

Consumerism and Spirituality: A Study Based on the Thoughts of Martin Lindstrom in the Book the Logic of Consumption Integrated with Contemporary Management

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Abstract: Contemporary society is marked by consumerism and increasingly unlimited needs and desires. Potential consumers are impacted by advertisements daily, which end up intensifying consumption practices. The problem situation of the work was knowing how to preserve spirituality in a society marked by consumerism. Problematizing, we sought to understand the following question: what are the relationships between consumerism and spirituality and how are they integrated into contemporary management? The general objective outlined for this study was to present the relationships between spirituality and consumerism in today's society. The methodology of the article was bibliographical research and theoretical research. The results point to the practice of unbridled consumerism in expansion driven by corporate strategies of manipulating consumption, aligned with accentuated concerns with spirituality practices, notably those who are most impacted by dehumanization in the face of this reality at the heart of consumerism.

Keywords: Consumerism, Consumption, Neuromarketing, Persuasion, Poimenica.

Introduction

The introductory paths of this section outline the concerns that drove the writing of this work. The fundamentals covered are necessarily based on the results of recent scientific research on subjects treated multidisciplinary and integrated with content that touches on various areas of knowledge.

Therefore, we think of the text by Alfonso García Rubio entitled “Unity in Plurality”, notably in the section where the important author discusses that the person's lack of freedom, manipulation, advertisements, educational systems, ideologies, socioeconomic systems, among others, they contribute to the dehumanization of human beings.

We understand, then, that this aforementioned dehumanization affects Christian spirituality because many people embrace the frenzy of unabated consumerism that can often become addiction, compulsion, obsession, dependence or even behavior limited by habit that often happens unnoticed. Thus, we see the need for pastoral care, attention, welcome and ecclesiastical support in order to help people going through these problems to understand the healthy practice of consumerism. Furthermore, protective care can also occur in order to prevent church members from engaging in the manipulations that are often carried out by companies through the most varied types of social communication, persuasion and propaganda strategies.

Thinking about the methodological structure of the work, the problem situation was knowing how to preserve spirituality in a society marked by consumerism. Consequently, it was to verify the relationships between consumerism and spirituality, pointing to corporate practices that dehumanize. The general objective outlined for this study was to present the relationships between spirituality and consumerism in today's society. The taxonomy for defining the scientific methodology of the article involved a bibliographic survey and theoretical research, based on renowned authors with recent productions, prioritizing the primary aspects of the sources investigated.

Imposing investments are made to identify consumption practices, their dynamics and their logic, because in the face of the scenario marked by consumption and asset appreciation, companies that have the most accurate information about consumer behaviors and their variations in the face of market competitiveness.

1. Marketist corporate strategies and dehumanizing consumerism

In an attempt to offer a logical sequence in the construction of the contents of the study present in this section, we will be explaining how a company is configured, what are the functions performed in the corporate environment until, finally, arriving at the marketing strategies that are being adopted in business to generating revenue and financial results. Next, believing to be the core of the work, we will present the relationships between spirituality and consumerism, and the Christian support that surrounds this scenario.

1.1. Understanding the format of a company

Before delving into the discussion of the strategies that companies are using to sell their products, it is a *sine qua non* to observe the organizational functions separated by the criterion of departmentalization, which meet the concepts of holism and systemic vision in the corporate environment.

The General Administration of a company is, minimally, composed of the following departmental organizational functions: Operations, Finance, Human Resources, Research and Development and Marketing. The Operations Department is responsible for transforming raw materials into finished products for sale. The Finance Department studies the time value of money, the diversification of investment portfolios to minimize risks, the investments to be made, the capital structure, among other activities. The Human Resources Department, also known as People Management, performs functions such as recruitment, selection, performance evaluation, remuneration policies, job and salary design and much more. The Research and Development Department is dedicated to collecting data about the company and its product portfolio, tabulating this data, making inferences, to generate scientific information useful for the decision-making process and corporate improvement. The functions inherent to the Marketing Department will be dealt with in the subsequent section as they involve one of the specific objectives of the present discussion.

1.2. The functions of the Marketing Department aligned with recent neuroscience discoveries in the dynamics of consumer practice

The Marketing Department brings together some of the most recent functions in the field of Management Science, because when the focus of business activities stopped being on the product and the process, those corporations that started the movement from the outside to the inside (which was unconventional at the time) had real chances of maximizing profits. In the corporate environment, the Marketing function covers activities such as research, product development, distribution, promotion, price, place and sales. Marketing can be defined “as the social and managerial process through which individuals and groups obtain what they want and need, creating and exchanging products and values with each other” (KOTLER, P.; ARMSTRONG, G., *Principles of Marketing*, p. 3).

When the focus stops being the product and the process, given the needs to sell and generate revenue, companies start to develop content that allows them to develop a competitive advantage over those who offer the same product on the market.

The basic objective of the marketing function is to establish and maintain the link between the organization and its customers, consumers, users or target audience. Both for-profit and non-profit organizations carry out marketing activities (MAXIMIANO, A. C. A., *Introduction to Administration*, p. 9).

In this dynamic, to understand consumer behavior and earn profits, some companies have used consumer manipulation strategies such as, for example, neuromarketing and persuasion, which will be discussed a little more specifically later. It is important to emphasize at this point, however, that we are not stating that the results from these areas of knowledge are always manipulative. Our discussion involves presenting how some corporate actions, taken without ethical concerns, tend to deceive human beings to the point of developing an increase in dehumanization.

1.3. Information about advanced research on neuromarketing and additions to understanding the logic of consumption

It would be very interesting to have precise answers to questions such as: why do human beings consume so much? Do we always make our own decisions when it comes to consumption? Or do we make the decisions that induce us to make? These questions will direct the study defined for this study unit.

This section was written with the aim of presenting results from the area of neuroscience in relation to understanding the logic of consumption. We will then make efforts to elucidate the concepts of neuromarketing and Martin Lindstrom's concerns expressed in his work called “The Logic of Consumption”.

Initially, it would be interesting to go through some conceptualizations of the term “neuromarketing”, which means “the branch of Neuroscience research that proposes to understand in greater depth unconscious processes and their applications in Marketing, in order to explain the preferences, motivations and expectations of the consumer” (BERCEA, M. D., *Quantitative versus qualitative in neuromarketing research*, p. 2). Furthermore, neuromarketing can be considered “the application of neuroscientific methods to understand

consumer behavior and marketing exchanges” (LEE, N.; BRODERICK, A. J.; CHAMBERLAIN, L., What is “neuromarketing”?, p. 200).

In 1957, an American journalist who acted as a critic of consumer practices, named Vance Oakley Packard, dared to challenge the market at the time by saying that all success would be determined by the domination of the human mind. At that moment, it was shocking information to say the least.

Socioeconomic systems, ideologies, movements, propaganda of various types, educational systems, family relationships, etc., as they manipulate human beings, contribute powerfully to the dehumanization of man, although they often present themselves as his saviors (RUBIO, A. G., Unity in plurality, p. 308).

Dominating the human mind means dehumanizing man to influence his consumption practices. As we well know, advertisements are tools capable of contributing, imposingly, to this dehumanization.

Many years later, at the beginning of 2004, with the advancement of technology and the theory of modern scientific knowledge, a Danish scientist named Martin Lindstrom, in his studies on consumerism, used equipment called functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) and an advanced version of the electroencephalogram test called Steady State Topography (TEE) to analyze the stimuli that the brain undergoes at the time of consumption.

All of this dynamic and bold actions by researcher Lindstrom had their origins in the scenario in which his criticisms and disturbing perceptions took place, as mentioned below:

By 2003, it had become abundantly clear to me that traditional research methods like market research and focus group discussions were no longer up to the task of finding out what consumers really think. And this happens because our irrational mind, flooded by cultural issues rooted in our tradition, upbringing and many other subconscious factors, exerts a powerful but hidden influence on the choices we make (LINDSTROM, M., The logic of consumption, p. 25).

The equipment used by Lindstrom in his research, the fMRI and the TEE, was the most advanced in the field of neuroscience. The fMRI exam looks a lot like a traditional CT scan. However, there are some differences precisely due to functional issues. In IRMf, the researched person interacts with the researcher in order to respond to the proposed stimuli. For example, the researcher, when projecting images of any product, asks the person being researched: “What do you feel when you see these images?”.

The most advanced brain scanning technique currently available, fMRI measures the magnetic properties of hemoglobin, a component in red blood cells that carry oxygen around the body. In other words, fMRI measures the amount of oxygenated blood in the brain and can accurately identify up to an area of just one millimeter. When performing a specific task, the brain requires more fuel – mainly oxygen and glucose. Therefore, the more a certain region of the brain is working, the greater the fuel consumption and flow of oxygenated blood to that region. Therefore, during the fMRI examination, when a part is being used, that region lights up fiery red. By tracking this activation, neuroscientists can determine which specific areas of the brain are working at any given time (LINDSTROM, M., The logic of consumption, p. 17).

The examination using images generated by fMRI lasts approximately 1 hour, where the person being studied remains awake, interacting and responding to the stimuli performed. The TEE measures electrical activity within the brain. While volunteers watch commercials, the TEE device tracks rapid brain waves in real time. Regarding his first research with an audience of smokers, Lindstrom explains:

A small reflective device, similar to a car's rearview mirror, projected a series of cigarette warning images at various angles onto a nearby screen. When she had to indicate the intensity of her desire to smoke during the slideshow, Marlene [who considered herself a “social smoker”] pressed a button – a small black console similar to an accordion – as the images were displayed (LINDSTROM, M., The logic of consumption, p. 21).

This neuroscientific study equipment, aligned with neuromarketing, allows us to understand the logic of consumption, desires, impulses, emotions and motivations of people. Thus, the method, even if unintentionally, presents prospects of dehumanization, and by dehumanizing the human essence of spirituality is lost, as human beings begin to make decisions, often due to the effect of external corporate influences.

1.4. Data from the largest and most revolutionary scientific study on neuromarketing ever carried out in the world

Martin Lindstrom, being a branding specialist, conceived what he considered to be the largest and most revolutionary scientific study on neuromarketing ever carried out worldwide. And the data is indeed impressive. The sample consisted of 2,081 smokers from the USA, England, Germany, Japan and China. The sampling criterion was non-random sampling by judgment. To elevate the explanation, it is interesting to highlight that "in judgmental sampling, the elements chosen are those judged as typical of the population to be studied" (BARBETTA, P. A., *Statistics applied to social sciences*, p. 54). The size of the study is 25 times larger than any other in the area of neuromarketing carried out to date. The research began in 2004 and lasted a total of 3 years. Lindstrom managed to partner with 8 multinational companies to finance the research, with a total of 7 million dollars disbursed. The team was made up of 200 researchers, 10 university professors with doctorates and 01 ethics committee that was very well organized and prepared. To supervise the team, Lindstrom invited Dr. Gemma Calvert – British Professor of Applied Neuroimaging at the University of Warwick, England, founder of Neurosense Limited in Oxford and DPhil in Clinical Medicine at the University of Oxford. But even with all this scientific notoriety, Dr. Calvert was not alone in supervising the work. Lindstrom invited Prof. Richard Silberstein – chief executive of Neuro-Insight in Australia – to help oversee the research.

Observing these data in detail, we can see the size of Lindstrom's boldness and intrepidity in his commitment to research results and advances in this area of knowledge.

1.5. Scientific and methodological elements of research with smokers

In his studies on consumerism, Lindstrom arrived at the following problem situation: what are the effects that warnings and warnings contained on cigarette packs have on smokers? Problematizing, he asks: do health warnings inhibit cigarette consumption? The general objective of the research with smokers was to analyze the stimuli that the brain experiences when consuming. The specific objective was to identify whether warnings and health warnings on cigarette packs inhibited smokers from consuming them. The methodological procedures were as follows: 1st step) Application of a questionnaire and interview with smokers (questions such as: a) Where do you live?, b) How many children do you have?, c) What is your marital status?, d) How long have you smoked?, e) Do you see yourself as dependent on nicotine or consider yourself a "social smoker"?, f) Are you affected by warnings on cigarette packs? g) Are you smoking less because of these warnings? 2nd step) Brain tracking using fMRI and TEE. 3rd step) Comparison of the information collected in the interview and through the research questionnaire with the images and data generated in the MRI and TEE exams. 4th step) Tabulate the data, make inferences and generate conclusions.

1.6. Smoker survey results

Even knowing that cigarette consumption is harmful to health and that the warning notices bring shocking photos (abortion, toxic product, death, heart attack, gangrene, toxic smoke, impotence, among others), smokers did not reduce their cigarette consumption.

Warning images on the sides, front and back of cigarette packs had no effect on suppressing smokers' desire. Zero. In other words, all those repulsive photographs, government regulations and billions of dollars that 123 countries invested in anti-smoking campaigns turned out, in the end, to be a huge waste of Money (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 22).

According to Lindstrom, the results from the survey of smokers are disturbing and surprising. The health warnings on cigarette packs, whether about the risk of contracting pulmonary emphysema, heart disease, or a host of other chronic conditions, had actually stimulated an area of smokers' brains called the nucleus accumbens, also known as the "point of desire".

However, like Dr. Calvert later concluded, our volunteers did not feel ashamed about what cigarettes were doing to their bodies; They felt guilty because those images stimulated the areas of their brain linked to desire (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 22-23).

Knowing that the warning images on cigarettes actually caused the desire to smoke, the research volunteers felt embarrassed about the consequences of cigarette consumption in relation to the damage caused to the body. It seems to be a reaction to perceptions of being manipulated in some way, reinforcing the concerns that are evident that human beings have a dynamic, conscious, free and unalterable spiritual essence that is uncomfortable with domination and sin.

Lindstrom expressed concerns about the survey results compared to social data.

You would notice that these explicit images [health warning signs] would deter most smokers. So why, in 2006, despite banned cigarette advertisements, direct and frequent warnings from the medical community, and massive government investment in anti-smoking campaigns, consumers around the world continued to smoke an astronomical 5.763 billion cigarettes?, a figure that does not include tax-free cigarettes or the huge international black market? (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 18).

Ultimately, health warnings have not been able to minimize cigarette consumption around the world, according to the research presented. The proposal is to develop new campaigns to reduce tobacco use around the world. Other strategic measures must be taken, based on science and human dimensions, if these innocuous institutional practices today are maintained and assumed by governments in promoting public health.

1.7. Research with Carmelites in 2006

Mario Beauregard – Canadian cognitive neuroscientist from the Department of Psychology at the University of Arizona, PhD from the University of Montreal, Canada, and Postdoctoral from the University of Texas and McGill University of Montreal Neurological Institute, together with Vincent Paquete, carried out research on 2006 with 15 nuns from the Order of Mount Carmel – the Carmelites – aged between 23 and 64 as a sample audience.

The question to be investigated was: which parts of the brain activate when we are engaged in personal, spiritual experiences, such as prayers, prayers, praise, or when we have the feeling that we are close to God? The overall goal of the research was to use neuroimaging generated by fMRI to discover more about how the brain experiences religious beliefs or feelings. The methodological procedures of the research were: 1st procedure – the scientists asked the 15 nuns to recall the most profound religious experience they had as members of the Carmelite Order. The fMRI imaging results showed large neural activity in the caudate nucleus and insula in the nuns' brains. 2nd procedure – the scientists asked the nuns to recall a deep emotional experience they had with another human being. The results, interestingly, presented images that showed that the activities were very different from the previous ones.

Beauregard and Paquette concluded that although there is no specific “god spot” in the human brain (no region that is particularly activated when we are having religious and spiritual thoughts), there are at least different patterns of brain activity during thoughts about religion and thoughts about religion. about being human.

1.8. Research with religious leaders – branding and spirituality

Knowing the results of research with Carmelites, Martin Lindstrom conceived of carrying out another challenging research involving a sample of 14 prominent leaders from various religions around the world, including Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism and Islam. The objective of the research was to discover what the participants' beliefs had in common. The results allowed us to conclude that despite the differences, almost all main religions have ten common pillars underlying their foundation: a) a sense of belonging; b) a clear vision; c) power over enemies; d) sensorial appeal; e) storytelling; f) grandeur; g) evangelism; h) symbols; i) mystery; and j) ritual. “And just as I suspected, these pillars have a lot in common with our most beloved brands and products” (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 100). The initial results led to an important question: “Is there scientific evidence that brands have a lot in common with spirituality and religion?” (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 108). The results achieved were structured in the following order: 1) Dr. Calvert analyzed fMRI data and discovered that strong brands generated more activity than weak brands in many areas of the brain linked to memory, emotion, decision-making and meaning; 2) when people saw images associated with strong brands, their brain recorded exactly the same patterns of activity as when they saw religious images and sacred symbols. According to the research results, consumers feel the same emotional impulses when they come across a religious symbol and a brand considered strong, such as Apple, Google, Ferrari, Harley-Davidson, Guinness and many others.

1.9. Analysis of some products and brands from the perspective of neuromarketing

On October 15, 2019, the MSCHF design office decorated some pairs of Nike brand sneakers, model Nike Air Max 97, with religious references and made them available for sale on the company's portal for the value of US\$3,000, wax R\$ 12 thousand. When offering the product, the company wrote the following question: “If Jesus Christ were alive today, what would he wear?” Interestingly, the stock completely sold out within minutes shortly after the offer. The Jesus Shoes, as it became known, featured the Nike symbol, a crucifix between the laces, a reference to a biblical verse (Mt 14:25), the acronym INRI (Ienus Nazarenus Rex

Iudaeorum – Jesus Nazarene King of the Jews) on the heel and holy water on the sole. On the portal, the company included an image where a believer performs prayers inside a church wearing the aforementioned product, as well as another image with Jesus walking on the water in front of the disciples in the boat, which is exactly the passage mentioned above in Matthew.

What made the design company MSCHF sell out its entire inventory of Jesus Shoes within minutes? The answer may be related to the conclusive information from the research carried out with 14 spiritual leaders, that is, by associating a strong brand with symbols of an also very strong religion (Christianity, in this case), the MSCHF office took off precisely because it had an impact the brain of consumers with affectionate and preponderant information that caused a desire to consume.

1.10. Ethical concerns arise after research results

Lindstrom demonstrates some ethical concerns when learning the results of research on neuromarketing and its social ramifications.

In short, the IMRf results showed that cigarette warning images not only failed to discourage smoking, but, by activating the nucleus accumbens, apparently encouraged smokers to light up. We cannot help but conclude that those same cigarette warning images that were intended to limit smoking, reduce the incidence of cancer and save lives had instead become a frightening marketing tool for the tobacco industry (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 22).

Knowing that there are possibilities to manipulate consumption through neuromarketing studies, what could greedy businesspeople do to maximize sales margins through manipulation of the human brain? Something to think about and worry a lot.

1.11. Neuromarketing in the soft drinks segment – the duel of the titans

In 1975, Pepsi-Cola Company executives launched an experiment that became known as the “Pepsi Challenge.” It consisted of distributing hundreds of Pepsi representatives in shopping malls and supermarkets around the world with tables set up to carry out the challenge/research. They distributed to each participant who approached sporadically two glasses with identical shapes, one glass containing Pepsi and the other glass containing Coca-Cola. After the tastings, people were asked which drink they preferred. The result was that more than half of the volunteers said they preferred the taste of Pepsi to Coca-Cola.

Given the results presented, a concern cannot fail to be raised: if Pepsi won the challenge, why isn't it leading the soft drinks market instead of Coca-Cola? We will try to point out the explanations. Malcolm Gladwell, in his work “The decision in the blink of an eye”, quotes Carol Dollard who explains the difference between taking a sip of a soft drink and drinking the entire amount from a can. In a taste test, says the researcher, people tend to like the sweetest product (Pepsi, in this case). However, when people drink an entire can of soda, there is always the possibility of hyperglycemia lurking. According to Gladwell, this is why Pepsi prevailed in the taste test and Coca-Cola continued to lead the soft drink market.

Later in 2003, Dr. Read Montague, director of the Human Neuroimaging Laboratory at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, decided to evaluate the results of the “Pepsi Challenge” taste tests a little more closely and with attention and depth that the exams deserve. The researcher reviewed the study data using an fMRI device, at which time he had the opportunity to monitor the brains of 67 people. Initially, he asked the volunteers if they preferred Coca-Cola, Pepsi or if they had no preference. More than half of those surveyed responded that they had a clear preference for Pepsi. When taking a sip of Pepsi, the volunteers recorded a burst of activity in the ventral putamen. In a second part of the research, Dr. Montague allowed those surveyed to know whether they drank Pepsi or Coca-Cola before tasting them. 75% of those surveyed said they preferred Coca-Cola. What's more, Dr. Montague also observed a change in the location of brain activity. In addition to the ventral putamen, there were blood flows recorded in the prefrontal cortex.

Thus, we have crystal clear information on why Coca-Cola continues to be the market leader. From this perspective, brands that explore the consumer's complete senses, vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch, are more memorable brands. Therefore, the best-selling brands on the market are exactly those that stimulate the brain to reflect on the same behavior it is visualizing. The disturbing question that must be raised is whether spirituality practices also undergo changes with these decisions.

1.12. Stimulation of mirror neurons in consumption practices

Recent research in neuroscience has revealed that the human brain has mirror neurons that imitate exactly what it visualizes. In 1955, the film *Picnic* was released in theaters. In the middle of the film, the words “Coca-Cola” and “Eat Popcorn” quickly appeared. Even though the passages were very quick, the human eye was able

to read the words and the brain recorded this information. The result was an increase in sales of the aforementioned products during the film's interval, due to behavior driven by mirror neurons.

1.13. Traps and manipulation of consumption in supermarkets, shopping centers and on television as forms of dehumanization

Supermarkets are environments suitable for manipulating consumption. All products are displayed on the shelves in order to influence and intensify consumerism. Products aimed at children are placed in the lowest parts of the shelves precisely to allow little ones to reach and touch the products, to influence their parents when purchasing them. Promotions for products that are about to expire, sweepstakes and tastings almost always boost consumption.

Shopping centers are designed to facilitate consumption. Observing store logos, the characteristics of each product, promotions, images, identity and infrastructure, for example, are already, in a certain sense, almost ethnographic forms of consumption and aspirations due to the high frequency in these environments, when we start to behave inclined towards physical and mental consumption. Sliding floors, dead ends, confusing signage, absence of clocks and windows indicate intentions to keep visitors longer in the environment where everything can be done to sell.

Television is also a powerful tool of manipulation. We are born inclined towards consumerism because we are bombarded by advertisements all the time. Remembering, who doesn't remember the Garoto company commercial released in 1990, in which a boy hypnotized people into consuming Baton chocolate. The boy said at one point in the commercial: "Buy Baton, buy Baton, your son deserves Baton", aimed at housewives. At the end, a thick voice said: "Baton, the boy's chocolate that doesn't come out of his mouth or head".

Have you ever stopped to think about how many times you've seen a good product fail on the market? Or will a brand prevail over stronger ones or succumb to a weaker one? Does an idea have so much power that it becomes almost unanimous? All of this is possible through manipulation and neuromarketing studies. Hostage to these practices, people stop consuming for themselves, becoming who companies want them to be: unrestrained, manipulable, irrational, dehumanized and almost mechatronic consumers in their consumption decisions.

1.14. Some of Lindstrom's concerns and other results

Lindstrom arrived at the following answers with the results of the research carried out: 1) Does merchandising really work? Answer: No; 2) What strength do logos have? Answer: Scent and sound are more powerful than any logo alone; 3) Subliminal advertising still occurs? Answer: Yes, she probably had an influence on what you chose at the convenience store the other day; 4) Is our consumption behavior affected by the world's largest religions? Answer: Without a doubt, and increasingly so; 5) What effects do health warning notices have on us? Answer: They stimulate consumption; 6) Does sex in advertising work? Answer: Not really (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 20).

This is why the true reactions and emotions we as consumers experience are more likely to be found in the brain, in the span of a nanosecond before thoughts are converted into words. So if they want to know the unvarnished truth – the blunt, uncensored truth about what makes us buy – marketers are going to have to poll our brains (LINDSTROM, M., *The logic of consumption*, p. 28).

It is very clear that scientifically understanding the consumer's brain is the most appropriate way to understand the dynamics of consumption.

1.15. Cialdini's weapons of persuasion on the path of manipulation and influence in consumerism

Robert Beno Cialdini (PhD) is a professor emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at Arizona State University. He is considered, in much of the world, as the greatest authority on the subject of persuasion. Cialdini wrote several books and scientific articles and his most widespread work is the best-seller "As Armas da Persuasão". In this work, Cialdini presents 6 weapons that companies have used to persuade consumers to consume. We will introduce these weapons in this section. The first weapon of persuasion is reciprocity – it occurs when, for example, we receive a free sample medication. By offering a free medicine, the pharmaceutical industry believes that the consumer will be persuaded to offer something in return and, thus, will purchase the product. The second weapon is coherence – it means the tendency that we have to maintain our identity, our image of who we are. Next, the third weapon is social approval – this is when an automobile industry, for example, makes efforts to show, incisively, that its car is the most sold, the most sought after, the most used and demanded by the public. The fourth weapon concerns affinity – it occurs when, for example, a salesperson (or

someone who wants to persuade us) puts themselves in a position of affinity towards us, being empathetic, altruistic and helpful. The fifth weapon is authority – for example, this happens when a company that produces toothpaste hires a dentist to recommend the brand in a television commercial, conveying the idea that the product has been tested and approved by experts. The last weapon is scarcity – the company passes on information that the quantity of the product or service on the market is scarce and, therefore, stocks are about to run out. In this scenario, the consumer needs to buy the product quickly so as not to run out, developing in many customers a specific need that perhaps did not have the essential nature of a desire or need.

Conclusion

It was possible to realize, during the research, that advertisements loaded with neuromarketing and persuasion, when dedicated to human manipulation for consumption, contribute greatly to dehumanization and affect Christian spirituality. We often buy unconsciously as a result of the impacts we suffer from the bombardment of logos, commercials and advertising.

It was notable to identify that companies invest in research and manipulations to maximize profits and corporate results. With this, it can be seen that mercantilism, at least in recent years, has been the main enemy of humanization.

Therefore, the research results that are brought up point to the importance of church leaders being aware of manipulation and consumerism that may be influencing their sheep, dehumanizing them and affecting their purchasing decisions. To achieve these noble and special objectives in the face of pastoral activity, support and care prove to be efficient in this process that involves the therapeutic community that seeks to provide opportunities for spirituality practices.

Contemporary society is marked by unbalanced consumerism and needs, desires and expectations that intensify without limit. Consumers are more likely to be impacted by advertisements on a daily basis, which end up intensifying consumption practices.

The Bible in its entirety leaves no room for consumerism as seen in modern society. Every time God, as a provider, satisfied human needs, he also left the teaching that his people should depend on Him with trust and faith. It is worth highlighting the teaching of the great apostle Paul: “My God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19).

It was also found that the results of the research carried out point to the practice of unbridled consumerism in expansion driven by corporate strategies of manipulating consumption, aligned with accentuated concerns with pastoral care, notably those who are most impacted by dehumanization in the face of this reality in the core of consumerism.

Carlo Ginzburg in his work “Wooden Eyes” presents nine reflections on distance. Looking at an advertisement from a distance and strangely helps us avoid being manipulated, as well as avoiding the consequences of indiscriminate consumption (GINZBURG, C. Wooden eyes, n.p.).

Propaganda manipulates men in an indistinct and often imperceptible way. Where propaganda has a voice to scream freedom, it contradicts itself by throwing the consumer in prison. The falsehood printed by propaganda is inseparable. It is in the community of lies that leaders and their followers come together thanks to propaganda, even when the content as such is correct. The truth itself becomes for her a simple means of winning followers for her cause: profits and more profits. She already falsifies it when she puts it in her mouth. Therefore, true resistance does not know any propaganda, it does not surrender to the stimuli of unbalanced consumption. Advertising is the enemy of men, advertising is the enemy of healthy consumption practices. So, clarification is a solution that can be aligned with protective care to avoid the problems of unrestricted consumption, which can be considered a recommendation (ADORNO, T. W.; HORKHEIMER, M., *Dialectic of enlightenment*, p. 209).

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Author Profile



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