

Imagining the production, the consumption and the nation: sensitive strategies of advertising communication *

Vander Casaqui **

ABSTRACT

In this article we develop the analysis of the campaign *Brazil Presence* aired in 2009. The series of commercials presents the *invisible bonds* constituents of the chains of production and consumption in contemporary Brazil, represented by subjects and their personal narratives. Advertising builds a sense of imagined community and establishes the bank as a fundamental presence in the nation constituted discursively, around work and consumption. According to speech, the interlacing of human trajectories and economic flows are motivators of the ecstatic vision of the country, both internally and in its visibility on the world stage.

Keywords: communication and consumption, advertising, labor, language, identity.

INTRODUCTION

Advertising, as a language rooted in the historical moment where it is produced, responds to a socio-cultural setting from which it is positioned, in a *strategic* sense, that is, by electing speeches with which it dialogues; in the *ideological* sense, by disseminating and legitimizing worldviews and associating them to the interests of advertisers; in the *plastic* sense, by mobilizing images that will make up the visuality of its speech (Orlandi, 2003). We understand the advertising language as an expression of values, meanings, representations of the material/symbolic consumption, thereby fueling the imaginary of its time, when it builds the rhetoric and the imagery of the relations between subjects mediated by goods. According to Lomas,

El acto del consumo (y la apropiación de los objetos) ostenta de esta manera una evidente significación cultural (y simbólica) al reflejar el horizonte íntimo de las expectativas de las personas en el seno de la sociedad¹ (1996: 38).

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** Post doctorate from Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa – FCSH-UNL. PhD in Communication Sciences from the Universidade de São Paulo (USP). Professor of the Post-Graduate Program in Communication and Consumer Practices PPGCom/ESPM, São Paulo-SP, Brazil. E-mail: vcasiqui@yahoo.com.br

We must consider, in light of Bakhtin's (1997) concept of ideological sign, that there is not only the reflection of the expectations of the subjects, in their peculiarities and aspects that correspond to community life, but also its refraction, in the slips of sense that advertising promotes to insert brands, institutions, goods in the center of a discourse that legitimates itself, among other reasons, by corresponding to the spirit of its time and to the culture in which it is pursued.

It is in light of this background that we return to the communication of Bradesco's brand, one of the biggest banks of our country, specifically the campaign called *Brazil Presence*, a series of 90 seconds films, aired since October 2009. The first five commercials were broadcasted still in 2009; it is this series that will be analyzed in this paper, as a set that ends with the end of the year film, whose protagonist is Bradesco itself and its traditional Christmas tree.

ADVERTISING, THE SENSITIVE STRATEGY OF CONSUMPTION

The production of subjectivity, apart from what corresponds to the human practices in society, is directly linked with the strategies of contemporary capitalism, to which advertising lends its power to narrativize the human experience, incorporating it to form links and bonds with the subjects, established as consumers. According to Pelbart,

subjectivity is not only on both ends of the process of production and consumption but subjectivity itself became "the capital" (...) When we say that the immaterial flows affect our subjectivity, we mean that they affect our ways of seeing and feeling, wanting and enjoying, thinking and understanding, living and dressing, in short, of living. And when we say that they require from those who produce them their subjectivity, we mean that they demand their ways of thinking, imagining, living, that is, their ways of life. In other words, these immaterial flows have as content ways of life and make us consume ways of life. Who says ways of life, says life. Therefore, let us dare the stone formula. Today the capital penetrates life on a scale never seen before and vampirizes it. But the reverse is also true: life itself because of it turned into a capital. For if the ways of seeing, feeling, thinking, understanding, living, dressing become the object of interest and investment for capital, they become a source of value and can, themselves, become a vector of appreciation (Pelbart, 2003: 147).

Advertising language is the aesthetic of the merchandise that will constitute the visibility of the organizations, in our case, the banking sector (which immaterial nature of its merchandise is predominant), overlapping as narrative that *vampirizes* life,

¹ "The act of consumption (and appropriation of objects) holds thereby an obvious cultural (and symbolic) significance when it reflects the inner horizon of expectations of people within society".

whereas life is also celebrated in its value. It seems to exist this double play in Bradesco's communication, in which the discourse foregrounds subjects who would otherwise be outside the regimes of visibility traditionally promoted by advertising - as workers acting in their environment, talking about life and how they perceive their role in production flows that take place in consumption - is the same speech that ultimately aligns the subjects by using them as a strategy of humanization, sensitivity of the consumer of its messages. Subjectivity crosses through the representations of production and consumption, as an enunciative calculation that aims to mobilize affections. Muniz Sodré defines *sensitive strategies* such as "binding games of the speech acts to the relations for the location and allocation of subjects within the language" (Sodré, 2006: 10), and in the affectations process of the human experience, it would be up to the media and advertising the role of "instrumentalizing the sensitive" (Ibid.: 11), that is, to establish strategies for achieving communication goals from the coveted allocation of subjects, which can be sensitized to share values and have a favorable image of the institutions, the brands, the products and services advertised. However, the coding and decoding processes are more complexed than the deterministic theories allows us to infer, that idealize the subject as being incapable of escaping from the hegemonic discourses present in the societies that we live in, feel, produce and consume. In this process, the degrees of binding go through the negotiation of the subjects with these totalizing discourses, in the reorganizations when there are appropriations, different positionings from what is power in the communicational project. A good index to perceive these flows established between advertising and its reception are the manifestations of internet users on *Youtube*, when the communication meets the opinions, the readings, the transformations related to the sensitive strategies developed in the messages. In this paper, we are dedicated to discussing the potential of communication, that offers itself to symbolic consumption, having as an object the advertising of Bradesco Bank.

COMMERCIAL ANALYSIS – BRAZIL PRESENCE CAMPAIGN FOR BRADESCO BANK

Brazil Presence: *The House* (October 2009)²

The commercial that debuts the campaign presents the structure of the narrative that is repeated in all the films, establishing a logic of industrial format. The place of consumption is the starting point for the construction of the productive chains' visibility, that were *invisible*, in reverse sense to the common links between production and consumption. We perceive here a dialogue with the idea of *commodity fetish* (Marx, 2006: 67-85), with the blackout of the production processes that would focus on the producer's alienation in regards to the product of his work. Here, Bradesco takes on the role of revealing a Brazil that would be as important as unappreciated. Value here is clearly media related: in every story, the self-mentioned value of each activity, expressed by the subjects present in the campaign, is made public. Therefore, Bradesco takes on the position of a subject enunciating a knowledge about the country that should be attributed to it. The connection to the *national* spirit is manifested in the signature that identifies all the films of the campaign, which reads *Bradesco presents, Brazil Presence*, in two images in the style of woodcuts, united by the flight of a hummingbird. In the signature, the allusion to a graphic style identified with popular culture, as in the production of "cordel" novels, typical of the Northeast region of the country, promotes an interesting contrast between the logic of development and modernization of the country from economic indexes, especially in numbers that correspond to Brazilian exports, and discursive memories of association of folklore to state communication and cultural encouragement strategies, especially during periods of dictatorship, as the military government arising from the coup of 1964.

The campaign's tone is presented by the melodic and harmonic music, that serves as a background that holds the emotion of individual stories as well as the feeling regarding the presence of the brand Bradesco at the end of the films. Voice off, a man's voice, thick and emotional in a restricted way, announces a slogan that refers to the enunciative project in series, as well as the idea of the discourse being a mere reflection of the life presented through the stories of people: *Stories are works, and here comes a*

² BRADESCO Casa. Directed by Paschoal Samora. São Paulo: Agency Neogama BBH/Equipe Mixer. Brazil, 14th oct. 2009. 90 sec, VHS, Son. Color. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0Tkb_TXOII>. Accessed: 9th mar. 2011.

life project, announces. The sequence of the subject occurs from the sphere of work, associated through the use of the term *works*. The meanings of work and life intertwine, overlap.

The place of consumption in the first film is represented by the family mediation: Amanda and Jailton, a couple from Campinas, SP, appear with their little daughter Julia, driving up to the plot where they plan to build a house and build their future history. Onsite, Amanda and Jailton will speak about their housing, in a narrative that brims simplicity, conformity to traditional models of life and ambitions of consumption: as the old saying goes, *quem casa, quer casa*³. The want is manifested as an actual dream materialized in the durable commodity that is construction (Image 1).



Image 1 – The family of Campinas, SP, present their dream house in the film *A casa*.
(Vídeos executados no Acrobat Reader.)

After this initial presentation, after the slogan and a recall of the family images with their expectations and plans, the workers who are responsible for making these dreams come true gain visibility. The production path is established by subjects that are linked in their particular stories and pride shown, to build the imagery of sensible links. In Lagoa Santa, MG, Marcio Martins is the chemical engineer that speaks about the importance of the concrete to the economy (Image 2), in a discourse anchored by the caption, the voice of the economic discourse that gives credibility to the speech, in a

³ *Married people want a home of their own.*

combination between humanization and objectivation, with the detachment from the message:



Figura 2 – Marcio Martins, chemical engineer from Lagoa Santa, MG, and representative of the concrete industry.

A certain poetics overflows from the style of the semantic net that will link the production spheres between themselves and with consumption: therefore, to make *Jailton and Amanda's project come true*, we need the concrete produced by engineer Marcio, as also Roberto Pereira's bricks, entrepreneur from São Pedro, SP, who gives a mystic feature to his activity: “esse pouquinho de terra, vai ser parte de um lugar que vai ser um centro produtor de amor, que vai reunir uma família... isso aqui é um elo bacana de fazer”⁴ (Bradesco Casa, 2009), points out in his speech.

The chains of voices thus formed reveal a discourse that combines rationality with the affections of the subjects, with their identity with the work, with the mythic dimension to which they are raised. These are people with their peculiarities, expressed in the distinct accents, their ways of speaking, conveying a real effect that is anchored in the idea of sincerity, through stories that convey credibility, spontaneity, as evidenced by Erivan Felizardo's speech, Master Builder: “Meu ofício é Mestre de Obra, eu gosto do que faço, me sinto realizado, tá realizando o sonho de outras pessoas – tê sua própria casinha, né”⁵ (Bradesco Casa, 2009). Those meanings gain another dimension when

⁴ “that little bit of dirt, will be part of a place that will be a center for the production of love, which will bring together a family ... this here is a nice link to do”.

⁵ “My craft is Master Builder, I love what I do, I feel fulfilled, making other people's dreams come true – to have their own house, right”.

combined with the economic discourse: *The construction industry generates 1.9 million formal jobs*, informs another caption in the advertising film. These people that are incorporated in their subjectivity, their thoughts, in their emotion, are also the strength of the economy: the intersection between these two spheres of activities demonstrates the human nature of this work as well as it implies that it is also competitive, that it is also able to be successful in a global economy environment. The sequencing of the stories is retrieved as a synthesis at the end of the film, by the speaker's voice: "Building your own story, Marcio produces concrete / that cements Roberto's bricks / that with their sustainable work allows Erivan to command the construction of scenarios / where projects such as Jailton and Amanda's come true" (Bradesco Casa, 2009). The images of Brazilians, that are packaged by the voice off, reiterate the sensitive strategy to produce the mythologization of these subjects as metaphors of Brazilian economy's strength. A nationalist discourse that is powered by the development imagery - which, ultimately, is the scenario where the Bradesco is present as the true invisible bond that arises in the discourse as the prosecutor of the world edited by advertising communication, as can be seen in the claim that ends all films: *Bradesco and you. Presence in a Brazil that works.*

Brazil Presence: *The flower* (november 2009)⁶

In the second episode, the flower serves as an axis for the narrative, that starts from the bouquet of the Sabará's (MG) bride, Fabiana Fadul, to a new route of the country's roads. The voice off does not distinguish dream from desire: "A gente não pode adivinhar o desejo escondido dentro de cada pessoa, mas tá na cara: todo mundo tem um sonho. De repente, alguém se lança em busca do seu desejo"⁷ (Bradesco Flor, 2009). The actual dimension of dreams, identified with goods and social practices, translates into desires. In the same context, Fabiana attaches emotional value to the traditional act of casting the bridal bouquet (Image 3): "Quando eu jogá o buquê, vai sê

⁶ BRADESCO Flor. Directed by Luis Pinheiro. São Paulo: Agency Neogama BBH/Equipe Mixer. Brazil, 7th of oct. 2009. 90 sec, VHS, Son. Color. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HASxkP8x3oA>>. Accessed in: 9th mar. 2011.

⁷ "We can't guess the hidden desire within each person, but it is in your face: everyone has a dream. Suddenly, someone rushes in pursuit of their desire".

como se um pedacinho de nossa felicidade tivesse sendo dividido com outras pessoas”⁸
(Bradesco Flor, 2009).

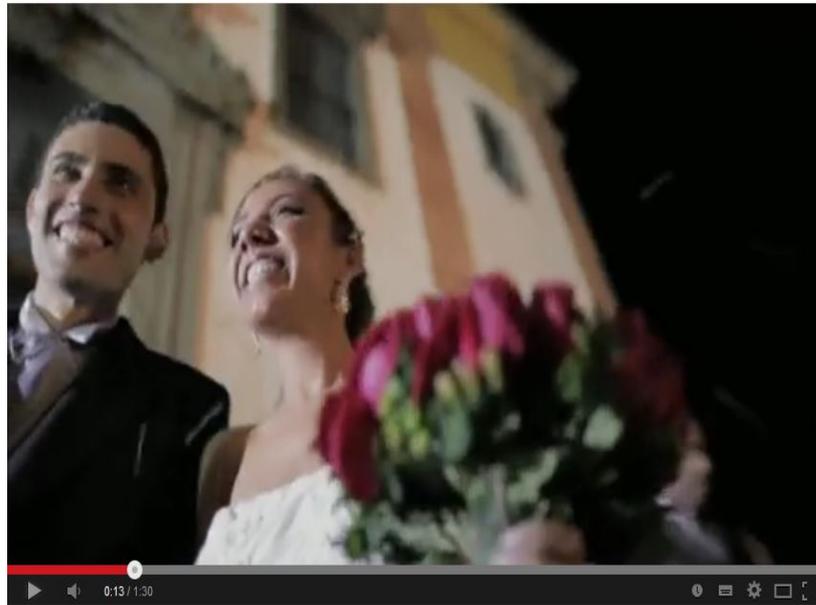


Image 3 – Fabiana Fadul and her bouquet, having as background an historic church of Sabará, MG.

At the beginning of the production link, presented in the film, is Kees, a Dutchman living in Brazil since very young, brought by his parents, currently producing flowers in Holambra, SP (Image 4). The voice off exploits the semantics associated with the flower to insert the producer in the speech of praise to the Brazilian economy: "Kees took root, planted the seeds of a dream. Today Brazil is a major exporter of flowers" (Bradesco Flor, 2009). Again, economic data is combined with the stories of people of flesh and blood, with a name, face and origin, as indicated by the caption in the film: *Brazilian flowers exports totaled U.S. \$ 36 million.*

The next scene is stars José Ricardo Pimenta, a trucker carrying the flowers along the roads of the country, materializing a striking visual element of the campaign: the movements of the actors, building a visual rhetoric of progression, advancement, as a metaphor of what is indicated in the economic sphere. Means of transport such as the truck and the train, align themselves in the semantic field with the purposeful steps of the actors, seen from the front or followed in their movements by the camera. Ricardo, like other workers, assigns emotional significance to his activity, thus contributing to a production network of affections that establishes the links and chains that cross several

⁸ “When I throw the bouquet, it will be like a little bit of our happiness had been shared with others”.

sectors of the Brazilian economy: “A pessoa tá sendo feliz em receber uma planta, eu que transportei, é prazeroso pra gente, né?”⁹ (Bradesco Flor, 2009), says Ricardo. In this film we also find the demarcation of space through the presence of Bradesco’s agency: when the flowers come to Selma Mendes, the florist from Contagem, MG, the closest link to the final consumer, Bradesco’s agency is presented as background. In the denser moment of meanings of this approach, while the voice off defines the place of flower’s production as *one more of the spots throughout Brazil that connect people and desires*, it is the image of a plate of Bradesco on the front of a historic building that stands out (Imagem 5). The bank, in this context, affirms its place as the link that builds its visibility by arranging voices to legitimize its self-claimed role of approaching subjects to their dreams and desires.

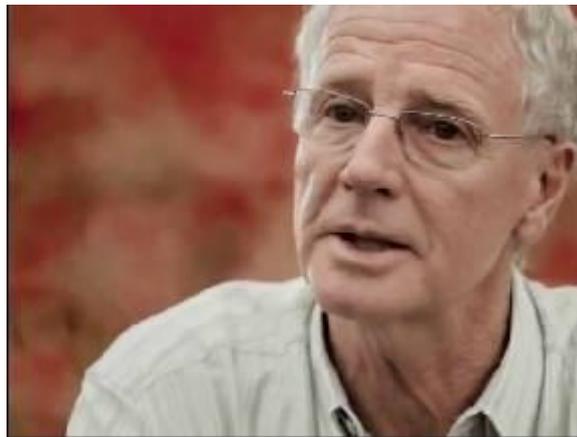


Image 4 – Kees, the Dutchman who *took root* in Holambra, SP.



Image 5 – Front of historic house, probably in Sabará, MG, identified with Bradesco’s logo.

⁹ “A person is happy to receive a plant, I hauled it, is nice for us, right?”

Brazil Presence: *The recipe* (november 2009)¹⁰

In the film *The recipe* the chain starts at the consumption of chicken in school lunches of a children's school from Nova Trento, SC, where Mrs. Carmem, the lunch lady, serves as a motto for the association between work and food: *Work is our food. It is from it that our energy to grow comes from*, says the voice off. Human and economic growth are placed in parallel: just as in other passages of the campaign, we find here an overview of the discursive strategy of Bradesco's brand. The supply chain starts in Maringá, PR, where the poultry industry is represented by the technical supervisor Dione Cazanti, framed by the visual immersion in the intricacies of a factory in the region. The image of a freight train makes the passage from this scenario to Paranaguá Harbor, PR (Image 6), where we see ships being loaded, with the anchoring of Fernando's speech, logistics manager: "O frango que sai aqui do Brasil a gente coloca na mesa de alguém lá no Japão, no Oriente Médio, na África"¹¹ (Bradesco Receita, 2009), he says, while the caption informs: *38.6% of chicken meat exported in the world is Brazilian*. The size of the numbers is associated with the grandeur of the images in a wide frame, in which machines, cranes, huge vessels embody the sense of the enormity of the economy. The modern imagery of work is recovered here: *heavy* capitalism is present to develop the visibility scheme of economic advancement, which is confirmed by the bank's discourse.

¹⁰ BRADESCO Receita. Directed by Luis Pinheiro. São Paulo: Agency Neogama BBH/Equipe Mixer. Brazil, 27th of oct. 2009. 90 sec, VHS, Son. Color. The film was available on Bradesco's *Youtube* Channel (<<http://www.youtube.com/user/bradesco>>) at the time of its broadcast on TV, but has gone out of the air. It is available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jt19YAbPPk0>>. Accessed: 27th mar. 2014.

¹¹ "The chicken that goes out from Brazil we put on someone's table far in Japan, the Middle East, Africa".



Image 6 – Image of Paranaguá Harbor, anchored by the economic discourse.

At the end of the chain, is the nutritionist Juliamar Stuani, that, by emphasizing the *high nutritional value of chicken*, is seen having in the background a totem of Bradesco (Image 7), marking the spatiality of communication as the symbolic universe of the brand, which governs the logic of the edition of the world represented. In the end, we return to the image of Mrs. Carmem, feeding a child (Image 8), accompanied by the voice off to reinforce the idea that food is not just for humans - is for the economy as a whole - a metaphor for the role of money, the raw material of the financial system in its various facets and shapes. The discourse on the Brazilian economy continues reiterated, tacked by the stories of *real* people, mediatized to serve the construction of the relevant speech of Bradesco.



Image 7 – Close up of nutritionist Juliamar, with Bradesco's totem in the background.



Image 8 – Final image of the child being fed by the lunch lady: the speech about the economy is supported by the strategic use of affections.

Brazil Presence: *The party* (december 2009)¹²

Because it is a film that reiterates much of what has already been identified in previous commercials, we hereby highlight the distinct elements. The scenario of consumption is again the heart of family, but now supported in milk consumption. Gisele Pereira, from São Paulo, SP, feeds her son Cesar with a bottle and highlights the milk as the continuity of the bond between mother and son. She prepares the Cesar's first birthday party; the *invisible bond* goes from the milk producer in the field, passing by the manufacturer of artisan cheeses, both located in inner Minas Gerais, arriving in Pará de Minas, MG, where the dairy industry turns milk into products such as yogurt. The highlight for this film is based on the color code: here it becomes apparent the effort to draw the space with Bradesco's red color (Imagem 9), to renew its presence as enunciator that edits the world, the *invisible bonds* made visible in *mediapanorama* (Appadurai, 1999) identified with the brand.

¹² BRADESCO Festa. Directed by Paschoal Samora. São Paulo: Agency Neogama BBH/Equipe Mixer. Brazil, 25th of nov. 2009. 90 sec, VHS, Son. Color. The film was available on Bradesco's *Youtube* Channel (<<http://www.youtube.com/user/bradesco>>) at the time of its broadcast on TV, meanwhile it has gone out of the air. We found it available at: < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ouu_j_zTRY8U>. Accessed: 27th mar. 2014.



Image 9 – Image of Cesar’s first birthday party: here it becomes apparent the effort of demarcation of the spatiality of communication with the colors of Bradesco Bank, along with the logo that accompanies every scene, in the upper right corner.

Brazil Presence: *The tree* (december 2009)¹³

The commercial, aired in mid-December, identifies with the spirit of Christmas and simultaneously closes the series released in 2009, placing Bradesco at the center of the narrative: the theme starts from the traditional Christmas tree of Bradesco Insurances, installed in Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas, Rio de Janeiro, RJ. According to the voice off, *a Christmas tree represents the union of our best wishes*; the mythic dimension of the images is based on the enchantment produced in people watching the fireworks show at the time the tree lights are lit (Image 10).



Image 10 – The audience watches fascinated the fireworks and Bradesco’s tree lights show.

¹³ BRADESCO *Árvore*. Directed by Luis Pinheiro. São Paulo: Agência Neogama BBH/Equipe Mixer. Brazil, 2009. 90 sec, VHS, Son. Color. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpvYkbyXIR4&feature=channel_video_title>. Accessed: 9 mar. 2011.

Besides the striking images of the tree, from close ups to wide shots, we follow the lines of the excited stage designer Abel Gomes, of the light technician Valmor Neves, of the fisherman Pedro Marins (that collaborated in transporting workers to the platform where the tree was installed), with highlight to Marcelo Braga Ramos, assembly coordinator. His speech marks the overflow of Bradesco's *ethos* (Casaqui, 2005): in the spirit of the holidays, the emotion is more intense, and what is suggested in other films becomes explicit: the worker represented is elevated to the status of hero. In the words of Marcelo, we have:

O meu sonho era ter uma arvorezinha de Natal na minha casa, aí hoje eu monto uma de 86 metros de altura, que até o meu filho sente orgulho, eu me sinto um herói, sabe, de ver a felicidade dele na escolinha, tá falando que ‘meu pai é que monta a árvore da Lagoa’”¹⁴ (Bradesco Árvore, 2009).

The images reinforce the mythic dimension of work: taken in *plongée* and, especially in *counter-plongée* (the camera positioned upwards) they place the hero in the midst of his great achievement, the tree structure. They are all identified more organically with Bradesco - after all, they were hired to produce the show in which the brand is the protagonist. In the end, the apotheosis of images and affections are strategically organized in the discourse: a sequence of emotional faces, delighted with the tree that identifies the bank, which closes the film (Image 11). Here we have an ending of that *Brazil that works* represented in communication: it is a Brazil that, governed by the *invisible bond* of Bradesco, is positioned as a facilitator of dreams and desires, capable of producing enchantment. The money is transmuted into fascination, in the links of the discursive chain (Bajtín, 2008) organized by the brand of one of the largest private institutions in the country.

¹⁴ “My dream was to have a small Christmas tree at my house, so today I assembly a 86 meters high, that even my son feels proud , I feel like a hero, you know, seeing his happiness at school , saying that ‘my dad is rising the Lagoa tree’”.



Image 11 – The apotheosis of Bradesco’s speech, at the fireworks and light show of the Christmas tree.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The campaign *Brazil Presence* of Bradesco Bank, in our analysis, proves to be a discourse built serially, establishing internal threads to each film and its interdiscursivity. In this web of meanings, subjects emerge that are aligned in a territory demarcated by the presence of the bank, as the *great invisible bond* that governs the development of the country. According to Ferrara,

The simulacrum of the world through the image opens, not only the reproducible ability on a large scale, but, above all, a new social dimension, a new spatiality that diffuses into the masses and consecrates the public. With television, the mass media are developed and its image is transformed in spectacular spatialities where the economic struggle is staged and taught, the exchange value, the overwhelming economic strategies, the capital that, in its expansion, was beginning to globalize. The modern spatiality transforms itself and replaces the face to face confrontation that had characterized the crowd that shoved itself in the route of galleries and passages, for the representation of a space that is remarkable in that it becomes a visual spectacle. The social space admits its media character (Ferrara, 2007: 23).

Space spectacularized by advertising edits the world in which Bradesco mobilizes meanings of nationalism, linking it to the dynamics of production and consumption, both in the Brazilian context as on the world stage. The construction of the imagined community (Anderson, 2008) is the regime of visibility of the financial capital, which, as an expression of unproductive labor, of the movement of capital to increase the capital itself, will find in the productive work, vampirized, its way to feed a

nationalist discourse, a nation conceived from the private sphere. A *symbolic privatization* of the State develops in Bradesco's speech: the established symbolic territory organizes the subjects around the production and consumption, of subjectivity linked to economic performance and competitiveness in a global market. The social space represented has in the sensitive strategies its way to affect the consumers of the message. In step with the legitimation based on the symbolic value of the work, based on media visibility, in a way, there is the emptying of the complex issues of the devaluation of work before its reorganization, intensification, mechanization and flexibility, at this exact scenario in which Bradesco finds the success of the economic performance of the nation and ranks as the protagonist. The pride associated with the work, chained to the euphoric tone, characterizes the return of triumphalist discourse that accompanied the history of twentieth-century Brazil, especially in its use in the government sphere, as in the discourses related to the Vargas Era, to the government of Juscelino Kubitschek, to the military regime from 1964 coup. The meaning of the discourse is all-encompassing; the heterogeneity is at the service of an orchestration of voices chanting, almost unison, through the diversity of accents, faces, dreams and stories, the praise to the Brazil *that works*, and, indirectly, to the presence of Bradesco and its operation in the country, emptying the controversy of the role of finance capital with a speech in a triumphant tone, a *Triumph of the will* of Brazilians.

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