

## The identification with the audience:

### local television production and sustainability of affiliated broadcasters

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#### **Abstract**

In this article, we study some strategies used by local television broadcasting stations, integrants of Brazilian television networks, to insert local contents in their programming, as a way to obtain legitimation in the communities they reach, as well as a way to maintain themselves. We focused our research in a local broadcasting station of the Rede Brasil Sul de Comunicações, affiliated to Rede Globo in Brazil. The broadcasting station is located in the countryside of Rio Grande do Sul state. Besides having a decentralized editorial production policy, with reporters and studio away from its headquarters, the local broadcasting station uses its commercial break to present contents produced by itself. These contents match the identities currently adopted by micro-regional audience. To illustrate this practice, we take as an example a production that has been broadcasted for the last five years. Its subject can be described as the ancestors memory preservation through the maintenance and restoration of the architectural patrimony, as well as the narratives associated with it.

#### **Key words**

television, local production, identity

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In this article, we discuss aspects of regionalized television content production. Local broadcasting stations insert, in their programming, readings of imaginings present in their area of coverage, building, this way, local identities. That procedure is specially taken by stations of *Rede Brasil Sul de Comunicações - RBS TV*, affiliated to *Rede Globo* - as one of its strategies for commercial sustainability within a media context which, first of all, is focused on national and international matters.

At first, we will refer to the globalization issue, since it is within its context that we have to understand the **local** and its identity manifestation - in this case, broadcast by the media. Introducing themselves into the globalized world, with their own

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strategies, *RBS TV's* broadcasters from the countryside of the state of *Rio Grande do Sul* seem to bet on a movement which is inherent to the globalization process, that is, localization, culture appreciation and localized identities.

It's understood that stations' own production insertion is quite limited by *Rede Globo's* policy. Therefore, the stations use – besides pre-defined editorial space – their commercial breaks to insert, in the regional, national and international flow maelstrom, demonstrations of the peculiar cultures they are part of.

We are going to deal with the regionalization of television content production in Brazil, pointing out some pieces of information about the two television networks the study brings up: a national one – *Rede Globo de Televisão*, Brazilian – and a regional one – *Rede Brasil Sul de Comunicações*, *RBS*, which covers the states of *Rio Grande do Sul* and *Santa Catarina*. We are briefly going to mention some local production, broadcasted during commercial breaks by several *RBS TV's* stations from the countryside to focus, eventually, *RBS TV dos Vales*, established in *Santa Cruz do Sul*. It covers *Rio Pardo* and *Taquari* valleys, *RS*, a micro-region<sup>3</sup> which is strongly marked by European immigration, specially German and Italian. *RBS TV dos Vales*, is considered a reference by the rest of the regional stations for its production of programetes<sup>4</sup> and has a singular behavior concerning editorial production.

We are going to finish by discussing *Preserve o que é nosso*, a programete, which, as we understand it, builds up a local identity based on regional culture and past, both marked by the immigration episode, specially German and Italian.

First of all, we have to clear up that, when we say, here, “local identity”, we refer to those historic and cultural aspects and features, which are chosen by individuals and groups established in certain restricted geographical area to settle their difference before individuals and groups established in other areas. In previous papers (Stürmer&Silveira, 2007a), we showed that several local broadcasting stations of *RBS TV*, spread across different areas of *Rio Grande do Sul*, address through production and exhibition of sponsored programetes, local identities which are different, among themselves, not to mention that, in a regional level (state), the Network underlines the *gaúcho* political identity.

## ***IN THE GLOBAL, THE NEED FOR LOCAL***

It seems essential to us getting started our reflection by approaching the globalization issue. First, because the studied stations are connected to a regional tv

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<sup>3</sup> Notice that it is our choice to use the terms “micro-region” and “local” to refer to geographical areas covered by *RBS TV* areas, specially to the area composed by *Rio Pardo* and *Taquari* valleys, covered by *RBS TV dos Vales*. In this station's discourse, the expression used to define this so called area is “region”. We avoided using this term because, in our text, the term “region” means, most of the time, to the state of *Rio Grande do Sul*.

<sup>4</sup> The “programetes” can be defined as short lasting productions (45” to 90”), sponsored and broadcasted within commercial breaks. The teasers at other times invite the spectator to watch them and the episodes in general are shown with opening and closure clips. Advertisers' signature is inserted at the end of each edition or only during the teasers. The product could be informative, educational, cultural, recreational, among others.

network which, in its turn, is the main affiliate of a national television network – being superior to this national network concerning the number of own stations – whose programming is widely made of international content.

Secondly, because ethnic identities which take place in *Rio Pardo and Taquari* valleys are referred in local programming with the identities linked to those two valleys, although they have European countries as bases, which constitute reference to immigrant descendants. In many cases, those descendants keep living bonds of cultural interchange with those countries, starting by keeping the language. On the other hand, it has to be said, new identities and hybrid local forms may come up from the synthesis of the two poles – the global and the local.

Eventually, we have to admit that, if one of the features of the globalization process is precisely the mutual affectation between what is global and what is local – rising from these contradictory forces – then the phenomenon we study puts itself *within* this process. That is, it becomes “part” of it and does not act “against” it, raising the value of an identity, which is supposed to be local, or when it tries to set the difference between the area it covers from other regions, or even from the rest of the planet.

Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner (1997) point out that nowadays, we are challenged to think of the relationship between global and local observing how global forces influence and structure more and more the local circumstances and, at the same time, how local forces and circumstances mediate the global, producing unique thinking and action patterns.

Despite having a strong economical nature, globalization also shows up deeply marked in the cultural instance: “*global culture involves promoting lifestyle, consumption, products, and identities.*” (Cvetkovich & Kellner, 1997:8). The authors understand that both the culture and the nationalism stand more resistant, profound and even fundamentalist than expected, and disputes among national and regional divergent cultures keep standing in a, supposedly, globalized world. Kathryn Woodward(2005) helps us to understand this matter when she points out that there are two different results from globalization as for identity. On one hand, cultural homogeneity that leads us away from local culture; on the other hand, a resistance which might strengthen and reaffirm local and national identities or lead to the emergence of new identity positions.

Thus, instead of becoming homogeneity, the global culture “...operates precisely through the multiplication of different products, services, and spectacles targeted at specific audiences” (Cvetkovich & Kellner, 1997:9). That is, consumers and media industries are becoming more distinguished and clients and audiences are segmented in more and more categories.

In Brazil, despite massive penetration of television networks, audiences keep, in different regions of the country, their regional cultures, often times, away from the

universe portrayed by those networks. Television production seeks to own matters of its audience to generate identification and legitimating recognition.

In our study, the immigrant identity which we refer to, isn't, evidently, the only one which is shown at *RBS TV dos Vales* coverage area. This identifying manifestation, whose bases go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century – when the colonization process of the micro-region started by Italians and Germans – is passed by countless other identities. Currently, any identifying representation delivered by the media can be appropriated by any inhabitant of the valleys.

Even so, the ubiquity of ethnical identities is undeniable, even more because it is intensively present in local media discourse.

## ***TELEVISION: FROM NATIONAL TO LOCAL***

Television depends on public acceptance which guarantees its existence. As an enterprise, a television station fights for the market: “its guidelines are based on maximizing profits; the messages, the program-texts, are the products it offers to the market” (Duarte, 2004:33). This way, “all television production process considers its interlocutors very carefully [...] because they are its products consumers, the buyers of its business”(Duarte, 2004:37).

One of the strategies carried out by television, aiming as many viewers as possible, is the use of homogeneous speech, constituting one unique public. Differences are reduced or left aside, so that the discourse presented does not shock values and prejudice of the majority (Duarte, 2004). That strategy is easily verified in the studied local stations which, in local level, accredit its audience, indistinctively, immigration and colonization predecessors, as well as one or another ethnical belonging to an European source, directly. The internal micro – regional differences are voided for the sake of a discourse that prioritizes certain values and ignores a great number of others. Anyhow, those stations aim for differentiation of its audience against the one that belongs to the rest of the state and the country. To them, the investment in production and exhibition - in commercial breaks – of its own programming, identified with the local audience, allows financial return and legitimating recognition.

The generalized non-observation to the Constitution rules of 1988 is well known, which, among others, establishes the local production as an obligation.<sup>5</sup> The bill of the House of Representatives (PLC) 59/03 that should rule article 221 of the Federal Constitution concerning regionalization of cultural, artistic and journalistic programming of radio and television stations, has been going through the National Congress for 15 years. The project faces resistance that comes from radio and TV stations. According to Carlos Gilberto Roldão (2006), these representatives have never

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<sup>5</sup> Capparelli and Lima (2004, p41) point out that the state isn't efficient carrying out the rules of Chapter 5, of title 3 of the 1988 Constitution. “Actually, the constitutional rule forbids (1) monopoly or oligopoly in Communication Media; it establishes: [...] and (5) regionalization of cultural, artistic and journalistic production [...]. Almost 15 years later, none of these rules, which demand its complementation by Law, has been observed.”

stood openly against regionalization, but have managed to obstruct it under unconstitutionality and impracticability allegations.

The original idea, showed a project that set a minimum 30% percentage for cultural, artistic and journalistic programs, entirely produced and broadcasted at the place of its headquarters, no matter the different possibilities/capabilities to accomplish this minimum percentage by the stations. While going through the House of Representatives, the project suffered several changes. One of them is the proposal of up to 22 weekly hours<sup>6</sup> of local programming for broadcasting stations with more than 1,5 million homes with television sets, reducing this share as the number of homes with television sets decreases (Roldão, 2006). The issue hasn't faced a solution yet. Caparelli e Lima (2004:52) get it right when they point out that Brazil is "the paradise for 'unregulated' broadcasting, submitted only to market rules.

The most important enterprise of the national television market and audience leader at the majority of the TV timetable – *Rede Globo* – started its activities in 1965. It is known that, despite the existence of other five big commercial networks operating in open channels – SBT, Record, Bandeirantes, Rede TV! and CNT/Gazeta – Globo is the one that seizes the largest percentage of money invested in TV in Brazil.

The 70's set the beginning of Globo's investments – which holds its production centralized in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo – in the regionalization of its programming, aiming at consolidating it as a leader. The increase of its geographical coverage happened through the creation of a vast system of affiliates. With 121 stations spread throughout Brazil, its signal reaches 100% of the national territory.

The system of affiliates has guaranteed Globo the position of largest TV network in Brazil. The affiliation contract, in general, "provides the regional station with the supply of all of Globo's national programming, free of charge; but has to share profit from regional and state advertising sales." (Basi, 2001: 26). Soon in 1996, according to *Veja* magazine (*apud*, Basi, 2001 : 25), 59% of Globo's advertising income, came from countryside cities.

Armando Job (2006), manager to *RBS TV dos Vales*, points out that local content production is made hugely difficult because a great deal of local income is destined to Globo network, keeping the concession agreement : "How can you have a daily programming with local income if you can't even count on local income? What sort of programming will you air?", he asks. On the other hand, he admits that "the largest audience in Brazil is built up with a lot of money, with skilled people" and the network regional stations "are what they are because of Globo"(Job, 2006).

Actually, as Basi points out (2001:29), "finding gaps in the programming timetable of the Network is a tricky task, because on *Rede Globo*, demands include the quality of the shows and commercial viability". Even so, regional stations mean, to the Network, the establishment of a bond with different communities and, consequently,

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<sup>6</sup> A fast calculation allows us to realize that these 22 weekly hours mean around 03 hours of daily local programming, or 12,5 % of the entire programming.

profit: “The company knows that behind this close relationship with the community stands the audience reflected into its programs, also its advertisers”. (Basi, 2001 : 34).

RBS TV stands as the largest regional television station network of Latin America. With 18 affiliates and members of *Rede Globo*<sup>7</sup>, covering 99,7% of homes with TV sets in *Rio Grande do Sul* and in *Santa Catarina*, RBS TV shows itself as the network that produces most, locally, in Brazil – about 15% of the programming timetable. It defines its programming as “focused on the appreciation of regional culture and information” and announces that “in each show, in each project [...] gives priority to contents that emphasize demands of the regions in which it acts”<sup>8</sup>.

The eleven stations spread throughout *Rio Grande do Sul*’s countryside act in quite different areas to one another. *Rede RBS* was forged from local stations that were already part of local daily life. It distinguishes itself from the other *Rede Globo*’s affiliates because it incorporated TV stations that generated their own programming (Silveira, 2006). According to Lauro Schirmer (2002), except for *Santa Rosa*’s station, whose concession was given to RBS in José Sarney’s government, all countryside stations in *Rio Grande do Sul* were given to local groups to which RBS associated with.

The regional network, through its stations, adopts a multi-focused posture. From regionalization, the public of RBS TV has access to three levels of information and interaction with the market: the national, the regional and the local (Souza, 1999).

It’s important to say that,

[...]the blend of levels of programming is proportional, standing out the priority for national producing. Since RBS has no technical nor economical conditions to keep a regional programming and/or local for more time, spectators have to please themselves by watching national shows most of the day (Silveira, 2006).

Scarduelli (*apud* Souza, 1999: 82) points out that “around 80% of the generated income comes from local clients – the ones who pay the cheapest 30 seconds on television. The 20% left come from state advertisers”. The author points out that, in order to conquer advertisers, each station has to, at first, conquer the community’s audience that it covers.

RBS TV, besides covering daily regional events on its daily TV news, is used to producing special programs that rescue historical, artistic and cultural aspects of the state. According to Daniela Aline Hinerasky (2004: 18), “RBS group has an important role in building and rebuilding *gaúcha* identity, through its diversified programming of TV and radio, the aired campaigns and events it carries out”.

Everything indicates that localized production remains composing the programming of RBS TV, according to Schirmer (2002: 189) reports on Nelson Pacheco

<sup>7</sup> In addition to the twelve stations from the countryside of *Rio Grande do Sul* and its head station, located in Porto Alegre, RBS counts on other six stations in *Santa Catarina*.

<sup>8</sup> Extracted from the presentation text of RBS TV which was on RBS’s website in October, 2006.



Sirotsky, one of the network's founders, stated: "We will remain on TV alongside *Rede Globo*, but broadening localism, which is *RBS's* mark". This concept turned out to be appropriate since it was acknowledged that audiences, although they have a fast access to the world's events, tend to remain analyzing them under their peculiar view, that comes from their roots.

Television presents itself as a space already acknowledged of appropriation and reorganization of meanings through representation it chooses. Ada Cristina Machado da Silveira (2001 : 28) reiterates that representations of collective identities establish symbolic bridges : "As these bridges connect singular individuals under common interests, they also articulate their insertion in a community".

The available spot left by *Rede Globo's* programming, of only 15% to *RBS's* programming, is even smaller to the countryside stations. In Job's opinion (2006), *Globo* does not demonstrate interest in increasing time for affiliates' programming production, because it believes it can produce better:

When an affiliate enters, quality lowers, and that can jeopardize *Globo's* audience. With *RBS* the relationship is more peaceful, but we have to think that if it gives ten more minutes to *RBS*, it also has to give it to other affiliates (Job, 2006).

At this point of our work, we intend to discuss procedures of identification adopted in local content production by broadcasting stations of *Rede RBS TV* from the countryside of *Rio Grande do Sul*.

## ***THE INSERTION OF LOCAL CONTENT: THE PROGRAMETES***

Production of local stations is concentrated in TV news, occupied by daily sociopolitical and economical matters, and programetes focused on reaching the community audience's esteem in which they are settled.

TV news make up one of the spots in which the local inserts itself in *RBS TV's* programming. Currently, every countryside station of *Rio Grande do Sul* has local sets inserted at the beginning of daily editions of *Jornal do Almoço(JA)* – from 12 p.m. to 12:30 p.m. -, and on *RBS Notícias* – from 7 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., of which four stations have got larger room for local news. Stations from *Santa Cruz do Sul*, *Caxias do Sul*, *Santa Maria* and *Pelotas* – each one with four sets on *JA* and one set on *RBS Notícias* – occupy around 70% of the journalistic space of *Rede RBS TV*. The other stations exhibit local reports occupying two sets on *JA* and one on *RBS Notícias* (Job, 2006). The journalistic spot – with local personalities' interviews, events coverage and facts reports – is, for sure, the defined format for the community to "see itself" on its daily life.

The programete, in its turn, reveals a kind of initiative of the local station to put on screen peculiarities of its surrounding community. Unlike TV journalism production, which standardized itself using a daily spot defined by the regional network,

airing programetes is not a rule – as proof of that, some stations don't adopt it – but they do use a strategy to, using commercial breaks, upgrade local production. The manufacture and exhibition of this kind of production attends different motivations that start from the station's disposition on identifying itself with the community to the necessity of offering diversified products for trading.

As an integrant part of our research, we carried out information collection about which stations exhibited programetes specifically in 2006. At first, we considered *Rede RBS's* stations established in the municipalities of *Bagé* (established in 1976), *Caxias do Sul* (1969), *Cruz Alta* (1980), *Erechim* (1972), *Passo Fundo* (1980), *Pelotas* (1972), *Rio Grande* (1978), *Santa Cruz do Sul* (1988), *Santa Maria* (1969), *Santa Rosa* (1992) and *Uruguaiana* (1974). A phone call in advance to those stations was made in order to check which ones had exhibited programetes in, precisely, 2006, and five stations matched this condition: *RBS TV Bagé*, *RBS TV Santa Rosa*, *RBS TV Cruz Alta*, *RBS TV Santa Maria* and *RBS TV dos Vales*. These stations were visited, mostly, between October and November of 2006 for interviews that were carried out with executive managers, marketing coordinators and assistants and production professionals, when it was made possible to learn about the programetes produced and broadcasted by them in that year.<sup>9</sup>

The existence of production with distinct themes was verified, such as: elderly, animal protection, fire prevention, voluntary work, among others. The programetes with these themes, although locally produced, could be in the programming of any other station because of its generalist feature.

On the other hand, there are others that try to emphasize local cultural identities related to the past and peculiar tradition of the community in which the station is inserted. It is the raw material provided by history and collective memory which Castells refers to (2003) that *RBS TV's* stations appropriate to build up those programetes. It could be said that, exposing certain particularisms, they operate in a way that makes the audience compose its identity enlacing an idea of past – and tradition – with the present and future. Zigmunt Bauman (2000: 136) points out that the tradition concept is paradoxical, because “it leads one to believe that the past ***ties up*** the present” unleashing “present and future efforts in the ***construction*** of a ‘past’ by which we need or want to be ***tied*** to” (the sociologist's italics). Tradition, to the author, involves “choosing a way of behaving among many possible ones, acceptable and feasible, known or guessed”, so that it is “a matter of thought, reasoning, justification and, above all, ***choice***” (Bauman, 2000:136-137, author's italics).

The studied programetes act in cultural identities and tradition consecration, updating them and, sometimes, reconfiguring them. It's necessary to admit, though, that individuals don't receive their identities ready, but they build them up from different

<sup>9</sup> While visiting the stations, many programetes exhibited in past years were mentioned. The making of programetes by countryside stations, by the way, was referred by Hinerasky (2004). It's also important to stand out that the non exhibition in 2006 does not mean that this format is not carried out by the stations. *RBS TV Uruguaiana*, for instance, despite not having programetes exhibited in 2006, has a history of this sort of exhibition in previous years.



discourses and practicing – sometimes antagonistic (Hall, 1997). Identity also means choices, which are made through several “offers”. The discourse of television is only one of the offers in which individuals may rest to build up their identities. But “as identity is what is *socially acknowledged* as identity” (Bauman, 2000: 142, author’s italics) and identity being a social phenomenon, as much as individual, television assumes an important role: in this case, every station acknowledges and tries to sanction local tradition and identities, acting in order to stress the hegemonic reading we have upon them.

The concept of “imagined consumer”( Du Gay, 1999: 52-53) helps to understand how television production is affected by an audience which is foreseen, potential, and often times reduced to its tradition. By creating a cultural product, the producers intend to establish an identification between that product and the station that exhibits it and particular groups of consumers – or audience. In the culture circuit proposed by Paul Du Gay, this process corresponds to an attempt of approach or articulation between moments of production and consuming. So, considering a certain local audience – imagined – the stations produce content that, as the producers suppose, will make this audience recognize and identify itself through the exhibited product.

As previously mentioned, five out of eleven countryside RBS TV stations produced and aired a series of programetes in its commercial breaks in 2006. Information concerning aired production by these stations built up article previously written (Stürmer & Silveira, 2007a).

It is important to point out some general aspects found in the survey. First we emphasized that all five stations which use the studied format, have in their programming, at least one production that stresses strong aspects of cultural identity and tradition of the area of coverage. To the stations, showing and promoting peculiarities of its area of coverage, its history and the present identities are a way of promoting its own insertion, of showing that they actually intend to practice the slogan of Rede RBS “your life on TV”. This intention might, somehow, explain why the stations exhibit programetes – which imply costs of production, research, etc. – in replacement of detached media. During interviews with stations representatives, it was possible to verify that, in some cases it is an alternative product offered to enterprises, which are already successfully established, have no interest in conventional commercials, or to companies that otherwise would not advertise on TV. It is a product made up from a commercial concept.

The interviewees on this survey – employees of the five stations previously mentioned – understand that the exhibited programetes reinforce the stations’ insertion in their covered areas. They state that the community’s response indicates, in some cases, the need for new series of those productions. In other cases, according to them, spectators contribute with suggestions or offering new journalistic guidelines (Job; Manjabosco; Batista; Celia; Braun, 2006). The involvement with the community during its making is also evaluated as positive, because it approaches the station to people that

often times are role models because of their attendance to groups of culture preservation and their leadership over institutions, among other issues. So, the interviewees understand that, besides the stations' concern about showing "they are present" in the communities in which they act, there is also a concern about the community also "being present" in the programming (Soares, 2006).

In general, the exhibition of the programete depends on sponsorship negotiated in shares. The signature of the sponsors is exhibited at the end of each episode or only on the publicity teasers. This aspect faithfully obeys *Globo's Standard*, of at least 5" of use for each sponsor. The same standard defines that by going beyond 90", production must be analyzed by *Globo* itself, before being broadcast. So, to *Rede Globo*, it has been established, as a rule, that a programete must have a maximum period of 90" (Soares, 2006).

The executive manager of *RBS TV dos Vales*, understands that series of programetes – like *RBS TV nos Vales*, aired on this station – manage, somehow, to cover a gap concerning divulging information which could not fit to editorial rules of *Rede Globo*, that is, they show up on TV news, despite the relevance they might have to the community.

From demands of this sort, we started to develop windows, in between commercial programming, "unloading" subjects we consider important, but are not among editorial rules of *Globo* [...] *insert* shows up as "advertising report", so that it is clear that it is about a commercial product and not editorial. That is the idea: for us to make up a more qualified commercial, with more, between quotes, credibility (Job, 2006).

Sponsors choose supporting the broadcast of programetes because these, usually, intend to show local aspects and approach cultural identities and tradition which can be important to themselves or to the clients. It is about a buy which, besides considering number of broadcasts of the company's brand, is based on feelings and intuition, and not on technical aspects that involve information about segment or "the number of reached", seconds seized, among other data (Soares, 2006).

The option for sponsoring a programete – and not for a detached medium purchase – features the institutional aspect, image, rather than ads that focus price/service/products and aim at selling merchandise directly. The *merchandising* used in some programetes can be considered an exception, and was found in both cases. The first, at *Santa Rosa* station, aims at elderly care and exhibits *merchandising* of a mate tea brand. The second, at *Cruz Alta* station aims at gastronomy of several ethnic segments, and the sponsors' products (rice, flour, corn, etc.) are shown during the making of recipes.

## LOCAL PRODUCTION OF RBS TV DOS VALES <sup>10</sup>

Established in *Santa Cruz do Sul*, in *Vale do Rio Pardo*, and covering other 62 municipalities, *RBS TV dos Vales* has approximately 780 thousand potential spectators. In its area of coverage, stand out several cities of mainly Italian and German colonization which are located in *Vales do Rio Pardo e do Rio Taquari*.

The station is known as exemplary concerning production of series of programetes and it serves as a model to other stations (Barcelos, Celia, Soares, 2006). Among others, there are productions being broadcasted which show activities and events in the micro – region (*Nossos Vales*) and daily life in the rural areas (*Momento da Família Rural*). Series about protection of water sources (*Nossos Vales Nossos Rios*) and urban cleaning (*Cidade Limpa*), among others, have been exhibited. One of its most recent projects is *Nossas Igrejas*, which aims at showing churches located in the area of coverage and stories concerning those churches. Acceptance to this product is confirmed by the “line” formed by companies that hold on to sponsor the product (Scherer, 2007).

According to the station’s executive manager, insertion of content concerning the valleys is one of his main concerns. The station, formerly named *RBS TV Santa Cruz*, is called, nowadays, *RBS TV dos Vales*: “the station has this regional feature starting from its name [...] I immediately realized that the fact of the name *Santa Cruz do Sul* and being in *Santa Cruz do Sul* [...] was a blockade for the relationship with other communities” (Job, 2006).

The size of the city, which has about 120 thousand inhabitants, is pointed out as one of the reasons the station seeks, in other cities of its area of coverage, alternatives to expand its income:

(*Santa Cruz do Sul* is) an extremely little city, compact, easy to move around [...], despite being an economic cluster, having a richness, it is an extremely timid city concerning culture, public offices, it is way smaller than *Santa Maria*. If we insisted on the model that stood six years ago [...], with the name and focusing on our headquarters, we would be relentlessly half of what we are today. The strategy was to leave the region, otherwise we would have non dynamic TV news [...] it would be boring [...] the economical result is the tripod the TV stations have: first the news, TV journalism, secondly, relationship with the community, through TV and events, which it can promote, and, to pay all this bill, the media, media broadcast. That is, we had to expand the income possibility, searching for smaller municipalities (Job, 2006).

The choice of aiming the TV journalism at the micro-region resulted in a division of this TV journalism in two poles:

We have three teams here ( in *Santa Cruz do Sul*) and two in *Lajeado*, we have a studio here and one in *Lajeado*, we have an editing desk here and one in *Lajeado*; that does not exist at any other station of *RBS* [...] this regionalization was not that risky since we had *Lajeado* on the other side; we did not Have just another city, we had the city which has had the highest growth in the state for many years, with a great economic diversity, which is so true that the biggest *RBS* branch is *Lajeado*’s <sup>11</sup> (Job, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> In January, 2007, the former *RBS TV Vales do Rio Pardo e Taquari* started to be known as *RBS TV dos Vales*, with the incorporation of the municipality of *Cachoeira do Sul* to the station’s area of coverage. The city is located in *Vale do Jacuí*.

<sup>11</sup> Besides *Lajeado*’s branch, *RBS TV dos Vales*, has micro- branches in *Encantado*, *Venâncio Aires* and *Candelária*.

These procedures towards other cities could be understood as one more level on the scale of programming regionalization. At first, would be *Rede Globo*; then, secondly, state *RBS TV*; third, *RBS TV dos Vales* and, fourth, the cities of its area of coverage, specially, *Lajeado*, a municipality 60 kilometers away from *Santa Cruz do Sul* and located in *Vale do Taquari* (*Taquari* valley).

The strategy of producing content, mentioned by the chief manager, leads to a kind of decentralization, as both TV news and programetes content reach the station, often times, through outsourcing services:

The cameramen of video producers (from the micro- region and headquarters cities) are prepared for capturing images according to *RBS* standards [...] you have a capacity of producing content which doesn't depend on the size of your team. That is something regionalization has taught us to do (Job, 2006).

According to Job, the station has no commercial production, unlike some others: “we got rid of this, because our main role is to be a communication vehicle and not a producer. In the communication chain, it is very clear to us: there is the advertising agency's role, the video producer's role and the vehicle's role.” (Job, 2006)

From *RBS TV dos Vales* programming, we picked out the media product we dared to study: the series *Preserve o que é nosso*. There are many reasons why we chose it. Firstly, its topic: each episode shows a house or antique building which was restored, also highlighting the achievements of the ancestors, remarkably the immigrants and descendants of German and Italian immigrants. The series recommends preservation and restoration of cultural and architectural assets as a means of acquiring satisfaction and acknowledgement.

Secondly, longevity and regularity: the series was created in September, 2002, and hasn't been out of programming or production, at any moment, attending to regular patterns (duration, production periodicity and exhibition, etc.)<sup>12</sup>. It was broadcasted even when there was no sponsor, specifically between October, 2005 and May, 2006. To the end of 2006, the series had accomplished 40 programetes exhibited by *RBS TV dos Vales*.

The series has had sponsors as big as *UNISC* – University of Santa Cruz do Sul, and the multinational *Alliance One*, which is one of the major leaf tobacco companies worldwide. The sponsorship was divided in shares, precisely in 2006, which were taken by a variety of segments. In October, 2007, the production counted on five sponsors. Among them, a hospital, an ice cream manufacturing company and a tractor and agricultural implements dealer shop. These companies had their brands and *slogans* exhibited in 44 monthly broadcasted teasers of *Preserve o que é nosso* aired in between 13 *Rede Globo* and *RBS TV*'s shows, with a special distinction to *Bom Dia Rio Grande*

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<sup>12</sup> Exhibition timetable suffered changes in 2006, turning from three weekly exhibitions – on *Jornal Nacional* on Tuesday, on *Globo Repórter* on Friday and the eight o'clock soap opera – to two weekly broadcasts – on *Globo Repórter* on Friday and *Domingão do Faustão*, on Sundays.

and *Mais Você* (with seven insertions each) and to *Vale a Pena Ver de Novo* (seven insertions).

As a third aspect, we considered the station's own features. On one hand, it seeks, more intensively than the others, extend its operation to the cities within its area of coverage, not restraining itself to the city where it is established. On the other hand, it becomes a reference to the other stations concerning series production, since it does produce more often than the rest.

Besides, *Preserve o que é nosso* enjoys a distinguished *status* even inside *RBS TV dos Vales*. It is the only one produced by the station's own production team. The programete adapts to a context of highlighting tradition and dignifying the past and the first immigrants that populated the micro-region<sup>13</sup>, intending to "highlight regional architectonic history and people's initiative, who are concerned about keeping their references"<sup>14</sup>. People of the community, by restoring their houses, show interest in exposing them and offer them as a feature to the TV station, maybe because, as Bauman says (2007: 18), "in a consumers society, nobody can be left aside as a consuming object". Showing restored antique houses, the series production highlights representatives of the families or people who have or had some relation to the building, telling stories that happened inside them or detailing the restoration work and the reasons why it was carried out.

The programetes of 90" are aired on Fridays, on the commercial break of *Globo Repórter*, and on Sundays, on the break of *Domingão do Faustão*. On each exhibition, the narrator and the deponents carry out the role of highlighting the roots of the communities they reach. The discourse in this production is reiterating, concerning events carried out in the area – *Oktoberfest* in *Santa Cruz do Sul* is considered the second biggest festivity of this kind in Brazil -, in the reports in newspapers of the micro-region and in daily life or social relations of the communities in the area of coverage.

The different editions of the series start by pointing out the place of the shootings (municipalities, location). Particular aspects of the building, such as the year of construction and the constructors' information are mentioned, also data of the restoration construction. The scenes show the garden, the outside and inside of the house, and furniture and home appliances as well. The deponent (only one on most episodes) is usually shown sitting, inside the house, or, occasionally, at the porch, and talks about aspects of the house and his family's history, which are, often times, resumed and stressed by the narrator. The programete has no opening clip, but has a quick ending clip.

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<sup>13</sup> In 1999, *RBS TV VRPT*, had already broadcasted the series *Lutas, Memórias e Conquistas*, which showed the colonization history in *Santa Cruz do Sul*, within the project *150 Anos da Imigração Alemã*. There were 60 programetes lasting one minute, each (Hinerasky, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Extracted from a presentation document of *Preserve o que é nosso*.

## ***PRESERVE O QUE É NOSSO***

Trying to analyze the features of *Preserve o que é nosso* and seeking the understanding of why this product is successful within the programming of *RBS TV dos Vales*, we chose three categories, proposed by Elizabeth Bastos Duarte (2004), who takes them as distinctive of genre/subgenre<sup>15</sup> : the kind of discursive reality it operates, the regime of belief this reality proposes and, at last, the tone. We start our reflection by the kind of discursive reality through which the series operates: the meta-reality.

Having the straight reference of the external and natural world, the meta-reality would be the kind of discursive reality that is based on “happenings that are external to the environment upon which the TV has no control of” (Duarte, 2004: 82). Thus, subgenres like documentaries, TV news, interviews, reports would have, as purpose, showing this external world. According to François Jost (2004; 2007) the meta-reality would match to what he calls the real world.

According to Duarte (2004), to every kind of discursive reality we can relate a belief regime. In meta-reality, the belief regime proposed is the truth. TV products commit to faithfulness to facts and involved social actors.

We may say that *Preserve o que é nosso* intends to refer to the natural world, informing present and past conditions, particularly of some sort of geographical area of coverage<sup>16</sup>. That is its promise concerning content which is shown on every episode. We believe, however, that the production makes at least two other promises which are not limited to the 90” of exhibition.

First, it seems to overcome its own borders as it refers to an identity to be preserved for the future. Secondly, we understand that exhibition of the programete itself should be a promise made by the station to its audience: that history, the architectural patrimony, culture and identity of its spectators will be observed in the making of its products. So, this station, although strongly resigned by the distant other (defined by networks on state and national level), wants to show itself worthy of trust before its local audience.

The sort of belief aimed by the station when broadcasting them is the truth. To Jost (2004), when a production refers to the real world, as it is on *Preserve o que é nosso*, what it shows could be taken seriously for three reasons. First because, as a sign of the world, it would have verifying purposes upon our world (Jost, 2004: 36). The television product we study, effectively, looks for current information in the real world and exposes it: the houses and their owners are actually there, at the place they are announced to be, and their restored home condition is also confirmed. The exposure of antique buildings also makes up a proof of existence of a past; however, when this past is verbally reported, truthfulness of what is being said depends on credibility upon the

<sup>15</sup> It is not our intention, in this article, to settle *Preserve o que é nosso* in a genre or subgenre. Duarte’s proposed categories were used, because we understood they help on evaluating the media product we studied.

<sup>16</sup> We observed that, in general, the programetes we faced in the visits carried out to the countryside stations, also intended to refer to the natural world, informing present and past conditions of their areas of coverage.



narrator's speech - which, in the end, represents the vehicle itself - and the community member's speech - the owners - who offer their testimony.

When their authorities is not contested, the narrator and deponent, by the way, become part of the second reason why the content of the programete can be trusted, according to Jost (2004): they grant the production the property of the author's sign, because, through them, it "shows a deep reality of beings and individuals" (Jost, 2004: 36). Third, the programete would be a document, a file of reality, because it would bring along an unquestionable truth.

The last category we chose, the tone, can be understood as those properties that can be granted to the discourse (Duarte, 2004). Among the tones we could relate to the studied series, we highlight two that seem to have a straight relationship with the reception of the micro-regional audience.

1) the position (distance vs. proximity) - we believe the way of addressing of the programete is of proximity, since, on one hand, it uses a speech that highlights a "we" that intends to include the audience and, at the same time, invites this audience to enter the intimacy of the residences interiors, where there are their blankets, flowers, photographs, and paintings, objects, in general, only shown to relatives and friends. It is from within this intimacy that the deponents speak.

2) Treatment (formality vs. informality)- despite the way of saying of the programete does present tones of proximity and lightness, it does not put aside the formality tone, which is an informative genre. The care with the deponents looks, for instance, all dressed up and standing at well arranged spots, just like the takes, that show framings of tidy environments, and show a kind of respect upon the spectator: the deponent prepares to solemnly receive the audience in his home. Even shortening the degree of spontaneity in shootings, this preparation does not take off veracity of what is exhibited in the programete: its promise is exactly settled in showing actions of organization, preservation, care, formality. That situation shows, in our understanding, a kind of idealization. The houses shown in the production probably don't work, in their daily life, the way they are shown on TV. The architectural space and even the past are idealized. The programete shows an ideal of identity, and, as a consequence, an ideal spectator.

The space limitation which is respected by the production can be pointed out as one of the elements that distinguishes it from other television texts: the programete becomes singular as it enunciates local identities, and its production is strongly motivated by a community in which the identifying expression is taken in the ethnical sense and turned upon past aspects. It makes up an important strategy which is used to insert local identity aspects within the national programming timetable.

There is a new deponent on every edition of the programete and he is always related to the house which is the theme of that episode. In our understanding, it can be understood, according to Fontanille (2005: 139), as an occasional actor who is "representative in one of the emission themes and in which testimony lies all the

programs development”. We can relate this occasional actor with the sorts of testimony proposed by François Jost (2004)<sup>17</sup> and understand him as a combination among the three categories it presents: historical, theoretical and pragmatic.

The witness is *historical* because he witnessed, for instance, the restoration work of the building and has, thus, competence to speak about it. Or because he lived there part of his life or even because his ancestors, who he lived with, lived there.

It is *theoretical* because, up to some point, every deponent represents a group of people that has, as a differential, the fact of restoring pieces of architectural patrimony. Or represent an ethnic group: “the theoretical witnesses are those who represent a kind, an essence”, says Jost (2004: 123). In this sense, the meaning of theoretical witness approaches the meaning of character of Paul Ricoeur (1991), which corresponds to a kind of substrate through which someone becomes acknowledgeable. It is possible to deduce that, when a witness presents common aspects to a member of a certain group, she represents this group in a generic form for detaining, individually, aspects that grant credibility to its testimony.

Last, the witness is *pragmatic* when “she is there to touch, bring out the emotions and feelings of the spectator” (Jost, 2004: 123). That is the case of those deponents that tell stories of their families and show, on screen, how much their ancestors’ trajectory and their artifacts are important in their lives and to the future of their descendants.

For all the aspects we have pointed out, we understand that the production builds up a local identity from accounts upon immigrants of its specific micro-region, evoking the past of this territory by using a triumphal discourse and choosing the argument of patrimony preservation as a means of caring about cultural and identifying preservation.

We can say that, as the station is affected by its surroundings and tries to show the culture in which it inserts itself, also the community is affected by the presence/proximity of the station and its programming; by restoring its homes, for instance, the spectators are interested in exposing them on *Preserve o que é nosso*, offering them as programming guidelines to *RBS TV dos Vales*.

We believe this strategy, taken by the station in the network system context, explains itself for the economic return and legitimating acknowledgement which it gets when it exhibits messages that observe some accordance with cultural practice of spectators.

## ***FINAL CONSIDERATIONS***

Both identity and difference are composed by the culture and the symbolic, which are equally decisive to establish content of cultural identity. The different groups

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<sup>17</sup> Jost (2004, p. 122-123) proposes a typology of testimony from the acknowledgement of the three subjects of the enunciation specified by Kate Hamburger – the subject of historic enunciation, the subject of theoretical enunciation and the subject of pragmatic enunciation – divided by: historical witnesses, theoretical witnesses and pragmatic witnesses.

elect those elements which they want to be recognized for. They rest, a lot, on the historical ancestors appeal who would gather them in a common source. It is important to bring up, however, that the attitude of remembering is surrounded by choices: what we are, at present, determines the way we remember and what we remember. The media has its role in this remembrance. It takes us through time, shows us versions we believe in. And arouses us to identify ourselves with characters we learned to know and admire.

It is interesting that, if individuals incorporate logics of media on their day by day, the media also incorporates aspects from individuals views in their programming, seeking, exactly, legitimating itself as a reflex of society and as an owner of information that can constitute their identities. Thus, it tries to be necessary, supplying parameters through which everyone should know if they fit into that identity model.

In the media product we study – the programetes and, specifically, *Preserve o que é nosso* –, those relations can be seen with a certain clarity. The station that broadcasts it shows itself concerned with the exhibition of matters of its area of coverage. It couldn't be different. The culture that surrounds it makes it be what it is, at least at the space it can define its own script and approach. This culture also makes *Preserve o que é nosso* be what it is. But the reverse way is also actual. The community offering the station programming guidelines, as a way of being part of the programetes series content, is emblematic. Why showing the community what was done? In the media making logics, something exists when it is on the media. Something has legitimacy, credibility, when it is made credible and legitimated by the media. And those individuals that eventually show on screen- even the local screen- can be rewarded by public acknowledgement, even though ephemeral. That is the logic in which the product is inserted. And, maybe for attending it fully, it has conquered a five year long mark on air.

It is necessary to say, on their own chaining of the TV network, that local stations find themselves very limited concerning, specially, two aspects. First, concerning the notorious restriction to programming room they may fill with local production. Secondly, as per the evident need of survival of those stations – organisms that need a way out for their product to be sold and recognition of their brands. This aspect showed itself clearly on visits we paid to stations in the state countryside.

RBS TV, on state scope, uses only 15% of *Rede Globo's* programming time for regional content insertions, making use of some breaks for insertions which escape from the strict TV journalism. As for the countryside stations of *Rio Grande do Sul*, they operate, in breaks defined by a network programming, only with TV journalism products, and occupying an even smaller percentage in programming.

That is why, we consider the programetes produced and exhibited by local stations very representative of the inner system of TV network. They are used by stations as a means of “bypassing” the matter of little breaks left to local content insertions and, at the same time, making sure to advertisers, the offer of a unique and special product. As it is aired in commercial breaks, it escapes from *Rede Globo's* rules,

as long as it does not overtake 90” – otherwise, it has to be evaluated by the head of national network.

In order not to narrow ourselves only to positive aspects of using programetes on TV network context, they should be pointed out as a strategy of maintenance and continuity of what is put. While stations – and audience – indulge in little pills of local programming, the national network goes on with its projects with no handicaps and no worries concerning a contingent competition that the local programming could mean.

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