

GOVERNING THROUGH AFFECT: EMOTIONS AND SYMBOLIC POWER IN THE CORPORATE DISCOURSE OF EXAME MAGAZINE

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the emergence of emotions in the Brazilian corporate world, using as its empirical corpus 148 issues of Exame magazine(1990-2007). Grounded in Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology and Norbert Elias's configurational sociology, the study analyzes how emotions, beyond subjectivity, are oriented as legitimate forms of distinction and symbolic consecration. Exame is approached as an instance of social consecration that, by prescribing desirable emotional styles such as empathy, self-control, and enthusiasm, institutes a "corporate emotional etiquette." To this end, we employ content analysis with the MAXQDA software, constructing a dictionary of terms and coding the compiled material. The research shows that emotional management becomes a moral grammar that structures hierarchies in the business field.

KEYWORDS: Symbolic capital. Symbolic domination. Emotions. Corporate management. Pierre Bourdieu. Norbert Elias. Exame Magazine. Emotional etiquette. Economic sociology. Corporate leadership.

Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a growing appreciation of subjectivity in the business world, a phenomenon that shifts the historically constructed boundaries between instrumental reason and affective expression in organizational practices (Vasques, 2022; Vasques, Jardim, 2021; Jardim, Vasques, 2019). Far from being perceived as irrational disturbances of utilitarian calculation, emotions are being

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reconverted into legitimate forms of symbolic valuation, acting as distinctive dispositions within the corporate universe. This article analyzes this transformation: the emergence of emotions as a structuring principle of hierarchies and social classifications in the Brazilian business world, with special attention to the symbolic forms of their dissemination and regulation by economic journalism, here represented by Exame Magazine.

It is assumed that emotionality, far from expressing an authentic subjective interiority, should be understood as a social and political construction, normatively oriented and performatively produced (Vasques, 2022). When integrated into managerial discourses, emotions assume a morphology of subjectivation, legitimizing schemes of domination and naturalizing criteria of consecration adjusted to historically incorporated dispositions of class, gender, and authority. In this sense, emotions are not only felt: they are socially taught, codified, oriented, and valued differentially, according to symbolic matrices that institute what can, should, or should not be felt, and by whom.

Inspired by Norbert Elias's (2011) theory of the civilizing process and Pierre Bourdieu's (1979, 1983, 2007a, 2013) relational sociology, this work seeks to analyze how the emotional discourses disseminated by Exame constitute authentic "moral grammars," guiding the formation of labels compatible with the normative imperatives of the management universe. Elias (2011) contributes by elucidating the civilizing function of etiquette in modes of affective regulation, while Bourdieu (1979, 1983, 2007a, 2013) provides the analytical tools to understand the logic of symbolic capital, classificatory disputes, and the performativity of habitus as operators of distinction. In addition, there are contributions from Mary Douglas (1986), especially her reflections on classificatory systems and symbolic purity, and from Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello (2009), regarding the mobilization of subjectivity in the "new spirit of capitalism."

Within this theoretical framework, Exame magazine is conceived as an instance of symbolic consecration, whose actions transcends the informational dimension, assuming pedagogical and disciplinary functions: it prescribes affective models of professional conduct and establishes, through the mediatization of sensibilities, a corporate emotional etiquette. Emotions, here, are not understood as private expressions of the psyche, but as socially regulated ways of feeling and acting, sanctioned by their adherence to the implicit norms of organizational rationality.

By proposing a sociology of emotions anchored in the theory of symbolic domination, this article investigates how Exame magazine participates in the construction of a corporate emotional *ethos*, in which affective competencies, such as empathy, enthusiasm, resilience, and self-control, operate as highly valued symbolic capital. At stake is not only the shaping of subjectivities adjusted to the new corporate morality, but also the very production of legitimate hierarchies within the

universe of management, founded on the ability to mobilize the emotions required by the game.

Methodologically, the research relies on content analysis as systematized by Laurence Bardin (2000). The empirical corpus comprises 148 printed editions of *Exame* magazine, published between 1990 and 2007, a period prior to the symbolic transformation caused by the 2008 global financial crisis (Grun, 2010; Jardim, 2013). The editions were digitized via OCR, and the minimum units of analysis consisted of cover stories and main interviews. Data processing, performed with the MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 software (v.24.2), integrated manual and automated coding (Kuckartz; Rädiker, 2019). Starting from an initial dictionary, the Smart Autocode feature was applied; after reading cycles, a final grid of categories was consolidated, highlighted below.

The empirical analysis thus allows us to grasp a moment of symbolic hegemony of neoliberal business rationality (Dardot, 2016), when emotion is redefined as a desirable managerial virtue. As observed by Grun (2010) and Jardim (2013), the 2008 crisis reshaped the contours of legitimacy, calling into question affective models that had been glorified until then. Analyzing this historical interstice therefore offers a privileged window into understanding the constitution of emotional dispositions adjusted to the moral and symbolic imperatives of Brazilian capitalism.

This excerpt allows for the analysis of a moment of transformation in business rationality (Dardot; Laval, 2016), in which emotion is transformed into a managerial model. As noted by Grun (2010) and Jardim (2013), the 2008 crisis reshaped the contours of legitimacy, challenging previously glorified affective models. Analyzing this historical movement therefore provides a privileged opportunity to objectify the constitution of emotional dispositions adjusted to the moral and symbolic imperatives of Brazilian capitalism. Consequently, the article is organized into three movements: first, the theoretical foundation is presented; then, the methodological approach and the matrix of categories are detailed; finally, the results are discussed, emphasizing the articulation between emotions, performativity, and symbolic classifications in the business space.

Category matrix and coding protocol

To make explicit the classification criteria adopted and to guarantee the replicability of the analytical process, Table 1 presents the category matrix used in coding the passages from *Exame* magazine. The construction of this matrix stems directly from the theoretical framework mobilized in the work: on the one hand, the political economy of capital, of classificatory struggles and of the linguistic market in Bourdieu (1998), which guides us to treat emotions as resources of symbolic

valuation and as socially situated speech acts; on the other hand, the configurational sociology of Elias (2011), which allows us to understand etiquette as a form of emotional regulation, historically incorporated and differentially distributed. To these keys is added the pragmatic framework of justification regimes, as proposed by Boltanski and Thévenot (1991), in which orders of magnitude function as grammars of legitimization. In operational terms, the matrix articulates two complementary levels: a level of “regimes” (the mercantile, industrial, inspired, domestic, opinion/renown, and project *cités*), which explain why and how excellence is justified in business discourse; and a level of markers of sensitivity and enunciative form (corporate emotional etiquette, war metaphor, charismatic leadership, empathy/managerial care, self-control/discipline, resilience/overcoming, linguistic market/performativity, and gender and career), which indicate how affects are prescribed, staged, and converted into value.

Table 1: Code Book

Category	Operational definition	Related dictionary terms
Cité of Opinion (media renown)	Justification through recognition/visibility: authoritative voices, experts, and ‘gurus’ whose authority serves as proof.	renown; opinion; media; reputation; authority; expert; consultant
Cité of the Market (profit/market)	Justification based on market and contractual results (profit, customers, competition).	profit; market; customers; results; dollars; competition; business; opportunity
Cité Industrial (efficiency/metrics)	Justification based on efficiency, technique, metrics, and process control.	efficiency; productivity; metrics; engineering; reengineering; quality
Cité Inspirée (charisma/creativity)	Justification based on inspiration, charisma, and genuine ability to mobilize.	charisma; inspiration; values; example; authenticity; happiness; legacy
Cité Domestique (hierarchy/Family)	Justification based on hierarchy, proximity, and family roles; legitimizes deference and authority.	family; respect; loyalty; tradition; home; care
Cité of Projects (network/flexibility)	Justification based on flexibility, network, mobility, enthusiasm, and the ability to ‘make things happen’.	projects; initiative; network; flexibility; enthusiasm; employability
Corporate Emotional Etiquette	The tacit code of ‘how to feel and display’ legitimate emotions at work (strategic empathy, measured enthusiasm, self-control).	etiquette; posture; decorum; emotion; empathy; enthusiasm; self-control
Warlike Metaphor in Management	Translation of military terminology (warfare, attack, discipline) for the corporate world.	war; battle; attack; army; discipline; vigilance

Category	Operational definition	Related dictionary terms
Charismatic Leadership	Authority founded on performative action that mobilizes and consecrates.	leadership; charisma; example; mobilization; audience; impact
Empathy/Managerial Care	Prescribing 'knowing how to listen' and care as a coordination and leadership skill.	empathy; listening; care; hearing; people; team
Self-Control/Emotional Discipline	Regulation and emotional restraint as a public sign of competence and legitimacy.	self-control; restraint; balance; discipline; vigilance
Resilience/Overcoming	Ability to withstand pressure and reconfigure oneself after crises, while maintaining alignment with goals.	resilience; pressure; crisis; overcoming; antifragile
Linguistic Market/Performativity	Speeches whose power derives from the speaker's position and audience recognition; speech acts that establish reality.	discourse; authority; performativity; recognition; doxa
Gender & Career (Barriers and Merit)	Differential coding of affections and trajectories by gender; meritocracy, sacrifices, double shift.	woman; motherhood; career; sacrifice; merit; advancement

Source: Research data.

This structure is consistent with the article's central hypothesis: *Exame* operates as an instance of symbolic consecration that, by prescribing desirable emotional styles, establishes a corporate emotional etiquette tailored to the imperatives of the business field. Therefore, each empirical excerpt received a primary category corresponding to the predominant justification regime, and up to two transversal markers when the passage explicitly contained affective or emotional codes. The choice of a primary link and auxiliary markers avoids undue overlapping of labels and, simultaneously, preserves the semantics of passages where reasons of efficiency (industrial), market (mercantile), and charismatic inspiration (inspired) coexist with specific affective grammars, such as empathy, enthusiasm, or self-control. This design allows for the analysis of the homology between the orders of magnitude that legitimize the emotional and managerial styles that the magazine naturalizes as credentials of belonging, in line with Bourdieu's (1989) notion of the conversion of social dispositions into symbolic capital.

From a substantive point of view, the matrix reveals three movements that run through the analyzed period and interact with the following sections of the article. First, the prevalence of industrial and mercantile justifications in defining what counts as effectiveness and success is observed, reinforcing the interpretation that emotional management becomes a moral grammar when subordinated to metrics

and results. Second, the use of the inspired *cité* as a bridge to affective legitimization is expanded, especially in beliefs about charismatic leadership, managerial empathy, strategic enthusiasm, and resilience; it is treated as a distinctive competence and as a sign of recognized authority in the linguistic market of the magazine. Third, symbolic markers that make up the corporate emotional etiquette are consolidated, organizing who can feel what, when, and how: the warlike metaphor disciplines expressive register in competitive contexts; empathy and “knowing how to listen” function as devices for governing people; self-control reappears as a credential of professional maturity. Taken together, these findings support the proposition that emotions, beyond being subjective products, are mobilized as capital and operate socially in this space.

Exame magazine as an instance of symbolic consecration: the mediatization of emotions and symbolic domination.

The trajectory of *Exame* magazine is part of the long process of constituting a journalistic-economic field oriented towards the symbolic formation of the Brazilian managerial elite (Donadone, 2000). Since its founding, the magazine has operated not only as a vehicle for information, but also as a normative instance, responsible for disseminating and consolidating a business habitus adjusted to the moral and cognitive demands of managerial capitalism. Created in 1971 under the direction of Roberto Civita, heir to Editora Abril and immersed in the American editorial tradition, *Exame* emerged as a local translation of international models of economic rationality, notably *Fortune* and *Harvard Business Review*, whose editorial formats and discursive content were adapted to the Brazilian business audience from 1974 onwards, with the stabilization of its periodicity and organizational structure.

Since then, *Exame* has assumed the role of cultural mediator for globalized management, operating as a privileged vector for the dissemination of thought styles, competency regimes, and affective languages originating from the hegemonic centers of Western capitalism. The performativity of this mediation manifests itself not only in the appropriation of layouts and terminologies from the American economic press, but, above all, in the legitimization of discourses by established authorities such as Peter Drucker, Tom Peters, and Marilyn Loden, whose interventions become part of a canon of reference in the magazine’s editorial space. By citing, endorsing, and nationalizing these voices, *Exame* establishes itself as an organ of symbolic consecration, becoming a pedagogical instance of corporate sensibility.

The structuring effect of the magazine is not limited to the transposition of exogenous models. *Exame* also mobilizes a repertoire of consultants, executives, and specialists, both national and international, who act as symbolic producers

(Bourdieu, 1996), that is, as legitimizing agents of affective, cognitive, and behavioral dispositions. Figures such as Robert Sutton, Betânia Tanure, Marcelo Mariaca, and Luiza Trajano are summoned as discursive authorities whose function is to normalize the emotions and leadership styles considered legitimate within the organizational universe. Instead of merely reporting practices, the magazine prescribes affects, behaviors, and forms of perception: it constructs, regulates, and consecrates subjectivities (Souza; Vasques, 2023).

This can be analyzed in the August 30, 2006 report, which highlights the generational shift among Brazilian executives. A study conducted by the consulting firms Integração Psicologia Aplicada and DBM reveals that company presidents between 32 and 45 years old are described as “obsessed with information and metrics,” rejecting intuition and emotional factors in decision-making. According to psychologist Simão Reis, “unlike the previous generation, executives in this age range place little value on intuition and emotional factors when making decisions,” marking a turning point in business sensitivity: emotion is suspended or reconfigured as instrumentalized data, reinforcing the naturalization of technical skills as superior (Exame, 08/30/2006, p. 75).

However, Exame itself also selectively promotes specific forms of affectivity as performative leadership resources. This is the case of Luiza Helena Trajano, presented in the September 17, 2003 edition. During a lecture with young company leaders, the executive articulates emotional repertoires, such as ethics, spiritual legacy, happiness, and family, with speeches about goals, entrepreneurship, and success. Standing, opening her arms continuously and inviting the audience to speak, she asks: “What should we do to make Magazine Luiza sell more toys this year?”. After listening to suggestions from the audience, she discusses them and concludes: “This is the first leadership rehearsal for each of you,” encouraging: “bring the whole team to your side, be entrepreneurial, ask for help, help others, believe in yourselves. We believe in you. That’s why you’re here today” (Exame, 09/17/2003, p. 22). Her speech is described as capable of “bringing the audience down”. This scene is complemented by the presentation of her biography (*ibidem*): at 53 years old, mother of three adult children, with a country accent and just over 1.5 meters tall, she leads a company with 4,000 employees, 159 stores and a revenue of 850 million reais in 2003. In the midst of an economic crisis, Magazine Luiza opened 50 new stores in one year, in a move described as bold and exceptional. Here, emotion becomes a strategic resource for mobilization, and her performance consecrates the figure of the charismatic leader whose authority stems from the harmonization between emotion and technique.

Another striking example of this logic is the figure of Colonel Cole Kingseed, presented as a transnational moral authority. *Exame* magazine reports (April 23, 2007, p. 40) that companies like *International Paper* and *Merrill Lynch* pay up to

\$70,000 for his lectures, in which the military man translates “lessons learned on the battlefield” into the “business world.” By stating that “war is competition in its most intense state,” Kingseed transforms military experience into a metaphorical management resource. In this gesture, the business field is discursively militarized, and emotions begin to be treated as elements of tactical training: discipline, resilience, and emotional vigilance become leadership capital (Exame, April 23, 2007, p. 40).

During the 1970s and early 1980s, Exame reinforced its role as a normative guidance body, offering the national business community a moral lexicon for the symbolic confrontation of adversity. The reports and editorials of this period are structured around narratives of personal success, exemplary biographies, and performative management solutions, which operate as matrices of emulation. Thus, as already pointed out by Norbert Elias (2011) in relation to the etiquette manuals of European courts, here too we witness the systematic production of practical knowledge oriented towards emotional self-management as a civilizational imperative.

By exploring the inner lives of individuals, giving visibility to emotional confessions, strategic vulnerabilities, and the “affective backstage” of decision-making, the magazine transforms emotion into a codified spectacle, converting it into a criterion for consecration. The executive’s emotional management is not merely a personality trait, but a sign endowed with market value: it signals self-control, empathy, charismatic leadership, or resilience. As Mary Douglas (1998) argues, every symbolic convention requires constant reaffirmation and legitimization; in this sense, Exame acts as a repository and amplifier of the affective conventions of the business world, transforming emotions into performative attributes and operating as a tacit manual of managerial etiquette.

The voices of its agents not only inform, but produce performative effects, as they consecrate models of action and codify emotions. Each narrative conveyed functions as an authorized staging of what should be felt, how it should be said, and who can say it. As Bourdieu (1998) emphasizes, the power of discourse does not reside in its isolated words, but in its insertion into social structures of recognition and into habitus previously adjusted to the dominant categories of perception and appreciation.

Furthermore, the dissemination of these narratives contributes to what Powell and DiMaggio (1983) call *mimetic isomorphism*: the tendency towards homogenization of organizational forms in contexts of uncertainty, through the imitation of legitimized models. In this context, *Exame* magazine operates as a privileged mechanism of symbolic mimicry. By presenting exemplary cases of success and leadership figures, it provides not only information, but also action plans and emotional disposition schemes that become internalized as normative expectations by readers. Imitation, in this sense, is not limited to the technical aspects of manage-

ment, but also affects legitimate ways of feeling, narrating oneself, and constructing one's own moral authority.

This dynamic highlights the magazine's role as an operator of symbolic domination: a legitimate classification agent whose representations contribute to naturalizing particular social dispositions as universal. The mediatization of emotions, their translation into leadership attributes, transforms the business world into a space of struggle for emotional recognition, in which symbolic capital acquires emotional density and becomes a criterion for hierarchization.

The effectiveness of Exame as a vehicle for symbolic consecration, ultimately, rests on its ability to resonate with pre-existing dispositions in its target audience. According to Bourdieu (1983), every performative prophecy requires a social universe of expectations compatible with what is stated. Narratives of emotional success, therefore, only acquire value when anchored in social structures that recognize such performances as legitimate. By prescribing models of emotionally regulated and managed subjects, Exame guides not only the actions but also the feelings of agents in the business world, thus establishing the boundaries of legitimate sensitivity.

Emotional etiquette and the corporate civilizing process in emotion management.

Norbert Elias's reflection on civilizing processes offers an indispensable theoretical framework for understanding the functioning of etiquette as social regulation and hierarchical differentiation. In *The Civilizing Process* (2011), Elias demonstrates that the norms codified in the etiquette manuals of European courts were not limited to disciplining aristocratic coexistence: they constituted an embodied grammar of distinction, in which the control of gestures, words, and, above all, affections, functioned as a practical operator of hierarchization. Etiquette, in this sense, was not mere formality, but a device of symbolic domination inscribed in the bodies and emotions of the agents, whose observance ensured recognition and permanence within a highly codified social space.

In the context of Louis XIV's court, as Elias emphasizes, the prestige and advancement of courtiers did not depend exclusively on noble titles or military merit, but on their ability to adhere to the meticulous standards of behavior prescribed by courtly grammar. Every gesture, every emotional expression, every form of deference was invested with classificatory meaning. Affective restraint, learned, practiced, and performed, became the quintessential distinguishing criterion. The slightest lapse in self-control was not merely a moral slip, but an attack on one's own social identity, punished with discredit, ridicule, or symbolic exclusion.

This logic, when transposed to the contemporary business world, reveals surprising structural similarities. The corporate space, far from being a neutral and rational arena guided exclusively by instrumental calculations, is configured as a symbolic universe of disputes for recognition and consecration. Just as in absolutist courts, the business world is permeated by tacit codes of conduct and sensitivity, which regulate the limits of what is acceptable and establish legitimate criteria for emotional expression. In this scenario, *Exame* magazine assumes a role analogous to that of the court as an instance of symbolic centralization: it selects, legitimizes, and consecrates emotional models of conduct.

The magazine not only narrates the trajectories of “inspiring” leaders and reproduces the emotions of successful executives; it also prescribes norms of affective conduct as requirements for professional excellence. By stating, for example, that “it is necessary to admit that people have emotions. And that they should have the right to express their emotions in the workplace” (*Exame*, 04/14/2004, p. 15), the publication does not encourage an indiscriminate release of emotions, but rather the selective and performed incorporation of certain emotional dispositions. Legitimate emotion is not just any expression, but that which contributes to commitment to the corporate project; “only mature, autonomous, and therefore independent people will commit to a project.”

As Elias (2011) points out, etiquette codes demand not only superficial adherence, but the incorporation of sublimation schemes. The logic of deference and decorum is not imposed exclusively by external coercion, but by internal mechanisms of self-monitoring and affective self-control. Breaking with these codes means exposing oneself to a loss of status, while adhering to them, even reluctantly, is a condition for remaining socially recognized. In the corporate world, valued emotional dispositions—strategic empathy, measured enthusiasm, silent resilience—operate as distinctive attributes that distinguish the visionary leader from the “emotionally inadequate” or barbaric professional.

The magazine (*Exame*, July 30, 1997) reinforces this *ethos* by highlighting changes in the management model: “Companies around the world have been trying to get rid of the military-style management model. What they are looking for today is flexibility, less authoritarian bosses, capable of listening to suggestions and criticisms from each employee” (*Exame*, July 30, 1997, p. 1). This rhetorical transition from rigid command to emotionally sensitive management does not represent the end of symbolic control, but its reformulation. Emotions, now, must be demonstrated strategically, contributing to organizational effectiveness and the public performance of executives.

Exame magazine fulfills the function of *an* etiquette manual for the new managerial elite, defining what can or cannot be felt, when and how emotions should be expressed, and which affective dispositions are valued as legitimate capital. This media codification of emotions confers upon emotional etiquette the status of sym-

bolic capital, capable of being converted into recognition, prestige, and advancement in this social universe. The executive's body, their vocal intonation, their posture in crisis situations, their carefully edited confessions of failure or overcoming—all of this comes to compose the legitimate performance of the corporate emotional habitus (Vasques; Souza, 2023).

Elias and Dunning (1992) expand on this analysis by emphasizing that patterns of self-control do not derive solely from repression, but from the historical learning of codes of conduct that shape the affective energy of individuals in accordance with social expectations. What changes over time are the socially defined criteria of what constitutes legitimate self-control. *Exame* magazine captures and updates these criteria, it provides a code for permitted and desirable emotions in the corporate world. Here, emotions cease to be internal expressions and begin to operate as public signs of competence, balance, and leadership.

Thus, the emotional etiquette disseminated by *Exame* magazine should be understood as an emotional grammar, structured by moral rules objectified in discourses of corporate success. These grammars define not only what one should feel, but also *how* and *when* to express such feelings, and, above all, who is legitimized to do so. As Bourdieu (1989) argues, the principles of vision and division of the social world are not neutral: they are socially situated, historically constructed, and unequally distributed. Emotion, as a label, in this sense, constitutes a form of symbolic distinction, a subtle marker that demarcates the boundaries between those who "feel right" and those who fail to adhere to the sensibilities consecrated by the business world.

Adherence to this emotional etiquette, mediated by the magazine, implies the incorporation of sanctioned emotional dispositions, an affective grammar that regulates the body, language, and appearance of individuals. It is a long-term social learning process, a civilizing process in which affects are converted into legitimate performances in the competitive space of management. As Elias (2006) emphasizes, emotional regulation is not instinctive, but socially constructed; and its effectiveness lies precisely in the ability of individuals to naturalize these dispositions as if they were a spontaneous expression of their individual authenticity.

From this perspective, we situate our analysis within the sociology of emotions, understanding emotions not as psychological facts, but as socially regulated forms of embodied expression, sanctioned by media outlets such as *Exame* magazine (author). This, operating as a circuit of symbolic legitimization, provides more than just reports on the corporate world: it delivers a manual of etiquette for emotions, behaviors, and postures. Its function is to normalize sensitivity, establishing what can be felt, how one should feel, and who is authorized to do so. In this process, emotional etiquette transforms into a language of belonging, an instrument of distinction, and symbolic power.

Between Reason and Sensibility: Business Etiquette

From the sociological perspective of Pierre Bourdieu (1998), discourses delivered in legitimate media spaces, such as *Exame* magazine, should not be taken as disinterested accounts of individual experiences or spontaneous confessions of autonomous subjects. On the contrary, they should be read as socially situated speech acts, endowed with symbolic efficacy and traversed by power relations inscribed in the structures of the corporate world. As performative utterances, these speeches not only describe the social world, they produce, classify, and hierarchize it.

An exemplary case of this logic can be found in issue 801 of the magazine, dated September 17, 2003, under the title “Reason and Sensibility.” In it, executive Luiza Helena Trajano, then president of Magazine Luiza, is presented as an archetype of contemporary leadership that articulates affectivity and rationality. In a speech delivered to an audience of employees, she mobilizes a lexicon composed of terms such as “ethics,” “family,” “happiness,” and “spiritual legacy,” intertwined with technical-managerial indicators, sales targets, entrepreneurship, and leadership strategies. The scene narrated by *Exame* functions as a symbolic consecration ritual, in which the speaker’s charisma and authority are actualized through affective performance.

“Then he goes on to talk about things like values, ethics, attitude at work, family, spiritual legacy, happiness, leadership, and success. ‘This is the first leadership rehearsal for each of you,’ he says. ‘And there’s only one way to succeed: bring the whole team to your side, be entrepreneurial, ask for help, help others, believe in yourselves. We believe in you. That’s why you’re here today.’ The audience erupts in applause.” (*Exame*, 09/17/2003, p. 22).

This performance embodies, in a privileged way, what Bourdieu (2013) calls the production of *practical sense*: the internalization of dispositions that guide the perception of the social world and action within it. By articulating emotion and technique, ethics and profitability, spirituality and entrepreneurship, Luiza Helena Trajano’s speech transcends its literal meaning: it establishes authority, defines models of conduct, and naturalizes criteria of excellence. It is a symbolic act that, through its very enunciation, guides and performs social reality.

In this specific universe of business media, such discourses operate as *doxa* (Bourdieu, 2004), that is, as forms of social knowledge that escape problematization and function as natural evidence of what is legitimate, effective, and desirable. It is not merely a matter of reflecting a business *ethos*: it is a matter of *producing and reproducing it*, through the guidance of etiquette manuals and moral languages that inform and guide social agents.

In this context, *Exame* magazine constitutes a symbolic market in the strict sense elaborated by Bourdieu in *The Economy of Linguistic Exchanges* (2008): a space in which discourses circulate as goods with differential value, according to the speaker's position and the social structure of reception. The pronouncements of executives, consultants, and management "gurus" are valued not only for their semantic content, but also for the symbolic authority embodied by those who utter them, that is, for their position in the social universe and the prestige legitimized by the magazine itself. In this linguistic market, discursive performance is a form of capital: the value of what is said is tied to who says it, and to which social hierarchies guarantee its credibility.

The case of Luiza Helena Trajano clearly illustrates this logic. Her discourse only acquires prescriptive force because she is recognized as a dominant agent, a supposedly successful businesswoman, whose economic performance indicators are repeatedly cited as material proof of her symbolic authority. As noted by *Exame* magazine:

At 53 years old, a mother of three adult children, just over 1.5 meters tall, with a country accent, she runs a company with 4,000 employees, 159 stores distributed across the states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Paraná, and Mato Grosso do Sul, with 4 million registered customers and a turnover expected to reach 850 million reais in 2003. (...) Few companies in Brazil have dared to grow so much in recent times." (Exame, 09/17/2003, p. 22).

This media recognition, which values the number of employees, stores, customers, and revenue as distinct attributes, not only reinforces its public image: it translates its symbolic capital into an instrument of moral consecration. Its speech begins to operate as what Bourdieu (2008) calls a *socially grounded illocutionary force*, a power of summoning that does not originate in the grammatical structure of the etiquette manual uttered, but in the social recognition of its legitimacy.

This process also allows us to revisit Bourdieu's (1989) critique of structuralist linguistics. Against the tradition inaugurated by Saussure, which treated language as an autonomous system detached from the social conditions of enunciation, Bourdieu proposes that discourses be analyzed as situated practices, immersed in unequal power structures. For him, the word is not a mere sign: it is a symbolic force, whose power derives from the social position of the speaker and the public's willingness to recognize it as legitimate: "It only preaches to the converted. And the miracle of symbolic efficacy disappears when one realizes that the magic of words makes previously assembled devices, dispositions, function." (Bourdieu, 2008, p. 132).

In this sense, *Exame* magazine functions as a pedagogical instance of etiquette, transforming authorized discourses into behavioral standards. Enthusiasm,

corporate spirituality, self-control, and empathy become performative emotional requirements, whose presence qualifies, and absence disqualifies, the agents engaged in this social universe.

By turning business language into an etiquette manual, *Exame* magazine updates a type of symbolic etiquette that not only prescribes how to act, but also how to feel, how to narrate oneself, and how to express legitimate affections. Like the courtly etiquette described by Elias (2011), this emotional business etiquette functions as a technology of symbolic differentiation, through which values are attributed, virtues are recognized, and hierarchies are consolidated.

Ultimately, the word performed by Luiza Trajano (*Exame*, 09/17/2003), especially when conveyed by a prestigious medium like *Exame*, not only represents but also establishes. The emotional gesture, the tone of voice, the inspiring content, the intertwining of affect and technique, become moral grammars of belonging and distinction. As Bourdieu (2008, p. 28) argues: "Language can say everything, represent everything, express everything within the limits of language; but its power is to produce for existence, producing collectively recognized and thus realized representations of existence."

Thus, *Exame* operates as a contemporary manual of emotional etiquette for the business world: an instance of symbolic mediation that informs individuals about what is morally valued, emotionally expected, and legitimately performable in the world of management. By selecting certain discourses as examples, such as that of Luiza Helena Trajano, the magazine prescribes affections, behaviors, and dispositions, converting language into an instrument of classification and symbolic domination.

Final Considerations

This article sought to demonstrate that emotions, far from being irrational residues or spontaneous manifestations of subjective interiority, operate as a moral grammar, disciplined and instrumentalized within the corporate universe. The analysis of editions of *Exame* between 1990 and 2007 revealed the consolidation of a corporate emotional etiquette, a normative regime of sensitivity that organizes the conduct of agents, legitimizes specific affective dispositions, and symbolically structures hierarchies of prestige within the organizational space.

Drawing on the contributions of Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias, we argue that corporate emotionality should not be understood as a natural given, but as a moral grammar whose symbolic efficacy depends on its inscription within historically constituted classification structures. In such a regime, feelings like enthusiasm, self-control, and empathy are transubstantiated into symbolic capital, selectively

valued according to the logic of distinction. *Exame* magazine, by prescribing such affects as desirable attributes of leadership and professionalism, acts as a manual of etiquette and consecration, naturalizing dispositions and guiding legitimate styles of presence, speech, and emotion.

This symbolic normalization of emotions reveals the invisible force of symbolic domination: by spontaneously incorporating legitimized affective codes, subjects reproduce structures of exclusion and inequality under the guise of emotional authenticity. As Bourdieu (2007b) analyzes, structures become structuring as they become structured in bodies. The successful professional, in this scenario, is the one whose emotional management expresses the harmony between the incorporated habitus and the expectations of the engaged social universe. This symbolic homology produces, regulates, and legitimizes the figure of the “charismatic leader” as a social type, converting emotion into capital, and affect into a criterion for social classification and hierarchization.

Thus, the main contribution of this study lies in highlighting that emotions, as social practices, are regulated by normative grammars that operate as discourses of belonging and exclusion in the business world. What one feels, how one feels, and who can feel it becomes the object of symbolic regulation, articulated by devices of affective socialization such as business media. *Exame* magazine, by producing and legitimizing such schemes, functions as a symbolic mediator, converting feelings into criteria of moral and professional consecration through a code of etiquette.

From a methodological point of view, this study falls within the relational tradition of sociology, articulating content analysis with an analysis grounded in the relationships between emotion and symbolic power. Although the empirical scope, centered on *Exame* magazine and the time interval from 1998 to 2007, imposes limits on the generalization of the results, we believe that the perspective proposed here offers support for the expansion of future investigations into the business world.

By focusing on emotions in the sociological analysis of symbolic domination, we reaffirm the need to denaturalize them and treat them as socially significant practices, traversed by structures of power, distinction, and domination. Emotions, far from being the opposite of instrumental reason, constitute its symbolic complement, operating as a form of adherence to and differentiation within the social universe. In this sense, integrating emotions means uncovering the invisible mechanisms by which affects participate in the organization and hierarchization of the social world.

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