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The everyday pain of racism of Brazilian black women and the effect of counterintuitive ads for its reduction: a Grounded Theory study

Abstract

This paper presents an explanation proposal about the meaning links that are produced when there is interaction of Brazilian women with counterintuitive ads, which show Afro-American women as protagonists of their discourses. It is a qualitative investigation oriented by the theoretical interconnection of perspectives of symbolic interactionism and mediatization studies, as basilar theoretical referential, and through the constructivist grounded theory, as a methodological approach. The results of this research enabled the articulation of the representative theoretical model “The Interaction experiences of Brazilian women with counterintuitive ad”, from which this paper presents the core category “The everyday pain of racism of Brazilian black women and the effect of counterintuitive ads for its reduction”.

Keywords

Counterintuitive Advertising, Grounded Theory, Mediatization, Racism, Brazilian Black Women.

1. Introduction

This is a relevant and necessary proposal to continue and advance the studies about repercussions concerning counterintuitive stimulus in Brazilian ads (Leite, 2009, 2014, 2015; Fry, 2002, etc.). The research produced contributes to the media studies that approach advertising as an object. The originality of this article consists in designing the construction of a substantive theory based on Brazilian women's (black and white) media consumption experiences about those ads. From their viewpoints, we can understand the significance and impact of the stereotypes¹ associated with black women.

The counterintuitive advertising can be considered a proposal from the professional advertising field that use, strategically, in its narrative

¹ The stereotypes concept here arise from social contemporary studies of social psychology cognitively-based, meaning “[...] a common belief about some attribute, characteristic, psychological, moral or psychological traits assigned extensively to a human group, formed through one or more criterion [...]” (Krüger, 2004: 36-37).

"others/new" stereotypical contents about minorities², i.e. "counterstereotypes moderators" (Blair & Benaji, 1996; Blair & Lenton, 2001, Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001). The main object is to innovate and advance their appeal to the consumers, "violating intuitive expectations" (Upal, 2007; Boyer, 2001) of the audience concerning the discourses normally found in the ad.

Conversely, in the denseness of the market's objective – arousing the interest of the audience, putting up some perspective, and providing social contact with positive ideas about the stigmatized groups. This narrative can foster other readings directing the perceptions to other feelings relating to the presence of these individuals in society. Seeing that these narratives can cognitively collaborate to the displacement or update of negative content (beliefs) that rule traditional stereotypes in relation to minorities.

In a nutshell, the critical reflection we seek here is to understand how advertising – within its discursive innovations, for example the counterintuitive strategy – can socially reflect and contribute to the establishment of social and cognitive (re)orientation in favor of those who suffer with prejudice and stereotyping by means of the use and consumption of the media narratives.

According to the limits of this article, the results of this research enabled the articulation of the theoretical model "The Interaction experiences of Brazilian women with counterintuitive ad" that offer an opportunity for black women to take a leading role, from which this paper presents the core category "The everyday pain of racism of Brazilian black women and the effect of counterintuitive ads for its reduction" that share especially the Brazilian Black women experiences.

The research question of this study was "How the interaction with counterintuitive ads with black women as a leading role affects their pain of racism?"

The symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934/ 1982; Blumer, 1969, 1980), and the mediatization studies (see Braga, 2006, 2012; Hepp, 2014; Hepp & Krotz, 2014; Hjarvard, 2012), focusing on the media's influence in (re)elaboration of identities, are the theoretical perspectives that lead the reflection in this article and the constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006, 2009) is methodological approach.

2. Methodological approach: Constructivist Grounded Theory

The grounded theory method (GTM) is based on a systematic investigation, and also a qualitative methodological approach supported by facts. Those facts must be built and revealed from a strong dialogical process between the researcher and the subjects. This approach seeks to evoke vivid experiences of the subjects. The main objective of this methodological approach is to build substantial theories capable of exploring and explaining specific sociocultural phenomenon based on the individual's realities.

The initial prospects of grounded theory were presented by Barney Glaser (1930) and Anselm Strauss (1916-1996) on their 1967 classical book *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. On the introductory part, the authors presented the definition below: grounded theory is "a general method of comparative analysis [...] and various procedures designed to generate [systematically] grounded theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: viii)³. In other words, "strictly speaking a grounded theory [GT] is exactly that:

² According to Muniz Sodré, the minorities are "the black, the homosexuals, women, indigenous, environmentalists, antineoliberalists, etc." (Sodré, 2005: 1).

³ Roy Suddaby indicates that the "notion of abduction has become incorporated into grounded theory as 'analytic induction', the process by which a researcher moves between induction and deduction while practicing the constant comparative method. Strauss and Corbin noted that induction had been overemphasized in grounded theory research. They observed that whenever researchers conceptualize data, they are engaging in deduction and

A theory that has resulted from the use of the GTM [grounded theory method]. In common parlance, however, the term refers to the method itself [...]” (Charmaz & Bryant, 2007: 3).

After the classic publication that presented the grounded theory, in the following years Glaser and Strauss aimed their theoretical perspectives about method in distinct ways. They written and published other articles and books, solo and in-group partnerships with other researchers as well. The most notorious are *Theoretic sensitivity* (1978) and *Basics of grounded theory analysis* (1992) by Glaser; *Qualitative analysis for social scientist* (1987) by Strauss, and *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*, in 1990, by Strauss & Juliet M. Corbin.

With their perspectives and approaches, Glaser and Strauss influenced many researchers; in addition, they have formed a new social scientists generation who has looked toward to collaborate with the advancement of thought about grounded theory. Among these researchers stands out Kathy Charmaz, who developed practical implications for applying the grounded theory under a strong symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective.

Furthermore, she is worldwide known by developing her proposal for the method of Glaser and Strauss, denominated as constructivist grounded theory. Charmaz approach figures, along with Glaser, Strauss and Corbin⁴ as the most celebrated in contemporary times. Considering, its intense connection with the dialogical potentialities of constructivism for the edification of substantive theories.

Charmaz's grounded theory recognizes, based on its specificity that the realities and phenomena studied are collective constructs and their precepts respond strongly to the interpretative tradition and move away from the objectivist principles of its founders approach, especially Glaser's proposal.

According to Charmaz, the constructivist grounded theory fundamentally

serves as a way to learn about the worlds we study and a method for developing theories to understand them. In the classic grounded theory works, Glaser and Strauss talk about discovering theory as emerging from data separate from the scientific observer. Unlike their position, I assume that neither data nor theories are discovered. Rather, we are part of the world we study and the data we collect. We *construct* our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices. My approach explicitly assumes that any theoretical rendering offers an *interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it [...] (2006: 10. author's emphasis).

Charmaz interpretation (and process) for the grounded theory advocates that the knowledge is the result of a joint construction between the researcher and the participant individuals of the investigation. The origin of theories should start from relevant data, which will provide solid subsidies for the construction of an eloquent analysis.

According to her the “rich data are detailed, focused, and full. They reveal participants' views, feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives”. (Charmaz, 2006: 14). For example, a research may use data obtained and extracted from case studies or applied to individuals in the reception spaces of a media message (soap opera, ads, etc.). Thus, such study may seek, for example, to understand what happens to some individuals, on pointed contexts and situations, right after reading these media messages, obviously considering a specific initial research problem defined.

that effective grounded theory requires ‘an interplay between induction and deduction (as in all science)’ (1998: 137)” (Suddaby, 2006: 639).

⁴ Green *et. al* (2007, p. 472) indicate that the three main approaches of grounded theory may be defined as the emergent (Glaser, 1992), systematic (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and constructivist (Charmaz, 2006).

It is recommended, based on the possibilities above, that interviews are recorded in audio, for example, with the authorization of the researched informants, and then transcribed for relevant data identification which may support the directions for the construction of an interpretative framework on the problem established.

Returning to the discussion proposed by Charmaz, the question is how to initiate these data construction, once the grounded theory is not based on pre-established hypotheses or specifically demarcated objectives, but rather a complex area of investigation or a research problem open and generative. It is known that a research problem guides the use of techniques and necessary methods appropriated for data extraction and production. However, what background and direction do the researchers need to have for going inside this field?

Charmaz recognizes that before starting a research project, both professional researchers and many postgraduate students already have a consolidated repertoire of their respective areas. Furthermore, many of these individuals probably have some intimacy with the research subject and its respective theoretical framework. Thus, with balance and ethical, “we may begin our studies from these vantage points but need to remain as open as possible to whatever we see and sense in the early stages of the research” (Charmaz, 2006: 17).

Reinforcing the answer to question about the beginning of the empirical work, she gives emphasis to other key point, denominated “sensitizing concepts”. This concept was extracted from the theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, especially, from Herbert Blumer theories. Blumer clarify the sensitizing concepts in contrast to the definitive concepts pointing out that

a definitive concept refers precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks [...] . A sensitizing concept lacks such specification of attributes or bench marks and consequently it does not enable the user to move directly to the instance and its relevant content. Instead, it gives the user a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching empirical instances. Whereas definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts merely suggest directions along which to look. [...] (1954: 7).

In this line, Charmaz verticalizing to the grounded theory also discusses about it, reinforcing that when researchers go inside the field they carry a considerable conceptual repertoire to guide the search of answers to their investigation problems:

These concepts give you initial ideas to pursue and sensitize you to ask particular kinds of questions about your topic. [...]. In short, sensitizing concepts and disciplinary perspectives provide a place to start, not to end. Grounded theorists use sensitizing concepts as tentative tools for developing their ideas about processes that they define in their data. If particular sensitizing concepts prove to be irrelevant, then we dispense with them (2006: 16-17).

In the discussions about the procedures of the constructivist grounded theory, with the beginning of the data collection exercise or, as Charmaz (2006: 16) prefers to call the data construction stage, it should be noted that in parallel with this initial procedure, analyzes and coding of collected data must be realized. The coding in this method needs to be understood

[...] more than a beginning; it shapes an analytic frame from which you build the analysis. [...]. Coding is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data. Through coding, you *define* what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means (Charmaz, 2006: 45-46, author's emphasis).

It is also worth noting that the literature indicates that it is not appropriate to collect all the data and then start as coding and analysis stages. These processes must occur simultaneously, always favoring the return and a comparison between the data in the quest to build relevant information.

On this way, the opening research question, which should initially support and guide the access to the field and the construction of data in an investigation through the grounded theory is indicated by the classic question formulated by Glaser (1978): "What's going on here?". Charmaz validates that this inquiry carried out by the researcher as orientation in the initial reflections is fundamental, for all aspects of grounded theory, in order to generate "looking at what is happening at either of two levels: - What are the basic social processes? - What are the basic social psychological processes?" (Charmaz, 2006: 20).

With the aforementioned clarifications, it is possible to start now to detail the procedures of data-gathering and the dynamics of the coding of these to discover the processes⁵ that transversalize an investigation in grounded theory. However, before it is appropriate to clarify that the substantial sample in grounded research is theoretical, that is, it is the one that

means seeking pertinent data to develop your emerging theory. The main purpose of theoretical sampling is to elaborate and refine the categories constituting your theory. You conduct theoretical sampling by sampling to develop the properties of your category(ies) until no new properties emerge. Thus, you *saturate* your categories with data and subsequently *sort* and/or diagram them to integrate your emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006: 96-97, author's emphasis).

This is because the focus is not on the individuals, but on their actions, experiences, events and issues, that is, it is on providing data for the construction of the theory. Therefore, two sampling biases are observed in this method, which complement each other: the initial sample, which deliberates on the participation, the profile of individuals and places, and that will subsidize the beginning of the research; and theoretical sampling, which guides the conceptual paths to be explored until sufficient data is gathered to support the explanation of its categories, thus resulting in the "theoretical saturation" of the research, or, as Ian Dey (1999: 257) adopts, conquest of "theoretical sufficiency" (Charmaz, 2006: 114).

In Kathy Charmaz's proposal for grounded theory are indicated three main coding stages: the initial, the focused and the theoretical⁶. The initial coding strictly fixes the data, considering the actions in each segment of these instead of applying preexisting categories. According to Charmaz, during this coding, the researcher must ask, "what is this data a study of?" (Glaser, 1978: 57; Glaser & Strauss, 1967); What does the data suggest? Pronounce? From whose point of view? What theoretical category does this specific datum indicate? (Glaser, 1978)" (Charmaz, 2006: 47).

⁵ "A process consists of unfolding temporal sequences that may have identifiable markers with clear beginnings and endings and benchmarks in between" (Charmaz, 2006: 10).

⁶ Although Tarozzi (2011) indicates the axial coding (proposed by Strauss and Corbin) among the coding types of the constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz relativizes the application of axial coding in the research, indicating it as optional. According to her, researchers "who prefer to work with a preset structure will welcome having a frame. Those who prefer simple, flexible guidelines-and can tolerate ambiguity do not need to do axial coding. They can follow the leads that they define in their empirical materials. Although I have not used axial coding according to Strauss and Corbin's formal procedures, I have developed subcategories of a category and showed the links between them as I learned about the experiences the categories represent. The subsequent categories, subcategories, and links reflect how I made sense of the data" (Charmaz, 2006: 61).

The main key coding practices are “word-by-word”, “line-by-line”, or “incident with incident.” Throughout this process, intense expressions used by interviewed informants, for example, may be potentially aggregated to theory in a literal way. Such expressions are referred to as *in vivo* codes.

The second stage of the process is focused coding. In this step, the codes are more targeted and selective than those in the initial stage. In order to do this, the most significant and / or frequent initial codes are used to analyze large amounts of data in detail. This coding requires decision-making on what data allows a better analytical understanding to categorize the other data fully. Otherwise, in this stage the researcher defines which data have the potential to be in line with others, thus forming a category.

Finally, the third stage is the theoretical coding. It is a sophisticated level of coding that follows the codes selected on focused coding. Charmaz clarifies that the theoretical codes produced in that point of process

[...] are integrative; they lend form to the focused codes you have collected. These codes may help you tell an analytic story that has coherence. Hence, these codes not only conceptualize how your substantive codes are related, but also move your analytic story in a theoretical direction (2006: 63).

It is at this stage that, according to Massimiliano Tarozzi⁷, the construction of categories reaches fullness and "theorization proceeds to identify the central categories, the key concepts around which theory will be organized" (Tarozzi, 2011: 154). Also in this dynamic, it is possible to start to the theoretical classification stages of these categories with the objective of finding the core category, that is, the main category which has the potential to "integrate theory and develop it around its conceptual axes emerged empirically" (Tarozzi, 2011: 154).

With the identification of this core category, it is feasible at this point to produce the graph representation (with diagrams or conceptual maps) of the grounded theory that illustrates its integration. Now, undoubtedly, the memos that must be written throughout the process of data construction will be fundamental to support the integration and reporting of the conceptual schemata to be constructed as well as to direct the final writing of the emerging theory. The return to literature that gives support to interpretations and conceptual unfolding about the perspectives constructed by grounded theory may occur with density in this period.

The constant comparative method of grounded theory of transforming data into codes and categories (comparing data with data, data with code, code with code, code with category, category with category, etc.), for example, may use as basis transcripts of recordings of interviews with participant individuals of the investigation, as well as field notes etc. To collaborate with the management and manipulation of the collected data it is recommend use, if possible, software such as Nvivo (Tarozzi, 2011) or Atlas.ti (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) to support data organization, construction of diagrams and conceptual maps (Clarke, 2003, 2005).

With this contextualization about the grounded theory method, the next topic presents how its procedures and techniques were applied in this research, as well as some results and their respective discussions pursuant to the literature.

⁷ All translations from Portuguese are my own.

3. Grounded inquiry

The investigation was carried out from August 2013 to October 2014 with black and white women, over eighteen years old, from different social classes in the Great São Paulo region, Brazil. They have contributed with relevant facts expressing opinions, "feelings, intentions, and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives" (Charmaz, 2006: 14).

To construct the *corpus* of this research, two women— a black and a white individual— were referred by some acquaintances of the researcher. Subsequently, the expansion of the *corpus* was made through the snowball technique (Baldin & Munhoz, 2011: 332).

Accordingly to GTM's procedures, the number of interviews participant individuals of the investigation was not established previously because our *corpus* followed the theoretical sample's perspective.

Thus, twenty-four women were interviewed (aged between nineteen to sixty years old), three of them were invited to a second interview to deepen the issues raised. A total of 27 in-depth interviews were conducted with a set of pre-determined questions using a semistructured interview guide. Twelve in-depth interviews with women self-declared white women, and fifteen in-depth interviews with self-declared black women. The experiences of the second group are considered in this article.

Their names were confidential and their privacy was guaranteed. They are only identified by the initials of their names and surnames in this paper.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews as was said previously and observational techniques⁸. The observations were registered on the researcher's notebook. Those were excellent materials to produce memos about the researcher's process of experience with the contents and critical reflection during the interviews.

After reading the Free and Clarified Consent, the interview started with general questions about the understanding of Brazilian advertising. After that, the participant individual viewed nine counterintuitive ads (figure1). Those ads chosen are part of a database of counterintuitive ad organized by the researcher since 2004.

⁸ According to Tarozzi, the observation in GT "focuses on phenomenon observations and, above all, on the elements of process defined in the research questions, placing less importance to the description of the context". Tarozzi, 2011: 111). Then, the aim is not to performed detailed descriptions, but to focus on the concepts of the investigation process.

The everyday pain of racism of Brazilian black women and the effect of counterintuitive ads for its reduction: a Grounded Theory study

Figure 1. A set of nine ads were used during the interview



Sources: (respectively) Brazilian magazines: *Isto é* (2013), *Exame* (2011), *Isto é* (2012), *Exame* (2010), *Exame* (2011), *Veja* (2013), *Veja* (2013), *Época Negócios* (2012) and *Rolling Stones Brasil*.(2008).

The criteria used to choose these ads was the relevance given to black women taking a leading role in the workforce, educational field, the business world, accomplishments, and professional success. This contextual criteria, defined by the narratives of the ads chosen, was based on the *Ethnic-racial Characteristics Survey's* data (2008)⁹ which revealed the lives of the individuals are influenced by their race, mostly at work, or social environments.

Considering this, the ads were extracted from Brazilian magazines and they were not necessarily related to the "advertising reception flow" (Piedras, 2009) when the interviews were performed. Thus, such ads were selected especially to understand the meanings produced during the first contact of women with their narratives.

⁹ Available in: <http://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv63405.pdf>. Accessed: 23. Jan. 2018.

In order to understand this context, the "meeting point" concept (Trindade, 2008; Di Nallo, 1999) is more pertinent to comprehend the context of interaction produced during the interviews, seeing that to understand this term it is necessary to consider that it indicates a specific situation of interaction with the message of the media.

In relation to the procedures during the interview, the interviewer asked the participant individual to choose only one ad, according to her criteria. After choosing it, the interviewer would ask what motivated the decision and what she understood from the ad. After the participant individual commented about, she was asked also to organize the ads according to her criteria, including the one she chose, considering the number order from one to nine. The participant individual was asked about their motivation, and after that, considering each ad, the interview would go on with the support of a semi-structured script.

The data was analyzed according to the systematized procedures of the constant comparative method, considering the stages (1) initial coding, with the construction of open codes; (2) focused coding, when the initial codes are grouped according to their conceptual consonance and dissonance, at this phase the first categories of the survey are originated; (3) theoretical coding whose purpose is to integrate the categories that explain the investigated phenomenon. In this phase, we also seek to define the core category that has the potential to integrate all the categories, allowing the development of a theoretical explanatory framework based on data.

The procedure started, especially with the *verbatim* transcription of the recorded interviews. The Nvivo software was used for the data analysis and the coding process.

After this contextualization, the next topic presents the meanings that establish the category "The everyday pain of racism of Brazilian black women and the effect of counterintuitive ads for its reduction". Contrastively, to understand the structure of this category, it is necessary for the reader to consider that the category is written in capital letter, and its subcategories were written in lower case and in bold type, while its components are in italic and underlined.

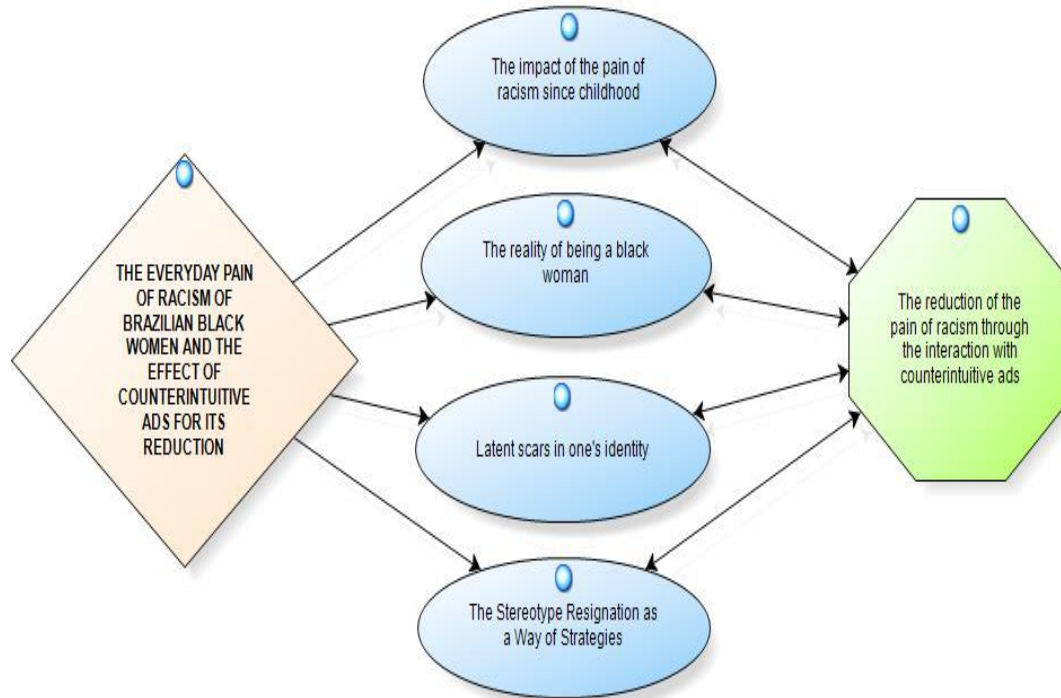
4. Results

The category about THE EVERYDAY PAIN OF RACISM OF BRAZILIAN BLACK WOMEN AND THE EFFECT OF COUNTERINTUITIVE ADS FOR ITS REDUCTION reveals the interpretation of Brazilian black women about this kind of ad. In this interaction and their interpretation, it is noteworthy how racism works in their lives.

This category has five subcategories: **The impact of the pain of racism since childhood**, **The reality of being a black woman**, **Latent scars in one's identity**, **The Stereotype Resignation as a Way of Strategies**, and **The reduction of the pain of racism through the interaction with counterintuitive ads**.

The everyday pain of racism of Brazilian black women and the effect of counterintuitive ads for its reduction: a Grounded Theory study

Chart 1. The everyday pain of racism of Brazilian black women and the effect of counterintuitive ads for its reduction



Source: Leite (2015).

Therefore, to understand this context, the subcategory **The impact of the pain of racism since childhood** carries some particularities, that direct to the comprehension of what most likely might be the source of those feelings when facing counterintuitive ad.

Since childhood, a black individual asks himself "Who am I?" They look for this answer in the media, for example, in ads, TV shows, soap opera, etc. For women, their reference regarding black people was heard, for instance, at school, and many times those references were negative made by their classmates, filled with naive prejudice, though highly destructive. A sense of displacement arose as a result from the lack of role models, because everywhere (besides their homes) they could feel they were silenced and the white people image was overrated. Media and its discourses have been the main source of this denial and silence of black people image.

When I was a child, I was a bit wired...as I used to spend a lot of time at home in front of the TV. There were always ads of some dolls, or clothes, and the model walking down the runway or the kid playing with the toy, they were always white and rich. As I was black and poor, I used to think I would never have that. So, I used to feel small next to them. I used to think I would never have things and I wanted to be white, because I used to feel like being black was something bad. I used to feel really awful because of the color of my skin [...]. Inside my childish mind, I used to dream about being white, I used to fancy myself waking up white with straight hair [she says laughing, but moved]. I used to feel diminished by society. For me, being black was something bad. I used to think I would never have friends or something. This feeling was always there. While I was a child, that was my world. What people used to tell me and what I used to see on TV about being black. Today I can see that it was not like that. (GLSS, Black Woman).

In this context, many times black children face this kind of situations and conflicts by themselves, because they do not understand how deep the subject really is. Their personalities are shaken, because it is in this period of their lives that they are developing their "self", through the interaction with "significant others", as the symbolic interactionism postulates, those are present all around them, for instance, their parents, friends, teachers, and media discourse that can support the child at this age.

Especially relating to the parents, or the family itself, it is possible to identify the lack of sensibility and knowledge about how to support the children during their first contact with racism, to diminish the nefarious effects in their lives. Many times, the child has to deal with such experiences by themselves, which can leave a permanent mark in the individual's social performance.

Yet, in the contemporary scene, women believe there is a change happening in the media, especially in the advertising industry in Brazil. This change gives a major concern about qualified integration of black individuals in their narratives. They hope this change will be beneficial to the cognitive strengthening of Brazilian black children's identity, especially their self-esteem's references.

I think that nowadays it is easier for the black kids to see themselves as a reference, [...] for example "oh, it looks like my dad, or my aunt, or my brother". Before it used to be only white people. Like the boy with blue eyes, what reference will they have? None. That is not a part of their lives, they will not be able to compare with someone in their families. They could even think: "Why is there no black guy?" Or even: "Why is my hair not like his?" If the father does not know how to deal with it, he will have a child like this [silence] I will not say... traumatized, but it will become a closed-minded person, not accepting himself/herself. Thinking it is not pretty to be black thanks to the media not showing people like them and will not accept who they are (SA, Black Woman).

The next subcategory corresponds to their experiences as infants, and the impact now on a black woman's identity on a daily basis. It is necessary to understand how these stories about racism guide their views, thoughts and social performance.

4.1. The reality of being a black woman

The subcategory **The reality of being a black woman** is the part where there are marks caused by their experiences of racism, it is what make their perceptions about social interaction sensible to any act against their identity as black women.

As we can see through their discourses, there is an uneasiness over society which makes black people alert about any signs of prejudice and racism. It is an exhaustive and intuitive activity, in other words, it is almost an automatic/ mechanic instinct due to the redescription black people had to deal with since childhood.

We can use as an example any kind of narrative on media, or even, comparing this article with advertisement with black women. Automatically, black women are suspicious and search for any trait of prejudice or racism in those ads. This alarm featured in black women is because black people in general are "hardened with prejudice", and also because of their identity that bears the social stigmatization of being a black woman in Brazil.

Those who look at the situation from the outside does not understand. Sometimes those situations did not happen to you, but you have seen other people going through this and you end up suspicious over those things. So, you kind of end up hardening your feelings. You end up interpreting better. I can see that, but sometimes an outsider who has not has this idea about racism and how strong it is, not only in the past, but today also... Then this kind of person looks at one of those ads and think it is normal, does not have this point of view. And the person thinks it is not a big deal. That nothing is going to change in their lives or thoughts. But, for the ones

that have been through this, they know how difficult it was or how difficult it is sometimes to tell the difference. Looking at this and see that it was not easy, that this [black women as a leading role in an advertising] is a result of a hard work. I cannot tell you whom exactly, but many people who fought for their rights, mainly the black people's rights of not feeling inferior. They went for it, they showed they are capable of doing anything. So, not everyone is able to see that (GS, Black Woman).

The next subcategory still works under this perspective about the racism in this kind of stories and how those women see the world. Specifically it reinforces their discourses about strength and the impacts of those experiences on their identities, as well as their performances on a daily basis.

4.2. Latent scars in one's identity

This subcategory **Latent scars in One's Identity** is pivotal to the meanings of through this category because it shows how cruel are the marks of everyday racism, influencing black women's lives, the way they look at something, the way they experience their social relationships.

The symbol of the scar is used here to try and convey what is observed and felt about those women's point of views regarding the counterintuitive ads present in their testimonials. That is because the relationship between those women with the advertising's narratives (alongside with their views about it) are like bridges enabling them to talk about those feelings and life experiences. Also, the awareness of the damaging effect of prejudice and racism that they have experienced.

In their discourses, we can strongly feel the excruciating pain of the sense of not recognizing themselves during their lifetime. This pain is felt every day, affecting their psychological and sociocultural health in many levels. In their discourses, many women express that bearing this experience is incomprehensible, what makes them outraged and feeling undignified as human beings.

The lives of those black women are marked by this pain. This pain is latent because of the diverse qualifications they produce in the social situations: pains like rejection, being seen as a social problem, all the limitations that are imposed on them, prejudiced glances, the non-identification of their image, social injustice, and the pain of a black child stating she has a disease.

I used to feel inferior. [...]. Today I do not feel like that anymore, but before when I used to feel or see something like that at school and on TV, I did not want to be black at all. I wanted to be white. I used to feel like being black was something bad. It was a thing, it was a terrible disease. I did not want to be black. Nowadays for me it is more like [silence], but before I used to feel like this. The white ones were always the most favored by the teachers at school. Black people were like the sick ones. I used to feel like this when I saw something like that. And I could not accept myself thanks to that, because I did not know we were equal. For me the, the whites were the best and I did not want to be black at all. I used to feel like it was the worst thing in the world. But it is what it is, and I used to feel really bad about my color. I used to suffer. So, I wanted to be white. I used to think that if I took some medicine or if I showered a lot I would end up lightening myself or my hair would get straighter (GLSS, Black Woman).

The expressions of this pain reflect in everything those women do, because it is something that they have to deal with every day since childhood. However, even though they live in this oppressive environment, it is for the awareness of the mark of this pain that some of them build mechanisms to handle those negative experiences. They seek ways to live without being directly influenced by the effects of this oppressive system that

jeopardize their identities and social relations. The next subcategory tries to understand those mechanisms used by black women to deal with racism and prejudice in their lives.

4.3. The Stereotype Resignation as a Way of Strategies

The Stereotype Resignation as a Way of Strategies represents some of the measures black women use on a daily basis to soothe the effects of racism. This subcategory holds the following components: *The Daily Silence of Racism's Experiences*, *Conformism to Face Racism*, and *Self-Prejudice of the black individual*. These components shape the potential strategies used by Brazilian black women when trying to minimize the impacts of racism in their lives. They must be seen as strategies drawn up during their experiences on the oppressive society.

The Daily Silence of Racism's Experiences is a method used to try and feel equal. Thus, the explicit discussion, sharing and fighting racism is avoided, so their experiences should not be amplified, postponing the implications of such.

Black women feel some embarrassment and difficulty to share their experiences. So, the silence and suppressed outrage are the quickest ways to avoid the manifests and disturbance of racist's actions in the social situations. That is to say, it is more comfortable to be quiet (pretending nothing ever happened) than fighting face to face against the oppressors, bewildering them with words.

One of the strategies to strengthen the basis of their silence is *Conformism to Face Racism* that corresponds to the understanding that prejudice is everywhere, as well as in society's conscience and dissimulation about its existence. Therefore, the ones who suffer with racism should ignore it, get used to it and accept to live with such situations. This way racism would not be so hard to get through the day, since this attitude in those oppressive context would not be directly associated with the heavy burden of racism, but only with a social barrier to be broken.

Thus, the reality of racist expressions and their sufferers would not be noticed. In this perspective, black people should exercise their minds to get stronger and accept themselves.

I have worked upon that over the years [racism and prejudice] inside me, because things happen and, automatically, you get stronger (TPVS, Black Woman).

I am used to it. Knowing it is racism and everything, I am used to it. I am used to this sort of things, for me it is not something big (you know, wow!). I used to feel inferior. Not today, today it does not affect me. For me this is normal. Brazil is like this. Racist. So, I have to get used to it [deep breath] [...] (GLSS, Black Woman).

The third strategy is always associated with the social observation here, based on the common sense that the black people encounter prejudice that comes from themselves. This strategy is called *Self-Prejudice of the black individual*.

In a way, this feeling must be associated with some kind of self-defense to racism they suffer every day. In contrast, this argument might have been placed in the minds of some black people, because society expresses and enhances that they are inferior all the time.

That way, trying not to fit into this inferior profile, they prefer not to recognize themselves as black ones, redirecting the same racist arguments of inferiority to another black person. This behavior would produce a feeling of denial and not belonging to the oppressed group that suffers with those arguments. In this attitude and denial, the black person could feel deceptively a part of this oppressed group, what would facilitate their facing racism and its daily implications.

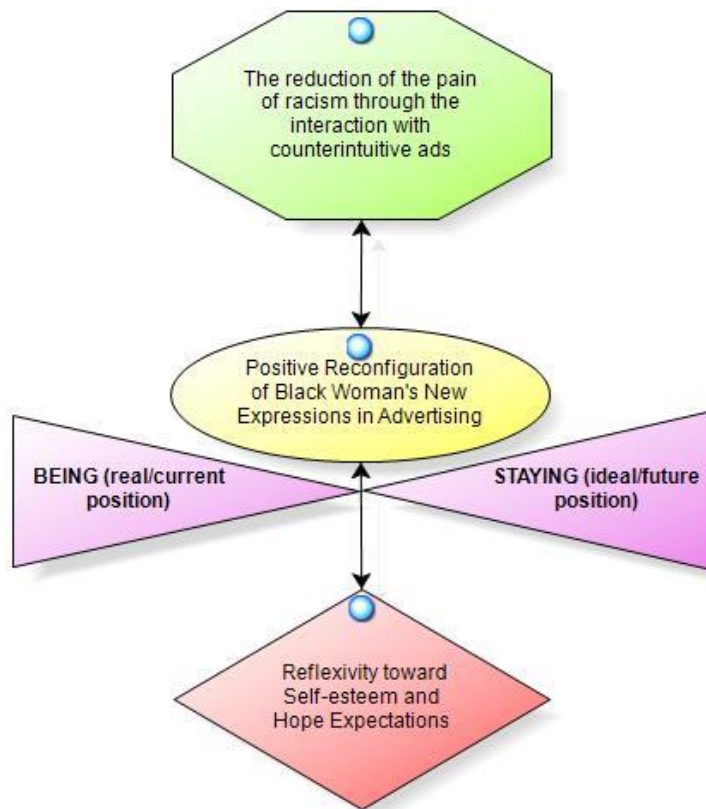
Clarifying the dimensions regarding the painful experiences of Brazilian black women the prospective contributions to counterintuitive ad is maximized, because its effects benefit the decrease in these racist experiences on a daily basis. Those perceptions are presented in the next subcategory.

4.4. The reduction of the pain of racism through the interaction with counterintuitive ads

The subcategory **The reduction of the pain of racism through the interaction with counterintuitive ads** reflect the effects that can be produced by the counterintuitive ad in the social, in a microsocial perspective as much as in a macrosocial projection.

In this part, we can find the essential of the counterintuitive ads, going beyond the objectives of the market. This subcategory holds the following components: *Positive Reconfiguration of Black Woman's New Expressions in Advertising and Reflexivity toward Self-esteem and Hope Expectations* of black women through counterintuitive ads.

Chart 2. Subcategory The reduction of the pain of racism through the interaction with counterintuitive ads



Source: Leite (2015).

Starting, there is the *Positive Reconfiguration of Black Woman's New Expressions in Advertising* that is made through women's discourses about their perceptions regarding the *Valorization of Black People's movement in the ad, Initial Achievements and Social Mobility*, as well as *The Rapture of Identifying Black Women as Protagonists in New Roles in Advertising*.

Black women notice the substantial number of ads promoting qualified/positive reconfiguration of black women's image. This movement generates a perceptive effect on

the importance of black people's (women, men, and children) images valorization, as well as the presence of the black women in the ad would also reinforce the valorization of women's image in society.

This "new/other" posture in advertising is considered as a marketing strategy. This fact is aware discourse – by the black women interviewed. Anyhow, in the short or medium term, black women will be able to identify themselves in the media. By the positive visibility over the black women's image in such narratives, the meanings have a potential symbolic integrated system that polarizes the dimensions of being in the face of those ads.

If you see those ads, they portray only women, and they are black. It is the valorization of a group. That is what we need. People would identify themselves greatly. [...]. A similarity between those two parts is valorization. They are appreciating black women and women in general. I thought it was beautiful that they used black models. Woman and black. If it was a blond woman, I would think it was nice, because it is a woman. It is my condition, because women are still discriminated. Even an executive white woman earns less money than men in a company. That is a fact! [...] But, now I like more the fact that they are using black women, I identify myself in those ads, with those products of the ad. [...]. I believe that even the white woman when she looks at those ads she would be very happy to see that they are using and appreciating black women. [...]. Valorization. [...]. They are doing that, so that is a change already [silence] (LNL, Black Woman).

In this way, it is worth noticing women's reaction when they see that black women have a leading role in counterintuitive ads. It is possible to observe their rapture in the first interaction with counterintuitive ads. It is noticeable that black women are amazed by the narratives when they see women like them being well represented.

However, when they balance their emotions, they analyze it more carefully, to consider the meanings in these narratives. This valorization of black people in the media is extremely important to them, especially in ads. Yet, it is possible to observe that in some counterintuitive ad, the subtleties of some meaning using the image of black women appear, and it is necessary to problematize that.

That is because, on the one hand, most ads raise a great visibility to black women associating the expressions and meanings of social mobility with their image. Contrastively, such black women are represented as working hard to achieve. In the ads used in this paper, black women are never represented enjoying something they have achieved.

Instead of showing a black woman going to a renowned college, the ads [the ads should do that] should show black women in a company, leading in a higher level. This should be done to change the discourse that black women are still studying to find her place in the market. It necessary to show the black woman went to college, conquered her place in the market, and with a position in the market. It should show that she has a degree from the prestigious college Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV). It needs a change, you know? It is necessary to modify this discourse, to erase this impression that a black woman will open a franchise. Instead, it should show a black woman profiting from her own company [...]. To show some people who are even more independent, in other words, they making their own life decisions. People like this, that instead of showing "if you do this you can have that", showing the ones who already worked it all out. Got it? Instead of showing the possibilities, show the cases. Got it? And, if possible, show cases of black people that achieved what they wanted because what I feel when I see those ads is that the black community still need to do a lot to fight for their rights. The ideal is not to show people who are still working hard, the ideal would be showing people that already got it. That would be the ideal (TRA, Black Woman).

Therefore, this item is an alert, because it demonstrates that a progress regarding black people's image is in course in Brazil. However, the strategic meanings of this visibility probably are still facing racist demands that still symbolically restrict black people's

representation in the media. There is probably a new way to approach the use of black people's images, but it is in this media's proposition redirection that it is possible to promote debates over such limited rules.

Thus, in spite of those possibilities, it is undeniable how counterintuitive ads can contribute to black people's stories. The effects produced by the interaction with those ads can improve their self-esteem. Those perceptions are presented in the next subcategory.

4.5. Reflexivity toward Self-esteem and Hope Expectations

Reflexivity toward Self-esteem and Hope Expectations is the result of the interaction between black women and counterintuitive ads. These ads, with their qualified images, encourage Brazilian black women's positive thoughts, even considering still hidden manifestations.

The narratives in the ads would be capable of producing a mix of positive feelings in black women. That would reduce the impact of their painful experiences regarding racism and prejudice. Therefore, such narratives would end up gradually fortifying their self-esteem.

The relevance of those ads as role models for black children is also emphasized by black women who argue that such images would have a deeper impact on black children. For them, getting in touch with those narratives and appreciating the black's image in media would produce a role model for a fortified identity, as well as a stronger sense of "belonging" in society.

Actually, we are talking about self-esteem, and any human being has the necessity of being appreciated. That is no such thing as an uglier person, or a bit ugly one or the prettiest. That is diversity, different people, many of them. So, we need self-esteem when we are developing our being, and identify oneself with something. I need to feel that I belong somewhere. Where am I in this society? [...]. If I am a young woman still growing up, and see a black woman dressed as an executive, automatically, I think: "Wait a second! I wanna be like her". I will try my best, because I saw this image that if she can, why can't I? So, in a nutshell, this is a changing process where the image of black women has been developed, she has been prized in those bank's ads. They are investing and shaping new professionals in this field that have different characteristics from the stereotypes we are used to seeing (TPVS, Black Woman).

Counterintuitive ads also convey a hope perspective to black women over the "new/others" ways of representing their images in media for the promotion of a wider social awareness. When using black women's qualified and positive presence, the counterintuitive ads show that black people can also stand out in society. In this way, social perception is encouraged, this could change the traditional and negative views regarding Brazilian black people.

Black women also argue that through the interaction with counterintuitive ads there is a cognitive relation in the experiences of those ads. It is possible that such ads motivate them, for example, to fight for social mobility.

The meanings of such ads, as we can see through women's voices, communicate beyond the objectives of the market. The meanings found in the counterintuitive ads, with black women, reach out and change the meanings of their life experiences, and its effects would fortify their self-esteem.

That way, counterintuitive ads can stimulate the perception that contributes to the weakening of the daily pain of racism through visibility, identification, reference, and identity valorization. Those capacities indicated by black women demonstrate the social role that the media can deliberately promote in society, in a search to stimulate a balanced context over diversity.

5. Discussion and Final considerations

Black women express their feelings regarding such ads or any other media product that expose black people. Enabling a careful reading that direct them to search in those discourses certain gaps promoting prejudice and racism.

We can interpret this activity as a social, cultural and historical construct that those women have to deal with over their lives since childhood. Life stage when, according to França & Monteiro (2004), black children start to notice racist attitudes coming from white people. Also, it is when the individual's self starts to develop (especially the "play stage", as the symbolic interactionism suggest).

In this stage, when children are being gradually introduced into the social interactions' symbolic universe, this identification activity is relevant for them to develop their selves, mirroring in references of "significant others" (Nunes, 2005). Those references usually come from the family, school, media, and others. They pass on values to children's perceptions of social roles that show them the ways they can understand as being a part of the world. It is a delicate period for black children, because

they become aware of their racial differences. This is the moment when they become aware of the meaning of such differences and the importance it is going to have in their future social relation. They represent the prejudice source when confronted with white people and that switch to a conscious level (Barbosa, 1987 *apud* Cavalheiro, 2003: 25).

Black children are usually very limited in the activities that develop their identities, especially regarding the reference and valorization of their place in society. "To the black person, this possibility is, mostly, withheld". [...]. The normative role model which he/she faces is the fetish: the white's fetish, the whiteness" (Souza, 1984 *apud* Costa, 1984: 4).

Joel Zito Araújo emphasized that the consequences of this logic have a deep effect in the construction of black children's identities, because

the Brazilian media hardly ever offers black children a role model that builds their self-esteem. White children, especially the Aryan standard, blonde-haired person with bright eyes, are over-represented in ads, soap operas, and movies. It leads to an obvious result: while the black children are ashamed of their blackness and racial origin, because they grew up in a social and educational environment of denial. It increased their low self-esteem. The white child is pampered and believes he/she is above all. Therefore, society – with its racism – causes a distortion in black and in white children. (2007, online)¹⁰.

In the media, this dynamic expressive operation is noticed, as told by Araújo (2007), because it is usually where Brazilian children¹¹ hope to find their reference. This is where they seek to identify themselves with some role model with the same physical characteristics, therefore, it is in this quest that many black children have their first experiences with prejudice and racism.

It is in the collection of references of "significant others", like the media narratives, that black children and white children seek answers to questions that support them in the

¹⁰ Available in:

http://portalmultirio.rio.rj.gov.br/portal/riomidia/rm_entrevista_conteudo.asp?idioma=1&idMenu=4&label=&v_nome_area=Entrevistas&v_id_conteudo=68226. Access: 23. Jan. 2018.

¹¹ Mediametrie (2007) study involved nine countries, including Brazil, and pointed out that Brazilian children spend more time in front of the television. Three hours and half on average. (Acevedo et al., 2011: 133).

development process of their identity. Many times, they cannot find such support, but they can find gaps and silence.

That way, the identity and self-esteem of black people suffer a profound impact since childhood in this frustrating quest for positive references. It is noteworthy that the media is just one of the agents contributing to the oppression over the years through history and culture (Schwarcz, 2012; 1987; Guimarães, 2012; Fry, 1995-1996; 2007; Munanga, 1986). However, its strength must be considered in the Brazilian's contemporary scenario.

Thus, one can presume that it is with other social and cultural channels that the "media logic" (Hjarvard, 2012) disseminate, motivate and strengthen some traumas and mental block that black people have until adulthood.

These traumas happen through the social cultural situations that silence and misappropriate the representation of their identities through alienation, violence and racism. In Brazil, this is expressed in an almost cordial way (Turra & Venturi, 1995).

The discourse of prejudice denial goes through such cordiality, as Lilia Mortiz Schwarcz (2012: 30) argued, based on the classic study held in São Paulo, in 1988, in which 97% of the individuals interviewed stated they did not have prejudice and 98% of them said they know someone who had. Based on such data, Schwarcz say that "all Brazilians seem to feel like an 'island of racial democracy', surrounded by racism on all sides" (Schwarcz, 2007: 12).

The marks of such violence in black women's lives are expressed among responsibilities and silenced suffer. Those women are traumatized and condition themselves to be always alert, in a way imposed on their cognitive structures – and it is believed that this happens to black people in general – a stressful condition of threat (Steele & Aronson, 1995; Silva, 2007) and the anxiety of being the target of a stereotyped manifestation at any moment. This stereotype threat is reflected in a shadow that follows and torments their action and social performance.

This agonizing attitude shoes a complex social life, historical and culturally imposed on black people. This is a direct effect that gradually weakens their self-esteem. They usually feel they must conform to such situations and hopelessness over scenarios that can alter the violent structures of racism.

A painful feeling marks the Brazilian black people in this perverse experience of denial and depreciation of their identities, imposed by a racist oppressive system, strongly present in Brazilian society. Even with its cordiality, this feeling inhibits their social performance, strongly shake their self-esteem and identity reverberating in every domain of their lives.

This emotional pain (with physical consequences) is reported in the voices of black women in this investigation, when they share the experiences of their interactions with counterintuitive ads which provided qualified visibility to black women as protagonists.

This painful feeling is emotionally manifested in their throbbing pain of their wounds produced over their racist experiences and their social interactions. Many times such "wounds heal and leave a visible mark in their lives", as can be seen in is study. Even though the latency of those scars keep existing, in other words, they appear to be "closed" quite often. However, internally, they keep open and sore, renewing in a latent and painful way at every racist experience, compromising the social cultural performance and the health of black people in society.

Many black people use daily strategies to conceal the perception over the impact of violence of racism because they try face and neutralize the effects produced by the suffering of such pain, that mutilates and block the expression of their identities and the development of their self-esteem. This study reveals three strategic resignations in this sense: the daily silence of racism's experiences, conformism to face racism, and the "self-prejudice".

It is important to mention that "pain arises from the threat to the self, whatever its source". (Carvalho, 2005: 526). Therefore, the aim of such strategies is to neutralize the

manifestation of painful memories that hurt "even when it was not a physical violence". When we feel excluded or undervalued, our brain reacts as if our body was in pain" and the consequences of such rejection are the "painful feelings, sadness, indignation, the increase in the stress level, and damage in self-control" (Mente & Cérebro, 2012: 25).

The opinion of the black women interviewed about the strategies and the painful experiences of racism that marked their lives. This can maximize the possible contribution that the counterintuitive ads can promote to shake and displace the symbolic structures that frame such experiences in a cognitive way. They can also promote "new/other" perceptions about black people in our society, trying to change the traditional contents of this negative stereotypes associated.

In the perception of black women, counterintuitive ads, help to decrease latent expressions of everyday racist painful experiences because, when you disseminate "new/other" of black women's expressions, the positive (re)configuration promoted in such narratives would produce a change in the individual aspect of reflexivity in their self-esteem and collective projection. That would promote a reflection regarding the "new/others" positions that black women can undertake when they try to change the traditional stereotype contents.

The redescrptions of counterintuitive ads would also arise hope in those women and in black people in general, especially children. In a way that they would believe that consideration, respect and visibility of their identity would be promoted in "the media logic" (Hjarvard, 2012) and re-appropriated by the "mediatization logic" (Braga, 2015) to support the construction of more positive associations of black people's identity in Brazil.

In the interaction of black women with the "communicative [re]configurations" (Hepp, 2014) of counterintuitive discourses, it is possible to notice a special and significant interface in their interactional dynamic with such ads.

A cognitive integrated change (process?) motivated by counterintuitive ads that place women between the conscience of "being" and the expectation of "staying" regarding their identities is noticed. In other words, a pendulum's metaphor is claimed here to gain a clearer perception. In the situation regarding the interaction with the ads, it is understood that counterintuitive ads provoke a cognitive process in black women that stimulate their perception as a pendulum's movement. Facing the ads, they symbolically experience a dynamic between "being" (real/current position) and "staying" (ideal/future position).

The meaning of "being" expresses the black women's identity marked by their painful experiences regarding the violence of racism. Women impose limitations upon themselves 24/7 and cling to fear, stress and insecurity produced by the traumas of racism. But the meanings of "staying" express an expectation of achievements and changes. It is the satisfaction's experience (rapture) proposed by counterintuitive narratives that depict black women as protagonists in positive situations stimulating other black females to think that a change is possible.

Those readings have the support of Jurandir Freire Costa who explains that "in 'painful experiences', in contrast to the 'satisfaction's experience', the psyche movement becomes rigid. It activates defenses whose sole objective is to control, dominate, and disappear with the painful excitement" (Costa, 1984: 9). Women's interaction with such ads symbolically allows them to project themselves to those narratives in a process of communication with their "self-object" (Blumer, 1969, 1980). In other words, the ads cognitively put themselves in the place of the protagonists, enabling significant experiences by the intracomunicative process indicated in the symbolic interactionism, i.e. interacting with themselves. Self-interaction as making indication to themselves.

This "staying" would reflect a more treasured self. This symbolic exercise is like a display to the self-esteem of black women. This can be strengthened and gradually change

the paralyzing meanings that structure the current "being", having in mind the strength of such experiences of symbolic satisfaction that counterintuitive ads can offer.

The external stimulus of ad is the "staying", that directly interacts with the internal structure (emotional) unnoticeable in black women, the "being". In this collaborative dynamic of affect on the activities' interpretation, in other words, by the mediatized and vivid interactive way of proceeding, composed by the "designation and interpretation" (Blumer, 1980: 137). Black women with the reality of their daily lives can practice a possible and ideal posture and expectation by the "staying", to rebuild the "being", with the support of the counterintuitive media discourses. That way, a feeling of hope comes over rescuing themselves from the oppressive cycle of racist painful experiences.

It is in this symbolic place of interaction, that the pendulum movement of "being" and "staying" would be completed. It would be completed with the balance when black women believe it is possible to restructure and strengthen their self-esteem.

In conclusion, black women and black people worthily need to "being". Counterintuitive advertising can absolutely support this path through the discourse of "staying" that symbolically supports the violation of stereotyped traditional contents imposed on black people in this cordially racist Brazil.

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