

Organizations and their perverse histories: The potencial of comic strips to stimulate reflexivity in undergraduate students

Organizações e suas histórias perversas: O potencial das tirinhas para estimular a reflexividade de estudantes de graduação

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to explore the potential of comic strip production to stimulate the reflexivity of undergraduate business students in relation to corporate practices. The research is qualitative, and the corpus is composed of material produced by students during a class activity in the discipline of Culture and Organizational Change of the Administration course of a federal public university. The empirical material consists of the slides presented containing the comic strips prepared by the students and their speeches during the group presentations, which were recorded with the consent of the participants, and later transcribed and submitted to the narrative analysis. The stories told by the students reveal the repulsive face of organizations: violence and exploitation of work; domination and power of organizations.

Keywords: comic strips; reflexivity; administration education.


Submitted: 28/03/2022
Accepted: 20/12/2022

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa aborda a reflexividade de estudantes de Administração, com o objetivo de explorar o potencial da produção de tirinhas para estimular a reflexividade de estudantes de graduação em administração em relação às práticas corporativas. Os procedimentos metodológicos são de natureza qualitativa, sendo o corpus de pesquisa composto pelo material produzido pelos(as) estudantes durante uma atividade de aula na disciplina de Cultura e Mudança Organizacional do curso de Administração de uma universidade pública federal. O material empírico consiste nos slides apresentados contendo as tirinhas elaboradas pelos(as) estudantes e nas falas desses(as) durante as apresentações dos grupos, as quais foram gravadas com o consentimento dos(as) participantes, e, posteriormente,

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RESUMO

transcritas e submetidas à análise de narrativas. As histórias contadas pelos estudantes revelam a face repugnante das organizações: violência e exploração do trabalho; dominação e poder das organizações. O artigo contribui para o campo da formação em administração, apontando para as possibilidades de estimular a reflexividade dos estudantes diante de decisões corporativas condenáveis.

Palavras-Chave: Tirinhas. Reflexividade. Ensino em Administração.

Introduction

In contemporary times, media discourses on political instability, economic oscillations, and social turmoil highlights the complexity of modern societies, reflected in and by the global social, environmental, political, and economic problems that persist, despite the development already achieved (GEORGE et al.; 2016). In this context, organizations have become increasingly visible for their responsibilities and engagement in areas that governments traditionally assume, humanitarian agencies, or other organizations (BALLESTEROS; USEEM; WRY, 2017).

Researchers from different perspectives have explored the organizations' involvement with various global problems. Some of them, for example, discoursing ways of overcoming the tensions that involve the integration of sustainability strategies into the competitive mainstream of organizations (HENGST, 2020); critical analysis of corporate social responsibility policies, which includes the exploitation of local communities by multinationals (BANERJEE, 2018) and unethical conduct, corporate irresponsibility and the recurrence of corporate crimes (FREITAS, 2005; LINSTEAD; MARÉCHAL; GRIFFIN, 2014; RHODES, 2016; ALCADIPANI; MEDEIROS, 2020).

With the Covid-19 virus spread and the WHO pandemic declaration in March 2020, the health crisis revealed many of the organizations' vulnerabilities, the way we live in communities, financial, industrial, health, educational, supply systems, and livelihoods (HOWARD-GRENVILLE, 2021). By responding to the challenges generated by the crisis, organizations can normalize, aggravate, or reduce the scenario of inequalities (BAPUJI et al., 2020). This context led companies to face the pandemic and its consequences.

One of the highlights of pandemic lessons is the interdependence of organizations with social, economic, and natural systems since organizational decisions have consequences for human suffering or prosperity (HOWARD-GRENVILLE, 2021). A world in crisis becomes an opportunity for management researchers to collaborate on facing global challenges (GEORGE et al., 2016), like poverty and social inequality. Consequently, seeking theoretical explanations and solutions to contribute to better organizational practices in response to the criticism received by managers training (MINTZBERG, 2004; SILVA et al., 2019; SARAIVA; PEREIRA; REZENDE, 2019).

Educational institutions with business administration courses have been the primary locus for professional and theoretical development guided by managerial, functionalist, and positivist logic (MCLAREN, 2020). In Brazil, according to the last census, the number of enrollments in Business undergraduate courses (645,777) and people management (178,259) was 824,036 (BRASIL, 2020). The expressive enrollment number reflects the offer expansion of business courses in the country from the 1930s onwards. It presents challenges, such as outdated training (BOAVENTURA et al., 2018), the need for methodological aspects advances, pedagogical, student awareness, teacher appreciation, and approximation between theory and the business context (BOLZAN; ANTUNES, 2015).

Organizational complexity requires theory development that makes distinctions, overcomes dualisms, and values relationality, temporality, context, and interpretative openness (TSOUKAS, 2017). It is urgent to reflect on how management researchers should engage, analyze and theorize about the everyday problems that organizations face in the 21st century (HOWARD-GRENVILLE, 2021). The results of such research, whether published in textbooks, in teaching activities, or exposed by the media, can shape future managers' thinking. It is necessary to reaffirm the long-term commitment to teaching these professionals to act ethically and responsibly when leading organizations and meeting the demands of society (TIHANYI, 2020).

Adopting teaching methods in administration that contribute to forming more reflective researchers and professionals is necessary and possible. In the educational context, reflexivity can provide critical and creative professional training. However, for this to happen, changes must occur in the pedagogical practices used by teachers (PEREIRA; CAVALCANTE; CASTRO, 2020), focusing on broadening perspec-

tives and understanding the teaching-learning relationship in business concerning pedagogical strategies that promote reflexive approximation of theory and practice.

Methodological procedures consist of qualitative research, the corpus being composed of the material produced by the students in an activity of the discipline of the Administration course and the observation, documents, and artifacts of teaching activity. In this sense, the guiding question of this study is: how to challenge Business Teaching to stimulate reflexivity in learning? To answer this question, we established this research's objective of exploring the potential of comic strips to encourage business students' reflexivity concerning corporate practices.

This work has five sections, and this introduction is the first. The second includes a literature review on business teaching and reflexivity; the third describes the adopted methodological procedures; the fourth discusses the results achieved. Then, the final considerations are presented, as well as the main limitations and suggestions for research.

Reflexivity and Business Training

The Brazilian sociologist and politician Alberto Guerreiro Ramos (1915-1982) warned of the crisis atmosphere surrounding contemporary organizations, reflected in the theories formulated about them (RAMOS, 1984). From an organization's critical view, business executives are increasingly invited to reflect on their academic and professional practices, challenging naturalized human realities. In this sense, educational training represents a promising way to think and organize the world differently (PAULA; RODRIGUES, 2006, ASSIS et al., 2013).

In the business expansion of historical education in Brazil, the import and influence of U.S. business teaching models are analyzed (ALCADIPANI; CALDAS, 2012; BARROS, 2014; ALCADIPANI; BERTERO, 2014; COOKE; ALCADIPANI, 2015) as that the colonial logic creates the Brazilian business academy guiding how management knowledge is produced and reproduced in developing countries (ALCADIPANI; CALDAS, 2012). In addition, there is concern with criteria such as scientism, universality, and relations of political and economic power legitimizing this process (BARROS, 2014).

Nowadays, the consequences of Business teaching commodification in Brazil have become evident. McDonaldization prioritizes standardized management recipes teaching (ALCADIPANI; BRESLER, 2000) offered by “Businessman factories” in which students become a passive product of a teaching process that prioritizes the contents memorization to the detriment of a formation that allows the articulation between theory, practice and the experience of knowledge (NICOLLINI, 2003).

In this sense, pertinent discussions are carried out around implementing new pedagogical practices to train students with critical thinking (FISCHER, 2001; ASSIS et al., 2013). Caggy and Fischer (2014) point out interdisciplinarity as necessary and adequate to promote essential thinking development; Braum, Carmo, and Sá (2016) praise the development of creativity in decision-making as a competence in the face of a complex world full of changes. In applying methodologies aimed at critical action, the teacher is essential for leading students to identify significant differences in their thinking once they start a process different from the already known methodologies.

Organizational theories are like socially “organized” bodies of knowledge claims offered as academic products produced by socially legitimate institutions. In that sense, they are always the effects of primary organizational processes (CHIA, 1996). Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate and encourage the exercise of reflexivity in the learning process as a tool to rethink and challenge the assumptions of management education and business practice in the face of contemporary challenges.

The concept and practice of reflexivity are widely debated in various academic subjects. In the social sciences and humanities in general, several studies show the increase of reflexivity as a characteristic of current societies (CUNLIFFE; JUN, 2005; SHADNAM, 2020). Although there is a consensus on exercising reflexivity virtues, there is no substantial agreement on reflexivity meaning (CARON; 2013, CUNLIFFE; JUN, 2005).

In organizational studies, the reflexivity practice has been recognized as an essential factor for necessary advances in academic culture and management studies (HIBBERT et al., 2019). However, much of the theoretical efforts have focused on using reflexivity in organizational practices research (SHADNAM, 2020). meanwhile, in organizational contexts, there needs to be more clarity on how to be reflective and on the difficulties inherent in engaging in deliberative acts (CUNLIFFE; JUN, 2005).

Concerning the context of the classroom and learning, as progenitors of reflective learning, authors like John Dewey stand out, who proposes reflexivity as a rational capacity to get involved in the experience to organize and learn from it; Paulo Freire, who praised the strengthening potential of reflection for intersubjective experimentation with new ways of being and the emancipating and demystifying role of education; and Donald Shon, who conceived reflection as a means of apprehending experiences to overcome technical-rational approaches towards learning knowledge (COTTER; CULLEN, 2012)

In contemporary times, in the teaching and learning process in administration, the concept of moral reflexivity and its exercise has gained relevance (HIBBERT et al., 2019). In this process, the distinction between reflexivity and reflection is relevant. Reflexivity involves revealing the assumptions that precede organizational practices and critically assessing their consequences, enabling new social realities emergence. Cunliffe and Jun (2005) point out that the two terms have very different ontological and epistemological characteristics. Reflection is based on the idea that there is an actual reality from which the subject can separate. An exploration of experimental logic is used to adapt and align the professional's strategies in the organizational context.

On the other hand, reflexivity is a dialogic and relational practice that has been the focus of works developed by Ann Cunliffe (2002, 2003, 2004, 2016, 2020). In this approach, reflexivity is a social constructionist perspective that understands human beings as engaged builders of the social and organizational realities in which they are inserted. Still, these are endowed with moral and ethical responsibility to interrogate and evaluate their involvement with the social world, the experiences taken for granted, the plausible meanings and competing interests, as well as the very actions that cause harm to themselves or others (HIBBERT; CUNLIFFE, 2015; CUNLIFFE, 2016).

Developing awareness about the personal and collective responsibility of being in the world involves dynamic reflexive skills that mobilize cognitive, relational, and emotional processes (HIBBERT et al., 2019). Self-reflexivity is a conscious act that depends on a transforming self-concerning the context. It can resort to an internal dialogue about assumptions and values to become responsive to others, opening new ways of being in the world. In an external movement, reflexivity criticism is

interested in criticizing ideologies for reformulating and expanding the boundaries of social and organizational practice (CUNLIFFE; JUN, 2005).

Recent studies have shown that, in reflective practice, emotions cannot be avoided. The emotional tone of context that leads to reflective practice is significant, as emotions engage the self in the social context and are like crucial triggers that lead to change and new understandings. In this sense, reflexivity as a cognitive and emotional practice implies recognizing the need for and importance of interpreting one's emotions and those of others in this process (HOLMES, 2010; HIBBERT et al., 2019).

The disenchantment with the indifferent attitude of Business education to contemporary problems reinforces the need to develop more holistic approaches to responding to the challenges in the work world (KARAKAS; MANISALIGIL; SARIGOLLU, 2015). Therefore, Business teaching should encourage students' active involvement to understand 'problematic' knowledge through incorporating teaching strategies that promote reflexivity exercise. This approach presents situations that enable students to become critical management learners, willing to evaluate organizations and how they operate and reflect on how they are complicit in the construction and reproduction of current management practices (CUNLIFFE, 2004, 2009).

Storytelling as a Strategy to Stimulate Reflexivity

The contents and materials usage mobilize reflexivity and reveal the complexity and multiple dimensions inherent in human experience (SINACORE et al., 1999). Stories and metaphors in learning processes offer creative and enlightening means through which future administrators and managers can see themselves in organizational contexts, allowing new perspectives on the possibilities of action in the face of lived experiences. By allowing critical incidents to be written and examined in a reflective and shared practice, stories and metaphors provide elements that enable the analysis of individual experiences and social and political criticism within a broader organizational context (GRAY, 2007).

A comic book involves two types of language, graphic (image) and verbal language (text). Some resources convey the movement idea, such as gestures and facial expressions mobilized to represent the character's features and feelings

(CADEVON; LANGLER, 2005). In addition to promoting student engagement beyond classroom confinement, they enhance the learning experience (AZMAN; ZAIBON; SHIRATUDDIN, 2016).

The use of comics and comic strips as a teaching strategy can stimulate creativity and reflection by portraying, simply and playfully, experiences lived in everyday life as narratives, even represented through still images and imaginary characters, can represent reality in motion (CARUSO; SILVEIRA, 2008; BRANDÃO; SILVA, 2018; SILVA et al., 2018).

When developing a Decision-Making and Management Development Strategy in a Business course at the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), Silva, Santos, and Bispo (2017) stated that the activity, incorporated into the learning process, enables skills development, enhancing the experiences exchange between students and professors, reducing the gap between theory and practice. From this proposed activity, the students identified similar situations described in the stories that offered dialogical reflection insights for the classroom.

In other experiences, replicating similar strategies, the practice enabled the development of criticality, creativity, and reflexivity. In the students' perception, the activity facilitated the theory understanding by allowing the discussed information abstraction (BRANDÃO; SILVA, 2018; ZAMORA; BRAVO; PADILLA, 2021).

Stimulating reflexivity can take advantage of different initiatives. Comic book storytelling is one of these possibilities. Students' freedom and autonomy to tell the stories they recognize as representative of the organizational context enhance reflections on the implications of professional practices resulting from learning.

Methodological Procedures

To achieve this research objective, which is to explore the potential of producing comic strips to stimulate the reflexivity of undergraduate business administration students concerning corporate practices, we adopted an observational study of an activity involving students from a 4th-grade discipline. Period, complete shift of the Business course at a federal public university in the first half of 2021, which consisted of three phases:

1. during classes, the teacher presented and discussed texts with critical perspectives on corporations, with the themes: (a) the organizations as instruments of domination metaphor (MORGAN, 2006); (b) environmental corporate crime (FONTOURA et al., 2019); (c) moral and sexual harassment at workplace (FREITAS, 2001); (d) the organizations as psychic prisons metaphor; and (e) critical studies in business administration (FOURNIER; GRAY, 2006).
2. for the final evaluation activity, the students were asked to, in groups, create organizational stories that illustrated the contents covered, presenting the action at the end of the semester in the form of comic strips. The story could be a figment of the group's imagination. However, it could also be about real cases published in the media or a combination of fiction and reality. The class consisted of 19 students, who formed four groups to create the stories in comic strips, using the free tool HQ Toondoo.com, and, for presentation, the groups used PowerPoint slides.
3. as previously instructed by the teacher, during the presentation of the stories told, the students shared their learning experiences and the focus of their reflections on two aspects: how the story created was related to the contents covered; and what they extracted from history as an essential factor in their management training.

The discipline's classes were held remotely through the TEAMS platform, regulated by Resolution 25/2020 of the Graduate Council of the Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU), in consideration of measures to deal with the emergency in Public Health of International Importance resulting from the coronavirus (COVID-19), having been recorded with the students' agreement.

The one hour and thirty minutes recording were made available to the authors of this article, generating six pages of transcription. Narrative analysis “ compares and contrasts various narratives, identifies key themes and (or) explores narratives through a theoretical lens” (SHARP, BYE, CUSICK, 2019, p. 861). A strip observational study combined with the students' speeches, resulting in the empirical material submitted to the analysis of narratives combined with narrative analysis, allowed

the mapping of topics chosen by the groups for the stories, the construction of the story told, and the students' emplacement.

Our premise is that students tell stories that stimulate the listeners' reflection of themselves since telling stories is a way of thinking (SCHON, 1987). In a report, events and actions intertwine to form a plot with contextual meaning (POLKINGHORNE, 1995). The students' stories reflect situations they may encounter in their professional activities. Even though "the distance between 'creative imagination' and 'active participation' remains unknown until students are acting professionally" (McDRURY; ALTERIO, 2004, p. 82), (re)producing such stories is an opportunity to imagine experiences.

The analysis of the narratives comprised: the transcription of the visual material and the speeches of the students in the presentation; structural analysis, when we explore how the story was structured, its development, and its beginning and end, based on Labov (1972), who distinguishes six elements: (1) summary – introduction of the subject/theme and why the story is of interest; (2) orientation – character definition and context description; (3) complicating action – the story itself, which is told after its contextualization; (4) evaluation – the relevance, the *raison d'être* of the story; (5) result or resolution – the conclusion; and (6) coda – not always present, or sometimes implicitly present, refers to the relevance of the story connected with everyday life.

Using this analytical structure allowed us to analyze narratives (POLKINGHORNE, 1995), going beyond the stories told, exploring themes, stories, and the students' positioning.

Results: Themes, Stories, and Reflections

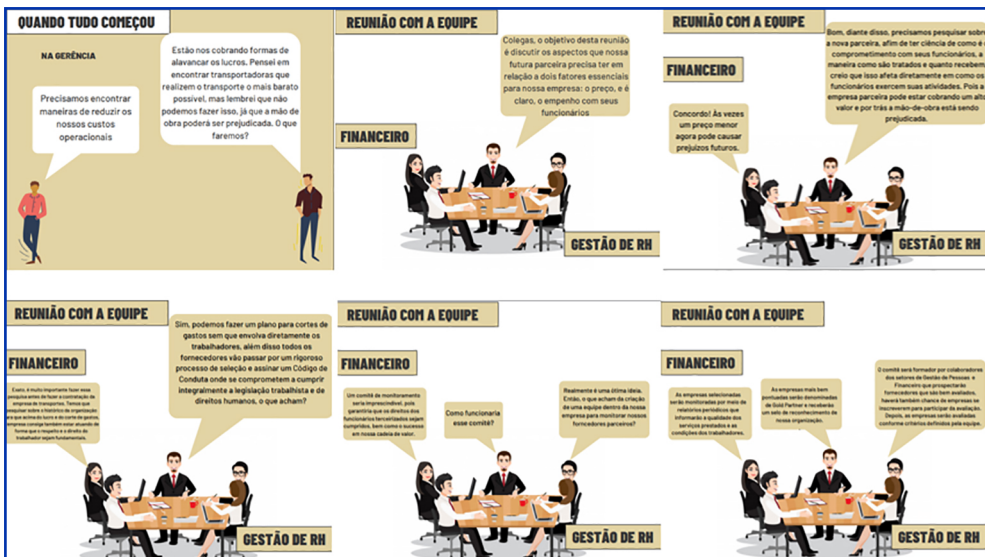
The results of this section were developed by analyzing the class recording made available, the comic strips prepared, and the transcription of the students' speeches during the presentation of the work. Next, we present the stories told by the students structured according to Labov (1972): 1. Summary; 2. Orientation; 3. Complicating action; 4. Evaluation; 5. Result or resolution; and 6. Coda. The narratives were grouped into two categories: Violence and exploitation at the workplace, Organization domination, and power.

CATEGORY 1 – VIOLENCE AND LABOR EXPLOITATION

In this category are the strips created by two groups of students. In the first group, the theme chosen was “work analogous to slavery,” inspired by the operation of the Program for the Eradication of Slave Labor and Trafficking in Persons of the Regional Superintendence of Labor in the State of São Paulo, which dismantled a scheme of work under similar conditions to slavery, on March 3, 2021. The fact involved two large breweries, the Ambev and the Heineken Group multinationals, and a third-party transport company contracted by both sides, the workers’ employer, and direct supervisor (El PAIS, 2021, online).

The story told by the students begins when two managers talk about ways to reduce operating costs and leverage profits, which is the general idea that making profits is the organization’s engine. The group emphasizes that such a reduction, when made with the use of outsourced carriers, could cause harm to workers, and even at that moment, they indicate that managers are responsible for the implications of relationships with partners that do not respect workers. The group also proposes ideas organizations can adopt to avoid workplace violence and exploitation, indicating that students recognize responsibility for their decisions.

Figure 1 Group 1 Story – Work analogous to slavery



Manager X: We need to find ways to reduce our operating costs.

Manager y: They are asking us for ways to leverage profits. I thought about finding carriers that carry out the transport as cheaply as possible, but I remembered that we could not do that since the workforce could be harmed. What will we do?

Meeting with the team (Financial and H.R.):

Manager Y: Colleagues, the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the aspects that our future partner needs to have concerning two essential factors for our company: price and, of course, commitment to its employees. Because the partner company may be charging a high price, the workforce is being harmed by it. Given that, we need to research the new partnership commitment to its employees, how they treat them and how much the employees receive. It directly affects how employees carry out their activities.

Finance Managers: I agree! Sometimes a lower price now can cause future losses.

Manager y: Yes, we can make a plan to cut costs without directly involving workers. In addition, all suppliers will undergo a rigorous selection process and sign a Code of Conduct where they undertake to comply with labor and safety legislation fully. Human rights, what do you think?

Finance Managers: Exactly. We have to research the organization's history so that, above profit and cost cutting, the company can act in a way that respects workers' rights. It is essential to do this research before hiring a transport company.

Finance Managers: A monitoring committee would be essential, as it would ensure that the rights of outsourced employees are fulfilled, as well as success in our value chain.

Manager y: How would this committee work?

H.R. Managers: It is a great idea. What do you think of creating a company-wide team to monitor our partner suppliers?

Finance Managers: The selected companies will be monitored through periodic reports that will inform the quality of the services provided and the conditions of the workers

Manager y: The best-scoring companies will be called Gold Partners and receive a seal of recognition from our organization.

H.R. Managers: The committee will consist of employees from the H.R. Management and Finance sectors who will prospect well-evaluated suppliers. Afterward, the companies will be evaluated according to the criteria defined by the team. There will also be a chance for companies to sign up to participate in the evaluation.

Recognizing the interdependence that the organization and its stakeholders share in the political and social arenas (DOH; QUIGLEY, 2014), the students suggest the adoption of a gold partner strategy, such as an incentive program, to identify and anticipate critical economic and social problems faced by contracted partner companies.

Students were encouraged to develop a reflective practice on work development and how they incorporated the theory into the portrayed organizational context. After the presentation, the teacher and her advisee intervened on the

implications of implementing this type of strategy. One of the students made the following observation:

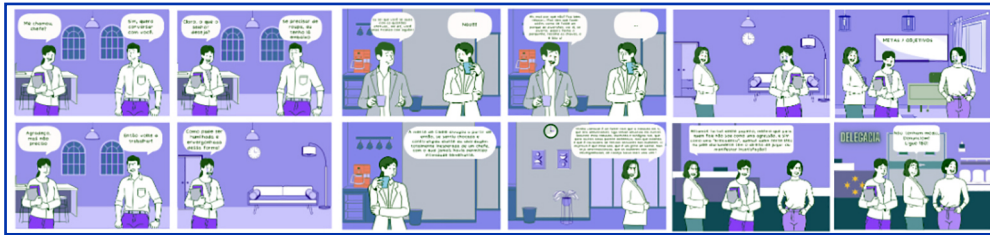
So professor, when you talked about the expense that will have to create this system and such, but thinking, on the one hand, the company is, if it does not carry out this type of control and leaves it in the hands of other people, the brand that it is going to get dirtier concerning people, it is hers, right? It is not the supplier's because it is better to attack Ambev than a small supplier. Of course, they will have expenses, but this will be reversed in the future because they can use this in favor of their image. They can have a more significant value chain, so besides providing goods for people, this will become something positive for their brand (Ana).

The students focused on managers' role in facing challenges involving implementing competitive strategies centered on reducing operating costs. For MacIntyre (2007), it is problematic that the management function is perceived as a neutral activity focused only on rationality and efficiency in terms of assets, costs, and benefits. Even though the group tried to draw attention to the company's responsibility for the implications of its decisions for society and workers, Ana's speech is impregnated with this rationality when she says that "the company is, if it does not do this kind of control and leave it in the hands of other people, the brand that will be dirtier about people, is hers, right?" It is central to Ana that the organization should be efficient and use the fact to favor its image, an idea guided by the managerial, functionalist, and positivist logic common to management courses (MCLAREN, 2020).

The second group in this category presented the strip "Organizations as an instrument of domination: Cases of moral and sexual harassment in the Federal Regional Court." The actual case that motivated the creation of the strip began in 2019 and involved complaints of moral and sexual harassment at the Federal Regional Court of the 4th Region (TRF4) carried out by three civil servants that ended in March 2021 with the filing of the case, without opening administrative process (BRASIL DE FATO, 2021).

The story explores the embarrassing events experienced by the servants in the work environment and the process of mutual support that mobilized the complaint. The group insisted on reproducing the dialogue to emphasize how language constitutes violence.

Figure 2 Group 2 Story - Moral and Sexual Harassment



At the restaurant

server01: Boss, you want to talk to me?

Boss: Yes, I want to talk to you.

Server01: Of course, what do you want?

Boss: If you need clothes, I have them downstairs.

server01: Thank you, but I do not need it

Boss: Then get back to work!

server01: How could I be humiliated and embarrassed like that!

Desktop

server02: Good morning, boss!

Boss: Well, it's you. The day is just a detail.

Server02: Hi...

Boss: Hahahaha, just a lighthearted joke.

server02: Was he trying to be funny

server02: I am feeling so impotent. I never gave him that intimacy!

Desktop

Boss: I know you are troubled by emotional issues... tell me, are you seeing someone?

server03: no!!!

Boss: Ah, but why not? It is good to relax... However, you have to do it like this as if it were an amusement park. Go there, have fun, close the playground, collect the keys, and that's it.

Server03:Cibele's mind wandered from then on. She felt shocked and embarrassed by the unexpected approach of a boss with whom she had never allowed such intimacy.

[...]

Complaint

The servers appear to be talking and crying.

At the police station: We're fed up with this little chat, even if, for those who speak, it does not sound like aggression but like a "joke," only those who feel this in their skin daily have the right to judge or express dissatisfaction!

Don't be afraid! Report it! Call 180!

After the strip presentation, some group participants made observations about the hierarchy of the male-dominated environment and women's "pioneering spirit" in filing a complaint. The case was archived, even though it occurred in an environment where it was expected to rule the law. At that moment, the students' organization representations are rational, and the reality of the case dilutes their roles presented when they reflect on it.

The phrases used are actual phrases of sexual harassment in TRF4, which happened in 2019. As the story takes place in this hierarchical environment, where men predominate, we decided to bring this strip for the pioneering spirit of these women being able to report these cases of harassment and abuse in an environment with so much hierarchy. Even in an atmosphere of law, they had difficulties, and the issues were archived (Juca, emphasis added).

Something interesting for us to bring about this article is that it brings a survey that took place in October 2020, which points out that 47% of the women surveyed have already suffered sexual harassment in the workplace. If you analyze the 'research by race and class, the percentage rises to 52% among black women and 49% among women who earn between two and six minimum wages (João).

Then, the professor and the doctoral student promote some notes to encourage participation, offering elements so that the students can articulate their understandings regarding what may be obscured in the dynamics of differences. The professor asked the participation of the students in the class to comment on the case, considering that the group in question is formed only by male students:

It was even something that we discussed in the group. According to the women interviewed, harassment comes from a workplace marked by language and aspects of sexist ways for the male audience, so men feel much more comfortable than women in these environments, and what we thought here that goes along with what we learned in the course is to bring this subject to the fore, through awareness and lectures, to make this environment more diverse for men and women (Student 04, emphasis added).

They should talk while waiting for an answer. They think they are making these calls in the middle of the street, out of nowhere, in the work environment. Sometimes we are there, worried about a situation, I don't know about the service, and the guy comes to talk, and they still expect us to be receptive. Thank you! (Maria, emphasis added).

Gender constructions, such as hegemonic masculinity, are influential in the world of work, in which masculine ways are taken as the norm (ACKER, 2011), and

reflexivity is essential to question and change such representation. The concern and interest of the group formed by male students in portraying the gender tensions encountered by women in organizations already indicate the exercise of reflexivity.

Reflexivity involves social actors in an embodied emotional and cognitive process, in which there is an attempt to understand and change the courses of one's life and that of others concerning the environments in which they are inserted. In this way, feelings and connections, such as others, are central to reflective practices (HOLMES, 2010).

CATEGORY 2 - DOMINATION AND POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS

The last two groups of students presented strips with the theme of domination and power. In the image of Figure 3, there is a strip with the title "UM ACT OF DOMINATION", whose inspiration was the movie "O Escândalo" based on the case of the CEO of Fox News, a news provider channel in the United States. The film shows how a group of women who suffered harassment accuse him, and he loses his job and, consequently, his career. The film had significant repercussions for portraying harassment, being directed by men, and being based on a true story (G1, 2020).

The narrative involves the situation of a manager who asks an employee to come to his office. The conversation between the two represents an act of domination.

Figure 3 Group 3 Story - Domination and Power.



After presenting the strip, the students carried out an analysis, in groups, based on theoretical discussions developed in the classroom, appointing the connection with Weber's theory of domination, mainly in traditional dominance:

Yes, there is the charismatic, the traditional, and the rational-legal type of domination. This case is traditional domination. As we can see in the conversation, something more patriarchal is happening, as previous people did to him, as they said about the woman. So, just like he says, she had to show loyalty to him, just like all the other employees did to him. Furthermore, he even says in the next strip, 'just remember that everything you have is thanks to me'. In this case, the legitimacy there in this type of domination will be given by the customer and by the feeling that it is correct to do it traditionally. So that's what we wanted to bring there, when, in the second panel, he says, you need to prove your loyalty like all the other employees, that is, that in her head legitimized his right to order what he wants (Marcos).

The students also mentioned the issue of morals, emphasizing how the activity encouraged them to reflect on their actions. According to Shadnan (2020), reflexivity is associated with our morals and reflections in corporate environments. Thus, by stimulating reflexivity, students reach the importance of studying and discussing themes and practices to develop a critical sense.

Uai, this is one of the themes that is something so crucial for life. When you study this, you see this in reality. Seeing this within an organization even shows its character because I, for example, want to be in an organization that never any kind of domination is harmful to the people who work with me, who are around me (José).

The last group addressed the issue of organizations as systems of domination based on their understanding. This group presented comic strips experienced in different environments, which can be shared in everyday life. The first environment takes place in a telemarketing company and is related to the theory of charismatic domination; the second relates to traditional dominance; the third relates to rational-legal power. Furthermore, finally, there is the fourth environment portrayed through the family environment, with patriarchal domination:

Figure 4 History of Group 4 – Organizations as Instruments of Domination



Scene 01

Operator: Just a moment, I'll ask my supervisor (mute). Sheyla, the customer, wants to unsubscribe.

Sheyla: convince him that our company has the best advantages and that it is not worth canceling

Operator: I've tried, but she insists on canceling anyway.

Sheyla: You have to work well under pressure because, without the stress, you won't work.

Operator: And what should I do to convince her?

Sheyla: Transfer the call to sales and then we'll change your script to reach your customers better.

Operator: thank you Sheyla. Your support is essential

Sheyla: I am here to help you and achieve the best result.

Scene 02

colleague01: did you see the boss's new idea?

colleague02: the one about turning the company into ESC?

Colleague01: Yes! He said that it is essential to pay attention to this cause.

colleague02: I saw it, it seems like he cares about it. In fact, he wants to gain notoriety

colleague01: Exactly, he doesn't even know the color of the recyclable garbage cans...

colleague02: lol, I even saw him throwing a coca cola can in the paper trash can.

colleague01: but since he's the boss, unfortunately, we can't give an opinion

colleague02: yeah, that's very complicated

Scene03

boss01: do you need to finalize the reports for yesterday?

subordinate 02: yes sir

boss01: and you have to change those poorly made spreadsheets.

subordinate 02: yes sir.

boss01: and you have to go to the supermarket to buy food for my dog

subordinate02: yes sir

boss01: you will talk, yes sir! BR

subordinate02: yes sir

Scene 04

Antonio after a hard day at work, comes home.....

Wife: hi love, could you help me with dinner

Antonio: Can't you see that I'm busy sorting out things at work....

Wife: Calm down, it's ok, you can go on

Antonio: great! Finish this dinner soon and bring it to me! I am starving!

After presenting the environments, the students justified using these situations to discuss domination. In the telemarketing environment, students reported that, due to their organizational and work characteristics, as it is a tiring and stressful environment, managers use charisma to encourage employees to obtain greater productivity and better performance of their functions.

Because of his charisma, he can even be seen as a better leader than the others, you know? It became light because of the way he did it, the way he did it, the way he did it, the way he was more like that, so that ended up having an impact on the employee results, who ended up being better. I've experienced situations where a supervisor was strict, he wasn't charismatic, he wasn't funny, he didn't have that little way of getting there, and his result was one way. However, the result differed when the supervisor was different from the leader. The leader's charisma has an aspect about his subordinates (Carlos).

The students observed that different types of domination could coexist within the corporate and family environments, as shown in image 04, presented by the group. The teacher encouraged students to think about work's impacts on family environments. Thus, one of the participants in the group reported:

So, I think it encompasses a lot the issue that when the guy goes out to work, he is considered the guy who works, and she (wife) is cooking, she's all nervous, she's working, but she's working at home. He doesn't consider that. He believes that he's the only one tired, which affects a lot in terms of male chauvinism because, until now, it's decreasing a little. However, before this issue, the man goes out to work, but the woman stays all day cleaning the house and taking care of the children. He has to cook dinner the way he likes it, and he doesn't consider that it's a job, that she probably spent the whole day doing things, and she's exhausted, but he doesn't consider it (Eduardo).

The domination theme can be present in all environments. Through the strips' elaboration, the students reflected on the theme's theoretical approaches and how these acts are practiced. Paula and Rodrigues (2016) point out that undergraduates in the Business Administration course must have reflective moments to become ethical, reflective professionals responsible for their decisions and the implications of such decisions. Reflexivity would be a reflection on their actions and questioning of ethics and morals (CUNLIFFE, 2016). Thus, the elaboration practice developed in the students a moment of reflection on the acts of domination, harassment, and slave labor.

DISCUSSION: REFLEXIVITY X EFFICIENCY IN THE STORIES TOLD IN THE STRIPS

The contents addressed and the class materials dealt with the repugnant face of organizations. The group’s narrative choices and the reflections presented indicate a reflective process that involved seeking an action plan that could have avoided the involvement of organizations in situations of corporate irresponsibility that inspired the narratives, in addition to praising the responsibility of the company and managers regarding the outsourced employees. However, the attitude guided by the managerial and capitalist students’ logic is still in our analysis. It leads us to understand what Tsoukas (2017) states about the need for organizational theories that overcome dualisms and value relationships and contexts to account for organizational complexity. This critical approach reveals the multifaceted character of organizations, especially the dark side of organizations, which harbors processes inherent to corporate operations and that put society in danger and risk (MORGAN, 2006), enhancing the mobilization of reflexivity (SINACORE et al., 1999) on the part of students.

In Table 1 below, we summarize the analysis results of the narratives.

Table 1 Summary of the stories

Narratives	Central Themes	Characters and Their Stories	Students Positioning
Violence and exploitation at work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work like slavery. 2. Sexual and moral harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breweries • Functional managers • Outsourcing as cost reduction and exploitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding that domination permeates society and organizations. • Impotence to study such themes. • Recognition of the dark side in organizational realities.
Domination and power in organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Male dominance 2. Types of domination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telemarketing • charismatic leader • Patriarchy in organizations • male chauvinism, racism, inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposition of ideas that reduce or avoid damage and social costs. • Recognition that liability actions can benefit companies.

Source: Researcher's authorship.

The students' stories told using the strips allowed them to imagine themselves in organizational contexts, which enhanced the emergence of new perspectives and possibilities of action when faced with situations of corporate irresponsibility. In this exercise, the students experienced the possible connections established between the manager's performance and an academic based on the demands placed on both, in terms of responding to challenges, dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, thinking critically, viewing situations from other understanding ways and learn from mistakes (CULINFFE, 2009).

The topics addressed touch on other situations, such as male chauvinism, patriarchy, racism, and inequality between men and women in organizations, reflected in the student's speech, such as Maria's "outburst". "Sometimes people are there worried about a situation, I don't know about the service itself, and the guy comes to talk, and they still expect us to be receptive, thank you!". These students' speeches point to the recognition of themselves as belonging to a category with relevant social claims about inequality within the scope of organizations.

Organizations use practices that require increasingly agile, competitive, and creative professionals with several other characteristics (GORLI; NICOLINI; SCARATTI, 2015). However, to train these professionals with such characteristics but who have a critical sense, it is necessary to rethink the practices that encourage the reproduction of the knowledge that organizations are purely rational (NUNES, 2012; BOLZAN; ANTUNES, 2015). In this sense, the production of comic strips as a teaching activity can be understood as a pedagogical method since it facilitates the process of learning and assimilation of content by students (OLIVEIRA; CRUZ, 2007).

Final Considerations

Stimulating business students' reflexivity proved to be an instigating and challenging experience, both for the professor and the researchers, who sought to explore the strips' potential to stimulate the reflexivity of business students concerning corporate practices. It was stimulating due to the students' engagement, who tried to research reported cases and understand the implications of these cases for society and the responsibility of managers in decision-making that require choices that are

not always moral and ethical. However, it was a challenging experience to observe students question such practices and decisions that negatively affect society. At the same time, they are mobilized to seek solutions that benefit the organization in achieving corporate objectives, placing them as the primary beneficiaries, not the social costs of the decisions.

Organizations are dynamic social and historical constructions and are becoming increasingly complex amid continuous and permanent change. Increasingly, the ability to learn, innovate and respond to current challenges becomes essential for organizations to assume responsibility for decisions and consequences. In their daily lives, objective and subjective, manifest, and hidden, concrete and imaginary structures weave the backdrop in which business students must develop as professionals and active actors in the construction of an egalitarian society, dealing with multifaceted issues that require more than ready-made recipes.

Reflexivity is a relevant component of these professionals' training in the need to challenge their assumptions and underlying values about the organizational reality based on their personal experiences. The use of methodologies that provide this exercise needs to be encouraged, considering that many students have little or no practical experience in organizational environments at the undergraduate level. Cunliffe and Jun (2005) draw attention to the difficulties inherent in engaging in reflective acts, which makes theoretical efforts focus on research (SHADNAM, 2020). In this sense, the research advances theoretically by defending that reflexivity in the field of management is potential when there is clarity in the didactic experiences on how to be reflective in the face of decisions taken with harmful consequences for society in general.

Being reflective involves connecting with others morally and ethically, integrating and jointly molding the organizational and social experiences we live (CUNLIFFE, 2016, 2020). Through the proposed analysis, it was possible to recognize student engagement and interest in positively rethinking harmful organizational practices.

The ludic format narratives and the discussions in class mediated an emotional and critical identification with the facts that inspired the elaboration of the strips, allowing the approximation between theory and practice.

As a contribution, we point out how playful and creative teaching strategies can encourage student involvement in learning moments involving engagement in

organizational practices. Considering the theoretical and practical knowledge available, the contextualized reality critical examination enables new ways to create meaning for the experiences analyzed in a self-reflexive and critical movement.

Even though we are committed to stimulating students' reflexivity, we do not allow ourselves to hide the limitations of this reflexivity concerning realistic situations of corporate practices when students take on decision-making positions. In a remote classroom context, it was possible to establish a space for reflection in which the teaching role was fundamental to stimulate critical thinking and promote dialogue concerning the topics addressed. However, one cannot guarantee this will happen in practice, considering the various pressures and influences on decision-making.

Online interaction may have limited the discussions on the presentation day, especially regarding student participation in discussions involving topics addressed by other groups. In this sense, we suggest that similar activities be incorporated into face-to-face classes in different course periods with varying contents for future research.

Field research on reflexivity in management education can benefit practice and theory. We suggest conducting ethnographic studies, in which it is possible to analyze the face-to-face interaction with playful and creative activities centered on stimulating reflexivity, investigating how teachers participate and can mitigate the difficulties or resistance that students may have present in this context. Equally important for the theme is the carrying out of research with male and female managers working in organizations to analyze whether and which content and class materials used during their graduation were able to mobilize their critical thinking to deal with decisions on the dark side of organizations.

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