

Advertising, phenotypic diversity and intercultural dynamization in Catalonia in times of crisis and change

Publicidad, diversidad fenotípica y dinamización intercultural en Cataluña en tiempos de crisis y cambios

Publicidade, diversidade fenotípica e dinamização intercultural na Catalunha em tempos de crise e mudanças

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ABSTRACT | This article aims to examine the cultural identity positioning of advertising in times of economic crisis in Catalonia, coinciding with the nationalist shift towards the independence from Spain in the year 2014. After analysing a sample of 441 spots from a major Catalan public broadcasting channel (TV3) in Catalonia, we can see that the characters portrayed fall almost entirely in the white-Caucasian phenotype. Therefore, the advertising discourse is not representative of the diversity of Catalan society today, as it excludes “others” from Latin America, Africa, or Asia, and positions itself on the side of the white-Caucasian “us” and “ours”. It does not promote the inclusive language recommended by media regulatory bodies, such as the Bureau for Diversity in Audiovisual Of the Catalan Audiovisual Council (2013), to promote intercultural dynamization and avoid xenophobia.

KEYWORDS: advertising; television; phenotypic representation; economic crisis; nationalism; cultural diversity; inclusive advertising; intercultural dynamization; Catalonia.

HOW TO CITE

Lorite García, N. (2021). Publicidad, diversidad fenotípica y dinamización intercultural en Cataluña en tiempos de crisis y cambios. *Cuadernos.info*, (48), 139-165. <https://doi.org/10.7764/cdi.48.27671>

RESUMEN | Este artículo busca examinar el posicionamiento identitario cultural de la publicidad en los tiempos de crisis económica en Cataluña, coincidentes con el cambio nacionalista hacia la independencia de España en el año 2014. Tras analizar una muestra de 441 spots de TV3, la cadena de mayor audiencia en Cataluña, se constata que la interpretación de los personajes recae casi totalmente en el fenotipo blanco-caucásico. Por lo tanto, el discurso publicitario no es representativo de la diversidad cultural de la sociedad catalana actual. Excluye a los “otros” venidos de Latinoamérica, África o Asia, y se posiciona del lado del “nosotros” blanco-caucásico y lo “nuestro”. No fomenta el lenguaje inclusivo que recomiendan los organismos reguladores de los contenidos mediáticos, como la Mesa por la Diversidad en el Audiovisual del Consejo del Audiovisual de Cataluña (2013), para promover la dinamización intercultural y evitar la xenofobia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: publicidad; televisión; representación fenotípica; crisis económica; nacionalismo; diversidad cultural; publicidad inclusiva; dinamización intercultural; Cataluña.

RESUMO | Este artigo busca examinar o posicionamento identitário cultural da publicidade em tempos de crise econômica na Catalunha, coincidindo com a mudança nacionalista para a independência da Espanha no ano de 2014. Depois de analisar uma amostra de 441 spots da TV3, cadeia de maior audiência na Catalunha, observa-se que a interpretação das personagens recai quase inteiramente no fenótipo branco-caucasiano. Portanto, o discurso publicitário não é representativo da diversidade cultural da sociedade catalã atual. Exclui os "outros" provenientes da América Latina, da África ou da Ásia e se posiciona ao lado de "nós" branco-caucasiano e do "nosso". Não promove a linguagem inclusiva recomendada pelos organismos que regulam os conteúdos midiáticos como a Mesa pela Diversidade no Audiovisual do Conselho Audiovisual da Catalunha (2013), para promover a dinamização intercultural e evitar a xenofobia.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: publicidade; televisão; representação fenotípica; crise econômica; nacionalismo; diversidade cultural; publicidade inclusiva; Catalunha.

INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to analyze how television advertising represented phenotypic diversity at the pivotal moment of the 2014 global economic crisis in a key geostrategic region of the Mediterranean and Europe such as Catalonia. In that region and at that time, an important nationalist political change was taking place –fostered by the native white-Caucasian population– called the *procés*: the process towards the independence of Catalonia from Spain, based on a roadmap to reach its own republic on a specific date, initially planned for September-October 2017, but currently without a clear date.

In this complex political-economic context, transitory but determining at the sociocultural level, it is convenient to analyze the social function of advertising based on Benavide's (1995, 1997) construction of cultures and identities, and from the accompaniment of the advertising discourse to the power elites addressed by Van Dick (1993, 1997).

Specifically, we seek to detect if such an extremely key element of the advertising visual discourse as the protagonist's phenotype positions the advertising message on the side of the white-Caucasian identities held by the economic power elites and the nationalist leaders who advocate the independence of Catalonia or opts for a plural representation in accordance with Catalonia's socio-cultural. This diversity was conceived during the long previous period of economic boom and the promotion of inclusive media proposals to revitalize interculturality in Catalonia, recommended by regulatory bodies for media content such as the Board for Audiovisual Diversity of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia (Mesa por la Diversidad en el Audiovisual del Consejo del Audiovisual de Cataluña, 2013). Therefore, these quantitative and qualitative references come from times of crisis and changes; the aim is to make a comparative follow-up in new economic and political periods to evaluate the effectiveness of the recommendations on inclusive advertising proposed by said regulatory body and accepted by the production and advertising industry.

One of the positivist ways of verifying advertising's contribution to positioning itself towards a certain identity model is to codify the phenotypes of the protagonists of an unbiased sample of television spots, broadcast by TV3, a publicly owned Catalan network with the largest audience and social impact in Catalonia, during 2014. From then on, we will study whether their physiological and morphological features, as well as their respective roles' interpretations (main, secondary, or incidental) and interconnections (structural or conjunctural, inclusive or exclusive) with other characters coincide with the plural Catalan diversity of those times and its inclusive intercultural relations, or opts solely for the white-Caucasian identities

advocated by the multinational economic elites and held by the nationalist elites in Catalan political power.

It is a research process consisting of addressing the inclusive intercultural or exclusive monocultural function of television advertising messages, based on proposals such as those postulated from cultural studies by Curran, Morley, and Walkerdine (1996), the questions raised by Hall about “who needs identity?” (Hall & Gay de, 1996, p. 13), the hybrid cultures discussed by García Canclini (1989), and the globalization of identity in the information age advocated by Castells (2001).

Such phenomena are approached from a qualitative, multimodal methodology, to draw conclusions not only from the spots content analysis, but also from the potential intercultural dynamic effects of advertising messages on consumers of different identities. These are results intended to promote the debate on inclusive advertising, from action-research models and applied audiovisual research, articulated from the academy in collaboration with organizations, institutions, and companies in the sector (Lorite, Grau Rebollo, & Lacerda, 2018). It is an action-research since it is conducted jointly by the Board for Audiovisual Diversity of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia and the Observatory and Research Group on Migration and Communication (MIGRACOM, by its Spanish acronym) of the Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona; other Catalan universities (Universidad de Barcelona and Universidad de Vic), and organizations such as SOS Racismo and the Association of Advertising and Public Relations of Catalonia also participate. Likewise, it is linked to audiovisual advertising agencies and production companies and advertiser organizations, such as the Association of Advertising Entrepreneurs, with the main objective of involving all of them in the normalization of the inclusive language that stimulates interculturality. It is also an applied audiovisual research since the inclusive alternative is proposed from the same audiovisual practices that future advertisers conduct at the university.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sociomedia contextualization

2014 coincides with a peak of the global economic and financial crisis. In Catalonia, this entails the paralysis of international migratory flows (Domingo, 2019) and an important return migration to the origin countries (Parella & Petroff, 2014). High unemployment rates are observed, and the little existing work tends to be occupied by a sector of the autochthonous population, white-Caucasian, who rejected those jobs and their salaries before the crisis because they considered themselves prepared to play a role professional, as well as having a higher social status. These jobs were filled before the crisis by Latin American and African

immigrants (Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics, 2019) and even European immigration from countries such as Romania (Pajares, 2006). Precariousness strengthens the protective and defensive attitudes of what is “ours” as well as those of the “us” from “here”, against the “others” from “outside”, foreign migrants of other identities. The “we” therefore involves the grouping around an own phenotype, white-Caucasian, different from the physiological and morphological traits of the “others”. According to Castelló (2008) and Rodrigo Alsina, it is an identity group that rather than being built by similarity with “mine” forms from the differences with the “others”.

That year also coincides with the beginning of an important change of nationalist sign in Catalonia; it is the start of the *procés*, the Catalan name for the process towards the independence of Catalonia from the Spanish State, adjusted to the deadlines of a roadmap with a completion date scheduled for September-October 2017 with the foundation of a Catalan republic. This process did not come to fruition and was “shipwrecked” (García, 2018), but despite this, it continues to be defended by an important sector of the Catalan population and continues to be one of the main political problems of current Spanish politics.

The *procés* is led by a sector of the autochthonous white-Caucasian population that claims a country with a single official language, Catalan (currently co-official language with Spanish), with borders that would separate it from France and Spain (from the neighboring regions of Aragon and Valencia), with their folkloric traditions (*els castells* or human castles and the *sardana* or circle being the most representative), and a series of identity values and customs. The latter are recovered from historical episodes, such as the 1714 War of Succession, claimed by the Catalan bourgeoisie at different times of Modernism, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, and defended by historical parties such as *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* (ERC) since the Second Spanish Republic of 1931. It is a transversal identity movement that, like all nationalisms, is exclusive (although it is considered representative of the entire Catalan “people”) of other cultural, linguistic, musical, and other traditional identities and customs typical of international migrations, coming from Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and even internal migrations, arriving from other parts of Spain such as Andalusia, with musical proposals such as flamenco singing and dancing.

To verify the identity of the protagonists of the advertising messages and check whether said media representation is positioned towards the white-Caucasian identity homogeneity, typical of the dominant economic elites of the times of economic crisis and nationalist changes in Catalonia, it is convenient to delimit three fundamental concepts. First, the phenotype of the actors and actresses in the spots. Second, that of the main, secondary, or incidental role played by the

advertising message protagonists, linked to their phenotype, and third, that of the inclusive or exclusive interconnections observed between protagonists of different phenotypes, depending on their respective interpretive roles.

Phenotype concept

Visual analysis allows the protagonists of the advertising message to be differentiated and codified based on their phenotype and supposed genotypic affinity, related to the physiological and morphological, given, according to Dawkins (2006), by the fact of sharing daily habits and similar social and cultural dynamics in the same environment (climatic, orographic, geographical, etc.). A phenotypic group taken as a fundamental reference in this study is white-Caucasian; it is made up of individuals with white skin (with different shades of white) and other features of the hair, nose, eyes (color), and of a genotype whose origin is considered Central European. This phenotypic grouping varies from others that come from a different environment, which has allowed the development of other physiological and morphological traits, like migrations from Sub-Saharan Africa, predominantly with black skin (with different shades of this color and Afro hair), very different from those from North Africa of Arab origin (with somewhat brownish skin and straight hair).

This phenotypic affinity aims to identify the protagonists of the spots more adequately than if done based on biology on differentiation by race. In this regard, it is worth considering what López Beltrán states concerning the double discussion about the human races:

A scientific debate, in which mainly anthropologists, population geneticists, demographers, and some close observers of science participate. Another popular, open debate on whether the classification of humans into races continues to serve some purpose, and whether the racist hierarchization of human groups is somehow presupposed in the classification scheme itself... (2001, p. 66).

Any other codification of the spots' protagonists based on the hypothetical demonym or supposed ethnic-cultural group is ruled out. We considered that if these adjectives are applied from the subjectivity of the encoder, they move away from the scientific objectivity (Chalmers, 2000) to which we must tend with this type of analysis aimed at verifying the advertising representation of the phenotypic diversity of plural Catalan society in times of crisis and nationalist changes, managed by the power of white-Caucasian phenotype.

These subjective assessments must be avoided, and even more so if they are given by the relationship of an individual from a country with a stereotype. On

this, Baladrón (2007) establishes a categorization of several stereotypes with which the “others” are associated in advertising. Two common ones are those of relating immigrants from certain Latin or Eastern countries with ridicule or poverty. It is easy to get a very generic idea about what a Latino, a Chinese, or a South African can be like, but to verify that these people are really from those places and not adjective them in a pejorative way, we must ask them and see if they feel and identify with them.

It is also quite subjective to codify the spot’s protagonists according to the social use of race, simplified in the past in a very primary way in five skin colors: white, black, yellow, coppery, and olive. It is easy to distinguish a person with predominantly white or light skin from one with black or dark skin, but the visual encoding process is complicated when we realize that no two skin tones are identical.

Some visual experiences aimed at making people think about cutaneous polychromy are those put into practice by photographer Angélica Dass with *Humanae.project* (<https://www.angelicadass.com/humanae-project>). Applying the Pantone technique, she confirms the infinite diversity of human skin tones. With this type of visual exercises, it is possible to affirm that each person has their own Pantone code (<https://store.pantone.com/es/es/pantone-color-institute>). This is probably the least biased way of coding the different spot’s protagonists so as not to incur in groupings conditioned by our subjective and stereotyped appreciation.

Since 1950, UNESCO recommends using the notion of ethnicity instead of race to encompass groups based on the same language, religion, and certain historical and traditional customs (UNESCO, 1950). Since then, this world organization has considered that it is more appropriate to speak of a single human race, although it accepts that there may be ethnocentric and cultural tendencies that allow grouping by ethnic groups and peoples, as postulated by anthropology authors such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Franz Boas, and Fredrik Barth (Barth, 1969). On the other hand, there are proposals such as those of biological determinism, sociobiology, and social Darwinism, favorable to racial discrimination, defended by authors such as Edward O. Wilson and Richard Dawkins (Templeton, 2013; Siham, 2018) that justify genetically the domination of an elite over other species. Determinism sees as “normal” that certain groups of African origin are considered inferior to white-Caucasian elites. Some of this hierarchical treatment is still detectable in certain elitist advertising. Even so, since the 1970s, more and more attention has been paid to the incorporation of protagonists of different phenotypes on equal terms. In any case, advertisers are quite conservative in this sense, and prefer not to alter the performers’ white-Caucasian identity registers so as not to see their sales affected (Wilson, Gutiérrez, & Chao, 2003).

This reluctance to diversify the spots' protagonists has resulted, in the United States, in groups of African and Latino origin ending up producing and interpreting their own advertising, intended for their own consumption (Retis & Badillo, 2015). In Spain, platforms such as *The Black View* aim to normalize the incorporation of actors of African origin in audiovisual production. Apparently, it is in the casting where a very stereotyped type of selection predominates, conditioned by the request of clients or advertisers. According to Armando Buika, a black African actor: “[...] they told me that I was not a reflection of society because you do not see black policemen or lawyers” (Colom, 2017).

A specific reference to verify if the phenotypic representation of television advertising coincides with that of the plural Catalan society is to compare the demographic data of the same year of the study. According to data from the Statistical Institute of Catalonia (IDESCAT, 2018), in 2014 the proportion of foreign residents in Catalonia was 14.4% of the total population, specifically 1,085,472 residents out of the total of 7,518,903 registered. Of the total number of foreign residents, 294,360 (27.1%), the majority, came from Africa; 221,605 (20.4%) arrived from Morocco, a country in which the predominant phenotype generically brings together features that we could describe as Arab. Those countries were followed by Senegal, with 18,893 residents, and Gambia, with 14,812. The proportion of both countries was only 3.1% of the total, which is why few citizens of this phenotype –which has as one of its main characteristics that of being predominantly black– are usually seen in Catalonia. From Latin America, there were 196,772 (18.1% of the total) residents registered, mainly from Ecuador (29,514), Colombia (20,910), and Peru (29,335), places in which a generic phenotype usually classified as indigenous (although it is an adjective that has been highly criticized and is sometimes replaced by others no less controversial, such as Latin) predominates. From Asia, 145,300 residents were registered, 13.4% of the total, coming from China (56,030) and Pakistan (41,059). Both countries have quite different predominant phenotypes: the former are sometimes grouped with the qualification of Oriental or Asian, while the latter are usually considered Indo-Aryan, although there are also quite a few differences between them depending on the place of residence, the ethnic groups, and the castes (Pániker, 2014). The rest of the residents come from Europe, specifically 403,105 residents, 37.1%, from the European Union: 127,284 from Romania, 68,821 from Italy, 44,718 from France, 26,926 from Germany, and 25,813 from the United Kingdom, all of them white- Caucasian, albeit with different skin tones, different eye types and pupil colors, as well as hair type and color, including different nose and lip shapes.

Main, secondary, or incidental role

A second concept is the type of protagonism of performers of different phenotypes in the spots. It can be primary, secondary, or incidental, and it can be understood as a fundamental indicator to calibrate the type of participation of “us” compared to that of the “others” (Bonin, Lorite García, & Maldonado, 2016).

The main character is the one who appears prominently for the longest time in the advertisement and on whom the common thread of the plot or audiovisual narrative falls. He/she is framed and focused more than the rest through close-ups, medium shots, and depth of field. It is also the character that plays an essential role as a transmitter of the commercial virtues of the advertised product, the one that impacts consumers the most, and the one that is usually emulated, dreamed of, and even idealized by the consumer society in its imaginary, regardless of the phenotypic and cultural identity of the recipients/consumers. In this regard, Román Gubern (2002) assures that ever since the Greek theater it is about protagonists who try to provoke *simpátheia*, or empathy, with the spectators and identification with their feelings.

The secondary character is complementary to the main character. He/she is usually given considerably less narrative time than the spot's main protagonists. He/she usually appears in choral compositions, in group or general shots, and if he/she is seen in a medium or close-up shot, it is usually only one or two seconds. Therefore, his/her interpretation usually goes almost unnoticed by the recipients of the message and does not allow him/her to be the pattern to emulate or idealize in their imagination as the main character.

The incidental character is the one who wanders “[...] as a scenic background without significant participation” (Martínez, 2005, p. 4). He/she usually participates only for a one second shot, and if he/she acts for a longer time, he/she hardly stands out. It is often incorporated as an aesthetic resource for the advertising message. It gives the shot and its composition a contrast point on a homogeneous whole. Sometimes he/she also usually appears in a scene as the extra that gives the story a greater realism or verisimilitude.

Interconnections

A fundamental criterion for understanding the type of communication that occurs between different phenotypes in the spot and calibrating the discourse's social positioning and the potential dynamic effect that it can provoke in the messages' plural reception is that of the structural or conjunctural interconnection that occurs between the protagonists (Lorite et al., 2018).

We consider the communication between the characters to be structural when the different phenotypes protagonists of the spot play a role similar to the social one, and there is no hierarchical treatment whatsoever that denotes exclusion or discrimination of some actors with respect to others. It is a model of fictitious representation of everyday reality, which apparently works in a balanced way as each one plays its role with its respective function (without thereby entering to assess whether this is the fairest way). It is that everyday life that is observed in different environments such as markets (seller and buyer), classrooms (teachers and students) or public transport (driver and passengers).

The interconnection is conjunctural when there is an elitist behavior and, therefore, hierarchical, and discriminatory, of the protagonists of a phenotype in relation to another or others, which can entail the same discriminatory effects among the plural audiences of the messages. The message can contribute to promoting social exclusion, and even racism and xenophobia. Although this type of discriminatory relationship is increasingly regulated by the codes of conduct of organizations such as the Board for Audiovisual Diversity of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia (Mesa por la Diversidad en el Audiovisual del Consejo del Audiovisual de Cataluña, 2013), AUTOCONTROL (2011), or the International Chamber of Commerce (Cámara de Comercio Internacional, 2018), who recommend fair treatment of diversity to advertisers and agencies, there continues to be a lot of audiovisual advertising in which white-Caucasian people are shown as hierarchically superior to those of other phenotypes. In fact, as will be seen in the following analysis, almost all television advertising is based on white-Caucasian performers, which is an indicator of the supremacy of one phenotypic identity over the others. The absence of diversity can give rise to an effect that is as highly exclusive of sociocultural diversity as that of the conjunctural or hierarchical interconnection between the different phenotypes represented in the spots.

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

The methodology is aimed at verifying and validating the hypothetical approach already underlined in the previous sections: that television advertising, broadcast by the channels with the largest audience and social impact, such as TV3 in Catalonia, is positioned on the side of the white-Caucasian elites that hold economic and political power during times of economic crisis and nationalist changes in geostrategic regions such as Catalonia, by positioning the phenotypic representation of their discourses on the almost exclusive side of their phenotypic and cultural identity. Thus, it is a white-Caucasian advertising capable of provoking

dynamization processes that exclude other phenotypes and cultural identities groups instead of promoting inclusive intercultural dynamization processes such as those proposed by the organizations and institutions that regulate advertising production, like the Board for Audiovisual Diversity of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia (Mesa por la Diversidad en el Audiovisual del Consejo del Audiovisual de Cataluña, 2013), AUTOCONTROL (2011), or the International Chamber of Commerce (Cámara de Comercio Internacional, 2018).

Sample, coding, and analysis

To avoid any subjective-ideological bias, we selected –as recommended by authors such as García-Ferrando, Ibáñez, and Alvira (1998)– a quantitative sample of normal brand spots or television advertising units, broadcast by the generalist television *Televisió de Catalunya*, TV3, a publicly owned channel, managed by the Catalan Audiovisual Media Corporation (Corporació Catalana de Mitjans Audiovisuals, 2019), an organization coordinated by six politicians from the main parties with parliamentary representation in the Parliament of Catalonia, which in 2014 was the one with the largest audience and potential impact of the advertising messages in public opinion (Kantar Media, 2015). These audience ratings allow it to host all kinds of advertising campaigns: those of the main American, Asian, and European multinationals, as well as those of the most important Spanish and Catalan companies, institutional, and even of local businesses. To select the spots with the homogeneity criteria required to adequately conduct their comparative analysis, we started from what Infoadex calls “normal spots” or “[...] films of different lengths that are broadcast either between different programs, or between the intermediates of the same program, and are used for any product or service” (Infoadex, 2013, p. 16). The normal spot, which is also called brand spot or television advertising unit (Boninet al., 2016) is intended to advertise a brand or an institution and differs from other television advertising typologies not addressed in this study, such as advertorials, advertising superimposed on television programming, teleshopping, and self-advertising on the television network (Infoadex, 2013, p. 13).

The final sample selection process was conducted by recording and coding the brand spots broadcast 24 hours a day on TV3 during two objective periods of the year 2014: a first from 15/01/14 to 02/14/14, and a second from 15/06/14 to 14/07/14, both inclusive. Both periods were selected because they coincide with weeks of the consumers’ usual daily routines and advertising production. These were not extraordinary periods, such as pre-holiday or promotional periods for Christmas holidays, nor do they coincide with the start of the school year or with specific celebrations such as Mother’s or Father’s Day.

After suppressing the repeated pieces of the same duration, brand and campaign, we obtained a total sample of 441 normal brand spots or television advertising units. From this first sample, we extracted a subsample of 45 spots in which we found phenotypic diversity. From this subsample, we selected the most significant cases to deepen the qualitative analysis, as recommended by authors such as Miles and Huberman (1994), Álvarez-Gayou (2003), and Martínez (2008), and from the main elements of audiovisual language such as image composition (Gubern, 1987) and montage (Eisenstein, 2001). Therefore, this qualitative audiovisual analysis is approached from the theories that support audiovisual language, but at the same time from the camera perspective (Lorite García, 2017), using the same narrative elements and productive tools utilized for spots' audiovisual production, specifically the storyboard and the technical script (Lorite et al., 2018).

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Presence of phenotypic diversity in advertising

The sample obtained from 441 brand spots allows us to verify, above all, the insignificant proportion of advertising messages with phenotypic diversity (table 1). Only 45 brand spots incorporate it, i.e., one in ten (10.2%). The proportion is quite similar in the two waves: 17 spots (8.9%) of 173 spots in the first one (15/01/14 to 14/02/14, both inclusive), and 28 (11.1 %) of 223 spots in the second one (15/06/14 to 14/07/14, both inclusive).

The data obtained allows us to verify the usual excessive concentration of television advertising in a few advertisers and, therefore, the power that these brands have in the representation and normalization of a certain phenotype in the imaginary of consumers of any identity, a trend that can be seen in the annual reports on advertising investment in Spain by Infoadex (2015). The same brands appear in its top 20 advertising groups as in the analyzed sample. Specifically, one out of every four spots (24.5%), 109 of 441, belongs to the top eight large advertising groups, classified as follows (the number of spots in parentheses): Danone (20), El Corte Inglés (17), Vodafone (13), Anefp (13), Reckitt Benckiser (13), Procter & Gamble (12), L'Oréal (11), and McDonald's (10).

The percentage of spots with phenotypic diversity in this group is only 7.3%. Of the total of 109 spots that add up to the top eight main groups, there are only eight with phenotypic diversity. The American multinational Procter & Gamble, advertiser of household and personal use products such as Oral B, H&S, Fairy, Ariel, Don Limpio, Viakal and Ambi Pur, seems somewhat more interested in the representation of phenotypic diversity, with three spots out of twelve.

Waves	Total spots with diversity	Total spots without diversity	Total sample of spots
First, from 01/15/14 to 02/14/14	17 (8,9%)	173 (91,1%)	190 (100%)
Second, from 06/15/14 to 07/14/14	28 (11,1%)	223 (88,9%)	251 (100%)
Total	45 (10.2%)	396 (89.8%)	441 (100%)

Table 1. Spots with and without phenotypic diversity on TV3

Source: Own elaboration.

It is followed by Danone, a multinational food products company, with two spots with a phenotypic diversity out of 17, and Vodafone (multinational mobile phone company), Anep (multinational pharmaceutical products such as Bisolgrip, Mucosan, Bisolvón, Fortasec, etc.) and McDonald's (food products) with only one out of 13, 13, and 10 spots respectively. Of this top eight large multinationals, there are three that do not use phenotypic diversity in their advertisements: El Corte Inglés (a network of Spanish shopping centers selling all kinds of personal and household products), Reckitt Benckiser (an English multinational for household and of personal care) and L'Oréal (personal care products multinational based in Paris).

Such advertising concentration continues if we expand the top of the spots sample to 25 brands; they broadcast a total of 215 spots, almost half (48.8%) of the total sample (441), but they represent only 15.5% of the total of 161 advertisers in the analyzed sample. This top 25 includes advertisers of considerable economic importance on the Spanish and Catalan scene, such as the banking entities CaixaBank and Bankinter, power companies such as ENEL-ENDESA, pharmaceutical companies such as Cederroth, emblematic brands in the food sector such as Nestlé, supermarkets such as Lidl, foundations such as the ONCE (National Organization of the Spanish Blind), which holds daily raffles, as well as important companies in the automobile sector such as Renault, the largest Spanish publishing group, Planeta, and public institutions such as the Generalitat de Catalunya, the Barcelona City Council, and the Government of Spain.

It is possible to verify that in this top 25 advertisers the proportion of spots with diversity is similar (6.9%) to the top eight (7.3%). They only broadcast 15 spots with phenotypic diversity out of a total of 215, i.e., only one out of every three ads of the total subsample of 45 show diversity (33.3%). Important advertisers such as Volkswagen, Borges, ENEL, Henkel, Securitas, CaixaBank, Bankinter, Grupo Planeta, Cederroth, Renault, or Fundación ONCE, do not include phenotypes other than white-Caucasian in their advertisements. This top 25 is joined by the Government of Spain with one spot with diversity out of eight, the Generalitat de Catalunya with one out of seven, and the Barcelona City Council, with two out of seven.

Advertiser group and economic sector	Total spots (N)	Total %	Spots with diversity (N)	% Spots with diversity
Anefp (pharmaceutical products)	13	3	1	2,2
Barcelona City Council (institutional)	7	1,6	2	4,5
Borges (olive oil)	5	1,1	0	0
Caixa Bank (banking entities)	5	1,1	0	0
Cederroth (pharmaceutical products)	7	1,6	0	0
Corte Inglés (shopping center)	17	3,9	0	0
Danone (food products)	20	4,6	2	4,5
ENEL-ENDESA (power companies)	8	1,8	0	0
Fundación ONCE (lotteries)	5	1,1	0	0
Generalitat de Catalunya (institutional)	7	1,6	1	2,2
Government of Spain (institutional)	8	1,8	1	2,2
Grup Bankinter (banking entities)	5	1,1	0	0
Grup Planeta (publishing groups)	5	1,1	0	0
Grupo Vodafone (telephony)	13	3	1	2,2
Henkel (home and personal use)	5	1,1	0	0
L'Oréal (skincare)	11	2,5	1	2,2
Lidl (supermarkets)	7	1,6	1	2,2
McDonald's (food)	10	2,3	1	2,2
Nestlé (food)	8	1,8	0	0
Orange – Amena (mobile telephony)	8	1,8	1	2,2
Procter & Gamble (home and personal use)	12	2,7	3	6,7
Reckitt Benckiser (home and personal use)	13	3	0	0
Renault (automobile)	6	1,4	0	0
Securitas (insurance)	5	1,1	0	0
Volkswagen (automobile)	5	1,1	0	0
Subtotal	215	48,8	15	33,3
<i>Remaining total</i>	226	51,2	30	66,7
Total sample	441	100	45	100

Table 2. Spots with phenotypic diversity in the top 25 main advertising groups and economic sector on TV3

Source: Own elaboration.

Of the private companies, only the German multinational Lidl has a spot with diversity out of a total of seven, as well as the French multinational Orange-Amena, also with one of a total of eight.

Diversity protagonism

In 25 spots, more than half of the subsample of 45 spots with phenotypic diversity, the main role falls on white Caucasian performers. In only 20 spots (45.5%) out of the 45 with diversity, performers of other phenotypes take on the role of main protagonists around whom the central plot of the articulated discourse revolves, an insignificant proportion of 4.5% if it is calculated on the total of 441 normal brand spots of the total sample. This means that in the remaining 95.5% the protagonists are solely white-Caucasian, and that advertising is almost totally inclined towards the identity homogeneity of “us” and “our” during the times of economic crisis and nationalist changes that coincide in Catalonia in 2014.

The companies that use actors and actresses of a phenotype other than white-Caucasian as outstanding referents of the brand and its products are mainly the American multinationals Red Bull, Calvin Klein, H&S, Herbal Essences, Oral B and McDonald's, as well as some European multinationals such as Kinder, Danone, Lidl, Mini, and Orange, although, as has been seen in the quantitative analysis, it is in almost insignificant proportions. In the case of Red Bull, certain African-American athletes who practice extreme sports sponsored by the brand are present in the ads. The McDonald's ad incorporates the phenotype of African origin of the third part of Louisianans to show them in a jazz session and a boxing match. Paradoxically, it is a phenotype that does not coincide with those of the European, French, and white-Caucasian migration, which introduced the Cajun sauce in the United States (Paige, 1992), announced by the brand to promote its hamburgers, but with the other migrations arrived with African slavery, which apparently is what the imaginary associates with this place in the United States, constructed through the language of cinema.

The spot of the American multinational Calvin Klein, belonging to the PVH Corporation group, based in Manhattan, New York, shows a youthful phenotypic diversity, inspired by urban tribes, to connect: “[...] with the new minimalist, androgynous, and industrial aesthetic of the so-called generation X” (Calvin Klein, 2019). The H&S, Herbal Essences and Oral B products of the American multinational Procter & Gamble, founded by the English William Procter and James Gamble in 1837 and headquartered in Ohio, bet on celebrities such as Sofia Vergara and Shakira. In this case, the stereotype of the exotic Latin woman of a certain mix of white-Caucasian predominance is used (Brooks & Hébert, 2006).

The spots of Spanish and Catalan companies and institutions only use white-Caucasian phenotypes as main protagonists. There are only two spots that do show some diversity, one for San Miguel beer, a company with headquarters in Barcelona, with two different durations, 60 and 40 seconds, in which protagonists of different phenotypes intertwine to the sound of the same song, *A Place Called World*, in line with the slogan of the campaign *A Place Called World* (San Miguel, 2014). In the opening sequence of the two adds, we see John Legend, an African-American American singer, born in Springfield, Ohio, presenting the song and sharing the spotlight with other Spanish musicians such as Anni B. Sweet, Nach, The Zombie Kids, and English musicians such as Dan Croll, from other musical styles like indie rock, beats and rap, but all of them of white-Caucasian phenotype.

The other television spot with a nonwhite-Caucasian main character is *Voltem per Catalunya* (Mediaq.tv, 2014), an advertisement aimed at promoting local commerce, presented by Asha Miró, a woman born in Nasik, India, who came to Barcelona in 1974 when she was adopted by a Catalan family (Torres, 2014). She can be seen in a medium shot at the beginning of the advertisement, presenting different local commercial proposals in standard Catalan, similar to that commonly used by TV3 news anchors.

The void of main protagonists of phenotypes other than white-Caucasian is not filled by including secondary characters with such characteristics. This participation is only verified in six spots of the total sample of 45 with diversity: four from European multinationals (Ikea, Nestlé-Maxibon, San Pellegrino, and Amena), one from the Japanese multinational Nissan, and only one from Catalonia corresponding to the Barcelona City Council. A children's soccer team from a tourist country, supposedly Morocco, visited by the white-Caucasian main character, who share a photo with him in the Ikea ad, appear as secondary to other phenotypes, as well as that of a young man with an African phenotype and Afro hair enjoying Nestlé's Maxibon ice cream; that of a man with a typical Singaporean phenotype in the San Pellegrino ad; the man with oriental features from Amena, but also with other fairly western facial features; the man with an African phenotype who travels standing up in the subway in the Nissan ad, and the man, barely perceptible, but who could be of an Eastern phenotype, who walks along Barcelona's Rambla del Poblenou in the Barcelona City Council in the city's promotional campaign ad (illustration 1).

As for the participation of incidental characters of a phenotype other than white-Caucasian, it is as insignificant as the presence of secondary and main characters. An incidental character appears during a one-second shot, and almost imperceptibly, in 14 spots (31.1%) of the subsample of 45 spots with diversity.

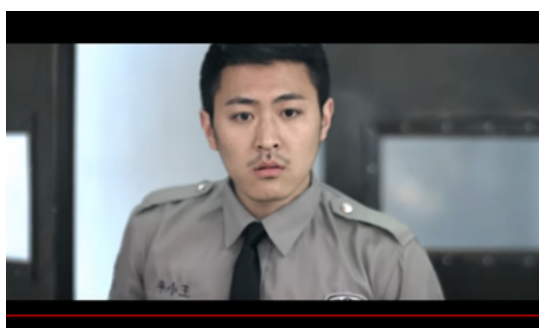
Ikea



Nestlé-Maxibon



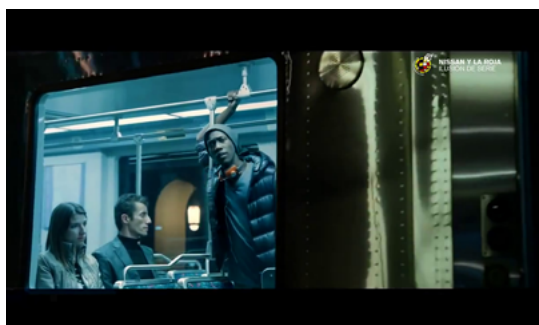
San Pellegrino



Amena



Nissan



Barcelona City Council



Illustration 1. Secondary protagonists of nonwhite-Caucasian phenotypes

Source: Own elaboration based on Ikea, Nestlé-Maxibon, San Pellegrino, Amena, Nissan, and Barcelona City Council ads

Practically all these incidental appearances are usually in advertisements for American or European multinationals. This is the case of some African-American women parading through New Orleans in the McDonald’s ad about cashew sauce; that of a young man of oriental phenotype behind the protagonist of the Smint advertisement in a supermarket; that of a man of African phenotype on a terrace in the Amena spot, and that of two Oriental workers from a Singapore hotel in the San Pellegrino ad.



Illustration 2. Afro hair in the “other” protagonists

Source: Own elaboration based on Multiple Sclerosis, Cacaolat, and Government of Spain.

In the case of Spanish and Catalan companies and institutions advertising campaigns, the negligible role of the “other” phenotypes is relegated to graphics. This can be verified in the spot of the Endesa League Magazine, dedicated to the Spanish state basketball championship, in which a player of African phenotype stands out in the background among the rest of the white-Caucasian players. This graphic resource is also used in the Laboratorios Ferrer ad, where there is a girl of oriental phenotype on the label of the box of the advertised product. Likewise, in the ad of the promotional magazine for TV3’s children’s programming, Club Super3, a secondary actor of African-American phenotype can be seen behind the main protagonists, white-Caucasian, of the youth series *House of Onubis*, produced and distributed by Nickelodeon in the U.S.

A common feature of the protagonists of the “other” phenotypes, and specifically of the incidental ones, is usually the type of curly hair known as Afro. This type of differential identity feature is used in the spot for the campaign on Multiple Sclerosis to show a happy girl jumping in a one-second shot; in that of Cacaolat, there is a woman with this type of hair among the group of white-Caucasian friends, and in that of the Government of Spain, we can see a child with a clearly different phenotype from the others leaving school (illustration 2).

Protagonists’ interconnection

Only one out of every three advertisements with diversity present some form of interconnection between characters of different phenotypes, specifically in 15 (33.3%) of 45 spots, a proportion that represents only 3.4% of the total of 441 advertisements of the total sample analyzed. It is, therefore, a practically insignificant contribution of television advertising to represent situations in which the potential inclusive or exclusive dynamization of receivers/consumers of different identities can arise.

However, the type of interconnection between protagonists of different phenotypes is structural. We see how they interact with total normality, each one playing their role and without observing any hierarchical or discriminatory attitude between them. Even so, it would be necessary to differentiate proposals for the interaction of celebrities with their elitist environment, such as the one found in the H&S ad, with Sofia Vergara at a family party in a luxury mansion and wearing high standing fashion hairstyles and outfits, from others such as Vitalinea or Residencia Àgora Barcelona, in which the actions take place in everyday environments such as a dance hall and a gym, and the protagonists are dressed and combed normally in the usual standard way of these spaces, without denoting a type of belonging to a certain social class.

Qualitative analysis

One of the ways to verify qualitatively whether television advertising contributes to representing the plural Catalan society or leans towards the white-Caucasian phenotype typical of power in times of crisis and nationalist changes, is through the qualitative analysis of the spots of public institutions such as the Generalitat de Catalunya (Government of Catalonia) and the City Council or Town Hall of the City of Barcelona.

First, it is striking that only one spot with phenotypic diversity from the Generalitat and two from the Barcelona City Council is broadcast, out of the seven obtained from each institution in the total sample analyzed of 441 normal brand spots. In addition, they do not choose to represent the real phenotypic diversity of the city or region to which they address; in the few shots in which protagonists of other phenotypes appear, they usually play a secondary or incidental role, merely testimonial, which barely allows us to appreciate the presence of said diversity in the audiovisual product or to equate it with the phenotypic plurality of Catalan society at that time.

CatSalut Respon of the Generalitat de Catalunya

In the case of the Generalitat de Catalunya, it is a 40-second advertisement for the CatSalut Respon campaign, aimed at informing all Catalans, of any identity and origin, about the operation of the “metges, infermeres and techniques”¹.

In the spot’s selected images (illustration 3) we can see how, in a first sequence, the man located in the spot, between two other secondary protagonists, a supposed

1. “Doctors, nurses and technicians”. It is striking that they are called that way, in this order, and through this gender treatment (in Spanish, they identify doctors as men and nurses, as women) (translator’s note).

customer of the service like him (image to his left), and a service technician (image below), seems to have a different phenotype from the women's white-Caucasian and from the main character, Helena García Melero, TV3 journalist, news and entertainment presenter, who can be seen in the second row, to the right, explaining on site how the service works. This man's facial features (eyebrows, eyes, mouth, skin tone, hair, beard, etc.) are different from those of the women. They could be considered as typical of any Arab country in the African Mediterranean. He could be one more citizen of the important community of Moroccan origin residing in Catalonia.

The visual composition of the man is identical to that of the first woman. There is no visual discrimination in this case, as is usual with the television treatment of immigration in information, for example. The "other" is always seen far away, in general shots, the official source nearby in the foreground or medium shot (Sendín, 2008). It is a close-up of the woman that follows another close-up, and both frames allow us to approach the two characters and simulate that she is talking to them. The man gives his opinion about the medical service looking at the camera, pretending to look into the eyes. He does it in standard Catalan, without a Moroccan accent. There is no male/female interconnection. From the supposed white-Caucasian user, a transition cut leads to the man of Arab phenotype, and from him, also by cut, to the white-Caucasian woman of the assistance service. It can be said, therefore, that this montage modality through transition cut does not allow for the inclusive (or exclusive) dynamizing effect of other advertisements in which the protagonists appear interacting with each other in the same shot according to the models of structural or conjunctural interconnection.

After the first sequence of the man with a different phenotype from that of the white-Caucasian women, we move on to a second one in which the assistance service offices are shown. The phenotype of the incidental protagonists that appear in this place allows us to verify that they are all white-Caucasian. Phenotypic diversity is not observed. The question arises if it is a true reflection of the reality of that space, and if so, if this should be the criterion to represent the plural reality that the Government of Catalonia must put into practice to report on a public service, such as this, aimed at the entire population, regardless of their origin, cultural identity, or skin color.



Illustration 3. Selected images from the CatSalut Respon campaign spot. Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014

Source: Own elaboration based on Generalitat de Catalunya.

Viu una ciutat i descobreix-ne 10, Barcelona City Council campaign

Like the previous institutional advertising, but in this case from the promotional campaign of Barcelona city, broadcast by the city council, through the slogan *Viu una ciutat i descobreix-ne 10*², there is also not a real citizenship representation in accordance with the phenotypic diversity that resides in this metropolis.

As in the announcement of the Generalitat, the presenter is white-Caucasian. It is striking that this type of municipal advertising shows only the architectural and historical city. The protagonist walks around Barcelona, but she does not interact with the citizens. There is only one type of sympathetic communication with a couple of neighbors, white-Caucasian, from the Gracia neighborhood (illustration 4), implying that it could be the only type of neighborhood in this place, since it is one of the city's most multi and intercultural neighborhoods.

There is only a glimpse of some of the real diversity of Barcelona in a shot of less than one second of the total 60 seconds that the spot lasts, during a first sequence in which the protagonist walks along the city's Barceloneta beach and stops watch how some bathers play volleyball, among whom we can see in the distance, in a general shot (which can hardly be seen if the ad is not paused), a woman and two men with phenotypes other than the white-Caucasian.

2. "Live a city and discover 10". The number 10 refers to the districts in which the city is structured at the urban level.



Illustration 4. Two images from the spot *Viu una ciutat i descobreix-ne 10*, 2014

Source: Own elaboration based on the Barcelona City Council spot.

In the same campaign there is a second 20-second advertisement, aimed at one of the ten districts of the city, Sant Martí and Horta Guinardó, in which, during the first three-second sequence, we see a man of a different phenotype from the protagonist, probably Indo-Aryan (Pániker, 2014), walking along a boulevard or promenade in the area (see image in illustration 1). Even so, it is a distant general shot that does not allow this place to be represented with the usual real daily diversity.

CONCLUSIONS

Through the quantitative analysis of a sample of 441 brand spots and the qualitative analysis of two representative cases of institutional advertising in Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya and Barcelona City Council), it can be seen that the advertising broadcast by TV3, the public television channel with the largest audience and social impact in Catalonia, (95.5%) opted almost entirely for a white-Caucasian phenotypic representation. This is in line with the homogeneous elitist cultural model that manages economic power and political changes in times of defensive crisis of what is “ours” and independentist nationalists of the “we” of “here”, but not with that of phenotypic diversity of Catalan society in a key geostrategic region of the Mediterranean such as Catalonia, in 2014.

It has also been verified how the exclusion of phenotypic diversity is given by the fact that the top advertisers that broadcast more spots –and therefore allocate a larger budget to television advertising– specifically, the international multinationals Danone, Vodafone, Anefp, Reckitt Benckiser, Procter & Gamble, L'Oréal, McDonald's, Lidl, and Nissan bet almost exclusively on the white-Caucasian phenotype as a safe commercial value.

In only one out of every ten brand spots, the advertising message incorporates protagonists of phenotypes other than white-Caucasian, but even in this subsample of 45 spots with diversity, the leading role also falls mainly on white-Caucasian

interpreters. Therefore, it is an almost insignificant representation of the phenotypic diversity, much lower than the 14.4% of foreign residents registered in Catalonia in 2014, which does not consider the most numerous immigrant groups, such as Moroccans, who represent 20.4% of the total number of foreign residents, nor of other phenotypes such as those typical of Latin American immigration. American multinationals go to Colombian celebrities, such as Shakira or Sofía Vergara, but more for their exoticism than for their phenotypic identity.

This poor representation of phenotypic diversity in television advertising means that the proportion of spots with interconnections between protagonists of different phenotypes is also practically insignificant, which is, as has been pointed out in the theoretical framework, a fundamental indicator of the potential intercultural dynamic inclusive effect of the message. Even so, the few interconnections found are structural and not circumstantial, and therefore show an egalitarian and non-discriminatory relationship of the white-Caucasian phenotype towards the “others”.

Lastly, it should be underlined that the quantitative and qualitative data shown in this article are aimed at evaluating the intercultural dynamizing function of messages as highly impactful in Catalan society as advertising, from models of action-research and applied audiovisual research (Lorite et al., 2018), which seek to link university research and teaching with the advertising profession, specifically with its organizations such as the Association of Advertising and Public Relations of Catalonia, and the regulatory bodies of inclusive media language such as the Board for Audiovisual Diversity of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia (Mesa por la Diversidad del Audiovisual del Consejo del Audiovisual de Cataluña, 2013). All of the above with the aim of balancing the representation of phenotypic diversity in advertising with the plurality of Catalan society and preventing the advertising message from positioning itself solely on the white-Caucasian economic and political elites' side, both in times of crises and changes analyzed in this work, tending to radicalization, as in future moments of economic boom and new international migratory remittances.

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