

# Television, diversity and cultural hegemony: A comparative study of the dominant ethnic stereotypes in the television systems of Chile and France<sup>1</sup>

## Televisión, diversidad y hegemonía cultural: un estudio comparado de los estereotipos étnicos dominantes en los sistemas televisivos de Chile y Francia

### Televisão, diversidade e hegemonia cultural: um estudo comparativo dos estereótipos étnicos dominantes nos sistemas de televisão do Chile e da França

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#### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the persistence of certain dominant ethnical stereotypes in television broadcasts in Chile and France. The method used was screen analysis, using an ethnic matrix of people and characters on TV. The results show that non-white ethnic minorities are underrepresented in France. In Chile, there is a tension between the self-perception of the population as white and the fact that people and characters on TV are 'whiter' than the majority of the population.

**Keywords:** television, cultural hegemony, stereotypes, television representation, comparative studies.

#### RESUMEN

*El presente artículo examina la permanencia de ciertos estereotipos étnicos dominantes en las emisiones televisivas de Chile y Francia. El método utilizado fue el análisis de pantalla mediante una tabla de etnorraciación de personas y personajes representados en los programas. De acuerdo con los resultados, mientras en el caso francés se da una subrepresentación de las denominadas minorías étnicas no blancas, en el caso chileno se observa una tensión entre la autodefinición implícita como sociedad blanca y el hecho de que las personas y personajes representados en la televisión son más blancos que la mayoría de la población.*

**Palabras clave:** televisión, hegemonía cultural, estereotipos, representación televisiva, estudios comparados.

#### RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a permanência de certos estereótipos étnicos dominantes nas transmissões de televisão do Chile e da França. O método utilizado foi o análise de imagem televisiva utilizando uma matriz étnica de pessoas e personagens representados nos programas. De acordo com os resultados, enquanto no caso francês há uma clara sub-representação das chamadas minorias étnicas não-brancas, no caso do Chile há uma tensão entre a auto-definição implícita como a sociedade branca e o fato de que as pessoas e personagens representados no televisão são mais brancos do que a maioria da população.

**Palavras-chave:** televisão, hegemonia cultural, estereótipos, representação televisiva, estudos comparativos.

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## INTRODUCTION

In November 2005, as a result of serious disturbances in the suburbs of Paris and other cities in France, the then French President, Jacques Chirac, called for an intensification of the fight against discrimination, with particular reference to television programs. This call was translated, in March of 2006, in the *Law on the equality of opportunities*. Among other directives, this legislation ordered the Superior Council of Audiovisual Content (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel, CSA), the governing body of television, radio and interactive web services in the European country, to ensure that “the programming of (audiovisual) communication media reflects the diversity of French society” (Legifrance, 2016).

Eight years later, in Chile, as part of the introduction of Digital Terrestrial Television, Law 20,750 was enacted (Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile [BCN], 2014). This law amended the regulations governing the operation of television and, with it, the scope of the attributions of the National Television Council of Chile (CNTV), by introducing a specific subsection relative to pluralism. In this context, it is understood as “respect for social, cultural, ethnic, political, religious, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity diversities (...)”, adding that “the observance of these principles is the duty of concessionaires and permit holders of television services regulated by this law” (Article 1, third paragraph).

Motivated by different situations, but inspired by a common goal of deepening pluralism, the legislation and regulatory bodies of television in France and Chile have sought to establish a public policy of promotion and respect of social diversity in the representations of this media in both countries.

In order to diagnose the representation of the diversity of French society on television, the Observatory of Diversity in the Audiovisual Media of the CSA commissioned a study to a team headed by the sociologist Éric Macé in 2008 (Macé, 2008). In this research, the French television programs favored the representation of individuals perceived as *white*, from an upper class and young people, despite the law (Macé, 2008). In the case of the gender dimension, although the representation of men and women was similar to that existing in French society, the distribution of main roles assigned to each gender favored men.

After the results of this study, in 2009 the CSA created its Diversity Barometer, which publishes an annual report whose objective is to measure diversity in television according to four criteria: social class, gender, ethnic origin and perceived disability. These reports are part of the documents that the CSA uses in its annual account to the French Parliament regarding the representation of the diversity of French society on television. In the last three years, the report has established that 86% of the people and characters represented in French television broadcasts of information, fiction and non-fiction, are perceived as *whites*, and only 14% as belonging to other ethnic groups, such as *blacks*, *Arabs* or *Asians*.

In Chile, the imbalances in the television representation of various social groups has been a permanent concern of the CNTV Research Department. This is demonstrated by an important set of studies conducted by this organization since 2005 (CNTV, 2016). Among these is the National Television Survey, conducted every three years, a consultation on the evaluation of national broadcast television according to actors who appear little in it and are perceived as harmed. According to the answers, the groups most punished by this media, both quantitatively (presence) and qualitative (valuation), are *indigenous*, people from poor neighborhoods and homosexual people. On the contrary, those with the greatest presence and at the same time most favored are the people/TV characters from richest sectors and the political and government authorities, as declared by the people surveyed (CNTV, 2014).

However, in the case of Chile, the ethnic dimension of television representation has not been adequately addressed by sociological and socio-anthropological research. Almost all of the recent studies reviewed refer to the processes of invisibilization or stigmatization of the so-called ethnic and/or cultural minorities, without deepening the analysis of previous processes, which are the ideological and action framework for this type of discrimination. One of the symbolic limitations that makes difficult this deepening in the reflection is its own predominant ethnic self-definition, which is difficult to deal with in societies that are considered *white* and which, under this adjective, conceal diversity and miscegenation.

The construction of diversity in Chile has been and is a long and complex process. For long periods we observe *the silence of diversity*. The self-image of Nation and State that was tried to construct required the denial of the diversities. (Bengoa, 2003, p.38)

The hypothesis behind this work is that in the Chilean case there seems to be a tension between the implicit self-definition as a *white* society and the fact that the people and characters represented in the audiovisual media are *whiter* than most of the population. This, along with the historical characteristics of the distribution of economic, political and cultural power in Chile (Sepúlveda, 2010), would operate favoring the production and reproduction of a *white* symbolic-ethnic model, dominant in the television of high audience, which privileges the representation of *white* people over the mestizo majority in this media.

Considering the work developed previously by the CSA of France and the CNTV of Chile on the subject, this article gathers part of the results of a comparative research conducted by a team composed of researchers of the Laboratorio Cultura Mediática from the University of Chile and the Laboratoire Communication et Politique from the University Paris-Dauphine of France. Although the aforementioned research has as its main objective the mediation processes of the presidential campaigns in both countries, the question of ethnic representation on television and its contrast with social diversity was a basic element to understand the relationship of the television system with society, and its dynamics of cultural hegemony and counter-hegemony. In order to make possible the comparison between the realities of the two countries, we used the same methodological criteria of the annual report on diversity of the CSA.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF TELEVISION AND REGULATION

According to the VIII National Television Survey (CNTV, 2014), in Chile there are an average of 2.6 televisions per household, which is close to the figures of developed countries. In France, 98.3% of households have at least one TV, with an average of 6.1 screens per household. This figure includes all kinds of devices through which it is possible to

watch television and connect to the Internet (CSA, 2014). Similarly, in Chile, the two specialized studies –Undersecretariat of Telecommunications (SUBTEL 2014) and National Television Council (CNTV, 2014)– show a significant growth of convergent television and Internet equipment. Before, a family occupied only the home desktop computer to access the Internet; Today, 26.7% of Chilean households are connected via smartTV (CNTV, 2014).

However, the most important finding for the purposes of our research is the fact that, in France and Chile, television continues to be the most important media of communication. In the case of Chile, 93% of people say they usually watch television (CNTV, 2014), while in France 87.7% does so (CSA, 2014).

In other words, the traditional media to which Chileans and French are exposed the most in their search for information, entertainment and knowledge, is still television. It is very significant how, even in conditions of expansion of the Internet and progressive technological convergence, television has managed to adapt to these transformations, and remain as one of the main media of communication in our society.

In both countries, data on access and consumption of information and communication technologies and systems (CSA, 2014; SUBTEL, 2014; CNTV, 2014) indicate that, far from a shift of television audiences towards *new media*, what is happening is a change in the ways of media consumption from a way we could call *sequential* and *mono-media*, where watching a television program is alternative to using the Internet or communicate by phone, to a *simultaneous* and *multimedia* way, where Facebook, Twitter or WhatsApp, the television, tablet or smartphone are used, more and more frequently, in the same space and time, simultaneously (Morduchowicz, 2008).

Social networks allow people to expand their living rooms to continue the conversation while watching a TV show, or to comment with hundreds, thousands and even millions of other viewers what is happening on the screen. Many of the live programs, both in Chilean and French television, have incorporated this online conversation of social networks as a main element in the discursive logic of many contest programs, talk shows and miscellaneous, which maintain a permanent feedback with their audiences, incorporating them into decisive aspects of the broadcast.

In mediatised societies, such as Chile and France, much of the knowledge people have about the world does not come from their own experience, but rather from the discourses, images and representations disseminated by the media, especially television (Muñiz, Marañón & Saldierna, 2013). This is precisely what makes the television a powerful instance of socialization.

It is usual that the public discussion questions the influence of the discourses, images and representations of the public space and the daily life of people broadcasted by television. In many countries, this social concern is at the origin of the existence of state agencies dedicated, specifically, to the regulation of this media. Such is the case of the National Television Council in Chile and the Superior Council of Audiovisual Content in France.

The National Television Council (CNTV, n/d, paragraph 1) is defined as “the body that must ensure the proper functioning of Chilean television through institutional policies that tend to orient, stimulate and regulate the activity of the actors involved in the television phenomenon”. In more specific terms, the work of the CNTV is oriented to control the content of television broadcasts; to process citizen complaints regarding possible violations in which such emissions may have incurred; to encourage the development of cultural programs of public interest; to conduct systematic research on the impact of TV in Chilean society; to grant, modify and terminate broadcast television concessions; to finance or subsidize the installation of antennas for transmission in extreme areas of the national territory; to subsidize the channels of broadcast television in order to implement a system that facilitates the access to the population with hearing disability. Along with the above mentioned, since the entry into force of Law 20,750 in 2014, it has the task of ensuring respect for social, cultural, ethnic, political, religious gender, sexual orientation and gender identity diversities.

In France, the Superior Council of Audiovisual Content (CSA, n/d, paragraph 1) has the mission of “guaranteeing freedom of audiovisual communication”. In that sense, the law gives it broad responsibilities: protecting the integrity of children against inappropriate messages and representations; monitoring the respect for pluralism; limiting the concentration of ownership of audiovisual media; organizing electoral campaigns

on radio and television; ensuring rigor in the processing of information; assigning frequencies to operators; ensuring the respect for the dignity of the human person; making programs accessible to people with hearing or visual impairments. In addition, the CSA is responsible for ensuring the defense of French language and culture in television programs. Since 2006, it has been entrusted with the task of ensuring representation of the diversity of French society in radio and television programs.

With different emphasis, but with important similarities in their main mission, what emerges from the tasks defined for both organizations is the enormous institutional, social, political and cultural relevance that the Chilean and French States have granted and continue to grant to television.

#### STEREOTYPES AND CULTURAL HEGEMONY

Any discursive operation involves defining a world, assuming a point of view and constructing a causal sequence of events, through a particular technological and symbolic device (Ortiz, 2013). In other words, a discourse—including in this notion those produced by television—, far from being a pure reflection of reality, represents the production of a way of thinking about the world. On the other hand, the representations we watch and hear every day are generated not only by the subject or the concrete enunciative instance that expresses them, but also correspond to the set of ideas that circulate in society in the form of common meanings, and we rarely reflect on the degree of adjustment with the objects or subjects they represent. These ways of thinking and representing reality often take the form of sociocultural stereotypes.

According to Quin and McMahon (1997), a stereotype is “a conventional image, a popular prejudice about groups of people. Creating stereotypes is a way of categorizing groups according to their appearance, behavior or customs”(p.139).

From a cognitive point of view, stereotypes help to provide stability and make the world predictable, insofar as they reduce the complexity and, with it, the uncertainty, generating security conditions in the subjects. However, for the same reason, they establish fixed and simplistic representations of reality, of a social group or of a person.

Stereotypes are mental constructions necessary for the elaboration and perception of reality in our daily life and necessary elements in the storytelling for audiovisual media, because they simplify reality so it can be captured and apprehended by the viewer. However, the problem lies in the repetition of representations traditionally assigned to men and women, to social groups or to certain professions, in order to make them easily recognizable by the public; an aspect that does nothing more than perpetuate standardized and conventional images, often with negative connotations. (Galán, 2006, p.77)

Although the production of stereotypes is not an exclusive practice of the media, the characteristics of the enunciative device of television, governed by immediacy (Lacalle, 2008); the vertiginous superposition of fiction and reality discourses (Amigo, Bravo & Osorio, 2014), due to the imperious need for entertainment as a way of building loyalty with its audience (Lochard & Boyer, 2004); the iconic-indicial inscription of concrete and singular bodies and objects within their discourses (Fuenzalida, 2012), result in the proliferation of stereotyped representations. This, along with its social and cultural relevance both in the public space and in the daily life of the subjects, gives a huge power to the impact of the representations made by this media.

The process of constructing and disseminating social and cultural stereotypes on television is the result of an arbitrary process of selection and combination of elements of reality, depending on particular interests or from the reproduction of values and categories dominant in the social sphere, expressed in terms of common meanings. This paradigmatic/syntagmatic process makes what is not interesting to show invisible and highlights what reaffirms the enunciative intentions of the media, a process that does not operate in a random way. In fact, it responds to the symbolic keys of production and reproduction of a dominant system of ideas about the world, which is installed in a hegemonic way in culture.

For Gramsci (quoted by Szurmuk and Irwin, 2009), the concept of cultural hegemony allows a better explanation of the processes through which certain social groups or classes exercise their symbolic dominion over others. From this point of view, the cultural hegemony of a group means that its forms of

representing reality, its values and world view become a common meaning shared by society as a whole:

What Gramsci sought was to analyze the dialectic between coercion and consensus within that process and, at the same time, to overcome the economic interpretations of history and politics by introducing in a central way the role of culture within the analysis of domination. (Szurmuk & Irwin, 2009, p. 124)

For García Canclini, the perspective sustained by Gramsci corresponds to a complex process that should not be understood as a simple set of binary oppositions between hegemonic and subalterns:

The crossing between the cult and the popular render the opposite representation between both modes of symbolic development obsolete, and thus relativize the political opposition between hegemonic and subalterns, conceived as if they were totally different sets and always faced. (García Canclini, 1989, p.323)

From this point of view, the conditions of installation and propagation of the stereotypes disseminated from the mass media, in particular from television, represent an enormous symbolic advantage of legitimation over others that circulate in a parallel or alternative way. For this same reason, the observation and analysis of such stereotyped television representations give us the great opportunity to penetrate into the logics and senses that cultural hegemony acquires. There is a long tradition of research in social sciences in this regard (Marcos, 2014).

#### CHILE: A WHITE SOCIETY?

Recent research (Fuentes et al., 2014) states that the genome of the inhabitants of Chile is 51.9% from people of European origin, 44.3% from Amerindians and 3.8% from sub-Saharan Africans. With these averages, it is very difficult that those three populations are not to mixed. Only a very small percentage of the inhabitants of Chile could have maintained their genetic origin, without mixing with the other groups.

In fact, another study states:

(...) in Chile the race process is closely linked to a certain socioeconomic stratification: Spanish people of higher social classes, who did not mix; a mixture between Spanish men and mestizo women in the middle classes; finally, the lowest classes concentrate the mixtures between mestizos-mestizos or

mestizos-Amerindians. Reciprocal mating between European women and Amerindian men rarely occurred. (...) In Chile a Framework of Socio-genetic Reference for studies in Public Health has been proposed. The foundation of this framework is the demonstration that the percentage of aboriginal mix is almost non-existent in high socioeconomic classes, and it arises and increases in a gradient to almost 50% in the lower classes. The socio-genetic strata are: high class (5%), population without Amerindian component; medium class (20%) with 20% of Amerindian mixture, and a lower class (75%) with 35% to 40% of Amerindian mixture. (Vanegas, Villalón & Valenzuela, 2008, pp. 638-639)

Everything would indicate that Chileans are, in the great majority and from the biological point of view, *objectively* mestizos.

However, anthropology has long shown that *races* do not exist objectively. What exists are groups and individuals from which stereotypes are constructed, assigning them negative or positive attributes, linked to a supposed *racial origin* (Marcos, 2014). The genes or body physiognomy of subjects and groups of individuals cannot be objectified under assumed universal parameters. The notion of race allows legitimizing discriminatory treatment by dominant or majority groups, thus building a hierarchy of human groups.

*Ethnic* groups do not have an objective existence. History and the social sciences show us that there are no groups of people that are homogeneous and culturally stable, capable of being hierarchized on a narrow notion of development (Jelin, 2014). The concepts of race and ethnic groups correspond to arbitrary symbolic constructions.

Notwithstanding the above, the symbolic patterns of race and ethnicity seem to continue to operate as stereotyped representations of individuals and persons in the common circulating meanings. This could explain the lack of identification as mestizos of most Chileans, or the difficulty of constructing a French identity on the part of French of non-European origin: the symbolic and social burden of being *mestizo*, *dark* or *descendant of foreigner* in a country that represents itself as white, as is the case of France and Chile.

In other words, although the categories of race and ethnicity are anachronistic for the social sciences, it seems that in the daily life, in the public social space

and in the media space, hegemonic perspectives persist that sustain these categories, sophisticate them and diffuse them. Moreover, these perspectives, albeit arbitrarily, do not cease to be motivated by factual elements: the physical appearance, the physiognomy of the subjects, their customs and behaviors, their beliefs and tastes. This process of attribution of race or ethnicity is denominated by Eric Macé (2013) as *ethno-racialization*.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to establish the levels of representation of the ethnic diversity of Chilean society in television and its comparison with the similar data of French television, we proposed ourselves to replicate the methodology used in France by the CSA.

As in the French case, we did not try to account for the reality of the ethnic origin of the people and characters represented by television. The objective was, rather, to account for the way in which they are perceived, in a situation of reception, starting from the common meanings circulating in Chilean society and from information susceptible of being objectified, regarding physiognomic/cultural features, such as skin color, hair color, facial features, type of clothing, among others. For that purpose, we elaborated an indexing table whose purpose was to retain the markers of *ethno-racialization*.

A first difficulty posed by the indexing operation is the adjustment between intersubjective attribution and objective physiognomic data. In the Chilean case, common meaning indicates that it is a mainly *white* society, but the physiognomic data indicate the presence of an important group of mestizo people. On the other hand, the anthropophysical type defined as *white* in the French study did not correspond completely to what was defined as *white* in Chile. To solve this problem, we proceeded to disaggregate Chilean *intersubjective white*, in three objectivable categories: *blond* (white complexion, clear hair color), *white* (white complexion, dark hair color) and *dark* (*non-white* complexion, *black* hair color).

The intersection between intersubjective assessments and objectifiable physical characteristics is justified by the need to generate an instrument that allows for the emergence (or not) of distortions and differences between

them, which should make evident the existence (or not) of a tendency in the forms of television representation attributable to the operation of a mechanism of cultural hegemony. For example, a person/character can be considered *white*, but when describing it is made from the marker *dark*. In this case, *dark* opposes *blond* and *white*. Thus, the anthropophysical French *white* type coincided with the *blond* and *white* types present in Chile, but was distinguished from the *dark* of this same country.

As this is not sustainable by itself, we considered the need to establish crossings between different types of markers that allow to objectivate common meaning based on historical, demographic and social stratification information. For example, a higher frequency should occur between the *blond* or *white* condition and the *high class* marker, given the conditions of distribution of political, economic and cultural power in Chile (Vanegas et al., 2008). The same for the marker *dark* with an indicator of *complexion* or *body type* (thin, medium, heavy): according to the physiognomic data, the condition of *dark* should be more recurrent with the *medium* or *heavy* complexions.

A second difficulty was the divergence between the common meanings that define the cultural standards of both countries regarding the *white* and the non-white. For example, the common meaning categories on the ethnic aspect defined by the French study established two opposite dimensions (white / non-white) and the disaggregation of the latter:

- White
- Non-white:
  - › Black
  - › Arabian
  - › Asian
  - › Other

After comparing the intersubjective and objectivable aspects in the Chilean case, the common meaning categories were six, not coinciding with those used by the French study. The categories were:

- Blond
- White
- Dark
- Indigenous
- Black
- Latin American

- Other
  - › Asian
  - › European – American

However, this situation of divergence did not present a significant problem, since the comparison of the television representations of ethnic origins is done in terms of the social reality of the ethnic diversity in each country. In other words, since the independent variable is diversity, this is the one that can be applied to the comparison. On the other hand, as mentioned before, the categories *blond* and *white*, of the Chilean case are equivalent to that of *white* of the French case, since they correspond to the European, Nordic and Caucasian physiognomic biotype, respectively, the main type present in French society. For this reason, for purposes of comparison with the report of the Diversity Barometer of the CSA, we homologate the *blond- white* binomial of the Chilean work to the French category *white*.

The markers of *ethno-racialization* were constructed in three ways: (i) the cultural experience of Chilean researchers; (ii) a survey of 36 people (18 men and 18 women) living in different communes of Santiago, Chile, aged 22-45 years and belonging to socioeconomic groups C1, C3 and D; and, finally, (iii) data extracted from specialized bibliography.

We conducted four independent tests on a random corpus of programs of various genres and formats of Chilean broadcast television (fiction, miscellaneous, information, reality TV, news, telenovelas, etc.), grouped into three categories: fiction, nonfiction and information. On the other hand, we established parameters and ranks for the observation of those elements of greater difficulty in their objectivation; for example: for the age indicator, the marker *Child* was referenced as the perception of a subject belonging to the age group of 4 to 12 years; and the marker *Young Adult* was tied to the perception of a subject of age range between 30 and 39 years. To determine technical or theoretical elements, such as the *Actancial Role* indicator, observers were instructed in the categories used by Propp and complemented by Greimas (1966).

These operations allowed to adapt and objectify the instrument and to agree on the categories that would be used. Thus, the final table of indexation of markers of ethno-racialization was constituted as follows:

**ETHNO-RACIALIZATION TABLE****A. BIOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON-CHARACTER:**

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| a) Perceived ethnic aspect:  | Blond / White / Dark / Indigenous / Black / Latin American / Other (Asian / European - American) |
| b) Perceived biological sex: | Female / Male  |
| c) Perceived age:            | Baby / Child / Adolescent / Young / Young Adult / Adult / Senior / Elder                         |
| d) Perceived complexion:     | Very slim / Slim / Athletic / Average / Heavy / Obese  |
| e) Perceived height:         | Short / Average / Tall / No references   |

**B. SOCIOCULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON-CHARACTER:**

- |                              |                                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| a) Perceived social class:   | High / Medium / Low                   |
| b) Perceived cultural level: | Refined / Educated / Popular / Vulgar |

**C. IDENTITY REPRESENTATION OF THE PERSON-CHARACTER:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| a) Perceived or declared gender identity:               | Female / Male / Gay / Lesbian / Transgender / Queer / Other  |
| b) Perceived or declared regional or national identity: | Chilean (urban) / Chilean (capital) / Chilean (rural) / Foreign (Latin American) / Foreign (European-American) / Other / Cannot be established |

**D. ROL ASSIGNED TO THE PERSON-CHARACTER:**

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| a) Actantial role: | Hero / Villain / Antagonist / Coadjuvant / Neutral / Narrator / Victim |
| b) TV Role:        | Lead / Supporting  |

Table 1. Ethno-Racialization table

*Source: Own elaboration.*



To construct the corpus of the Chilean study, we established a sample corresponding to the total of programs broadcasted by the four television stations with the highest rating (Mega, Chilevisión, Canal 13, TVN), from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., the week from Monday 29 of August to Sunday 4 of September of 2016. Of this sample, we watched a total of 155 programs and indexed 2.458 people/characters. Advertising, mass audiences and non-human characters were excluded. As in the French study, only the people/characters who spoke were considered.

For the analysis, according to Dixon and Linz (2000), we used three strategies of relation with the television representation of the different ethnic groups perceived in the analyzed programs: (i) the relation between different ethnic groups (percentage of presence of each one); (ii) the relation of the roles assigned to each group (lead/supporting); and (iii) the relation between the diversity data of the television representation and the statistical information of the social reality.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Below are the results and their analysis according to the relationship between the ethnic groups, the assigned roles, and the comparison with the information of the social reality.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS

We examined the relationship between the different ethnic groups in global, overall, terms and according to television genres, considering among the latter the categories fiction, non-fiction and information.

Of the people/characters represented in the sample of programs broadcasted by the Chilean television channels of the sample, 70% is recognized as *blond* and *white*. If we validate these Chilean categories to the one of *white* French, the number is smaller than the European study, where this marker appears 86% of the times.

On the other hand, the person/character perceived as *dark* corresponded to 26% in the Chilean sample. And the person/character perceived as *indigenous* reached 4%; *black*, 1%, *Latin American foreigner*, 2%; and *other*, 1%.

Regarding the distribution by television genre, and considering fiction first, we found that the rate of characters considered *blond* (o) and *white* corresponds to 79% in the Chilean case and to 84% for *white* in the French case. In Chile, the *dark* category accounted for 11%. The other categories, as a whole, constituted 12%, distributed in *indigenous*, 2%; *black*, 2%; *Latin American*, the most represented in this group, 4%; and *other*, 2%. The French study report does not specify how the *non-white* category is disaggregated.

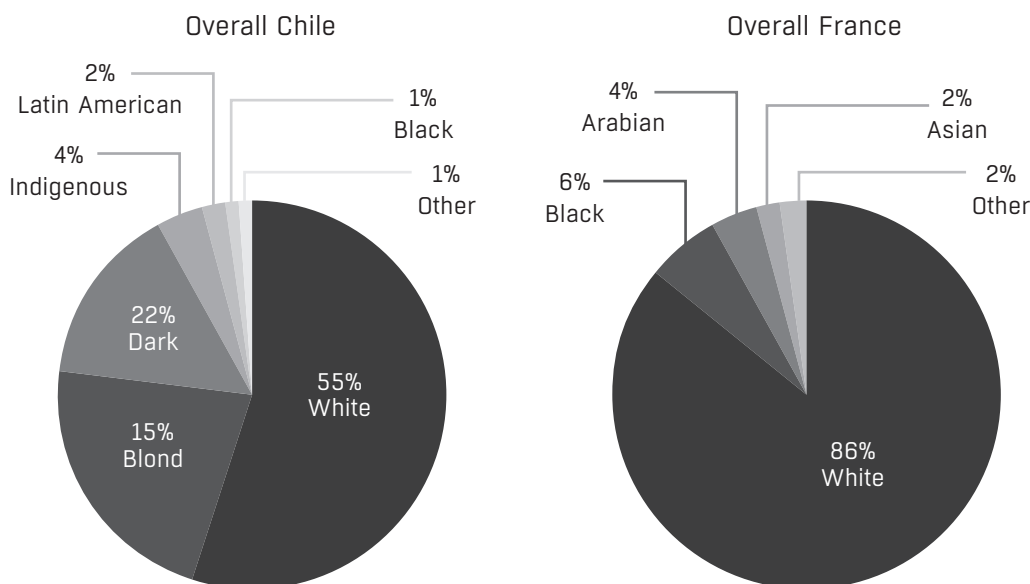


Figure 1. Perception of the different ethnic groups, in television programs of Chile and France

Source: Own elaboration.

As for the non-fiction category, composed of programs such as talk shows, contests, reality shows, docu-realities, miscellaneous and alike programs, in the Chilean corpus the ethno-racialization rates *blond* and *white* corresponded to 66%; and in the French corpus, to 85% for *white*. In Chilean television, the *dark* category accounted for 21%. The other categories, as a whole, constituted 13%. Among them, the most represented was *indigenous*, with 5%. The French study report does not specify how the *non-white* category is disaggregated.

On the other hand, in the information category we mainly considered television newscasts, but informative news reports were also included. In this regard, in the Chilean corpus, *blond* and *white* (a) ethno-racialization rates corresponded to 60%; and in the French corpus, to 86% for *white*. In the Chilean case, *dark* accounted for 23%; *indigenous* and *Latin American* people, 6% each. The other categories constituted 5%. The French study report does not specify how the *non-white* category is disaggregated.

**ROLES ASSIGNED TO EACH GROUP**

We examined the rates of ethno-racialization according to the television roles assigned to each group, considering leading roles and supporting roles.

When it comes to counting the number of people who assume or embody major roles, as anchorpersons,

entertainment programs hosts or protagonists of fiction, the figures are very explicit. In the case of the Chilean corpus, 82% correspond to *blond* and *white*; and on French television, 86% corresponds to *white*.

As for people/characters in secondary or supporting roles, in the case of the Chilean corpus, 77% correspond to *blond* and *white*; *dark* accounts for 16%; 3%, *indigenous*; 1%, *black*; 2%, *Latin American*; and 1%, others. In French television, 87% corresponds to *white* and 13% to *non-white*.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL REALITY**

If we were to define the characteristics of the Chilean population based on the physiognomy of the people and characters who occupy the majority of the screens and have the main roles in the fiction, information and non-fiction broadcasts, the more likely we are to conclude is that it is composed mainly of people very similar to those in French television programs, that is, *white* people.

Seen in this way, the realities of television representation of the ethnic aspect in Chile and France are similar. However, when compared to social reality, we can see that the *white* people that appears on Chilean television screens are *whiter* than most of the country's inhabitants, according to data from recent genetic studies on the Chilean population. Among them,

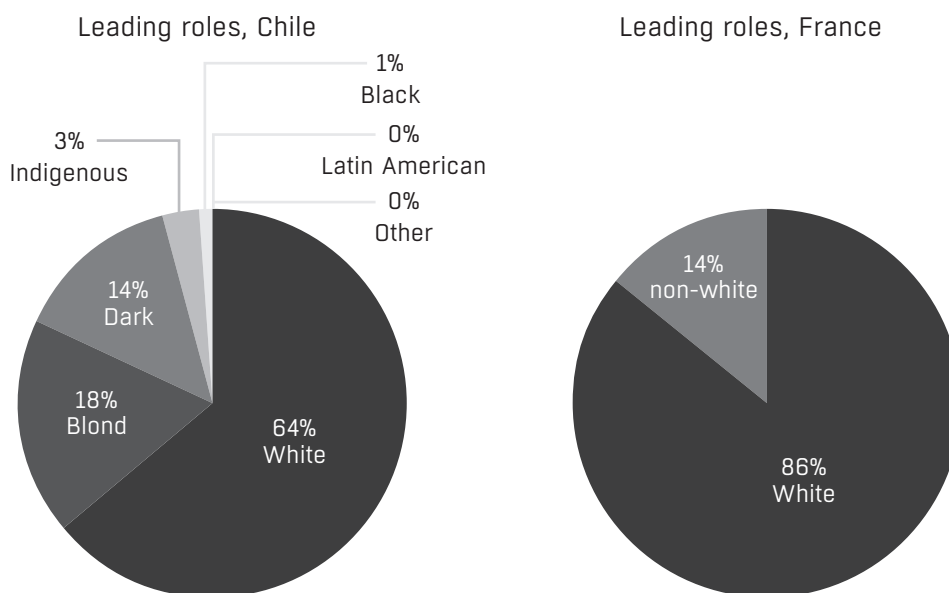


Figure 2. Perception of main roles assigned to different ethnic groups in television programs in Chile and France

Source: Own elaboration.

the ChileGenómico research (www.chilegenomico.cl), whose results show an important component of Amerindian ancestry in most of the Chilean: "This Amerindian component is distributed quantitatively between 3% and 100%: The European component ranges from a minimum value of 0% to 95%, while in the case of African ancestry the values were mostly between 0% and 5%" (Cifuentes, 2016).

While in Chile the population is characterized by anthropological and biological studies as predominantly mestizo, that is, as *non-white* in terms of the categories of the French report, in France the *white* component is the majority.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although *white* ethnic stereotypes in the television representation of both countries are largely dominant, in France they operate in the sense of hiding what the studies and regulatory bodies have named *visible minorities* (Nayrac, 2011); that is, ethnic minority groups that are part of the diversity of that country. In Chile, in addition to operating in the same way regarding *Latin American* immigrants and *indigenous* people, such representations seem to diminish the television presence of a large part of the population.

In addition to the overrepresentation of a *white* ethno-racialization on French and Chilean television, the roles assigned to *non-white* groups, to genres other than masculine, to poor, to the elderly or to the immigrant are secondary.

When observing the distribution of roles in Chilean television only from the ethnic point of view, we can see that people with dark skin and *black* hair are often represented in secondary roles in fiction, as witnesses in the information and, in general, as objects of communication, not as subjects. On the other hand, people belonging to native peoples, especially the Mapuche, usually have no presence on television, except as exotic characters (in the positive version) or as terrorists who oppose the way of life of

Chileans (in the negative version). This is a process of symbolic categorization very close to that used for the representation of foreign immigrants or for ethnic minorities in France (Lochard, 2006).

The contrast between the reality of television representation and the social reality that has been attempted in this limited work, shows the mismatches between one and the other; and with it, the functioning of the mechanisms through which cultural hegemony operates on television. In this case, overrepresenting the dominant groups and minimizing the presence of the subaltern groups. However, these proposals of meaning built from the television do not necessarily inhibit the critical consciences that face these forms of representation.

Since the 1990s, various social organizations began to install in the public discussion of France the concern for the representation of cultural diversity and identity on television. Shortly afterwards, in 2000, the CSA published the first study, entitled Presence and representation of visible minorities in French television, initiating a line of research and follow-up that continues until today, which seeks evidence of this type of inequality.

In Chile, there are more and more organizations committed to sexual diversity, gender equality, immigrant rights, the claims of *indigenous* peoples or urban dwellers, who have begun to worry about the stereotypes through which they are represented in the media. The National Television Council has done an important job in fulfilling the mission entrusted by the State of Chile, generating various studies on pluralism, quality, treatment of gender, among many others, through which they show other inequalities in the representations of Chilean television. See, for example, the study Television representation and discrimination (CNTV, 2015).

Without an effort to demand greater standards of pluralism, diversity, social, cultural, ethnic and gender respect in the media, it will be difficult to counteract the power of the production and reproduction of symbolic inequalities within our societies.

## FOOTNOTES

1. This article contains some results of the initial phase of the research project called *Télévision, pluralisme et élections. Approches comparées des campagnes présidentielles en France et au Chili* [Television, pluralism and elections. Compared approaches of presidential campaigns in France and Chile], funded by the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) of France. For its realization, it had the important collaboration and support of the National Television Council (CNTV) of Chile and the Vice-Rector of Research and Development of the University of Chile.

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