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Conceptions of 19th Century Organizational Competition: Ideological Possibilities in the United States Railway Environment between 1870 and 1880

Alexandre Hochmann Béhar [α], Douglas Inácio Fragoso Ferreira [σ] & Raudyane Soares Marreiro [ρ]

Abstract- **Discursive constructions are laden with meanings tied to the historical and social context, which are linked. Historically, the development of concepts associated with Administration is presented in a de contextualized and anachronistic way, which could indicate a manipulative ideological potential. Therefore, this article analyzes the concept of competition, which is so dear to Administration, in the context of the origin of modern organization: the United States railway companies. Thus, through use of the Infinite Conceptual Puzzle, journalistic articles were selected from the American Railroad Journal, for an analysis of the conceptions of competition between 1870 and 1880. The analysis proposed indicates an approximation between the various perspectives of competition and the positive perspective. This is linked to the intention (and idea of a right) of competing against foreign nations in the external market, also as a demonstration of development and a level of civilization, and the railroads were crucial for this competition.**

Keywords: competition; united states railways; infinite conceptual puzzle; ideology; historical research.

I. Introduction

This article continues the historical, conceptual and discursive analysis conducted by Béhar and Feitosa (2020), with regards to conceptions of the concept of competition in the 19th century United States railroad environment. This proposal not only arises from the relevance of United States railroad organizations as the principal model of modern organization (Chandler, 1999; Perrow, 2002; White, 2012) but, more specifically, contemporary criticism of organizational competition (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020). The anachronistic nature of the field (Matitz; Vizeu, 2012; Moura, 2014; Béhar, 2019), possibility of inadequate discursive appropriation, and individual manipulation orientated by ideologies, are associated with these (Ramos, 1983; Tragtenberg, 2005; Barreto, 2014; Seifert; Vizeu, 2015; Béhar, 2019).

From the conceptual and historic perspective, we identified that the concept of competition originates in classical economics (Smith, 1976; Bacic, 2011). Guided by the emerging bourgeois society, the classical conception of competition places it at the same level as natural actions, acting to balance financial and commercial relations between countries, being presented as a fundamental way to achieve progress and economic development (Bacic, 2011; Hobs bawm 2014).

However, the bourgeois origin of competition relates to broader contextual aspects than merely the economic characteristic. It links the transformations which took place in European society, disseminated about emerging nations on the American continent (Hobsbawm, 2014). In this regard, it is the United States in particular that sees the influences of the new model of rationality, supported by technique and calculability, and the emerging democratic ideas of freedom and individual action (Fernandes; Morais, 2004; Karnal, 2004). In this context, although railway companies stand out as a symbol of evolution and technological advance, the development of a rail network is associated with intense economic development and social impact (Wolmar, 2012a).

On account of its transformative nature, this moment is also associated with the preparation of a new set of lexicons. This became essential due to the need to give meaning to new work that was being presented (Hobsbawm, 2014). However, besides the relation between the creation of a discursive meaning and the socio-historic context to which it is related, discursive practices would also be related to reinforcement and power disputes (Foucault, 2007; 2008; Van Dijk, 2017). Its support for control and manipulation develops on the subjectivity of individuals and social interaction, influencing conceptions about reality, establishing a differentiation between the different social groups. These premises orientate what in this study is understood by the concept of ideology, in corporate in to the creation of a socially-shared discursive meaning (Van Dijk, 2006; 2015; 2017).

With this in mind, the objective of this article is to analyze the ideological conceptions of competition in the United States railroad environment between 1870 and 1880. The interval proposed is intended to repeat the period covered by Béhar and Feitosa (2020), enabling discursive repetitions and variations to be identified, which contribute towards the analysis.

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Corresponding with the objective, this research is developed from the strategy of historical research, supported by the "reorientationist" perspective (Üsdiken; Kieser, 2004; Jacques, 2006; Costa, Barros; Martins, 2010; Matitz; Vizeu, 2012): the Infinite Conceptual Puzzle (Béhar; Feitosa, 2019). This analytical method aims to allow reflection on ideological orientation, underlying conceptions related to a concept, from its socio-historic establishment. Therefore, it takes into consideration a wide range of socially- shared discourse during the period in which the analysis is developed. Selection of the source to construct the corpus is supported by Perrow (2002), White (2012) and Wolmar (2012 a; 2012b), highlighting the importance of the American Railroad Journal at the time. The analysis undertaken was based on 466 articles, identified in 517 editions of journals, and 15,594 pages. Discourses by railroad managers, representatives from the press, civil society and the state are associated with the corpus.

From the issues introduced, we will present the fundamental structures of this article in the following sections. Firstly, we will present the theoretical framework of this study, especially dedicated to retrieving competition as an element of "organizational society," the context of the 19th century, and United States railroad competition. This will be followed by the premises, methodological procedures, and document analysis. To finalize, we will present the final considerations of this research.

II. Competition as Anelement of "Organizational Society"

The idea of competition, even within the organizational domain, is not something recent, nor can it be analyzed out of its context. In relation to these questions, we observe that the contemporary idea of competition is associated with profound transformations in European society, especially from the 18th century. Linked to classical economics, the conception of competition is connected to the concept of perfect competition. More specifically, it refers to an organization`s capacity, from its skills and capacities, to compete against other organizations for preferential access to markets or consumers (Bacic, 2011. Thus, guided by an "invisible hand" (Smith, 1976, p. 438), competition is presented as a force of nature, expressed in the market "as a basic phenomenon which directs and awards a singular dynamic on the capitalist system" (Bacic, 2011, p.19).

With regards to the role of context, the conception of competition presented also relates to the profound scientific, political and social transformations which took place, especially from the 18th century, in contrast to the model of medieval society. Associated with the bourgeois project of society, these transformations were centered on the economic perspective, and made an innovative, productive, rationality model possible, due to the Industrial Revolution (Wallerstein, 1974; Braudel, 1996; Weber, 2006; Hobsbawm, 2014).

However, although the economic aspect was presented as fundamental, the need for transformations that enabled the formation of a new model of society, associated with bourgeois intentions, needed to go further. Thus, the ideals of individual freedom, justice and progress (Hobsbawm, 2014) were established in the utilitarian model of rationality and technique (Weber, 2006; Hobsbawm, 2014). For example, the establishment of the modern state is associated with these issues (Weber, 2006).

Captained accordingly, this Eurocentric "organizational society" (Clegg, 1998; Reed, 2010) supports the justification for expansion over others for industrial development. From the conception of Darwinian competition, the understanding was shared that technological and economic advance would mean higher social evolution and, therefore, the capacity to provide (or guarantee) what they understood to be a new evolutionary level of humanity (Dobb, 2012; Hobsbawm, 2014).

These issues were seen as fundamental, for a better understanding of the development of the United States and, consequently the railroad companies in this country. This declaration is made on account of the moment in which the United States was established as an independent nation, with these principles as its guide, since it is the time in which the transformations presented were simmering in Europe. These aspects will be examined in further detail in the following section.

III. The 19TH Century United States Railway: Context and Competition

Initially related to the displacement of immigrants who sought to settle in this British colony, economic development and population growth in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the incorporation of emerging European bourgeois ideals, led to the declaration of independence in 1776. Arising from its historic constitution, the intention and desire to develop a new nation was based upon Republican ideas of democracy and individual freedom. However, the development of a new nation was far from being presented as homogeneous. Glaring differences between the colonies in the north (industrialized and salaried) and those in the south (agricultural exporters and slave holders), reached their limit in 1862, and is an essential requirement to understand the Civil War. The victorious north had strong relations with European aspirations, such as reinforcement of the desire for expansionism, an increase in the nation`s political autonomy, economic self-sufficiency, and international

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significance (Karnal, 2004; Fernandes; Morais, 2004; Ameur, 2013).

A fundamental aspect for the victory of the northern colonies, the role of the railroads went beyond impacts on logistics. On account of the possibilities of technological, economic, and social advances during the 19th century, the perception associated with the railroads was of progress, and the development of humanity. This condition was even more pronounced in such a young nation and far-ranging territory, as was the case of the United States. Thus, although beginning in the 1820s, the United States rail network expanded rapidly over the years, becoming more prominent from 1862, with the construction of the country`s first transcontinental railroad (in addition to the above-mentioned leading role in the Civil War between 1861 and 1865) (Perrow, 2002; White, 2012; Wolmar, 2012a; 2012b).

Unlike other countries, such as Great Britain, rapid expansion of the United States railroad took place with the determinations of private capital, under the premises of the liberal perspective that orientated the birth of the nation. Intense growth in the number of railroad companies and their operations, created an environment of intense competition. However, the goal of this competition was not limited to railroad companies, but also to water transport canals, which had played a prominent role in transporting merchandise before the rise of the railways (Perrow, 2002; White, 2012; Wolmar, 2012a;2012b; Béhar; Feitosa, 2020).

The economic and geopolitical role exercised by the railroads during the 19th century increased the importance and impacts of railway competition, in the dispute for hegemony by countries. Therefore, not only were these companies presented as the cradle to create various modern organizational practices (due to operational complexity) (Chandler, 1999; Perrow, 2002), but aspects of railroad competition were also discussed from a broader perspective (Béhar and Feitosa, 2020). These effects were closely associated with the consequences of the American Civil War (Chandler, 1999; Perrow, 2002; Wolmar, 2012a; 2012b).

Therefore, analyzing between 1859 and 1869, Béhar and Feitosa (2020) observed variations in the conceptions between shared competition, especially between the following social actors: railway managers and the press. In relation to this analysis, although during the period in which the Civil War and construction of the Pacific Railroad took place, the railroad companies made harsh criticism of the consequences of competition (negative perspective of competition), demanding restrictions, press representatives presented an expressive variation of the conception associated with the concept. With respect to this actor, we propose that defense of a classic conception of competition in the United States railroad environment (positive perspective of competition), observed prior to the Civil War and construction of the country`s first transcontinental railroad, would play a questionable role following the Civil War. From these milestones, Béhar and Feitosa (2020) understand that while press representatives followed the railroad managers`criticism of competitive practices between railroad companies (negative perspective of competition), they defended the right and building the nation`s capacity to compete internationally, through the railways (positive perspective of competition).

Discursive variations of this type did not take place on a random basis. Previously, in addition to representing world viewpoints and conceptions of reality, they could also constitute a way of influencing and manipulating, from power disputes (Foucault, 2007; 2008; Van Dijk, 2017). These questions (or premises) will be covered in detail in the next section, in addition to the associated methodological procedures.

IV. Premises and Methodological Procedures

The declaration that this research is related to a qualitative approach is not sufficient for a more thorough presentation. Besides the characteristics of this research, such as considerations on the role of the researcher, the intention to value subjective aspects and provide new interpretations of phenomena (Denzin; Lincoln, 2006), this study is based on the premises of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). Starting with the conception of discourse as a vast means of communication, and field for the dispute for power (Foucault, 2008), as premises we would like to refer to the role of discourse as a path towards acquisition, reproduction and the legitimization of ideologies (Van Dijk, 2015; 2017).

In Van Dijk`s (2015) conception, ideology becomes a form of social cognition, supported by a system of mental representations that establish a group identity. With the main means to disseminate and strengthen its conceptions in the communicative process, ideologies are also presented as representations of interests between different social groups, in the dispute for power. In this respect, "ideologies typically represent who we are, what we do, why we do it, how to do it (we should or should not), and so that we do it; in other words, our identity, actions, objectives, norms and values, resources, and social interests" (Van Dijk, 2015, p.54, highlighted by the author). Arising from this, Van Dijk (2015) observes that ideologies are not only negative, since in the same way they are used for domination, they are also presented as a means for resistance.

However, shared ideological conceptions are not static. To the contrary, supported on the discourse-cognition-context axis, ideological preparations

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accompany the need for social groups to adjust and adapt. The limits of socially-shared mental representations, deeply associated with the model of social cognition of a certain time, apply to this context. Related to these is discourse, as a possibility for individual apprehension, and a means of group propagation of the mental representations developed (Van Dijk, 2015; 2017).

With this conception of ideology, we highlight the criticism associated with appropriation, the improper use of concepts in Administration (Ramos, 1983; Moura, 2014) and the anachronism present in these theoretical constructions (Matitz; Vizeu, 2012; Moura, 2014; Béhar, 2019). Guided by Van Dijk`s (2015; 2017) perspective, we share the understanding that these weaknesses could be presented as discursive means to dominate and manipulate, through discourse. This aspect is also reinforced by the ideological nature present in organizational theorizations (Tragtenberg, 2005; Barreto, 2014; Seifert; Vizeu, 2015; Béhar, 2019). Thus, we understand that a study guided by a historical perspective (Jacques, 2006; Costa, Barros; Martins, 2010; Matitz; Vizeu, 2012), especially the reorientationist approach (Üsdiken; Kieser, 2004; Costa; Barros; Martins, 2010), may contribute towards resolving this manipulative potential, providing elements to expand the debate and recover the temporal perspectives of concepts (Vizeu, 2010; Matitz; Vizeu, 2012).

Thus, on account of the specific characteristics for conducting this study, we opted for the methodological strategy of the Infinite Conceptual Puzzle (Béhar; Feitosa, 2019). Supported by premises of Koselleck`s conceptual history (1992; 2006) and Van Dijk`s (2006; 2015; 2017) Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), this method proposes a multiple discursive and critical-reflexive analysis, guided by ideological possibilities, related to a concept, which are synchronous and linked to a socio-historical context. As a discursive analysis for reflection, the role of power in the socio-historical context in question should also be considered, allowing for inferences on mental representations and domination for behavior. Hence, the use of a lexical analysis of discourses proposed by Van Dijk (2006) emerge as an analytical method connected to this research strategy. To this, we observe an investigation into the variation of lexical elements in the discourse, which represent a means for ideological expression. Operationally, the above-mentioned method of analysis is supported by the identification of factors of preposition (adjectives, complements and sentence structure), to evaluate local and global consistency (construction of semantic consistency in the discursive context), and an indication of propositional relations (search for what is beyond the written text) possible in the discourse in question.

As a historical research strategy, we conducted document research (Bauer; Gaskell; Allum, 2008; Creswell, 2010), supported by files available online. Considering the representativeness of various discourses associated with the context under analysis, we accessed articles in the American Railroad Journal (Perrow, 2002; White, 2012; Wolmar; 2012a; 2012b) for the research period. Looking for terms associated with competition (starting with "compet"), we identified 466 articles in which competition was mentioned. These articles were identified in 517 editions of the journal, on 15,594 pages. It should be noted that we were not able to analyze1879, due to the characteristics of the articles available for access. Analyses of this research will be presented in the following section.

V. Conceptions of Competition in the United States Railway Environment Between 1870 and 1880

As observed in the previous section, the discursive analysis proposed was developed from a total of 466 articles in the American Railroad Journal. For the purposes of information, from these we had the highest frequency of articles by social actors: "railroad managers" (311 articles) and "the press" (140 articles). There was a lower frequency for "government representatives" (09) and "civil Society representatives" (06 articles).

Thus, during the first year, and throughout the analysis, we observe maintenance of the analysis proposed by Béhar and Feitosa (2020). In relation to this, for example, holding a positive perspective remains for state representatives and civil society, and a negative one for the railroad managers. In other words, state and civil society representatives appear to defend competition from its classic conception, favoring a free market, and the premise of its natural balance, providing gains for society. These premises arise from the definition presented by Smith (1976) and, more recently, shared by Bacic (2011), in view of the situation reported by Dobb (2012) and Hobsbawm (2014).

Maintaining the perspectives proposed by Béhar and Feitosa (2020) also links the important part of the discourse by railroad managers and representatives of the press. In this regard, we now refer to the negative perspective of competition; in other words, "in accordance with the railroad managers` vision, competition was seen as negative to sustain and expand business, and even for the survival of their companies" (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020, pp.858-859). Thus, articles that defended the railroad companies` monopoly of specific routes could be observed over the years, also associating adjectives such as "ruinous", "harmful", "to be avoided", or "malefic." With regards to local and global consistency, we see competition associated with the financial losses of railroad companies, decreases in profits, and even indications of bankruptcy. Although in specific articles, the railroad

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managers highlight isolated gains, they also make significant criticism of competition, which leads us to the proportional factor of the negative perspective of competition. However, we observe an important alteration in adjectives, local and global consistency, and the propositional factors of these actors throughout the analysis.

The first aspect that we would like to highlight is the intensity of disputes associated with railway competition. Maintaining a negative perspective of competition, the reference used for criticism appear to become more intense, with the use of warlike terms to refer to competitive practices between railroads. Thus, between 1872 and 1877, articles by railroad managers and representatives of the press also refer to United States railway competition as a "war", and the corresponding "railway war", "tariff war", and a "war between managers". In reference to the scenario characterized by "hostile attacks", or "hostilities", the companies are called to respond with "offensive and defensive weapons", to avoid "surrendering" to "rivals" or "enemies", and "bitter conflicts."

Possibly, due to such competitive intensity, positive mentions of tariff agreements also increase. These arguments are noted in the discursive construction of these two actors, although a higher number is mentioned by railroad managers, and appear to intensify over the years under analysis. Thus, while the railroad managers defend that the "consolidation and concentration of business had altered the conditions of competition" in 1874, in 1875 we identify the mention of the need for agreements in the articles, due to the importance of the railways for the national economy, the defense of "reasonable conservatism, instead of profitless competition," and the possibility of providing shareholders with higher returns, through agreements and tariff integration. In 1877, the mention of agreements is associated with the idea of unnecessary competition, considering the essential role of the railways in national development. In the same year, arguments that competition was a reason for a decrease in shareholders` returns are reinforced, with the establishment of a board that involved the participation of managers from various railway companies, with the objective of restarting dividend payments to shareholders. In an article in 1878, the agreements are seen as a wise decision, referring to 1877 as "the pooling year", led by the manager, Vanderbilt. The focus on strengthening the railways through agreements is also observed in articles in 1880, and would be more appropriately detailed in the approach on the positive perspective of competition.

Over the period under analysis, the positive perspective of competition, observed by Béhar and Feitosa (2020) between representatives of the press, is also noted between railroad managers, although with less frequency. For the positive perspective, we refer to "a perspective of railroad competition, focused on the external market, as a means for geopolitical affirmation with other nations" (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020, p.860). The "right of this nation to compete internationally with other industrialized nations, in order to achieve a new level of civilization, development and progress (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020, p.860) is also related to this perspective. With regards to the theoretical framework of this study, the positive perspective is related to the premises of a Eurocentric organizational society (Clegg, 1998; Reed, 2010), although orientated by the railways, including the dimension of expansion over other people (Dobb, 2012; Hobsbawm, 2014). The characteristics of the conception of United States society (Karnal, 2004; Fernandes; Morais, 2004; Ameur, 2013), and the role played by the railways from the second half of the 19th century (Perrow, 2002; White, 2012; Wolmar, 2012a;2012b) are also associated with these aspects.

Hence, we observe that articles that defend the United States` competitive capacity with other countries, although opposed domestically by the railways, are related to the positive perspective between 1870 and 1871. The negative perspective refers to these companies` crucial role in the conception of the nation`s progress, mainly on account of its economic, but also social, impacts. In 1872, expansion of this perspective was identified in a number of articles, including the dimension of the possibility of the United States` economic competition, due to strengthening its railways.

Absent between 1873 and 1874, in 1875 and 1876 we see an emphasis on the fundamental role of the railways as a means for progress, and defense of the nation`s interests. With competition being a negative aspect for business sustainability (through a real "railway war"), the idea of awarding importance to the country at an international level is related to arguments in defense of tariff agreements between railways. These conceptions can still be identified in 1877, with the expectation of the railways` role and expansion of the railroad network for the United States` "economic recovery". The conception shared in a number of articles is that expansion of the railways was an opportunity to expand national commercial borders. An example of this possibility is demonstrated in an article from 1878: US capacity to compete internationally with England in the railway production market (locomotives and materials) is highlighted. Regaining the importance of the railways for the United States` geopolitical position, also in 1878, is an articles that addresses financial gains through the export of agricultural products, due to the returns provided by the reach of the railway network.

The arguments presented over these years are reinforced in different articles published in 1880, a year with further references to the positive perspective of competition. Specifically represented by press articles, there is an important reinforcement of the national and

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geopolitical importance of railways for the USA. This importance is not only linked to the way of distributing the country`s agricultural production, but also encourages the development of new agricultural and commercial borders. An indication representative of the association between the negative and positive perspectives of competition merits presentation: "The role is that it is not the competition of rail with rail that controls or limits the charge that may be made for their use, but the competition of product with product in the great markets of the country and of the world" (Article [From the Fortnightly Review] - The Railroads of the United States. Their Effects of Farming and Production in that Country and in Great Britain. By Edward Atkinson, dated 28/07/1880). Once more, these issues are strengthened by the size of the country`s railway network, an aspect highlighted in a note by the journal.

Complementary to the analysis proposed, we observe what we understand as a positive dimension of the positive perspective of competition between 1870 and 1880. Although providing a positive description, these discursive elements are not supported by the idea of economic freedom, or the defense of a market balance (as observed in the sections associated with state and civil society representatives). This conception relates to the discursive constructions of a number of managers and representatives of the press as optimism, or the desire for competition. The occurrence of this perspective does not present adjectives, but is identified through local and global consistency in the analyzed texts. Thus, in the context of this analysis, and considering the stage of propositional relations, we share the understanding that the railroad managers` references to this positive dimension of the positive perspective of competition take place over a period of time, before their companies actually competed with rival lines. In other words, our understanding of the texts under analysis is that this dimension is only presented as the possibility of the railway companies accessing new markets. In this setting, the railroad managers and representatives of the press defend competition as a means for the development and expansion of the railway network, then being replaced by the negative perspective after operations had commenced.

Thus, articles by railroad managers and representatives of the press which defend this "right to competition" for new business are identified from 1870. Related to this, for example, are the positive impacts of the expansion of the railway network into an are a of the country considered underdeveloped in 1871. During the same year, there is a reference to the importance of competitive action by the railways against water transport using canals. Defense of railway action is linked to aspects which have already been observed, but are also reinforced by articles of a positive dimension: the importance of the railways for the country`s economic and technological development. In the same direction of this argument is an article that emphasizes the importance of the advance of the railways, compared to the use of mules to transport cargo, or another that highlights the role of financial capital to develop the country`s railways. The positive nature of this perspective is also observed in articles published during 1872. These present favorable arguments towards the railways for the growth of cities, and providing healthy competition for products. The opportunity for "more favorable navigation facilities, "with the establishment of new railways is also addressed.

Absent during 1873, in 1874 we observe what appears to be another expansion of this perspective: the defense of no state intervention in the management of the national railways network. Thus, although faced with negative competition for business (to the point of "driving out" the flow of investments in railways) the state would not be responsible for intervening in business, leaving decisions to the businessmen. Criticism of state interventionism is also observed in 1875, especially considering local legislation that restricted tariffs as "hostile and senseless", "unfair and oppressive."

An article in 1876, in which the negative perspective of competition is presented (through tariff agreements), also introduces the positive dimension of the positive perspective for new business. The shared notion that expansion of the railway network represents an interest of the nation, and these interests are above that of any railway company. The exacerbated patriotism (or glorification) identified in 1876 is also shared in 1877, in an article that highlights the five years between 1870 and 1875, which was the longest period of railway construction known in history. This is important for the economic recovery of the United States, among other issues. In this regard, it is interesting to note a new negative regarding the possibility of state control of railway management (as opposed to the French model).

In 1878, we identify that water transport using canals is suggested once more as a target for the competitive action of railways (clustered in tariff agreements), led by the manager, Vanderbilt. This issue is reinforced during 1880, with the observation that pooling assists this battle, making rates stabilize at a fair price. These years also include contributions to the positive dimension of the positive perspective. They are presented through articles that not only defend tariff agreements between railway companies (or polls), but present a reinforcement of state intervention in competitive (and tariff) actions between these companies. From the conception that congressmen would not have the capacity or skill for this intervention, a journal article advocated: "leave the railroads alone". In this context, and from the publication "Railroads: their Origin and Problems, "by Charles Francis Adams Jr, a press article discusses the possibility of lessening the

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intensity of railway competition, on account of its national importance. Thus, from the example of Germany, France, Belgium and Great Britain, the possibility of "good railroad control" is discussed. Discursive preparation against state regulation is also observed in articles in 1880, highlighting its importance for international competition, through full defense of the railways. The way out of this situation, in the press representatives` point of view, was through consolidation of the railroads.

From the issues presented in this section, our understanding is that, contrary to what Béhar and Feitosa present (2020), the analysis for 1870 to 1880 allows an approximation of the perspectives shared by the different actors present in United States society, identified in the documents. Therefore, we share the conception that competition in the United States railway environment between the years of this research indicates the preponderance of a positive perspective of competition. In addition, related to the competitive context between nations in the second half of the19th century, other perspectives of competition (positive and negative) are also enforced.

In a sense, what we observe is that, at least for the United States railway environment, the positive perspective of competition (associated with the classic conception) should be avoided, using the justification of allowing the strengthening, improvement and maturity of the domestic market. This understanding refers to continuous and frequent rhetoric not only from the railroad managers, but also press representatives during the period under analysis. This rhetoric is not only presented against competition but also in favor of mechanisms that impede it, at the more "classical" level. The great importance of the railways for the country`s development and progress (fundamental issues for the period under analysis) is associated with this idea and, therefore, competes for international importance, against other industrialized nations. The positive dynamic of the positive perspective of competition is presented in this context: the country`s railway network requires expansion and reinforcement to make it more powerful.

Relating to the guiding premise of this research, the conception of competition, which may be its ideological potential, is linked to this argumentative variation. Thus, discursive productions are not only presented as a means of communication for a power dispute (Foucault, 2008), but to exercise the control of specific social groups over others, from the orientation of mental representations, through the manipulation of social cognition. In this regard, the conceptions related to competition in the United States railway environment are also presented as a means to establish a group identity. In other words, to the argumentative variations related to the concept of competition in the railway environment are associated guidance on behavior and forms of action, established in accordance with the interests of specific groups in this society (Van Dijk, 2015). Also related to the ideological nature of the perspective of shared competition, we observe the ideological discursive constructions which approach the idea of resistance, proposed by Van Dijk (2015), and which are associated with the discourse of state and civil society representatives. Having responded to the points of the analysis, the final considerations of this study will be presented in the next section.

VI. Final Considerations

Discursive productions are not disassociated from the socio-historic context. The construction of meaning, in addition to the signification of reality, supports power relations (Foucault, 2007; 2008; Van Dijk, 2006; 2015; 2017). Thus, they also act in the construction, dissemination and reinforcement of ideologies. These ideologies, also supported in the context, and social cognition, enable the development of mental representations focused on serving the interests of certain groups, to the detriment of others, acting as a form of domination and resistance (Van Dijk, 2006; 2015; 2017). From these premises, and considering the criticism of organizational competition (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020), the anachronistic nature of the field (Matitz; Vizeu, 2012; Moura, 2014; Béhar, 2019), the inadequate appropriation of concepts (Ramos, 1983), and individual manipulation guided by ideologies (Tragtenberg, 2005; Barreto, 2014; Seifert; Vizeu, 2015; Béhar, 2019),the aim of this research was to analyze the ideological conceptions of competition in the United States railway environment between 1870 and 1880.

The temporal delimitation of the analysis is supported in the continuity of the analysis proposed by Béhar and Feitosa (2020), considering the fundamental nature of the United States railway company as the principal model of modern organization (Chandler, 1999; Perrow, 2002; White, 2012). Linked to the analytical cross-section, premises and criticism presented, we used Infinite Conceptual Puzzleme thodology (Béhar; Feitosa, 2019). This strategy is inserted as a perspective of historical research in Administration (Üsdiken; Kieser, 2004; Jacques, 2006; Costa, Barros; Martins, 2010; Matitz; Vizeu, 2012), focused on reflection on ideological conceptions underlying a concept, in a specific socio-historic context, from a diversity of discourses (Béhar; Feitosa, 2019). Therefore, document research was conducted (Bauer; Gaskell; Allum, 2008; Creswell, 2010) based on articles in the American Railroad Journal, on account of its relevance at the time (Perrow, 2002; White, 2012; Wolmar, 2012a; 2012b). In this research, we accessed 466 articles, distributed throughout 517 editions and 15, 594 pages.

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From the above, we share the understanding that although we are in the socio-historic context of the rise of the bourgeois conception of competition, linked to classical economics(Smith, 1976; Bacic, 2011), very few discourses appear to be orientated in this way. During the research, our analysis only observes a positive mention of the conception of competition related to a natural logic, of self-balancing, and a means of progress and development for all humanity by" state representatives" and "civil society representatives" (Bacic, 2011; Dobb, 2012; Hobsbawm 2014).

In contrast, we observe the negative perspective of competition (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020), especially shared by railroad managers and press representatives. With adjectives such as "ruinous", "harmful" or "malefic", or associated with the loss of profits and bankruptcies, competition is presented as something to not only be avoided and controlled, but tackled through tariff agreements and "pooling". Initially, this dimension appeared to contrast with a number of articles by these actors, in which competition seemed to be positively perceived. However, with development of the analysis, we were able to identify indications that this stance appeared to be presented as a positive dimension of the positive perspective of competition (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020).

For the positive perspective, we share the idea of international competition, captained by and for the nation, as a means of geopolitical reaffirmation with other competitive nations (Béhar; Feitosa, 2020). To this we associate representative discourses by the press, with the railway companies as a means to allow national development and progress, but without presenting themselves to the country as superior. This dimension appears to be aligned with the ideals related to the birth of the United States nation of freedom, democracy and individualism, supported by the modern model of rationality and technique (Fernandes; Morais, 2004; Karnal, 2004; Ameur, 2013). The context of "organizational society" is also linked to these (Clegg, 1998; Reed, 2010); in other words, the idea of the superiority of nations considered (industrially) developed, as a pretext for domination and expansion over people and nations seen as backward (Dobb, 2012; Hobsbawm, 2014). The preponderant role of the railways as a means for national development and progress is added to these two perspectives (Perrow, 2002; White, 2012; Wolmar, 2012a; 2012b).

It is as a result of the connection with these dimensions that we share the understanding of the positive dimension of the positive perspective of competition. Underlying this (proportional factors) we identify positive references to the possibility of competition through expansion of the national railway network (questioned following their installation, and the start of the "tariff war") and negative for state interference in the railroad context. Associated with the positive perspective, we share the understanding that this dimension is seen as positive, from the idea of expanding and strengthening not only the national railway network but also giving rise to national economic and social gains, as a result of these operations.

Thus, we share the idea that the negative perspective of competition is also related to the positive one, in the sense that it allows the railway network to be reinforced, by strengthening the railway companies. From Van Dijk (2006; 2015), the argumentative variations presented by these social actors during the analysis, supported by various adjectives, textual constructions of local and global consistency and propositional factors, may indicate ideological potential underlying the idea of competition. Productions of mental representations potentially influencing social cognition are associated with this conception. Its manipulative action may be associated not only with the establishment of a group identity, and defense of the interest of specific segments of society, but also the identification of groups to be fought. The attempt at ideological resistance appears to be associated with discursive productions of" state representatives" and "civil society representatives", supported by the classic idea of competition.

However, the analyses proposed here do not have the objective of closing off any possibilities for reflection. Related to historical analysis, and the use of documents, are limitations such as distance from the period under analysis, the possibility of accessing new documents, and new bases of the socio-historical context for a better association, and cultural differences. We also observe the limitations and characteristics of an interpretative study, which assumes a certain degree of interference by researchers. With regards to this, triangulation procedures were taken, sharing impressions of the analysis. To this, we stress the importance and possibilities of historical studies for Administration studies, especially those guided by perspectives that suggest critical reflection on conceptual and discursive constructions. We also share research possibilities of research related to the conception of ideology as a means for social action in the dispute for power in the field of Administration. We hope that these questions contribute towards expanding the debate, in addition to possibilities for action, to transform realities.

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