The media discourse and the 'new middle class': articulations of a social experience in progress

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Abstract

The text problematizes different dimensions of the 'new middle class', especially approaches of the media discourse which depart from associations to class fractions of different economic capital. From a bibliographic research of the themes that theoretically articulate the topic, it thinks the 'new middle class' as a relational notion considering its reflections in the actual life of the whole of society. It is discussed how it reflects on the ways in which the experience provided by the increase in consumption power amongst these subjects is represented in the media , referring to new experiences that allow them to perceive themselves and their social position, contributing to the conformation of their class identity and of their relation to other groups. Finally, based on theoretical work of Raymond Williams, the text approaches the "new middle class" as a cultural formation in its pre-emergent state, a social experience *in progress*, whose outcomes are not completely classifiable.

Keywords: New middle class. Social order. Structure of feeling. Media. Consumption.

Introduction

The expression "new middle class" has been, in recent years, widely used by different and important social spheres in Brazil. The various approaches given to the topic in the media point to the growth of the middle class, including in this stratum the part of the working class which has ascended economically, having witnessed an increase in its power of consumption. However, this focus solely on income has overlooked debates on class struggle: that is, on what changes and what remains the same in terms of social inequality.

As part of our research, this article aims at locating and comprehending the relations between residual and emergent values in the fractions of the middle class and the 'new

middle class' from different representations on both within the dominant discourse – the government, the market, and especially the media. From a bibliographic survey on the topic, on this article we reflect on how these changes are perceptible in the everyday and in the conformation to the subjects' identities, thus drawing our theoretical framework on concepts developed by Raymond Williams.

The text is divided into four steps: firstly, we reflect on class domination in terms of the tensioning between dominant, alternative, and oppositional values (WILLIAMS, 2011). Next, we present the different ways by which the dominant discourses (political, economic, and most of all mediatic) have been presenting the ascension of the 'new middle class', collaborating to the construction of a 'half-truth' about the issue (SOUZA, 2010). Thirdly, we draw on Williams' (1979) proposition that a new class represents a new cultural formation to think about the ways in which transformations put forth by the phenomenon may lead to adaptations and incorporations between class fractions. Finally, we reflect on the 'new middle class' in relation to the concept of 'structures of feeling', considering this formation as a social experience *in process*.

The (new) middle class and the relations of domination and subordination

The concept of class is fundamental for understanding the general dynamics of social life, given that every specific organization and structure of any society are linked to the social intentions conducted by a particular class (WILLIAMS, 2011, p.50). According to Jessé Souza (2013), both the reproduction and the legitimization of inequality come from the maintenance of the mechanisms by which social order functions opaquely, as to keep interests and advantages to those who have class privilege somehow implicit.

In this sense, we take class to be "sets of agents who occupy comparable positions and who, being placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, have every likelihood of having similar dispositions and interests and therefore of producing similar practices and adopting similar stances" (BOURDIEU, 2011, p.136). In constructing our own reflections, therefore, we draw on Williams' (2011) proposal to observe social life through the functioning of a central system of meaning and values which are dominant. Due to its dynamic constitution, this system is not recognizable simply in abstract terms inasmuch as it is built and reinforced by the practices which compose a real process of incorporating such values.

Thus, class domination is not kept only via power or property but also via lived culture – which includes the experience, the saturation of habit, the world-views, all embedded and

renewed at every stage of life. In this context, dominant values are neither unique nor static; they are tensioned against alternative/oppositional senses[1]. The hegemonic process of the constitution of social life succeeds because of its continual activity and adaptation, which ultimately means recognizing (and accommodating) both oppositional and alternative meanings, values, and opinions within the structuration of effectively dominant culture (WILLIAMS *apud* CEVASCO, 2001, p.55).

The observation of the social process through tensioning, which includes those interests that diverge from the dominant ones, leads Williams (1979) to reinstate the Gramscian concept of hegemony. In his analysis, the concept includes and expands the concepts of ideology and culture. For him, hegemony represents an advancement in the observation of social life inasmuch as it recognizes the social process as a whole, without assigning specific distributions of power and influence. That is, it implies taking into account the relation between domination and subordination "in their forms as practical consciousness, as in effect of the saturation of the whole process of living" (WILLIAMS, 1979, p.111), covering from political, economic, and social activities to the construction of identities and relations lived by subjects. Thus, for Williams (1979, p.113), hegemony:

> [...] is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perception of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming [...]It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a 'culture', but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes.

Alternative and oppositional values therefore exert pressure over the dominant ones, which are thus not exclusive. The contrary also applies: alternative and oppositional values to the dominant logic are shaped by the limits and the pressure arising from hegemony – thus being possible to recognize the production and the adaptation of alternative forces within dominant culture itself. In that sense, Williams suggests that alternative politics and culture are significant because, besides breaking with the hegemonic and its active presence, they point to the limits, the tensions, and all that the hegemonic process tries to control, transform, or incorporate. Once the concept of hegemony goes beyond that simple transmission of domination, "the reality of cultural process must then always include the efforts and contributions of those who are in one way or another outside or at the edge of the terms of the specific hegemony" (1979, p.116, *our translation*).

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[1]   Although close, oppositional senses are built by precise social and political forces claiming for a change in the dominant, whereas alternative ones refer to something that deviates from the dominant standards without necessarily fighting it (WILLIAMS, 2011).

Observing the complexity of culture through its variable processes by relating dominant values to non-dominant ones leads to the concepts of 'residual' and 'emergent' (WILLIAMS, 1979). Residual refers to what has been formed in the past but lingers actively in the cultural process as an element of the present. Emergent, on the other hand, refers to meanings, values, practices, and experiences that have been continuously created. Within the emergent, it is important to make the distinction between elements representing a new phase of dominant culture and those effectively new as they are alternative or oppositional to the dominant. Those two are relational concepts – as we see it, the emergent and the residual are always in relation to the dominant. Thus, emergent and residual elements might (or might not) be incorporated by the dominant.

Considering the capitalist system and the bourgeois values as dominant, we reflect on the dynamics ruling the current social structure in Brazil. A reflection in which the middle class is central to understanding such process of signification. In those terms, what are the values that make up cultures alternatives to the dominant logic of the middle class? Is it possible for them to be found in the fraction known as the 'new middle class'? To what extent (and why) is it important for the traditional middle class to incorporate or reject the elements representing the emergent class? In order to articulate those questions, it is firstly necessary to contextualize the concept of the 'new middle class'.

'New middle class': a 'half-truth'?

This is a term that gained repercussion after the release of a study by the *Fundação Getúlio Vargas* in 2008 that pointed to the increase in the purchasing power of the so-called 'C class'. Classified in accordance with family income (from R$1.343.00 to R$5.971,00[2]), this group was given attention and value due to its proportions: it accounts for almost 95 million people (more than half of Brazil's population), of whom 30 million ascended from the D and E classes in the past ten years. Besides being numerous, the 'new middle class' was presented as dominant according to the economic perspective for concentrating more than 45% of the purchasing power in the country – potential granted by the increase in income and in access to credit, a result of public policies and economic stabilization (NERI, 2010).

Even though the research coordinated by Marcelo Neri (2008; 2010) has been used as a reference in economic and governmental analyses, in academic debates on the other

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[2]   Values updated by Kerstenetzky, Uchôa and Silva (2013). In Neri's original version (2008), it varied from R$ 1.126,00 to R$ 4.854,00 (or US$ 485 to US$ 2.080,00 in 2008).

hand, most citations to the study have been made in the form of criticism to its economic approach (SOUZA, 2013) and to the faulty use of the concepts of class (SOBRINHO, 2011) in that it considers this fraction only in terms of income.

According to Jessé Souza (2013), statistical data, such as those used by Neri, are rich pieces of information for the analysis of social structure. However, they are not data 'in themselves'; there has to be a dense theoretical discussion in order to understand them. In other words, for Souza, in using quantitative data as evidence of the increase in purchasing power of part of the population, Neri overlooked the role of other forms of capital (social and cultural) in the conformation of the class *habitus* of these new subjects as well as the results of this more contextual set of ways in the maintenance of social order and of inequality.

Souza's claim not to call this group 'new middle class' but rather 'new working class' takes into account stark differences between this group's *habitus* and that of the established middle class, which has, in turn, been endorsed by most authors currently working on the topic[3]. It must be equally noted that it also seems to be consensual amongst scholars to recognize that there have been *real* changes in people's lives in the past years – even if those changes do not have, however, the power, as Neri argued, to have made them members of a new social class.

Moreover, despite the fact that the expression 'new middle class' has been heavily criticized in academia, it is important to take into consideration the fact that it is still widely used in the dominant discourse (media, government, and market). Jessé Souza (2010) highlights that such enthusiasm surrounding the 'new middle class' is an intentionally skewed representation of dominant culture, thus presenting the ascension of so many people as a fact, free from conflicts or contradictions. Nothing is said about the costs at which this ascension came; that is, what sacrifices and hardships are imposed on the social mobility of these subjects as of their birth, which ultimately both attenuates the perception of class difference – thus maintaining it – as well as praises material change as complete transformations in these people's lives. That, for Souza, qualifies as symbolic violence.

The 'half-truth' about the rise of the 'new middle class' put forth by dominant culture speaks of real changes indeed, but it does not allow for there to be any debate on class inequality since it conceals the lack of access to the apparatuses that enable upwards social mobility, such as education, healthcare, and other forms of capital which, when associated, guarantee the maintenance of the dominant group's class privilege (SOUZA, 2010).

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[3]   UCHOA; KERSTENETZKY, 2013; SOBRINHO, 2011; JORDÃO, 2011, to name but a few.

The media and the 'new middle class': the evident and the concealed

Equally enthusiastically, the 'new middle class' became a topic of debate in various social fields, in which the media have had an important role in the constitution of the dominant discourses that define what the concept of the 'new middle class' is supposed to be. What has been made evident and what has been concealed by the media are both relevant for the hegemonic control and the maintenance of class distinctions. In that sense, "communication and its material means are intrinsic to all distinctively human forms of labor and social organization, thus constituting indispensable elements both of the productive forces and of the social relations of production" (WILLIAMS, 2011, p.69).

In considering the pervasive circulation of discourses on the 'new middle class' in the media, the receptors of such discourses (who are also co-producers of such texts), as well as the other social spheres, Grohmann (2013) argues for a "mediatization of social classes" for they are "in magazines, *telenovelas*, smartphone apps, social networks, blogs, fashion industry, advertising, as an 'explosion of mediatized classes', thus capable of assigning sense and meaning to subjects' interactions and practices of consumption" (GROHMANN; 2013, p.6, *our translation*).

For the author, in a great deal of what is produced by Journalism, the imagined receptor's *ethos* is different to that of the subject who is a part of the 'new middle class' due to the fact that these journalistic texts aim to 'unveil' who these people, their habits, and their consumption expectations are. Some, moreover, point to the ways in which companies have been adapting to take advantage from these people's newly-discovered purchasing power in a clear example of how the expression has been commodified.

Grohmann also lists the *ethé* of the 'new middle class' according to Journalism: a subject who is eager to consume (usually paying in monthly instalments), whose 'desires' are being transformed into 'achievements'. The access to consumption, in turn, is attributed to individual efforts, coming from a national context of a stable economy, thus exacerbating the optimistic tone of the approach.

The tendency to accentuate the main role of the working class is also noticeable in telenovelas. In this context, it is important to highlight that the existence of rich and poor nuclei is recurrent in Brazilian plots, in which upwards social mobility on the part of unprivileged characters is usually associated with their individual trajectories, thus reinforcing the ideology of merit (RONSINI, 2012).

The inclusion of such characters amongst the protagonists has recently become a frequent phenomenon, which exposes the relations of prejudice and praises the virtues of

the working class (2012. Attention to the conflicts between characters of the traditional and the emergent classes – clearly demarcated by differences in their *habitus* (BOURDIEU, 2008) – has been central in three of the recent primetime telenovelas on *Rede Globo*[4]. However, this approach is not limited to the authors' interest in stirring debate on social issues but especially to the attempt to raise ratings amongst the working class (RONSINI, 2012).

If the rise of the 'new middle class' is a half-truth that must be dealt with carefully in the social field, for the advertising market, on the other hand, this rise brought changes in targets and, consequently, in the advertisements themselves as well. Marcelo Serpa, partner of the renowned ALMAP BBDO, when asked about the impact of the rise of the C, D, and E classes in advertising during an interview for Brazilian newspaper *O Globo* (SCOFIELD JR.; D'ERCOLE, 2010), had an interesting response:

> Twenty years ago, one would speak to the urban audiences, the middle class, and would simply put all the rest aside – all those who, even though were watching the same message, could not consume. It was a highly sophisticated and ironic message for a limited audience. That has completely changed today because of massification. Language needs to be simpler, more objective and direct. The content has to be understandable by an 'average Afghani'. The irony, the metaphor, and the hyperbole have all perished. Advertising has to be more popular in order to get through to as many people as possible, which does not necessarily mean that it has to be worse, that it has to be bad. It might be of good taste, fun, but in a different language. The risk of releasing a campaign that no one understands is that of pouring money down the drain [our translation].

Two are the expressive elements in this piece. The first one places the working class as a previously nonexistent target audience for advertising: 'all of those who could not consume'. The second element refers to the idea of the working class as being made up of people who lack cultural capital to understand more complex messages. In order for advertising to become popular, according to Mr. Serpa, it would be necessary to abandon sophistication and recognize the interlocutor as an "average Afghani". This approach ultimately legitimates the dominant mindset and reiterates the social position of inferiority which the working class is assigned.

Janaina Jordão (2011) accordingly analyses the aesthetics of retail advertising targeting the 'C class'. She bases her analysis on Mr. Serpa's testimonial as well as on a

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[4]   Aguinaldo Silva's *Fina Estampa* (2011/20132); João Emanoel Carneiro's *Avenida Brasil* (2012); and Glória Perez' *Salve Jorge* (2012/2013).

survey published by *Data Popular* in 2011, whose results point to the agencies' lack of knowledge on how to deal with a more popular audience – only 8.6% of interviewees said they were prepared to speak to the C, D, and E classes. Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *taste*, as a way to classify that unites and separates groups based on their dispositions, helps the author to reflect on what is produced and what is perceived in terms of advertising aesthetics – in this case, those that have the working class as its target. As part of the dominant group, advertisers and their clients "comply with the logic of distinction. They would not produce for the working class what they would produce for themselves. That is when the system of classifications comes in with its ideas of refined taste and popular taste, both entrenched in the logic of production" (JORDÃO, 2011, p.8, *our translation*).

These examples of different ways of representing the 'new middle class' in the media presuppose too different ways of appropriating such content. We are thus dealing with an important space, one in which Communication can reflect on differences and, especially, on the tensionings, the negotiations, and the articulations needed for hegemony to be a process of social domination which is comprised of seduction and complicity on the part of the working class, which, to a certain extent, recognizes itself with the interests put forth by the dominant class (MARTIN-BARBERO, 2006, p.112)

The 'new middle class': conflicts and adaptation in a new cultural formation

From the observation of the ways in which control is maintained, it is interesting to expand the question onto the changes behind the 'formation of a new class'. For that, we must take into account some transformations which have materialized in these subjects' everyday life. That refers to the increase in access to formal education in different modalities, to diverse experiences and subjectifications emerging from leisure activities and a consequential appropriation of cultural capital.

The recognition of education as a paramount factor for social mobility is consensual amongst subjects from all social classes. Nevertheless, according to a research carried out by Souza and Lamounier (2010), there is a difference between the aspirations and the expectations of education on the part of parents in accordance with their class: "[...]just like people of higher levels of education, those who are semi-schooled also wish that their children earn a university degree. More than a third of them (36%) recognize, however, that their children's achievements will not meet such aspirations" (SOUZA, LAMOUNIER, 2010, p.57, *our translation*).

This tensioning between what is expected and what is possible collides with the limits that are often concealed or shown in a skewed manner by the dominant discourse. Although the levels of education amongst young people of the new working class are higher than that of the previous generation[5], the proportion of access to and the quality of education are still very different to those experienced by the middle class (KERSTENETZKY; UCHÔA, 2013, p.11).

We thus argue that the difference in social and cultural capital prevents that the compensation (if that much) of economic capital could be equivalent to the class identity of subjects from these two fractions. Therefore, despite taking into account the importance of the maintenance of inequality as a topic of analysis, we are interested in discussing the ways in which the formation of a 'new class' represents a new cultural formation (WILLIAMS, 1979, p.127).

Certainly, the formation of the 'new middle class' as a source of cultural practices retains its original unequal and subordinated space (WILLIAM, 1979). That is, *we are speaking of the ascending fraction of the working class*. However, as of the moment when these people's practices are recognized, by means of either adaptation or incorporation, within the dominant culture, there is a tensioning between emergent and dominant elements (mostly alternative and sometimes oppositional), which alters the lived reality of both groups.

Effectively, from situations which are provoked by the approximation of economic capital, there are subjects from both groups who now share spaces and capital which had been previously exclusive to the members of the traditional middle class. And, even if the mere presence of members from the 'new middle class' in material and symbolic spaces might not invert the logic of domination, something has changed in the relation between the two groups.

The dominant class incorporates emergent cultural elements, supported by their presence in various media products. This incorporation obviously follows the growing demand of media consumption on the part of this segment of the audience[6]. On the other hand, there is resistance to the presence of the 'new middle class' in spaces taken to be traditional of the established middle class – which translates, even if in disguise, as class racism (SOUZA, 2010, p.49). Journalism publishes recurrent articles on the dissatisfaction

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[5]   15% of young people between the ages of 19 and 29 are currently registered in higher education, twice as many as in the time of their parents (KERSTENETZKY; UCHÔA, 2013, p.9).

[6]   For example, between the years of 2006 and 2012, the number of LCD or plasma TV sets increased at a rate of 400% amongst the 'new middle class'; today, some 27% of households of the C class have cable TV; 41% of the total internet usage is by people from this group; print popular newspapers, similar to penny papers, have been dominating the paid circulation in the country for over a decade. The media have thus been adapting their content and creating new products to cater for the 'new middle class' (RIBEIRO, 2012).

of the traditional middle class with the changes brought about in their everyday by the increase in the purchasing power of the 'new middle class'. Such dissatisfaction often translates into numbers:

> According to the survey, 55.3% of the consumers at the top of the pyramid believe that products should have different versions for rich and poor people, 48.4% state that the quality of services has worsened with the access of population, 49.7% prefer to go to places frequented by people of the same social level, 16.5% believe that poorly-dressed people should be stopped from entering certain places, and 26% say that a tube station would bring 'undesirable people' to their neighborhoods (CARVALHO, 2013, p.1).

On the part of the new working class, it is necessary to consider that the experiences resulting from the increase in the purchasing power offer subjects new ways to use time, new modes of sociability, new material and symbolic possessions – all of which, once they have been introjected in people's everyday, provoke a change in self-perception. Life is no longer as it was and will probably never be the same again.

Consumption, in those terms, has to be analyzed beyond the materiality of acquired goods so as to be seen as a "set of sociocultural processes in which take place both the appropriation and the use of the products" (GARCIA CANCLINI, 2008, p.60, *our translation*). We should not, therefore, dismiss of the fact that material and symbolic consumption to which this part of the population has had access can also incite the reflection on processes of identification and social distinction – that is, of identity conformity. Seen like that, consumption helps to reflect on class conflicts (and their fractions) since the association of goods with their owner is classified and classifies, is hierarchized and hierarchizing (BOURDIEU, 2008).

Nevertheless, in this group, the increase in economic capital does not guarantee a mutual elevation of social and cultural capital, which are essential for the maintenance and domination of the middle class, thus not being possible to equate both fractions herein presented. That is, the middle class incorporates and accepts alternative elements especially as a way to retain domination and the 'new middle class' incorporates and adapts dominant elements in an attempt to get closer to the dominant and/or to distinguish itself from lower fractions. In other words, there is value incorporation and adaptation from both parties, which does not, however, make them equivalent to one another.

For Bourdieu, the structure of class relations comes into being by means of a synchronic cut, in which there is a relatively stable state of distribution of the "global

volume of capital" justifying the formation of spaces for distinct lifestyles. Such stability cannot, however, be mistaken for inertia. Within and between classes themselves takes shape a constant dynamic, the result of conflicts and capital reconversion, which arranges fields and subfields in a diachronic fashion. That is why it is important to conceive of the field and class dynamic in terms of *fraction*, which vary according to the relation between capitals and their position – which can be declining, stable, or rising positions (BOURDIEU, 2008).

The issue is not restricted to what we have hitherto articulated in terms of the adequacy of names or the stratification of a group. In trying to locate the fraction, i.e the social space in which the 'new middle class' is inserted, we make an effort to understand the dynamic of this subfield both in its internal transformation as well as in its relation with other fields. That implies recognizing the importance of empirically observing "the ways in which abstract social principles become nothing less than real, full of 'dreams and hardship', for regular people who face everyday dilemmas" (SOUZA, 2010, p.40, *our translation*).

Class identity as an experience *in process*

As we see it, we face a transition from a cultural element whose meaning does not lie just in its fixed evidence. Emergent culture, for Williams (1979, p.129), is not noticeable only in its immediate practices, there being in its origin a preliminary emergence – something that is not yet fully articulate but already presently acts and exerts pressure. That allows us to reflect on the 'new middle class' through Raymond Williams' notion of structure of feeling.

For the author, there are social experiences which are *in process* and thus are not institutional or formal and are often not even recognized as social. These are *changes of presence*, which "in that although they are emergent or pre-emergent, they do not have to await definition, classification, or rationalization before they exert palpable pressures and set effective limits on experience and on action" (WILLIAMS, 1979, p.134).

In that sense, Williams makes a distinction between practical consciousness and official consciousness: what is in fact lived and what we believe is being lived (1979, p.133). It is evident, in the construction the dominant makes around the 'new middle class', that a series of discourses (media, government, and market) are articulated, which allows for the constitution of an official consciousness referring to what we believe is lived by this group. However, in relation to practical consciousness, to the experiences that have

been lived by those subjects in the past years, there is "a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulated and defined exchange. Its relations with the already articulate and defined are then exceptionally complex" (1979, p.133).

That is, changes in the lives of subjects of the 'new middle class' are real and have been articulated with cultural elements that were settled by the group. These new experiences that are lived by the subjects further provoke transformations and, because of that, are not formalized, classified. They are thus social experiences *in process*, which can be seen as *changes of presence,* constituting (although not evidently) the way in which the subjects of this group conform their class identity. "Methodologically, then, a 'structure of feeling' is a cultural hypothesis, actually derived from attempts to understand such elements and their connections in a generation or period, and needing always to be returned, interactively, to such evidence" (WILLIAMS, 1979, p.135).

For Williams (1979, p.137), the rise of a new structure of feeling is often associated with the ascension of a class or with the break/mutation within a class. In this last case, a cultural formation appears to distance itself from the norms of the class, even if keeping its essence. As we see it, those are the intriguing principles for the observation of what has been called the 'new middle class'. That is, the tensionings that relate dominant, alternative, and oppositional elements are in fact made up of what is in formation but is already part of the concrete life of the whole of society.

Final remarks

We have no intentions to infer ultimate conclusions about the topic here, especially considering that we have been observing a social experience *in process*, thus not yet finished, not fully formed. Noticing the subtlety of this scenario is a challenge for social research – one which we want to highlight.

Therefore, we take the 'new middle class' to be a notion that does not apply objectively due to the fact that it is relational, it exists *in* and *by means of* relation, *in* and *by means of* the difference established in the tensioning between different class fractions (BOURDIEU, 2008). That also refers to the observation of what alters and what remains in the relations of domination and subordination between distinct class fractions, thus allowing us to think about class conflicts and potential alterations lived not only in the everyday of this specific group but also amongst subjects of fractions holding more or less economic capital.

Consumption is a prolific standpoint for such observation since it allows us to visualize, through its different uses, the expression and the distinction of tastes and lifestyles in accordance with the social position the subjects occupy (BOURDIEU, 2008). Thus, the adaptation and incorporation of alternative values into the universe of the middle class (and vice versa), which circulate very frequently in the media, reflect tensions that permeate everyday reality both in the traditional and in the emergent classes.

We reiterate that, although disagreeing with the partial construction that supports the notion of the 'new middle class' in the media discourse, we believe that real changes have indeed taken place in the lives of these subjects. What is now needed is to scale and observe them so as to go beyond quantitative data. Our stance is that what has been taking place is the formation of a new class fraction that might be called *new* "inasmuch as it results from deep social changes that follow the establishment of a new form of capitalism in Brazil and in the world" (SOUZA, 2010, p.26, *our translation*).

Williams (1979, p.134) suggests that experiences constituting the structure of feeling have become more easily recognizable at a later stage when they were classified, formalized, and even incorporated by institutions and formations. In that case, it seems as if there will be a moment at which it will be possible to note the establishment of this class fraction in a more evident and consolidated fashion when the experiences offered by the access to economic and cultural capital have definitively been articulated and incorporated by these subjects.

Thus far, it is possible to speak of the formation of a 'new middle class' *habitus*. That name will ultimately lose its firm meaning as it will not be possible to call it 'new' for it will no longer be emergent, but settled. Nor will it be possible to speak of it in terms of a 'middle class' for the conformity of its lifestyle along with a set of specific practices and preferences will have been sketched, allowing for the recognition of its specific *class habitus*.

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