

de B'beri, Boulou, University of Ottawa, Canada

Multicultural English-Canada and Intercultural Francophone-Québec: A Case Study on Racial Representation through TV Commercials

The objective of this presentation is to outline the 'political use' of television commercials as a "governmental practice" in Canada and Quebec that sustains the production of an intercultural (homogeneous) national identity on the one hand and a multicultural conception of cultural minorities on the other. To achieve this objective, I focus my analysis on the dual politics of representation in Québec and Canada and illustrate the ways in which some practices of racial representation that subtend the rhetoric of both multicultural and intercultural policies are worked and reworked in both English-Canada and Francophone-Québec. One of my main arguments is that even in the 21st century, there is a policing of the gap of multicultural representation between Anglophone-Canada and Francophone-Québec. If one of the primary goals of the commercial is to represent identifiable images of potential consumers, then it is interesting to note that many TV commercials showcased on Québec's TV literarily 'whiten' all possible representations of "otherness," while the reverse is true of commercials in English Canada where ethnoracial difference is (overly)emphasized. I'll conclude by arguing that any analysis of multiculturalism in Canada and interculturalism in Québec would have to take into account this dual 'level of governing mentality' which appears to police the gap of ethnoracial identity through cultural representation within the divergent linguistic frameworks of English and French Canada.