Sexuality, gender, religion and interculturality in new stories on civilisations and cultures broadcast by Spanish television

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Abstract
Introduction. We analyse several Spanish televised news stories regarding religion, gender, sexuality and interculturality and explore how these news stories are interpreted by audiences and experts. **Method.** We used three complementary methods in three research phases. We first conducted a critical discourse analysis of the different religious, gender, sexual and intercultural identities portrayed in the news stories. We then analysed how audiences interpreted these news stories using focus groups. Finally, using the Delphi procedure, we explored the opinions of experts regarding the same news stories. **Results and discussion.** The discourse analysis highlighted the representation and stereotypes projected by the media and identified by both audiences and experts. **Conclusions.** Audiences and experts were very critical of televised news stories, perceiving both limitations and stereotypes. However, older audiences tended to reproduce the same stereotypes they denounced in the media. In general, this study shows that when receivers interpret sensitive issues, they trend to either accept or reject media discourses outright, leaving little room for the negotiation of meanings.

Keywords
Interpretation; audience; experts; discourse analysis; focus groups; Delphi.

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1. Introduction

'Civilization' and 'culture' —complex and pluralistic concepts that embrace much of human activity— can be approached from many perspectives and disciplines. The many definitions of these concepts are notably different, as each tends to focus on just one particular aspect of these extensive concepts. The classic 1871 definition by Tylor (1977) even considered the two concepts to be

synonymous. However, leaving aside this synonymy and the difficulties in establishing inclusive and exclusive definitions, a feature of both concepts is that they are matrices of identity, as evidenced by various authors (Huntington, 1997; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

In regard to the study and operationalization of the concepts of civilization and culture, we usually start with two fundamental assumptions: both are frames for the construction of identity and meaning (Geertz, 1989: 88), and —from the field of communication— both are narratives, or 'texts' (Lotman, 1996: 109). These texts not only make sense of the world, they also enable civilizations and cultures to narrate their own stories and reflect their own identifying characteristics (Castelló, 2008: 79). In other words, civilizations and cultures are self-referential texts that construct representations of their own identities. No one doubts the power of identity, although, as a social and cultural reality, its manifestations vary (Castells, 1997), which explains why it is a core object of study in the social sciences. Indeed, around the turn of this century it became central to current studies (Hall and Du Gay, 2003; Silva Echeto, 2003), given that postmodernism (Kellner, 1995), globalization (Tomlinson, 1999), multiculturalism (Parekh, 2005) and interculturalism (García-Canclini, 2004) have only enhanced interest in the concept of identity.

Although civilizational and cultural narratives are to be found in many discourses and genres, the media probably exerts the greatest social influence in building narratives of civilizational and cultural identities. According to the programme of the Alliance of Civilizations: 'the media is (…) a crucial arena for challenging prevailing attitudes regarding the many 'others' across the globe. Individuals do not simply hold intellectual beliefs about peoples in distant lands, but rather, they have strong emotional responses to divisions that are perpetuated in the media' (Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat, 2007). Furthermore, of the different media, television, in particular, plays a fundamental role in the construction of civilizations and cultures (Barker, 2000; Hall, 1997).

To overlay the concepts of culture and civilization through the more visible concept of identity we draw on Block (2010), who —from a sociolinguistics perspective— proposed distinguishing identity according to ethnicity, race, nation, gender, social class, language, sexuality, religion, age, migration status and consumption/lifestyles (Block, 2010: 483).

In our research we focused exclusively on three of these labels, namely, religion, gender and sexuality. Our aim was to explore how television in Spain structures its identity discourses around these concepts and how these go to build a specific intercultural mindset.

2. Method

The research was divided into three consecutive phases in which different methodological strategies were implemented. In the first phase we analysed the discourse built by news stories around religion, gender, sexuality, interculturality; in the second phase, we explored interpretations of the same news

stories by focus groups; and in the third phase, we obtained the opinions of experts using the Delphi method.

2.1. Phase 1: Discourse analysis

Our sample was composed of Monday, Thursday and Sunday prime-time evening news broadcast in the period 15 May-15 July 2012. Six generalist channels were selected for sampling: Antena 3, Canal Sur, Telecinco, Telemadrid, La1 and TV3. Three were nationwide channels (Antena 3, Telecinco and La1) and three were regional channels (Canal Sur, Telemadrid and TV3) channels; four were public channels (Canal Sur, Telemadrid, La1 and TV3) and two were private channels (Antena 3 and Telecinco). A total of 4,184 news stories were collected (sports and weather news items were excluded) for analysis by two researchers. Of the full sample of original news stories coded from video recordings, 688 were classified as dealing with religion, gender, sexuality and interculturality.

The news stories on religion reflected any kind of representation of a religion or religions. Those on gender referred to discrimination against women, the feminist movement and sexual roles. Those on sexuality referred to any representation of sexuality and sexual orientation, including relationships and family models with affective-sexual bonds between two or more persons and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) perspectives. Finally, the news stories on interculturality —which represented interaction, dialogue, conflict or misunderstandings between people with different cultural references (in the broadest sense)— were analysed according to a typology of interculturality (conflictive, unresolved or possible) as developed in García-Jiménez, Rodrigo-Alsina and Pineda (2015).

In this first phase two analytical techniques were used, namely, membership categorization analysis (MCA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). MCA is a type of formal ethnomethodological analysis that investigates how members of one community make sense of themselves and other individuals and of their daily activities (Jayyusi, 1984; Lepper, 2000), relying on practical use of common knowledge to categorize themselves and others. The categorization not only reflects a description of routine daily activities, but also involves both a social and a moral order, as moral and practical reasoning is expressed and organized through ascriptions, attributions, imputations, judgements, etc. (Jayyusi, 1991b). MCA is particularly suitable for studying news, as it enables an exploration of how news production categories are used to shape public opinion and promote specific worldviews. Although several studies describe the application of MCA to print news stories (Jalbert, 1999; Jayyusi, 1991a), as far as we are aware, MCA has not been extensively applied to televised news (Malbois, 2007).

CDA is a technique for studying how, through texts, the abuse of social power, dominance and inequality are played out, reproduced and occasionally combatted (Van Dijk, 2009: 149). As noted by Van Dijk (2009: 121), the relationship between discourse and social power needs to be accounted

for. In the case of media representations of cultures and civilizations, CDA provided us with tools to assess whether media texts legitimate asymmetrical power relations in situations reflecting interculturality, religion, gender and sexual diversity. Of the different categories of analysis available in CDA, we used those most relevant to the collection of the information of interest, studying the topics that provided overall consistency to the televised discourse. As noted by Van Dijk (2003: 152), topics reflect what the discourse is 'about', as they reflect the most important information in a discourse and provide coherence to texts and conversations. 'Thus, a summary or headline typically expresses some or all of the macro-propositions that form such a macrostructure' (Van Dijk, 1995: 282). Analysing the semantic macrostructure involves studying 'global meanings, topics or themes. These are what discourses are (globally) about (…) they embody the (subjectively) most important information of a discourse (…) and perhaps most importantly, they represent the meaning or information most readers will memorize best of a discourse' (Van Dijk, 2010: 68).

2.2. Phase 2: Focus groups

The focus group approach was used to obtain interpretations of audience readings of the news stories. This qualitative approach furnishes approximate knowledge of the social reality being studied, gleaned from communication within a group. The focus group is thus configured as a micro-representation of a social macro-situation (Ostertag, 2010; Wood, 2007).

The focus group topics were structured into two main blocks. The first block consisted of participants viewing and then discussing the news, guided by pre-prepared open questions. Participants were first questioned about their interpretation and evaluation of the news and were then asked for their opinion regarding its presentation (whether they found the story well-rounded and whether they detected stereotypes). The second block focused on analysing media constructions of discourse. Participants were asked about their perceptions regarding the influence of the news stories, whether an alternative informative angle could have been adopted and whether interpretations could vary depending on audience age.

Eight focus groups were organised (n=67, 37 women and 30 men) in three different geographic locations (4, 2 and 2 groups in Barcelona, Madrid and Seville, respectively), composed of 6-10 Spanish participants per group. When profiling possible participants, it was sought to obtain a balance between the sexes and also between occupations, professions and educational levels, although within-group divergence regarding the latter was minimized so as to create a relaxed climate for dialogue. The groups were also profiled by age: four groups each were composed of participants aged 20-30 years and of participants aged 40-60 years. The focus group sessions were held throughout the summer of 2014. All sessions were recorded and later transcribed by a professional subcontracted company, which subsequently analysed the results —using the ATLAS.ti program— according to codes previously established by the research team.

The eight focus group sessions were organized according to two distinct threads: interculturality, on the one hand and on the other hand, religion, gender and sexuality. Participants in each thread analysed three news stories, selected from the overall sample as representative or at least paradigmatic of the subject. The three news stories representing interculturality were as follows: (1) a report on a controversial raid in the Madrid district of Lavapiés and clashes and tensions between police and *manteros* (unlicensed street vendors who lay out their wares on blankets); (2) a report on a circular prohibiting police from making indiscriminate raids on grounds of people's ethnic origins or of their being undocumented in Spain; (3) a report on a country-and-western style festival in Algete (Madrid), featuring US flags and music and Texan-style clothing. The three news stories representing religion, gender and sexuality were as follows: (1) a report on an Egyptian television channel featuring women journalists wearing the niqab; (2) a report on participation by foreigners and women in the San Fermín bull-running festival in Pamplona; and (3) a report on a gay couple travelling to India to have a child via surrogacy. The clips can be viewed on the research project website [http://aracc.upf.edu/media].

2.3. Phase 3: Delphi method

The final phase consisted of a Delphi analysis conducted with experts based in Spain and elsewhere. This approach was considered appropriate for our data collection purposes, given that it is both anonymous and suitable for a panel of geographically dispersed experts, who, after opinion rounds with controlled feedback, ultimately reach convergence (Smith, 1997; Kent and Saffer, 2014; Landeta, 1999). Because the Delphi method is useful for collecting information on complex events in unknown areas and for providing insights in situations for which no objective data or applicable analytical models are available (Landeta, 1999: 56 and 163), it was eminently applicable to our research. In the words of Kent and Saffer (2014: 569), 'the Delphi method is a unique research approach because of the ability to learn about ideas and issues that are not widely recognized among a group'. In short, it is a structured group communication process that is effective in addressing a complex problem (Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

The Delphi method has three fundamental characteristics. Firstly, it is anonymous, as, during implementation, the experts are not aware of each other's identities. This enables greater freedom of expression, avoids confrontations and minimizes inhibitions. Secondly, since it allows for iteration of issues followed by controlled feedback, experts can consider different perspectives and change their opinions. Finally, it enables homogeneity to develop from heterogeneity. Although the experts should be experts on the subject, they should not necessarily come from the same discipline, so as to ensure a multidisciplinary perspective (Landeta, 1999).

For the Delphi analysis, it was considered both interesting and enriching to disaggregate news on religion, gender and sexuality. Consequently, four Delphi analyses were implemented, one each on interculturality, religion, gender and sexuality. The same news stories as used in the focus groups

were analysed: for the Delphi analysis on interculturality, the same three interculturality news stories; and for the other three Delphi analyses, the corresponding news stories on religion, gender and sexuality.

The Delphi rounds were implemented between April and early June 2015 using an online questionnaire. Of 15 experts on each of the four topics (multiculturalism, religion, gender and sexuality) contacted by e-mail, nine confirmed their participation for three topics and eight for the fourth topic. The sample of experts represented different parts of the Spanish-speaking academic world; most lived and worked in Spain and the others were familiar with Spain (either because they were Spanish or had worked in Spain). Represented were various universities and research centres, where the experts were either academics working on interdisciplinary applied research projects or media professionals collaborating with research projects. All were reputable and widely published experts in their fields, whose work has been endorsed by the scientific community.

To facilitate subsequent comparison, the Delphi questions were, *mutatis mutandis,* very similar to those posed to the focus groups. The experts were first asked to state their name and place of work and indicate their general sources of information. They were then presented with questions in two blocks: in the first, they gave their own interpretation and evaluation of the selected televised story (after viewing the clip); and, in the second, they expressed their opinions of the media and transmitted their perceptions of the influence of the news.

When the first round responses were analysed and processed, it was found that the responses already showed remarkable convergence. Those questions for which convergence was maximum were eliminated and questions with responses showing high but not total convergence were included in a second round, in which the experts were asked whether, on the basis of the first round responses, they would ratify or moderate their stance. After these two rounds, the Delphi analysis terminated, given that consensus was reached regarding responses.

3. Results and discussion
3.1. Discourse analysis

The religious news story referred to the emergence of a new Egyptian channel, called Maria TV, featuring women journalists wearing the niqab. The minimal contextualization of the news is reflected in an opening that highlights 'something' that would be 'unthinkable' in the Mubarak era, indicating that this development was only possible due to a leadership change in Egypt. The anchor then informs viewers that the 'unthinkable' is a television channel featuring 'fully veiled' women, later clarifying that they are wearing the niqab. The report ends with a questioning of the ideology of the journalists, that is, whether they are ultra-conservative (as pre-supposed by the channel) or are, as self-defined, progressive. The discursive strategy undermines this self-definition by the Maria TV journalists, whose argument is that they are progressive because, by leaving the home, they are going

against tradition. The news report is anecdotic and lacks in-depth analysis. It builds a conclusive narrative that depicts a reality understandable to the viewers, with the narrative itself seeking to establish the significance of the phenomenon.

The gender news story, as analysed according to MCA, reveals the normative or moral character of categorization as social action. According to the news report, 'foreigners' and 'women' have no place in the Pamplona bull-running festival. This reasoning is based on notions of common sense or preconceptions regarding foreigners (e.g., 'ignorance' of local traditions or 'ignorance' linked to youth) and women (e.g., 'limited physical strength' or 'lack of courage'). Foreigners and women are therefore constructed in this news story as the 'other'; it is also clear that identity is simply a discursive characterization of an individual that has no bearing on objective facts. Identity is not a fixed attribute, however, but is a realization oriented towards action that takes different forms for a variety of purposes. Identity is performative, with gender and nationality understood as discursive constructions linked to specific production contexts (Gómez-Puertas, Ventura and Roca-Cuberes, 2015).

Regarding sexuality, the news story refers to surrogacy parenthood by a male homosexual couple. The analysis leads to the conclusion that homosexuality is a problem that hampers the achievement of objectives related to heteronormativity. However, since the news is reported by a public television channel in Spain, where homosexuality (and same-sex partnership since 2005) is legal, a certain solidarity with homosexuals is evident. In fact, although the news story refers to a particular couple, since the construction is based on 'we' the problem is collectivized: 'becoming a parent via surrogacy is a profitable business in India and demand from Spaniards is growing.' We thus see how a particular case is generalized to all Spaniards, making them share the problem as their own and creating the need for them to intervene in its resolution. In another sense, the values transmitted as desirable by the discourse are framed in relation to 'we' who value what is 'natural', 'legal' and 'permitted' and who also always defend the 'truth'. There is dissonance between this supposed linearity and (legal) homosexuality, although surrogacy is not how same-sex couples will achieve the nuclear family proposed by heteronormativity. Furthermore, a perception of the non-natural nature of homosexuality is reiterated through symbolic reference to the non-biological.

As for interculturality, it can be concluded that it receives little attention from Spanish television, as evidenced by the fact that a mere 150 news stories of our total sample of 4,184 broadcasts deal with this issue. Furthermore, interculturality is mostly represented as conflictive or as unresolved: 57.3% of the news stories reflected conflictive interculturality, 12.1% reflected unresolved interculturality and 30.5% reflected possible interculturality. Note also that conflictive interculturality primarily reflected problems instigated by others. In contrast, positive interculturality is represented as mainly institutional (government meetings, film festivals sponsored by public entities, etc.) or, to a lesser extent, as socioeconomic. Thus, a positive image of interculturality is associated with power or leisure or with groups that are wealthier than the Spanish in-group. Conflictive interculturality is the

most common hegemonic discourse, one that has even come to colonize the discourse of possible interculturality, mainly reflected in contexts that are dissociated from everyday life. This situation of impossible cultural relations reflects the construction of a more conflictive world (García-Jiménez, Rodrigo-Alsina and Pineda, 2015: 317). Our CDA indicates that socioeconomic status greatly influences televised representations of interculturality. Thus, it cannot be said that television news systematically constructs an image of foreigners or immigrants as a threat; what it does is assign them positive or negative roles depending on how wealthy they are (Pineda, García-Jiménez and Rodrigo-Alsina, 2016).

3.2. Audience interpretations

In general terms, we conclude that audiences make plural and diverse but sometimes contradictory interpretations. It is interesting to note that viewers are often aware of the multiple meanings of cultural practices and of the difficulties inherent to understanding other cultures. Such self-reflection regarding their own interpretations and their lack of references would indicate that audiences are aware of cultural diversity. In the same vein, audiences seek out interpretive strategies that help them make sense of unknown realities. Below we present the main results for each of the four issues discussed by the focus groups.

Regarding interpretations of the religious news story, the focus groups' assessment was generally negative: the report was too short, decontextualized and manipulative. Curiously, this criticism of the actual handling of the news story was correlated by a no less strong opinion regarding the topic. Indeed, it is remarkable that the participants were critical not only of the news story but also of the reporting style and the communicative intentions of the channel. This would indicate a certain competence in assessing how news is prepared and even why. Also notable was the acknowledgement of a certain cultural ignorance in themselves when interpreting foreign practices that appear alien, but especially their awareness of the possibility of different meanings that depended on particular cultural perspectives. In other words, we could say that an opposing interpretation was being made (Hall, 1993) that called into question the interpretation offered by television. In short, the focus group participants were very critical of the report and of the communicative intentions of the broadcaster, even suggesting that the news as presented fed Islamophobia.

The participants were also very aware of their limitations in interpreting the religious news story, feeling that they lacked information and were culturally and contextually uninformed. They even acknowledged that many perspectives on the news story were possible and that a reading from secularism could not be the same as one from Islam. This stance would appear to have resulted in a more comprehensive and prudent perspective on use of the niqab by the Egyptian journalists. Opinions were rather more diverse when referring to the event giving rise to the news. In some focus groups the opinions of the participants could be observed to evolve. Initially the view was that the

Maria TV initiative was an act of freedom, even of rebellion, by Egyptian women journalists. But this view was gradually modified, to the point where it was doubted that this was the free choice of the journalists — how could they be aware whether they were free or not if their repression is interiorized? Since the Maria TV journalists were considered to be manipulated, they were denied credibility both regarding their reporting and their opinions. With this kind of denial of social actors, audiences become impervious to any statement or opinion that does not reinforce their own perspective.

Regarding the gender news story, the interpretations by the two age groups were different also in relation to the results of the analysis of the news of the previous phase. The analysis revealed a complex construction involving a wide range of stereotypes regarding foreigners and women. The older age group seemed to be generally less aware of the power of television —and the media in general— to amplify stereotypes, whereas the younger age group proved to be well capable of detecting stereotypes. Interestingly, the younger people were also capable of differentiating between these stereotypes on the basis of their own knowledge and the social imaginary, probably because of their possession of critical and independent sources of information for the construction of meaning, but also, perhaps, because of their broader intercultural experience and their critical perspectives regarding gender. In this case, an implicitly patriarchal and nationalist discourse was constructed around a male figure who 'owns' particular traditions, and by implication, the 'other' was excluded, negated for being female or non-native. But this discriminatory discourse is based on a vision that is accepted and shared by both the transmitter and the receiver of the communication. Thus, although a televised news story may not explicitly appear to be racist, sexist, heterosexist, xenophobic, etc., the audience may perceive it to be so. Finally, age differences affected interpretation: the older age groups tended to be less critical and to more easily assume an oppressive perspective regarding otherness, whereas the younger age groups were more tolerant and respectful of the other and more vigilant regarding stereotyping in the construction of otherness.

In discussing the handling of sexuality in the news stories, the focus groups considered reporting to be partial and fragmented. They interpreted this in terms of a lack of relevant insights, noting that the lack of data and contextual information prevented viewers from forming their own opinions on what was being reported in the news. This would indicate the absence of the necessary information to contextualize surrogate pregnancies. For the older focus groups, the perception that the news focused solely on the gay community was clearly indicative of a lack of information: the absence of any references to heterosexual couples choosing surrogacy was suggestive of this practice affecting only gay couples. The younger focus groups, however, did detect this stereotypification of homosexuals. Many participants eventually came to accept what they had not detected initially: the tendentious nature of the news. Returning to differences between the younger and older groups, a change was detected in the opinions of the younger people: in early discussion stages there was greater understanding of the difficulties faced by childless couples facing legal obstacles, but later on, the injustice and the emotional and health costs for the Indian women who rented their wombs came into

play. In the older age groups the discussion came to focus on the link between women forced to rent their wombs and the poverty and subhuman living conditions of underdeveloped countries. Most older participants were against surrogacy, whereas younger participants showed greater understanding of the difficulties of childless couples.

The age difference was also evident regarding interculturality. The older participants had fewer intercultural relationships than the younger participants; they also tended to obtain their information mainly through traditional media, unlike the younger participants, who tended to rely on the social media for their information. In general, the younger people made a more critical reading of the news story and were more vehement in denouncing stereotyping and the dearth of information. The older adults, in contrast, indicated that the information provided was sufficient and showed more reactionary responses to immigration; this fits with the notion, confirmed by many audience studies, that a peripheral relationship with a particular problem enhances acceptance of media versions of reality (Deacon et al., 1999: 26). Also detected was a clear ideological polarization in interpretations, since the report was either accepted (a hegemonic decoding was assumed) or rejected outright, thereby leaving little room for negotiation (Hall, 1993). Discrepancies regarding how accurately the USA was represented, for example, indicate that information on interculturality was interpreted in various ways. What is most striking, however, is that when differences existed in the stance from which news was decoded, there was a high degree of polarization in terms of for and against positions. For example, in the older age groups, opinions regarding the news report on illegal street vendors were very polarized, with some participants agreeing and others totally disagreeing with the media portrayal of the *manteros*. Participants who rejected the influence of television tended to frame and read interculturality in socioeconomic terms, with some participants pointing to how television was biased in how it represented cultures in terms of wealth. Finally, some participants tended to adopt paradoxical positions; on the one hand, they were sceptical of media ideologies and manipulation, but on the other hand, they reproduced the same discourse as the media. Thus, as some individuals recognized that television as a communication medium was biased and manipulative, they also uncritically accepted and reproduced its ideological anti-immigration discourse.

3.3. Expert opinion

Finally, we compiled the results for the four Delphi rounds with experts, who underlined some of the central issues addressed by the focus groups. In general, the experts were critical of the quality of televised news, presented as information units devoid of contextual information and accurate statistical data. They were also critical of the harmful and stereotypical representation of otherness.

The experts who participated in the Delphi analysis on religion —the Maria TV story— broadly rejected the report, mainly on the grounds of partiality, the lack of contextualization, the focus on the women's dress and a sensationalist and manipulative approach to reporting. Denounced in particular was the lack of contextualization for the emergence of the channel and the fact that the women were

not given a voice. The report, which adopted a paternalistic and Western stance, reiterated the stereotype that niqab-wearing women were voiceless and unthinking victims. Noted also was how reference to the visibility of the eyes of the veiled women was an appeal to the collective imaginary that viewed the Orient as mythical and mysterious; furthermore, signalling the women as 'ultra-conservative' but also as 'leaving the home to work' backstaged their technical training and forefronted a stereotypical association with submissiveness. Some of the experts, however, saw a more positive side, indicating, for instance, that the report could help break with the traditional image of the Muslim woman locked in the home. All the experts consulted were firmly of the opinion that news stories greatly influence the audience's perception of reality — although one expert qualified this statement by pointing out that this also depended on the type of audience. In general, it was felt that a non-expert layperson would have more difficulty in interpreting news reports appropriately, although one expert pointed out that stereotypes about Arab and Muslim societies are also deeply rooted, for example, in universities. Another expert suggested that people with an intermediate or higher level of formal education and a centre-left political orientation would better detect biases in the news. Although some experts were of the opinion that other media would have tackled the report in a similar way to Telecinco, other experts felt that other channels would have been more respectful.

As for the gender news story, there was some consensus regarding the paradoxes resulting from the oppression implied by stereotypical constructions of identity and otherness. Regarding the representation of women who participate in bull-running festivals, the opinions of the experts, on the whole, reflected certain contradictions. Thus, while there were positive reactions to women participating in bull-running (they tended to be more cautious and to prepare), this kind of discourse responded strongly to the stereotype of the more prudent (and less daring) woman. This prudence, when described as a feminine value, cannot be considered as entirely positive when it reflects a perception of a lack of innate abilities; men, when they possess these abilities, are viewed as skilled and courageous, rarely or never as imprudent. As for the foreigner, the label inevitably applied is one of imprudence, irrespective of sex, although here the paradox occurs at the level of representation. On the one hand, human diversity is highlighted through evident phenotypic traits (Caucasian, Asian, black, etc.) of foreign tourists in images in which they do not speak; on the other hand, there is a stereotypification of foreign tourists as young (apparently) middle-class or upper-middle-class whites (European, US, Canadian, New Zealander, etc.) looking for 'kicks'. Divergence between the experts regarding the news story largely derives from the definition of the communicative frame, which embraces both the receiver and the communicative purpose. For some experts, 'colour' is included in order to comply with a perceived demand for spectacle and entertainment in televised news. For other experts, the communicative goal goes even further: it reflects a purely economic interest in promoting tourism globally as a new cultural rite. Depicted is the foreign receiver of the message, a potential tourist drawn to news that highlights a broad international following and diffuse components of culture, entertainment and dangerous rites, all reminiscent of savage capitalism. These arguments were reiterated by the experts in the second Delphi round in referring to the lucrative 'theme-parking' of culture, the risk-seeking habits of the Anglo-Saxon male and Hispanic

exoticism (bulls, sex and alcohol) that reproduces platitudes deriving from the literature of Hemingway.

Regarding the sexuality news story, most of the experts believed that television has a crucial role to play regarding representations of the LGBT community. Distinguished were two main receivers of these discourses: society at large and LGBT individuals themselves. The media can ensure visibility and greater awareness of LGBT people in society, promote sexual diversity and choice as yet another individual freedom and recognize the legitimate participation of different identities in everyday life. As for how the media can legitimize or avoid marginalizing the LGBT community, it can provide references in the form of positive role models, especially for those who, for whatever reason, have difficulty accessing or participating in the circulation of discourses about their own sexuality (for instance, people living in rural contexts, who have yet to come out, etc.). Although some experts opined that visibility was always good, other experts felt that the full range of sexual orientations had not yet been sufficiently normalized. The LGBT individual was often treated as somehow 'weird' or, more cynically, was used for sensationalist impact in reports that were ultimately discriminatory and stigmatizing. Some experts felt that this kind of caricaturing and over-emphasis on sexuality generated dissatisfaction in the LGBT community. However, others suggested that televised news represents LGBT individuals quite differently from fictional accounts, which tend to be much more loaded with prejudices and simplifications. Most experts believed that television news reports reproduce heterosexist content. LGBT people are largely invisible, feature less frequently overall, but disproportionately more so in more problematic situations, and often feature in marginalized or in show business settings. The experts also agreed that, in general, the image is distorted, stereotypical and stigmatizing, and the focus is often sensationalism rather than the rights of minorities or issues of justice and equality. The representation is also often both indirect (the protagonists have no face or voice) and undiversified (excluded are lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals). Nonetheless, many experts felt that there has been significant and positive progress in representations of the LGBT community in recent years, especially when news reports address LGBT persons as an organized group.

Regarding interculturality, the experts denounced the simplification reflected in all the news stories. The fact that the stories on the Lavapiés raid and the ban on raids associated immigration with crime or aberrant behaviour was described by one expert as unadulterated racism. There was no perceived integration or dialogue, and interculturality was presented as something alien, added or external. The fact that Spain is a country with a long history as a cultural melting pot tends to be overlooked; indeed a narrative exists that deliberately conceals the intercultural processes that have unfolded in Spain over the centuries. Interculturality in the analysed news stories was associated with delinquents mocking the police and the justice system, and discourses on immigration tended to be underpinned by a perception that immigration was a source of danger. As for the report on the US-style country-and-western festival, the experts indicated that, in this case, the depiction was frivolous, folkloric, exotic, fun, superficial, anecdotal — in short, 'carnivalesque'. This kind of construction of

interculturality raises several issues. There is, for instance, simplification for reasons of ethnic, geographical or national origins (excluded, note, are gender and sexual orientation), there is a lack of discourse on cultural diversity and, finally, an ambiguous, sensationalist discourse is constructed that is directed towards individuals viewed as a lumpen mass of consumers rather than as individuals or citizens. It was also noted that discourses and accompanying visual images often fuelled conflict by failing to educate viewers in interculturality (interaction between different cultures) and multiculturalism (co-existence of different cultures in the same territory). Finally, the experts also agreed that the wealth, power and influence of a country was a crucial factor in the representation of particular nationalities as a focus of either harmony or conflict.

4. Conclusions

As can be appreciated from our analysis, the audience interpretations and the opinions of the experts, the vision of the news stories analysed was, overall, very critical. However, the question arises as to whether journalists are not constrained, on the one hand, by limitations in news production and, on the other, by the model reader they construct. This is not to minimize the responsibility of journalists nor to justify the representations they make of news stories. In constructing the model reader, a certain perspective of the receiver and of their cultural skills is established. What therefore needs to be considered is to what extent journalists may be non-ethnocentric and yet create a story that exceeds the limits of interpretation by their audiences. When an audience is faced with a story, they may be very critical of the journalism, yet this does not mean that, in trying to make sense of the news, they do not reproduce the same stereotypes. So there is, essentially, a certain convergence between journalistic discourse and audience interpretation — which is ultimately what the journalists seek. In addition, since an alternative is often not available to the audience, existing stereotypes are simply reinforced — as denounced by our experts.

The analysis of how sexual diversity is represented in Spanish televised news points to a progressive acknowledgement of this situation which, generally speaking, is incorporated as yet another normativized practice in society (as mentioned, same-sex marriage has been legal in Spain since 2005). However, maintenance of a certain subtle discourse of opposition can be detected, primarily in relation to certain practices, for instance, surrogacy. Observed in this case was a delegitimizing strategy that relocated homosexuals within a scale of social oppression that included impoverished Indian women who rented their wombs; gay surrogacy was therefore represented as oppressive of these women, who were converted into the victims of their objective to be parents. In the audience interpretation, the homosexual was no longer a subject of rights but an oppressor of victims with a face. With regard to the issue of religion and gender in a Muslim context, more conventional stereotypes were evident in the audience, whereas discourses regarding both integration of diversity and stereotypification were detected in the experts.

In relation to interculturality, televised news stories construct intercultural interactions in which the possibility of communicative encounter is a pipedream. When two people with different backgrounds interact, understanding and dialogue as happens between equals never take place. Interculturality is thus represented as a violent process or, at best, as a carnivalesque game in which the actors, clearly labelled as 'us' or 'them', do not share the same symbolic space. In this divided game, there is always a part of the interaction process that is considered dominant and positive and a part that is considered negative. The interpretation that the audiences made of the analysed news stories underlined the fact that, despite differences between younger and older participants, the televised discourse is either accepted or rejected — there is no intermediate position. This polarization of interpretations leaves little room for negotiating information.

Audiences may be critical of televised news and detect stereotypes, and yet hold the same prejudices they denounce in referring to people from other cultures, religions, etc. Note, however, that there are differences between the interpretations of younger and older audiences. For example, the younger participants in the focus groups who had experienced more intercultural contacts had a richer and more open perspective on interculturality than older participants whose intercultural contacts were limited or even non-existent.

Finally, we would like to point out that changing our perspectives involves rethinking otherness and, inevitably, identities. Given the many technological, political, economic and cultural changes experienced in the twenty-first century —not to mention changes in mentalities and emotions— we need new perspectives and new proposals. It is understandable to feel uncertainty and anxiety as we observe changes, but as human and intellectual beings we cannot close our eyes to new realities. Toulmin (2001: 281) proposes adopting one of two attitudes towards the future: 'On the one hand, we can welcome with open arms a perspective that offers new possibilities but which requires new ideas and more adaptable institutions, and we can view in these transitions a good reason for hope as we seek greater clarity regarding new opportunities and demands which suggest a world of practical philosophy, multidisciplinary science and transnational or subnational institutions. Alternatively, we can choose to turn our back on the promises of the new era and, on tenterhooks, hope that the lifestyles and thinking characteristic of the era of stability and the national spirit last at least as long as our own existence on Earth' [our translation].

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