

An exploratory point of view about consumption and mediatization of food brands in the lives of some families¹

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Abstract

This article presents considerations that are part of the development of the research *The production of meaning in reception of advertising and consumption practices of food in the city of São Paulo*. The aim was to investigate the discursive practices of three families from Sao Paulo and we try to identify aspects of production of meaning mediatized and consumption of brand foods in cultural practices of daily life. From the critical discourse analysis (CDA), we confront the discourses with hegemonic social practices derived from food consumption of families investigated as a way of understanding the issues in the pattern of consumption brand reception of the phenomenon under study.

Keywords: reception; brands; consumption practices; links of senses; food

1. Thoughts on the research

The research *A produção de sentido na recepção da publicidade e nas práticas de consumo de alimentos na cidade de São Paulo* (*The production of meaning in reception of advertising and consumption practices of food in the city of São Paulo*), sought to understand the connections of meaning of brands of products and services regarding household consumption of food for three São Paulo families, as well as in public places around the city.

The critical discourse analysis (CDA), (Fairclough, 2001 e 2003) was used as a methodological path to discuss the mediatization of home food consumption. The study reveals the kinds of meaning links between between the influence of the flow of reception from commercial communications of brands/advertising (Peidras, 2006) or meeting points (Di Nallo, 1999). Those were adapted herein to the study of food brands in cultural consumption practices in the family environment, as a form of making public the brands in daily life, as defended by Casaqui (2011), when dealing with the corporate communication not necessarily identified as traditional advertising messages. Those would work as such, promoting, publicizing brands in its diverse expressions of ordinary life. According to Perez (2004), they also act creating a trademark environment

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that allows one to notice the ontological aspect of brands in the symbolical life of consumption and institutions, which is also in accord with the thoughts of Zozzoli (2002), about the “ontology of brand”. We are dealing with an approach that deals with the brand inside an advertising system that works as a foundation for an infinity of forms/messages (Rocha, 2006: 12-13) capable of operationalizing transfers of meaning of goods for the consumption life. (McCracken, 2003: 99-101).

Thus, the place of study of reception/consumption must privilege the construction of theoretical models that fosters criticism about mediatized consumption practices by brands, in this text, restricted to the family universe in the food business.

The understanding about food consumption in the domestic time and space, as well as the assumptions of enunciation from advertising reception established in Trindade (2008) help to map what belong to the order of sign-material links and sign-symbolical link from the representation of rituals of consumption, observing the influence of mediation of brands in these processes (Trindade, 2009a: 9-11).

It is understood as a sign-material link of meaning the connection that can be established between brands/products and services from their imagined worlds, publicized, and the world lived in, in the possibility of building a common or worldly meaning between time and space of the brand and time and space of consumers-receivers. In this case, consumption is operated by the direct and indirect influence of brands’ advertising messages. Direct, because the values of advertising and brand generate the possibility of identification with the consumer-receiver. It is indirect because this also depends on factors connected with the socioeconomic level of the subject, his cultural background and his values – which influence his purchase decisions.

The second link, the sign-symbolical, refers to some kind of influence from advertising and brand. This does not necessarily result in the consumption of a specific good (brand/product or service). It implies, however, in the incorporation of a lifestyle, a pragmatic or affectionate way of being that the consumer-receiver adopts in his behavior of use and consumption and is taken as part of himself as a way to manifest his habits, which in turn reinforces his values and worldviews. This is certainly adapted and

varied as the cultural background and social and economic standings of the subjects change.

These links are part of contexts of situations of consumption, full of meaning, as the meeting points dealt by Di Nallo (1999: 223) when he alerts to the necessity of marketing and consumer behavior studies that should not be focused on the idea of a static target, thinking of a public and scenario of exchangeable brands. It would be more adequate a study oriented to daily life situations of consumption, which would allow the comprehension in relation to the previously mentioned links, the dimension of connection of meaning in the universe of brands in family life, as a situation of consumption, here manifested as the object of our discussion.

Having exposed out understanding about the links of advertising meaning to everyday life, it is not time to rescue the exploratory study that was made in 2009/2010 regarding three families. However, we will not explore again the ethnical description that was made before, but will offer a brief characterization of the researched families during the fieldwork, in which the distinctions between high, medium and low income came from the Associação Brasileira das Empresas de Pesquisas – ABEP (Trindade; Moreira, 2010).

It is also worth noticing that such a choice happened within the criteria that sought to explore the variety of practices of meaning of food consumption mediatized by brands in these families. There is no intent to generalize, nor create an effect of meaning of compositional fallacy that tried to demonstrate a panorama of the three distinct social segments that were observed.

The high income family is a couple from São Paulo, composed of a professionally successful male in his second marriage with a younger wife; the medium income family had its mother and two adolescent children interviewed. We note a more active participation during the interviews with the mother and the younger child.

Finally, in the low income family, we talked to the mother (elderly) which lives with an older son (PE teacher at a public school in the São Paulo state) and one sister, all adults. Despite being classified as low income, it shows signs of ascension in the Brazilian context during the last decade, and in certain moments unrepresentative of the

traditional imaginary for this social bracket, as we will notice during the text (Trindade; Moreira, 2010: 63-67).

As to the material that is specific to the research, which brings results about food consumption, it should be noted that meaning links were apprehended from photographic images taken at the observed environments and by the families' discourses. Nevertheless, the focus here will be given to the discourses of the head of each family, the main informants. With this in mind, the following dimensions were identified: foods and brands stored at home; eating rituals, media influences in eating; food purchasing rituals and preferred brands.

The analysis of the discourses reveal meaning in the discursive practices on the daily habits of food consumption of families, allowing for the confrontation between discourse and social practices that translate symbolic logic of ideological reproductions, resistances and social changes, results of processes of social interaction.

Following this line, the theoretical viewpoint used in the work about food consumption mediatized by brands, is given from adaptations of contributions about the meanings of advertising in food products given in Barthes (1961) and the symbolical meanings of his food presence as aspect of material life, as defined by Braudel (1961). Together, they allow for a joint logic between material activity indicated by social or cultural practices of consumption and its meaning links, in the communicational perspective of brands, as we try to take note here, under the pretense of critical analysis of discourse proposed by Fairclough (2001).

2. Reception and media consumption by the viewpoint of critical discourse analysis

When we deal with CDA we constantly refer to Normal Fairclough and Teun Van Dijk, among others that disseminate their theories in Brazil, such as Resende and Ramalho (2005).

CDA seems to present a more profitable potential to analysis reception studies, because it allows for the understanding of production of meaning of the subject about the social problems manifested in discourse and text practices, as resulting from the

processes of social interactions and their dynamics of power and ideological conflicts (Dijk, 2000, p. 19-66).

This perspective seeks in the interface of multiplicity of methods, by the study of discourse studies as discursive practices, the strategic line for an investigation of interdisciplinary nature, regarding the advertising reception of brands in food consumption in the life of the three aforementioned families, in an attempt to establish as criteria of methodological pertinence the study of production of mediatized meaning of food brands. In this context, therefore, it is necessary to present a summary of the evolution of CDA.

Discourse and social change (Fairclough, 1992) is the work that expands horizons on the theories of discourse for a theory of social discourse, affirming that the analysis of text and social practices is mediated by discursive practices, that is to say, discourses and texts reveal social practices, in the mediation of discursive/communicative practices.

The discourse has, as characterized by CDA, three dimensions that come from Halliday's (1985) systemic functional grammar, in which language macrofunctions are: ideational, interpersonal and textual, redimensioned by Fairclough, considering that the social practice refers to the ideational dimension, that is, the ideological plane, its meanings, presumptions, metaphors, hegemonic values in their economic, cultural, political and ethnical orientations; While the discursive practice, would reveal the production, circulation and consumption of discourse within this hegemonic logic or the resistance to hegemony, considering the context of discourses, the forces in play, the coherence and intertextualities. Such consideration points to a interpersonal dimension of discourses in their practices; finally, it is in text that signs gain a concrete status and in it would be observed vocabulary, grammatical questions, textual cohesion and structure, as linguistic mechanisms that CDA considers as an access point to the reflection of social questions (Resende; Ramalho, 2005: 30-31).

The author also prepares a draft for textual analysis geared towards construction the criticism towards social reality (Fairclough, 2001: 211-246). However, that are some unfinished theoretical questions, among them the one that notices the limit regarding the

restriction of social practice to the mediation of discourses and texts, which favor the field of communication, since this is not restricted to linguistic question. Therefore, could it be said that there are other social moments outside the discourse, in the formation of social practices? Which would these be? And what would be the relationship to the discursive moment? Is it necessary to consider these other moments as a place of analysis of the social theory of discourse? In what way? The analysis of social practice, limited to linguistic elements would be enough for a scientific observation of the discourse as a form of social action? And also, if the text is to that theory as an empirical object of the social phenomenon, what is the importance of the discursive practice inside social structures? Finally, why study practices instead of studying social structures? (Resende; Ramalho, 2005: 31).

The theory seems to allow us to make a connection with the studies of social discursivization, the result of the mediatization processes. In it, communication as a production practice, circulation and consumption of discourses, finds privileged space. Media practices allow for a path of understanding to social reality phenomena in the interpersonal logic, unrestricted to the limits of linguistics, or even to the perspective of technological mediation. As Fausto Neto (2005) would say, there is a wide view, sociotechnical, that manifests itself as a contemporary symptom of research in the areas of communication in several ways, even if the logic of these interpersonal processes are not instituted as cultural reference practices of social interaction. They certainly are in place in everyday life as Braga (2006) brings to our attention.

Going back to the description of evolutionary path of CDA, in the attempt to resolve the linguistic questions of the social discourse theory, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) published *Discourse in late modernity: Rethinking critical discourse analysis*. The authors present an elaborate discussion about social practices, taking into account the presence of different levels of life that must be contemplated in the proposals of analysis of CDA. The discussion offered in the aforementioned work favors dialogue with Bakhtin, Giddens, Bourdieu and Habermans, for instance, allowing to observe the regulatory function of discourse in social life, which makes social theory of discourse something closer to a discussion of communication, through social

discursivization, as we pointed earlier.

This way, social practices are understood by other authors of CDA as “habitual ways” in time and space in which four vectors/moments are articulated in their conformation, one internalizing the other with no reductions. They are as follows: material activity referring to social practice; formulation of discourse in semiotics; networks of social relations and the mental phenomenon that corresponds to the reflective and cognitive dimension according to a give social practice (Chouliaraki; Fairclough, 1999: 21-30).

Several material activities result in discursive formations that happen in a determined set of social relations, generating specific mental phenomena. Thus, social practices can refer to economy, politics, culture that establishes more or less permanent relations, results of the meeting of these vectors/moments. This demonstrates the need for definitions of material activity of the study to the observation of its discourses, contextualized by their network of specific social relations and that generate mental ways of perceiving a given social practice by the subjects (Resende; Ramalho, 2005: 33-34).

The perception of such articulations allows for the criticism of the discourse and favors the perspective of social change, in actions of discourse practices, as a way to change the mental formations and perceptions regarding a given social phenomenon regarding emancipative social practices in the context of daily life.

Still concerned in delving in these questions, Fairclough (2003) in *Analysing discourse* elaborates the criteria of relevance for the analysis of text, according to the evolution of theoretical perspective. He elaborates once again his theory, going deeper in the ideational dimension, relating it with the representations that manifest textually in interactional discursive genres. Therefore, he brings to the discursive field the perception of its discursive constitution as social practice, with its challenges, values and ideologies that are represented discursively, the Representational dimension.

These discursive genres in interaction, in their turn, manifest themselves in discourses that reveal aspects of the living world, indicators of a cultural and social

identification statute. The identification dimension.

With this, discourses also bring signs of processes of interaction in networks of social relations of individuals that manifest themselves in concrete textual actions, which he denominated the action plane, and its textual style is also revealing of the individual's actions in the scope of practices. The action dimension.

Once the elements of CDA are understood, we can present how the application of this methodology is given in the work that we realized.

Before that, it should be noted that in the larger research, of which this work is a part of, we compared the links of meaning of brands in food consumption in its household practices and in the feeding practices in public places. However, at this moment, we are only dealing with the question of trademark mediation and of household food consumption.

To achieve this, it is necessary to sketch some theoretical principles employed in this phase for the comprehension of the household as the place of study of feeding culture.

In first place, we must understand food as part of material culture. As related by historian Henrique Carneiro (2003: 2-3), the study of feeding is composed of four initial viewpoints:

Biological, economic, social and cultural. The history of feeding [...] reaches at least four (other) great aspects: [...] physiological-nutritional, economic history, social conflicts and cultural history [...] (to with anthropology brought a huge amount of information that is interwoven [...]).

When it comes to the study of feeding by itself, historian Fernand Braudel (1961) ponders that it is connected to the dimensions of cultural material life, with the symbolic value of food associated in parallel with its financial value as merchandise.

Another cultural datum is that eating is an intimate act. Here we bring up the special feeling of pleasure and displeasure that eating bring us, since it is an act felt by the body. The act of eating manifests itself as a form of sensitive knowledge about cultures. Alongside this, the act of eating must be perceived as an identity and socialization trait according to the ways in which cultures perceive and practice such

act. (Rauolt-Wack, 2001: 11-15).

Therefore eating is an communicative act, generator of a social interaction, also being a discursive place of production of meaning in its representations for daily life. That is, the representations of feeding generate a body of images, with its visual synesthesia referring to flavors and aromas of food in its cultural, mediatized uses (Barthes, 1997[1961]: 21) and (Trindade, 2009b: 32-33).

Finally, food results of intercultural and commercial processes. If feeding is culturally inscribed by the symbolic dimension that this act occupies in the life of civilizations, it is natural that the commercial flow of food then defines symbolic exchanges in food production and in the means of realizing meals. These result in the transformation, fusion, homogenization and hybridism of feeding habits, in similar processes to the studies of cultural media hybridism studied by Garcia Canclini (1996).

Nowadays, such hybridism gives an intercultural dimension for the meanings of feeding in the world with no precedents. Also, eating is no longer a household habit. Establishments that offer feeding outside of the home can be analyzed as symbolic stratified spaces around social and ethnic positions, lifestyles and specific menus that are offered to the public, characterized as theaters of eating.

We notice, then, an erosion of the concept of meal in the domestic and family life with the predominance of frozen dishes heated in microwaves in individual portions, that take away from the home environment, in everyday life, the gregarious function of confraternization, reunion, that now takes place in the public spaces of the “theaters of eating”, restaurants, bars and street kitchens (Carneiro, 2001: 18-19).

The rituals of eating change and the world of consumption brings representation to these traces of urban life. In this way, it becomes pressing to know the role of domestic feeding in the world of values of late modernity, as Giddens (2002) would say. It is necessary to know the meaning links that are constituted in everyday domestic life regarding the consumption of food, since the cultural transformation experienced in the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century have been having effect over the home environment and its feeding culture.

3. Some results: meaning links in the discourses of the high income family

The links of meaning suggested by images registered from the food found in the homes studied suggest only one material sign connection, marked by the ritual process of ownership and storage of food. On the other hand, the brands found are those that have constant advertising in the media, which in the symbolic universe of the high income class indicates certain strength of the sign-symbolic links, as a possible representation of their lifestyles. Another noticed datum refers to the amount of *light* and *diet* products, since the husband has cardiovascular problems and the wife has no intention of getting fat. In contrast, we see a pizza under the stove. CDA helps us understand these paradoxes.

In the action plane, the high income couple points to a feeding routine that focuses the breakfast, but not together, since the two subjects do not share the same habits. The husband eats less since he doesn't feel hungry in the morning. She has a more complete breakfast.

(Husband) Not because I only have a sip of juice is... I don't like having breakfast, so I don't feed as I should in the morning is, is basically for her that I make a regular breakfast.

Lunch is handled outside the household, since both work out. At night the couple prefers snacks and eating pizzas. This reveals nutritional habits that are not recommended.

In the identification plane, the husband says that feeding, as a meeting moment for the couple, is reserved to weekends, at their beach house in Peruíbe-SP. There they have "more confort" than in their apartment in the Pompeia neighborhood, where they reside during the week. Thus, we notice an erosion of domestic feeding in this family's daily activities.

(Wife) Other expensive brandes (speaking about olive oil) stay at the beach house in Peruíbe... We cook more over there [...].

We notice also a clear media influence regarding the preference for promotions, such as the *Caras* magazine and cookbooks, since the husband likes to cook different dishes with special ingredients, searching for new flavors. He has a knack for gastronomical experimentation, as is noticed in the example of the influence of his wife's father (packaging seller for the *Ades* drink) and the ad in the *Boa Forma*

magazine regarding the pear-mint flavored *Ades*.

(Husband) [...] it a completely futile magazine... there is no need for its subscription that was contracted because of the freebie that came with it. That was the Caras magazine. We got as a reward 23 cookbooks, which are, 23 really good cookbooks. So, I subscribed. It is a futile magazine.

I read on Boa Forma that this product (*Ades*) would only be sold during the summer [...] and her father told me of the pretty packaging [...] I had to try it.

Such aspect translated the multifactorial trace of purchasing decisions in daily life, which is not always defined by advertising, but that in this case manifests aspects of discursive interaction of advertising, quotidian, promotional and brand-related media genres, in the constitution of preferences that help in the identification of consumption by the couple. At the same time, almost paradoxically, we register criticism towards media for its *futility*.

Tal aspecto traduz o traço multifatorial das decisões de compras na vida cotidiana, que nem sempre é totalmente definido pela publicidade, mas que nesse caso manifestam aspectos da interação discursiva dos gêneros midiáticos publicitário, cotidiano, promocional e das marcas, na constituição das preferências que auxiliam na identificação do consumo alimentar do casal. Ao mesmo tempo, quase que paradoxalmente, registra-se a crítica à mídia pela sua *futilidade*.

In the representational plane, the interest in gastronomy seems to come from the sign-symbolic link of the couple's lifestyle, manifest in their favorite brands, which are constantly represented in the media. Other examples are their preferences for the *Zafari* and *Pão de Açúcar* supermarkets, near the couple's home, which is also a factor of elevated social status, manifested in the discourse over the action place of the purchase ritual.

(Husband) Lately I have been shopping at Zafari because it's close by. And because of its great variety... I go shopping weekly.

(Wife) Bologna... Bologna is Ceratti, Ceratti. Hot dogs are Hans@[...] If you go for pasta, right? I prefer Barilla. When it comes to fruitcake. fruitcake, to me, I can only have Bauduco. That's due to its taste and smell. It's moist. Reminds me of my childhood. I like the Danúbio *light* cream cheese, and the Activia yogurt.

The consumption of food in this family circle, at least as far as the discourse and

captured images are concerned, seems to be moderated, not prone to waste and have a functional feeding, not necessarily the recommended parameters of nutrition, but geared towards health and desirable well being, with weekly or every other week basis. This paradox between discourse and feeding practices is noticed, in the media consumption of magazines such as *Boa Forma* and products branded as light and diet, revealing a discursive interaction seeking an ideal of healthy food consumption that crumbles in the daily life of the couple.

Discursive practices tend to be better than social practices of food consumption. There is an attempted resistance, but it succumbs to the ideal of the experience of eating well. That is, mental formation, compatible perception with the power of consumption and the mediatized logic of brands consumed by the individuals in this social class, though such observation cannot be generalized, since only one family of this segment was researched.

This mismatch only finds solace during weekends, at the couple's beach house, when they seek different flavors and the pleasure of eating in the family, bringing attention to consumption in the hedonic search within sensorial tendencies and the pleasure of food consumption that reveal affection and symbolic links.

4. Some results: meaning links in the discourse of the medium income family

According to the images registered, there is a tendency towards the consumption of lesser known food brands, or yet, the purchase of brands owned by major retailers, such as *Qualita (Pão de Açúcar)* and *Hamburguer Extra*. This option points to a consumption, in its purchase rituals, that is concerned with the effectiveness of the expenditure of a typical middle class family. We also notice an option of feeding that clearly includes snacks for the teens, indicated by the presence of products such as ketchup, hamburgers and chicken nuggets. The sign-material links herein identified do not point towards relations of sign-symbolic links between brands and advertising of food and the more elaborate lifestyle of the inhabitants of the apartment where the family resides. There seems to be some consistency between the socio-economic profile and the standards of consumption presented.

In the identification plane, it seems to us that the intention to experiment new things has (an eventual) significance for the moments of purchase of the family. Not only that, but it's obvious the choice for more cost-conscious products. The favorite supermarket for the homemaker is ECON, a popular chain of supermarkets. But she likes to buy fresh produce at the open market next to her house. We also noticed that the mediatization of advertising through pamphlets, in the opinion of the mother

interviewed, is extremely important in order to decide purchases, showing a discursive interpersonal logic between subject/consumer and institution (place of purchase) that generate a practice of cultural reference for the consumption in the purchase rituals of this family:

I like receiving supermarkets' pamphlets and bigger stores to be able to compare prices. I write down by the pamphlet the prices, and then I go to an establishment that promises to match prices, and so I get discounts in several items. How would I know about promotions and prices if not for advertising?

Still in the identification plane, we notice that the homemaker is responsible for the purchase and preparation of food in the house. Her family action dictates feeding. In terms of gregarious rituals, dinner is a special family time almost every day, except for the absence of the father once a week, when he attends church. This behavior was not noticed in the previous class. The favorite brands of the homemaker indicate a feeding preference and points towards ordinary consumption, not inclined towards innovation, as revealed by her discourse.

(Mother) I always have the same brands in mind at the supermarket, but I like experimenting... Coca-Cola... Passatempo (cookies)... Nescau... Aurora (meat in general)... Divella (instant pasta)... Coqueiro (canned tuna). Tio João (rice), Brahma (beer), Paulista e Elegê (milk), Pilão (coffee), Ninho (powdered milk), Leite Moça (condensed milk).

In the representational dimension, this family does not see feeding in a privileged place to manifest sign-symbolic links. Feeding of medium class observed in this family is given through sign material links that operationalize feeding on a daily basis. However, in the ideation of the woman/mother there is a point in the representational plane, that materializes in the action plane through the traditional lifestyle of a middle class mother, that refers to the act of sometimes preparing sweets to please the family. However, brands and advertising do not seem to be so strongly constitutive of this symbolic repertoire, with rare exception such as the condensed milk brand Moça, from Nestlé, mentioned by the mother that uses the product as preferred brand to prepare desserts.

The question of feeding rituals, that is, the absence of daily group feeding rituality, like other families, is another aspect that shows the deflation of meaning in the feeding practice in the material life of these individuals. Family members only dine

together some times every week. The dining room is almost empty, as a symbolic place of status in the apartment space. The head of the family shows concern over the quality of the food and its brands, revealed in the consumption of few constant products, which notes worries on the scope of feeding tendencies of consumption regarding trust and practicality. There is also another concern in relation to cost-benefit of food.

In the representational plane, we notice the hegemony of thought that gives the woman a social responsibility for the nutrition of the household, from purchase to preparation of food, subject responsible for the rituals of purchase and preparation of food in the house.

(Mother) My only obligation is to leave lunch ready, and that each one serves themselves at the time they arrive home. Only C.S (father), doesn't have lunch at home... He likes a varied menu, but I don't do many dishes.

The social feeding practice is revealed as distant from an idealized discursive practice regarding food, as was noticed in the high income Family. Contrariwise, social practice in food material life is revealed by a discursive dynamic based on cost-benefit logic, manifested by media influence of promotional advertising of supermarkets and ordinary taste, with traces of tendencies of consumption of trust and practicality for daily food consumption.

5. Some results: meaning links in the discourse of the low income family

The images of food captured from this family show preference for popular and traditional brands, and present some self-owned brands that were obviously selected to better serve the family budget in the purchase of foods. This somewhat reflects the medium class family, except for a greater quantity of verified food, between the three families, (higher disposition for the ritual of possession and storage). The house is situated in the East part of São Paulo has a pantry to store food, besides the kitchen cabinet and the refrigerator. We also noticed some fresh fruit among cleaning products. These facts were not noticed in other houses.

The information observed make us believe in the concern with storage of food, similar to what happened in historical times of food scarcity, which in this class is applied due to the low income of the family and lack of opportunity to frequent supermarkets.

In the action plane, the text of discourse show that feeding rituals are followed, but at varied times. We confirm the erosion of domestic feeding in group as verified in

the other families. However, the visit of the interviewer happened during the afternoon tea time, being this the only registered case of a feeding ritual in the observed families during research.

The diet of this family group follows a simple daily menu and suggest a concern from them, especially the older son (PE teacher) with excess of fat in food, making clear the presence of a tendency towards consume configured by health and well being. This aspect is given on the interactive dynamic of discourse in the life of the subjects researched and defines the identification plane of this family group.

(Son) Lunch - "It's rice, beans, the 'bare stuff', and the salad varies a bit. The mixture made the parts smaller. Ah, because you aren't hungry? No. Because I've been eating too much. I think I could eat less to be less fat. Because I am already getting fat. I don't want to be fat anymore. I don't want to. I want to lose weight, I am lowering the mixture on the dish. It's expensive and not good for me. So these are two things I have in mind, he he..."

A good part of the preferred food brands for the low income family is part of the universe mentioned with the other interviewed families, which shows the power of corporations like Nestlé, for instance, in every single group visited having a preference for brands such as *Nescau* and *Leite Moça* and *Bauducco*. However, the brands refer to a routine universe. Differently, the high class seeks to experiment new flavors and different food products. This shows distinct identification dimensions from social classes in the observed families, which could only be saturated in the perspective of a bigger study, contemplating families of the same socio-demographic profile.

As for the interference of media in the eating process, the older son, simultaneously manifests criticism towards the manipulatory and false aspect in his opinion regarding advertising, but also shows himself to be receptive to promotional messages from food, similarly to the homemaker in the medium class family, in his attempt to save money.

Advertising. It lies a lot [...] Vitamin advertising is false. Vitamins bought for 80 bucks, 50 bucks, and has A-Z vitamins. Lies! To have all these products (sic), the product should cost 300 bucks, at least [...] So television is manipulated. It's [...] meant to fool the people [...] television makes money illicitly for that [...] the guy who makes well done ads has credit [...] mas it will stay like that... it (publicity) makes you sometimes want to consume things you can't have [...] so you end up going overboard due to the longing of having or eating something that is on an advertisement.

In the specific case of the low income family, the interviewee reveals the possibility of buying for a month at one single place. The purchases are dominated by retailers self-owned brands or competing, similar cheaper ones to save and satisfy the symbolic needs of consumption, by purchasing a product in the ideation of consumption of another brand perceived as better, as in the examples of holiday fruitcake and coffee. That is, consuming unknown brands of a product instead of a preferred brand, that has a higher cost than the competing ones acquired, what classifies this consumption in the tendency of consumption of practicality and convenience.

(Son) – My mom [...] She loves fruitcake. Obviously the quality of Bauducco fruitcake, which is a very good brand. She goes the whole year without buying a good, tasty one. And then the other coffees, then you keep a quality one, or a self-owned supermarket one, or an inferior brand with lower price, with the objective of having the fruitcake she likes. But at least one from a good brand will get purchased.

This reveals a strong identification aspect for this family, which reverberates directly on the representational dimension in function of the socio-economic limitations of their social standing which, simultaneously, reveals some food consumption aspiration similar to those of the high income family, the aspirational aspect.

In the action plane the text of discourse reveal the lifestyle. The purchases are made on a monthly basis, on supermarkets, preferentially the Extra branded ones, which are relatively close to the family home and “has everything”.

(Son) Lately we’ve been going to Extra. I think that stuff is very cheap [...] so, when compared with other smaller supermarkets, everything is the same; they are making the products bigger. So, from one store to the next, the difference is minimal, unlike the wholesalers? In those you can get a bigger volume, but that’s it. That’s because... Everything is so expensive! Too expensive. I go shopping once a month.

Food takes a good chunk from the family budget, since income is low. With this, we notice sign-material links that are also sign-symbolic, since the impossibility of consumption of expensive brands results in options of taste pleasure, substituting expensive brand products for cheaper competitors. So the *Bauducco* fruitcake is replace,

every now and then, for the *Village* one, *Nescafé* for the self-owned brand *Qualitá*, and so it goes. If the financial situation was different, they would certainly consume the brands of their preference, which does not annul the influence of the symbolic meaning of these brands for the life of the studied family.

Finally, another aspect to be observed is that the family, by the consumption of corn and flours, shows their northwestern roots, showing traces of a feeding culture resulting from migratory processes. It is demonstrated how little by little these particular flows mold the offer of the food market to meet demand that is created historically. In this way, as it happens in the universe of the high income class, imported products also have this role, creating the conditions for which the mercantile world of the food system may hybridize and reveal itself in the consumption for its relevancy to the symbolic universe of people, showing distinction of the representational dimension among classes through their food consumption.

6. Discursive practices vs. food consumption practices: final considerations

We presented so far some meaning links for brands and culture food practices in the domestic universe and made clear the limits of ethnographic observation (two visits per household) did not allow for a regular mapping of all feeding rituals within a desirable level. However, it has given us solid information regarding the participation of advertised brands in the food consumption for the meaning of the lives in the studied families.

Through the eyes of CDA alongside the discourses we detected that all families are stuck to the logic of deflation of feeding rituals and smaller fresh food purchase in daily life, thanks to the urgency of work life, which overlaps with eating life in late modernity, bringing value to industrialized meals and, therefore, more mediatized.

High income class seeks idealized consumption (representation) in the value of brands, whose promise of healthy eating and well being is aggregated, as well as the experimentation of gastronomic pleasure in new flavors with imported products that also gain space in the life of the couple, a tendency of consumption for senses and pleasure.

Middle class shows itself more engaged in the logic of the system. There is not questioning over feeding life. The aspirations of representation are not revealed, in the case of this study, by the consumption of food. The feeding dynamics follow the logic of cost-benefit with no questioning, feeding life conditioned through the trust and practicality, as well as reinforcing the role of the woman in the representation of feeding culture in the domestic scope. Meanwhile, the lower income class is revealed to be critical towards advertising of food, though it concedes to it for economic reasons in function of the economy in the act of purchase.

It is also noticed, in the representational dimension of the low income family an aspiration towards the high income class, manifested in the desire or preference in the consumption of brands of food seen as expensive for their socio-economic universe, forcing them to consume cheaper competitor brands as an alternative. It's the ideological representation of the aspiration of high income class consumption.

We can thus conclude that there is a hiatus or paradoxes between the promise of discursive practice of brands and consumers versus the practices of consumption that sustain the logic of the feeding system. Particularly, the feeling of well being and health, as far as the distance from a perspective of recommended feeding as an encompassing and dominant model between families.

We notice that the regulation of discourse of brands of food interferes in the regulation of discursive and social practices of consumers regarding patterns of consumption, be it desirable or not. If there are no regulatory action, targeting collective/social welfare, the discourse of food brands will populate the imaginary of consumers as promises, whose feelings would be emptied in the actions of social practices that perpetuate the production/consumption logic and keep the economic system alive. However, these do not help the social needs that look after a feeding balance in a broad scope, such as the distribution and production of food, as well as from a nutritious standpoint, for the individuals.

Mediatized feeding by current brands discusses social changes, such as ecological sustainability, organic feeding, sustainable production of food. However, the production/consumption logic prevails, disguised in the meaning of well being. Such a transformative aspect was not verified among the families researched, which confirms such hegemony, at least among the individuals that participate in the poll, making a bigger study necessary to validate such considerations that lies herein, based on exploratory study. However, the investigative path here conducted seeks an authorial perspective of research, which intends to point towards possibilities of viewpoints towards the phenomena of reception and consumption of publicized brands and their

flows in the cultural dynamics of everyday life, associated to the meanings of material life.

The media has a key role in this process, for its representations installs forms of identification and actions. Nowadays we have a discursive practice that offers hyper caloric tasty products, with no restrictions, most of them capable of being questioned by the criteria of a recommended nutritious diet. Social practice acts along the discursive practice, taking us towards actions that materialize in a lifestyle that makes the feeding system to work in its plenitude following the interests of few and not the mass and in a sustainable perspective.

This reflection about mediatized feeding activity by brands and consumption suggests that social and discursive practices should be rethought in the perspective of transforming social change of the installed consumption models. Advertising and food brands have a great responsibility in the construction of meaning in this aspect of material life, as we try to point herein.

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