

**DIGITAL MEDIA
AS AN IDEOLOGICAL
PROPAGANDA APPARATUS
OF THE STATE:
THE “NEW” WELFARE
AMONG SAYINGS,
NON-SAYINGS
AN OTHER EFFECTS**

**A MÍDIA DIGITAL COMO APARELHO IDEOLÓGICO DE PROPAGANDA DO ESTADO: A
“NOVA” PREVIDÊNCIA ENTRE OS DITOS, NÃO DITOS E OUTROS EFEITOS¹**

**LOS MEDIOS DIGITALES COMO APARATO DE PROPAGANDA IDEOLÓGICA DEL ESTADO:
LA “NUEVA” PREVIDENCIA ENTRE LOS EFECTOS DICHOS, TÁCITOS Y DE OTRO TIPO**

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, we aim to analyze the digital advertising discourse of the “new” Social Welfare, in order to comprehend ideological effects in the constitution of the senses and subjects. The *corpus* consists of a publication on the federal government’s page “Previdência e Trabalho” on Facebook, and a materiality available at the government’s website, which was used in the Welfare Reform’s proposal (WR). The study is theoretically supported by the assumptions of Discourse Analysis (DA) in the perspective of Michel Pêcheux. The results show that the discourse of the “new” Social Welfare, inscribed in the state discourse formation (DF), although it is crossed by several other DFs, it is strongly governed by the neoliberal DF; in this plot, the digital media functions as an

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ideological apparatus of state propaganda, which seeks to inculcate senses of prosperity and development in the nation through the approval of the WR. Thus, despite the sayings about the “new” Social Welfare produce effects of transparency and univocal logic, the equivocation is established, because the senses can always be different.

KEYWORDS: “New” Social Welfare. State Discourse. Ideology and Digital Advertising.

RESUMO: Neste artigo, objetivamos analisar o discurso da propaganda digital da “nova” Previdência, visando compreender os efeitos ideológicos na constituição dos sentidos e sujeitos. O *corpus* foi constituído de uma publicação da página do governo federal “Previdência e Trabalho” (*Facebook*), além de uma materialidade disponível no site do governo, usada na apresentação da proposta da reforma previdenciária (RP). O estudo respalda-se teoricamente nos pressupostos da Análise de Discurso (AD) pecheuxiana. Os resultados apontam que o discurso da “nova” Previdência, inscrito na formação discursiva (FD) estatal, embora seja atravessado por várias outras FDs, é fortemente regido pela FD neoliberal; nessa trama, a mídia digital funciona como aparelho ideológico de propaganda estatal, que busca inculcar sentidos de prosperidade e desenvolvimento à nação pela aprovação da RP. Assim, ainda que os ditos sobre a “nova” Previdência produzam efeitos de transparência e univocidade lógica, a equivocidade se instaura, pois os sentidos sempre podem ser outros.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: “Nova” Previdência. Discurso Estatal. Ideologia e Propaganda digital.

RESUMEN: En este artículo pretendemos analizar el discurso de la publicidad digital de la “nueva” Previdencia, con el objetivo de comprender los efectos ideológicos en la constitución de significados y sujetos. El *corpus* ha consistido en una publicación en la página del gobierno federal “Previdência e Trabalho” (*Facebook*), además de material disponible en el sitio web del gobierno, utilizado en la presentación de la propuesta de reforma de la Previdencia (RP). El estudio se apoya teóricamente en los supuestos del Análisis del Discurso (AD) pecheuxiano. Los resultados muestran que el discurso de la “nueva” Previdencia, inscrito en la formación discursiva estatal (FD), aunque estea atravesado por varias otras FDs, está fuertemente regido por la FD neoliberal; en esta trama, los medios digitales funcionan como un aparato ideológico de propaganda estatal, que busca inculcar un sentido de prosperidad y desarrollo en la nación mediante la aprobación de la RP. Así, aunque los dichos sobre el “nueva” Previdencia producen efectos de transparencia y univocidad lógica, se establece el equívoco, porque los significados siempre pueden cambiarlos diferentes.

PALAVRAS CLAVE: “Nueva” Previdencia. Discurso Estatal. Ideología y Publicidad digital.

1 INTRODUCTION

Presented as the only way to economic prosperity in Brazil, the “new” Social Welfare is discussed in early 2019, when Jair Messias Bolsonaro, who was a member of the Social Liberal Party (PSL), holds the presidency of the Republic and launches the Constitutional Amendment Bill (PEC) 06/2019, implementing a number of changes in the welfare system.

On this occasion, Bolsonaro government makes the first pronouncements on the need for changes in Social Welfare, in the context of his rise to the presidency of the Republic, with the renaming of the term “new” instead of “reform”. Subsequently, the Social Welfare Reform (WR) was voted in two rounds in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Federal Senate, with the approval of the base text on October 22, 2019² in the second round in the last House.

Therefore, our objective in this study is to analyze the discourse of advertising³ of the “new” Social Welfare in digital media, aiming to understand the ideological effects established in the constitution of senses and subjects. We will discuss the path of the senses in the network, in order to understand the effects of paraphrastic repetitions and the drift of senses around the term “new”. Based on digital formulations that materialize the state propaganda of the “new” Social Welfare, we intend to understand the processes of

² Some highlights were discussed and approved on October 23, 2019.

³ Coming from the Latin, by the expression *propagare* (to propagate), propaganda refers to the dissemination of ideas, thoughts and causes, using persuasive strategies in an attempt to influence people to accept what is being proposed. For Carrozza (2012), it seems that the expression *propaganda* is related to a sense of ideology reflected as concealment, content, manipulation. We emphasize that, in Discourse Analysis, ideology is taken within the discursive formations, that interpellate individuals in subjects.

ideological interpellation of the subject, functioning in the discourse of advertising and marketing of the “new” Social Welfare model. Our hypothesis is that the digital media functions as an ideological apparatus of State propaganda⁴.

In this analytical course, we consider the discursive formulations of the political-economic field to understand the determinations of the discursive formations (DF) that cross this plot. According to Pêcheux (2014, p. 147, author's emphasis), discursive formations correspond to what, “[...] numa formação ideológica dada, isto é, a partir de uma posição dada numa conjuntura dada, determinada pelo estado da luta de classes, determina o que pode e deve ser dito”⁵.

In the face of the dispersion of senses in/in the network, we seek to question the evidence of senses and historical and ideological determinations, in the movement of subject positions, in the plot of sayings and non-sayings that functions under the plot of relations of strengths and senses.

The *corpus* consists of a post made two days after the presentation of the PEC, on the page “Previdência e Trabalho”, managed by the federal government, on the social media Facebook⁶, in addition to the print of an image with linguistic inscriptions about the proposal of the “new” Social Welfare⁷.

In an archive of digital materialities about WR, we cut out three discursive sequences (DS) for the constitution of the *discursive corpus*. To proceed with the discussion, we have as a theoretical-methodological basis the Discourse Analysis (DA) of Pêcheux, which we will discuss in the next topic. Furthermore, we will bring some contributions from the Social Sciences, taking into account the relevance of their studies and that some of their concepts help to better explain the functioning of discourse.

2 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS: PÊCHEUX'S DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The Discourse Analysis developed by Pêcheux takes language in its material form and considers the subject's inscription in historicity, which is affected by ideology and the unconscious (PÊCHEUX, 2014). Thus, language is the materiality of discourse and this one is the materiality of ideology (ORLANDI, 2002). Discourse is defined as an effect of senses between interlocutors and functions in the tensions established between the structure and the event, under the relations of language with exteriority (PÊCHEUX, 1997, 2015). In this process, subject and senses are mutually constituted (PÊCHEUX, 2014). Therefore, DA functions in a space that understands the utterance⁸ as a series of drift points, allowing interpretation (PÊCHEUX, 2015).

In the theoretical context of DA, the notion of subject is in a place of singularity, as it is conceived as a position among others, through the relations with the subject form⁹ of a given DF (PÊCHEUX, 2014). When inscribing in the discourse, the individual is interpellated as a subject by the ideology, being able to occupy different positions or subject positions. In this sense, Courtine (2014)

⁴ The notion of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) was coined by Althusser (1999). The author reports that an ISA consists of a complex system of institutions, organizations and defined practices, in which the entire State Ideology or a part of this ideology is carried out. Althusser (1999) emphasizes that the ISA are the Apparatuses: school, family, religious, political, trade union, information, edition-diffusion and cultural.

⁵ “[...] in a given ideological formation, that is, from a given position in a given conjuncture, determined by the state of the class struggle, determine what can and must be said” (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p. 147, our translation).

⁶ Social media developed in 2003 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Andrew McCollum, Chris Hughes and Eduardo Saverin, students at Harvard University in the United States. This media has nearly three billion active users worldwide.

⁷ Published on the federal government website, the image is part of a set of slides on the PEC, exposed to the Special Committee of the Chamber of Deputies in May 2019.

⁸ Based on the work “The Archeology of Knowledge”, by Michel Foucault, Courtine (2014) conceives the utterance not referring to the proposition, nor to the sentence, nor to the act of language, but to the discursive scope.

⁹ This expression was introduced by Louis Althusser and refers to the form of historical existence of individuals.

postulates that a subject-position is defined as a determined relation, established in a formulation between an enunciating subject and the dominant subject of a DF, producing various subject-effects in the discourse.

Such subject-effects point to the different modalities of subjective functioning (PÊCHEUX, 2014), which result from the relations of enunciators with the senses of a given DF, processes that can have *identity effects* - in which the position taken by the subject promotes its subjection under the mode of freely consented; *counter-identification* - which produces a distancing of the subject of the enunciation in relation to the subject-form of a DF; and *disidentification*, the effect of which takes place “[...] por um processo subjetivo de apropriação dos conceitos científicos e de identificação com as organizações políticas de “tipo novo”” (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p. 202)¹⁰. In the latter case, there is a rupture of sense with the dominant subject-form of a DF, establishing a new DF.

It is important to emphasize that this subject is also affected by the already said in the interdiscourse, the level of discourse constitution. Courtine (2016) cites the establishment of two levels in the description of a DF: that of the utterance and that of the formulation. The utterance refers to the sense elements of a DF, which governs repeatability within a network of formulations (COURTINE, 2016). The author emphasizes that the unevenness of formulations concerns the vertical or interdiscursive dimension of an utterance as a network of formulations. On the *level of formulation*, Courtine (2016) comments on intradiscourse, in which it appears as the place where the sequencing of the elements of sense is carried out, in the case of a horizontalization of the vertical dimension.

The author adds that the utterances “[...] existem no *tempo longo de uma memória*, ao passo que as “formulações” são tomadas no *tempo curto da atualidade de uma enunciação*”¹¹ (COURTINE, 2014, p. 106, author's emphasis). In this perspective, “[...] a noção de memória discursiva diz respeito à *existência histórica do enunciado* no interior de práticas discursivas regradas por aparelhos ideológicos” (COURTINE, 2014, p. 105-106, author's emphasis). For the author, from the relations between long memory - considered by the author as interdiscourse (vertical axis) - and intradiscourse (horizontal axis), we have the effects of memory.

For Pêcheux (2020), memory would be that which, faced with a text that emerges as an event to be read, comes to reestablish the “implied” that its reading needs, in other words, the condition of the legible in relation to the legible itself.

In the meantime, Indursky (2003) points out that the pre-existing sense of the discourse is located within a vertical structure, be it the DF that crosses the discursive subject or the interdiscourse. In turn, the author emphasizes that the subject's formulation is located in the horizontal structure (intradiscourse), pointing to an updated form of the utterance.

Then, it is in this plot of relations of senses already said that the formulations update the discourses, producing paraphrastic and polysemic effects, as the discourse functions in this tension between the effects of (de)stabilization.

The concepts mobilized here help to explain the functioning of the discursive process in the materialities selected for analysis. Based on the assumptions presented, we will analyze the discourse of state propaganda of the “new” Social Welfare, in digital media, in order to understand the modes of ideological interpellation of the subjects, undo the evidence of senses and highlight the equivocality of the discourse (PÊCHEUX, 2015).

3 ANALYTICAL GESTURES

As we will focus on the discourses that circulate in the digital, we will describe some peculiarities of this environment, as it produces determinations and effects of senses.

¹⁰ “[...] by a subjective process of appropriation of scientific concepts and identification with political organizations of a “new type”” (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p. 202, our translation).

¹¹ “[...] exist in the long time of a memory, while “formulations” are taken in the short time of the actuality of an utterance” (COURTINE, 2014, p. 106, our translation).

3.1 THE CONDITIONS OF PRODUCTION/CIRCULATION OF DISCOURSES FUNCTIONING IN DIGITAL SPACES

Taking into account the postulates presented, we will start this analytical journey with a reflection on the functioning of digital discourse, since digital media will be our discursive space and also integrates the conditions of production and circulation of the discourses in question.

According to Dias (2016), in DA, the digital refers to a field of discursivities that is constitutive of space, subject and sense, as well as knowledge, with its own materiality. The digital functions as a meaningful field for materialist reading and interpretation of discourses, regularly becoming an object of analysts due to the dynamics established there.

The discursive practices in this space allow an intense circulation and movement of senses, in view of the traces of memory, the articulations and disarticulations between the nodes of the network, establishing points of stabilization and drift in the discourses.

In these links, political-ideological clashes are materialized in the most diverse formats, instituting processes of consent and resistance to discourses, in the plot between silence and memory. Digital technology is an instrument for disputes over senses and power relations, which affects subjects, who are already affected by ideology and crossed by the unconscious.

The digitization of the world, in line with Dias (2016), refers to a process of historicization of the senses that moves the way of meaning, producing another material form -, since it inscribes the saying, the doing, the practices of the subjects, in other conditions of production -, affected by other institutions, ensuring the functioning of the ideological machine through the relations of power and production-reproduction of work.

In this space, writing and reading function through the (mis)paths of hypertext. Cortes (2015) asserts that hypertext is made up of memory clippings, being woven in a non-linear way and considered an electronic *palimpsest*. The author says that hypertext is seen as a mobile support that provides a movement of inscribing and erasing gestures, constituting a place woven from/by memory.

In these terms, the intersection of discourses in the digital produces a multiplicity of sayings, with new senses through discursive fluidity. Relations of strengths and senses function in this plot, instituting a work of memory in the processes of discursive (re)updating, with paraphrastic and polysemic effects.

Romão (2004) highlights that cyberspace raises numerous questions for language studies, such as the innovative mode and structure of electronic textuality along with the multilinearity of reading directions. The author points out that the internet gives space to reflect on the emergence of new subject-positions, of discourses and counter-discourses, of senses of resistance and domination, which are intricately intertwined in swirling spirals.

Faced with the complexity created by the conditions of digital production that affect the production of senses, it is necessary to try to understand how discourses can be repeated, with stabilizing effects, counter-discourses and ruptures.

In our gestures of interpretation, we will follow the guidelines of Pêcheux (2015), regarding the description/interpretation intricacy in continuous tension movements.

Let us move on to the analysis, with our first discursive sequence (DS1), consisting of the materiality below, which was posted on February 22, 2019, on the page "Previdência e Trabalho".

DS1:

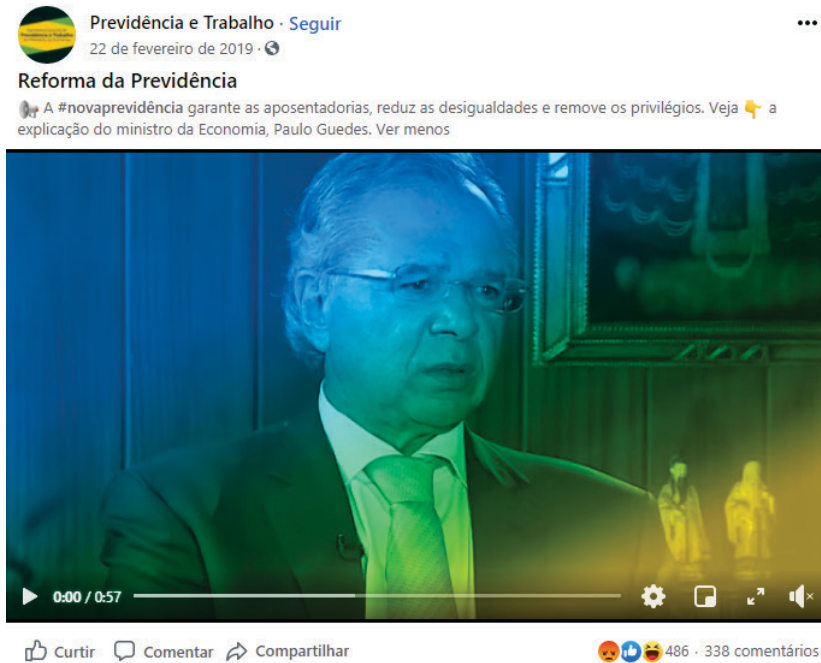


Figure 1: Publication print

Source: Page “Previdência e Trabalho”, on Facebook

The post begins with the title “Welfare Reform”. There is the call “The #novaprevidência guarantees retirements, reduces inequalities and removes privileges. See the explanation of the Minister of Economy, Paulo Guedes”; these utterances are preceded by an icon of a speaker, the indexing of the hashtag #novaprevidência, in addition to another icon of a hand that indicates a video lasting almost one minute.

The post has 486 reactions and 338 comments¹².

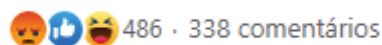


Figure 2: Print of reactions to the publication entered in DS1

Source: Page “Previdência e Trabalho”, on Facebook

Among the interpretation gestures materialized in the reactions in the post inscribed in SD1 there is an icon of anger (grr), corresponding to a position contrary to what was proposed, which may result in processes of counter-identification or disidentification to the subject-form of the state DF. Then there is the *icon like*, subjectifying an identification of the subject, and the *icon of laughter* (haha), producing senses of irony and annoyance to the publication. These icons integrate the materiality of digital language and function as a *corpografia*, concept proposed by Dias (2016) to reflect on digital writing. This notion is defined by Dias (2008) through the concepts of style and affection, which touch the issues of language and writing, according to the philosopher Gilles Deleuze. For Dias (2016), *corpografia* it is the textualization of the body in the letter, on the screen, through affection, producing a writing – and a body – affected by the digital. So, the digital *corpografia* materializes gestures of interpretation and different subject-positions in the digital media space.

¹² Corresponding numbers up to the day of materiality collection, on January 7, 2021.

The gestures of interpretation/interpellation of the subjects in the network through the “like” promote submission to the context of domination, says Han (2020). The author advocates that we are dominated by the dictatorship of capital and that “like” refers to the “digital Amen”. Han (2020) explains that neoliberalism is equivalent to “capitalism of like”. In this context, we observe that the reactions of the subjects materialize identifications with the dominant and neoliberal discourse.

On the other hand, the subjects, in their interpretative gestures, can distance themselves from the subject-form of the state DF, through the process of counter-identification, or break with the subject-form, through the process of disidentification.

It is worth noting that, since the beginning of the publicity campaign in favor of the changes, the state discourse opted for the use of the term “New Social Welfare” instead of “Social Welfare Reform”; they are modes of ideological interpellation by state propaganda, by the effects of the promises of a new, fair and equal welfare system.

In DS1, the publication is introduced with the expression “Welfare Reform”, and below that title there is the hashtag #novaprevidência. Such substitution establishes the discursive metaphor, because for Pêcheux (2014, p. 240), sense does not consist in the property of the literalness of the signifier, but “[...] existe exclusivamente nas relações de metáfora (realizadas em efeitos de substituição, paráfrases, formações de sinônimos)”¹³.

In line with Pêcheux (2014), the metaphor functions by the principle of interdiscursivity, as each new formulation to signify brings the inscription of the senses of the interdiscourse. So, the discourse will function under the tensions of memory, between the already said of reforms already carried out - the signifier “reform” still appears in the post -, and the effects of novelty, through the hashtag #novaprevidência. Such metaphorical substitution produces silencing effects of the senses already said of other reforms, which memory functions with senses of setbacks established in labor rights. Orlandi (2007, p. 74) points out that “toda denominação apaga necessariamente outros sentidos possíveis, o que mostra que o dizer e o silenciamento são inseparáveis: contradição inscrita nas próprias palavras”¹⁴. In this way, this effect of contradiction functions in the discourse by the alternating use of terms.

We observed in DS1 the inscription of the *corpografia* by the icons that materialize the announcement of something renewing, such as the use of the hashtag. The hashtag #novaprevidência has been shared in order to gather and circulate discourses favorable to changes in social security. In Silveira’s (2015) view, the hashtag, due to its status as a techno-word, is inscribed in a discursive dimension, as it goes beyond individual use and establishes a bond between the subject and the language and the discourses. In view of this, this network of clickable links circulates the readings through gestures of sharing senses and, although other discourses function in the archive, it introduces effects of completeness and support for changes in a process of stabilization of senses.

From the perspective of Pereira (2018), the hashtag is a symbol of power, as it is configured as a language. The author explains that repetition and quantity, when instituted by hashtags as a place of power, promote unequal relations in the midst of circulation and memory, structuring lines of domination between senses.

It is possible to observe that the hyperlink of the hashtag #novaprevidência functions as a way of ideological interpellation, as the state discourse appropriates, not only the hashtag, but the entire device of digital technologies to carry out an advertising campaign in favor of the approval of the Welfare reform. Therefore, we maintain that digital media functions in this discourse as an ideological apparatus of state propaganda. In the field of analysis of her research, observing the formulation/circulation of the political hashtag #onagagné, Silveira (2015) argues that subject-users have an ideological relation with hashtags, since these, in their various processes of formulation/circulation, suffer historical and ideological determination from technocratic society. For the author, the linguistic investigation of the hashtag provides a reflection on the link between language and subject, language and ideology. Furthermore, based on Pêcheux’s assumptions, Dias (2004, p. 49) declares that “a técnica interpela o indivíduo em sujeito na relação ciberespacial,

¹³ “[...] exists exclusively in metaphor relations (performed in substitution effects, paraphrases, synonym formations)” (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p. 240, our translation).

¹⁴ “[...] every denomination necessarily erases other possible senses, which shows that saying and silencing are inseparable: contradiction inscribed in the words themselves” (ORLANDI, 2007, p. 74, our translation).

a partir de uma norma identificadora”¹⁵, in this sense, by the functioning of ideology. In this process, the hashtag #novaprevidência certainly produces new effects of power, in the interpellation and affectation of the subjects, through the bias of indexation that leverages the circulation of the state proposal, in paraphrastic repetitions.

It should be noted that the government invested heavily in the advertising campaign in favor of Welfare reform. It is estimated, as published in Revista piauí online (MAZZA; BUONO, 2020), that during the first year of Bolsonaro government, WR led the ranking of advertising expenses, and for every R\$100 spent, R\$72 went to the WR campaign.

We note the work of ideological interpellation by digital media, and the latter is the ideological apparatus of state propaganda, in reference to Social Welfare reform. According to Payer (2005), the media has been working with a great power of ideological interpellation of the subjects. In the author's words:

[...] tudo indica que *um novo Texto vem adquirindo o valor de Texto fundamental na sociedade contemporânea*: um texto cujo poder de interpelação sobre os indivíduos vem se equiparando àquele que o Texto sagrado ocupa na ordem religiosa, na Idade Média, e que o Texto da lei jurídica ocupa na ordem do Estado Moderno. *Este grande texto da atualidade, no meu modo de entender, consiste da Mídia, daquilo que está na mídia, em um sentido amplo, e em especial no marketing, na publicidade*. O valor que a sociedade vem atribuindo à mídia – ou o poder de interpelação que a Mídia vem exercendo na sociedade – passa a assegurar-lhe o papel de *Texto fundamental de um novo grande Sujeito, o Mercado, agora em sua nova forma globalizada*. (PAYER, 2005, p. 15-16, author's emphasis)¹⁶.

Making use of the author's reflections in our discursive analysis, we postulate, as already indicated, that in the functioning of the discourse on the Social Welfare reform undertaken by the Bolsonaro government, the digital media functioned/functions as an ideological apparatus of state propaganda and marketing. Regarding this study, this Subject¹⁷ would be the subject-form of the state DF, which seeks to “sell” a product, which is the reform, by interpellating the subjects to accept the proposal.

Payer (2005) observes that, historically, this discursive process of interpellation functions with utterances of institutional precepts that always establish a condition (obedience) for a consequent promise of reward. In accordance with the author, in the religious order, the utterance that functions as a precept is obedience to the divine law, whose promised reward is the salvation of the soul; in the order of the State, this utterance is obedience to the juridical law (civil obedience), with freedom of expression being the reward; in the market order, the utterance is success, which functions with the power to “[...] *interpelar ideologicamente o indivíduo em sujeito* (Althusser) e de *imprimir a evidência do sentido* (Pêcheux) [...]”; “[...] o *enunciado todo-poderoso do Mercado*, que funciona como lugar máximo de interpelação, pode ser resumido em uma palavra: “*sucesso*”” (PAYER, 2005, p. 18, author's emphasis)¹⁸.

Based on the author's considerations, we can think about the functioning of the discourse of state propaganda and marketing about welfare system, whose utterance functioning in the process of ideological interpellation of individuals into subjects is the approval of the WR, that promises as a reward a “new” Social Welfare in order to bring economic growth, many jobs and prosperity to the country. Such a promise can be seen in DS1, in which state propaganda promises a “new” system, that “guarantees retirements, reduces inequalities and removes privileges”. In this case, applying Payer's (2005) thinking to this analysis, we can say that digital

¹⁵ “[...] the technique interpellates the individual as subject in the cyberspace relation, based on an identifying norm” (DIAS, 2004, p. 49, our translation).

¹⁶ “[...] everything indicates that a *new Text has been acquiring the value of a fundamental Text in contemporary society*: a text whose power of interpellation over individuals has been equivalent to that which the sacred Text occupies in the religious order, in the Middle Ages, and which the Text of the legal law occupies the order of the Modern State. *This great text of the present time, in my understanding, consists of the Media, of what is in the media, in a broad sense, and especially in marketing, in advertising*. The value that society has been assigning to the media – or the power of interpellation that the Media has been exercising in society – starts to assure it the role of *fundamental Text of a new great Subject, the Market, now in its new globalized form*” (PAYER, 2005, p. 15-16, author's emphasis, our translation).

¹⁷ This subject, with a capital “S”, refers to the absolute and universal subject (PÊCHEUX, 2014).

¹⁸ “[...] *ideologically interpellate the individual as a subject* (Althusser) and *imprint the evidence of sense* (Pêcheux) [...]”; “the *all-powerful utterance of the Market*, which functions as the maximum place of interpellation, can be summed up in one word: “*success*”” (PAYER, 2005, p. 18, our translation).

media and social networks function as the “Fundamental text” of a Subject, the neoliberal State, which gathers forces from the state DF with the neoliberal DF.

Dardot and Laval (2019) explain that neoliberalism not only survives as a system of power, but also reinforces itself. For the authors, it is necessary to understand the sense of the current transformations of neoliberalism with regard to what they call the new neoliberalism. It is not just about austerity or monetarist economic policies, the dictatorship of financial markets or the commodification of social relations (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2019). Fundamentally, it turns to a global political rationality that seeks to impose on the part of governments, the logic of capital in the economy, in society and in the State itself, to the point of converting it into the norm of existence and the form of subjectivities (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2019).

For the authors, propaganda is one of the strategies employed by neoliberalism for the exercise of power; the digital media is, then, both the instrument, the ideological apparatus, as well as the space for the circulation of neoliberal discourses, such as the propaganda of Welfare reform.

Since the first debates about the need for changes in the social welfare system, in addition to the fiscal effects that would be generated with the changes, the government has listed the reduction of inequalities and the withdrawal of privileges. The justifications function as a response to a system that supposedly acts as a mechanism to strengthen inequality.

However, we inquire about who will benefit from the reform, as the changes include tightening rules that penalizes workers, such as raising the minimum age for women to retire, which is now 62 years old; the new pension rules for death, which before the WR was paid in full, but now it is 50% of the amount of the retirement, plus 10% for each dependent, up to the limit of 100% of the retirement; retirement due to permanent disability, that in the old social welfare system consisted of 100% of the average contribution salary and becomes, in the new rules, 60% plus 2% per year of contribution that exceeds 20 years (men) or 15 years (women)¹⁹; the calculation for the benefit amount, which will account for all salaries and no longer the highest 80%²⁰. These factors contribute, among other things, to the extension of the retirement of the insured and the reduction of income from some benefits.

Thus, the discourse of the “new” Welfare produces effects of perfect transparency, but, when questioning the evidence of senses, it is deeply opaque (PÊCHEUX, 2015), after all, who benefits from the reform? What privileges are removed, whose privileges? Will inequalities actually be removed? This way, the WR formulations are propositions with an apparent stable logic, subject to a univocal answer; though, in the intersection of propositions and questionings, appear “[...] formulações irremediavelmente equívocas”²¹ (PÊCHEUX, 2015, p. 28).

In the discourse inscribed in DS1, we notice the movement of the senses in escape. Orlandi (2012a) argues that the “senses in escape” express the movement of possible senses in the same symbolic object, producing different subject-positions and effects of the sense. The escape is established in view of the ideological process, as some senses stay and others go (ORLANDI, 2012a). The author says that the senses in escape produce effects in the production of silence, in a strong and dynamic way. In this dispersed and disordered effect, the utterance establishes senses of guaranteeing retirements, reducing inequality and removing privileges, however, in the opacity of senses, the discourse is deconstructed in the face of the various measures that will harm the beneficiaries of the system.

In this way, the media, as an ideological propaganda apparatus of the neoliberal State, seeks to imprint senses of newness on the reform, working on the effects of changes in the lives of citizens in a positive way. In this plot, entangled in state discourse, digital media becomes the “language of State”, defined by Pêcheux (2011, p. 86) as “[...] uma série de estratégias de discurso obstinada em

¹⁹ Except in cases resulting from an accident at work, occupational disease and work-related disease.

²⁰ Changes listed in Constitutional Amendment 103 of November 12, 2019.

²¹ “[...] irremediably equivocal formulations” (PÊCHEUX, 2015, p. 28, our translation).

evacuar qualquer contradição e a mascarar a existência das relações de classes: ela usa uma falsa aparência para contornar indefinidamente o que todo mundo sabe e que ninguém pode dizer”²².

For Gadet and Pêcheux (2004), language is a matter of State, with a policy of absorption, invasion and annulment of differences, assuming that they are recognized. Nevertheless, due to the determinations imposed by the language in its equivocality, this discourse can fail, producing effects of incompleteness, as it establishes non-sayings. In the plot of language of State, neoliberal discourse crosses and determines state discourse, producing the neoliberal State.

Regarding Welfare management, for Dugnani (2015, p. 228), the neoliberal discourse “[...] alia suas posições favoráveis à redução dos benefícios sociais previdenciários à evocação insistente da redução do peso do Estado”²³, launching a solution: “less State, more market”.

In the utterance in DS1, paraphrases function with the effect of justifications and a pressing need for reform, as the senses are resumed and updated with each government. The paraphrase returns to the same spaces as the saying (ORLANDI, 2012b). Let’s observe the materiality below, which appears in one of the Bolsonaro government’s work materials and is part of a news published on the government’s website.

DS2:

“A questão é séria porque leva ao aumento da taxa de juros. O país todo paga pelo desequilíbrio da Previdência. E esses privilégios, que estão sendo defendidos, têm um custo altíssimo”

Fernando Henrique Cardoso

“Acho que a Previdência, de vez em quando, deve ser reformada. Na medida que é provado cientificamente a nossa longevidade, a gente não pode ficar com a mesma lei feita há cinquenta anos”

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

“Nesse momento, nos cabe enfrentar o desafio maior para a política fiscal no Brasil e para vários países do mundo, que é a sustentabilidade da Previdência Social em um contexto de envelhecimento da população”

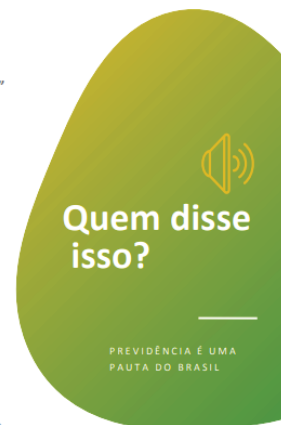
Dilma Rousseff

“Se não fizermos hoje uma readequação previdenciária, você vai ter prejuízo. Porque acontecerá o que aconteceu na Grécia, o que aconteceu em Portugal, o que aconteceu em muitos espaços universais. Você tem que readequar a Previdência para continuar recebendo a aposentadoria”

Michel Temer

“Estamos concebendo uma proposta moderna e, ao mesmo tempo, fraterna, que conjuga o equilíbrio atuarial com o amparo a quem mais precisa, separando ‘previdência’ de ‘assistência’, ao tempo em que combate fraudes e privilégios”

Jair Bolsonaro



SECRETARIA ESPECIAL DE PREVIDÊNCIA E TRABALHO | MINISTÉRIO DA ECONOMIA | PÁTRIA AMADA BRASIL

Figure 3: Print of a clipping of material used in the presentation of the PEC to the Select Committee of the Chamber of Deputies

Source: Ministry of Economy, 2019. (Federal government website).

DS2 updates formulations already said about the reforms carried out in the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, Dilma Rousseff, and the attempt to institute Welfare reform in the Michel Temer government²⁴, but it also brings the inscription of the WR discourse, in the enunciation space of the current government.

²² “[...] a series of strategies of discourse obstinate to evacuate any contradiction and to mask the existence of class relations: it uses a false appearance to indefinitely circumvent what everyone knows and no one can say” (PÊCHEUX, 2011, p. 86, our translation).

²³ “[...] allies its favorable positions to the reduction of social security benefits to the insistent evocation of the reduction of the weight of the State” (DUGNANI 2015, p. 228, our translation).

²⁴ Due to a small support in the National Congress and the federal intervention in the public security of Rio de Janeiro, in 2018, the proposal for Welfare reform was suspended, as the Federal Constitution prevents changes to the text in periods of federal intervention.

We observed the effect of discursive regularity in the utterances, in which we noticed the paraphrastic movements produced around the need for continuous reforms. In the discourse materialized in DS2, the following discursive resumptions function: fiscal adjustment and maintenance of actuarial and financial balance; life expectancy of the population and sustainability of Social Welfare; periodicity of reforms; removal of privileges and reduction of inequalities; and combating fraud.

In DS2, President Bolsonaro, when commenting on the reform proposal, declares that WR separates 'welfare' and 'assistance'; in this discourse, we have the functioning of refutation by denial, which functions through the bias of the announced and the transverse discourse²⁵, that "[...] cruza e conecta entre si os elementos constituídos pelo interdiscurso enquanto pré-construído [...]", according to Courtine (2014, p. 204-205)²⁶; however, for the author, in this process, the senses of the interdiscourse are hidden in the intradiscourse. The author advocates that refutation by denial: "[...] pode ser obtida pela supressão de um membro de uma forma completa de refutação; é conservado o membro que comporta a negação contrastiva, no qual o pré-construído elemento de saber de uma FD antagônica é marcado por uma identificação negativa" (COURTINE, 2014, p. 206).²⁷

Returning to DS2, it is possible to paraphrase the expression [...] "separating 'welfare' from 'assistance'" [...] by the following sentence: "our proposal does not intend to provide assistance, but welfare". In this way, the discourse, through denial, produces effects of refutation of the senses of assistance to the "new" Welfare. There we have the transverse discourse in functioning, since the term "assistance" takes up the memory of welfarism.

Silva, Quadros and Flach (2019) explain that welfarism consists of a service delivery, through donation, charity or favor, whose work is often carried out without respect for the individual's uniqueness. Therefore, welfarism generates in the assisted subject a dependence on the other (SILVA; QUADROS; FLACH, 2019). The authors debate the way and the motivation by which welfarism is carried out, taking into account that at times, its motivation is narcissistic, involving the search for social status, the attempt to compensate for attitudes that cause regret through "good actions", aiming even at the adhesion of the beneficiaries to ideological thoughts.

That said, in the WR advertising, the senses of welfarism would not be welcome, given that such a term carries a memory of senses of domination. However, denial produces the opposite effect of refutation, that is, it does not refute, but confirms the denied senses, since in this process the pre-constructed elements²⁸ in the discourse are incorporated/dissimulated (COURTINE, 2014).

Due to the effect of the discourse of advertising, President Bolsonaro's utterance materializes the sense that WR will provide "support to those who need it most", without being based on assistance. A policy of domination of hegemonic power functions in the discourse, given that in this process the interests of the wealthiest classes in society are at stake. With that, the government does not fight, in a total and effective way, the causes that result in the state of need of the population, not delving into the roots of the social problems to solve them; and Social Welfare, although in a new guise, does not address the needs of workers, as it follows neoliberal ideological dictates, which seek only business interests.

The way the media circulates discourses is a way of ideological interpellation for the acceptance of what is imposed. In the words of Orlandi (2017, p. 247), "[...] é o modo de circulação, inerente à sua materialidade, que rege a textualização do discurso, afetando tanto a constituição como a formulação e, portanto, o funcionamento ideológico do discurso digital"²⁹. In the meantime, the

²⁵ Pêcheux (2014) points out that the functioning of transverse discourse refers to metonymy, as a connection of the part with the whole, the cause with the effect, the symptom with what it designates, etc.

²⁶ "[...] crosses and connects with each other the elements constituted by the interdiscourse as pre-constructed [...]" (COURTINE, 2014, p. 204-205, our translation).

²⁷ "[...] can be obtained by suppressing a member of a complete form of refutation; the member that carries the contrastive negation is preserved, in which the pre-constructed element of sense of an antagonistic DF is marked by a negative identification" (COURTINE, 2014, p. 206, our translation).

²⁸ The term "pre-constructed" was created by Paul Henry to designate what refers to a previous and exterior construction, but always independent, opposing what is constructed by the utterance (PÊCHEUX, 2014).

²⁹ "...it is the mode of circulation, inherent to its materiality, that governs the textualization of discourse, affecting both the constitution and the formulation and, therefore, the ideological functioning of digital discourse" (ORLANDI, 2017, p. 247, our translation).

ideology of the neoliberal State summons the subjects to identify with the state DF, through the bias of the metaphor that inserts the term “new” and starts to signify with the effects of an apparent logic, as the state discourse promises a “new” Welfare, with a sense of dismantling an outdated system, to make room for something innovative that will promote equity. Thus, the return of the WR discourse to the same spaces of the saying in the Bolsonaro discourse establishes paraphrases that reinforce senses of plausible justifications for the WR and produces senses of importance for the adoption of measures to implement the changes.

Next, let's look at DS3, made up of excerpts from a video with utterances by the Minister of Economy, Paulo Guedes (cf. DS1). The video begins with the exposition of the utterance chanted as the main slogan “New Social Welfare / It's for everyone / It's better for Brazil”.

DS3:

“We are going to guarantee retirements, we are going to reduce inequalities, we are going to remove privileges, we are going to increase the country's growth rate, increase productivity, capital accumulation, generate jobs. It's a new Brazil if we can make the reforms we need. And this Welfare reform is the first and most important. We are going to improve the investment grade in the economy, we are going to accelerate investments, we are going to structurally reduce the deficit, returning to fiscal balance. This allows for lower interest rates, faster investments, economic growth, job creation. So, it is definitive, this reform is very important. And we are on the path to prosperity for all.”

Table 1: Transcript of an interview given by Minister Paulo Guedes

Source: Page “Previdência e Trabalho” on Facebook

The advertising discourse of the “new” Welfare begins with formulations that establish senses of scope and of the only economic way out for Brazil, senses that are worked on by government advertising in the institutional discourse. In this bias, the power relations function in DS3, as the place occupied by Guedes is constitutive of what he says, legitimizing the state discourse of the need for reform.

In the position of Minister of Economy, Guedes, as a speaker, is crossed by relations of strengths that determine the discourse. In this process, we also perceive the relations of sense, as the discourse refers to others produced in previous governments.

In addition, some sayings that strengthen the process of ideological interpellation for the adhesion of the subjects to the WR discourse are resumed. First, the repetition of the sequence “we are going to” produces senses of legitimation, of veracity to the promises listed, as well as of a collective voice that encompasses the voice of the entire society. Other expressions stand out in this set of sayings, instituting a paraphrastic family for the term “new” Welfare:

- ✓ retirement guarantee
- ✓ reduction of inequalities
- ✓ removal of privileges
- ✓ increase in growth rate
- ✓ increase in productivity
- ✓ capital accumulation
- ✓ job creation
- ✓ investment grade improvement
- ✓ acceleration of investments
- ✓ structural deficit reduction
- ✓ return to fiscal balance

Table 2: Paraphrastic families for the term “new” Social Welfare

Source: Own elaboration

The paraphrastic families for the signifier “new” Welfare produce senses of economic growth and, consequently, of benefits to the points. For Indursky (2011), formulations can bring the same sense, as in a paraphrastic family that functions as a matrix of sense. Indursky (1997) argues that within a paraphrastic family, a comparison can be established between the same and its repetitions, resulting in the regularization of sense.

In this relation of repeatability, the expressions produce effects of senses of benefits for the “new” Welfare, in a plot of strength that seeks to maintain the regularization of the sayings in the proposal, and at the same time they institute senses in escape, since they disperse the content of the rules that will be implemented in the “growth” process and the sacrifice of workers to achieve the benefits. We note in the discourse what Pêcheux (2015, p. 20) advocates: “a novidade não tira a opacidade do acontecimento”³⁰.

Silva Sobrinho (2019) states that certain discursivities that call for “changes” and “reforms” are taken ideologically as essential principles to the production management programs and the direction of the bourgeois State, which announces globalization, and its neoliberal practices, as a road of no return to society. The “language of the State” functions in the discourse, producing effects of senses aimed at capitalist interests, instituting ideological effects of economic growth.

Dugnani (2009) explains that neoliberal agents press for changes that direct resources to the financial market with the aim of boosting profits, however, these changes negatively affect the mass of population. In this regard, we see the ideological discourse of reform and the ideals of the capitalist system. Nogueira (2017) comments that discourses on labor relations, depending on the position in which they are produced, establish a way of rewriting capitalism in an attempt to make it (re)signifying.

Returning to the formulations of DS3, Guedes says: “It is a new Brazil if we manage to carry out the reforms we need. And this Welfare reform is the first and most important”. Here we can see the regularity regarding the directions given by the changes to the country, that will become a “new Brazil”.

This metaphorization of senses ranging from “reform” to “new” produces the effect that there will be no setbacks, a promise that with the adoption of the “new” measures there will be no withdrawal of labor rights. Guedes becomes the “advertising character” of the neoliberal State, as he also uses the language of the State to interpellate individuals in neoliberal subjects, announcing that the “reform” in the Social Welfare system “is the first and most important”. In other words, the changes in Social Welfare are the first step towards other reforms in other areas, which will gain momentum with the approval of the first one.

It can be seen the importance attributed by the state discourse to WR as a path to be followed to open new routes. The discourse given by Guedes promises, as a result of the changes, an advance in terms of the economy. “We are going to improve the investment grade in the economy, we are going to accelerate investments, we are going to structurally reduce the deficit, returning to fiscal balance. This allows for lower interest rates, faster investments, economic growth, job creation”. Once again, the language of the State functions, in ideological interpellation, with the effect of economic structuring with possibilities of ascension in terms of employment positions; they are senses of apparently logical evidence, but the discourse is always opaque, and the senses can always be others (PÊCHEUX, 2014, 2015).

To conclude, the minister states: “So it is definitive, this reform is very important. And we are on the path to prosperity for all.” This conclusion takes up, in a paraphrastic process, the sense that the Welfare reform “is the most important”. In this context, the discourse of the “new” Social Welfare indicates a new path, the “path of prosperity for all”. It is yet another promise of the neoliberal State, as a reward for the adhesion of the subjects to the discourse in defense of WR.

When analyzing the corporate management discourse of/in Petrobras, Nogueira (2015) points out that the notion of prosperity functions through the pre-constructed effect, i.e., there is a pre-constructed about “prosperity in life”, which can be achieved through work and functions as a place of identification for the working class.

³⁰ “...the novelty does not take away the opacity of the event” (PÊCHEUX, 2015, p. 20, our translation).

Nogueira (2015) adds that ideology only functions in these subjects because there is an identification position that is taken, in which the subject identifies with something, in a relation of discursive imaginary projection, corresponding in this case to (possible) prosperity. The author asserts that the relation sustained in the prosperity discourse is a mistake, since it is an inherent consumerist illusion of capitalism. In this perspective, Nogueira (2015, p. 174) declares that “[...] a prosperidade é a promessa do capitalismo”³¹.

In the functioning of ideological interpellation, the effects of neoliberal senses, with the promise of prosperity, are instituted and linearized in intradiscourse, due to a reform proposal that supposedly contemplates a new future.

In a study carried out by Tenório Neto and Ericson (2020)³², they report that at the Brazilian political level the imaginary of a future of prosperity is recovered with a view to attributing to it the responsibility of eliminating corruption, of the old politics, feeding the desire for the economic miracle. The authors seek to discuss how the neoliberal discourse presents itself, silencing the antagonism of social classes, as it recovers a memory that reinforces a unity regarding a future that does not seem to arrive.

For Tenório Neto and Ericson (2020), in the discursive scope, this imaginary continues to produce senses, given that it appears as a clipping of a memorable past, going back to political campaigns aimed at economic development, such as: “50 years in 5” (Juscelino Kubistchek’s electoral campaign – 1955); “Collor is progress. A new time will begin” (Fernando Collor’s electoral campaign – 1989); “Brazil cannot go back. Go forward Brazil” (Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s electoral campaign – 1998).

In this plot entangled by several DFs, as we have seen, substitutions of utterances function in metaphorical work, when government administrations change, producing paraphrases to the process of “economic growth”. In doing so, there is a discursive regularity regarding progress, “inculcating”, in the words of Pêcheux (2014), senses of the need to move forward. We point out that the discourse of novelty is crossed by neoliberalist ideals and functions only as a guise, a camouflage of old practices of exploitation of the worker and rights cuts.

In this discursive plot, we perceive a relation between silence, metaphor and interdiscourse, as Orlandi (2012a) points out, when she describes the notion “senses in escape”, explaining that these senses are seen as dismantling, an explosion that destabilizes and produces movement disorder. In DS3, the dominant ideology in the neoliberal State interpellates the population to participate in the process of change, instituting effects of democracy, engagement and commitment to economic growth. Nonetheless, other senses are silenced in the discourse of novelties in welfare rules, such as penalizing workers and defending the interests of entrepreneurs.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the metaphorical effect of the term “new”, the discourse on the “new” Social Welfare functions in a way to produce the effects of a system that intends to end privileges, promote equity, not being equivalent to repairs. Through mass circulation, digital media propagates feelings of rejection of the current system and advocates its necessary replacement, given its urgency which is supposedly essential for the country’s economic growth.

The discourse is affected by the relations of strengths and senses, with strong determinations of the neoliberal discourse; in this process, the media functions as an ideological apparatus and propaganda machine of the State and circulates, with intensity and celerity, the effects of strengthening the proposal, in an attempt to “inculcate” in the minds of the population the importance of the measures of the “new” welfare system.

However, the discourse functions under the tensions of transparency and opacity and, in this way, words, expressions and propositions change sense according to the positions of those who use them (PÊCHEUX, 2014).

³¹ “[...] prosperity is the promise of capitalism” (NOGUEIRA, 2015, p. 174, our translation).

³² Research made from a corpus extracted from the document “A bridge to the future”, formulated by the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party - PMDB (2015).

Therefore, in the plot of the sayings, the non-sayings are inscribed and thus the senses for the “new” Social Welfare can be quite different from those determined by the neoliberal DF, such as the penalization of workers and the setback of labor achievements.

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