Representation of Ethnic Diversity in Online Advertising Images of Fashion Brands (2010-2019)

Alicia Luna López

BA in Advertising and Public Relations - Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Carles Roca-Cuberes

Author Note

To SFU SOCA, for inspiring the idea of this whole project through its fight for inclusivity, representation, community-building, and social justice.
Abstract

The following research is conducted on how ethnic and cultural diversity is used as a branding strategy in online communication images of fashion brands, how is it exploited in the creation and selling of clothing products, and how it may relate to the brands’ corporate identity. The research is grounded on a qualitative content analysis method that analyzed a total of 50 images posted in social media platforms or corporate websites of several global fashion brands. The motivation behind this research is the fact that the use of cultural diversity and racialized minorities in advertising images as a branding tool is bringing the attention away from major political and social issues, such as discrimination based on ethnicity and cultural appropriation, in favor of some neoliberal brands that build a superficial, ungrounded discourse of social engagement in order to profit. Is a brand promoting equality more than another because it shows cultural diversity in its advertisements? Is it portraying ethnic minorities the way they should be depicted, that is, true to their cultural values and own identities? The strategies used to represent values of ethnic and cultural equality, diversity and inclusion in advertising are sometimes poorly researched, misused, overused, and blend in a pool of brands whose discourses often draw upon tokenism or cultural appropriation, among other techniques that damage the social identity of ethnic minorities. Research found that the choice of main character for online images of fashion brands, as well as techniques to sell narratives and lifestyles through fashion products, were the most common and relevant features in online fashion advertising. It also found that the fashion industry has evolved in terms of inclusion of non-White models, and it is learning to present ethnically diverse models without perpetuating unequal relations of power that favor their White counterparts. Lastly, forms of cultural appropriation in both clothing goods and brands’ communication materials are still used frequently, although there is also a growing trend of
cultural appreciation that shifts away from the White hegemonic cultural norm, and contributes to make other ethnicities and cultures visible in contemporary consumer culture.

*Keywords:* Ethnic diversity, online advertising, branded activism, cultural appropriation, consumer culture, content analysis.
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Representation of Ethnic Diversity in Online Advertising Images of Fashion Brands (2010-2019)

1. Introduction

Fashion doesn’t only refer to the clothes we wear, but also the trends and movements that are present in our society. Forms of style, slang speech, and socio-political movements are defined by trends that are in fashion in a specific time frame and geographical context. Advertising is one of the tools of a broad system of communications that helps shape and feedback those movements. In every country, there is a system that filters the messages and images that are repeated on the media for several audiences to recognize certain topics as priorities. Those are what are known as trending topics.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how ethnic and cultural diversity is represented in online advertising, due to the great impact that the portrayal and/or stereotyping of ethnic minorities has in Euro-American-centered societies. Specifically, debates on how fashion brands encourage discourses of misrepresentation or cultural appropriation have been rising across the world. The interest behind this study relies on the importance of including a properly researched representation of the reality and identity of ethnic minorities in advertising, that avoids forms of stereotyping, cultural appropriation or tokenism (that is, collecting models or images that stereotype several cultures to give an appearance of inclusiveness, as if they were tokens), in order to recognize and include non-White audiences. The goal is to find some of the effects that different representations of ethnic diversity in online advertising may have on contemporary consumer culture. The object of study are advertising images of fashion brands, both pictures and videos, published between 2010 and 2019 in social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) or corporate websites, since they have an intercultural and almost global
reach. Brands include Reebok, H&M, United Colors of Benetton, or Gucci, among others; as well as well-known fashion designers.

This research will begin with an exhaustive literature review on three main areas of interest for this study: implications of post post-modern consumer culture, the power of advertising and branding as socio-cultural constructs, and the history, causes and consequences of representation of ethnic and cultural diversity in advertising. Then, the method selected to analyze the images selected was qualitative content analysis. The design of the content analysis protocol has been inspired by the literature review and by several activists from different ethnic backgrounds, whose online content helped define some patterns in the ways different cultures are presented in online mass advertising of mainstream fashion brands.

In this study, culture will be considered as the ideas, customs, lifestyle and social interactions of a particular group of people. Therefore, when referring to cultural or ethnic minorities, that is those groups of people whose cultures are not hegemonic in the Western society (i.e., non-White cultures):

“The term ethnicity refers to shared culture and background. Ethnic groups may be formed around nationality, religion, physical attributes, or geographic location. [...] An ethnic group is a cultural group with several distinguishing characteristics, and it can be defined as a group that shares a common history, tradition, and sense of peoplehood”. (Jikyeong & Youn-Kyung, 1998, p. 97)

During the last decade, and as said before, what has been considered to be ‘cool’ or ‘in fashion’ among mostly young individuals, is yet another wave of styles that have been appropriated from other, less privileged cultures than the dominant White cultural norm. As it is demonstrated in this research, contemporary consumer culture is characterized by the figure of the consumer-citizen, that is, consumers define trends that brands -and in this case, fashion brands- follow and perpetuate, so that more consumers adopt them, redefine new identities and
trends, and so on. For instance, long nails, braided hairstyles, oversized clothes, or dreadlocks, which are Black cultural traits that have historically been considered to be dirty, “ghetto” styles, are now trendy because the dominant White culture has appropriated them. On the other hand, kimonos, once a symbol of cultural resistance for the Japanese, are now a chic complement to the hegemonic fashion culture. Internet and social media ads by fashion brands have contributed to this effect by cherry-picking said items from ethnic minorities, and using them in White models that fit Euro-American beauty standards. Items that represent, or are rooted in the identity of certain cultures are used as stereotyping tools, reducing those ethnic minorities to tokens for White culture.

Following recent scandals that involved racist communication and cultural appropriation in the fashion industry, this research takes a look on how are fashion brands representing cultural minorities, how are they using these depictions as a branding strategy, and how misrepresentation scandals came to be in the current context of consumer culture. Many times, their campaigns result in outrageous viral mistakes that backlash, due to lack of proper previous research, of basic knowledge on determined ethnic minorities, and of cultural diversity in their very own marketing and managing teams, apart from only in their advertising imagery:

“The fact that such designs can be authorized by so many people within an organization is deeply concerning. [...] How is it that the directors of design, e-commerce, press and sales all managed to turn a blind eye to something so obviously offensive?” (Lawson, 2019).

It is important to mention how authors like Bell Hooks already denounced and reflected upon race and representation in the media -and advertising- back in the 1990s. In her own words, “white supremacists have recognized that control over images is central to the maintenance of any system of racial domination” (Hooks, 1992, p. 2). Taking a critical gaze at images that we, as either White people or citizens of societies dominated by White culture, constantly normalize, is
crucial in a moment where images play such an important role in a world saturated by them. As consumer citizens, we need to acknowledge that advertising images are not innocent, they are political, and that social politics of domination rule how they are constructed and marketed.

“[We] must be willing to critically intervene and transform the world of images making authority of place in our political movements of liberation and self-determination. If this were the case, we would consider crucial both the kind of images we produce and the way we critically write and talk about them. Most importantly, we would rise to the challenge to speak that which has not been spoken” (Hooks, 1992, p. 4).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Post Post-modern Consumer Culture

Back in the 1960s, the first marketing strategies focused on the characteristics of products, and how to sell them to an undifferentiated mass audience. Communication and promotional materials of brands were merely centered in the products or services being sold, showing almost no human presence. Of course, all human representations and communication messages were aimed to and represented the hegemonic, white supremacist culture of the ‘massive audience’. Brands showed few to no ethnic minorities in their advertisements, unless it was to perpetuate stereotypes and systems of oppression to non-White sectors of the population. These types of communication showed that the steps that would make social change in communication were not yet allowed in our society (Hooks, 1992).

In the Fordist capitalism of the mid-20th century, broadcast media and political subjectivity were formulated collectively. Advertising and marketing relied on cultural stereotypes that reproduced and normalized dynamics from the political sphere that privileged White middle-class families. Communication strategies facilitated relationships between political and social identities and specific consumption behavior, a practice that only increased as new
cultural markets were created and capitalized upon. Those excluded from the hegemonic consumer category (white, heterosexual, Christian, middle-class male) were encouraged by the media to become an “ideal consumer citizen”, that is, by purchasing items that characterized the dominant stereotype, one could build their identity to fit a more accepted standard in society. Some advertisers recognized Black people as a potentially lucrative market, so they used political ideals of freedom and equality to attract their consumption and that of other non-White consumers. This is what Banet-Weiser called ideals of citizenship: freedom, equality and democracy, versus ideals of consumerism: individual satisfaction and profit. Consumer culture and political ideals were connected beyond profit motive. Social values previously tied to politics, such as freedom, democracy and equality, were then accessible through consumer capitalism: “individual consumerism as the means to achieve the promise of social change and prosperity” (Banet-Weiser, 2003, p. 23). However, this awareness that consumer choices could be political was the beginning of the later commodity activism.

Later on, in the post-modern era, brands started to see that the production and consumption spheres weren’t opposite spheres in society, that audiences produced meaning to the brands with their acts of consuming. Therefore, there is not one massive audience, but many differentiated publics that can be categorized following diverse criteria (age, sex, class, habitus, taste, etc), and the values of whom brands need to connect with. Branding and marketing strategies started to include more human presence and trying to appeal to the emotional values of audiences. In the 1980s, clothing brands like United Colors of Benetton or Gucci started to focus their production, communication, and marketing techniques to different positionings in the fashion industry. During post-Fordism, or late capitalism, at the end of the 20th century, audiences were differentiated by specific racialized or gendered groups, and their identities were
imagined and marketed to accordingly. Niche marketing turned identities into market categories. With niche marketing, another ideal came into place: authenticity. The “authentic” consumer, that is, the hegemonic category of the White, middle-class consumer, became a dominant representation in advertising. On the other hand, in cultural politics, “difference” manifested itself within the politics of visibility: “marginalized groups struggled against the exclusionary strategies built into mass production and fought to gain recognition of their identities” (Banet-Weiser, 2003). Representation and media visibility, then, became key in issues regarding equality and collective empowerment. The power of visibility created a way for advertisers and marketers to capitalize on socio-political struggles, positioning “authenticity” as a key component. Marketing “real” identities as an attempt to delegitimize public accusations of the manipulation and inauthenticity of advertising. This began to develop a “relationship between consumer and producer that is now central to the neoliberal strategy of building culture within the structures of branding and marketing” (Banet-Weiser, 2003, p. 33).

“When considering habits of consumption within advanced capitalism, and what that tells us about our identities and our relationships, we also must consider the equally important, but more abstract, notion of what constitutes a commodity in the first place. Is racial or gender identity a commodity? Can the pursuit of social justice be commodified? What does that mean for individuals, institutions, and politics? Exploring the ramifications of commodification means considering what it means to be a social activist in an environment that above all else values self-empowerment and entrepreneurial individualism.” (Banet-Weiser, 2003, p. 20)

In the contemporary era, or what Holt (2002) calls the post post-modern era, effective marketing has needed to escalate yet one more level, and it has gone from emotional marketing to social marketing. Post post-modern marketing takes in account the current social activism movements that are taking action in the streets of the Western world, such as feminism, anti-racism, or the LGTBQ+ equality movement, among others. Brands, and in this case, fashion
brands, have quickly understood the necessity to engage with these fights in order to connect with their audiences, especially if a big percentage of these audiences are directly affected by oppression and discrimination, as they are.

“Contemporary consumers [...] deploy consumer goods and a generally available media culture to produce an ethical surplus in the form of a social relation, a shared meaning or, more generally, a commodity.” Then, “brand managers [use] trend scouting and other kinds of market research to ensure that the ethical surplus produced by consumers adds dimensions of use-value to the branded good.” (Arvidsson, 2005, p. 249)

The current individuated marketing and neoliberal labor practices are characterized by the blurring of consumer and producer identities. The advanced capitalist dynamics manage and design identities and diversity in the form of brands. The key component in contemporary consumer culture is now “engagement”, that is the elaboration of relationships between producers and consumers. Immaterial labor becomes part of a process of economic experimentation with the creation of monetary value out of culture (Arvidsson, 2005). The real-life struggles of power in the world fuel the production and maintenance of brand cultures. In this production of culture, concepts, ideas and images are items of more value than monetary benefits from products and services. This means that consumer power, through participation in this economy, can redefine those concepts and images. In the neoliberal era, the ideals of consumerism focus on individualism, choice and freedom.

“Within advanced capitalist culture, social activism is understood and experienced as a material good, as an object that has exchange value with other products. [...] The social activist in its current manifestation is managed, organized, and exchanged as a brand. [...] Political ideals such as equality, freedom, and empowerment are realized through the practices of consumption and consumer citizenship. [...] When current identities are configured as “post-racial”, older political paradigms that once mobilized
social activism no longer have the same cultural or economic capital; their community struggles are easier
to dismiss, and their victories are easier to ignore” (Banet-Weiser, 2003, p. 48)

Since the beginning, United Colors of Benetton has always bet on powerful, rule-breaking campaigns in alignment with their corporate values of sustainability and equality, which gave them major media resonance and social impact. This is one of the reasons why other clothing brands have followed this trend, and included models from many ethnic backgrounds in their campaigns, as well as promoting equality and cultural diversity. Brands such as H&M, Zara, and even higher end ones, like Gucci or Supreme, want to be trendy and progressive, but mostly viral, because in the contemporary world, likes on social media will most likely translate into sales. Although, ironically, “Benetton’s approach to cultural “inclusion” has been widely criticized as perpetuating stereotypes of difference – an ironic result that illustrates the complex intersection of identity, representation, and marketing within the global economy” (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 594). However, reality shows that these fashion brands, so different in their market positioning, usually have a common denominator in their communication campaigns, which is the fact that they fail to represent ethnic and cultural groups in ways that consumers who belong to them are able to identify themselves in. “The original context of any product is that of its production” (Williamson, 1988, p. 229). Truth is, the inclusion, diversity and sense of equality that are sometimes seen in this kind of campaigns are far different from the reality behind the advertising brand and company. From the designs of their products, which often come from cultural appropriation; to the confection of the clothes, which don’t usually follow fair trade regulations; to the use of the kind of advertising images mentioned before, fashion brands perpetuate differences arbitrarily imposed and maintained by white supremacy, hidden behind their neoliberal masks (Hooks, 1992).
“Brands are today under attack by an emerging countercultural movement. [...] Intrinsic contradictions erased the efficacy of the modern cultural engineering paradigm of branding, premised upon a consumer culture that granted marketers cultural authority. The current postmodern consumer culture, which is premised upon the pursuit of personal sovereignty through brands, [...] is now giving rise to new contradictions that have inflamed the antibranding sentiment sweeping Western countries. [...] They will give rise to a new post-postmodern branding paradigm premised upon brands as citizen-artists” (Holt, 2002, p. 70).

Holt proposes these three stages of the evolution of consumer culture. By the 1990s, four techniques became popular to present brands as relevant, authentic, cultural entities. These techniques still prevail in contemporary consumer culture: (1) ironic, reflexive brand persona, to distance the brand from the negative connotations of persuasion that advertising has; (2) coat tailing on cultural epicenters, that is, forging a relationship with a determined community to create the impression that the brand belongs to that community and is not a cultural parasite; (3) life world emplacement, or what we know as storytelling, sometimes used to detach the brand from its real history and consumption; and (4) stealth breathing, or the use of influencers. This postmodern paradigm has its own, new, intrinsic contradictions that are starting to threaten its efficacy and have originated anti-branding movements. The saturated and somewhat homogenic competition between brands, as well as techniques grounded in basic deceit motivated by profit motive, seem to especially infuriate the audience (Holt, 2002, pp. 84-85). Contradiction one, compressed ironic distance, emerged when most brands started using ironic distancing from commerce, since it became clear that it is, in fact, a commercial technique. The second contradiction is what Holt calls “the sponsored society”, or how the overuse of influencers is damaging authenticity and increasing criticism. Another contradiction that is extinguishing authenticity is how postmodern branding is relying on trying to find countercultures that are still untouched to be able to sponsor them. Contradiction number four is enhanced by the Internet and
social media: “peeling away the brand veneer” is the movement that demands corporations to reveal their true identities and backstage activities to public scrutiny. This is blurring the boundaries between internal organization and external branding, which requires, once more, that companies publicly align all of their processes, from design to communication, to their core values. Lastly, sovereignty inflation is the constant urge to identify oneself through brands and consumption. “Consumers want to author their lives, but they are looking for ghostwriters to help them out”, and that’s where the work of advertising becomes relevant in defining meaning (Holt, 2002, p. 87).

“The consumption of goods is crucial not only to the economy but to the ideology which supports it. (…) The conscious, chosen meaning in most people’s lives comes much more from what they consume than what they produce. (…) All the things that we buy involve decisions and the exercise of our own judgement, choice, ‘taste’. (…) Consumerism is often represented as a supremely individualistic act – yet it is also very social: shopping is a socially endorsed event, a form of social cement. (…) If you pay for something you feel you control it” (Hooks, 1992, p. 230).

As seen, in the near future, or in the so-called post-postmodern consumer culture, brands will no longer be able to hide their commercial motivations. Instead, their authenticity and their value in society will come from what their contribution as a cultural source is. In this aspect, there needs to be a key difference between the postmodern “parasitic reference” (or credit/cultural appropriation), and the artistic use of credited, cultural resources.

“Brands now cause trouble, not because they dictate tastes, but because they allow companies to dodge civic obligations. Postmodern branding is perceived as deceitful because the ideals woven into brands seem so disconnected from, and often contrary to, the material actions of the companies that own them.” (Holt, 2002, p. 88)

This is particularly significant in the fashion industry because clothes are often a means to portray self-identity. Fashion marketers are urged to study contemporary trends of consumer
culture, and to take them in account not only in their advertising strategies, but also in the production phases, since they influence purchase decisions:

“It is the meaning that is associated with ethnic clothing that results in its purchase and usage. Thus, involvement is an important variable in understanding motivation. [...] Recent trends show that immigrants are increasingly trying to maintain their cultural identities. Wearing or owning a traditional ethnic dress can be a manifestation of ethnic identity” (Heitmeyer & Rajagopalan, 2005, p. 84).

Holt added that “they [consumers] are looking for companies that act like a local merchant, as a stalwart citizen of the community. [...] Brands will be trusted to serve as cultural source materials when their sponsors have demonstrated that they shoulder civic responsibilities as would a community pillar” (Holt, 2002, p. 88). The power that consumption has proved, both culturally and socially, has received great support and investment from neoliberalism and suffered the backlash of new social movements. Consumer boycotts politicize the ideals of freedom, choice and sovereignty distributed by neoliberal discourses. Consumption is a new resource of political identification and mobilization against unfair trade, sweatshop-based industries, and related issues of social justice. The citizen-consumer has been sponsored by progressive social movements. New regulations in communication are obliged to engage with and consult consumers as well as protect and serve them. Inevitably, there are inherent tensions about how to represent consumers with diverse interests and backgrounds. Debates about ethical consumerism are helping to revise what counts as “the good life” for the citizen-consumer. The appeal to personal responsibility can be numbed when it comes to global problems. The growing number of points of contact between consumption and citizenship also alerts us to the number of gaps and silences that remain in research on non-hegemonic cultural traditions (Trentmann, 2007, p. 154).
2.2. The Power of Advertising Branding

Advertising has been a powerful agent in every society throughout history. From the simplest signs that are given a certain meaning in a small collective, to the most complex strategies of propaganda, communication, marketing and advertising are double-edged swords. On the one hand, they reproduce and perpetuate a given status quo, but on the other hand, they have the ability to reshape that very same system, depending on the way they are implemented:

“The power of advertising lies in its ability to photographically frame and redefine our meanings and our experiences and then turn them into meanings that are consonant with corporate interests. This power to recontextualize and reframe photographic images has put advertising at the center of contemporary redefinitions of individuality, freedom, and democracy in relation to corporate symbols”.

(Goldman & Papson, 2006, p. 216)

Advertising is a major force in an “image-based culture” like our society, that shapes how people understand and live their lives. “Who we are—individually, as members of groups and categories, as a society—is intimately tied to the image system communicated through advertising” (Johnson, 2008, p. 6). There is a concern about the influence of advertising on commodity construction and consumption, but what its role in culture implicates has also been theorized on. Advertising is centered on establishing the “commodity-as-sign”, that is, defining identity through the consumption of signs and meanings commodified in items. “By nature, advertising is always changing, and we should expect some of its prominent discourse to be evolving as cultural interests and priorities evolve. [...] As a major public discourse of our time, advertising carries codes that are potent with cultural meaning and ideological implications” (Johnson, 2008, p. 14).

Advertising images build its meaning at least in part from language. Even in ads that carry no verbal elements, the product name is central to the ad’s meaning. Verbal elements are
more prominent in Internet advertising. The imaging process uses carefully selected words and visual symbols that are perceived in relationship to cultural meanings and personal experiences of the advertising audience. “Advertising packages discourse codes that grind out representations of the social world but can also disrupt, redirect and accelerate how the social world is conceptually configured” (Johnson, 2008, p. 5). It reaffirms, among other things, ethnic polarities. In the usage of discourse, language creates, but also limits meaning. There are three facets of discourse that help understand how discourse works in society, especially to establish and maintain power relations: “text, including vocabulary, semantics, grammar, sentence organization, structure; discourse practice, which refers to types of discourse and how text is produced, distributed and consumed; and social practice, or how the discourse relates to particular patterns of social organization and communication” (Johnson, 2008, p. 8). Along with these facets, there are seven features of discourse that play a part in the creation of meaning in advertisements: (1) ellipsis leaves out elements that are recoverable by the reader; (2) connotation can be private or shared broadly within a social or cultural group, but is not universal; (3) paralanguage includes facial expression, body position, spatial configurations, etc; (4) tropes, or figures of speech like metaphors, are commonly used in advertising to link products to something that can be meaningful within a cultural context; (5) point of view, which is the ad’s creators selection of who gives the message; (6) grammatical person of the ad; and (7) narratives, that can be effective discourse styles for presenting lifestyles associated with a given product or service. Advertising discourse contributes to ideological codes prominent in the 21st century, Euro-American-dominated society. Ethnic and cultural diversity continue to be minimal in ads, and when they are present, commercials display situations that tend to cement particular conceptions about a given collective (Johnson, 2008).
“Brand earnings are understood to be based [...] on their ‘brand equity’, which is made up of their subjective meanings or social functions” or as Gorz called them, brands are “monetizable symbolic values (Gorz, 2003: 60)” (Arvidsson, 2005, p. 239). Brand value represents an important immaterial asset in contemporary capitalism. It is difficult to give exact figures for the overall economic weight of brand value, but estimates suggest that this has increased continuously over the last 20 years. “Brands are built through advertising, marketing, [...] and a number of other strategies devised by the various symbol analysts that the brand-owning company employs [...] to some extent, a brand’s assets are produced by consumers themselves” (Arvidsson, 2005, p. 239). Along these lines, marketers “have recognized the importance of targeting ethnic segments, not only to increase sales, but also to differentiate themselves from their competition” (Heitmeyer & Rajagopalan, 2005, p. 85). However, more often than not, when implementing strategies for targeted cultural or ethnic markets, both companies and media tend to benefit the hegemonic Western culture in advertising imaging, while preserving inequalities in their core activity and personal teams. “The logic of market capitalism is that it often masks inequalities while simultaneously claiming to address and alleviate them” (Banet-Weiser, 2003, p. 49). When these brands are, on the other hand, using broader strategies for bigger audiences, they fall into the exclusion and/or misrepresentation of non-White or marginalized groups:

“The lack of diversity reflects the role of media as purveyors of ideology in American life and culture. Media do not simply deliver “facts” but also serve to define social ideals. [...] Media teach values, definitions of right and wrong and reassurance in shared experiences, [...] securing the continuity of a given social order” (Baldasty & Henderson, 2003, p. 100).

A study made to investigate the representations of Asian American female bodies in advertising showed that the new trend of portraying ‘multiculturalism’ in advertising is usually
only a superficial branding strategy that seeks to make both the historical charge of multicultural images and the processes by which they are produced invisible:

“The emerging global culture has been packaged, commodified and marketed by multinational global corporations in a form that can be sold to dominant White groups attempting to disengage from a historical legacy of racism, segregation and Anglo-conformity. [...] In this way, the perception of multiculturalist advertisements as the symbolic site for cultural diversity and equality overlooks the subtle complexities with which [racialized] bodies are presented and represented to White America” (Chung & Kim, 2005, p. 89).

Another study called “Apartheid in the Great Outdoors” (2004) concluded that Black models in advertising are confined to urban and suburban environments, while Whites have exclusive domain over outdoor settings, which is another example of how ethnic stereotypes are broadly used in every advertising category. He notes an ironic dichotomy in studies about the representation of black people:

“Studies have shown that Blacks historically have been underrepresented in advertisements, they have been shown most often in subordinate positions with respect to Whites, and then to have light skin tones and White physical features. Other research suggests [...] Blacks are better off in the advertisements than in the outside world” (Martin, 2004, p. 518).

He also points out that Whites are twice as likely to be portrayed as business professionals than black people, while they are far more likely to be depicted as athletes. His findings show that, in advertising, the outdoors is socially constructed as a White space. The danger of these kind of assumptions is that they become so rooted in our society it is impossible to differentiate facts from stereotypes. Therefore, efforts should be made to discover ways to blunt this effect.
2.3. Ethnic and Cultural Representation in Advertising Media

As seen, representations of identity can affect how we see, treat, and understand different identities and groups. Typically, when representing minorities in media and advertising, versions of subordination are reproduced and rarely denounced or contradicted:

“Semiotic meaning draws upon dualistic notions of being, identity and difference (self/other, male/female, white/black, normal/exotic). The opposed elements stabilize positive and negative cultural associations and values. [...] Setting one element against the other has perpetuated and reinforced the dualistic hierarchical orderings that historically have favored the male and the white” (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 583).

When marketing and advertising images, brand managers must understand the semiotic implications of representation in the cultural context where they are marketed. Meaning is produced by social and cultural forces. Brands are, in the post post-modern society, socio-cultural constructs that both feed from and impact consumers and their mental frameworks. Thus, representation of ethnic diversity assumes primary importance. How it is portrayed is crucial to creating meaning:

“Identities that are exoticized, sexist, or racist, damage the reputation of represented groups, and associated group members, and manipulate their being for consumption by others. Furthermore, some identities are systematically excluded from marketing images, while others are represented in ethically problematic ways. The claim is not that some advertising, as well as other forms of marketing communications, might offend the concerned group and its members, but that certain forms of representation may limit their opportunities for the future by undermining or sabotaging their reputation (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 585).

Furthermore, ethically problematic representations, such as stereotyping, may also jeopardize marketing objectives, since audiences may be offended and reject the message and its brand:
“In a groundbreaking discussion of “image ethics”, media researcher Larry Gross (1988) began to articulate an ethics of representation pertaining to the media. He proposed two fundamental principles: first, groups should be allowed to speak for themselves. Second, media practices, including advertising, should be used to equalize the unequal distribution of power in society, or at least not to perpetuate inequality” (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 586).

Images allow advertisers to make choices on how to depict people. However, Borgerson and Schroeder (2005) found and studied four common representational conventions, starting from two basic questions regarding these conventions: “visual communication theorist van Leeuwen (2000, 2001) identified two basic questions regarding conventions of visual representation: (1) how are people depicted in relation to each other or their surroundings? and (2) how are people depicted in relation to the viewer?” (Borgerson and Schroeder, 2005, p. 586).

Van Leeuwen also identified three pictorial dimensions: (1) the social distance, showing assumptions about how the social status of one differs from that of another; (2) the social relation, showing power differences between figures that appear; and (3) the social interaction, which relates the depicted figure’s gaze to its implications with the audience (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 586). With that, the four representational conventions mentioned above are face-ism, idealization, exclusion, and exotization (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005). Face-ism -a subject portrayed with a great facial prominence to be perceived as more intelligent, ambitious, and attractive- and idealization -idealized bodies to construct notions about identity, attractiveness, and normality in society- usually favor men and undermine women, while exclusion and exotization often affect ethnic minorities and thus, representation of cultural diversity.

“Cultural constructs of multicultural advertisement strategies in the new global era [include] racialized and gendered representations as the “other”. The emerging global culture has been packaged,
commodified and marketed by multinational corporations in a manner that widens their range of cultural repertoires but resurrects traditional hierarchies” (Chung & Kim, 2005, p. 67).

Exotization affects many identity categories, such as Blacks, Asians, Native Americans and indigenous people, and is a specially damaging form of stereotyping that reflects a dominant cultural view of the exotic ‘other’. Depictions of exotic people do not just exist, but they are created and recreated by diverse communication strategies. Exotization always functions in a context of unequal power, where colonial, patriarchal, and racist discourses are in place. Exotization is accentuated when opposed to the projected normalcy of White characters. Ads that feature racialized actors consistently promote the strongest cultural differences. For example, the exoticized bodies of Asian women are used to represent the “forbidden pleasures” that come with “tempting” products like liquor or cigarettes:

“Representing people as ‘others’ or persons not like ‘us’ can produce unethical imagery. These choices may lead to subtle racist, sexist, and/or epistemically closed representations that could undermine marketing communication, particularly global campaigns aimed at diverse consumers” (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 587).

On the other hand, exclusion is the “likelihood of not representing particular people in marketing communications” (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 593). While it is true that thanks to the construction of niche marketing, many cultural groups appear in communication materials that were exclusively White a few decades ago, other minorities, such as the poor, the disabled, or the “different” individuals have been underrepresented or excluded from these images. “By excluding – to varying degrees – certain representations, possible meanings, interpretations, and understandings are limited in ways that may negatively influence certain individuals, groups, scenarios, and even geographic locations” (Borgerson & Schroeder, 2005, p. 593). However, inclusion of marginalized cultural groups won’t reduce the negative ethical impact if the
representation strategies used to depict them are based on exotization, stereotyping, tokenism, or presentation of power differences. With tokenism, the key to understanding its main problem is what Chung and Kim (2005) described as “contemporary advertising campaigns have tried to re-invent the world in all its multicultural glories without threatening culturally-embedded hierarchies of the past. [...] Under the guise of multiculturalism, Orientalism has evolved into an object to consume and a vehicle to stimulate consumption” (pp. 76-77).

Consumers and marketers may be aware of these representational conventions and related pictorial dimensions, but consumers are usually unable to resist or deconstruct them. Generally, they serve to justify the status quo in the consumers’ psyche. Therefore, it is the social responsibility of marketers and producers to research, create and reproduce ethical representations of diversity in advertising in order to promote and naturalize equality within globalized societies. It is important to note that different markets have different histories of representation, so further ethical issues arise from the commodification of human beings and the association of identity with consumption.

When Ling Chen and Masako Isa (2003) studied the process of acculturation for Japanese students in the US, they found seven stages from which marketers can learn when researching a new culture to understand its proper representation. The key to fundamental research must rely on active interaction with several individuals from a specific cultural or ethnic group. For strangers, cultural adaptation involves learning of new ways (acculturation), and partial unlearning of old ways (deculturation). “Cultural learning is an ongoing communicative process, embodied and constructed in routine [intercultural] interactions” (Chen & Isa, 2003, p. 76). The seven stages were: (1) preparedness, that is, practical preparation and previous research on the new culture; and (2) expectations, to actively compare what has been learned with what is being
encountered. Then, sources of (3) anxiety, such as particularly problematic situations, negative anticipation, or in-group dynamics, could be translated in advertising as problematic representations, like alienation or stereotyping. The way these potential issues are managed will determine the success of the campaign in terms of representation of diversity (or what Chen and Isa called the (4) enjoyment/discomfort phase). When referring to (5) communication, there were three categories: successful interactions happened when there were an equal intercultural interaction and points of mutual interest, problems occurred when inadequate communication strategies and in-group pressure took place, therefore successful communication strategies involved participation, mutual learning, and cultural appreciation. Lastly, (6) social personality traits and (7) the influence of the native culture of the subject(s) involved must be also taken into consideration when engaging with a new culture.

“Images of race and representation have become a contemporary obsession. Commodification of blackness has created a social context where appropriation by non-black people of the black image knows no boundaries. If the many non-black people who produce images or critical narratives about blackness and black people do not interrogate their perspective, then they may simply recreate the imperial gaze – the look that seeks to dominate, subjugate, and colonize.” (Hooks, 1992, p. 7)

When ethnic-based marketing strategies started to emerge in the 1980s, one of the main resources was what was known as the “copycat ad”, which were traditional White advertisements reproduced with models of different ethnicities (mainly Blacks). This strategy ignored the specific consumer needs and ethnic identities of their target population. In response, brands incorporated multicultural strategies:

“The rising significance of immigration from Asia and Latin America and America’s role in the new global economy will inevitably have an effect on the multicultural representations that advertising and marketing campaigns will promote, particularly among their white-collar, professional audience.

Multiculturalism is one of the clever marketing strategies that corporations have recently used to market
Their products. [It] evokes artificial images of racial unity and harmony among the various cultural groups of America and celebrates the general openness of “color-blind” Americans to the rich cultural traditions of different racial groups.” (Chung & Kim, 2005, p. 72)

These kinds of “color-blind” strategies that aim to include multiculturality as a homogeneous blob completely deny the traits, experiences, traditions, realities and overall individual identities within different ethnic groups.

“The multicultural approach allows corporations to expand their market share to a racially diversifying population of consumers, […] and to re-package and obscure the exploitative labor machinery that produces them. (…) Multicultural imagery of specific advertising campaigns, while expanding its campaign to include multi-racial characters, relies on the “foreign” and “seductive” appeal in order to highlight the supremacy and positionality of White men within the global order.” (Chung & Kim, 2005, p. 72).

Nonetheless, while strategies for the portrayal of ethnic diversity in advertising can reproduce deeper structural social inequities, they can also have the power of re-invent and conceal them:

“The growth of ethnic diversity presents a special challenge to professionals […] because their mission is to be leaders in promoting a better understanding of individuals from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, whether professionals succeed or fail in their interactions with these diverse groups depends on their understanding of and attitudes toward cultural diversity as well as the specific manner of approach that they take” (Jikyeong & Youn-Kyung, 1998, p. 92)

Metaproduction occurs when creating ethnically specific communications, since they require a high degree of reflexivity. It is important to understand how signs are generated and distributed in the production of advertising communications. Metaproduction connects microlevel cultural and linguistic signification with broader categories of brand identity and ethnic meaning. It focuses on the cultural sign, helps create interest, and facilitates its circulation.

“Metasymbols” and the debates around them should be both considered as consumer culture
elements. Marketing creatives do not simply reflect existing ethnic values, but approach the process of signification by producing new values or re-contextualize existing ones for particular purposes. Advertising executives both use and actively create racialized identities through ads. In the neoliberal discourse, meanings of ethnicity that are rooted in earlier discourses of racialized capitalism and current ideologies are re-coded as “differences” that can be considered equal (Shankar, 2012).

There are several studies on specific implications of misrepresentations in advertising or the media for the Black community and the Asian American-or Asian European- markets. Regarding African Americans and the Black diaspora, misrepresentations usually have to do with stereotyping, appropriation, or exclusion. Although people of color appear regularly in ads, they usually appear as secondary characters or in ads for low cost, low-nutrition products and in athletic and sports equipment ads. Advertisers used people of color more often to promote lower cost clothing brands or to represent discount retailers. Minorities appeared in advertising for more upscale brands only when they were targeted toward a youth audience. In these portrayals, “they either were presented as stereotypes, as peripheral characters, or as people who had assimilated into the larger White culture. None of these representations challenge White social dominance” (Baldasty & Henderson, 2003, p. 98). “Complaints from the NAACP and other civil rights groups about racial representation [argue that] there is little or no economic pressure to make substantive changes” (Baldasty & Henderson, 2003, p. 111).

Against this issue, Lawson (2019), in an article for The Independent, argues that, in the fashion industry, representation should go beyond campaigns: “it is about sending black models down seasonal runways when they have international buyers to impress. It is about advertising in black publications and hiring black creatives. […] We still have a history of fashion that is built
on tactless disregard for a demographic [black people] that presents the purchasing power of approximately $1.2 trillion” (Lawson, 2019).

Regarding the Asian market, since many want to maintain their cultural identities, marketers must implement ethnic marketing differently from their traditional approach. The key to serving Asian American consumers effective marketing or advertising communications is to understand the natures of ethnicity and acculturation and how they affect their purchase decision-making (Jikyeong & Youn-Kyung, 1998, p. 95). These aspects are commonly examined from two dimensions: informational influence and store attribute importance. Informational influence includes all of the different sources of information (personal, such as reference groups, or marketer-dominated, such as media) through which they learn about a given clothing brand. Thus, reference groups are used by advertisers to expose people to lifestyles and contribute to the formation of values and attitudes, as well as influence purchase behavior, in techniques that mask these sources of information as ‘personal’, and not marketer-dominated. Similar shopping behaviors are likely to emerge within consumers with a similar ethnic background, meaning that “consumer groups from different ethnic backgrounds, although sharing the values and norms of the dominant culture, express certain distinct differences from consumers of other ethnic categories and warrant differential marketing efforts” (Jikyeong & Youn-Kyung, 1998, p. 98). However, significant differences in cultural orientation and buyer behavior within a given ethnic group may also exist, since their levels of acculturation may differ. Thus, when targeting Asian consumers, advertisers must not consider all Asian groups as homogeneous, but tailor their strategies for each individual ethnic market.

Neoliberalism has long positioned Asian Americans as ideal model consumers, especially compared to other ethnic minorities, such as African Americans, and so advertising strategies
targeted to Asians have historically used more specialization and more “positive” stereotypes, such as exotization, in an attempt to attract this market. “Many who work in niche advertising are acutely aware of mass-mediated stereotypes of Asian Americans and the role advertising has played in perpetuating them” (Shankar, 2012, p. 587). Shankar stated that, in this type of advertising, the “white-washing” effect entails that only the five most profitable Asian American ethnic groups are represented, while others are excluded. The same happens with populations that are currently targets of political tension, including Muslims or Asian Americans who may not be socially or economically living up to model consumer expectations. Heitmeyer and Rajagopalan (2005) studied the relationship between ethnicity and consumer choice in the context of their involvement in Indian ethnic apparel or contemporary American clothing. They found that, as consumers become more comfortable with their host culture, they feel the need to reconnect with their original one. Ethnic groups residing in foreign land view clothing products differently across stages of acculturation. What they bring up relates to a very important notion in terms of representation of ethnic and cultural diversity in advertising: cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation is the inappropriate and inaccurate adoption of features of a socio-cultural minority by a more dominant society. In order to avoid this issue in the communication and advertising phase, which is very sensitive to targeted cultural market segments, a company and its brand need to take it in account while building the whole brand image, and, coherently, through all the phases of the production and distribution process. Understanding consumer interests and their impact on the overall population will benefit fashion marketers. Some of the implications that Heitmeyer and Rajagopalan mention are that low accessibility to retail stores carrying ethnic apparel may hamper consumers’ ability in acquiring them. However, Indian fashions -and cultural fashion trends from other ethnic groups- are influencing mainstream
western fashions, thus, trends could be initiated by the non-hegemonic groups within a given society. Armani, Fendi, and Miyake all draw on elements from the “exotic” Indian culture, such as beading or interesting textile textures:

“Compromise between creativity and capitalism and between affect and profit requires that we understand what exactly is being compromised, and what consumers gain or lose” (Banet-Weiser, 2003).

There exists a “love affair” with foreign cultural fashion trends, but a significantly low representation of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the designing and managing teams of the brands that appropriate those trends. Because there is an “overwhelming whiteness” in the fashion industry, “it is representation, but more precisely participation, that will create lasting change within the fashion industry” (Lawson, 2019).

After reviewing the preceding literature, and in order to further analyze the possible consequences that depictions of ethnic minorities in online advertising images may have in the shaping of identities in contemporary consumer culture, this research intends to answer to the following questions:

- **RQ1**: How are features of discourse used in online images of fashion brands to give meaning to their messages in terms of ethnic diversity and inclusion?
- **RQ2**: In which ways are the models in those images presented in relationship to both each other and the audience regarding their ethnicity?
- **RQ3**: When advertising clothes online, is there a significant amount of cultural appropriation that privileges the hegemonic culture?

3. **Method**

As seen, consumer culture has evolved along with marketing and advertising strategies since the 1960s, when forms of mass media were first invented. While there has been progress in the way consumers are being taken into account by brands in their process of building brand
identity, this analysis aims to prove that there is still a long way to go in contributing to the definitions of self-identity and in acknowledging the social struggles and movements that are present in the lives and minds of current consumer-citizens, regarding their diverse ethnic backgrounds. In order to research how some of the pictorial conventions mentioned in the Literature Review are currently being used in marketing and branding strategies, as well as to study how the misrepresentation of ethnic diversity in advertising may affect contemporary consumer culture and the shaping of cultural identities in society, the chosen method will be qualitative content analysis. Specifically, following Altheide’s (2013) focus on qualitative methodology and the media's impact on society. This research will focus on fashion brands, because fashion has historically been an industry that strongly determines and perpetuates signs of social status, cultural association, self-identity and differentiation. Therefore, the way meanings are commodified in the advertising imagery of fashion brands is especially impactful in a society that is based, precisely, on images. In addition, because of globalization, mediatization, and the emerging of Internet and social media during the 21st century, these images are spread, shared, reproduced, and analyzed more than ever before, creating and unprecedented impact in both the emitters (in this case, fashion brands) and the audiences of each message. These effects are worth reviewing in order for communication and marketing professionals to be aware of the consequences their campaigns may have on consumer society and therefore, on their brands; and so ethical strategies can be designed accordingly.

Being the topic chosen Representation of Ethnic Diversity in Online Advertising Images of Fashion Brands, the universe for this qualitative content analysis is all of the images used for advertising or marketing purposes by fashion brands in online platforms between 2010 and 2019. The sampling strategy followed has been theoretical sampling of global fashion brands,
including designers with a known brand, that used online and social media advertising during that period of time. Thus, the unit of analysis is individual online images with human models. By applying the following protocol for qualitative content analysis, different techniques used in online advertising by fashion brands in terms of ethnic and cultural representation will be examined and compared. This is the final version of the protocol, after applying some modifications while the analysis was being conducted.
3.1. Qualitative Content Analysis Protocol

1. Case number (1-50)
2. Date (dd/mm/yyyy)
3. Brand (and company, if applicable)
4. Medium
   a. Social media
   b. Corporate website
5. Type
   a. Picture
   b. Video
6. Text
   a. Title: The image has a title or text that is relevant to its contextual signification.
   b. Caption: The image is accompanied by a caption (in case the platform allows for it) that is relevant to its contextual signification.
   c. No text: The image is displayed by itself and with no advertising text.
7. Use of discourse features
   a. Ellipsis: In the text and/or image, some elements that contribute to the creation of its meaning are non-present, but aimed to be recovered by the viewer.
   b. Connotation: In the text and/or image, one or more elements may have a double meaning in a White-dominated society and about a given non-White group.
   c. Paralanguage: The facial expression, body position and/or spatial configuration of the model(s) are relevant to the creation of the image’s meaning.
d. Tropes: The text and/or image uses figures of speech, such as metaphors, to link the product to a culture-specific meaning.

e. Point of view: The choice of main character(s) of the image is relevant to the signification of the message.

f. Grammatical person: If applicable, the grammatical person of the text is relevant to the signification of the image.

g. Narratives: The image and/or text represents a specific lifestyle that is the base of the message’s meaning. That is, it commodifies an identity via the product. They can also reproduce a company’s branded discourse.

8. Ethnicity of model(s) – Mutually exclusive options
   a. Individual White model
   b. Individual non-White model
   c. Hegemonic group of models (White standard)
   d. Ethnically diverse group of models (specify how many models are in the group and how is it diverse)

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience
   a. Stereotyping: One or more models in the picture reproduce stereotypes about a given ethnic group, either directly (the model(s) belong to that group) or indirectly (the model(s) pretend to imitate that minority).
   b. Exotization: An ethnic minority is presented as the ‘exotic other’, idealizing their style and masking their less-privileged reality. There may also be a certain degree of sexualization of non-White bodies (specify).
   c. Exclusion: Only White models are present, so other ethnicities are ignored.
d. Alienation: All of the models portrayed are White but one, as a clear attempt to justify cultural appropriation or to give a sense of ‘multiculturalism’. Alienation can also occur when a racialized model is put on the spotlight solely because of their ethnicity, in a controversial way.

e. Tokenism: There is at least one model that belongs to each or most major ethnic groups (White, Black/Brown, Asian, and Indigenous), presented with no apparent meaningful reason, in order to make the brand appear as inclusive and multicultural.

f. Participation: There are several models from diverse ethnic backgrounds that are portrayed with authentic and factual representations of identity, and are all relevant to the creation of meaning of the message. In case of an individual model, similar images from the same brand or campaign use participation through a series of individual, well-researched portraits.

10. Pictorial dimensions, if applicable – Mutually exclusive options

   Pictorial dimensions refer to the presentation of models in relation to each other, but they can also be inferred from the differences between the presentation of models in one ad and in a similar one from the same campaign.

   a. Social distance: The presentation of models from different ethnic backgrounds create and reproduce symbolization of differences in their social status.

   b. Social relation: Models relate to each other in a way that presents power differences. Unequal relationships of power can be seen.

   c. Social interaction: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes – Mutually exclusive options
a. Cultural appropriation: One or more models are wearing ethnic clothing or accessories that are inspired by traditions of cultural minorities without visibly belonging to the given community. Neither the designer of the clothing item nor the marketing strategy is crediting the original culture.

b. Cultural appreciation: Ethnic clothing and/or cultural accessories are present, but they are worn and portrayed accordingly and ethically, with either models that belong to the minority in question, with a researched, diverse representation technique, and/or crediting the original culture.

c. Cultural norm: No ethnic or cultural clothing is present. All of the clothing items displayed are mainstream to the White hegemonic cultural norm.

12. Miscellaneous (specific comments, coding or clarifications)

4. Results

A total of 50 images posted on online platforms of fashion brands between 2010 and 2019 were analyzed to assess the relevance of ethnicity as a feature that continues to be commodified in the fashion industry. From the design of products to the marketing and communication materials, this industry continuously feeds off of cultural and ethnic minorities that are different from the hegemonic Western norm. This phenomenon can help bring different cultures together and make movements for the equality of ethnic minorities visible. However, the features of discourse and pictorial dimensions, as well as other communication techniques used in promotion images to significate their messages, can contribute to perpetuate White supremacy and ignore the history and culture of other ethnicities in the world.
4.1. Use of features of discourse in images

Research question 1 asked how are features of discourse used in online images of fashion brands to give meaning to their messages in terms of ethnic diversity and inclusion. Following Johnson’s model for features of discourse (2008), category 7 of the qualitative analysis protocol analyzed images based on seven features: ellipsis, connotation, tropes, point of view and narratives. Table 1 shows the absolute and relative number of times that each feature was used, in a total of 50 images. Because the options of this category weren’t mutually exclusive, most images included several features of discourse:

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of discourse</th>
<th>Number of images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td>16 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connotation</td>
<td>21 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropes</td>
<td>9 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of view</td>
<td>38 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical person</td>
<td>9 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>30 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since all of the images included human models, and because ads are designed for an image-based society, the most relevant feature of discourse was the Point of view, meaning that the choice of main character was the most recurrent and relevant technique to give meaning to the intended message. In 76% of the cases studied, the success or failure of the campaign in terms of reception by the audience depended mainly on the model or models chosen for the ad. Narratives were also an important feature because brands today are not only product sellers, but fairly powerful agents in contemporary consumer culture. Most brands are required to have and show a set of core values that are relatable to the audience in order to both succeed in their market and contribute to society through a positive impact. Storytelling is a popular technique in
current communication and marketing materials because it is easy to remember by the audience, and usually very visual. Narratives help align every campaign to the values of the brand, and tie them to a story that will stick in the minds of its target market. In the same way, many forms of Connotation were present in some images. Connotation essentially requires that the audience of an image and message previously knows some information and links it to the meaning of the ad. This information often comes from stereotypes that are deeply rooted in the psyche of White-dominated societies. More often than not, Connotation is used to perpetuate these stereotypes. However, it can also appeal to cultural traits of ethnic minorities, or highlight an existing stereotype to denounce it.

In January 2018, world’s second largest clothing brand H&M uploaded a set of promotion images to their website to introduce a new collection of hoodies for kids to their catalog. One of these hoodies had a message written in it that read “Coolest Monkey in the Jungle”, and in every image were this hoodie was featured, a Black toddler was wearing it (see Annexes, case number 1). This particular image created a lot of outrage across the Internet and H&M was obligated to remove the item from the catalog and apologize publicly. Connotation and Point of view were key features to the signification of the message that originated the scandal. The word ‘monkey’ is a commonly known derogatory metaphor used to attack the Black community. Given the signification that the sentence “coolest monkey in the jungle” may have when related to the Black community, H&M picked a Black model. If the model was White, there would be no defamatory signification, therefore, the choice of main character was poorly researched. In addition, the Grammatical person, although allegedly unintentional, would be ‘I’. It appears as if the Black child wearing the hoodie is making the statement, as if that would justify the connotation of the text. This image reproduces the stereotype that compares Black
people to monkeys, which denigrates and dehumanizes this minority by putting them at the level of a less-developed, wild animal. Putting this image in the context of its campaign, the rest of the clothes from this collection were promoted by White models, and with non-connotational messages in them, making it a clearly alienated message.

The fact that H&M could release images like this kind in a global platform made consumers, advocates for ethnic equality, and even celebrities around the world question the integrity of the brand, the representation of ethnic minorities in their management teams, and their understanding of the importance of cultural research in a corporation of these dimensions. H&M has a “100% Fair and Equal” value in its CSR, and also an independent non-profit organization that aims to bring education, water, and equality to the planet. However, it stills failed to represent ethnic diversity in a way that doesn’t prolong White supremacy or isn’t in contradiction with its CSR values. Internet users said that H&M proved that their offer for equal job opportunities clearly doesn’t apply to racialized individuals in their management teams, in comparison to that in their production chains.

Another example where Connotation and Point of view were key to the social signification of the ad was The Great Show by Dolce & Gabbana. The Great Show were a set of three short videos published on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform, on November 2018, that were qualified as explicitly racist and sexist by Internet users (see Annexes, case number 7). In the one that this research analyzed, there is a narration by a Mandarin-speaking voiceover that pronounces incorrectly on purpose, in a way that mocks Chinese speech. With Chinese folk music playing in the background, some of the sentences include “Welcome to the first episode of ‘Eating with Chopsticks by Dolce & Gabbana’, “This is how you eat our great pizza margherita properly”, and “Is it too big for you?”. In the video, there is a Chinese woman trying to eat a
pizza with chopsticks. The Paralanguage (facial expression and gestures) of the female main
character is submissive to the narrator, who is supposedly teaching her how to eat properly. She
repeatedly laughs and appears as if she is not aware of the situation surrounding her, which was
perceived as intimidatory by the audience. Evidently, there are sexual connotations in the
narration that are ridiculing the Chinese woman. Also, because of the choice of model, the Point
of view of this ad is mocking Chinese culture and reproducing White supremacy by showing
Italian culture as more educated than the Chinese one. The Grammatical person of the text is the
narrator, that speaks to both the audience and the main character (‘You’) in an imperative way.
He is trying to educate a person from a different culture in the “proper” way of eating, justified
by the fact that she is Chinese and is eating traditional Italian dishes with chopsticks. When
analyzing Narratives, this image presents an imagined Chinese lifestyle in a derogatory way. On
Weibo, one person commented "D&G's stereotyping China. [The videos] only show the brand's
outdated view about China”.

Moreover, with the sexual connotations in the narration, and the attitude of the main
character, laughing and submissively obeying orders from the narrator, this video sexualizes the
identities of Asian women. The relationship between the narrator and the Chinese woman shows
a difference of power that favors the male narrator. In this case, clothes were not a reason of
outrage, rather how they were presented. This ad, along with the other two videos of the same
fashion, aimed to promote an upcoming runway called ‘The Great Show’ to introduce a new
market in China. The audience, first on Weibo and then on YouTube, found these ads racist and
disrespectful to the culture that Dolce & Gabbana was precisely trying to attract. Dolce &
Gabbana failed to properly research the market they were targeting, and to review the connoted
readings that the audience could have at this series of ads.
Lastly, the Nike Pro Hijab promotion is an example of how Narratives can and are being used to significate an image (see Annexes, case number 17). This image was a picture posted on Nike’s Instagram feed on November 2017, that featured German boxing champion Zeina Nassar, of Lebanese heritage, wearing the Nike Pro hijab (a product designed for Muslim women in sports) with the title “Don’t change for the rules. Change the rules.”, and the caption “It’s only crazy until it’s reality. The International Boxing Association rewrote the rules, allowing women everywhere to box in hijabs. A huge win for women across the world. #justdoit”. The text uses Tropes to link the product, the Nike Pro hijab, to the Muslim fight for normalizing and legalizing the religious hijab in all countries and environments. The choice of model for the image is very relevant to the signification of the message: Zeina Nassar is an elite boxer in Germany that has advocated for the abolition of the anti-hijab rule in boxing, among other fights. What more particularly gives meaning to this ad is the Narratives of both the image and the Nike brand. The picture and its texts show a lifestyle of ‘fighting for freedom’, that is the base of not only the campaign, but the whole brand’s discourse. Nike has a history of “changing the rules” with advertising and social campaigns that feature Colin Kaepernick, a professional football player in the NFL known for his vocal and polemic fight for the Black Lives Matter movement; and Serena Williams, who stands for women empowerment, among others. However, the Nike Pro Hijab ad is commodifying a social movement via the product that is advertised. The Grammatical person of the title is also relevant to this message. The imperative ‘You’, that encourages the audience to stand and fight for great causes matches this corporate activism trend that has been strongly emulated by Nike, especially in the last decade.

In this case, the values of the Nike brand and those of its image are aligned, and although it has been criticized for commodifying the social movement for the normalization of the hijab, it
uses a logical, researched representation of ethnic diversity with a purpose. It has also contributed to moving forward actions that have made an actual change in society regarding this movement, as the caption of the image states.

4.2. Diversity and inclusion

Research question 2 asked in which ways are models in online images of fashion brands presented in relationship to both each other and the audience regarding their ethnicity. To answer this question, we will look at Table 2 and Table 3. Table 2 relates the amount of inclusion of non-White models in this kind of marketing images to the pictorial dimensions that are used, which may present differences in the social status or power of the models based on their ethnicity, and in relation to each other. Table 3 shows how models are presented to the audience based on ethnicity, and includes forms of stereotyping, exotization, exclusion, alienation, tokenism, or participation:

Table 2

[Inclusion and pictorial dimensions]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Social distance</th>
<th>Social relation</th>
<th>Social interaction</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual White model</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual non-White model</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hegemonic group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnically diverse group</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

[Presentation of diversity]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation techniques</th>
<th>Number of images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stereotyping</td>
<td>12 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exotization</td>
<td>13 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion</td>
<td>22 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation</td>
<td>8 (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 2, the amount of ads with an individual White model or a group of White models is almost the same as the amount of images with an individual non-White model or an ethnically diverse group of models. While this shows an evolution in the representation of ethnic diversity in the fashion industry, there is still a predominantly White imagery. It is important to note that when only or predominantly White models were present, the pictorial dimensions used were mostly Social Distance and Social Relation, that is, the way models are presented in relation to their non-White counterparts in the same campaign shows differences in the social status or power between the White and non-White models, favoring the hegemonic Western culture. This differences are usually portrayed with paralanguage, stereotyping, alienation, or cultural appropriation, among other techniques.

On the other hand, the pictorial dimension used in most images with an individual non-White model, or an ethnically diverse group was Social Interaction, meaning that when the fashion industry features models from different ethnic backgrounds, it does not tend to perpetuate unequal social statuses or relationships of power. Predominantly, when it comes to ethnic diversity and pictorial dimensions, the fashion industry has learned to introduce and present Black models equally to White models, and often includes Asian models, but is still ignoring other ethnic minorities, like the Native Americans.

An example that can illustrate the way pictorial dimensions are used in online promotional images in the fashion industry is the difference between the Desigual campaign featuring model Winnie Harlow, and the Diesel campaign featuring the same model (see Annexes, cases number 18 & 19). Winnie Harlow is a Canadian fashion model of Jamaican

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation techniques</th>
<th>Number of images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokenism</td>
<td>6 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>19 (38%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
heritage, known for having a skin condition called vitiligo, that causes patches in the skin to lose pigment. In 2015, she was the face of the Desigual spring collection, and even though she might have been chosen for her skin condition, she is featured with normality, without making a brand statement off of her condition. When putting the analyzed image, where she is the only model, in the context of the campaign and the brand, we note that Harlow is granted the same platform as her homologous models, that have been featured as the face of new collections. In general, the imagery of Desigual feature models from different ethnic backgrounds and is usually not alienating or stereotyping. This brand does a fairly good job on representation of diversity. It credits designs from other cultures and collaborates with culturally diverse designers. Its production is based in Spain and its communication materials are inclusive and participative, ethnicity-wise. Because all of Desigual models are represented with equal relevance to the audience, the pictorial dimension of this ad (and campaign) is Social Interaction, that is, it does not perpetuate White supremacy or unequal relations of power between ethnicities.

In the same year, Diesel also featured Winnie Harlow in an underwear ad. The ad showed an all-White, fit group of models (males and females) in their underwear, except for the Jamaican-Canadian model. The paralanguage of the models adds to a sexual connotation, and the narrative shows an uninhibited, sexually free lifestyle that is linked to the product; Diesel’s underwear. However, only the non-White female model has her legs around a man and is held upside down by another man, so her body is more sexualized to the male audience than the other females’ bodies. The vitiligo condition that Harlow has makes her skin a valued asset in terms of representation of diversity in the fashion industry. The main feature that differs the Black community from the White hegemonic culture is the skin color. Winnie Harlow is part of an ethnic minority that also suffers from a condition that can be used to alienate and exoticize her.
In this particular case, she is presented as the ‘exotic other’, in opposition to the other White models. There is also a higher degree of sexualization of her body due to her position in the ad, as explained before. Because there is a high degree of alienation in this ad, that is, all of the models portrayed are White but one, in an attempt to give a sense of ‘multiculturalism’ and inclusion to the brand, the pictorial dimension used is Social Relation, meaning that White models appear to be presented with equal relevance, but the only racialized model is held by two men upside down, showing power differences that diminish Black bodies.

When there are models of different ethnic backgrounds in a predominantly White fashion ad, the image tends to use Alienation or Tokenism, and models are usually presented in Social Distance or Social Relation, rather than Interaction. However, when the group of models is ethnically diverse in fairly equal ratios, forms of Participation and Social Interaction are often used. Looking at Table 3, Presentation of diversity, we see that there is still a high amount of Exclusion (44%) present in the online images of fashion brands, meaning that inclusion of ethnic minorities in these ads still has a way to go. When ethnic minorities were present in the image, forms of Stereotyping and Exotization were used, in a way that damaged the identities of cultural minorities in the context of White-dominated societies. Nonetheless, Participation doubles the use of Alienation or Tokenism.

There is a fine line between Participation and Tokenism. In some cases, opinions might differ. The difference, generally, relies on the bigger picture of the advertising company. When featuring Participation, there is a certain inevitable degree of Tokenism, since one will necessarily pick at least one model from most or every major ethnic group, depending on the purpose of the marketing material. However, is this company using multiculturality as a one-time branding strategy or to jump on a superficial diversity trend? Or is it advocating for diversity in
both every level of its identity and through its platform to a globalized society? The corporate social responsibility of brands (the old CSR) is no longer an independent department, but it is necessarily inherent to the brand’s identity and core values. As agents with a main role in contemporary consumer culture, fashion brands and companies need to set an example, and normalize Participation of ethnic and cultural diversity in their identity and imagery.

As Borgerson & Schroeder stated, “Benetton’s approach to cultural “inclusion” has been widely criticized as perpetuating stereotypes of difference – an ironic result that illustrates the complex intersection of identity, representation, and marketing within the global economy” (2005, p. 594). The brand’s name ‘United Colors of Benetton’ has historically referred to both the colorful designs of the clothing items and the diverse skin colors of the people in the world. Benetton ads are widely known for their inclusion of ethnic diversity, a trait that has been at the core of the identity of the brand since its beginning, when it was considered radically outside the ‘White norm’. Aiming to portray an inclusive, diverse world, the brand has sometimes used controversial pictures from photographer Oliviero Toscani. In their newer ads, they include an ethnically diverse group of models presented in a happy and welcoming attitude, which is a trademark characteristic of Benetton’s ads (see Annexes, case number 21).

United Colors of Benetton paved the way for the fashion industry to be more inclusive in terms of cultural and ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, the brand has failed to evolve in terms of actively contributing to any fight for racial equality, and keeps on limiting its activism to the inclusion of at least one model of each most major ethnic group (White, Black/Brown, Asian, and Indigenous), with no apparent meaningful reason in its marketing materials, in order to maintain the ‘multicultural’ trademark of the brand’s social image. As contemporary consumer culture becomes more aware of brands’ activities behind their appearance, United Colors of
Benetton has been involved in sweatshops scandals, such as the garment factory in Bangladesh that collapsed in 2013, killing 1,300 people. The company’s failure to bring the message in its campaigns to real action, or at least visible action, is the reason why the perception of participation and inclusion by its audience has shifted to critiques for their recurrent tokenism.

In contrast, a new swimwear brand named Chromat was created in 2017 with a explicit base and focus on Participation. They design, produce, and sell empowering garments for all bodies, mainly targeting the population that self-identifies as a woman (see Annexes, cases 41-43). Every model at Chromat is hired because they bring something unique and authentic to the runway and images, that differs from the predominantly non-inclusive norm in the fashion industry (regarding ethnicity, as well as gender, sexual orientation, religion, and physical body diversity). Models are portrayed with authentic and factual representations of individual and collective identities, and they are all relevant to the signification of the message and narrative of the brand. Also, When there is an ethnic or cultural piece of clothing featured in Chromat’s images, it is worn, presented and credited as fits, and cultural traditions are not vandalized, sexualized or exoticized. Ethnic clothing and cultural identities are not commodified for the sole benefit of the brand, rather presented with an authentic, factual lens that contributes to a greater inclusion, better representation, and normalization of ethnic diversity in contemporary consumer culture.

Captions in Chromat’s images include “Chromat’s bodies should be the rule, not the exception”, “We feel a volcanic energy right now; things are about to burst, but new land is forming. It’s a chaotic, exciting time.”, or “The future is empowering, inclusive and sustainable.”, to point out the need for diversity to be the rule in the fashion industry, instead of an exception to hegemonic, majoritarian stereotypes. Also, Chromat swimwear is made with
sustainable fabric and works with safe, ethical, fair-wage factories. The grammatical person of the captions implicitly include the Chromat brand and company (‘Us’), and it puts itself at responsibility for doing better in and for its industry, in order to help the world in terms of diversity and environmental care. Every inspiration for Chromat’s clothing is credited in the images and platforms of the brand. It also maintains its commitment to inclusion and diversity throughout all the stages of the company’s production chain. Thus, Chromat is setting a good standard in terms of Participation, since the equality shown in the brand’s images matches the identity of the whole brand.

Lastly, and in order to exemplify techniques of representation, it is important to illustrate the use of Exotization (see Annexes, cases number 10, 25 & 31). Victoria’s Secret is a lingerie brand known for its openly sensual and sexual identity. However, this brand has historically targeted and exclusively portrayed a normative, skinny, predominantly White kind of woman’s body. While it has evolved in terms of inclusion of ethnically diverse models in its images, the brand has been involved in many scandals regarding cultural appropriation, exotization, and sexualization of ethnic minorities. In the Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show 2012 Broadcast (case number 10), White model Karlie Kloss wore a Native American tribal headdress and an animal print bikini, alluding stereotypical and sexual connotations on American Indians. This image represented an erotic and exotic lifestyle linked to a stereotype of Native Americans, which commodifies their identities. An ethnic minority, in this case the Native American women, is presented as the ‘exotic other’, idealizing and sexualizing their bodies, and masking their less-privileged reality. Also, in this Fashion Show, no Native Americans were modelling, and so this headdress was worn by a White model. A White model wearing clothes that resemble the fashion from a different ethnic community creates and reproduces differences between the social status
of the White and the Native American communities. Some American Indian women pointed out Victoria’s Secret lack of inclusion and empathy with this known injustice affecting their community. Activists from Native Appropriations stated that more than 30% of Native American women have been raped in their lives, and 90% of those rapes are perpetrated by non-Native men. They accused Victoria’s Secret for “blatantly and ignorantly perpetuating the sexualization of American Indian women to a predominantly non-Native, male audience. Victoria’s Secret and Karlie Kloss later apologized and removed the footage from the show.

In a similar fashion, in April 2016, Free People, an Urban Outfitters’ brand released a collection of fashion accessories under the label ‘Festival Shop’ (case number 25). Most, if not all the accessories plagiarized or were inspired from Native American fashion (feathers, beads, etc). What for White culture is just ‘festival’ wear, for ethnic minorities like the Native Americans, the Indigenous Peoples and the Indians, has cultural meanings. The narrative of the analyzed image (and campaign) evokes a bohemian-like style that is part of the identity of some ethnic minorities, but is recurrently commodified to benefit the White market. The fact that all models were White, or at least non-Native, highlights the lack of inclusiveness in the process of design, production and marketing of the featured products. This collection aimed to portray a dream-like festival experience by using Native American culture as an accessory. Thus, Native American and Indigenous cultural traits are presented as ‘exotic’ when linked to the White audience and the festival experience. It idealizes and exoticizes an stereotype that is harmful to the Indian American heritage. In addition, the images exclude non-White ethnicities, appropriating Native American, Mexican Indigenous and Indian cultures without crediting or featuring them. Free People has a long history of cultural appropriation, since the brand was
based on inspiration from mainly the Native Americans, but it has not collaborated with any POC designer or model.

Lastly, Brownie is a highly successful Spanish brand that is often associated with the White supremacist, middle and high class. It continuously perpetuates the stereotype of associating Whiteness to high-end fashion and non-Whiteness to street fashion. The 2019 collections ‘About Havana’ and ‘Livin’ Life’ (cases number 31 & 32) feature only White, teenage bodies, ignoring every other ethnicity. The images of the ‘About Havana’ collection resemble Cuban and Latino culture, and the paralanguage of the models and spatial configurations in every picture are paradisiacal and aim to allure desire in the audience. Thus, the Latino community, and specifically the Cuban lifestyle, is presented as an exotic, attractive, vacation way of life.

In addition, the narrative of the brand’s imagery is the appearance of high-class, urban style. Therefore, it commodifies a higher social status through its products. Although the majority of images feature an individual model, the systematic exclusion of non-White models in all of the brand’s imagery, along with its values of high-class status, create and reproduce symbolization of differences in the social status of White women vs racialized women. Also, the brand’s images often hyper-sexualize teenage, White, female bodies, which presents a double threat to society: the sexualization of young girls, and the establishment of the association between Whiteness and beauty or attractiveness.

4.3. Cultural appropriation vs cultural appreciation

Research question 3 asked about the amount of cultural appropriation, as opposed to cultural appreciation, that is still present in the online imagery of the fashion industry, privileging the hegemonic culture. Table 4 shows the number of cases, out of 50 images, that included any form of Cultural Appropriation, or, on the contrary, featured Cultural Appreciation. Cases with
no visible cultural references, that is, lack of ethnic clothing or non-White cultural connotations, were labeled as Cultural Norm:

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation of clothes</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appropriation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural appreciation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural norm</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To exemplify the opposition between Cultural Appropriation and Cultural Appreciation, we can look at Kokon To Zai’s Inuit rip-off (see Annexes, case number 9) and the Navajo Nation against Urban Outfitters (case number 11). In November 2015, Kokon To Zai introduced a new sweater to its catalog, which was featured in runways and their corporate website. This sweater was plagiarized from a sacred Indigenous caribou skin parka, originally made to offer spiritual protection to an Inuit shaman named Ava. The Nunavut family, an Indigenous community in Canada that is related to said shaman, was deeply offended when they discovered that Kokon To Zai had been selling their sacred design as a sweater, without crediting them, and without their permission. Moreover, the sweater was worn by a White model, and there is no credit or representation of the family that was the original source of inspiration. The sweater that is being promoted is not only ethnic clothing, but also a sacred design to the Nunavut family and the Inuit community. Cultural Appropriation happens when a dominant culture, in this case White hegemonic culture, picks and chooses and/or profits off cultural traits that come from oppressed cultures, in this case ethnic minorities. The reason why this is offensive to ethnic and cultural minorities, and why it perpetuates their oppression, is that these communities are often ridiculed, stereotyped, and commodified through the same cultural traits that, when used on a White
person, they become not only socially acceptable, but ‘exotic’ and ‘groundbreaking’. In addition, some of these traits carry a great historical, cultural or religious charge that is sacred or painful to the original cultures.

Another case of Cultural Appropriation in the fashion industry happened in October 2011, when Urban Outfitters released a collection of patterned clothes and other accessories labeled as ‘Navajo’. These items, as well as the promoting images, stayed in the brand’s website’s catalog until November 2015. The patterns and the ‘Navajo’ name on the products are a plagiarism of the Native American Navajo Nation tribe, who own the largest tribe reservation in the United States, and are the second largest Native American Nation. No members of the tribe were credited or shown in the designs or ads. In addition, the naming ‘Navajo’ was used for all the products with these patterns without the tribe’s permission, for they were not benefitted in any way. The Navajo Nation had a dispute with Urban Outfitters for the trademark of this kind of geometrical, colorful patterns for more than seven years. On 2016, Urban Outfitters finally removed the naming of the products, and both parties reached a supply and license agreement that formalized the use of appropriated branding, and opened the door to a collaboration on authentic Native American jewelry, with hired Navajo artisans. In the image analyzed in this research, three models from different ethnic backgrounds are wearing Navajo sweaters, but none of them look Native American, which is the culture from where the patterns in the clothes are originally from. This choice of main characters may have been an attempt to mask Cultural Appropriation with a sense of multiculturalism. Thus, it shows poor previous research and representation of ethnic diversity in the marketing and communication teams of Urban Outfitters.

On the contrary, world-known designer Edward Enninful set an example on Cultural Appreciation and inclusion of ethnic and cultural diversity when he became editor-in-chief of
Vogue Britain. On November 2017, he shared his debut cover for the famous fashion magazine on Instagram, which featured mixed-race British model of Ghanaian heritage and feminist activist Adwoa Aboah. Enninful explicitly stated his intentions of making political statements in and through the fashion industry. The designer’s new brand for Vogue enabled diverse participation through a series of individual, well-researched and accurately presented portraits in the cover, among other changes in the magazine’s management teams and editing line. Under the previous editor, Alexandra Shulman, Vogue was criticized for its lack of diversity: although recent cover stars included Zoe Kravitz or Rihanna, there was no solo non-White model on the cover between Naomi Campbell in 2002, and Jourdan Dunn in 2014. Edward Enninful’s brand remained loyal to its firm statement for ethnic diversity throughout his career. In Adwoa Aboah’s cover, the model was wearing a headpiece that resembled African patterns, as well as clothing accessories that are culturally and historically linked to her own heritage. She is also an advocate for diversity, and Vogue credits the original designer.

Two years later, in November 2019, Edward Enninful took another step forward on ethnic and cultural diversity for Vogue. Another cover posted on Enninful’s and Vogue’s Instagram profiles featured model Estrella Vázquez, originally from Oaxaca’s Mexican Indigenous Muxe community. This was the first time in the history of Vogue that a trans, self-identified as third-gender person was featured in the cover, and also the first ever joint fashion shoot between British Vogue and Vogue Mexico, making it another one of Enninful’s political statements for diversity and inclusion. Estrella was wearing an embroidered huipil and enagua (a traditional Mexican Indigenous blouse and skirt), and the image contains many elements that are originally from the Muxe community. As in the rest of Edward Enninful’s images, this model is portrayed in an authentic way, true to their own identity, and non-hegemonically. In addition, ethnic
clothing is featured, designed in collaboration with the Muxe community, and worn and credited by Muxe-native, trans model Estrella Vázquez. Edward Enninful expanded his own and the Vogue brand across borders and broke non-inclusive stereotypes. This particular image made history by making visible and paying homage to both the Indigenous Peoples and the transgender community.

In conclusion, when an image creates outrage due to Cultural Appropriation it is because it excludes the affected communities in every level: design, promotion, credit, and profit. When the Point of View feature of discourse contributed to the creation of meaning of an ad in terms of Cultural Appropriation, it was always because a White model was chosen to represent cultural traits from other ethnicities. When a cultural minority is the source of inspiration and profit of a predominantly White brand, but it is not contracted or credited in any way through the process of selling a product, the cultural heritage of that community is being taken away from them, while they are not being benefitted culturally, socially, or economically. Thus, it is a common phenomenon in the fashion industry that damages the culture, history and identities of ethnic minorities, and perpetuates White supremacy in contemporary consumer culture.

5. Conclusions

In contemporary -or post post-modern- consumer culture, consumers have evolved from being passive receivers of messages and buyers of products, to actively create and build meaning for their own identities, and also for the brands they consume, through their acts of purchase. The term prosumers (producers and consumers), or more specifically, consumer citizens, underlines the fact that contemporary consumers are active, powerful agents in consumer culture, therefore, in society. The other crucial factor in the creation of social discourses and norms inside consumer culture is brands (and their companies). Because consumer citizens have more information about
companies -mainly thanks to the Internet-, brands today need to build upon active engagement and collaboration with their consumers and their realities, since prosumers play a big part on supporting or defaming brands. This includes understanding social struggles and movements, as well as established standards, in order to evaluate and fight the inequalities that they denounce or perpetuate between different communities of consumer citizens. This is necessary for both the success of any brand in its market, and the compliance of its commitment to the company’s corporate social responsibility, which is now shifting to be inherent to any brand’s own identity.

Marketing, communication, and advertising efforts have been the window to brands’ identities since the creation of these disciplines. Being advertising and branding materials what reinforces and communicates the values of a brand, and being brands’ values an essential agent in consumer culture, we can state that advertising is a very powerful resource to either perpetuate or break standards in any society. Specially, the fashion industry has an important weight in image-based cultures and societies, like the hegemonic Western norm, because of its size and its power in imposing and spreading beauty standards and fashion trends. This research focuses on the representation of ethnic and cultural diversity in online images of fashion brands, used for marketing and communication purposes, in contemporary consumer culture (2010s), since the Internet has added a virality and globality component to the already powerful imagery of the fashion industry. The interest behind this research is to relate the existence of stereotypes or other discriminatory phenomena regarding ethnicity in contemporary White-dominated societies, and the degree to which the fashion industry perpetuates or breaks these inequalities.

Using a qualitative content analysis methodology, this research has found that the most important features of discourse used in online images of fashion brands to give meaning to their messages in terms of ethnic diversity and inclusion are Point of View and Narratives, meaning
that the choice of main character of the images was essential to the interpretation of the ads. Narratives are aligned to the brand’s intended discourse, that often commodifies imagined lifestyles in order to sell a given identity to consumer citizens, through its products. Secondly, the amount of inclusion of diversity in the fashion industry has evolved towards a more diverse imagery, in terms of ethnicity, during the last decade. However, the communication departments and materials of fashion brands are still predominantly White, and often show and perpetuate unequal social statuses or relations of power that favor White supremacy. Nonetheless, it is important to note that there is a greater inclusion of non-White models, and they are mostly portrayed and represented as equals to their White counterparts. Lastly, this research has found a high amount of cultural appropriation in many levels of the fashion industry; from designs that were ripped off a cultural minority, to the exclusion of ethnic minorities from the management teams and communication materials.

Proper representations go beyond the advertising phase, but rather start at the design and production stages of fashion goods. Because this research only conducted qualitative content analysis on advertising images, we can’t go deeper into a brand’s implications with ethnic diversity in other phases of the production chain. One of the most important matters in terms of representation of diversity in marketing and communication materials is that the values that an ad is presenting need to be necessarily aligned with the values of the brand in all its facets. That is, in the case of fashion brands, from the very core values of their branding (and/or rebranding), to the designing process, production chains, and finally communication materials of their products. Brands are slowly moving on from exclusion of non-White cultures in their imagery, but are often failing to go beyond the picture to the action.
Newer fashion brands have already been created under the wing of a consumer culture that pressures them to contribute to society in a way that positively impacts Western culture, other than just selling clothing goods. Thus, older and more mainstream fashion brands tend to slowly integrate ethnic and cultural diversity in their companies, and to do more quality research on their communication materials. However, there is still a correlation between the fact that most of these mainstream global fashion brands have a predominantly White market, and that a considerable part of this market supports White supremacy. The fashion industry has an important weight in the normalization of images and trends in contemporary consumer culture, and it has historically broken oppressive standards of all kinds, so it must continue to strive for an equal representation of ethnic diversity. For instance, Old Navy, a paradigmatic GAP Inc brand that based its identity on values of the ‘typical American lifestyle’, introduced a Twitter ad in 2016 that promoted a sales season, and it featured an interracial family (see Annexes, case number 23). This apparently harmless ad was mostly supported by Twitter users. However, some self-identified White supremacists were outraged at the promotion of “White genocide”, and the spread of multiculturality over messages of and for an exclusively White world.

After conducting this research, it can be concluded that marketing and communication of fashion brands still need to come a long way when it comes to ethnic diversity and racial representation in the post postmodern era, although there are already advances in comparison to earlier decades. It is not only a matter of inclusion of ethnic diversity, but of properly researched portrayals of cultural identities. Future research might focus on the relationship between the communication materials of fashion brands and their internal managing teams and production process, using a smaller sample of fashion brands. These brands need to be committed and coherent with their social responsibility, and do the previous proper research on the production
and communication of their products. This is especially important, given the fairly globalized consumer culture that exists in the world, because fashion tends to merge designs, materials, and techniques from different cultures. All the way from the design and production, to the marketing and communication of a clothing item, fashion brands have to take in account the origin of it, credit the proper culture, and rely on individuals from that culture to advise them in its correct representation in advertising images. Moreover, ethnic diversity shouldn’t be merely a campaign or branding strategy, but an inherent value of the company, visible at all levels. If fashion brands have an even representation in their own management teams -not in their production chains- of professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds, it will be easier to avoid racist and xenophobic scandals for misrepresentation or mockery of an ethnic or cultural minority.
6. References


7. Annexes

7.1. Complete Qualitative Content Analysis

Coolest Monkey in the Jungle

1. Case number: 1
2. Date: 08/01/2018
3. Brand: H&M
4. Medium: Corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: “Coolest monkey in the jungle”. There is no title or caption in the image itself, but there is a clear written message in the advertised clothing item that is the center of the signification of the message in this image.
7. Use of discourse features:
- **Connotation**: The word ‘monkey’ is commonly used and known as a pejorative name for the Black population in White-dominated societies.

- **Tropes**: The sentence in the hoodie is a figure of speech that links the product to a culture-specific meaning, in this case, it is relating the Black model to the word ‘monkey’, that is a common derogatory metaphor for Black people.

- **Point of view**: Given the signification that the sentence “coolest monkey in the jungle” may have when related to the Black community, H&M picked a Black model. If the model was White, there would be no defamatory signification, therefore, the choice of main character was poorly researched.

- **Grammatical person**: In this case, the imagined grammatical person would be “I”. It appears as if the child wearing the hoodie is making the statement, as if that would justify the connotation of the text.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model, Black male toddler.

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

   - **Stereotyping**: This image reproduces the stereotype that compares Black people to monkeys, which denigrates and dehumanizes this minority by putting them at the level of a less-developed, wild animal.

   - **Alienation**: Putting this image in the context of its campaign, the rest of the clothes from this collection were promoted with White models (see Fig. 1), and with non-connotational messages in them, making it a clearly alienated message.
10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - **Social distance**: Although in the main image the model is alone, the expression on his face doesn’t match the supposed feeling of pride that the sentence on his clothes is trying to mean. When we look at the context of the campaign,

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural norm**: All of the clothing items displayed are mainstream to the White hegemonic cultural norm: regular hoodie.

12. Miscellaneous: This image created outrage on social media as soon as it was posted. Many Black advocates denounced this poor choice of portrayal of the product, mainly because it shows a lack of diversity in the team behind the brand. If they are not inclusive inside the company, and they don’t conduct proper market research, it is easy for these images to be reproduced and spread, causing harm in our society in terms of representation of cultural diversity.
The Balaclava Knit

1. Case number: 2
2. Date: 06/02/2019
3. Brand and company: Gucci (Kering)
4. Medium: Corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features:
   - **Ellipsis:** This piece of clothing gets its name from its resemblance to the balaclava helmet, and includes a pair of painted red lips in the part that covers the face. Since it is not an actual balaclava, the rest of the face is not painted on the sweater, but a sense of *blackface* can be recovered by the viewer.
   - **Connotation:** Blackface is a technique that was popularly used in the 19th century in the United States in theatrical representations, that consisted on painting non-Black actors to represent a caricature of a Black person. Painted traits included a black face and thick, red lips. Blackface was used to stereotype and mock Black slaves. In this
picture, a black sweater covers half of the face and there are thick, red lips around the actual lips of the models, making it a form of blackface.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model, female

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

   - **Stereotyping**: This picture uses an indirect form of stereotyping, because a White model is used to resemble another ethnic minority. In this case, a particular form of stereotyping (blackface) is used to downgrade the Black diaspora.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural appropriation**: Although the piece of clothing isn’t ethnic-specific, meaning it doesn’t use any materials, patterns, or designs associated with a given culture, it is mocking physical traits of an ethnic minority, in this case the Black population.

12. Miscellaneous: In this case, which also received a lot of backlash in social media, the problem didn’t come from the communication itself, but from the very design of the sweater.
The Resort 2020 Collection

1. Case number: 3
2. Date: 13/06/2019
3. Brand and company: Carolina Herrera (Puig)
4. Medium: Corporate website
5. Type: Collection of pictures
6. Text: The images show no text, but the collection has the following caption on the website:

“The Carolina Herrera Resort 2020 Collection takes on the playful and colorful mood of a Latin holiday”.

7. Use of discourse features:

- **Paralanguage**: The facial expression and body position of the models, as well as the spatial configuration of the setting creates a ‘playful and joyful’ feeling on the audience, linked to the products that are advertised.

- **Point of view**: None of the models belong to the BIPOC community (Black, Indigenous and People of Color). They are all White, probably because the target market of the brand is mainly White, and this point of view is selling the “colorful mood of a Latin holiday”.

- **Narratives**: These images are commodifying the Latino identity and the stereotype of a party lifestyle through the products in this clothing collection.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Hegemonic group of models, White females

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exotization**: From the design of the clothes to their presentation in the website, this whole collection is inspired in traditional, artisan, Indigenous embroidery in Mexico. Using only White models, and through a spatial configuration that evokes certain stereotypes, these images are exoticizing an idealized Latino lifestyle, masking their reality.
   - **Exclusion**: Only White models are present, so all images are non-inclusive of other minority ethnicities.

10. Pictorial dimensions:
   - **Social relation**: Models are not presented in relation to each other, but in relation to the diverse audiences, they present power differences in the way that White models are appropriating Indigenous clothing.

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural appropriation**: All models are wearing ethnic clothing, inspired by Mexican Indigenous minorities, but none of them belong to this group. Neither the design nor the marketing strategy is crediting the original culture.

12. Miscellaneous: The Mexican government publicly accused Carolina Herrera of cultural appropriation for this collection. Many Internet users were outraged by the fact that none of the profits from this collection went to Mexican Indigenous people and none of the models were POC, but the designer ripped off the embroidery from this culture. Mexican minister
Alejandra Frausto demanded the fashion house “publicly explain on what basis it decided to make use of these cultural elements, whose origins are documented, and how this benefits the Mexican communities”.
Lola Indigo x Reebok

1. Case number: 4
2. Date: 11/04/2019
3. Brand and company: Reebok (Adidas)
4. Medium: Social media, mainly Instagram (promoted ads)
5. Type: Picture
7. Use of discourse features:
   - **Paralanguage**: In all of the images of this campaign, the main character (Spanish singer Lola Indigo) is holding or flipping her braids, giving an important role to this hairstyle in relation with the signification of the message (title).
   - **Point of view**: The main character in every image is Lola Indigo, except in one, that is depicted next to a racialized male model whose name doesn’t appear in the image. The fact that her, a White woman, is “breaking the standard” is relevant to the meaning of the image.
   - **Grammatical person**: The grammatical person of the title is the imperative “You”. This ad is encouraging the audience to break the cultural norm (“standard”), yet the
only visual example that is portrayed is a White model wearing box braids, a traditional African hairstyle, since there is nothing else in the picture that outstands for being different to the hegemonic culture.

- **Narratives**: This image is representing a culture-specific trait as a groundbreaking fashion style in a White-dominated society.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model, White female Spanish singer Lola Indigo

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

   - **Exotization**: The hairstyle that the main model is wearing is exoticized when related to the title “break the standard”, since it is a traditional -and very historically charged- style for a broad ethnic minority.

   - **Alienation**: Every picture of this campaign portrays Lola Indigo by herself except for one, as a clear attempt to justify cultural appropriation or to give a sense of multiculturalism to the brand.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

   - **Social distance**: In the image with two models, the racialized model is behind the White main one and his body position is facing the left corner of the picture, while the White model is centered, standing firmly, facing the audience and holding her braids as a statement of power.

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural norm**: All of the clothing items displayed are White-normative, but there is cultural appropriation in the hairstyle of the model.

12. Miscellaneous: This campaign, which also had a broad printed spread, didn’t outstand in social media for its cultural appropriation. This may be a sign of how this kind of cultural
appropriation is widely normalized in our society, since it means no harm. However, when models like Lola Indigo, who have a lot of influence in the younger market, appear with these hairstyles in big campaigns, many people from the audience will follow the “break the standard” trend, without acknowledging or crediting the original culture or the meaning of the trait.
Michael Kors’ Jerga

1. Case number: 5
2. Date: 14/09/2018
3. Brand and company: Michael Kors (Capri Holdings)
4. Medium: Corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features

- **Ellipsis**: This picture is centered on the product, the sweater, which can appear as a regular piece of clothing to some audiences. However, for the Indigenous community, this is an exact copy of their traditional *jerga*, an artisan classic piece of clothing in Mexico.
- **Point of view**: The model and main character wearing the ethnic sweater is White and there’s no other context to the image, so it presents a form of cultural appropriation.

8. **Ethnicity of model(s)**: Individual White model, female

9. **Presentation of model(s) to the audience**
   - **Exclusion**: There is only one White model wearing ethnic clothing, so the original culture is ignored.

10. **Pictorial dimensions**: Not applicable

11. **Presentation of clothes**
   - **Cultural appropriation**: One or more models are wearing ethnic clothing or accessories that are inspired by traditions of cultural minorities without visibly belonging to the given community. Neither the designer of the clothing item nor the marketing strategy is crediting the original culture.

12. **Miscellaneous**: The Mexican Indigenous community was very shocked about this item and they expressed it on social media. The gray version of the sweater is an exact replica of the traditional *jerga*, but it costs approximately 100 times more (180 vs 20,000 Mexican pesos). Once again, the original culture that served as an inspiration for this clothing item was not credited in either the design or the marketing materials, and none of the profits benefitted this community.
Dillard’s x Katy Perry

1. Case number: 6
2. Date: 13/02/2019
3. Brand and company: Katy Perry for Dillard’s
4. Medium: Social media (Katy Perry’s Instagram)
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text. The caption feature on Instagram wasn’t used.
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: This is another case of blackface in the fashion industry. These shoes, although they came in different colors, were always depicted in black, with thick, red lips, and big eyes, which resembled the blackface technique that is offensive to the Black community.
   - **Paralanguage**: Because the advertised product are shoes, the fact that a White model, in this case Katy Perry, is wearing what looks like two black faces on her feet, demonstrates a difference in power that favors White supremacy.
- **Point of view:** The product itself, but also the choice of model to promote it, contributes to the controversial signification of this image.

8. **Ethnicity of model(s):** Individual White model

9. **Presentation of model(s) to the audience:**
   - **Stereotyping:** Blackface is a pejorative form of stereotyping Black people that the main model is reproducing.

10. **Pictorial dimensions:** Not applicable.

11. **Presentation of clothes:**
   - **Cultural norm:** The clothing item that is promoted isn’t ethnic or culture-specific, but its design resembles blackface.

12. **Miscellaneous:** This product came out at about the same time as The Balaclava Knit (see case number 2), and many Black activists, as well as professionals from the fashion industry, took on social media to create awareness about the general lack of research and sensitivity in the whole process of the industry: from the design of the products until their promotion techniques.
The Great Show by Dolce & Gabbana

Source: L. DOPE on YouTube (link)

1. Case number: 7
2. Date: 15/11/2018
3. Brand and company: Dolce & Gabbana
4. Medium: Social media, Chinese network Weibo
5. Type: Video
6. Text: With Chinese folk music playing in the background, there is a narration by a Mandarin-speaking voiceover that pronounces incorrectly on purpose in a way that mocks Chinese speech. Some of the sentences include “Welcome to the first episode of ‘Eating with Chopsticks by Dolce & Gabbana’,” “This is how you eat our great pizza margherita properly”, and “Is it too big for you?”. This is one of a series of three videos that were qualified as explicitly racist and sexist by Internet users.
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: There are sexual connotations in the narration that are ridiculing the Chinese woman.
- **Paralanguage**: The facial expression and gestures of the female main character are submissive to the narrator, who is supposedly teaching her how to eat properly. She repeatedly laughs and appears as if she is not aware of the situation surrounding her, which can be perceived as intimidatory.

- **Point of view**: In the ad, one can only see the main character, a Chinese woman, but the narration’s point of view is mocking her culture. We can infer, being the advertiser an Italian brand, that the narrator is reproducing White supremacy, therefore the choice of point of view is relevant to the signification of the ad.

- **Grammatical person**: The grammatical person of the text is the narrator, that speaks to both the audience and the main character (‘You’) in an imperative way. He is trying to educate a person from a different culture in the “proper” way of eating, justified by the fact that she is Chinese and is eating traditional Italian dishes with chopsticks.

- **Narratives**: This image presents an imagined lifestyle in a derogatory way. On Weibo, one person commented "D&G's stereotyping China. [The videos] only show the brand's outdated view about China."

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model, Chinese woman.

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

   - **Stereotyping**: There is a direct form of stereotyping when using a Chinese model to mock the ethnic group that she belongs to.

   - **Exotization**: With the sexual connotations in the narration and the attitude of the main character (laughing and submissively obeying orders from the narrator), this ad sexualizes the identities of Asian women.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
- **Social relation**: The relationship between the narrator and the main character shows a difference of power that favor the male narrator.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural norm**: Only White standard clothing is present. The main character is wearing an Italian designer dress by Dolce & Gabbana.

12. Miscellaneous: In this case, clothes were not a reason of outrage, rather how they were presented. This ad, along with the other two videos of the same fashion, aimed to promote an upcoming runway called ‘The Great Show’ to introduce a new market in China. The audience, first on Weibo and then on YouTube, found these ads racist and disrespectful to the culture that Dolce & Gabbana was precisely trying to attract. The main designer was involved in a racist scandal towards China the same week, in which he allegedly sent racist jokes about the Chinese culture to his team.
Isabel Marant vs Tlahuitoltepec

1. Case number: 8
2. Date: 20/01/2015
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Ellipsis**: The embroidery in this blouse is very similar to ancient Indigenous Tlahuitoltepec blouse, original from the Mixe community in Mexico. Thus, this information can be recoverable by a specific audience, since credit is not present in the picture or description.
   - **Point of view**: The model used to wear this piece of clothing in this picture is White and does not belong to the ethnic group that inspired its design.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exclusion**: Only a White model is present, and the affected community is ignored.
10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural appropriation**: This kind of embroidery and design belongs to the tradition of the Mixe in Mexico, a culture that was neither credited by the designer or brand, nor represented in the promotion of the product.

12. Miscellaneous: From January to November 2015, the brand Antik Batik sued Isabel Marant for allegedly copying the design from them. In November, the Mixe community stepped in and spoke out about this case of cultural appropriation that affected them, but Marant was cleared of accusations by a court in Paris because she didn’t claim to be the author of these designs. However, the Indigenous community complained about the lack of credit and benefit to their culture.
Kokon To Zai’s Inuit rip-off

1. Case number: 9

2. Date: 26/11/2015

3. Brand and company: Kokon To Zai

4. Medium: Corporate website

5. Type: Picture

6. Text: No text

7. Use of discourse features

   - **Connotation**: The main clothing element shown in the picture has spiritual connotations for a part of the Indigenous community in Canada.

   - **Point of view**: The person wearing this item is a White model, and the picture does not credit the original culture.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model, male

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Exclusion**: This piece of clothing is almost an exact copy of a sacred Indigenous design. It was made without the affected community knowing, and there is no credit or representation of the family that was the original source of inspiration.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural appropriation**: The sweater that is being promoted is not only ethnic clothing, but also a sacred design to the Nunavut family and the Inuit community.

12. Miscellaneous: This sweater is a caribou skin parka originally made to offer spiritual protection to an Inuit shaman named Ava. The Nunavut family, an Indigenous community that is related to said shaman, was deeply offended when they discovered that Kokon To Zai had been selling their sacred design as a sweater. The pattern is an exact copy of their traditional parka and it was made without their permission.
Victoria’s Secret’s sexualization of Native Americans

1. Case number: 10
2. Date: 12/11/2012
3. Brand and company: Victoria’s Secret (L Brands)
4. Medium: Social media, Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show 2012 Broadcast
5. Type: Picture, frame from video
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features:
   - **Connotation**: Victoria’s Secret has a large history of exotization and sexualization of a specific standard of White, skinny women’s bodies. In their 2012 Fashion Show, model Karlie Kloss wore a Native American tribal headdress and a bikini with stereotypical connotations on American Indians.
   - **Point of view**: As most of Victoria’s Secret models throughout its history, Karlie Kloss is a White model, and in this picture, she is wearing tribal-like clothing.
   - **Narratives**: This image represents an erotic and exotic lifestyle linked to a stereotype of Native Americans, which commodifies their imposed identities.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model, Karlie Kloss (female)
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exotization**: An ethnic minority, in this case the Native Americans, is presented as the ‘exotic other’, idealizing their style and masking their less-privileged reality. There is also a high degree of sexualization of American Indian women’s bodies.
   - **Exclusion**: Although Victoria’s Secret models in their Fashion Shows come from very diverse backgrounds, the most shared pictures by the brand and the media usually feature White women, and all of them have a skinny, normative body. In the case of this Fashion Show, no Native Americans were modelling, and so this headdress was worn by a White model.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - **Social distance**: A White model wearing clothes that resemble the fashion from a different ethnic community creates and reproduces differences between the social status of the White and the Native American communities. Some American Indian women pointed out Victoria’s Secret lack of inclusion and empathy with this known injustice affecting their community.

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural appropriation**: The featured headdress and other accessories, along with the bikini, resemble Native American cultural clothing and also stereotypes it.

12. Miscellaneous: Activists from Native Appropriations stated that more than 30% of Native American women have been raped in their lives, and 90% of those rapes are perpetrated by non-Native men. They accused Victoria’s Secret for “blatantly and ignorantly perpetuating the sexualization of American Indian women to a predominantly non-Native, male audience. Victoria’s Secret and Karlie Kloss later apologized and removed the footage from the show.
Navajo Nation vs Urban Outfitters

1. Case number: 11

2. Date: 21/10/2011

3. Brand and company: Urban Outfitters

4. Medium: Corporate website

5. Type: Picture

6. Text: Title “Urban Outfitters”, just the naming of the brand. However, every clothing item with these patterns was labeled “Navajo” across the website up until November 2015.

7. Use of discourse features

   - **Ellipsis**: Half of the faces of the models have been cut off the picture and are recoverable by the viewer. This technique actually subtracts meaning instead of adding to the message in order to center the attention in the products displayed, and not the models.

   - **Point of view**: There are three main characters from different ethnic backgrounds, although there are none that may look Native American, which is the culture from where the patterns in the clothes are originally from. This choice of main characters may have been an attempt to mask cultural appropriation with a sense of multiculturalism.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethically diverse group, including one Black male, one White woman, and what appears to be an Asian woman in the middle, although it is not clear.

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

- **Tokenism**: Because of the faces being cut off, we can see few physical traits of the models from which we can infer different ethnic backgrounds. Although it is not a harmful or particularly dehumanizing way of tokenism, there are three models with three different skin tones that are included with no relevant meaningful reason other than aesthetics, in order to make the brand appear as inclusive and multicultural.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appropriation**: The patterns and the “Navajo” name on the products are a plagiarism of the Native American Navajo Nation tribe, who own the largest tribe reservation in the United States, and are the second largest Native American Nation. No members of the tribe were credited or shown in the designs or ads. In addition, the naming ‘Navajo’ was used for all the products with these patterns without the tribe’s permission, for they were not benefitted in any way.

12. Miscellaneous: The Navajo Nation had a dispute with Urban Outfitters for the trademark of this kind of geometrical, colorful patterns for more than seven years. On 2016, Urban Outfitters finally removed the naming of the products, and both parties reached a supply and license agreement that formalizes the use of appropriated branding and opens the door to a collaboration on authentic Native American jewelry, with hired Navajo artisans.
Kendall Jenner’

1. Case number: 12
2. Date: 23/10/2018
3. Brand and company: Vogue and CFDA (Council of Fashion Designers of America)
4. Medium: Social media, Vogue’s Instagram
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Caption “Fifteen years and 150 finalists later, the CFDA/Vogue Fashion Fund prize has created a true sense of community among designers of all ages and backgrounds—all with differing aesthetic and commercial aspirations”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view:** Afro hairstyles are linked to the Black diaspora, a community that has historically received hateful attacks because of their hairstyles, so a White model with an afro portrayed in an up-scale setting makes the point of view relevant in the sense that it perpetuates White privilege.
   - **Narratives:** The style presented in the image is accompanied by a caption that evokes an idealization of equality and diversity (“all ages and backgrounds—all with differing
aesthetic”) that is not realistic in our current society. Thus, it is commodifying a non-existent reality.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model, celebrity Kendall Jenner

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exotization**: Hairstyles like Kendall’s afro in this picture are often portrayed as ‘groundbreaking’ and ‘modern’, while they are traditional to less privileged minorities.
   - **Exclusion**: There is only one model with an afro hairstyle that is hegemonic in the White-dominated culture.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural appropriation**: Both the clothes and the hairstyle were meant to be an update of the romantic ‘Gibson Girl’ style from the early ‘70s. Therefore, while this image doesn’t show explicit cultural appropriation in the clothes, its presentation can be read in that manner by the Black community.

12. Miscellaneous: Vogue apologized for this photoshoot after accusations of racism and cultural appropriation. Kendall Jenner and her family have been involved in these kinds of scandals several times, so it made the image more controversial. However, many Instagram and Internet users from the Black community supported and defended Vogue, stating that these images can help to the normalization of different cultural traits, like afro hairstyles.
Marc Jacobs’ Dreadlocks

1. Case number: 13
2. Date: 15/09/2016
3. Brand and company: Marc Jacobs
4. Medium: Social media, Marc Jacobs’ Facebook
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view**: Luxury fashion designer Marc Jacobs used wigs with colorful wool dreadlocks on all of the predominantly White models of his runway, featuring Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid. The choice of the main characters, rather than his fashion designs, were the source of most of the signification of this image.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Hegemonic group of models, two White females, Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Exotization**: The dreadlocks are used as a unique, modern colorful accessory, normalizing the use of this hairstyle by White people as a fashion trend, exoticizing and ignoring the history behind the style.

- **Exclusion**: In this picture, only White models are present because Marc Jacobs’ runway was predominantly White, although all models wore the dreadlock wigs.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social distance**: Although some models in the runway were non-White, the most featured models were Gigi Hadid, Kendall Jenner and Irina Shayk, portraying a difference in the social status of White and non-White models.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appropriation**: Some of the patterns and styles in the clothes, as well as the hairstyle, were appropriated from Black culture.

12. Miscellaneous: Internet users called out Marc Jacobs for not using models with dreadlocks in the first place, and for perpetuating the acceptance of White people appropriating styles that Black people are constantly ridiculed for. In response, Marc Jacobs stood by his designs, denied the existence of cultural appropriation and criticized People of Color for straightening their hair (mostly Black women are asked to do so in their workplaces to look ‘cleaner’). He also stated that “he doesn’t see color”, a sentence that is problematic to Black culture because it ignores the struggles of their community. A year later, he forcedly apologized.
Kim K’s Kimonos

1. Case number: 14
2. Date: 25/06/2019
3. Brand and company: The initial name of the brand by Kim Kardashian was Kimono, who now renamed it SKIMS.
4. Medium: Social media, Kim Kardashian’s Twitter
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Caption “Kimono is my take on shapewear and solutions for women that actually work.
7. Use of discourse features

   - **Connotation**: In the text next to the image (the caption on Twitter), Kim Kardashian names her product and brand ‘Kimono’. The kimono is a traditional Japanese dress that is well-known across the world, while the shapewear of this image has nothing to do with the Japanese culture and its clothing. This wrongful connotation didn’t go unnoticed by the Japanese and Asian audience.

   - **Paralanguage**: The facial expression, body position and spatial configuration of the models in this image aim to create a meaning of inclusiveness, comfort, and confidence.
- **Point of view:** A group of models with many different skin tones are used to represent the diverse shades of the ‘nude’ color, which gives a signification of inclusiveness and diversity.

8. **Ethnicity of model(s):** Ethnically diverse group of models. A group of women with different skin tones, predominantly Black and White.

9. **Presentation of model(s) to the audience:**
   - **Participation:** There are several models from diverse ethnic backgrounds that are portrayed with authentic and factual representations of identity, and are all relevant to the creation of meaning of the message, which in this case emphasizes on the different ‘nude’ shades. In other pictures of this launching campaign, female models with different body types and ethnic backgrounds are also present.

10. **Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable**
    - **Social interaction:** Although in this particular image Kim Kardashian has more relevance, it is for being the designer of the product, not for her ethnicity. In other pictures, all models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience, and Kim Kardashian is not present.

11. **Presentation of clothes**
    - **Cultural appropriation:** The original name chosen to present this piece of clothing, Kimono, was directly appropriated from the Japanese culture, and the designer tried to trademark it without asking for permission to the original culture.

12. **Miscellaneous:** Kim Kardashian has a massive audience globally, and she was criticized for the naming of her product. However, she handled the controversy and changed the name to SKIMS. The pictorial representations in the images of this brand are quite inclusive.
The Zara Lungi Skirt

1. Case number: 15
2. Date: 29/01/2018
3. Brand and company: Zara (Inditex)
4. Medium: Zara’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Caption “Checked mini flowing skirt with draped detail in the front.”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view**: A single White model, along with a caption that did not credit the original Indian piece of clothing, was used to promote an overpriced skirt.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model, female
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exotization**: The caption “checked mini flowing skirt” describes the lungi, a wide strip of cloth used mainly by men in South and Southeast Asia, East Africa, and the Arab world, as an exotic piece of clothing, which aims to justify the expensive price.
   - **Exclusion**: Only White models are present; other ethnicities are ignored.
10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural appropriation**: One or more models are wearing ethnic clothing or accessories that are inspired by traditions of cultural minorities without visibly belonging to the given community. Neither the designer of the clothing item nor the marketing strategy is crediting the original culture.

12. Miscellaneous: Most Internet users were amazed at the fact that any Indian could have spotted an issue of cultural appropriation at first glance. Given the controversy of Inditex’s history with sweatshops, consumers demanded a more ethical and inclusive designing, producing, and marketing teams. Zara did not address the issue.
Jennifer Lawrence x Dior

1. Case number: 16
2. Date: 13/11/2018
3. Brand and company: Dior
4. Medium: Social media, Dior’s Instagram
5. Type: Video
6. Text: Jennifer Lawrence, who is the model of the photoshoot for this collection, narrates the ad that features the filming of this photoshoot. Some of her words are “One of the main inspirations for this collection are the traditional women riders in Mexico, so I’m really excited that it is looking at and celebrating these women’s heritage through such a modern lens.”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view**: The main character of this ad is actress Jennifer Lawrence, who states that a collection inspired by traditional Mexican horsewomen has a “modern lens”. This point of view adds to the signification of the message because she is a White woman representing Mexican heritage.

Source: Instagram Video (link)
- **Grammatical person**: The grammatical person of the text in this ad is the same as the main character. Not only she is the face of the campaign, but she is also the voice that states that “she couldn’t think of a better place to shoot than California”.

8. **Ethnicity of model(s)**: Individual White model, actress Jennifer Lawrence

9. **Presentation of model(s) to the audience**:  
   - **Stereotyping**: The campaign for this Dior collection stereotypes *escaramuzas*, but does not feature them.
   - **Exclusion**: A White actress was chosen as the face of this campaign and collection, when there are actual Mexican actresses with traditional heritage that could have been a better fit. The culture that this ad is trying to celebrate was not represented.

10. **Pictorial dimensions**: Not applicable

11. **Presentation of clothes**  
   - **Cultural appropriation**: The clothes and the setting from this campaign imitate traditional Mexican culture traits, and while the community is credited, they are not represented in the ad.

12. **Miscellaneous**: This clothing collection was influenced by the *escaramuza*, a traditional, highly skilled Mexican horsewoman; and the female characters from *The House of the Spirits*, the classic novel from Chilean writer Isabel Allende. However, the campaign noticeably lacked representation from actual Mexicans, and was shot in California. Jennifer Lawrence, in her narration, says that “she couldn’t think of a better place to shoot”, and was criticized because of not thinking of authentic Mexican landscapes. In addition, the phrase “modern lens” was understood as if what made this collection ‘modern’ was the fact that was promoted by a White person.
The Nike Pro Hijab

1. Case number: 17
2. Date: 02/11/2017
3. Brand and company: Nike
4. Medium: Social media, Nike’s Instagram
5. Type: Picture
6. Text:
   - Title: “Don’t change for the rules. Change the rules.”
   - Caption: “It’s only crazy until it’s reality. The International Boxing Association rewrote the rules, allowing women everywhere to box in hijabs. A huge win for women across the world. #justdoit”
7. Use of discourse features
   - Tropes: The text uses a trope to link the product, the Nike hijab, to the Muslim fight for normalizing and legalizing the religious hijab in all countries and environments.
- **Point of view**: The choice of main character of the image is very relevant to the signification of the message. Boxer Zeina Nassar is an elite boxer in Germany that has advocated for the abolition of the anti-hijab rule in boxing.

- **Grammatical person**: The grammatical person of the title is the imperative ‘You’, that encourages the audience to stand and fight for great causes. This corporate activism trend has been strongly emulated by Nike, especially in the last decade.

- **Narratives**: Both the texts and the image show a lifestyle of ‘fighting for freedom’, that is the base of not only the campaign, but the whole brand’s discourse. However, it is commodifying a social movement via the product that is advertised.

8. **Ethnicity of model(s)**: Individual non-White model, German boxing champion Zeina Nassar, of Lebanese heritage

9. **Presentation of model(s) to the audience**:

   - **Alienation**: While this image does not present an evident form of alienation, it does commodify the Muslim liberation fight. By putting the spotlight and monetizing off of this movement, though it helps with raising awareness, Nike is alienating Muslim women. This product and ad legitimized the hijab across two different narratives: the liberal Western democracies that accuse this piece of clothing of oppressing women, and the Muslim market, so it makes sense from a business point of view.

10. **Pictorial dimensions**:

   - **Social interaction**: There is only one model in the ad, but the title and caption indirectly include other women athletes that are empowered equally, regardless of ethnicity, culture and discipline.

11. **Presentation of clothes**
- **Cultural appreciation**: The Nike Pro Hijab copies the traditional hijab design, and is produced and sold worldwide. The origin, tradition and meaning of the product is always credited and presented with a Muslim model, which is appropriate to the message and signification of the campaign.

12. Miscellaneous: -
**Winnie Harlow x Desigual**

1. Case number: 18
2. Date: 30/07/2014
3. Brand and company: Desigual
4. Medium: Desigual’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text (just naming of the brand)
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view**: Winnie Harlow was the face of the 2015 Desigual collection, and even though she might have been chosen for her vitiligo condition (skin condition that causes patches of the skin losing their pigment), she is featured with normality, without making a brand statement off of her condition.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model, Canadian model Winnie Harlow from Jamaican heritage
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Participation**: Since it is an individual model, we have to put this image in the context of the campaign and the brand. This campaign was centered in Winnie Harlow, and she is granted the same platform as her homologous models that have
been featured as the face of new collections. The imagery of Desigual feature models from different ethnic backgrounds and is usually not alienating or stereotyping.

10. Pictorial dimensions:

- **Social interaction**: All Desigual models are represented with equal relevance to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appreciation**: Some of the clothes in the 2015 Desigual collection featured African-inspired designs, but they were credited and worn by a racialized model in their promotion, appreciating cultural diversity.

12. Miscellaneous: In general, Desigual does a fairly good job on representation of diversity. It credits designs from other cultures and collaborates with culturally diverse designers. Its production is based in Spain and its communication materials are inclusive and participative, ethnicity-wise.
**Winnie Harlow x Diesel**

1. Case number: 19
2. Date: 01/02/2015
3. Brand and company: Diesel
4. Medium: Diesel’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text (naming and slogan of the brand)
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation:** There is a sexual connotation present in this ad, since it only shows normative, fit bodies in their underwear.
   - **Paralanguage:** The body position and spatial configuration of the models add to the sexual connotation. It is important to note that only the non-White female model has her legs around a man and is held by another, so her body is more sexualized to the male audience than the other female bodies.
   - **Narratives:** This image shows an uninhibited, sexually free lifestyle that is linked to the product; Diesel’s underwear.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Hegemonic group of models, dominantly White models, except for Canadian-Jamaican model Winnie Harlow

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

   - **Exotization**: The vitiligo condition that Harlow has makes her skin a valued asset in terms of representation of diversity in the fashion industry. The main feature that differs the Black community from the White hegemonic culture is the skin color. Winnie Harlow is part of an ethnic minority that also suffers from a condition that can be used to alienate and exoticize her. In this particular case, she is presented as the ‘exotic other’, in opposition to the other White models. There is also a higher degree of sexualization of her body, as explained before.

   - **Alienation**: All of the models portrayed are White but one, as an attempt to give a sense of ‘multiculturalism’ and inclusion.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

   - **Social relation**: Models appear to be presented with equal relevance, but because two men are holding the only racialized model upside down, the picture presents power differences that diminish Black bodies.

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural norm**: All of the underwear displayed are mainstream clothing items to the White hegemonic cultural norm.

12. Miscellaneous: -
Levi’s Collaboration with OutRight Action

1. Case number: 20
2. Date: 31/05/2018
3. Brand and company: Levi’s (Levi Strauss & Co)
4. Medium: Levi’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features

- **Paralanguage**: The body position and spatial configuration of the picture, as well as the clothes that are featured, give a sense of confidence and pride to the LGTBQ+ community, regardless of the ethnic background of each person.

- **Point of view**: The choice of models is relevant to the campaign because they all belong to the LGTBQ+ community, but it is not principally relevant in terms of ethnic diversity.

- **Narratives**: The image represents a lifestyle and gives out a message of living sexuality with pride and freedom. Levi’s may commodify the movement for sales, but rather actively cooperates with it, so it uses its platform to remain relatable and useful as a player in contemporary consumer culture.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models, six models with different physical, aesthetic and cultural traits

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

   - **Participation**: While some may argue that this image uses tokenism, I consider this image to be participative and inclusive, because inside the LGTBQ+ community, exists a stigmatization and discrimination of non-White bodies. The fact that this campaign not only makes the LGTBQ+ movement visible, but also includes all ethnicities in the community, raises awareness on the stereotype that sexualities different from the heterosexual only exist in Western cultures.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

   - **Social interaction**: All models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural norm**: No ethnic or cultural clothing is present. All of the clothing items displayed are mainstream to the White hegemonic cultural norm.

12. Miscellaneous: Levi’s collaboration with OutRight Action, which is the beneficiary of the benefits from the Pride collection since 2018, is an example of how fashion brands can align their corporate values with the ones they portray in advertising. Levi’s not only openly features LGBTQ+ models in its communication materials, it also actively helps the cause by raising awareness and raising funds for it. This cause is not ethnicity related, but many mainstream fashion brands that claim to advocate for cultural diversity and inclusion could participate in the fight in the way Levi’s does.
Benetton’s Tokenism vs Participation

1. Case number: 21
2. Date: 03/03/2011
3. Brand and company: United Colors of Benetton (Benetton Group)
4. Medium: Brand’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text, but the name of the brand adds meaning to all of its messages, historically
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: The brand’s name ‘United Colors’ refers to both the colorful designs of the clothing items and the diverse skin colors of the people in the world.
   - **Paralanguage**: Every model’s facial expression is happy and welcoming, which is a trademark characteristic of Benetton’s ads.
   - **Narratives**: The world-famous imagery and brand image of United Colors of Benetton have historically aimed to portray an inclusive, diverse world; sometimes with very controversial pictures from photographer Oliviero Toscani.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Group of ethnically diverse models (eight)
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

- **Tokenism**: Historically, United Colors of Benetton paved the way for the fashion industry to be more inclusive in terms of cultural and ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, the brand has failed to evolve in terms of actively contributing to any fight for racial equality, and keeps on limiting its activism to the inclusion of at least one model of each most major ethnic group (White, Black/Brown, Asian, and Indigenous), with no apparent meaningful reason in its marketing materials, in order to maintain the ‘multicultural’ trademark of the brand’s social image.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural norm**: No ethnic or cultural clothing is featured or appropriated.

12. Miscellaneous: As contemporary consumer culture becomes more aware of brands’ activities behind their appearance, United Colors of Benetton has been involved in sweatshops scandals, such as the garment factory in Bangladesh that collapsed in 2013, killing 1,300 people. The company’s failure to bring the message in its campaigns to real action is the reason why the perception of participation and inclusion by its audience has shifted to critiques for their recurrent tokenism.
The Face of the City

1. Case number: 22
2. Date: 02/02/2016
3. Brand and company: United Colors of Benetton (Benetton Group)
4. Medium: Social media and corporate website
5. Type: Series of pictures
6. Text: Title “This is the face of New York”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Tropes**: Instead of using a real model, Benetton digitally edited the faces of several models into one, creating an illusion to show ethnic diversity inside of major cities in the world (in the picture, the New York edition).
   - **Narratives**: This image aims to proof that there is not one ethnicity that defines the population of a city, but that cities around the world are multicultural hubs, with citizens from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model. However, the face of the model is not authentic, but the digital mixture of several faces.
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Stereotyping**: The technique used in this ad, although creative and good-intentioned, stereotypes the look and identity of citizens from a given city, excluding people whose physical traits drastically differ from this standard.
   - **Exclusion**: All of the made-up models in the different ads of this campaign turn out to be visibly White and resemble the hegemonic physical traits. Also, no cities from Eastern societies are featured in this creative experiment.
   - **Alienation**: In the New York edition of this campaign, the skin tone of the model is slightly darker than those in the other ads, and the woman resembles Indian American physical traits. This may alienate Native Americans for being the only group with visible featured traits.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - **Social relation**: Because all of the artificial models in the campaign turn to be dominantly White, it manifests White dominance in multicultural cities.

11. Presentation of clothes
    - **Cultural norm**: All clothes featured are mainstream to White culture.

12. Miscellaneous: This series of ads was supposedly created based on factual demographic data on the racial mix of each city. However, it is hard to imagine that there is such small representation of non-White ethnicities in such globalized cities. In addition, all of the cities that are featured are European and American, except for Japan, which excludes almost all of the countries that aren’t White-dominated.
Old Navy’s Interracial Family

1. Case number: 23
2. Date: 29/04/2016
3. Brand and company: Old Navy (GAP Inc.)
4. Medium: Social media, Old Navy’s Twitter
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Caption “Oh, happy day! Our #ThankYouEvent is finally here. Take 30% off your entire purchase”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Paralanguage**: The relationship between the models in this picture, inferred from their body language is that they are a united family.
   - **Narratives**: The image presents the narrative of an interracial, inclusive family’s lifestyle, and presents no differences with the mainstream representation of hegemonic families.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models. One White male who appears to be the father of the family, one Black woman who appears to be the mother, and a Black male toddler.
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

- **Participation**: In this case, the models from diverse ethnic backgrounds are related. Therefore, this image is representing the authentic, factual reality of interracial families naturally, and it is the base of the signification of the ad.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social interaction**: Models have an equal relevance and signification in the ad, except for the toddler, who represents the couple’s son and is logically portrayed with a difference in power in regard to his parents.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural norm**: The clothes featured in this ad are not ethnic clothing.

12. Miscellaneous: This apparently harmless ad was mostly supported by Twitter users. However, some self-identified White supremacists were outraged at the promotion of “White genocide”. There is probably a correlation between the fact that most of these mainstream global fashion brands have a predominantly White market, and that a considerable part of this market supports White supremacy. Nevertheless, the fashion industry has an important weight in the normalization of images and trends in contemporary consumer culture, and it has historically broken oppressive standards of all kinds, so it must continue to strive for an equal representation of ethnic diversity.
Top Spring 2018 Picks for Women

1. Case number: 24
2. Date: 11/04/2018
3. Brand and company: Old Navy (GAP Inc.)
4. Medium: Old Navy’s corporate website
5. Type: Collection of pictures
6. Text: No text (just naming of the brand and season)
7. Use of discourse features
   - Ellipsis: Every image in this picture is centered on the product advertised, and the complete outfits are intended to be recoverable by the viewer, according to their own taste and preferred style.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models, four females (Asian, Black, White and White)
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Participation:** There are several models from diverse ethnic backgrounds that are portrayed separately and equally. Nonetheless, there is a certain degree of tokenism, since the models from non-White ethnic backgrounds are mostly featured in a White-like style. Participation is predominant, given the background of the brand’s company, which aims to give equal opportunities in both the teams on the inside and the models in the outside communications.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social interaction:** Models are represented with equal relevance.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural norm:** Although there is no visible cultural appropriation, there is also no cultural appreciation, that is, no collaboration or intersectionality with non-White ethnicities in the design of the products, which may also perpetuate the hegemonic culture and ignore other ones.

12. Miscellaneous: -
The Festival Shop

1. Case number: 25
2. Date: 08/04/2016
3. Brand and company: Free People (Urban Outfitters)
4. Medium: Free People’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   
   - **Connotation**: The accessory in this picture is just one item of a collection of fashion goods under the label “Festival Shop”. What for White culture is just ‘festival’ wear, for ethnic minorities like the Native Americans, the Indigenous Peoples and the Indians has cultural meanings.

   - **Paralanguage**: The facial expression and spatial configuration of the model evoke a bohemian-like style that is part of the identity of some ethnic minorities, but is recurrently commodified to benefit the White market.
- **Point of view:** The choice of main character highlights the lack of inclusiveness in the process of design, production and marketing of the featured product.

- **Narratives:** This image, along with the whole collection, aims to portray a dream-like festival experience by using Native American culture as an accessory.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model, female

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

   - **Exotization:** Native American cultural traits are presented as ‘exotic’ when linked to the White audience and the festival experience. It idealizes and exoticizes an stereotype that is harmful to the Indian American heritage.

   - **Exclusion:** Only White models are present in the whole collection, so other ethnicities, including the ones from which fashion good were appropriated, are ignored.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural appropriation:** All of the accessories from this collection were inspired or copied from the Native American, the Mexican Indigenous or the Indian cultures without crediting or featuring them.

12. Miscellaneous: Free People has a long history of cultural appropriation, since the brand was based on inspiration from mainly the Native Americans, but it has not collaborated with any POC designer or model.
Live in Levi’s

1. Case number: 26
2. Date: 08/07/2014
3. Brand and company: Levi’s (Levi Strauss & Co)
4. Medium: Levi’s corporate website and social media
5. Type: Picture
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Ellipsis**: The main element of the image, which are the advertised trademark Lev’s jeans, are not mentioned, by recoverable by the viewer. This ellipsis is central to the meaning of the message, since it pretends to showcase the customization feature of the 501 jeans.
   - **Paralanguage**: The overall setting of the picture gives a sense of confidence and style, values that are aligned with the brand’s core values.
   - **Narratives**: The Levi’s narrative has historically been linked to being stylish in one’s own, unique way and proud. This picture naturally portrays a group of friends wearing Levi’s jeans and walking with confidence.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models, four Black males and another Brown male.

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exclusion**: This ad and the campaign that it belongs to aimed to be inclusive by portraying a group of Black models in a similar way as the traditional White counterparts. However, only this picture featured an all-Black group, very few other pictures included one Black model, and none included other ethnic minorities.
   - **Alienation**: Most pictures in this campaign featured predominantly White models but this one, as an attempt to give an image of inclusion.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural norm**: Clothing items (mainly jeans) are mainstream and not particularly aimed for an exclusively White market.

12. Miscellaneous: Considering Levi’s history and the date of this image, and despite the categories assigned to this particular case, this brand has historically done a good job at including diversity in its company as a whole. In fact, on January 2019, it was recognized by Forbes as one of the year’s Best Employers for Diversity in the US, and ranked #353 among 500 companies on the 2019 list based on diversity policies of the same magazine.
GAP: Part One

1. Case number: 27
2. Date: 28/02/2010
3. Brand and company: GAP (GAP Inc.)
4. Medium: GAP’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Paralanguage**: The facial expression, and spatial configuration of the models portray a united ‘GAP’ family that creates a meaning of participation.
   - **Narratives**: The image and text evoke a narrative of inclusion, in this case, with emphasis on biological sex. It represents an inclusive lifestyle and culture.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models; two racialized women, a White male, and a White female
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Participation**: There are several models from diverse ethnic backgrounds that are portrayed in equality, being true to their individual identity, and are all relevant to the creation of meaning of the message.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social interaction**: Models are presented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural norm**: No ethnic or cultural clothing is present.

12. Miscellaneous: GAP Inc. has a rooted commitment to diversity since its creation, although has been evolving throughout time along with pictorial conventions and trends in the fashion industry. Two ads from the beginning of the decade and two from the last years of the 2010s have been chosen in this sample to analyze the evolution of this particular brand, because it came in at number 5 out of 7,000 organizations on the Thomson Reuters list, for it believes that diversity, inclusion and opportunity are key to retaining talent, driving growth, and attracting new customers.
GAP: Part Two

1. Case number: 28
2. Date: 30/08/2010
3. Brand and company: GAP (GAP Inc.)
4. Medium: GAP’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: The title used for this image to refer to the color of the jeans is a sentence commonly used in the Black liberation movement to emphasize the value and power of Black lives, talents and cultures. However, it gained more popularity after (but not because of) this ad was published.
   - **Point of view**: Out of three models, none of them are from the Black diaspora, even though the text attached to the image reminds the audience of the ‘Black magic’ in Black people, so it adds to the connotation.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models; three females (two White and one Asian)
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exclusion**: In this ad, there is two White models and an Asian model dressed and characterized in White fashion, excluding the Black diaspora from this representation.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
    - **Social interaction**: There is no relevant difference in the presentation of the White versus the Asian model.

11. Presentation of clothes
    - **Cultural norm**: Only hegemonic White clothes are featured.

12. Miscellaneous: This second GAP ad from 2010 fails to understand the connotations that the sentence “Black Magic”, combined with a lack of Black representation, may have on this community. However, they do include diversity of ethnic backgrounds.
GAP: Part Three

Source: [Link]

1. Case number: 29

2. Date: 30/07/2019

3. Brand and company: GAP (GAP Inc.)

4. Medium: GAP’s corporate website and social media

5. Type: Video

6. Text: Title “It’s Our Denim Now”

7. Use of discourse features

   - **Tropes**: The slogan features a figure of speech that associates the sentence “it’s our moment now” with the product, made of denim (jeans).

   - **Point of view**: All of the featured models are women from diverse backgrounds, which gives a meaning of ‘all women’ to the word ‘our’ of the title.

   - **Grammatical person**: The grammatical person is ‘us’, to engage both the brand and the audience in the women empowerment movement.

   - **Narratives**: This ad portrays a broadly diverse but united group of women that represents a message of ‘standing together’.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Tokenism**: Judging by the image itself, one can feel this ad used a form of tokenism, when picking each model with a particular visible identity trait that relates to her ethnicity, physical appearance, gender identity or sexuality. Because the message aims to be all-inclusive and participative, it is almost an obligation to use a certain degree of tokenism to ensure diversity. Nevertheless, it is the brand’s responsibility to carry this value beyond its imagery for it to be considered participative in contemporary society.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - **Social interaction**: All models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural norm**: Denim clothing is not related to any ethnic minority.

12. Miscellaneous: In category number 9, Tokenism was picked over Participation to highlight the implications of the similarities of these techniques. Nonetheless, GAP Inc. does a fairly good job at diversity as a company.
1. Case number: 30
2. Date: 02/02/2017
3. Brand and company: GAP (GAP Inc.)
4. Medium: Social media, GAP’s YouTube channel
5. Type: Video
6. Text: Title “Generation GAP: ‘90s Icons Now”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Ellipsis**: This ad resembles a classic ‘90s GAP ad that featured the parents of these models. This information is only recoverable by some viewers to understand the signification of this image.
   - **Paralanguage**: The spatial configuration of the model is relevant to the creation of the image’s meaning because they imitate the original ‘90s ad.
   - **Tropes**: The whole video is a parallelism of a classic GAP ad.
   - **Point of view**: Every model from this ad is the child of former GAP campaign stars.
   - **Narratives**: The narrative of this ad calls up the brand’s tradition and long-term commitment to equality and diversity.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Participation**: There are several models from diverse ethnic backgrounds that are portrayed with authentic and factual representations of individual and collective identities, and they are all relevant to the creation of meaning of the message because they are the next generation of former, classic GAP model stars.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
    - **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes
    - **Cultural appreciation**: Even though no visibly ethnic clothing is featured, both the clothes in the ad and its aesthetics appreciate the fashion and culture of the ‘90s, including an accurate and fitted representation of the style of ethnic minorities.

12. Miscellaneous: Bahja Johnson is the Director of Banana Republic Global Merchandising, another GAP Inc. brand, who has demonstrated success devising innovative category strategies that improve financial performance, increase market share, and deliver exceptional product to the customer. She began her career at Gap Inc. in 2012 as part of the company’s prestigious Rotational Management Program, which ensures representation of diversity in the managing teams of GAP Inc. Bahja Johnson is known for revolutionizing the inclusion and diversity status quo at the company.
About Havana

1. Case number: 31
2. Date: 03/04/2019
3. Brand and company: Brownie
4. Medium: Brownie’s corporate website
5. Type: Collection of pictures
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features

   - **Connotation:** The images of the ‘About Havana’ collection resemble Cuban and Latino culture.

   - **Paralanguage:** The poses and spatial configurations of the models in every picture are paradisiacal and aim to allure desire in the audience.

   - **Narratives:** The narrative of the brand’s imagery is the appearance of high-class, urban style. It commodifies a higher social status through its products.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Group of hegemonic White models
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Exotization**: The Latino community, and specifically the Cuban lifestyle are presented as an exotic, attractive, and vacation way of life.

- **Exclusion**: Only White models are present, and every other ethnicity is ignored.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social distance**: Although the majority of images feature an individual model, the systematic exclusion of non-White models in all of the brand’s imagery, along with its values of high-class status, create and reproduce symbolization of differences in the social status of White women vs racialized women.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appropriation**: Some of the clothes, patterns and pictorial settings of this collection of images resemble Latino culture but does not feature or credit it, except for the stereotyping title “About Havana”.

12. Miscellaneous: -
Livin’ Life

1. Case number: 32
2. Date: 28/05/2019
3. Brand and company: Brownie
4. Medium: Brownie’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Title “Livin’ Life”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Paralanguage**: The facial expression and body position of the model hyper-sexualizes teenage, White, female bodies.
   - **Narratives**: The brand’s narrative reproduces the desire for exotic, vacation lifestyle.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exotization**: In this case, the sexualization does not occur on non-White bodies, but on teenage, White girls.
   - **Exclusion**: Only White models are present in this and other campaigns of the brand.
10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable
11. Presentation of clothes:
   - **Cultural norm**: The featured swimwear does not include ethnic or cultural patterns.
12. Miscellaneous: Brownie is a highly successful Spanish brand that is often associated with the White supremacist middle and high-class. It continuously perpetuates the stereotype of associating Whiteness to high-end fashion and non-Whiteness to street fashion.
One Size Fits All

1. Case number: 33
2. Date: 02/12/2019
3. Brand and company: Brandy Melville
4. Medium: Social media, Brady Melville’s Instagram
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - Narratives: The only relevant discourse feature is the brand’s narrative, reproduced in all of its products and images. Brandy Melville’s philosophy is “One Size Fits All”, so most of its apparel comes in tiny sizes for one specific stereotyped and exoticized body. In addition, a very high percentage of the brand’s promotional images star a White model.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Stereotyping**: The brand’s discourse creates and perpetuates stereotypes not only on female body sizes, but also on the idea that hipster-like, higher-end, upscale urban fashion is for White, skinny teenage girls. Ironically, when mostly Black women wear similar urban styles, they are stigmatized as ‘ghetto’.

- **Exclusion**: Only White models are present in the majority of the brand’s images, including this one.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social distance**: Like what happens at Brownie, although the majority of images feature an individual model, the systematic exclusion of non-White models in all of the brand’s imagery, along with its values of high-class status, create and reproduce symbolization of differences in the social status of White women vs racialized women.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural norm**: No ethnic or cultural clothing is present. All of the clothing items displayed are mainstream to the White hegemonic cultural norm.

12. Miscellaneous: Brownie and Brandy Melville are somehow ‘sister’ brands, because they have been educating the latest generations of young women in White, skinny supremacy. This has created a lot of insecurities in the vast majority of teenage girls, regarding ethnicity and size, in mainly two countries -and societies- that are very similar in terms of fashion and beauty standards: Spain and the United States.
Brandy Melville

1. Case number: 34
2. Date: 07/09/2018
3. Brand and company: Brandy Melville
4. Medium: Brand’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view**: Almost every brand ambassador and model at Brandy Melville is White, contributing to the White supremacist overall narrative of the brand.
   - **Narratives**: Brandy Melville sells quite standard, hegemonic clothing at higher prices to reproduce the narrative of higher end fashion than other mainstream fashion brands, exclusively tailored to the White, young, female market with a specific body type.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Stereotyping**: The brand’s discourse creates and perpetuates stereotypes not only on female body sizes, but also on the idea that hipster-like, higher-end, upscale urban fashion is for White, skinny teenage girls. Ironically, when mostly Black women wear similar urban styles, they are stigmatized as ‘ghetto’.
   - **Exclusion**: Only White models are present in the majority of the brand’s images, including this one.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural norm**: All of the clothing items displayed are mainstream to the White hegemonic cultural norm.

12. Miscellaneous: Since its very creation, and despite many critiques, accusations and initiatives to prompt the brand to expand its diversity, it has remained true to the values of its creation all along.
Fenty’s Debut

1. Case number: 35
2. Date: 20/05/2019
3. Brand and company: Fenty by Rihanna (LVMH)
4. Medium: Social media, Fenty’s YouTube channel
5. Type: Video
6. Text: No text. The video only includes background sounds and the official website, because it was the teaser video of the first Fenty collection.
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view**: Many models are featured in the ad from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to support the brand’s narrative and values.
   - **Narratives**: Being Rihanna the owner and designer of the brand, Fenty was created to advocate for inclusion and diversity in all senses.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Participation**: All models are portrayed with authentic and factual representations of their individual identity, and are supporting the main message of the brand.
10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to
     the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural appreciation**: Clothes and aesthetics from different cultural backgrounds
     are brought to this image by models that belong to each specific culture, making each
     style equally and individually relevant, and the image collectively heterogenous.

12. Miscellaneous: -
Savage x Fenty

1. Case number: 36
2. Date: 03/06/2019
3. Brand and company: Savage x Fenty (TechStyle Inc.)
4. Medium: Collection’s corporate website
5. Type: Collection of pictures
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Point of view:** Every piece of clothing is worn by different and diverse female models in order to represent ethnic inclusion.
   - **Narratives:** The purpose of this collection, which is a perpetual collaboration between two brands (Savage and Fenty by Rihanna), was women empowerment, with emphasis on diversity and inclusion of ethnicities and body types. All of their imagery aligns with this purpose.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Participation:** In every picture, individual models are portrayed true to their own style and unique personality.
10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
- **Social interaction**: Every individual portrait has the same relevance in the companies’ website and online/social media ads.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appreciation**: Different and diverse cultural styles are present and highlighted equally, regardless of their ethnicity, across the website.

12. Miscellaneous: Savage x Fenty, as well as their face and designer Rihanna, actively and loudly advocate for women empowerment, diversity, inclusion and Black liberation through the products and through all the available online and offline channels.
1. Case number: 37
2. Date: 04/05/2019
3. Brand and company: Off-White
4. Medium: Off White’s Instagram
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Title “I support young black businesses”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Paralanguage:** The main model’s facial expression and body position are firm and straight, to indicate that the message is a serious matter and a form of activism.
   - **Point of view:** Black singer Cartier was chosen to model for this image, since he is a young, Black, music entrepreneur.
   - **Grammatical person:** The grammatical person ‘I’ in the T-shirt and message is intended to mean and encourage Black support on an audience that includes people of the Black diaspora and allies of the Black liberation movement.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model, Black male
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

- **Participation**: Only one Black model is featured in the image, but it makes sense with the message and meaning of the ad, since he belongs to the affected community.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appreciation**: The T-shirt in question is not ethnic clothing, but it calls up a sociopolitical movement that affects the Black community and encourages the support of it.

12. Miscellaneous: Off White was created by African American designer and DJ Virgil Abloh. In the beginning, he contributed to break the stereotype that linked high-class to Whiteness, by creating the most popular luxury clothing brand of 2019 (more than Gucci, Prada or any other designer store) based on Black, urban styles. However, he has lately been accused by his fans of abandoning those values and profiting off of enabling White hegemonic culture over Black culture.
Off-White White Team

1. Case number: 38
2. Date: 04/05/2019
3. Brand and company: Off-White by Virgil Abloh
4. Medium: Social media, Virgil Abloh’s Instagram Stories
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Caption “All the art directors of Off-White. Crazy, crazy talented crew of kids.”
7. Use of discourse features
   - Point of view: The main characters of this image are the team of art directors of Abloh’s brand, who are all White.
   - Grammatical person: The grammatical person is the narrator, Virgil Abloh, presenting the team, putting all the weight of the signification of the message in the content that is shown.
- **Narratives:** This image and the Stories that followed gave the audience the opportunity to take a glance inside of Off-White’s team, and majority of the Black consumers of this brand were disappointed at the fact that there is an evident lack of diversity in the managing teams of a company that was supposed to support young, Black entrepreneurs.

8. **Ethnicity of model(s):** Group of hegemonic White models

9. **Presentation of model(s) to the audience:**
   - **Exclusion:** In a communication material of a Black-owned brand, the rest of the managing team of the brand was presented only to show that there is no inclusion of non-White ethnicities, even though it is present in the on and offline advertising materials of Off-White.

10. **Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable**
    - **Social interaction:** Models relate to each other equally and have the same relevance towards the audience.

11. **Presentation of clothes**
    - **Cultural norm:** All of the clothing items displayed are mainstream to the White hegemonic cultural norm.

12. **Miscellaneous:** There is a lot of controversy around Virgil Abloh and Off-White. Members of his Black community have called him out on the Internet and threatened to boycott his brand because ever since he started winning big money from it, he allegedly stopped using his platform to support Black businesses and culture. Instead, he follows mainstream hegemonic trends, collaborates with overpriced White brands exclusively and only features diversity in the brand’s communication materials.
1. Case number: 39
2. Date: 7/11/2017
3. Brand and company: Edward Enninful (world-known fashion designer) for Vogue (fashion magazine)
4. Medium: Social media, designer’s Instagram
5. Type: Picture
6. Text:
   - Title: “Great Britain”
   - Caption: A list of power players in politics and the arts, diverse in age as well as ethnicity
7. Use of discourse features
   - Ellipsis: Only readers that can recognize most of the names in the caption will recover that this image intends to make a political statement about diversity.
- **Paralanguage**: This image uses the *face-ism* technique for the main subject to be perceived as more intelligent, ambitious, and attractive, which adds to the statement of the picture.

- **Tropes**: The title “Great Britain” plays with the meaning of the adjective ‘great’ as in ‘diverse’. Thus, diversity is what makes Britain great.

- **Point of view**: The sole choice of main character for this picture depicts Enninful’s intentions to engage in the conversation about diversity, and is perhaps a subtle hint at the absence of this model from the cover of Vogue until the moment.

- **Narratives**: Being this cover Edward Enninful’s debut cover as editor-in-chief of Vogue Britain, it signaled his intentions of making political statements, not just fashion ones.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model, mixed-race British model of Ghanaian heritage and feminist activist Adwoa Aboah

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

- **Exotization**: Because it is the cover of a well-known fashion magazine and aims to be associated with attractiveness and desire, there is a certain degree of exotization of the model’s face (*face-ism* and make-up), but it is not related to her ethnicity—all of the models in the cover of Vogue are exoticized at some level, regardless of their gender, ethnic, or cultural background.

- **Participation**: Since it is an individual non-White model, looking at similar images (covers of Vogue Britain edited by Edward Enninful), we can state that the designer’s new brand for Vogue enables diverse participation through a series of individual, well-researched and accurately presented portraits.
10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appreciation**: The headpiece that Adwoa Aboah is wearing resembles African patterns and clothing accessories that are culturally and historically linked to her own heritage. She is also an advocate for diversity, and Vogue credits the original designer.

12. Miscellaneous: Under the previous editor, Alexandra Shulman, Vogue was criticised for a lack of diversity: although recent cover stars have included Zoe Kravitz and Rihanna, there was no solo black model on the cover between Naomi Campbell in 2002 and Jourdan Dunn in 2014. Edward Enninful debuted as the new editor-in-chief with a firm statement on diversity, to which he has remained loyal until the day.
Edward Enninful x Estrella Vázquez

1. Case number: 40
2. Date: 22/11/2019
3. Brand and company: Edward Enninful for Vogue magazine
4. Medium: Edward Enninful’s Instagram
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Caption “Estrella Vasquez wearing an exquisitely embroidered huipil and enagua (a traditional blouse and skirt), captured by Tim Walker for the first ever joint fashion shoot between British Vogue and Vogue Mexico. I was so proud of this very special shoot, which features members of Oaxaca’s indigenous muxe community.”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: The image contains many elements that are originally from the Mexican Indigenous Muxe community. Mexican readers may identify themselves with this picture in a way that other ethnic groups can’t.
- **Paralanguage**: The body position and spatial configuration of the model are relevant to the creation of the image’s meaning: a firm bet on inclusion of diversity at every level.

- **Point of view**: This was the first time in the history of Vogue that a trans, self-identified as third-gender person was featured in the cover, making it another one of Enninful’s political statements for diversity and inclusion.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model, trans and Indigenous super-model Estrella Vázquez.

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Participation**: As the rest of Enninful’s designs and Vogue cover editions, each model is portrayed in an authentic way, true to their own identity, and non-hegemonically.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural appreciation**: Ethnic clothing is featured, appropriately designed, worn, and credited by Muxe-native trans model Estrella Vázquez.

12. Miscellaneous: Edward Enninful and Vogue expanded the brand across borders and through non-inclusive stereotypes. This particular image made history by making visible and paying homage to both the Indigenous community and the transgender movement.
1. Case number: 41
2. Date: 03/07/2018
3. Brand and company: Chromat (Chromat Co.)
4. Medium: Chromat’s corporate website
5. Type: Collection of pictures
6. Text: Caption “Chromat's Bodies Should Be The Rule, Not Exception - Daily Beast”
7. Use of discourse features
   - Tropes: The caption plays with opposites ‘rule vs exception’ to point out the need for diversity to be the rule in the fashion industry, instead of an exception to hegemonic, majoritarian stereotypes.
   - Point of view: Every model at Chromat is hired because they bring something unique and authentic to the runway and images that differs from the standard, non-inclusive norm in the fashion industry.
   - Narratives: Chromat focuses on empowering garments for all bodies, and proofs it with every design and communication material, because its core values are aligned with its branding.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Participation**: There are several models from diverse ethnic backgrounds that are portrayed with authentic and factual representations of individual and collective identities. They are all relevant to the creation of meaning of the message and narrative of the brand.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
    - **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes
    - **Cultural appreciation**: When there is an ethnic or cultural piece of clothing featured in Chromat’s images, it is worn, presented and credited as fits, and cultural traditions are not vandalized, sexualized or exoticized.

12. Miscellaneous: -
Serenity

1. Case number: 42
2. Date: 24/02/2018
3. Brand and company: Chromat (Chromat Co.)
4. Medium: Chromat’s corporate website
5. Type: Collection of pictures
6. Text: Caption “The Spring/ Summer 2018 Serenity Collection started with healing. We felt the urge to cling to rocks. To feel grounded. To practice self-care and collective care of our community. We looked at Zen gardens, salt baths and healing crystals. As the grounding rocks have gone deeper underground, our energy has begun to heat up and become liquefied, molten. We feel a volcanic energy right now; things are about to burst, but new land is forming. It’s a chaotic, exciting time.”
7. Use of discourse features
   - Ellipsis: By not explicitly saying the cause of the need to heal, readers must recover the meaning of a struggle for unity and diversity, especially among all women, from the message in the caption.
- Point of view: A broad choice of models from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds were picked to align the sender of the message (the brand) to its meaning (diversity).

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - Participation: Along with Chromat’s corporate values, models from different ethnic backgrounds are featured in a way that they are not alienated, exoticized or used for marketing purposes only.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - Social interaction: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes
   - Cultural appreciation: Ethnic clothing and cultural identities are not commodified for the sole benefit of the brand, rather presented with an authentic, factual lens that contributes to a greater inclusion, better representation, and normalization of ethnic diversity in contemporary consumer culture.

12. Miscellaneous: -
Represented Diversity in Online Advertising

1. Case number: 43
2. Date: 09/07/2019
3. Brand and company: Chromat (Chromat Co.)
4. Medium: Chromat’s corporate website
5. Type: Collection of pictures
6. Text: Caption “The Chromat Autumn/Winter CLIMATIC collection was inspired by MIAMI: a city on the front lines of climate crisis. Simultaneously a paradise and a natural disaster, Miami is on the front lines of climate change with rising water, increased flooding and toxic red tides. Witnessing this has instigated a new consciousness focused on mitigating environmental destruction through sustainable fabrics and more. We recognize that the fashion industry contributes to poisoning waterways through use of toxic chemical dyes, mountains of fast fashion garment trash, inhumane labor practices and growing fibers with pesticides, formaldehydes and more. We are committed to designing innovative swim and bodywear while ensuring a healthier planet. Chromat swim is made with sustainable fabric that uses regenerated nylon spun from fishing nets recovered from the world’s oceans. We also use up-cycled fabrics and work with safe, ethical, fair-wage factories. Our goal is to
design empowering garments for all bodies. This runway show celebrates the inspiring women, femmes and non-binary #ChromatBABES who inspire us to be bold and unapologetic every day. THE FUTURE IS EMPOWERING, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE.”

7. Use of discourse features

- **Point of view**: Every model at Chromat is hired because they bring something unique and authentic to the runway and images that differs from the standard, non-inclusive norm in the fashion industry.

- **Grammatical person**: The grammatical person of the caption includes the Chromat brand and company (‘Us’), and it puts itself at responsibility for doing better in and for its industry in order to help the world in terms of diversity and environmental care.

- **Narratives**: Both in the collection of images that feature the products and, in the caption, Chromat explicitly narrates the purpose and inspiration of this line of products, and it is, evidently, relevant to the creation of meaning for the image and the brand.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:

- **Participation**: There are several models from diverse ethnic backgrounds that are portrayed with authentic and factual representations of identity, and are all relevant to the creation of meaning of the message. In case of an individual model, similar images from the same brand or campaign use participation through a series of individual, well-researched portraits.
10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appreciation**: Every inspiration for Chromat’s clothing is credited in the images and platforms of the brand. It also maintains its commitment to inclusion and diversity throughout all the stages of the company’s production chain.

12. Miscellaneous: In addition to its revolutionary fight for diversity in the fashion industry,

Chromat is committed to designing innovative swim and bodywear while ensuring a healthier planet. Its swimwear is made with sustainable fabric that uses regenerated nylon spun from fishing nets recovered from the world’s oceans.
Outdated Fendi

1. Case number: 44
2. Date: 08/07/2016
3. Brand and company: Fendi (LMVH)
4. Medium: Social media, Fendi’s Facebook
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - Paralanguage: The spatial configuration of this image evokes Fairytale Fantasy theme.
   - Point of view: Kendal Jenner was the main face for this runway, a choice that perpetuates mainstream trends in the fashion industry.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Exclusion**: The vast majority of models in this Fendi runway was White, with very few exceptions.

- **Alienation**: The non-White models that are present, show a degree of alienation and it looks as the brand’s clear attempt to give an appearance of multiculturalism.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social relation**: Because most models are White, this ethnic group has a greater presence when presented to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appropriation**: The outfit in the picture resembles Asian clothing styles, specifically Chinese and Japanese, but no design or inspiration in these cultures is credited by the brand. Fendi argued that these looks were inspired by fantasy legends.

12. Miscellaneous: The use of Kendall Jenner, who is a hegemonic, controversial public figure, gives Fendi a mainstream, outdated flare.
Updated Fendi

1. Case number: 45
2. Date: 25/03/2019
3. Brand and company: Fendi
4. Medium: Fendi’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Paralanguage**: The configuration of all of the diverse models as a whole adds to the meaning of unity and equality of the image.
   - **Point of view**: The choice of a group of ethnically diverse models is relevant to the signification of the intended message of the image and the brand.
   - **Narratives**: Fendi changed its narrative on the 2019 off and online imagery in terms of inclusion of ethnic diversity.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Ethnically diverse group of models
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Participation:** In this new era, Fendi didn’t fall into tokenism to include a better representation of ethnic diversity. It actually did a good job in remaining true to the models’ self-identity and collective identities.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

- **Social interaction:** Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appreciation:** Although most designs are culturally normative, some non-White culture inspiration can be sensed in some designs, that are worn by POC models and not exoticized or alienated.

12. Miscellaneous: The 2019 Fendi runway (and corporate imagery) featured more ethnic and age diversity than ever. However, representation of transgender, non-binary and plus-size models took a disappointing step back.
Armani on White masculinity

1. Case number: 46
2. Date: 26/06/2013
3. Brand and company: Giorgio Armani (Armani)
4. Medium: Social media, Armani’s YouTube channel
5. Type: Video
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - Tropes: The composition of the depicted frame, as well as the rest of the video, only shows one stereotyped definition of style, copied in several White, male models.
   - Point of view: Only White male models were chosen for this communication material, so it has a White supremacist point of view.
   - Narratives: Armani’s narrative tries to define an exclusive kind of masculinity through White-normative, high-end, European fashion and lifestyle.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Group of hegemonic White models, five males.
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Stereotyping**: All models reproduce the same stereotype of a specific kind of valid, normative, White masculinity.

- **Exclusion**: Non-White ethnic groups are excluded physically in the image, and culturally, in the way that the message excludes different-looking men from the depicted, standardized canon.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable

   - **Social distance**: Because non-White models are not present, and the message purposely portrays White supremacy, there is an inferred difference in the social status that favors Whites over racialized individuals.

11. Presentation of clothes

   - **Cultural norm**: The only outfit displayed in the frame, along with the rest of the outfits in the video, are mainstream to the White hegemonic cultural norm.

12. Miscellaneous: -
Armani on homogeneous femininity

1. Case number: 47
2. Date: 27/09/2013
3. Brand and company: Giorgio Armani (Armani)
4. Medium: Armani’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Tropes**: There is a parallelism in the make-up and characterization of every model to look alike to give White-normative homogeneity to the image.
   - **Point of view**: All of the models featured are White and look alike, as in the Men’s collection (see case 46).
   - **Narratives**: Armani’s narrative tries to define an exclusive kind of homogeneous, White, high-end, exclusive femininity through its particular definition of female fashion and lifestyle.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Group of hegemonic White models
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Stereotyping:** All of the models in the picture reproduce a White supremacist exclusive stereotype of style a narrative.
   - **Exclusion:** Only White models are present, so other ethnicities are ignored.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
    - **Social distance:** Because non-White models are not present, and the message purposely portrays White supremacy, there is an inferred difference in the social status that favors Whites over racialized individuals.

11. Presentation of clothes
    - **Cultural appropriation:** As often happens particularly in the women’s fashion industry, some designs in this image appear to be inspired by non-White ethnicities, but they are not credited or respected. In this case, the third and fourth design resemble geisha’s fashion in Japan.

12. Miscellaneous: -
Mirroring Pakistani Culture

1. Case number: 48
2. Date: 10/06/2017
4. Medium: Social media, brand’s Instagram
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: Caption “Miranda Kerr for Moschino”
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: The mirror work featured in this design is original from Pakistani culture. Thus, this image evokes cultural connotation to that community.
   - **Point of view**: However, the model used to wear this mirror work was White.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual White model
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Exotization**: Pakistani culture is exoticized in this image through the body on Miranda Kerr and the mirror work used in a minidress that is not true to the cultural heritage of this technique.
   - **Exclusion**: The culture that inspired the design of the featured product is not present, nor is any other non-White ethnicity.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural appropriation**: Mirror work is a pattern used in Pakistani traditional fashion. This community wasn’t acknowledged in any stage of the production and promotion processes of the product.

12. Miscellaneous: Jeremy Scott’s 2017 collection for MOSCHINO received many accusations for cultural appropriation. From mirror work to tie-dye, the collection was heavily inspired by Indian techniques, and resembled the traditional outfits from North-west India. The cultural references in this collection were hard to miss, as it also featured jazzy and over the top replication of Hindi script, images of Hindu deities, and traditional Indian jewelry. However, none of the models belonged to the affected communities and the brand didn’t credit or benefit their cultures.
Indian European Fashion

1. Case number: 49
2. Date: 27/02/2015
3. Brand and company: Stella Jean, fashion designer
4. Medium: Stella Jean’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: The image and the rest of the images of this series are filled with cultural references to Indian fashion.
   - **Point of view**: The main character of this picture is hard to categorize or fit into labels of gender or ethnicity. Ambiguity is a smart technique for the presentation of this collection.
- **Narratives**: Stella Jean has dedicated her work to cultural crossovers, so non-White cultural references in her images are expected.

8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model

9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
   - **Participation**: Although this collection features many Indian-Himalayan fashion trends, the models in the picture are diverse in many aspects, including ethnicity, and she credits the culture from which she gets her inspiration every time.

10. Pictorial dimensions (presentation of models in relation to each other), if applicable
   - **Social interaction**: Models are represented with equal relevance and signification to the audience.

11. Presentation of clothes
   - **Cultural appreciation**: Many items of ethnic clothing are present, but they are properly credited by the designer in the context of the image.

12. Miscellaneous: Stella Jean is considered the first Black Italian fashion designer - she comes from Roman and Haitian heritage. She says that she is genuinely interested in multicultural crossovers. She tries to keep a fresh perspective, avoiding the traps of the tourist’s eye or, even worse, the perils of an imperialist gaze. She is an advocate for the seamless blending of the apparently disparate. Her work also advocates, as it says in her website, for “multiculturalism applied to ethical fashion”
KENZO’s Running Tiger Kimono

1. Case number: 50
2. Date: 08/03/2019
3. Brand and company: KENZO (LVMH)
4. Medium: KENZO’s corporate website
5. Type: Picture
6. Text: No text
7. Use of discourse features
   - **Connotation**: The product featured in the image resembles the Japanese kimono, a traditional garment for their culture.
   - **Paralanguage**: The body position of the model, moving freely, adds to the creation of meaning of the image because it highlights some of the benefits of the product.
8. Ethnicity of model(s): Individual non-White model; Black, young female
9. Presentation of model(s) to the audience:
- **Alienation**: There is only one model, who is racialized, wearing a Japanese-like garment. This can be read as an attempt to avoid using a White model to avoid criticism without further addressing the matter of diversity or doing in-depth research on pictorial dimensions and their consequences in consumer culture.

10. Pictorial dimensions: Not applicable

11. Presentation of clothes

- **Cultural appreciation**: Creator and designer Kenzo Takada was born in Japan, and he created this brand to build a fashion trend that merged Japanese and European fashion. Thus, the use of the product and the word kimono is intentional to credit his own cultural heritage, which is one of Kenzo’s core values.

12. Miscellaneous: Kenzo is a French luxury fashion house founded in 1970 by Japanese designer Kenzo Takada. Kenzo Takada was born in Japan and moved to Paris in 1964 to start his fashion career. He then became known for using Asian and Japanese influenced style with the construction of European fashion.