

Brands, Ethics and General Intellect.

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After
morality. .ethic
s is back



Ethics is big business

- 44 per cent of UK consumers let 'ethical considerations' enter into their purchasing decisions (*Ethical Corporation, January, 2008*)

Brands are
ethical values



Ethics?

- *Etikos*: how free actors ('men') can relate affectively (*ethos*= mood, character) to each other in order to create community (*polis*), in the absence of hierarchies and monetary obligations.

Brand value= ethical surplus

- a however temporary and loose affective community (life-style) created around a brand in free processes of public communication.
- (Ethical surplus: Maurizio Lazzarato, *Lavoro immateriale*, Verona; Ombre Corte, 1997.)

management = the
management of
public

- **communication**
historically contemporary
brand management has evolved
as a response to the
increasing productivity and
autonomy of consumer
practice.

corporate ethics is mainly a way of managing external productive processes that can not be entirely commanded

increasing amounts of value
produced in free technology-
enhanced interaction



ethical managemnt is a way of
'dealing with' General
Intellect



we have two
economies . .

- the monetary economy of capitalism, and the ethical economy of social production

- capitalist control builds on the subsumption of the ethical economy under the monetary economy, this builds on 1) surveillance and programming, and 2) artificial scarcity

Ontological power

- Surveillance and programming are part of a strategy of ontological power, that intervenes not on the individual, but on the environmental conditions of action.

'ruling through freedom'

- The point is to control the platform of action so that freedom naturally comes to unfold in a desirable direction.

examples

- Corporate values 'ethics'
- Branded cities and spaces
- Discourses of entrepreneurship and competitiveness

competitiveness

- From this perspective, the ideology of 'competitiveness' serves to create a form of subjectivity that makes creativity, innovation and other forms of ethical productivity 'ready for market', by packaging it in a format that is compatible with the logic of business.

competitiveness

- Is a way of pre-structuring the ethical economy to make it fit the demands of the capitalist economy. This strategy is contra-productive for two reasons:

First

- Because such pre-structuring limits the productivity of the ethical economy by *apriori* limiting its inventive capacity.

Second

- Because such pre-structuring renders the experience of participation less 'authentic' and thus risks producing a motivational crisis.

structural
difference
between the two
economies.

- They have different value logics.

in the capitalist economy. .

- value is based on investment of productive time
- production is motivated by the accumulation of private wealth

in the ethical economy

- value is founded on the production of community
- productive activity is motivated by the accumulation of public recognition

- the two economies have two different and potentially conflicting value logics

- new icts allow a more advanced self- organization of the ethical economy by means of alternative currencies of public recognition

prediction

- a growth of the ethical economy and a decreasing ability of the capitalist economy to subsume its products under its value form

- Capitalism is hollowed out from the outside
- like the feudal mode of production once was
- and remains as a subaltern 'make only' capitalism

- FINE