

# The classification of Publicity and Publicity discourse as factors of construction of the rural world representations

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## Abstract

This paper presents some of the results of a master's degree research that examined the representations of the rural world by the ads of the *Globo Rural* magazine in the 1980s, 90s, 2000s. This work presents the shapes, types, classes and the discourse of advertising in the magazine that contribute for representations of the rural world built by its ads. After analyzing 384 ads, it was concluded that advertising changes over time and represented the plurality of identities of the new rural world and the social changes suffered by rural areas.

**Keywords:** Social representations. Rural Ads. *Globo Rural* Magazine. Publicity discourse.

## Introduction

This article shows part of the results from a research<sup>1</sup> that analyzed how the Publicity produced by printed media represents the rural world, observing its evolution, between

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the 80s and 2000s, thought the announcements from the *Globo Rural* magazine (GR). It is presented in this work the shapes, types, ads classes and also the Publicity speech applicants at the GR that contributed to the construction of representations made by its advertising.

The purpose of this research was to know better the socio-cultural representation of the rural world built by *Globo Rural* magazine announcements, also to analyze its Publicity speech, understand the content and list the representation – defined here according to Laplantine e Trindade (1977, p.77), as “any mental translation and interpretation of a perceived external reality.” The aim of this study was to understand the characteristics of rural world through rural representations linked in advertising of GR magazine. Moreover, comparing advertising in the magazine in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, raising the representations of rural and its transformations, also analyzing dialogues and images presented in ads.

Since it is an investigative study of rural ads and due the scarce literature, this study was characterized by its descriptive as well exploratory character. About the temporal dimension this study was transversal by tendency.

The 1980s was chosen as a starting point for research because coincides with the period of the consolidation of the Brazilian agriculture modernization. It has been also the emergence of the Brazilian rural advertising medium. It was in the early 80s, according to Ramos and Marcondes (1995), as a way to overcome the widespread economic crisis in this period, the segmentation in the Brazilian publishing market started, financially supported, as is well known, largely by advertising.

The Jeca Tatu was no longer jeca far less Tatu. The advertising profits originated and destined to the rural world increased over all 80s, with a contribution from many other agencies and vehicles in the greenbelt (RAMOS; MARCONDES, 1995, p 110.).

Headed by the weekly television program, the *Globo Rural*, whose audience has increased quickly<sup>2</sup>, came up with books, supplements and magazines, such as *Globo Rural* magazine.

From the 1980s until the today, the *Globo Rural* magazine, within the agricultural titles, is the one that most has been present in the Brazilian daily life. Launched on October 1985, it is the most popular monthly rural magazine in Brazil<sup>3</sup>, with the largest circulation and distribution<sup>4</sup> through the sale of subscriptions and on newsstands across the country. The units of analysis of this research were the announcements of GR magazine, selected by stratified purposive sampling. This selection allowed coverage of editions of different months in three different decades of publication. The corpus analysis was composed by all the ads from the selected editions, except the classified. The choice of the years to be studied was made by drawing a number from zero to nine, which would correspond to the year of each decade. Thus, the number eight was drawn, and then there were selected the years 1988, 1998 and 2008. This research was performed transversely, issues of March, June, September and December, in order to covering the four seasons of the year. Thus, covering the announcements destined to the different rural activities, characterized usually by their production cycles, usually annually.

### Theoretical framework

Anthropologists and communication researchers have argued that the function of advertising, besides of selling products, is to talk to (and about) the society. Advertisers and researchers have

<sup>2</sup> The program was first issued in January 1980, half an hour's long. Due to increases in audience and in demand for advertising spaces, already in August the same year, the program doubles its duration, half to one hour.

<sup>3</sup> A *Lavoura* is the oldest rural magazine of the country (1897). It is bimonthly edited and distributed free to members of the National Society of Agriculture (SNA), universities and research centers.

<sup>4</sup> The *Globo Rural* reached in 2008, according to the Circulation Verification Institute - CVI, a circulation of about 100,000 copies. Of this total, approximately 50,000 were sold by subscription and over 15,000 directly at newsstands.

witnessed “the fact that advertising plays the ideas, values and culture, prevailing at the time of its conception” (Galvão, 1998, p.18). Advertising expresses opinions and suggests behaviors. It is therefore an action, demonstration, social and collective representation

Consisted by the resulting influences from the society, as well as from its values and practices, advertising also acts on itself, reaffirming values, stereotypes and worldviews. In this way, the advertising, through ad / language, is a social representation that reproduces the values and the intellectual and emotional aspects of society.

Advertising is a form of cultural representation, and can be seen, according to Rocha (1990), as a myth in its production and as a ritual at its reception. According to Da Matta (1997) and Rocha (1990), rites and myths are social creations and cultural events. Based on this, and also based on Bourdieu<sup>5</sup> (1996), for whom the rites, by acting on the representation of reality, have the power to act on it. It can be stated that advertising influences the several constructions of reality.

### Collecting and data analysis / Methodology

Initially, a literature search was performed as a fundamental step in contextualizing the work and the selection of theories and techniques to evaluate the ads. The context of agricultural policies and models of rural development was constructed from the exploration of scientific literature and from media of the period, specifically, *Veja*, a national magazine, through its collection, complete available on the site <http://veja.abril.com.br/acervodigital>.

Considering the concept of advertising as:

a set of empirical techniques that rely largely on knowledge from psychology, sociology, anthropology, communication, semiotics and even neurobiology (ZOZZOLI, 2007, p.37)

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<sup>5</sup> In *The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges*, Bourdieu (1996) states that social rites have invariant characteristics and symbolic efficiency is one of them.

And whereas it is situated in a complex field, it resorted to interdisciplinary<sup>6</sup> to achieve the goals. Thus, the concepts were perceived, and the analyzes were performed according to categories of advertising, linguistics and semiotics. The announcements were analyzed according to the following methodological approach: classification of categories and advertising concepts present in the advertisements; identification of the structural discursive aspects and semiotic structural features of ads, from its form / art and content / text, and content encoding of messages from the ads. This was made for all 384 ads of the four editions of the three decades considered.

Due space limits will only be presented in this article the results of the analysis of advertisements based on Publicity, specifically as the area, graphics, type, resource concepts, types of advertising, propaganda functions, message style, and also analysis of advertising speech.

### Analysis of the ads based on Publicity and results

In the first stage of the methodological approach set out in this study - the classification of concepts and categories of ads advertising - some characteristics of advertising presents at *Globo Rural* magazine in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s were revealed. Afterwards, other peculiarities emerged through data and categories crossing.

There were considered all the ads, excluding the *calhaus*<sup>7</sup>. These ads in the magazine itself are considered “stopgap” because usually meet non-negotiated spaces by the commercial department of GR. Also there were excluded classified ads and ads from the Agroshoppingsections because of lacks of features of consumer advertising in this type of advertising, in which “the elements of persuasion are conspicuously absent” (VESTEGRAARD; SCHRODER, 2004, p.3-4).

<sup>6</sup> It is understood interdisciplinarity as an integrative methodology of knowledge areas, as MUNIZ; RIBEIRO (2000) does.

<sup>7</sup> Calhaus are announcements of the magazine that are only published when there is spare space, often an ad of the vehicle itself.

## Area

The 1988 editions had 496 pages and 211 ads. In 1998, the magazines have 62 ads in 432 pages and, in 2008, summed 480 pages and 111 ads (Table 1). Comparing the three decades, the year 1988 was the best in magazine advertising in GR, with more pages, larger total area devoted to advertising and therefore more ads.

From 1988 to 2008, despite the number of ads has decreased to almost half (from 211 to 111) it was observed that at the *Globo Rural* magazine this number never exceeded 29% of its total area. This meant, for example, that twice the number of ads in 1988 did not represent twice the area of advertisements, inferring that there were smaller ads in large quantity.

The lowest number of ads in 1998 called attention. It was difficult to state the reason for this decline, however, this was a time of crisis, economic recession with high interest rates and low dollar fluctuations rate, allowing food prices to remain relatively low (the so called *green anchor* from the Plan real).

In 2008, the GR advertising increased both in number of pages, and in the number/area of ads. From 1998 to the present decade, the ads have increased almost 80% in volume and 1% in area. Despite this increase, the area of the ads did not exceed 30% because it is well known that in publishing, they normally avoid the area of advertising exceeds the 40% in order to do not disturb the reader and cause complaints.

## Graphic resources

The percentage of the ads constituted by only words, called *leterings* or *all type* have declined by nearly half from 1988 (5.7%) to 1998 (3.2%), and in 2008 did not appear at all. (Table 1).

Table 1 - Graphics resources in the Announcements from the GR in the years 1988, 1998 and 2008

Resource	1988		1998		2008	
	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
<i>All type</i>	12	5,7	2	3,2	-	-
<b>With photo</b>	123	58,3	43	69,4	74	66,7
<b>With ilustration</b>	48	22,8	4	6,4	3	2,7
<b>With photo and ilustration</b>	28	13,2	13	21	34	30,6
<b>Total/Base Nº</b>	211	100,0	62	100,0	111	100,0

Contrasting with the “*all type*” ads, the magazines were increasingly invaded by the colors. Ads printed in polychrome increased 50% from 1988 (60.2%) to 1998 (90.3%) and reached in 2008 almost all of the ads (98%). The production capacities of ads, such as, number of colors, pictures and graphics (tables 1 and 2) followed the technological changes in the printing industry.

Table 2 – The colors in the announcements from GR magazines in the years 1988, 1998 and 2008

Color	1988		1998		2008	
	Nº	%	Nº	%	Nº	%
<b>Black and White</b>	57	27	1	1,6	-	-
<b>Two colors</b>	12	5,6	4	6,5	-	-
<b>Three Colors</b>	15	7,2	1	1,6	2	1,8
<b>Poly chrome ?</b>	127	60,2	56	90,3	109	98,2
<b>Total/Base Nº</b>	211	100,0	62	100,0	111	100,0

## Type of ads

Regarding the type of advertising, over the decades studied, there was a predominance of products (89.6% in 1988, 75.3% in 1998 and 70.4% in 2008), although it was observed a slight decrease from 19.2% from 1988 to 2008. On the other hand, announcements of services increased from 1988 (6.6%) to 2008 (16.2%). The same occurred with institutional announcements: 1988 (3.8%) to 2008 (13.5%).

The increased in the diversification of the ad type presented by rural advertising over the decades showed their greater complexity and also the increased valorization of the rural public and the maturity of rural propaganda as specific segment of advertising in general. Thus, over time, it was recognized the importance of adding value to products through the creation and improvement of services, which were offered in advertisements. Also, from 1990s, probably driven by the existence of the Consumer Code and by programs of total quality, companies began to invest in the valorization of the logotype, divulging the organization and its values, to build the loyalty of their customers, positioning itself more intense in the media.

## Type and concept of the ad

In ad creation, advertising professionals define what is known as the concept of ad creation - the basis of the argument, which maintains the main sales approach - usually developed from a positive feature, a value of the product being advertised, a social virtue in the moment. There were not considered ads that showed just the product, without any elaboration in art direction or in writing<sup>8</sup>, and do not had any concept, despite its frequency among the journals studied.

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<sup>8</sup> Creating an ad is composed by the direction of art that takes care of the visual (font, color, graphic or photo, arrangement of elements) and the writing that takes care of the text.



Among the ads studied in the three decades, most had more than one concept. In 1988, for example, about 30% of product announcements had two concepts and 2.4%, more than two. This proportion decreased in 1998 to 12.9% and in 2008 and to 16.2%. It was necessary to understand, however, that the percentage is based on the number of ads each year, not on the number of occurrences of the concepts.

The economic argument, in which the ad promises advantageous and profitable products was one of the most frequent among the announcements of GR. Between product announcements, this type of ad appeared in 47.6% of the total ad in 1988. Among the institutional listings of the same year, the concept shared the lead with “Production / Productivity” and “Culture”, both present in 42% of the ads cited year.

In 1998, the economic approach was also the most frequent, with 44.4% among the announcements of services. In 2008, the concept led with 28.6%, of the announcements of products.

The idea of modernity and technological innovation was ahead among announcements of services in 1988 (53.3%). In 1998, maintained its leadership with 32.6% among advertisements of products and 75% of the institutional ones. This concept was also the most frequent (33.3%) among announcements of services in 2008.

Absent among advertisements in the 1980s, the “Ecology / Environment” concept emerged with 8.1% in the 1990s. Among the institutional ads, the ecological approach jumped from 1988 (14.3%) to 2008 (43.7%).

Interestingly to observe a significant increase in frequency of some concepts, over the decades. A Cultural approach, for example, jumped from 1988 (5.85%) to 2008 (18.3%). Also among the ads of products, “Adventure”, almost nonexistent in 1988 (0.5%), doubled its appearances from 1998 (2%) to 2008 (4%). The concept “professional capacity”, quintupled its appearances from 1988 (2.1%) to 1998 (11.6%) among announcements of products.

Over the decades, the concepts (and hence the appeals) were changing, showing changes in the meanings and representations assigned to the rural world.

### Types of advertising and advertising functions

In this work was understood that the category commercials “camouflages the intentions of advertisers” (PINHO, 2009 com. pes.). Thus, there are classified subdivisions of advertising: (1) of products, (2) of services, (3) generic or commodities, (4) retail, (5) comparative, (6) cooperative, (7) promotion, and (8) legal – as proposed by Pinho (1990). In this subdivision, it was disregarded the commercial advertising in the form of “classified” since – as previously reported – it was decided by their exclusion.

The advertising of products or services were predominated, however the slightly decreased over the three decades – 1988 (91.7%) to 2008 (85.3%). The ads that directly or indirectly mentioned the competition, comparative advertising type (“the result is a final product superior to similar”), also decreased from 1988 (5.4%) to 2008 (4.2%). In contrast, promotion advertising type (which present jointly with the product or service, some sort of advantageous condition: promotion) increased from 1988 (0.5%) to 2008 (6.3%). On a small scale, appeared the cooperative advertising, jointly held by the manufacturer with one or more retailers, or by various manufacturers and a large store in 1988 (2.4%), 1998 (no entries) and 2008 (3.2%). The “retail”, also called commercial, which is the sponsor of the ads by retailers (stores, consumer cooperatives, supermarkets, malls, among others) appeared only in 2008 (1%). Ads of type “Commodity” did not appear.

The “Legal” Publicity, mandated by law, which is formed by ads that publish balances, minutes of calls and public edicts from companies were also absent from the GR magazine, in the three decades studied. This was predictable since the legal announce-

ments have to be published in major national newspapers and official gazettes.

According to Pinho (1990), advertising has five functions: (1) protective, (2) identity, (3) public service, (4) motivation and (5) institutional. Identify these five functional categories in the ads helped the process of collecting data about the uses and purposes of those.

The Protective advertising serves to protect the company from possible economic or political restrictions that may arise from government regulations and to inform public opinion on political, economic, social and environmental issues. Advertising focused on public service provides public utilities and motivation advertising aims to mobilize society and, or, influence government action. Among the GR announcements, the Institutional ads, whose function is to promote the acceptance of the company as a public institution prevailed in 1988 (100%) and 2008 (56.3%). In the decade of 1998, the kind of “Identity” ads, whose function is to build an organizational personality, a visual identity and assign values and characteristics to the company, was the most frequent, with 75%. In 2008, there were announcements representative of all five functions, which was interpreted as a consideration of the advertisers about the public rural segment.

### The style of message

The styles of message allowed classifying the ads, according to the representations they make from the possible consumers. The announcement brings as background a style of message in order to convince the public and to promote quick identification with consumers. In this study, it was adopted the classification of Kotler and Armstrong (2007). Thus, the messaging styles used were: Scenes of Real Life, Lifestyle, Fantasy, atmosphere or Image, Character Style or symbol, Technical Knowledge, Scientific Evidence, Evidence by Testimony or surety, and by suggestion of

the Professor José Benedito Pinho, it was added to this classification the style humor, because good humor is a common feature of Brazilians and very present in advertising language. As the ad can present more than one concept, it can also have more than one message style. With more than one style ads were identified in 1988 (8%), 1998 (21.3%) and 2008 (18%). Due to the variety of styles in a same announcement, it was marked therefore, the number of times occurred in each style, thus the number of total ads marked exceeded the total number of ads.

The “Scenes of Real Life” style, which naturalizes the use of the product by ordinary people (not popularly known) was predominant in advertisements of all ads in 1988 (30.8%) to 1998 (37%).

However, the “atmosphere or image” style messages that abstract the product / service, relating them to feelings and sensations, prevailed in 2008 (30.6%). In the course of three decades, there are styles that have increased their participation: “Fantasy”, which creates an amazing aura, unreal, around product / service, doubled from 1988 (4.2%) to 2008 (9.9%); the “Humor” jumped from 1988 (1.9%) to 2008 (8.1%), and Style “technical Knowledge”, which demonstrates the technical ability of the company to manufacture the product, increased from 1988 (14.7%) for 2008 (20.7%).

Although, it was not detailing here the analyzes based on advertising, made from the subdivision of 384 listings in 8 categories of products and services, it is important to mention that observing the categories as a whole, it was realized, through the evolution of message style of the ads, that in the 80s the rural advertising tried to naturalize the use of products and services, convincing the public that its use was necessary. In the later decades, apparently convinced of the necessity of having / using the product / service, the audience was addressed by outstanding their technical properties and advantages, which were also related to lifestyles valued socially. In 2008, increased substantially the outside reality style - fantasy, atmosphere or image and humor - intending to

stimulate consumption, by the relaxation of the public, through laughter and dreams. It was noticed that the conceptual trend in these three categories coincided, in the 90s, with the valorization of modernization and the importance of innovations and technologies. In the late 2000s, the concepts aligned to rise of values related to the importance of environmental issues and also those related to economic issues, stimulated by the global crisis.

After an assessment of the concepts and messages of the ads, it was necessary to discuss what it was said and how advertising represented rural.

### The advertising speech

Since an announcement is planned, at the time of the concept definition, it brings in itself references, clearly showed or implied from other texts: the intertextuality. As Fairclough argues, “all statements are populated and, in fact, made of pieces of statements from others, more or less explicit or complete” (Fairclough, 2001, p.134).

The advertising speech, under metaphors forms, wordplay, popular expressions, testimonials of famous people, associations of ideas, double meanings, among others, is built with earlier discursive elements recognized, and therefore easily assimilated by the public. According to Aumont (2004) assimilation is the “pleasure of rediscovering a visual experience into an image, in a repetitive mode, condensed and controllable (AUMONT 2004, p.83), and this happens because of the constant comparison that the public does between what they see and what they’ve seen in another past moment, called perceptual constancy (AUMONT, 2004, p.82).

Thus, the advertising discourse tries to present products / services, selecting and highlighting what (concepts, values, ideas) is consider recognizable and important to the public that wants to conquer and transform into consumers. When choosing to show and highlight one (or more than one) concept, which is the axis

of the sales approach, the ad already gives clues at this moment of how it represent itself, the product / service that is intended to sell, and how it sees its consumer audience. Not all of the announcements brought representations about the rural field. Some just offered products or services without making mention (or reference) to the rural areas, hence with no representations whatsoever about it.

The percentage of ads in *GR* magazine that made reference to rural increases between 1980 and 2000, with a slight decline in 1990. This increase may have been indicative of progressive specialization of rural propaganda and advertising market segmentation.

This reference to the rural world in the ads indicated that they are directed, although not exclusively, to rural consumer audience. However, it was about those references that the research and analysis of the rural were performed, represented on the advertising of *GR* magazine, between the products / services most publicized of the most frequent categories.

The category “Machinery, equipment, implements and rural services” occupied nearly 40% of the advertising area of *GR* magazine in the three decades studied. The representations made by ads of mowers and water pumps were analyze. The advertisements of water pumps displayed a strong tendency to show the country as a mechanical workspace, conveying the idea that with the right technology, it is a space that promotes affluence. The announcements of the mowers during the decades of 98 and 2008 revealed a different image of a rural represented as a workspace that can be light, easy and even pleasurable. By bringing urban images complementarity was pointed out, underlying mixing and similarity instead of dichotomy between urban and rural areas. When portraying the country<sup>9</sup> style, with the image of a famous

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<sup>9</sup> The country style represents a new rurality, packed by music and sports (mostly equestrian) of great appeal, bringing crowds to massive events. It would be “an insertion of rurality in the criteria of urban civility” (DE PAULA, 2001 p.38).

country singer, it was built an image of rural less work-related and more sophisticated.

When analyzing the ads of technical courses, the most publicized product during the three decades, within category “Communication and Training”, it was noticed that rural was represented as an area of vast estates, however with difficult access to services, as a space for businesses, no longer tied exclusively to agricultural or livestock production, an area of mobility and social growth.

Within the category “vehicles and associated parts” there were analyzed announcements of trucks and oil (most common in the 80s and 90s) and pick-ups vehicles, more frequent in the 2000’s.

The ads of trucks showed a heavy or light, impersonal or humanized rural representation, the rural world as a place for work and productivity. The ads of oil, based on the concepts of “production / productivity” and message style “Fantasy”, portrayed a rural world of large farm, whose owners would be readers of *GR* magazine.

In the years 1998 and 2008, ads about pick-ups trucks as well as technical quality advertising (color use, imaging, layout, text and creativity), show a variety of representations of the rural. The pick-up truck in the 50s was released as a motor geared exclusively for work, but nowadays became, from its simplest to the most sophisticated model, a passengers’ car, object of desire and symbol of status for urban consumers, including those who do not have any contact with the rural world. The status and consumerist desire are related to the new representations about the rural world, seen not only as a space of work and profitable business, but as a place for trips, adventure, tranquility and refuge from the urban world, according to the advertisements observed. In these ads, the rural was represented as a space for adventure, leisure and relaxation. It is the idyllic rural, sparsely populated, place for escaping from urban problems, a landscape waiting to be conquered, sacred space of works and values – respect to the land, companionship and culture – it has been developing

to a representation of the rural as world, outside everyday life, something presented in the form of discovery, with fun.

### Final remarks

It was important to learn and discover which representation of rural advertising has widespread, because the representation spread by the media on a specific reality ends up influencing the way that reality is perceived – and built – by whom is represented by it and by third parties.

The advertising analysis is useful because it marks the evolution of graphics and production of advertisements; it identifies and categorizes the concepts of the ads and their styles of messages; it specifies the types of advertising and advertising functions; it shows clues on which images of rural world, the ads of *Globo Rural* magazine built over the decades studied. This advertising was becoming more sophisticated over time, in technical terms: color, imaging, ad size. Thus, it was evident that there were continued solid investments by companies and agencies to gain the preference of “rural” entrepreneurs. In this game of persuasion, or seduction, several representations on rural were presented. This variety of representations of the rural confirms the claims of theorists and scholars on the heterogeneity of the rural world representations.

Throughout the process of division and classification of the ads, it was noticed in all categories, that the year of 1998 differed greatly from 1988 and 2008. Not only because of the number of pages and advertisements, for instance, it had 62 ads, less than 1988 (211) and 2008 (111), but also about the frequency of concepts and types of messages the year 1998 was atypical between the three studied. This was explained by an investigation of what happened in Brazil in terms of rurality in 1998. The Real Plan was taking place since 1995 and there was a strong control over exchange rates and high interest rates, which was responsible for an



artificially drop on the price of agricultural products. And, despite increased production, producers of commodities received relatively little for their production. The country was in a recession, so in the beginning of the following year, the dollar was released and other measures were implemented. Therefore, advertising profits decreased and only big advertisers divulged.

Throughout the analysis and comparison of the ads, it was noticed that while the context has changed, the representations of rural attended and expressed their modifications. This evidence confirms the hypothesis of this research that advertising, over time, represented the multiplicity of new rurality identities and social changes incorporated into the rural world.

The Publicity in GR has also changed. The small and simple ads, which predominated in the editions of 1988, were switch to large and colorful ones from wealthy advertisers. In late 2000's, the GR magazine advertisements portrayed the undocking of space-time advocated by Giddens (2002): The rural world is moving from a passive representation, halt, backward, to an active, modern and globalized rural world. The rural world has not stopped in time, and changes all the time. Even the countryside, for example, that in the past was seen as passive, something to be contemplated, metaphorically it becomes a possibility for interaction and adventure.

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