

And the winner is...

Entrepreneur awards and the quantified success

And the winner is...

As premiações e o empreendedor do sucesso quantificado

Gisela Castro and Carolina Fabris

Introduction

In contemporary times, it is wise to view communication and consumption as central axes in the most varied social spheres. As Castro (2018) points out, consumer practices are articulated with media visibility. The media socialize for consumption and take an active part in everyday life. Immersed in this culture, people create identifications, build identities, recognize themselves socially and within their own groups of peers. Moreover, when they consume, they are also communicating important aspects about themselves and the social groups to which they belong (CASTRO, 2014).

Within this logic of imbrication between communication and consumption, people are called upon by various enunciators to be part of specific subjectivity production programs and regimes, supported by activities and services offered in the market (AIDAR PRADO, 2013). Such convocation occurs in a broader context, and current capitalism also operates by trial and error. With each change, the system quickly adapts in order to learn how to establish dialogue with its audience (AIDAR PRADO, 2013). A proof of this are the transformations in the sphere of work that generate changes in the character itself, as pointed out by Sennett (2007).

With the changes taking place in the world of work, together with a neoliberal ideology that reinforces individualism, the figure of the entrepreneur emerges. In this model of subjectivity produced by neoliberal rationality, it is essential to maximize results, calculate risks and assume full responsibility for eventual failures (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2016).

Necessary to maintain a system in which wage labor relations and social security guarantees no longer predominate, more people are urged to join entrepreneurship as a way of life and mode

of being that is considered desirable, attractive, challenging. How to summon them? Among the various ways to promote entrepreneurship, the awards draw our attention. Over the years, several entrepreneur awards have been promoted by different public and private institutions to recognize, disseminate, and praise the figure of the successful entrepreneur as an admirable type of manager. This is considered as an exemplary subject for today's society. As we will demonstrate, this is the one to whom the system calls on and with whom it has learned to talk to for its own maintenance.

What are the attributes and characteristics of an entrepreneur that deserves a prize? What is a 'successful' entrepreneur, a 'winning' character? What kind of prize is offered? What characteristics are currently valued in entrepreneurship? Which institutions call for entrepreneurship and reward such so-called 'successful' entrepreneurs? In view of these provocations and the context presented so far, in this article we intend to map the entrepreneur awards in Brazil and to analyze the convocation of the entrepreneur as an emblematic subjective model for the contemporary times.

To achieve this goal, we mobilize the concept of quantified self. Increasingly, society is investing in quantitative measurement and assessment in the hope that they can enable monitoring and, eventually, the enhancement of performance (RETTBERG, 2014) in the most varied sectors. In this specific article, we assume that many entrepreneur awards articulate ways to quantify certain behaviors and reinforce these metrics as indicative of the optimized performance and 'success' expected in the current world.

The first part of the article focuses on the theoretical aspects of the discussion. The themes are "communication, convocation and modes of being" and "entrepreneurship, success and metrics". We then present the mapping of the entrepreneur awards. In the last section we develop a critical analysis of two selected awards.

Communication, convocation, and modes of being

As we highlight the close relationship between communication and consumption in this discussion, we view consumption as a complex socio-cultural set of practices. An act of consumption is also an act of communication. When someone chooses what to wear, what to eat (and what not to eat), the places they will go to, the music they will listen to and so on, this creates meanings that are inserted into symbolic circuits (CASTRO, 2014). Thus, consumption practices go beyond material issues, since what is communicated becomes symbolic, representative of a lifestyle, a mode of being and a type of behaviour.

Within this dynamic of promoting modes of being based on the logics of consumption, Aidar Prado (2013) brings up convocation as something that is present in this process, yet not always explicitly. As an example, the author turns to programs based on the language of self-help that instigate and convoke audiences for transforming themselves in various ways. Makeover reality shows are clearly a media genre linked to the interests of capitalism. In this type of show, the enunciators function as symbolic analysts whose function is to assist in “transitioning” between distinct symbolic points: “before” and “after”.

These convocations occur in the context of current capitalism, a system that operates in a constant way of improving its methods of convocation and modulation of subjectivities. Attentive to the detailed metrics that are presented at breakneck pace, this system adapts quickly to learn how to better attract the attention and loyalty of its audiences, to get ahead of the new needs detected, to study the environment once again and to continue in this permanent reinvention of modes of operation (AIDAR PRADO, 2013).

Sennett (2007, p. 10) relates the transformations of a type of capitalism he calls flexible with what he identifies as the “corrosion of character” – the latter being understood as “a more comprehensive term than “personality”. As he explains, such transformations have brought about important changes, which the author assembles into eight thematic groups. For the purposes of the discussion presented here, we will stick to the transformations of the routine due to the demand for flexibility at work and their consequences in the constitution of new modes of being and acting, as well as their forms of control.

According to Sennett (2007), routine is closely associated to flexibility. Modern society is in revolt against routine, bureaucratic time which can paralyze work, the government, and other institutions. Flexibility, coupled with repulsion to routine, is said to have produced new forms of power and control. Flexibility requires that the present becomes discontinuous with the past and that organizations constantly seek to reinvent themselves. Flexibility is also perceived in the organization of time at work: the work day becomes a combination of several shifts, with people working at different times, on more individualized shifts. This question impacts the individual by generating a certain flexibility of character and tolerance towards fragmentation. People are now required to live in disorder. According to Sennett (2007), this generates a capacity to detach oneself from the past - with all the consequences that this can cause - and to launch oneself in a continuous process of reinventing oneself with each new challenge that is presented.

All these changes brought about by flexible capitalism are important to understand the new form of subjectivity pointed out by Dardot & Laval (2016), as well as by Safatle (2015): the self-managed subject. In the neoliberal ideology, the individual is seen as sovereign. Their private property is their means of independence. Theirs is the last word on politics and the market. According to Dardot & Laval (2016), the neoliberal subject is permanently urged to take responsibility for their own life and to exercise their power of choice in a daily basis. As a *modus operandi*, according to Safatle (2015), “the neoliberal subject does not follow positive norms, they calculate results and, for this reason, continually flex norms”.

According to Aidar Prado (2013), each need identified by current capitalism has its manuals and respective convocations, with their specific enunciators installed on devices with appropriate communication contracts:

In this liquid world, for each user there are enunciators of convocation, offering completeness (...) in relation to a series of scheduled needs. This completeness is announced through knowledge of lack suppression: if you lack this, take that, learn to use it to solve your lack; enjoy it, be wholesome, fulfill yourself. For that, it will be necessary to buy items, pay for some services, listen to several enunciators, pay for consultation, deal with consulting fees, read manuals, instructions, recipes, train, address goals based on strategic rationality, climb up several scales (AIDAR PRADO, 2013, p. 18).

As the author observes, there are several ways to reinforce the logic of belonging to a group of “different identicals”. For this, the media makes use of texts that call for the body of the enunciatee as a sensitive whole, appealing to all the senses simultaneously. These are narratives of ‘success’ stories according to the frameworks of neoliberalism; constructions of subjects modeled for consumption, with finely segmented and idealized lifestyles presented as admirable.

Taking the magazine *Nova* as an example of convocation for the consumption of certain modes of being of the neoliberal subject who is a self-entrepreneur, the author demonstrates how this vehicle is placed as a manual of procedures that presents a 'life of success and pleasure' for a certain type of female reader:

On the one hand, the convocation speaks in the first person summoning a you: we are here to help you, reader, we are close to your needs, we know you, we know your world, it is ours. On the other hand, there is the construction of a we, a set of belongings in which common values are set and replaced in the search for an identity of this imaginised, idealised woman who fulfills herself when the community functions as a group of sociability that provides the identifications of its members. Occasionally, competitions are called for, such as *Nova*, in which the winning reader takes the place of goddesses of the cover (AIDAR PRADO, 2013, p. 54).

As Aidar Prado (2013) teaches in his thought-provoking research on the magazines segment, such a calling occurs when it is showed that a person only needs a program and a map to find

themselves, to be 'successful' and 'to live well'. The texts help the reader to know which reality they belong to or should belong to, what they must do to become someone better or to turn into something they would like to be. Such motivations imply modalizations of being, of knowledge, of doing and of power, accompanied by appeals and passionalization strategies to capture the reader's attention: "The summoned reader becomes an initiate in the learning of consumption values, one who launches themselves to become "more me", a type of You Inc. entrepreneur in an imaginised world"(AIDAR PRADO, 2013, p. 55).

Taking the place on the cover with models of success also occurs in the universe of entrepreneurship and business. The entrepreneur is often presented as an ideal type, and an entire segment of specialized media is built around this. Business media reinforce models, legitimize teachings, practices, consultants and 'gurus'. This is an industry that contributes to a broader issue: the creation and consolidation of a world view and symbolic reality of reference (WOOD Jr & PAULA, 2016).

In a review on this topic, Costa (2010) found works addressing the most diverse perspectives taking business media as their central object of investigation. This diversity includes books, magazines, newspapers whose theme is business or corporate management. Such studies aim to understand the managerial imaginary, the discourse of the best companies to work for, women's representations or the suffering of working in specific vehicles.

In their analysis of four business publications: *Exame*, *Você S.A.*, *HSM Management* and *Harvard Business Review*, Wood Jr & Paula (2006) highlight the impact of popular business media. The authors address some characteristics of these publications, such as their relevant role in the dissemination of values such as right and wrong, good and bad, without much critical reflection. They also highlight their relevance in the valorization and dissemination of international management ideas coming, mostly, from the United States. This is the type of media responsible for corroborating these practices, while also promoting the legitimation of certain specialists in the field, even though these might lack in academic consistency.

According to Castellano (2018), this culture of management was responsible for bringing to the environment of Brazilian companies a type of mentality from the United States that reinforces, albeit ambiguously, meritocracy as an important concept of that culture. According to Castellano, there is some resistance in Brazil as to the adoption of meritocracy as a basic criterion for social organization.

Based on these reflections, we will discuss later on how entrepreneur awards can be understood as a way of calling upon individuals to adhere to the precepts of modalization of subjectivities that surround the entrepreneur as an essential figure in the current neoliberal context. However, talking about these awards involves talking about metrics, parameters and measurements that highlight those who deserve to be considered as a successful reference. This is the point we discuss in the next part of this text.

Entrepreneurship, success, and metrics

In neoliberalism, the individual subject is seen as “human capital”. In this context, the individual must always strive to value herself/himself. The neoliberal person then becomes the competitive person, one who Dardot & Laval (2016) name as a “business subject”, “unitary subject”, “neoliberal subject” or, simply, “neo-subject”:

The unitary subject is the subject of total self-involvement. The desire for personal fulfillment, the project that one wants to carry out, the motivation that animates the “collaborator” of the company, the desire with all the names that one wants to give to it, is the target of the new power (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2016, p. 237).

Castellano (2018) describes this new way of acting that is reinforced by conforming to the neoliberal mentality. Starting, first, from an exposition of the welfare state as a situation for the reactive, carefree man, accustomed to imputing to the State and to society the solution to their problems, the author brings up the neoliberal subject who values merit, autonomy, competitiveness, entrepreneurship. It is precisely in the figure of the entrepreneur that we focus our discussion in this article.

This subject always guides their behavior on competition and the demand for excellent performance in every area. “Winning” and being “successful” are top priorities. When valuing their personal capital, they take accumulation as the law of life. They need their body to allow them to go beyond their capabilities for production and pleasure (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2016).

As self-entrepreneurs, they have control over their life and must manage life according to their desires and needs, as they develop appropriate strategies based on cost-benefit calculations (SAFATLE, 2015). Entrepreneurship emerges in this search for self-government, in which the individual is his/her own self manager. It is widely understood that everyone has something of an entrepreneur within them. The role of the market would be to release and stimulate this potential (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2016).

In this context, Castellano (2018) emphasizes how responsibility for a huge spectrum of issues is transferred to the individual sphere. In this effort, the author views self-help as an interesting symptom of contemporary times. Thus, we see the creation of a kind of morality based on the circumscribed dynamics of private life.

Similarly, the entrepreneur can also be perceived as a symptom of contemporaneity. In this logic, the distribution of economic resources is seen as exclusively due to the successful actions of personal achievements. The corporate subject is exposed to risks whose management concerns only their own decisions. Coherent with the view that all spheres of life present risk, according to Dardot & Laval (2016) this is about managing the different types of “personalized micro risk”.

As a result, there is a growing wave of individualization in which social crises are viewed as individual crises. External causes are taken as personal problems. With individualization, “transactions” weight more than “relationships”. The subject must be positive, purposeful, proactive, have 'effective' relationships and must not stick to the past. They must always demand more from themselves and, although their self-esteem grows, dissatisfaction increases in relation to their ever superlative performance indexes. In the absence of a responsible external authority, the source of all effectiveness would be the individual themselves. This way, “economic and financial coercion turns into self-coercion and self-blame” (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2016, p. 345).

Still on individualism, Castellano (2018) brings forth another perspective. By studying the imaginary of success in self-help literature, which she considers one of the cultural materializations of individualism, Castellano shows that the origins of individualist ideology are based on certain traditions from the United States. The utilitarian tradition, dominant in that country, preaches boldness, flexibility, autonomy, and the willingness to take risks as well as to pursue goals. Ittassu (2012) argues that the figure of the entrepreneur is the hero in the scenario of maximum efficiency in a productivist world.

But it is not enough just to be an entrepreneur, it is necessary to be a 'successful' one. In her study, Castellano (2018, p. 26) demonstrates how the image of the winner is portrayed as those who “build their own path and, regardless the surrounding social context, they thrive”. Their counterpoint, the losers, are those who hold the State and others responsible for their defeats. They settle for less, prefer to “hunker down” in the safety net offered by the State and wait for the 'good opportunities' to come their way. (CASTELLANO, 2018, p. 51).

As a form of "reward" for those who adopt the appropriate modes of behaviour and manage to project themselves as successful in the current neoliberal context, the awards are intended for 'winners'. Furthermore, entrepreneur awards represent the materialization of another symptom of today's culture: the quantification of the self. As Rettberg (2014) observed, measuring something gives us a sense of control. Whether these are numbers of marketing campaigns, productivity indexes or health indicators, measuring also makes us disregard or disconsider things that cannot be measured.

According to Rettberg (2014), promoting self-knowledge by means of self-tracking data is the slogan of the quantified self movement. This is a group of people who use mobile devices, spreadsheets, notebooks and more to track and analyze all kinds of information about themselves. Their testimonials at meetings and blogs show the stories of individuals regarding the use of self-monitoring to improve their lives, to become more productive, manage a disease, sleep better, lose weight, stay in shape and even find a loving partner.

In a general way, society seems to be investing in quantitative measurements in the hope of improving performance (RETTBERG, 2014). Thus, it is safe to assume that many entrepreneur awards can be viewed as a way to quantify certain types of behavior and to reinforce these metrics as indicative of success. They showcase the indexes of the optimized performance that is expected in the today's world.

Based on the theoretical framework presented here, the characteristics that we intend to explore in the awards take the entrepreneur as an individual, as someone who wants to win. This is someone who wishes to be successful and who believes that this would depend only on their own decisions. Positive, purposeful, responsible, and hardworking, they have 'effective' relationships and are not tied to the past. Autonomous and competitive, they take risks and "take charge of their life", "run after their dreams", always seek to surpass themselves (CASTELLANO, 2018; DARDOT & LAVAL, 2016; SAFATLE, 2015). Their predominantly instrumental rationality leads them to exclude the affective aspects of human nature from their decisions, as well as all dimensions that are not easily quantifiable (CASTELLANO, 2018, p. 51).

It is important to emphasize that in this culture of quantifying, data represent projections and simulations. Therefore, they allow only for approximations of knowledge, and should not be confused with knowledge itself. Many people take metrics and projections as the objective truth, but objective truth is not restricted to data or figures. Rettberg (2014) also stresses that we live in a time

when people are taught that being constantly monitored is normal. The practice of self-tracking is regarded as a benefit. The entrepreneur awards are good examples of this type of strategic rationality geared towards benefit. In the next topic, we will explore the role of metrics in the world of entrepreneurship by analysing the way some of these awards are conceived.

The quantified entrepreneur

Entrepreneur awards can be regarded as a convocation for a certain style of self-management. These are exemplary narratives that aim to persuade people to adhere to the “entrepreneur” mode of being. For this study, our initial search was carried out by using “entrepreneur award” as a keyword. As a result, several reports and websites were found. These were analyzed to map the existing awards.

This survey allowed us to see that, in some cases, the entrepreneur is mentioned as a substantive subject (“entrepreneur of the year”), while in other cases as an adjective (“entrepreneur mayor”). In the latter, we have the presence of entrepreneurship related to several areas such as social and gender issues, as exemplified, respectively, in the “social entrepreneurs” and “women entrepreneurs” awards.

The diversity of entrepreneur awards also shows the diversity of their scope and periodicity. There are national awards, while others stem from local initiatives. Some of these awards have been running for years, while others result from single specific initiatives.

The tables in the Appendix display the mapping that was undertaken. We roughly analyzed 26 entrepreneur awards, from 23 different institutions. With this panorama, one first piece of evidence can be singled out. The diversity of existing entrepreneur awards and the different entities involved show how far quantification is now a part of this scene.

Two awards were selected for more detailed analysis. Our selection criterion was to privilege awards that highlight entrepreneurship in a general way. Recurrence was also considered. This guaranteed a greater amount of material for analysis. The two awards we studied were: Entrepreneur of the Year Award, promoted by Ernest Young (EY) and Successful Entrepreneur Award, promoted by the magazine Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios (PEGN).

Based on the examination of materials such as websites, regulations, reports, and publications related to these events, these were some of the questions we came up with: What are entrepreneur awards? Who are their sponsors? What are the standard practices and types of

behavior these awards prescribe as a pattern? Which institutions are responsible for the entrepreneur awards? Which personal and management skills do these awards reinforce? What kind of connotation do they present? Who is, after all, the successful entrepreneur – the winner?

We used the following categories to guide our analysis: history of the award, its origin, institution that promotes it, evaluation criteria, award categories, type of prize, prized type of behavior and concept of success that underlies the award.

Award 1: Entrepreneur of the Year - EY

Starting with the first categories of analysis, the history of the award and its origin, the Entrepreneur of the Year award emerged in 1986, to “honor and support leading entrepreneurs in the United States”, according to its official discourse. This award has existed for over 30 years and it operates in 50 countries and 145 cities worldwide. It has been carried out in Brazil for 20 years. Each program has a national winner, who competes for the world title. The world award has already had winners from several countries, such as: Canada, Australia, France, India, Singapore, United Kingdom, Switzerland. In 2018, a Brazilian received the global award for the first time. The winner was Rubens Menin, founder of MRV Engenharia. The institution that created this award is Ernest Young - EY, a global company that provides audit services, advice in taxation and consultancy for corporate transactions.

The annual award is divided into three categories: Master, Emerging and Sustainable. The “master” award is aimed at entrepreneurs from consolidated companies in their area of activity. The “emerging” category honors those with great potential for growth. Finally, the “sustainable” segment is focused on companies that have reduced the socio-environmental impacts of their businesses. The promoting institution highlights on the award website that the items evaluated are:

The award is based on the following criteria: entrepreneurial spirit, financial performance, strategic direction, innovation, global impact, personal integrity, and influence. EY identifies and promotes the achievements of these leaders, extolling the growth of their companies and the dynamism of their businesses to foster an entrepreneurial culture in several countries and regions. (Ernest Young, 2018)

The evaluation process is based on a report with detailed information about the candidate entrepreneurs. This report is handed over to a group of referees who, according to EY, are “outstanding entrepreneurs in the market in which they operate”. In addition to the report, an event is held before the end for the finalist candidates to present themselves. It is worth taking a closer look at the details of the items evaluated. In our view, these are indicators of how a “successful

entrepreneur” is constituted and parameterized. Based on the arguments put forth by Aidar Prado (2013), we understand that this set of elements works as an exemplary entrepreneur's manual, promoting their convocation.

Table 1 - Evaluation criteria for the Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Criterion	Description
Personal characteristics and business history	An entrepreneur describes their personal characteristics and the history of the business. They also talk about their desires in charge of the company and express what they consider as decisive for being successful. They describe situations in which they showed perseverance in adversity and overcame difficulties. They talk about how they solved problems, what they learned from such experiences as they display their ability to take risks and face the uncertain.
Innovation	A business leader describes how they create and make business visions a reality. They talk about how to build and rebuild commitment around common goals. They display their ability to develop new products and solutions, to innovate, to adapt and improve current products, process and services. They discuss how to differentiate from the competition. They display entrepreneurial maturity in building strategic alliances and in surrounding themselves with talented people, teams, councils and advisors to ensure success for all.
Company initiative / culture	The entrepreneur shows pioneering spirit in their approach, in the creation of a product, in the adoption of a certain type of culture or process. They talk about how they acknowledge the need to anticipate trends and adopt changes that occur in the competitive environment by means of innovation in all aspects of the business. They describe how to nurture innovation within their organization.
Financial performance	One of the ways to analyze the financial performance of a given company is to check the enhancement of brand(s) and assets.

Source: extracted from EY (2018)¹

From the information above, it is possible to identify that, for the purposes of the call made by the Entrepreneur of the Year Award, the successful entrepreneur shows initiative, is a pioneer, anticipates trends, changes, can be innovative, creates a culture of innovation in the organization,

¹Available at <<https://www.ey.com/br/pt/about-us/entrepreneur-of-the-year/premio-emprededor-do-ano-2018-criterios-de-avaliacao>>. Access:17 april 2019

builds strategic alliances, surrounds themselves with people who ensure their success and that of everyone in the organization, has the capacity to take risks, faces the uncertain, perseveres, overcomes challenges, manages to make their company have a good financial performance as verified in terms of enhancement of brand and assets.

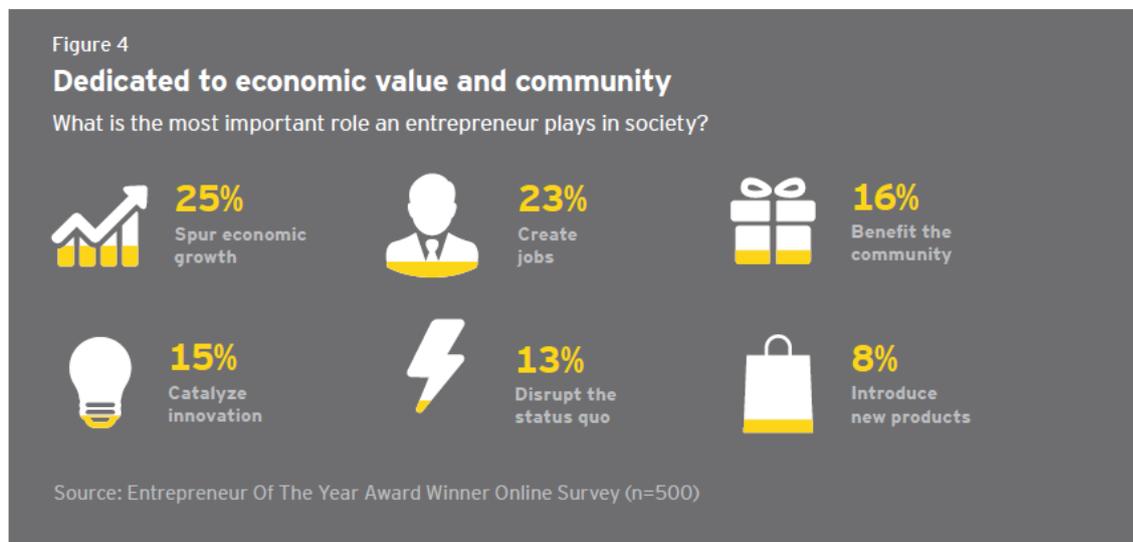
Innovation is one of the most extolled characteristics in this prescribing manual. This attribute is highlighted in several award categories: pioneer, innovator, and innovation in the organization. Such prominence of innovation as an attribute can be linked to a type of behavior deemed valuable for the operation of current capitalism: the continuous act of reinventing oneself. Such a provision is necessary in an uncertain and risky environment.

Individuality is also highlighted in this award. It is present in this discourse as the valorization of individual initiative. To reinforce the importance of individuality in this ideal, we observe that none of the awarded characteristics emphasize collective action. The only aspect that could point toward the collective is “surround yourself with people”, however, social interaction is not valued here. The way this is carried out, "people" are only necessary here to "ensure the success" of the individual entrepreneur.

Another point that draws attention in the reports and in the dissemination of the event is how figures are used to demonstrate the relevance of the award itself. To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the global award, EY, in partnership with Harvard Business Review, published material that outlines the profile of the winners. In “The purpose of entrepreneurs - how they overcame themselves and won the competition”, they boast the number of people awarded and the amount of money generated by the winning companies: “9,000 executives in the United States have already won this award over the past 30 years” or “Most of these entrepreneurs have created companies that grow in prosperous ways. They have generated around 100 million dollars, with a thousand employees or less”.

Another aspect is the impact of entrepreneurs in their specific communities and in society in general. Figure 1, below, seeks to demonstrate the economic and social value of an entrepreneur by quantifying, in decreasing order of importance, their different ways of contributing to society: by generating economic growth, generating jobs, generating benefits for the community, fostering innovation, changing the status quo, introducing new products.

Figure 1 - Infographic on the social relevance of the entrepreneur



Source: Image extracted from *Ernest Young & Harvard Business Review analytics* (2018)²

Figure 1 shows the promotion of the entrepreneur as a relevant social agent. Performance factors that are considered exemplary, as well as socially responsible, are listed here, along with detailed metrics.

Award 2: Successful Entrepreneur - PEGN

We were able to find less materials for this award than the previous one. Most of the information we worked with came from the website of the magazine *Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios* - PEGN. The first issue of this magazine was released in December 1988, a year after the creation of the television program with the same name (SANTANA, 2011). Currently the magazine defines itself as “the largest and most important community of entrepreneurs in Brazil. - *Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios* aims at helping innovative people to transform ideas into successful businesses”.

PEGN also sponsors other awards that are not addressed directly at the entrepreneur, such as awards for franchises, women, startups, social businesses, academic works, micro and small companies, among others.

The Successful Entrepreneur award has had over ten editions. Considering the 2018 edition, we can see it rewards companies in five different categories: retail, startup, services, industry and social impact. In addition to competing for the specific awards in their respective categories,

companies also compete together for the main Entrepreneur of the Year award. The evaluation of these companies is carried out by PEGN specialists in partnership with Insper, a recognized higher education institution in the areas of Administration, Economics, Law and Engineering. Through this partnership, an evaluation committee is created, which PEGN defines as being a “committee of notables composed of personalities from the business world, recognized for their knowledge on the subject, professional experience and achievements”. Called to function as symbolic analysts, as described by Aidar Prado (2013), people and institutions of the entrepreneurial environment are part of this group, according to the official description. These include investors, investment fund managers, institutions involved with the business promotion, consultants, executives, entrepreneurs, business journalists, entrepreneurship teachers and incubators. As a prize, in addition to the award ceremony itself, the winners are featured in the publication material.

The award defines its purpose as promoting entrepreneurship and to recognize the entrepreneurs who stood out each year. It also aims to help develop “the culture of entrepreneurship in Brazil, the development of the economy and the production of educational content”. People who compete can either be nominated by third parties or self-register by using a link in the award's promotional material.

It was not possible to find details of the evaluation criteria for this award. The Table below describes how the categories are defined.

Table 2 - Evaluation categories of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Category	Description
High impact businesses (Industry, Services and Retail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they have been in existence for at least three years • they presented an increase in revenue of more than 20% in the last two years; • they are innovative (have launched new products, service or business models in the last three years); • they have great potential for growth.
I - High impact businesses (Industry, Services and Retail)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they have been in existence for at least three years • they presented an increase in revenue of more than 20% in the last two years; • they are innovative (have launched new products, service or business models in the last three years); • they have great potential for growth.
II - Business with a social impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have been formally in existence for at least two years

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As their core business, they (also) offer solutions to social problems; and / or sell products or service that contribute to improving the quality of life of the low-income population; • They have the potential to scale and operate efficiently; • They are innovative (have launched new products, service or business models in the last two years).
III – Startups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have been in existence for at least three years • any segment, including web / internet; • They are innovative (in products, service or business models); • they show consistent revenue growth.
General Award highlight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They stand out in more than one category; or • they stand out in the opinion of most members of the evaluation committee

Source: Compilation of information extracted from the Award² notice

Although this award is primarily focused on the characteristics of companies, in contrast to the previous award whose emphasis was on the individual, when analyzing the way categories are described, it is possible to infer what is understood as a “successful” entrepreneur. The entrepreneurs summoned through this award are making their companies survive with increased sales amid market turbulence. They are considered as innovators when launching new products in companies that have the potential to grow despite a scenario of successive crises. Once again, in this award, the so-called 'innovation' stands out in this neoliberal management model.

Discussion of results

A first point to be considered is that the characteristics of determination to win, and to be successful (DARDOT & LAVAL, 2016; CASTELLANO, 2018) pointed out in the literature on the entrepreneur are aligned with the existence of awards occurring frequently in this medium. In the first award we analyzed, the emphasis on the individual was much greater. In these awards, the emphasis is always on individual performance. This observation demonstrates how individual attributes are more valued than the collective ones in the discourse on the neoliberal subject.

Table 3 presented below summarizes the categories that are analyzed in each selected Award:

Table 3 - Analytical categories of the selected Awards

Categories	Award 1: Entrepreneurs of the Year - EY	Award 1: Entrepreneur of the Year - PEGN
Award history	Honor and Support America's Leading Entrepreneurs	To promote entrepreneurship and to recognize the entrepreneurs who stood out each year
Origin	Since 1986	Approximately since 2010
Institution	Ernest Young	Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios
Evaluation criteria	entrepreneurs from consolidated companies in their area of expertise	retail, startup, services, industry, and social impact
Award categories	Master, Emerging and Sustainable	High impact business, social business, and startups
Prize	Award event	Ceremony and magazine article
Valued type of behavior	Innovation, perseverance amid adversity, overcoming challenges, ability to take risks and face the uncertain Pioneering spirit	Innovation, capacity for scalability, revenue, efficiency, increased sales, potential for growth.
Success concept	This person is a pioneer, takes risks, perseveres, has overcome challenges to make their company innovate and show good financial performance.	This person has the capacity to innovate and create something that is efficient

Source: Table prepared by the authors from compiled data

Our analysis of the two selected awards showed that, in addition to the convocation for entrepreneurship and its promotion as a model for the neoliberal subject who manage themselves as “successful”, these awards also promote the institutions that award them. This can be seen in

the way Ernest Young directs various materials related to the award to its website, just as the magazine Pequenas Empresas Grandes Negócios uses being present in its publication as a bargaining chip for the award they give out.

Still, the entrepreneur award goes much further by fostering desires and calling on entrepreneurs to adopt certain types of behavior that are regarded as exemplary and admirable in the business world. When it is argued that to win it is necessary to be innovative, entrepreneurs are being called upon to deliberately and consistently adopt this mode of being in their daily lives. Therefore, success is linked to a narrative of surpassing and persisting at an individual level. In this ideal, the environment and the actions of others are not deemed relevant as long as the individual is persistent and knows how to efficiently calculate the costs and benefits of each risk assumed as part of the process towards growth. Therefore, as portrayed in these awards, success results from individual effort.

Based on the analysis of the categories and evaluation criteria in the entrepreneur awards selected here, it appears that a “successful” entrepreneur must adhere to the established model and play certain roles in personal terms when exhibiting characteristics such as initiative, pioneering spirit, anticipation of trends, constant change, generating a culture of innovation in the organization, building “strategic” alliances, surrounding themselves with people who ensure their good performance, persevering, taking risks, overcoming challenges, among others. Likewise, it is equally important that they adopt attitudes that are viewed as appropriate in the management of their business, such as: launching new products regularly, guaranteeing growth potential, making their company have a good financial performance in the enhancement of brands and assets. These are key attitudes that are prescribed for the mode of being of an entrepreneur subject.

The metrics used to quantify performances and parameterize this mode of being reinforce characteristics that are aligned with the ideal of individual effort that is demanded of the neoliberal subject: the “self-entrepreneur” (SAFATLE, 2015). Although there are also criteria related to the social impact of actions taken by a “successful” entrepreneur, individual topics are more highly valued. Thus, we can infer that these are considered priorities in the set of parameters for evaluating this type of performance geared towards “success”.

The financial dimension also deserves special mention. Making the company survive, generating profit and growth are fundamental criteria in the performance evaluation of the entrepreneurial subject. It is evident, therefore, what Aida Prado (2013) argues in the sense that

there is a convocation for entrepreneurs to continue making the capitalist system work in the “new reason of the world” (Dardot & Laval, 2016) by placing financial performance and growth of companies among their main targets.

If we accept that control works by tracking and measuring all kinds of performance levels, we should also take heed that data are used by the sponsoring companies themselves as material to be offered to this audience as reinforcement of the social importance entrepreneurship, along with the entrepreneur award itself. This aspect stands out when we consider the data presented by the impact of the EY entrepreneur award.

Final considerations

To critically articulate three major aspects of our present times, namely: entrepreneurship, success, and metrics, we selected two of the main entrepreneur awards offered in Brazil as objects of analysis for the present article. Starting with the first - the relevance of entrepreneurship in the neoliberal context - the number of awards for this category identified in the mapping we carried out would be a strong indication of the importance of such a model of subjectivity in our culture. Linked to a certain way of acting aimed at achieving their goals, the entrepreneur subject can be seen both as an actor or an agent, as well as as a mode of being. This quality of behavior can present itself in several areas. Just as there is the entrepreneur of the year, there is also the entrepreneurial woman, the entrepreneurial student and so on.

Entrepreneur awards call on the most diverse types of profiles to adopt the characteristics deemed necessary and admirable in this medium. All of them are aligned with the fundamentals of success, the second aspect of today’s world we have highlighted in this article. The imperative of success is not only recognized but also widely celebrated in entrepreneur awards. It is not enough to act as an entrepreneur: one must desire to be recognized worldwide as the winner in an EY entrepreneur award ceremony. One must desire to make it to the cover, or to be the subject of a special report by PEGN.

To assess something, one needs to measure and to quantify and therefore generate numerical figures. So here we have the third point that concerns this article: metrics. To find out if they are worthy of an award, the entrepreneur subject must follow certain standards and fit into certain parameters. Many such standards and parameters concern the expected types of individual

behavior. Others refer to the impacts brought to society by their enterprise. The latter stand out, mainly, for feeding into the current capitalist system by generating wealth and profit.

In our analysis, we aimed to remove the entrepreneur awards from the scope of common sense and to bring them to critical reflection in terms of their forms of communication, the connotation for the consumption of certain models of subjectivities, the imperative of success and its metrics. Upon concluding this discussion, we understand that “the winner is” triggers mechanisms for prescribing procedures, forms of behavior and modes of being deemed to be valued in the most different spheres of the social, as the figure of the entrepreneur clearly stands out as the neoliberal ideal of subject.

Gisela Castro

Professor at the Postgraduate Program in Consumption and Consumption Practices / ESPM-SP

Doctor in Communication and Culture / UFRJ

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0662-3770>

E-mail: castro.gisela@gmail.com

Carolina Fabris

Doctor Student at the Postgraduate Program in Consumption and Consumption Practices / ESPM-SP

Master in Public Administration and Government / FGV-SP

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3500-3802>

E-mail: carolina.fabris@gmail.com

Received on: October 13, 2019.

Approved on: May 16, 2020.

References

AIDAR PRADO, José Luiz. **Convocações biopolíticas dos dispositivos comunicacionais**. São Paulo: Educ, Fapesp, 2013.

CASTELLANO, Mayka. **Vencedores e fracassados**: o imperativo do sucesso na cultura da autoajuda. Curitiba: Appris, 2018.

CASTRO, Gisela G. S. Lindas para sempre e jovens de coração: o envelhecimento na publicidade natalina brasileira. In: CASTRO, G. G. S. **Os velhos na propaganda**: atualizando o debate. São Paulo: Pimenta Cultural, 2018, p. 73-101.

_____. Comunicação e consumo nas dinâmicas culturais do mundo globalizado. **PragMATIZES** - Revista Latino-Americana de Estudos em Cultura, v. 4, n. 6, mar. 2014, p. 58-71.

COSTA, Alessandra. **Convergências, divergências e silêncios**: o discurso contemporâneo sobre o empreendedorismo nas empresas juniores e na mídia de negócios. Tese (Doutorado em Administração), Fundação Getúlio Vargas, São Paulo, 2010

DARDOT, Pierre; LAVAL, Christian. **A nova razão do mundo**: ensaio sobre a sociedade neoliberal. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2016.

ITUASSU, Cristiana Trindade. **O sentido do sucesso**: uma construção social *made in USA*. Tese (Doutorado em Administração). Fundação Getúlio Vargas, São Paulo, 2012.

RETTBERG, Jill Walker. **Seeing ourselves through technology**: how we use selfies, blogs and wearable devices to see and shape ourselves. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

SAFATLE, Vladimir. Empresários de si. **Carta Capital**, edição 13/05/2015.

SANTANA, Dalva. **Aprendendo a ser jovem e empreendedor em tempos líquidos**: uma análise da Revista Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios. Dissertação (Mestrado em Educação). Universidade Luterana do Brasil, 2011.

SENNETT, Richard. **A corrosão do caráter**: consequências pessoais do trabalho no novo capitalismo. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2007.

WOOD Jr., Thomaz e PAULA, Ana Paula Paes. A mídia especializada e a cultura do management. **Organizações e Sociedade**, v.13, n. 38, julho/setembro 2006.

Selected primary sources - Ernst Young:

Ernest Young. Empreendedor do ano 2017, 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.ey.com/br/pt/about-us/entrepreneurship/entrepreneur-of-the-year/premio-empresendedor-do-ano-2017-master>. Acesso em: 18 dez. 2018

Ernest Young, 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.ey.com/br/pt/about-us/entrepreneurship/entrepreneur-of-the-year>. Acesso em: 18 dez. 2018

Ernest Young. Noite de grandes comemorações no Prêmio Empreendedor do Ano 2018, 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.ey.com/br/pt/about-us/ey-noite-de-grandes-comemoracoes-no-premio-empresendedor-do-ano-2018>. Acesso em: 18 dez. 2018

Ernest Young, 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.ey.com/br/pt/about-us>. Acesso em: 18 dez. 2018

Ernest Young. EY celebra o empreendedorismo brasileiro, 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.ey.com/br/pt/newsroom/news-releases/release-premio-empresendedor-do-ano-2018>. Acesso em: 18 dez. 2018

Ernest Young. Critérios de avaliação, 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.ey.com/br/pt/about-us/entrepreneur-of-the-year/premio-empresendedor-do-ano-2018-criterios-de-avaliacao>. Acesso em: 20 abr. 2019

Ernest Young & Harvard business review analytics. The entrepreneur's purpose - How EY Entrepreneur Of The Year® Award Winners Outperform and Outlast the Competition, 2018. Disponível em:

<https://hbr.org/sponsored/2016/11/the-entrepreneurs-purpose-how-ey-entrepreneur-of-the-year-award-winners-outperform-and-outlast-the-competition> Acesso em: 25 maio. 2020.

Selected primary sources - Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios:

Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios. Prêmio empreendedor de sucesso 2017 abre inscrições, 2018. Disponível em <https://revistapegn.globo.com/Empreendedor-de-Sucesso/noticia/2017/09/premio-empreendedor-de-sucesso-2017-abre-inscricoes.html> Acesso em: 20 abr. 2019

Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios. Inscreva sua empresa no prêmio empreendedor de sucesso 2017, 2018. Disponível em <https://revistapegn.globo.com/Empreendedor-de-Sucesso/noticia/2017/09/inscreva-sua-empresa-no-premio-empreendedor-de-sucesso-2017.html> Acesso em: 20 abr. 2019

Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios. Conheça os vencedores do prêmio empreendedor de sucesso 2017, 2018. Disponível em <https://revistapegn.globo.com/Empreendedor-de-Sucesso/noticia/2017/12/conheca-os-vencedores-do-premio-empreendedor-de-sucesso-2017.html> Acesso em: 20 abr. 2019

Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios. Os vencedores do prêmio empreendedor de sucesso 2017, 2018. Disponível em <https://revistapegn.globo.com/Empreendedor-de-Sucesso/fotos/2017/12/os-vencedores-do-premio-empreendedor-de-sucesso-2017.html> Acesso em: 20 abr. 2019

Appendix

Table A - Entrepreneur Awards

Award name	Institution that promotes it
Entrepreneur of the Year Award	Ernest Young
Successful entrepreneur	Pequenas Empresas & Grandes Negócios (PEGN)
Spark Awards 2015 - event that honors the most influential companies in Brazilian entrepreneurship	Microsoft, in partnership with StartupFarm
LIDE Entrepreneurship Award	Group of Business Leaders (LIDE)
José Paschoal Baggio Entrepreneur Award	Correio Lageano and Instituto José Paschoal Baggio
Entrepreneur Award	France - Brazil Chamber of Commerce
36th Entrepreneur of the Year Award	Mogi das Cruzes Commercial Association (ACMC)
Entrepreneur 2018	Inova – Unicamp
Entrepreneur Award	São Gabriel do Oeste City Hall - Economic Development Secretary
Entrepreneur Award Ozires Silva	ISAE Business School
Entrepreneur Award José Paschoal Baggio	Jornal Correio Lageano
Entrepreneur Santander 2019	Santander Universities

Source: developed by the authors from information compiled during research

Table B - Thematic entrepreneurship awards

Award name	Institution that promotes it	Theme
Student Entrepreneur	Entrepreneurs' Organization (EO)	Young students
Pronatec Entrepreneur Award	Sebrae and Ministry of Education	
Citi Young Microentrepreneurs Award 2016	Entrepreneurial Alliance, with support from the Citi Foundation	
Laureate Brasil Award - Young Social Entrepreneur	Laureate International Universities	
Visionaris - UBS Social Entrepreneur Award	Swiss Bank UBS	Social / sustainability
VIVA Stephan Schmidheiny Award 2016 - social entrepreneurship initiatives in Latin America	Viva Idea	
Social entrepreneur	Folha de S.Paulo	
Sustainable Entrepreneur	Portal 1 Papo Reto	
Women's Consulate Award for Female Entrepreneurship.	Consul - Appliances brand social responsibility arm	City hall
Women's Initiative Awards - honors entrepreneurs from five continents	Cartier	
Sebrae Business Woman Award - women who are examples for Brazilian entrepreneurship.	Sebrae	
Sebrae Mayor Entrepreneur Award	Sebrae	City hall
Cultural Entrepreneur Award	RGE Sul and Cida Cultural	Culture
Santander Banespa Awards for Entrepreneurship and Science and Innovation.	Santander	Science
Cooperative entrepreneur award	Coopercentral Aurora Alimentos, Sebrae / SC and Catarinense Movement for Excellence (MCE) with support from Senar, SESCOOP and SICOOP	Cooperative

Source: developed by the authors from information compiled during research

Abstract

This paper deals with three contemporary topics. The first one is the prominence of the entrepreneur in today's neoliberal culture. The second topic highlights the importance of success. Thirdly, the central role of data in the growing role of quantification plays in the neoliberal mode of being. By analysing two awards granted to the entrepreneurs in Brazil: Entrepreneur of the Year Award and Successful Entrepreneur Award, we argue that such awards can be seen as a means of summoning people to take up the "entrepreneur" mode of subjectivity. Taken as symbol of the current cultural trends, the successful entrepreneur is socially valued as an individual who fosters innovation, is willing to take risks, able to overcome challenges, among other aspects. This individual is also valued in the way they manage their business to be profitable and grow, thus maintaining the current capitalist system in a backdrop of uncertainty.

Keywords: Communication. Mode of subjectivity. Entrepreneurship. Neoliberal subject.

Resumo

Neste artigo três pontos do contemporâneo são destacados. O primeiro destaque é dado ao sujeito neoliberal que se desdobra na valorização do empreendedorismo na cultura. O segundo ponto é a motivação para ser cada dia melhor e obter sucesso. Um terceiro ponto é a necessidade de transformar em números estimativas e resultados, quantificar o desempenho em todas as áreas. Estes três pontos de destaque são articulados nesse artigo a partir da constatação de que existem premiações que convocam as pessoas a aderirem ao modelo de subjetividade exaltado pela lógica "empreendedora". Com base na literatura elencada para fundamentar esta discussão, são analisados dois prêmios concedidos aos empreendedores no Brasil: o Prêmio Empreendedor do Ano e o Prêmio Empreendedor de Sucesso. A análise destas premiações revelou que o empreendedor de sucesso exibe determinadas características e comportamentos individuais que são valorizados na cultura atual, tais como ser inovador, arriscar, superar desafios, entre outros aspectos. Tal sujeito empreendedor é também valorizado na gestão de uma empresa que faça diferença em termos de lucratividade, crescimento e manutenção do sistema capitalista atual em um cenário de incertezas.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação. Subjetividade. Empreendedorismo. Sujeito neoliberal.

Resumen

En este artículo se destacan tres puntos de lo contemporáneo. Uno es el tema neoliberal que se desarrolla en la valorización del emprendedor en la cultura. El otro, la motivación de cada día para ser mejor, para tener éxito. Un tercero, la necesidad de que todo se convierta en números, para cuantificar. Son estos tres aspectos destacados los que se articulan en este artículo desde la lógica de que hay premios que hacen la convocatoria a las personas al modelo de subjetividad "empreendedora". Para esto, se analiza el contenido de dos premios otorgados a emprendedores en Brasil: Premio Emprendedor del Año y Premio Emprendedor del Éxito. A partir del análisis fue posible darse cuenta de que el emprendedor exitoso valorado en la cultura actual pasa por características y comportamientos del individuo, como ser innovador, asumir riesgos, superar desafíos, entre otros aspectos. También es valorado en la gestión de una empresa que marca la diferencia en términos de rentabilidad y mantenimiento del sistema.

Palabras clave: Comunicación. Subjetividad. Emprendimiento.