ) made a price checking on 540 pharmacies in 18 state capitals in Brazil during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results show that the high demand may have increased the prices of some items a 'bit' more than what would be acceptable, creating an abusive situation. As examples, the hand sanitizers (500g) were being sold from R$7.99 to R$78 (μ= R$ 21, 876% variation) and disposables masks (box with 50) ranged from R$5.49 and R$425 (μ= R$50.25 7641% variation) (ICTQ, 2020)

The exploitation of the panic caused by the pandemic summed to the product`s shortage on the market makes increases on the products` prices to unprecedent values. As only few companies had availability of hand sanitizer/related products and the demand was high, they followed the classic offer-demand rule, increasing the prices so much that the average consumer was unable to afford or would have to make a serios effort in order to buy it. Although the government influenced to keep the economy running, it abstained from taking actions to control the abusive market prices – in the neoliberalist society, the state should only interfere to guarantee the competition among economic agents (Dardot & Laval, 2017). Here the theories about the autoregulation of the marketing are applied in practice: with the *laissez-faire,* companies will hold no constrain to maximize their profits, even if that costs the life of others.

Directly related to the Necrocapitalist perspective, the capitalists seek to accumulate capital and profit from the fear of death. As droplets are responsible for the disease transmission, which can be transferred directly or indirectly through surfaces, both masks, which avoid the release of such droplet, and sanitizers, which facilitate the products` and surfaces` cleaning, are essential to the safety of society in general. They control central commodities to guarantee the control of the pandemic and use their

position to bargain surreal prices. The same way the workers who guarantee the maintenance of water supplies in Latin America and Africa are deprived or exploited for its consumption (Banerjee, 2008), the social class which produces those commodities will be deprived of them.

On the necromarketing perspective, one of the known manipulation arguments is called perfection, which refers to the use of the drive consumers have to avoid death and everything related to it (Ł. P. Wojciechowski & Babjaková, 2016). Although the necromarketing concept applies to advertising, contexts such as the coronavirus make the updates people receive all day every day as a passive advertising. The consumer already has received on the news the importance of using protection products (e.g. hand sanitizer and masks), so all the market has to do is to sell a product with high demand caused by the alarming (and justified) news. Necromarketing refers to the use of morbid arguments to sell, whether the company creates those arguments or simply make use of them.

Individualism on the pandemic: stocking "essential" products

The human species have always stocked goods. When people were still hunters and gatherers, we would stock food in the summer and spring for when the availability of food was minor (Harari, 2011). People in that epoch were sure to have no other way of acquiring food – no supermarket would have available products (nor exist, by the way) and no one else would be producing packaged goods essential to his survival, nor toilet paper would be available in any store, cave or society near him.

With the rise of the pandemic, Kantar recorded an increase of 26% in supermarket purchases, which indicates the will to stock products. Some product categories stand out for its specific increase: while cereal was purchased 73% more than usual and cleaning products presented a rise of 70% (79% for dish soap), toilet paper grew in 211%. The responsible for this growth was classes A and B of the Brazilian Social Class system, (Gambaro, 2020) which represents only 14,4% of the country (Villas-Bôas, 2019).

Here, we see the same capitalist logic: I accumulate, accumulate and accumulate more, so I will have when I need it. But the capital I is to be observed here. When consumers stock products in large scale, the price of those products rise, and the consumers we refer to in this discussion is the A and B social classes, the statistical minority (Villas-Bôas, 2019) who have both access to increase their carts in 26% and to pay the extra prices caused by the increase in demand, as in the former context.

People find themselves outside of a society. They see themselves as a whole individual alone, inserted on a collection of other individual selves with whom they have no obligation to create bonds, only if it interests themselves (Dumont, 1969). Competition is entrenched to the neoliberal subjects in a level that all their minds think about are their needs and the others who will need the same – and compete for it. The neoliberal subject takes the common good out of perspective to follow the drive they learned (Dardot & Laval, 2017). The individual subjugates the life of others to their comfort and sense of security (Mbembe, 2003). Even though this differs from putting their lives at risk in the name of accumulation, we regard the life quality of others as secondary to our individual comfort.

The same logic of irresponsibility and immunity of the state of exception (Banerjee, 2008), here applies to the individual consumer. While sovereigns use their status and power in the name of a greater good (whatever they are) for personal interests, the citizen uses this state of exception or crisis in the name of their own protection to justify their individualistic actions, putting aside the well-being of society as a unity.

CONCLUSION

The new way of the capitalism is entrenched to our society and the COVID-19 context helped bringing into light whatever doubt remaining. The government actions and the societal symptoms summarized 'textbook neoliberalism'. We see the government abstaining from helping the population and holding them as responsible for their own past choices and lifestyles which led each individual as accountable for their lack of preparation for this extreme situation. However, when the markets call for help to stay open and being able to compete and sell, the government takes all actions to guarantee the minor impact possible to the companies, setting aside public safety, labor rights and global recommendations.

The market, by its turn, use the context to maximize their profit. Without interference from the government, prices of essential products related to public protection escalate to impracticable levels to most of society. As this represents a natural reaction from the market, the government does not interfere, allowing the consumer to choose whether they will buy the overcharged products and permitting other companies to propose other cheap solutions to compete.

Finally, consumers are no different. The drive to compete with their equals make them forget about the social impact of accumulating products, which led them to stock

essential goods. The neoliberal subject got so blinded by the competition logic in their heads that the price increases and shortage of products caused by unfounded accumulation goes unconsidered, affecting the lives of those whose savings remain insufficient for their existence.

The concept of Necrocapitalism focuses on the development of death worlds or the exploitation of resources without attention to its impact on society, but it should, as well, see the appropriation of morbid situations already established to accumulate capital. This analysis regards three layers of society: the government, the market and the people, all three of them with practices which refer to Necrocapitalist concepts.

While the original Necrocapitalist analysis focused in different contexts, some characteristics are similar to the Covid-19 pandemic. In both cases we can see the distortion of reality to develop a state of exception, in which the sovereign is allowed to take unfunded decisions without being held responsible for them, in the name of a greater good (Agamben, 2005). As in the cases of exploitation of societies to explore natural resources (Harvey, 2005), the *Brazilian government* grants privileges to the private sector and risk the lives of the working class and consumer well-being in order to guarantee the market`s right to compete and sell. Finally, the government uses this power to decide the importance of worthiness of each life. Just like when the handicaps where unworthy and disposable during the Nazism (Agamben, 1998), the death of the elderly and other groups of risk are mere casualties of a so called cold.

Although the necromarketing field so far encompasses solely the communications field and the intentional use of morbid references, I believe this concept also refers to both other strategies in marketing (price definition, product development and distribution) and to cases in which the context itself refers to death worlds. When the context is used to increase sales or prices, when the industry promotes a shortage to speculate and increase prices and when communications set aside the tangible impact a disastrous context bring to society in order to put up an ad, what would be the routine in marketing practices cross the line to practices which make use of death worlds to profit.

Although this paper focused on three situations from different layers of society, other practices related to Necrocapitalist and Neoliberalism are clear in the chosen context. Among others, we can observe the relationship among the people crowned with the possibility of social isolation and home office versus the 21% of society working on essential services (Gambaro, 2020) and the class struggle between those two groups, which is just a small piece of the different ways the pandemic is affecting each social

classes; The productivism people try to achieve and show on social media, even on social isolation, which brings up the productivity need of the neoliberal subject (Dardot & Laval, 2017); Luxury or fashionable products launched to fight the pandemic. In the other hand, a study could also observe the creation of organizations and initiatives, as well as the conversion of capitalist practices and organizations to fight the crisis, as in the case of Louis Vuitton, Burberry and Chanel repurposing their lines of production to make masks for the ill and the health system.

Finally, this study could improve by exploring different practices in the pandemic context, but also by adding other theoretical perspectives to the analyses. Also, a deeper analysis of the impact of capitalist way of production has on the contemporary society may, as well, bring new layers of understanding to this paper.

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