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# Representation of sociocultural diversity in audiovisual advertising: materials for inclusive treatment

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Our objective is to analyze the treatment that audiovisual advertising makes of sociocultural diversity, focusing particularly on phenotypic traits. We also propose some lines of action oriented towards good dynamizing practices in inclusive intercultural milieus, avoiding the reproduction of racist or xenophobic assumptions. **Methodology:** we have based our analysis on: (a) a general sample of 834 advertisements broadcasted in *prime time* on various Spanish television channels, (b) in-depth interviews with 38 advertising experts, (c) collaborative work with various professional associations and institutional organizations, and (d) a reception study with 249 college students. **Results:** we conclude that phenotypic diversity in advertising is underrepresented with respect to the social reality of reference and that inclusive good practices must go through the incorporation of multicultural diversity in television advertising. We emphasize the importance of doing it from intercultural dynamizing perspectives that show discourses with interpersonal and intergroup interconnections in different contexts and situations.

## Keywords

Sociocultural diversity; TV advertising; Good inclusive practices; Applied audiovisual research; Intercultural environments.

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## 1. Introduction

What is the treatment granted by audiovisual (television) advertisement to sociocultural diversity and in specific, to protagonists of phenotypes different from predominating Center-European White/Caucasian of our context? And, what may be the most adequate treatment to avoid racist and xenophobic effects and dynamize intercultural coexistence? These are questions we attempt to answer, since 2012, through different projects where we have been investigating about audiovisual representation of sociocultural diversity, mainly phenotypical, from interdisciplinary teams comprised by researchers of different areas of knowledge (Communication, Anthropology, Education, Linguistics and Politics) to widen to the maximum the perspectives of a study object as extremely polysemic as this one, using action research models and applied audiovisual research, which consist of linking the Academy with the Classroom and both, with the sociomediatic reality, specifically with representing institutions, organizations and collectives like the College of Advertisers and Public Relations of Catalonia, the Association of Advertisement Businessmen or the Table for Diversity in Audiovisual Media of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia, besides agencies and companies of the advertisement sector, interested in incorporating sociocultural diversity to its campaigns.

We start with a multimodal methodology of analysis of advertisement spots, in order to obtain the maximum objective references, quantitative and qualitative from four fundamental axes of analysis of audiovisual discourses: broadcast, production, reception and dynamization. In this text, we show the most relevant results and some significative examples with certain audiovisual hints to comprehend how advertisement manages the inclusive treatment and represents in an egalitarian and ethical manner, the cultural and phenotypical diversities that reside in the societies receptors of international migrations where analyzed advertisement messages circulate.

## 2. Methods and concepts of reference

### 2.1. Inclusion criteria

To select advertisement with diversity properly and verify whether it is inclusive, we need to establish a double preliminary consideration: on one hand, the concept of “diversity” and, on the other, its distinction from concepts such as “difference” and “inequality”. Society is, at the same time, similar and heterogeneous and it recognizes itself based on shared cultural substratum. Thus, when managing perceivable differences on spots, we work with the manifestation of morphological traits (phenotype) which, even though it is part of the particular and unique constitution of that person, they tend to be extrapolated to the delimitation and classification of cultural groups depending on his or her outlook, with all the consequences this may entail (Boulton 2015; Shankar 2015; Bristor *et al.* 1995).

Among the most harmful effects of this classification we can find the reading of cultural groups in terms of inequality depending on phenotypical characteristics (Jindra, 2014). In this line, some studies

in Spain have oriented their attention towards the representation frequency of specific collectives (ethnic minorities, immigrants) in fiction series, reflecting about its possible incidence in inclusion or anti-otherness phenomena present in the Spanish society (Marcos *et al.*, 2014; Marcos Ramos & Igartúa Perosanz, 2014; Baladrón Pazos, 2011).

Consequently, the phenotype of individuals selected to be part of a spot is relevant both regarding the business dimension –ethnomarketing– (Gaona Pisonero & Martínez Pastor, 2008) as well as the possible proactivity of his or her role as facilitators or standardizers of the social integration of said collectives (Arroyo Almaraz & Martín Nieto, 2009; Gaona *et al.*, 2016).

To detect inclusive advertisement, we must start by the selection, coding and analysis of objective samples (Ibañez, 1998) of spots, broadcast in media such as television [1], in ‘prime time’ time slots, with a relevant follow-up and impact of messages by plural audiences. Therefore, we start from the analysis of the broadcast of an objective sample of advertisements, selected during a specific time period, established in compliance with a limited number of variables that allow us to detect, initially in a quantitative manner, the total of advertisements with diversity. This would be the sample taken as reference to deepen in the qualitative analysis of the representation of diversity and its inclusive treatment from different audiovisual narrative specialties.

But, how do we differentiate advertisement with diversity (mainly phenotypical) from the one that is not? And, in what we based on to consider it inclusive? To differentiate it, we used a concept of inclusive audiovisual advertisement that allows to evaluate the treatment of diversity in selected advertisements. It is important to highlight that said concept is established from the initial interdisciplinary debate (epistemological, theoretical and methodological) where each researcher, of the configured interdisciplinary team, provides his or her particular view considering the reference schools of thinking within his or her area of knowledge (Grau, 2016; Bonin, Lorite García and Maldonado, 2016; Lorite García 2004, 2006 and 2011), but with the main objective of extracting the concept out of concepts to avoid exceeding by emulating or considering experimented theories as one’s own with similar issues in other moments or contexts, recalling in that sense what Ibañez recommends about the need to articulate a theoretical framework of reference of our own, enclosed to the space-temporality of the object of study (Ibañez, 1998).

One of the first conceptual distinctions are destined to know how to differentiate the inclusive advertisement of the good advertisement practice. Good practice is whereas all advertisement’s protagonists are treated in the same way because we confirm that it does not discriminate any of them despite their phenotype, skin color or supposed origin. Likewise, we verify that the same framings or scenes are performed with all protagonists and grant the same narrative value depending on the size or camera positioning (Millerson, 1993; Gubern, 1987). But said equal treatment is also inclusive if the spot shows how protagonists of different identities and phenotypes interact, and do so through communication and active intercultural interconnection models able to evoke the same intercultural dynamizing processes among plural receptors/ consumers of the advertisement message. Therefore, good practice is related to a balanced representation of the different stereotypes, depending on the different textual, graphic and audio and/ or visual elements of the advertisement discourse, but it would be inclusive if, besides, they are shown performing communicative acts, both verbal and nonverbal, and interconnections (structural and/ or conjunctural), able to evoke the same inclusive intercultural dynamics of the plural recipients of the message.

Considering the aforesaid, it will be difficult to find a completely inclusive advertisement. For this purpose, we need to confirm that besides complying previous requirements, the soundtrack (voice, music, effects and silence) codes the diverse identities represented in the piece from identical

parameters and allowing to be decoded from a multicultural reception as Muraca says (2012 and 2013). We have to ask ourselves the same regarding other elements of the audiovisual discourse such as: settings with their respective illumination (show the spaces and contexts in which diverse characters perform in a balanced and not stereotyped manner?), graphic design (typography and color are only related to occidental references? as Entenza (2016) confirms), or other elements associated to the dimensions and aesthetic of bodies and clothes of characters. It is also very important to verify the pace of audiovisual editing, observing whether it matches the different times and vital paces predominant in every culture or if only a single pace is shown, typical from urban models of affluent middle socioeconomic class towards which the consumption of advertised products attempt to take us. From the multimodal methodology and action research and applied audiovisual research model, in which this research is framed, we consider that it is convenient to use recommendations collected by style manuals or deontological codes in effect as well. First of all, something we have verified is that there is no specific manual about advertisement and sociocultural diversity in the different mediatic fields analyzed (Spain and Catalonia) in the same way it is possible to find it in other communication sectors, such as information [2]. The different manuals and codes that talk about representation of phenotypical, cultural and ethnic diversity in some of their proposals, coincide in defending an egalitarian treatment of the different protagonists of the message. We suggest that all characters are represented, respecting their quotidian reality to the maximum, avoiding possible discriminatory effects. Likewise, it is recommended not to use stereotypes and avoid the association of physical traits with the superficial and distorting cultural topics we hold about the supposed geographical origins of actors. About the issue, José Carlos Sendín and Patricia Izquierdo recommend: “to build more moderated discourses and representative of the immigrant community positioning them in the social scenario as another actor” (Sendín and Izquierdo, 2008: 27).

Also, it is possible to find some recommendation in relation to the adequate treatment of diversity in advertisement in the codes used by regulating organizations of the sector in Spain such as *Autocontrol* (Association for the Self-regulation of Commercial Communication), where there is the explicit warning: “Advertisement shall not suggest circumstances of discrimination due to race, nationality, religion, gender or sexual orientation, nor will attempt against the person’s dignity.” (Autocontrol, 2011: 4).

## 2.2 Sampling procedure

Considering the initial objective sample, obtained from the broadcast perspective, is the basis for the whole subsequent process of multimodal audiovisual analysis from production, reception and dynamization, we need to establish initially a universal concept allowing us to quantify and adequately compare advertisement pieces with homogeneity criteria (García Ferrando, Ibáñez and Alvira, 1998; García Ferrando, 1984). Therefore, we managed the regular brand spots exclusively (also called television advertisement unit - TVAU- for our study), setting aside advertisement tipologies such as sponsorships, TV shopping, self-advertisement and advertisement reports. This allows selecting audiovisual advertisement pieces of a specific duration (5, 10, 20, 30, 40, 45 and up to 60 seconds or more), broadcast between news, informational and entertainment programming of television channels (Infoadex, 2013; Lorite García, 2016).

A first quantitative indicator about the representation of sociocultural diversity in television advertisement is obtained from a sample of spots from the generalist private television: *Tele5*, *Antena 3*, *La Sexta* and *Cuatro* (we discarded *TVE* because the broadcast of commercial advertisement is forbidden), adding the public autonomic Catalan channel *TV3* not only to have available the references of a región with important percentages of foreign residents, but also due to the fact that the audiovisual

broadcast in Catalonia is explicitly supervised by an independent authority of audiovisual communication regulation (The Audiovisual Council of Catalonia, CAC [3]). Among the entities created by CAC the Table for the Diversity on Audiovisual Media is worth mentioning, some of which objectives are oriented to: “Reflect about the representation of cultural diversity on audiovisual media” and to “Elaborate proposals targeted to the audiovisual sector to collaborate with the best promotion of diversity values” [4]. Among the most recent results of its activity, there is a research specifically oriented to analyze the audiovisual advertisement and sociocultural diversity in Catalonia (MDA-CAC, 2015).

Once the television channels were selected, we chose a wide prime time time slot (the three hours comprised between 20,30 and 00,30 hours), during the week from Monday 17 to Sunday 23 of March, 2014, a period of the year distanced from the Christmas campaigns or any other pre-holiday or sales promotion or campaign. Afterwards, we elaborated a code book, where each one of the variables considered in coded were defined and operationalized. Thus, we recorded a total of 140 hours of television advertisement, corresponding to more than four thousand six hundred brand spots or TVAU (table 1) distributed by television channels and with the following percentages and broadcast durations:

**Table 1. Total of brand spots, broadcast duration and screen percentage.**

TV Channel	Spots	Duration of broadcast advertisement in seconds	Time of broadcast advertisement in hours, minutes and seconds	Screen percentage
<b>Antena 3</b>	857	15.055	4:10:55	14,94%
<b>Cuatro</b>	1.204	21.707	6:01:47	21,53%
<b>La Sexta</b>	837	14.240	3:57:20	14,13%
<b>Tele5</b>	935	16.471	4:34:31	16,34%
<b>TV3</b>	794	15.626	4:20:26	15,50%
<b>TOTAL</b>	4.627	83.099	23:04:59	16,49%

Source: authors' own creation.

After a first coding process we discarded 371 pieces, corresponding to self-promotions of the channel, sponsorships or any other kind of overprinted advertisement in the programming, since they are not considered brand spots of TVAU. From the 4.256 remaining advertisements, a first sample was filtered, which included 834 television advertisement units in total of unrepeated spots that included characters in their making. A thorough classification depending on different variables was performed (including television channel, year, month, day, duration of the piece in seconds, synopsis, language and advertiser – differentiating business group, brand and product-, as well as the number of advertisements per campaign). Next, we proceeded to identify characters with perceivable diversity traits based on the main criterion of characters' phenotype, but also considering other elements such as language, clothing or setting of the spot. This last clustering constituted the second sample of 65 brand spots or TVAU allowing us to obtain a percentage indicative of television advertisement with diversity of 7.8% (over a sample of 834) which can be evaluated as insufficient if we consider references such as the percentages of foreign population resident in Spain in 2014, about 15% (IDESCAT, 2016).

Of each one of these 65 spots with diversity, we identified the 359 characters (main role, secondary or incidental) appearing in them for their subsequent individual coding. From them, we worked specially

with the 128 protagonists that presented perceivable traits of diversity. First, we collected the storyboard, with the spots' main scenes (depending on the framing), and its synchrony with sound scenes. We coded two essential aspects to be considered to verify whether it was a proposal of inclusive advertisement such as the leading role performed and interactions (structural and/ or conjunctural, hierarchical or egalitarian), as well as intercultural dynamization processes observed in the advertisement and that may have an impact in the plural reception of the advertisement message. We considered convenient to code, besides, other references such as gender, age range, constitution, height, socio economic level, social context, skin color, eye color, hair color, hair type and clothing, as complementary references to the qualitative analysis of each character but not with statistical purposes, through variable crosstabs, as recommended by Miles & Huberman (1994) and Martínez (2008).

If, as we said, the selection of audiovisual advertisement pieces comprised in our sample catalog has been carried out based on objective broadcast criteria, some categories and variables of analysis of the subsample of characters (i.e. skin color or age range) respond to consensus criteria and, subsequently, subjective criteria. In fact, any qualitative analysis is likely to include a subjective component in the configuration of analysis categories such as the ones managed here, due to the simple reason that they do not respond to random classifications or to standardized operationalizations procedures. Thus, for instance, when we decide for elaborating age groups we need to establish operative delimitations between them enabling the subsequent controlled comparison among coded data in the sample. Obviously, the resulting classification can vary based on the chosen delimitation criteria, although these splits might be necessary to constitute age categories relatively comparable between statistical sources and audiovisual analysis. We insist in the relative nature characteristic of this kind of comparison since it is easy, for instance, to gather certain data of the detailed series of population registered by the National Statistics Institute, but it is quite impossible to obtain magnitudes of such accuracy in audiovisual advertisement broadcast by television.

Therefore, as Galeano says (2004), we need to consider this level of subjectivity when it comes to consider research data; but as Álvarez-Gayou (2003) and Ruiz Olabuénaga (2012) indicate, to assume it does not mean to waive its heuristic potential as it is assumed that our experience “is conditioned by our adoption of a perspective towards it” (Ruíz Olabuénaga, 2012: 272) that achieves a critical comprehension of things through reflection processes, consensus and collective critics (*Idem*, p. 275).

In this sense, we manage categories and variables which operationalization is the result of a consensus determined with the firm resolve of performing a rigorous analysis thereof, but with the caution of being aware that any modification of them would condition extrapolation of results (as happens, on the other hand, with any analysis taking social class as basis, for instance).

### **3. Analysis and results**

#### **3.1. The prominence of diversity in the spot**

The sample catalog analysed allows to confirm certain significant references to suggest an inclusive advertisement. A first essential one is that of the protagonism of actors of phenotypes, skin colors and further traits considered, that are different in the Spanish television advertisement. To adequately differentiate its role in the advertisement we have considered the three usual roles that actors of any audiovisual product tend to perform: main role, secondary and incidental. Every audiovisual advertisement story tends to differentiate a very limited number of main actors, sometimes only one or two, who are shown in close-up and on whom there is the responsibility of sustaining the narrative thread of the argumental storyline. There are also other secondary actors, during some sequences and scenes, complementing the performance of main characters. A

third typology is the incidental characters, as Martínez says (2005): only act for an instant, and in the case of advertisement stories they can barely be perceived visually because they appear a maximum of a second in the total duration of the advertisement spot. Using this classification, we try to know what is the protagonism of characters of different phenotypes compared to natives in spots with diversity, and with it, we try to understand whether they develop the same roles and if their treatment is equal and dynamizes interculturality, in compliance with the concept of inclusive audiovisual advertisement we defend, or if they are set aside to secondary or incidental roles instead.

A first significative data is that, out of the 359 characters, 231 (64.4%) have traits we might consider native or White-Caucasian and 128 (35.6%) with phenotypes and further traits such as skin color, which can be associated with other origins and identities (African, Latin-America or Asian). Even though this first general data already demonstrates that the protagonism of spots with diversity does not lie on diverse protagonists, it is even clearer when confirming that from the 190 characters out of 359 (52.9%) performing a leading role, 136 (71.6%) are native or White-Caucasian and only 54 (28.4%) are of other phenotypes or identities. Said proportions invert as we consider secondary and incidental characters. However, in the case of secondary protagonists the proportions still clearly tend towards natives (62.8%), and 37.2% are of other origins. With incidental characters the trend inverts completely: 39.6% are White-Caucasian and 60.4% of other phenotypes, as shown in the following table:

**Table 2. Protagonism of the sociocultural diversity in spots with diversity.**

<b>Protagonists</b>	<b>Other phenotypes</b>	<b>White-Caucasian</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Main role</b>	54 (28.4%)	136 (71.6%)	190 (100%)
<b>Secondary</b>	45 (37.2%)	76 (62.8%)	121 (100%)
<b>Incidental</b>	29 (60.4%)	19 (39.6%)	48 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	128 (35.6%)	231 (64.4%)	359 (100%)

Source: MIGRACOM-UAB.

### 3.2. Interactions and processes of intercultural dynamization

Another way of evaluating the inclusive treatment of advertisement is by confirming whether protagonists of different phenotypes and identities in the spot interact between them and if this relationship is balanced or egalitarian, or on the contrary, discriminatory or hierarchical. From here we confirm whether said verbal and nonverbal, interpersonal and/ or intergroup communication can evoke inclusive intercultural dynamization processes in the plurality of receptor or potential multicultural consumers of products announced. To verify it, we coded character interactions based on two typologies: a) conjunctural or based on subjective filming criteria (for instance men/ women in relation to intellectual faculties or activities, foreign/ native in relation to concepts of moral authority, etc.); b) structural or based on context (it is the case of the manager/ employee at work, doctor/ patient in a hospital visit, policeman/ pedestrian in the regulation of urban mobility, etc.). Likewise, we take in mind when they do not interact and if this obeys solely to the type of advertisement audiovisual montage (through transitions per frame able to separate camera shots of every protagonist) or

granted protagonism. Next, we coded whether said communication was egalitarian or discriminatory and the type of intercultural dynamization conveyed.

From the total of 359 characters coded, collected from the 65 advertisement units with diversity, we can confirm that 69.5% of “other” phenotypes and identities (specifically 89 of the total of 128) tend to interact with the remaining native characters (231) through some kind of conjunctural (15.6%), structural (38.3%) relationships or both (15.6%), as mentioned in the table below. This means that three out of ten (30.5%) do not interact with the rest, because it is not promoted in the advertisement story (12.5%) or due to the type of editing through visual transitions by cut (18.0%). Native protagonists interact less than those of other phenotypes (54.9%), and the resource of showing a single protagonist in a camera shot is used more on them: 37.7%, while with the other phenotypes this is only executed in 18%. This is due to the fact that these are advertisement models where the main characters are emphasized in a single camera shot at the start and at the end of the spot and they tend to be mostly natives or White-Caucasian, as we have confirmed in the previous section.

Table 3. Interconnections of protagonists of spots with diversity.

Interactions	Other phenotypes	White-Caucasian	Total aggregated
Conjunctural	20 15.6%	27 11.7%	47 13.1%
Structural	49 38.3%	53 22.9%	102 28.4%
Structural and conjunctural	20 15.6%	47 20.3%	67 18.7%
<b>Total interactions</b>	<b>89 69.5%</b>	<b>127 54.9%</b>	<b>216 60.2%</b>
Do not occur	16 12.5%	17 7.4%	33 9.2%
Do not interact due to editing (transition by cut)	23 18.0%	87 37.7%	110 30.6%
<b>Total Interactions plus no interactions</b>	<b>128 100.0%</b>	<b>231 100.0%</b>	<b>359 100.0%</b>

Source: MIGRACOM-UAB.

To confirm whether those interconnections of protagonists of different identities are inclusive or discriminatory we consider, besides the type of egalitarian or hierarchical relationship between them. But since it is not possible to quantify it, we show how we analyzed it, from the qualitative perspective, with some of the most significant examples, collected following criteria such as the maximum diffusion and impact of advertisement units with diversity of the sample analysed.

### 3.3. Inclusive advertisement practices: selection of examples

One of the examples where a type of structural interconnection occurs or in a same space or setting, in this case, among characters, is the spot of the company 11822 of telephone consultations. We see a woman of another phenotype signing in the chorus (see illustration 1) as another more member. In the camera shot selected no hierarchical or discriminatory relationship is observed. It can be considered a



good advertisement practice because this protagonist is given the same treatment compared to the rest of components with different physical traits compared to her. Said treatment may also be considered inclusive because it can evoke the same standardization of intercultural communication among message recipients.

The spot also considers gender equality (there are 11 men and 11 women), even the diversities of constitution, hair type, height, age and even different physical traits of characters with the same skin color. However, it is an atypical Gospel chorus. Usually all singers are of black skin and Afro-American origin. However, considering that the field of reception is then Spanish society, a better phenotypical representation, in compliance with the multicultural reality, would entail incorporating another additional protagonist of another phenotype (perhaps a man) and also position the black skinned woman in the spots of maximum interest within the frame (according with the rule of thirds), in the first line, and performing a leading role such as playing the piano.

**Illustration 1. Image selected from the storyboard of 11822.**



Source: MIGRACOM-UAB.

One of the spots with diversity of the sample is destined to remind the World Down Syndrome Day. In this case, there is a type of interaction that is mainly conjunctural because there interact people of different roles. Just like the previous spot, all characters sing and dance together. It is about an example of inclusive advertisement because it shows the diversities, not only phenotypical but also functional (called handicap or disabilities), interacting with complete normality among them and inviting message recipients to actively participate in the campaign with their dance and song. It is a clear exponent of advertisement message that can evoke the same process of inclusive intercultural dynamization. One of the main protagonists is the man in the medium shot of the following illustration.


**Illustration 2. Camera shot of the advertisement about the World Down Syndrome Day.**




Source: MIGRACOM-UAB.

San Miguel campaign, a Spanish beer brand, is another example of inclusive advertisement practice, dynamizer of interculturality, where we can observe all kinds of interconnections (conjunctural and structural) between protagonists of different phenotypes and origins, without perceiving any kind of hierarchical nor discriminatory relationship between them. In the analysed sample we obtained two spots, one of 60 seconds and another one of 40, where we can see how people of different phenotypes and geographic origins interact, interpreting, through different music styles, the same song (*A Place Called World*), titled the same way of the campaign’s slogan: “A Place Called World” and which conveys a model of global coexistence between all the cultures of the world.

**Illustration 3. Selection of images from the storyboard of the campaign “A place called world” of San Miguel (60”).**

Camera shot	Description
	<p>From the initial framing, using middle shots and close-ups of John Legend, polifacetic artist (singer, composer, pianist and actor) North American, born in Springfield, Ohio.</p> <p>We move to Anni B. Sweet by cut, Andalusian Singer, born in Malaga, who sings in English in the spot.</p> <p>Next, Dan Croll, born in Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, England, clear exponent of Indie Rock music.</p> <p>Moving though medium and long shots of a young urban public that could belogn to any multicultural city.</p>

Camera shot	Description
	<p>Then we move to the rapper from Albacete Nach,..</p> <p>...to the members of "The Zombie Kids", a duet comprised by Edgar Candel Kerri (born in Barcelona) and Cumhuri Jay (born in Turkey), of beats music.</p> <p>And ends with Javier Limón, music producer and presenter of the program <i>Europa FM</i>, of the same name as the song and slogan of the campaign "A Place Called World. "</p>

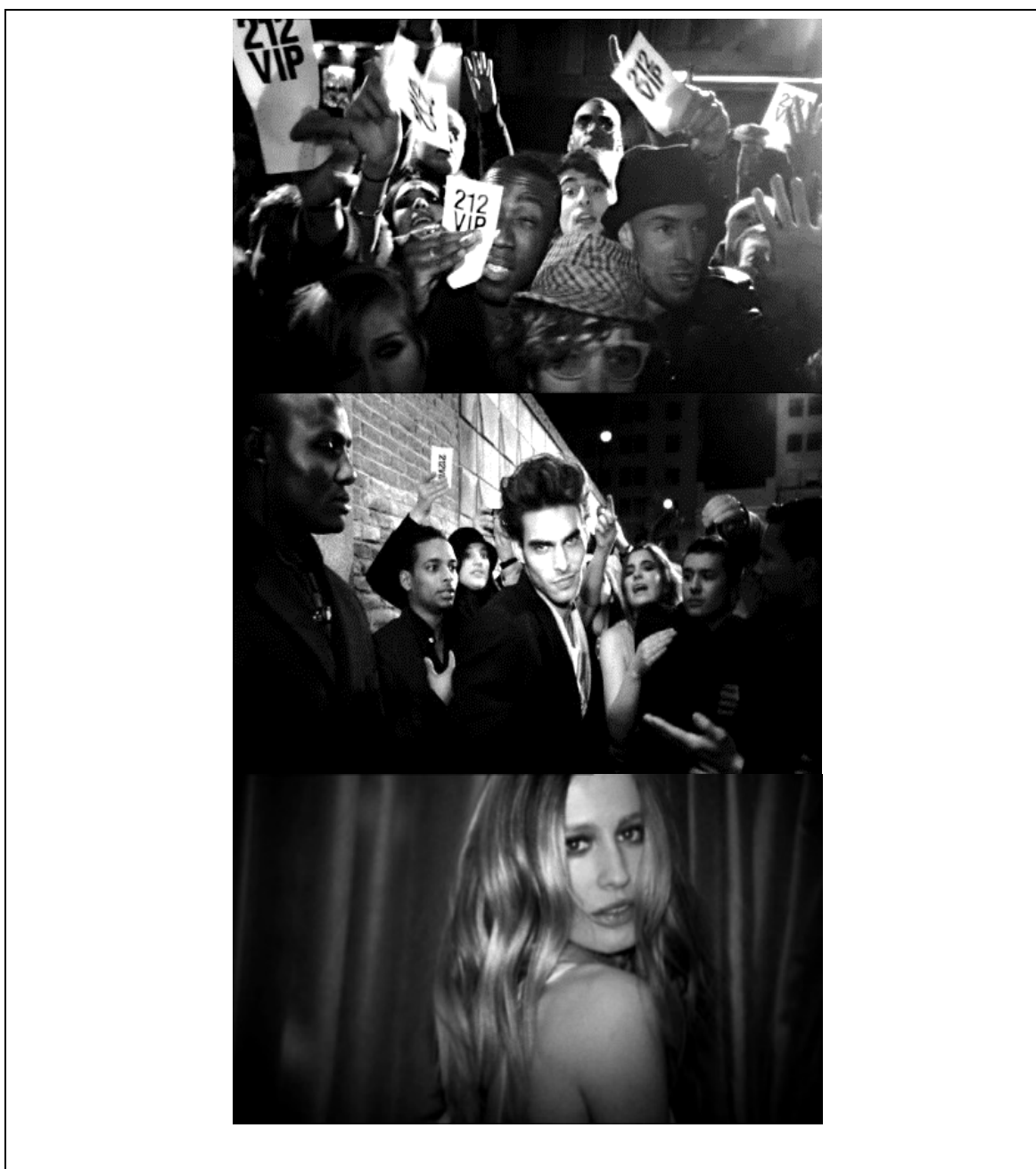
Source: MDA-CAC and MIGRACOM-UAB.

In this case, it is important to highlight the perspective of the production and the brands' commitment with the standardization of diversity. It is part of the advertisers' objective. The brand wanted to create an "ode to the mixture and unión of all citizens of the world" [5]. It is about a spot produced with the support of the agency SCPF of Barcelona, where there work publicists and creative professionals like

Toni Segarra, who defend these kind of intercultural and inclusive proposals, as manifested in the interview performed for this study.

*Carolina Herrera's* spot, advertising its product *212 VIP*, could be a type of advertisement that even though it considers diversity, it seems to set it aside to a secondary plane of secondary and incidental characters that wait at the door, and that some watchmen must “vigilate” so that they let the VIP elite through, represented by two main characters, a man and a woman, apparently top models, of occidental traits and skin colors we can see in the following illustration, very different from the man that appears in the first image in the centre of the frame:

**Illustration 4. Selection of camera shots from the storyboard of *212 VIP*.**

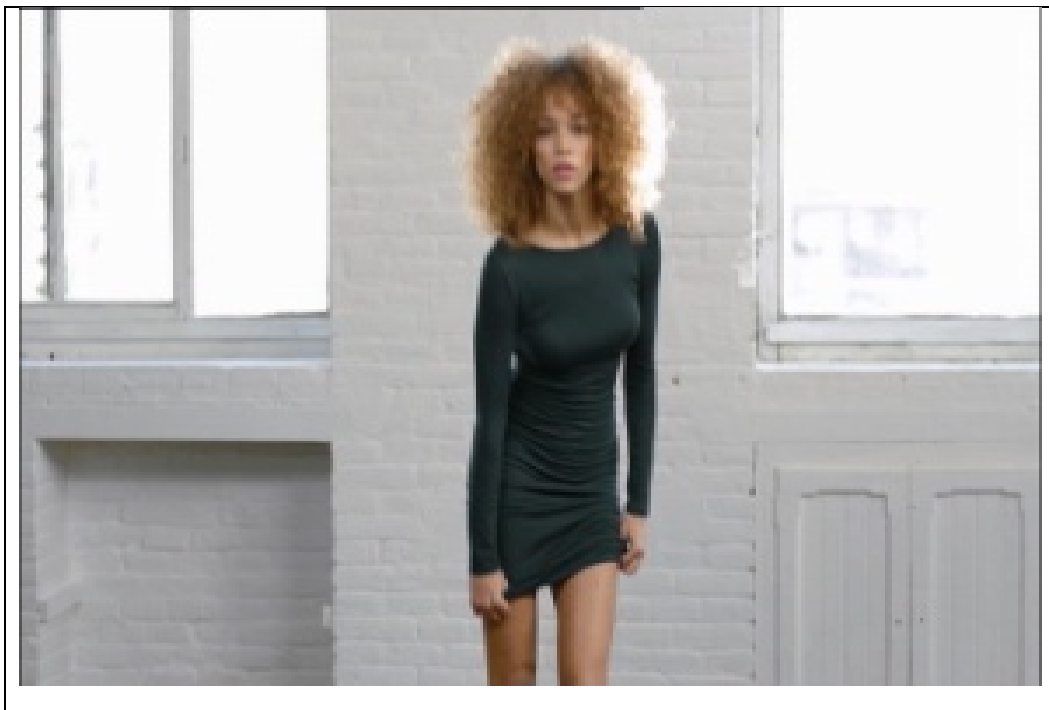


Source: MIGRACOM-UAB.

### 3.4. From the analysis of broadcast to the production and reception analysis

One of the examples where there is no communication between characters, because the camera shots of each one are associated through transitions by cut, is the Norit campaign. We consider this spot includes phenotypical diversity because we evidence there appears the woman on illustration 5. It is a secondary protagonist, with hair and skin color different from the rest, who appears on seconds 10 and 11, just in the middle, of the spot's 20 seconds duration. The visual treatment is similar to the rest of authors. However, the audiovisual synchrony is eye-catching. While we see her adjusting her dress, through the three fourths or American shot of illustration 5, a voice in *off* can be heard, in a standard Spanish registry, stating: "...its color, its shape...", at the rhythm of the music (a type of classical and extradiegetic music) of a single instrument, a piano, that accompanies the whole spot in sonorous secondary camera shot or close-up.

#### Illustration 5. Camera shot of Norit's storyboard.



Source: MIGRACOM-UAB

We can consider said synchrony as not so appropriate because it highlights only those two aspects of a phenotype like that which may outstand due to both conditions, but we see this is also used with other actors. Previously the *off* associates the word "brand" with the woman dressed in red, a garment that seems to be more of a brand or label, instead of the sports clothing of the only man appearing in the spot.

We can also observe that the spot's settings and surroundings tend to not so saturated luminous colors and its general outlook is somewhat gray and dark and therefore, typical from certain urban environments of historical occidental developed cities. However, what catches the attention of said chromatic and musical treatment is that it is usually associated with middle socioeconomic class contexts where a homogeneous phenotype predominates and which appears represented in almost the complete advertisement, except when there is the woman of the different phenotype in the core of the narrative storyline.

Nevertheless, at this point of the qualitative audiovisual analysis we deem necessary to verify our subjective perspective of content analysis from the actual spot's production. It is convenient to recall that we perform our research from proposals of action research and applied audiovisual research, destined to discover and suggest inclusive advertisement practices. Therefore, we defend the objectivity granted by the methodological multimodality, try to gather the maximum information from the perspective of the production of advertisement messages (in this case of advertisement agencies, *casting*, audiovisual producers, as well as from communication teams of advertising companies and institutions and organizations that perform a fundamental role in the standardization of diversity in advertisement and of diversity in general) [6].

**Illustration 6. Camera shorts of Norit's storyboard.**



Source: MIGRACOM-UAB

One of the specialists interviewed, Xavi Sitjar, director of the agency Paradise Falls and creative staff of the advertisement of Norit's campaign, considered that: “[...] we incorporated a *mulatto* girl [because] [...] in this advertisement we talked a lot about the diversity of clothes, of the different garments we used in the everyday life, the diversity of colors, this diversity is part of the brand's patrimony.” On his part, Jordi Picas, creative staff of the agency and the campaign, argued that with it, they aimed to convey the idea that:

“[...] our product *Norit* washes the clothes in a way or conceives clothes in a different way, it is not only about washing, but instead, it listens, understanding that you have spend your time, your money in looking a kind of clothing that conveys your values ...”

In spite of that, it is not an omnipresent diversity:

“frankly, it has been difficult to perceive an extraordinary sample of diversity mostly because several typologies appear and they are all traditional Caucasian, however, it is true that the second time you watch it, you discover there is a girl that is somewhat more diverse, isn’t it?” (Toni Segarra, publicist)

Although, as Joan Rión says (director of the casting agency *Vadever*): “[...] in Norit’s case, it has bet on diversity... it opened the characters’ scope a little bit.” This proposal is not exempt from risks, since brands cautiously weight every choice affecting the final image of the brand that can be associated to the company through the generated spot [7]: “the agency can provide a creative idea, but the one saying yes or no is the advertiser, the one that risks is the advertiser or the one who is afraid to risk himself is the advertiser.” (José Ángel Abancens, Publicist and President of the Association of Advertisement Businessmen). And all that, “not because the brand is the one investing money and risk, but because it is the one that finally adds Audacity.” (Toni Segarra, publicist, SCPF agency).

Thus, there is a certain consensus among advertisement professionals about the suitability of advertisements with characters that are phenotypically diverse (skin color, constitution, height...), but also in recognizing the limitations the client might impose out of fear for the consequences that may have for his business, the fact of making a choice the audience considers incorrect. But also, there is a relevant factor in this sense: the actual sociodemographic context the audience is inserted in:

“I believe there is no bad will in it, but simply that they are the great forgotten. I think that as this group of people coexists with us, from other cultures, other races, as they acquire economic capacities, economic weight in our society, they will be incorporating in the different brand campaigns [...] Perhaps in other societies whereas a hundred years ago people from different cultures incorporated, they are no longer seen as foreigners [...] For us, they are new and even if you don’t want to, the society still considers them foreigners, that they are not from here” (Ton del Pozo, Dean of the College of Publicists and Public Relations of Catalonia.)

And not seldom, the reality evidences the weight of our own biases. From the study of the broadcasting, we code this woman as a protagonist of different phenotype in a subjective manner, but from the study of the production said interpretation is nuanced and even decomposes us a lot: “[...] I know that she originally lives here in Barcelona and I am aware she has British origins, therefore I understand she has African origins, I understand these could be part of her origins, she could come from Africa” (Xavi Sitjar).

Finally, it is worth asking: How is the phenotype of the Norit woman perceived by the different segments of the audience and how they react towards the audiovisual narrative construction of diversity? We answer this question from a third perspective of the multimodal analysis: of the study of reception and dinamization of the representation of diversity in advertisement. Therefore, we could carry out a specific study in Spain and in Brazil [8] among 249 students of Spanish (85.54%) and Brazilian (14.45%) universities. One of the main objectives we were looking for, was analysing the impact of advertisement on reality through the effect of its narrative and discursive strategies in an education field sector (students). Therefore, we designed this education research approach as educational resource of great potential value through the work with spots such as Norit (Lorite García and Grau Rebollo, 2017).

This incorporation of students to the reflection about the representation of phenotypical diversity on television advertisement allowed appreciating that the Classroom is also diverse at interpretative level,

despite a certain recurrence in the association of some phenotypes with specific ethnic and geographical origins. In this sense, it is still interesting that participants always attribute a foreign origin to selected characters, discarding beforehand the possibility that any of them could be Catalan or Spanish as in the case of the Norit's actress spot.

Said ideological connections also operate at the level of subjective concepts of normality (Shankar, 2015). Thus, for instance, it is revealing that up to seventeen respondents identified a specific color with a «standardized» skin tone (referring to it as: “flesh tone”, “skin color”, “*color da pele*”, “standard tone”, etc.). This relevance is not thanks to its statistical weight over the total of sample (they only constituted 9%) but instead, due to what it allows to suspect about the existence of reference patterns about that issue (Shankar, 2015; Baladrón, 2011).

Thus, after being asked about whether they consider the treatment of diversity perceived in advertisement units such as Norit, as an example of inclusive advertisement practice, we found in our study that the most recurrent factors when it comes to conferring said condition to a spot, were associated to explicit manifestation of diversity regarding age and gender, as well as the variety of outlooks and sociodemographic profiles perceived within the framework of a same spot. On the contrary, caricaturization is manifested as the threshold of tolerance of a stereotype; that is: the point from where the ideological distortion (always from an evident physical disposition) is considered denigrant or offensive.

#### **4. Conclusions and recommendations for the inclusive advertisement practice**

We added recommendations to these conclusions because we are not aiming solely to summarize the most significant findings, but also to emphasize, as the title conveys and as has been exposed in the text herein, which can be some of the elements present in an inclusive (television) audiovisual advertisement:

1. As demonstrated, all inclusive proposal emerges from quantitative results and qualitative analysis obtained from applying a methodology of multimodal analysis that feeds mainly of objective samples of spots. It is necessary to articulate the critics of the advertisement discourse from this initial abstraction so not to derive only towards the critical analysis of representation of diversity that circulate on social networks and which ends up considering that all advertisement is stereotyped and, therefore, racist and xenophobe.
2. To avoid interpreting the advertisement from our subjective and ideologic perspective –although we agree with Ruiz Olabuénaga (2012) about the unavoidable character of a certain subjective component and in its potential heuristic value– we need to establish theoretical concepts that allow to evaluate it in an objective manner, as inclusive (television) audiovisual advertisement. Said “obsession” by objectivity (Chalmers, 2000) is related to the action research models and applied audiovisual research we articulated to link the Academy with the Classroom and both of them, with the multicultural reality, specifically with organizations and institutions ensuring that minorities are not discriminated in advertisement messages.
3. We could confirm that the television advertisement with diversity barely considers the real sociodemographic variety and when it does, the main protagonists are still White/ Caucasian natives. Protagonists of phenotypes associated with other continents (African, Latin-American or Asian) mainly represent secondary or incidental roles, as could be confirmed also on studies oriented to the field of television fiction (Marcos *et al*, 2014). It is worth suggesting a greater participation of phenotypical diversity in spots, although it must be done from intercultural dinamizing perspectives that are able to show personal and group interactions, structural and



conjunctural, in different contexts and situations, under equal conditions, such as examples shown (11822, *World Down Syndrome Day* and *San Miguel*).

4. The participation of “the others” in the audiovisual (television) advertisement is inclusive if it shows and promotes intercultural communication and does not evoke clasist, racist and xenophobe discrimination. We observed how this is achieved when the same visual treatment is used, as well as the same camera shots or framing to all characters of the selected spot. But we also observe how elements of the advertisement discourse as relevant as color and music keep being monocultural (typical from the Spanish, European or traditional occidental culture) instead of multicultural (Martínez Corcuera, 2005; Muraca, 2013). For instance, in Norit’s spot we heard a piano but not an Andean flute. Gray tones have a prominence, but not yellow nor red.
  5. Considering reccomendantions of Sendín and Izquierdo (2008), we have shown how the interpretations of the advertisement from the study of broadcast or spots content analysis need to be compared from production and reception to interpret identities correctly and analyse them from the nuances required to adequately regulate on inclusive advertisement. Sometimes we are obliged to sinthetize the denomination of protagonists to add data and carry out its quantitative interpretation, but it is evident that the mediatization of diversity must be interpreted in the same heterogeneous manner, so to be able to investigate it based on its own denomination and without falling in certain quantitativists reductionist biases.
  6. We consider there should be a regular monitoring, through new samples and multimodal analysis, to comprehend the possible changes of the reproduction of the phenotypical diversity in advertisement, from the demographic changes that may happen in migrations receptor societies, such as the Spanish, and after some first steps in awareness-gaining in this sense together with institutions responsible of dinamizing inclusive advertisement (Table for Diversity in Audiovisual Media of CAC, College of Publicists and Public Relations of Catalonia or the Association of Advertisement Businessmen). Therefore, the sociodemographic traits of audience segments should be taken more in mind, as well as reception contexts of messages.
  7. And, lastly, it is convenient to warn about the fact that we tried to lead by example and were extremely cautious about the terms used to refer to the different characters analysed. However, we have seen that sometimes there is no other way than to skip standards and name White-Caucasian characters in such a way to be able to differentiate them adequately from those who not have these traits, ending up calling inadequately “other” phenotypes. Sometimes using only, the neutral name of ‘character’ with all actors is not enough. However, the audiovisual analysis sometimes allows sparing the textual term, because it is already present in the image. We perceive it as different and let each individual to attribute it his or her own term, leting each one to name diversity based on his or her way of understanding it or interpreting it. This is a relevant challenge to apply to the inclusive audiovisual production but also for the scientific knowledge and specially for an applied audiovisual research pending of not stereotyping the scientific analysis of stereotypes.
- This paper has been elaborated from data obtained in the following research projects: (1) ‘Multimodal study on the representation of diversity in the Spanish advertisement and intercultural effects in cities of the Mediterranean in times of crisis’, funded by MINECO (CSO2012-35771); (2) *Publicitat audiovisual i diversidad sociocultural a Catalunya. Materials per a un tractament inclusiu: ¿estereotips, llenguatge, imatge, gènere i valors*, for the Table for Diversity in Audiovisual Media of the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia (CAC); (c) Advertisement, propaganda, otherness and citizenship: trans-methodological strategies of the analysis of diversity in contexts of economic and social change in Brazil

and Spain, funded by CAPES (Brazil) and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of Spain (HPB1400030).

## 5. Notes

[1] This has been the proposal from the first studies we conducted in MIGRACOM-UAB, since the middle of the 90s, of action-research and applied audiovisual research, about the treatment of immigration, minorities and sociocultural diversity on information and mass media.

[2] “We haven’t thought about this and probably neither agencies, nor clients, we didn’t even talk about it in the College until you, from MIGRACOM expressed this concern ...” (Interview to Ton del Pozo, Dean of the College of Publicists and Public Relations of Catalonia).

[3] <https://www.cac.cat/index.jsp>.

[4]

<https://www.cac.cat/web/mesa/index.jsp?NjM%3D&Mg%3D%3D&L3dlYi9tZXNhL29iamVjdGl1c0NvbnRlbnQ%3D>.

[5] Retrieved on November 25, 2017 from: <http://www.lascancionesdelatele.com/2014/07/cancion-anuncio-san-miguel-2014.html> and <http://www.anuncioshd.com/2014/07/cancion-anuncio-san-miguel-2014-un.html#ixzz4ZQyoGVhs>

[6] We selected a sample of a total of 38 specialists, using the video camera as main tool of applied audiovisual research that aims to be also a scientific manner of showing research results (Lorite García and Grau Rebollo, 2013), among them: Toni Segarra (SCPF agency), Joaquin Lorente (publicist, founder of MMLB), Miquel Campmany (marketing and communication director of Nestlé), Mireia Verdú (director of the models agency Francinamodels), Joan Rió (Casting director of Vadever), Ton del Pozo (Dean of the College of Publicists and Public Relations of Catalonia), José Ángel Abancens (president of the Association of Advertisement Businessmen and Vicepresident of the Advertisement Academy), Richard Wakefield (founder of *Publicitarios Implicados*), Salvador Alsius (member of the Council of Audiovisual Media of Catalonia), Carme Figueres (president of the Table for Diversity in the Audiovisual Media of CAC), Beatriu Guarro (president of *SOS Racismo Cataluña*) and Rafael Besolí (responsible of Communication of the Program *BCN Interculturalidad*).

[7] “When you are in charge and responsible of developing a brand’s communication, you must understand that advertisement talks for the product.” (Joaquín Lorente, publicist).

[8] Destined to the Multimodal study on the representation of diversity in the Spanish advertisement and intercultural effects in cities of the Mediterranean in times of crisis, for MINECO (CSO2012-35771).

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