

Catalonia, the pioneer of advertising as an academic science in Spain

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Abstract

The fundamental goal of our research was to demonstrate that it was in Catalonia that advertising was first given the status of academic science in Spain in the opening decades of the 20th century, based on the knowledge and advances of the most industrialized countries, especially the USA. Our findings confirm three main lines of the proposed hypotheses, namely: a) the secondary role played by Spain in worldwide advertising theory; b) the national interest in adapting advertising studies in Spanish curricula, above all according to the contributions of Catalan theorists; and c) the leading role of the written press as a platform for the dissemination of advertising.

Key words: advertising, mass communication, education, press, psychology.

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1. Hypothesis

Advertising activities have a long history. Indeed, the use of persuasive techniques to promote and disseminate the acquisition of goods or services is as old as commerce itself. However, the genesis of modern advertising dates from the nineteenth century and was the outcome of the progress of industrialisation. The phenomenon of advertising began with few theoretical underpinnings. It essentially sought to solve companies' occasional problems and needs, while uncovering and exploiting the many possibilities provided by the mass media, which in the early decades of the twentieth century not only included the written press but also began to incorporate new media like the radio and cinema.

From the 1910s to the 1920s, the development of advertising became evident. Theoretical reflections on advertising reveal that the phenomenon had taken root and was beginning to be part of the popular imaginary. Advertising reached the 'Roaring Twenties' after this recent reflection and academic organisation.

In the United States, it was a tightly regulated academic discipline—Chicago had a prestigious advertising school—and France created a chair in advertising in the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* in 1911.

The essential objective of this research is to demonstrate that the status of advertising as an academic science was introduced into Spain via Catalonia in the early decades of the twentieth century based on knowledge and advances from the more industrialised countries, especially the United States. Likewise, this research also sets out to reveal that the main person to introduce the new advertising methods to Spain was the Catalan Pere Prat Gaballí, an exercise we have undertaken by analysing his theoretical contributions from academia and the media in an effort to determine his main influences.

The first demonstrable fact we find on the introduction of the new advertising methodologies dates from 1915, when the Official Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Barcelona sponsored the first scientific advertising class to be taught in Spain, precisely by Pere Prat Gaballí.

Continuing this methodology, it is essential to ascertain to what extent Prat Gaballí was a pioneer in the development of advertising as an academic science. In his first publication in the advertising literature, 'La publicidad de nuestro tiempo' (The Advertising of our Time), from 1915, we find a pioneering concept of advertising in Spain: the advertising engineer. He wrote, 'Especially in England and the United States, the expert is a professional working for a businessman using all the technical resources and means that he is familiar with or invents to ensure that the items he is advertising reach the broadest market possible' (Prat Gaballí, 1915, p. 4).

Based on Prat Gaballí's definition of advertising engineer, we seek to ascertain what advertising theories Prat Gaballí developed that became the most important in his teaching career.

Another annotation that Prat Gaballí wrote in 1915 describes the real situation of Spanish advertising at the time: 'In Spain there are not yet technical advertising offices. Here, advertising agencies play the exclusive role of intermediaries in the administrative order. Furthermore, no magazines on the topic are published in our country, and the commercial magazines that are

published in the largest cities pay no attention to disseminating knowledge about advertising' (Prat Gaballí, 1915, p. 11). In short, Prat Gaballí was expressing in writing that the literature on this subject was non-existent in Spain. Therefore, the handful of people interested in studying it had to draw from the literature from England, the US, Germany and France. Consequently, the handful of Spaniards trained in advertising were truly self-taught after having studied the international literature or sojourned abroad.

For this very reason, it is important to learn about the international literature that was repeatedly cited in Prat Gaballí's books on advertising. We also need more information on his stays abroad, because this combination of theory and experience that Prat Gaballí acquired was crucial to the development of his innovative advertising technique. One good example of this is the international literature cited by Prat Gaballí in the book *Una nueva técnica. La publicidad científica* (A New Technique. Scientific Advertising, 1917). The list he publishes in this book showcases Prat Gaballí's theoretical knowledge. Specifically, we would like to ascertain whether the influences were a global trend in the twentieth century or whether his referents dated back to the nineteenth century.

The debate on the nature of advertising theory and its dependence on other disciplines remains alive and produces new scientific resources today, such as this article. The goal of analysing the history of advertising in Spain from unconventional vantage points is to suggest new avenues of research to illustrate the birth and development of advertising as an academic science. Interpreting advertising through academic education and especially through its dissemination in the written press is the main purpose of our research. Without a doubt, the phenomenon of advertising encompasses many features from other disciplines, and therefore transversality largely defines its origin and development.

2. Theoretical framework

The analysis of advertising from an interdisciplinary perspective provides considerable intellectual substance. Worth noting is the majestic Claude C. Hopkins book entitled *Scientific Advertising*; published in 1923, it advocated a formal approach between advertising and the social sciences primarily through research on the market, the consumer and the efficacy of advertising, as well as the potential of these sciences to make advertising more rational and objective. Claude C. Hopkins claimed that advertising had reached a high degree of maturity and was gaining the status of a science: 'It is based on fixed principles and is reasonably exact. The causes and effects have been analysed until they are well understood. The correct method of procedure have [sic] been proved and established. We know what is most effective, and we act on basic law' (Hopkins, 2013, p. 13). The reissues of this book in recent decades—1980, 2013—clearly reveal the continued relevance of its content.

In the specific case of the Catalan Pere Prat Gaballí, the main subject of this study, his theoretical contributions are analysed primarily through his most important work, *Una nueva técnica. La publicidad científica* published in 1917, in which he acknowledged the intellectual influences of authors and works like: Herbert W. Hess, *Productive Advertising* (1915, reissued in 2013 and 2015); Sherwin Cody, *How to Deal with Human Nature in Business. A Practical Book on Doing Business by Correspondence, Advertising and Salesmanship* (1915);

Harlow Gale, *On the Psychology of Advertising* (1900); Walter Dill Scott, *The Psychology of Advertising. A Simple Exposition of the Principles of Psychology in their Relation to Successful Advertising* (1902, reissued in 2017), one of the first books to establish well-grounded connections between psychology and advertising, which claimed that the goal of modern advertising was to suggest more than to convince (Sáiz & Sáiz, 2007); E. E. Calkins and R. Hole, *Modern Advertising* (1905); Frank Alvah Parsons, *The Principles of Advertising Arrangement* (1912, reissued in 2016); S. Roland Hall, *Writing and Advertising* (1915, reissued in 2013); Octave Jacques Gérin and C. Espinadel, *La publicité suggestive: théorie et technique* (1911); and J. Arren, *Sa majesté la publicité* (1914, reissued in 2018). The recent reissues of the works that influenced Pere Prat Gaballí demonstrate that they have become classics and are part of the scholarly underpinnings of the field of advertising even today. For example, the case of the University of Minnesota professor Harlow Gale is telling, as the relevancy of his book—which is constantly cited by scholars (Eighmey & Sar, 2007)—reveals the depth of his innovation and influence as a founder of the psychology of advertising. He was the first to undertake experimental studies on the effects of advertising and established concepts and methods which are still used today.

The transversality of the science of advertising—and especially the scientific nature of the phenomenon—is indisputable in the theories of all the aforementioned authors, and the re-reading and subsequent analyses of their works have been validated and confirmed by the researchers who came after them. In the early twentieth century, the science of advertising entered Spain's classrooms and gradually became part of them with the legitimacy provided by its theoreticians, curricula and syllabi. Prat Gaballí's writings also left indications of some works on advertising that he considered indispensable. They are classics, most of which have been reissued in recent years, such as William James, *Psychology. The Briefer Course* (1892, reissued in 2003) and *Talks to Teachers on Psychology* (1899, reissued in 2013); W. Trotter, *Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War* (1916, reissued in 2005); and Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules* (1895, reissued in 2013).

Likewise, in recent years the figure of Prat Gaballí has also been studied by researchers like Barjau (1999), Sáiz and Sáiz (2007), Rom, Altarriba and Martorell (2009) and Quintas (2011), although acknowledgement of his prime role in consolidating advertising as a science and teaching subject still requires further research.

3. Methodology

The study and interpretation of the bibliographic sources was complemented with a rigorous effort to locate and analyse journalistic sources with the goal of determining the Spanish and Catalan press's takes on advertising in the early decades of the twentieth century. Thus, we set out to identify journalistic articles which focus on and analyse the phenomenon of advertising.

The primary research goal was to interpret the phenomenon of advertising essentially in light of the opinions on the topic reflected on the pages of the contemporary press. The genesis and development of modern advertising occurred in industrialised Europe and the United States, but the analysis is

essentially local, Spanish and chiefly Catalan, in an effort to consider the (mainly) English and North American influence on Spanish advertising.

Therefore, one methodological resource often used in the study presented here was journalistic research. Alongside what are considered the mass media in Spain, like Barcelona's *La Vanguardia* and Madrid's *ABC* newspapers, we also analysed the viewpoints in the local press in Girona, Tarragona, Palma de Mallorca, Còrdova, Figueres, Igualada, Olot and Puigcerdà. The views of the correspondents in the modern cities of New York and Paris were also included.

We sought to group together and interrelate journalistic viewpoints, which are ultimately largely the viewpoints of citizens, with the more academic story provided by the theoreticians of advertising from that period.

4. Document sources and resources

Our research methodology is clearly qualitative—based on the content analysis of 38 journalistic pieces—although it clearly benefitted from the digital immersion of journalistic sources. The new technologies have done much to facilitate the historian's work (Magallón, 2017) because millions of pages that had been restricted to in-person access in the reference rooms of archives and libraries are now available online. Therefore, this is a significant advance from the standpoint of accessibility to culture and knowledge.

The possibilities afforded by digital technology are extraordinary and have transformed the field of research, especially if it is available via a word-search mechanism (the priority keywords in the study were the following: 'advertising', 'science of advertising', 'communication', 'psychology', 'advertising agencies', 'teaching' and 'education', as well as the names of the theoreticians of advertising). The timeframe was from 1900 to 1936, and the preferred geographic scope of the newspaper titles were Catalonia, along with the rest of Spain to a lesser extent.

The research was conducted by consulting the following online journalistic libraries: Historical Press Virtual Library (BVPH) (<https://prensahistorica.mcu.es/es/inicio/inicio.do>), Digital newspaper library/BNE (<http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/HemerotecaDigital/>), Municipal Archive of Girona (<https://www.girona.cat/sgdap/cat/premsa.php>), Network of County Archives of Catalonia (XAC). Press (<http://xac.gencat.cat/ca/inici>) and ARCA: Archive of Old Catalan Magazines (<https://arca.bnc.cat/arcabibpro/ca/inicio/inicio.do>).

Likewise, to complement the document sources and resources, the following Prat Gaballí works were analysed: *La publicidad de nuestro tiempo* (1915), *Una nueva técnica. La publicidad científica* (1917), *La publicidad racional* (Rational Advertising, 1934), *El poder de la publicidad* (The Power of Advertising, 1939) and *Publicidad combativa* (Combative Advertising, 1953). Another source directly related to this author is the technical magazine put out by Prat Gaballí's Fama advertising agency (1919-1921).

Furthermore, to corroborate our theories, we got in touch with his social, family, scholarly, professional and institutional milieux in order to gain or check all the relevant information on Prat Gaballí's works. In this quest for Prat

Gaballí's more personal documentation, we conducted several searches in the cities of Pineda de Mar, New York and Barcelona.

First, we contacted Francesc Roldán from the Municipal Archive of Pineda de Mar to verify Prat Gaballí's birth; interestingly, this same archive contains documentation of the birth of Prat Gaballí's wife, Ernestina Ballester. The author was listed as a resident of this town, where he spent his summers and later lived after he was married. However, the documents ultimately show that he was born in Barcelona in 1885.

Next, we researched whether Prat Gaballí had been in New York in 1911. To do so, we contacted the researcher Jordana Mendelson (New York University) to try to verify his journey. One possible reason for the journey may be that he went to study at the Alexander Hamilton Institute (1909-1980), a modern business institute. Therefore, we contacted the Irma & Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy and the Science Industry and Business Library (SIBL) – The New York Public Library, to get more information on that modern business institute. In this search, we found the methodological book *Forging Ahead in Business* (1921) published by the Alexander Hamilton Institute. We also checked with Mireia Bertrana (Archive of the Maritime Museum of Barcelona) to search the ship departure records from the Port of Barcelona to New York. Lastly, through digital sources, we confirmed that Prat Gaballí travelled to New York in 1946 via the Ellis Island Foundation (<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org>) and Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com>).

Another research source was the Advertising Documentation Centre in Palma de Mallorca to find out what documents Prat Gaballí possessed (documentation provided by the son of the publicist Jordi Garriga) in order to get more information on his journeys, lectures and conferences. We also contacted the publicist Robert Rodergas, who advised us to reach out to Prat Gaballí's grandson, the CEO of the Editorial Hispano Europea publishing house. In order to get more information on Prat Gaballí's unpublished personal collection, we got in touch with the Professional Journalism and Public Relations Association of Catalonia, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and the collector Marc Martí, who had organised an event in memory of Prat Gaballí in 2016.

Likewise, we researched Prat Gaballí's publications containing poetry and literature, the artistic passions of his youth. By doing so, we ascertained that there are two documents at the Ateneu Barcelonès on the poet and publicist Prat Gaballí published by Dr Maria Àngela Cerdà in 1985 and 1986. The first is a book on Prat Gaballí and his poetic youth (Cerdà, 1986), and the second is a sound recording of the event celebrating the centennial of his death (Garriga, 1985), at which Dr Cerdà spoke as the living witness of the author's poetry. Through Dr Juan Miguel Zarandona (University of Valladolid), we got in touch with Dr Cerdà, a philologist who lives in the city of Barcelona. Finally, we secured an interview with Dr Cerdà, in which she shared information on her personal notes from when she was writing the book on Prat Gaballí (1986).

In particular, she theorised on the *Poemes de la terra i del mar* (Poems of the Land and Sea, 1912) published by Prat Gaballí, and her notes proved his journey to New York in 1911. Finally, we found out that this author had worked with Jordi Prat Ballester, Prat Gaballí's son, at Barcelona's Foment del Treball office.

We then contacted the director of documentation at Barcelona's Foment del Treball (Job Promotion) office, Carlos García, and found that Prat Gaballí had contributed to the journal *Éxito: Revista Técnica de Negocio* (1925-1935), among other publications. Furthermore, we checked newsletter no. 2 published by the Publi-Club¹, which describes the working sessions of the First National Advertising Conference held in Barcelona in 1929. We found, for example, Prat Gaballí's talk on advertising and the market: 'It is urgent for the current generation of businessmen to be well-versed in modern distribution methods, and especially in the economic system of the large brands launched and sustained by advertising'.

In this talk, Prat Gaballí outlined the need for education on market research because in the more developed countries, like the United States and Germany, modern techniques were being applied like marketing and the analysis of commercial statistics, fundamental concepts in the modern economy.

5. Theoretical reflections and scientific vindication of advertising

Catalonia's dynamic economy, with its entrepreneurial bourgeoisie who forged solid commercial ties with the Americas throughout the nineteenth century, was perfectly poised to import theoretical influences from abroad. In Barcelona in 1926, L. Chambonnaud and Alfonso Carnicero published a book which emphasised the theoretical reflection on advertising at a time when this discipline was on the upswing and gaining in prominence. The authors associated concepts from the field of psychology with the world of advertising, and they vindicated the imagination as an optimal resource for activating the consumer's senses: 'Let's imagine an advertisement showing a beautiful automobile stopped at the door of a wonderful hotel. An elegant lady steps out of the car and gets ready to enter the hotel. In our imaginations, we see the luxury of this sumptuous hotel and mentally associate it with the comforts and ease that come with owning the car' (Chambonnaud & Carnicero, 1926, p. 11).

In this sense, images contain profound psychological value, and this insight was reinforced over the years, even though today no author has pinpointed it so early on: 'The selling points used in advertising in the early twentieth century, where the image was merely an illustration of what the word said, started to make way for advertising messages where the image supported all the rhetorical argumentation, this time appealing to audiences' feelings and emotions, giving rise to a kind of "visual catechism"' (Correa, 1999).

The theoretical reflections put into practice, sometimes still under the effects of intuition, led to highly successful advertising creations which often shifted between symbolism and psychology.

Outside of Spain, advertising was considered a science. In a report published in the newspaper ABC on 19 April 1907, its Paris correspondent F. Mora was surprised that one of his interviewees defined himself as an 'ad writer' and told him that: 'For us, advertising is a true science with its own established

¹ For more information on the newsletter published by the Publi-Club describing the working sessions of the First National Advertising Conference, see: 'Congreso Nacional de Publicidad. Organizado por el Publi-Club - Asociación de Estudios de Publicidad y organización', Boletín. O. P. V. S. (Barcelona) (December 1922), year ii, 4, p. 14.

laws and principles based on extensive experience. In fact, many serious psychologists and quite a few sage philosophers at universities have deigned to codify it, and there are even journals, like *Publicity*, which solely discuss these matters' (Mora, 1907, p. 3).

Professionalisation naturally led to an investment in advertising that was not made in Spain as it was in countries like England; according to the 16 March 1907 issue of the newspaper from Olot, *El Deber*, British industrialists and merchants allocated 25% of their profits to advertising their products in newspapers, convinced of the efficacy of this strategy.

Naturally, regarding advertising as a science meant that it was part of the educational system in the more developed countries. In the United States, it was a fully regulated academic discipline, and as mentioned above, countries like France created the Chair of Advertising at the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales* in 1911 directed by E. Arnaud de Masquard, who said: 'I am convinced that advertising is a social science. It puts all the resources of human intelligence into play: it makes sense of observation and criticism; it forces us to study our fellow human beings' tastes, wishes, needs; it obliges us to find all the means to satisfy them, retain them, suggest in them the desire to buy' (Arnaud de Masquard, 1911, p. 10).

The French scholar pointed out that in the US and England, companies had an Advertising Service which was hierarchically just below the owner in the company's organisation. He called on French companies to rank it equally. The situation of Spanish advertising was far from these countries, and even from France, which was behind according to Arnaud de Masquard's opinions, although it was nonetheless a referent for Spain.

In the United States, the first academic course on advertising was taught by Walter Dill Scott at Northwestern University in Illinois in 1904, while in Europe classes on advertising were advocated by the pioneer Luis Vergne in 1907 at a lecture delivered at the *Association des Hautes Études Commerciales* in Paris, in which he upheld the need for formal academic programmes on advertising techniques (Méndiz, 2000).

6. Pere Prat Gaballí, a pioneer of modern advertising in Spain

The economic and social context of cosmopolitan Catalonia—along with some degree of chance—can explain the appearance of a figure like Pere Prat Gaballí (Barcelona, 1885-1962), who was capable of transforming the intuitive practice of advertising into a scientific discipline. In 1910, he left poetry behind when he discovered his vocation in advertising with the magazine *System* in New York, and he set out to study advertising techniques. Prat Gaballí praised the value of this US magazine: 'It was a great magazine dedicated to studying and propagating new methods of commercial organisation, encompassing the art of selling and the technique of advertising. It was a magazine written in a vivid, dynamic, incisive language that was totally new to me' (Prat Gaballí, 1959, p. XII).

Thus, his enthusiasm for advertising theories was furthered with new influences from the US through the magazines *Printer's Ink*, the oldest advertising magazine in the US which advocated a new way of working, grounded more on analysis than the professional's intuition; *Advertising World*; and the

first theoretical treatises by Daniel Starch and Walter Dill Scott. The Americanisation of Prat Gaballí's thinking on advertising must have been further magnified by his training at the Hamilton Institute in New York, although there are reasonable doubts whether Prat Gaballí actually spent time at this US institute,² as there is no written proof to confirm it. What is indisputable, however, is that Prat Gaballí set out to construct a new kind of advertising based not on improvisation but on analysing the advertising experiences of other more developed countries and comparing them with his own experience as a working professional (Prat Gaballí, 1934).

Pere Prat Gaballí began to build his own advertising theories. He believed that advertising should be able to not only capture consumers' attention but also clearly express the usefulness of the good or service and create the need for and interest in it. The next step consisted in acting on consumers' sensibilities and stimulating their desire to possess the good or service. This would overcome any possible resistance, and consumers would purchase it on their own will. Prat Gaballí graphically depicted this process with a scale where the actor starts indifferent to and resisting the product. The ultimate goal of advertising was naturally to effect the purchase through different levels: attention/memory, interest, desire and will. To prompt the shift from indifference to purchase, advertising had to use the weapons of psychotechnics. Prat Gaballí's theories, which were innovative for Spain, resemble the advertising system proposed by Elmo Lewis in 1898, although Prat Gaballí never cited that author.

Prat Gaballí's theoretical training in advertising was intense, and in the early 1910s he sought to carve a niche for himself and disseminate his American influences. In 1915 he started holding advertising classes at the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, where he introduced the rational new advertising methods grounded on psychological criteria. The class syllabus included such a wide range of topics as the psychological principles that explained individuals' reactions to outside stimuli; the objective criteria of the perception of shapes, colours and texts; and memory and capturing people's interest. That is, the contents were based upon innovation and modernity. He thus embarked on a productive combination of teaching and advertising which trained extraordinarily competent advertising professionals.

Prat Gaballí's flood of writings started in 1915 with the publication of *La publicidad de nuestro tiempo* (The Advertising of Our Time), and his magnum opus came out two years later: *Una nueva técnica: la publicidad científica*. In this book, he reported on his international influences and his proposals to expand the scientific knowledge of advertising, and he outlined how advertising had evolved from the mid-nineteenth century until then. He defined it as follows: in 1850, advertising 'raised awareness of products in order to sell them according to the public's needs'; in 1895 it 'raised awareness of products among the greatest number of individuals possible, expressing their particular advantages in an attention-grabbing way in order to create and meet needs to encourage

² Some authors claim that Prat Gaballí was in New York, and after he married Ernestina Ballester he travelled to New York in 1911 to further his commercial studies at the Hamilton Institute. They say that his journey must have been revelatory to the young poet, as he discovered the world of ad writing through the professional magazines System and Printer's Ink. More information can be found in the following article: Barjau, S. (2002). 'Els inicis del pensament publicitari: Pere Prat Gaballí, Rafael Bori i el Publi-Club: la teoria i la pràctica de la publicitat racional a Catalunya entre 1915 i 1939', in *Publifilia*, 6, pp. 49-64.

purchases'; and in 1917 he offers a future vision, which would take almost four decades to be widely implemented in Spain: advertising 'teaches you to ascertain the spirit of the public and apply this knowledge imaginatively and ingeniously to tell the largest number of individuals possible about the usefulness or advantages of an item so that it effects action; that is, it suggests desires and determines acts of will' (Prat Gaballí, 1917, p. 24).

Pere Prat Gaballí's approaches confirm the cross-disciplinary nature of the fields that converge in advertising. Thus, in addition to psychology and sociology, he also vehemently defended the need to be familiar with economics, he situated advertising between production and consumption and he outlined its relationship with the laws of distribution. Prat Gaballí largely grounded his theories on the book by Pierre Clerget, *Manuel d'économie commerciale*, published in Paris in 1909 by Librairie Armand Colin.

That same year, 1917, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce published *Lecciones de publicidad explicadas en las clases de Enseñanza Mercantil, impartidas per Prat Gaballí* (Lessons on Advertising Explained in the Mercantile Education Classes Taught by Prat Gaballí). As Joaquín Lorente explains, this book 'came out eight years [actually six] ahead of what many people erroneously believe to be the first book in the world on the subject: the great classic *Scientific Advertising* by the US author Claude C. Hopkins, Prat Gaballí's most important teacher, who believed that all well-crafted advertisements had to contain a complete story' (Lorente, 2006m p. 25). Prat Gaballí's large volume of work is sufficient to determine that the fundamental principles of a new theory of advertising had taken root in Catalonia, and it soon spread around Spain and benefitted from specialised magazines.

In 1919, Prat Gaballí founded the Fama advertising agency in Barcelona; a few years earlier, Pablo León Domínguez had founded the Helios agency in Madrid. Both agencies reached partnership agreements with the Swiss international advertising agency Publicitas, which had set up shop in Spain in 1922 (Checa, 2007, p. 122). Publicitas inundated the Spanish and Catalan press with its own advertisements featuring such provocative slogans as 'Shrewd propaganda always leads to success. You don't have to spend more to boost sales. You have to spend wisely. Don't forget that you can get different results with the same amount of money depending on how you spend it. Huge amounts are wasted on advertising! There's no need to get distracted on advertising problems as long as you have someone with know-how thinking about and working on it' (*La Esfera*, 9 February 1924). Or: 'Advertising is the key to success. If you use it methodically and consistently, you'll get amazing results. Advertising is the only sure way to counter economic crises, increase sales and build the prestige of a company on a solid foundation' (*La Vanguardia*, 12 April 1924). And finally: 'Thinking is winning: An idea? An idea is the bolt that doubles a machine's output, the moral principle that opens new horizons... An idea is an advertising campaign that creates the demand for the item, a poster that captures crowds' attention. The branding that makes a product popular...' (*La Galeria*, 20 August 1930).

These adverts explained that Publicitas' advertising services could not be hired through the technical departments of agencies like Helios in Madrid and Fama in Barcelona. Instead of company advertisements, sometimes the press itself published reports on the Publicitas agency and its services, such as when *La Esfera* published an article—which today we could consider an infomercial—

entitled 'Una visita a Publicitas' (A Visit to Publicitas), in which it described the agency's characteristics, properties and services: 'Overwhelmed with multiple concerns, a businessman does not always have the time to conduct an in-depth study of how to advertise his products or brands. He relies on intuition, and he often gives in to momentary pressures. If he has a trained ally to think and work for him, he doesn't need to distract himself with advertising problems. The expert will ensure that he gets the most profit from the least cost; he will choose the best media and materials for every case; write up the adverts; draw and design their slogans with provocative ideas; and produce the circulars, prospectuses and catalogues and everything else related to propaganda' (*La Esfera*, X, 511, 20 October 1923, p. 16).

However, the meticulous planning of advertising strategies in the US sometimes contrasted with the more unconscious and disorganised nature of European advertising, which was dominated by the avant-gardes, who clearly focused on the artistic value of the advertisements.

With all this theoretical and practical knowledge under his belt, in 1928 Prat Gaballí moved to Madrid to direct the Veritas advertising agency owned by the Gal chain of perfumeries, regarded as one of the first Spanish companies to grasp the importance of advertising.

7. Barcelona, Spain's capital of advertising

In the first third of the twentieth century, the conditions were in place for Spain to modernise: the population was growing, the manufacturing structures were modernising and society was undergoing profound changes (Arroyo, 2016), even though the political context brought about by the instatement of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in 1923 can be considered unfavourable, as it had many negative effects in the field of communication (Costa, 2013).

In any event, in the 1920s, Catalan advertising professionals organised themselves into a guild. Barcelona was the test lab of advertising in Spain. In 1921, the *Associació de Professionals de Publicitat* (Association of Advertising Professionals) was founded in this city, mostly made up of Prat Gaballí's former disciples. They met at the Hotel Europa on Barcelona's Rambla in 1926 to debate turning it into the *Publi-Club, Associació d'Estudis de Publicitat i Organització* (Association of Advertising and Organisation Studies), a goal that materialised one year later. It joined the International Advertising Association of New York, the *Union Continentale de la Publicité* of Paris and International Mail Advertising of Chicago. The *Publi-Club* hosted many activities and showcased the country's drive to modernise by incorporating innovative advertising techniques and staying in constant contact with similar entities in Europe and the US. The experts who belonged to the *Public-Club* were familiar with the field of creative advertising in the English-speaking world, and their projects were warmly received abroad. They participated in conferences and exhibitions in Barcelona, Chicago and Brussels, and they taught classes and published the newsletter *Opus*.

As part of the 1929 Barcelona International Expo, *Publi-Club* organised the First National Advertising Congress in Barcelona, where its vice-president, Rafael Bori Llobet, asserted the importance of advertising in society, along with the fact that unlike Spain, countries like the US, England and Germany, with governments who were aware of the value and benefits of advertising, had official

chairs at the universities and business schools. He ended by proclaiming Barcelona the birthplace and hub of advertising in Spain: 'He stated that the Congress was held in Barcelona for two reasons: first, because it is the cradle of advertising in Spain, and secondly because of the Expo' (*La Vanguardia*, 31 August 1929). Rafael Bori and José Gardó reflected and theorised on advertising, and in 1927 they published a textbook in which they described the six qualities that they believed advertising had: it sparks attention, it retains attention, it stimulates interest, it inspires sympathy, it creates desire and it activates the will. Likewise, they assigned advertising educational purposes: 'It should be born in mind that an advert should not just draw the public's attention, but by fulfilling its advertising purpose, it also performs the delicate task of educating the masses; while it does predispose them to choose what we are advertising, it also teaches them things that otherwise they might not have learned' (Bori & Gardó, 1928, p. 33).

Advertising gradually gained social standing, to such an extent that the media pontificated about it and trumpeted its importance, which they sometimes considered even higher than the quality of the product itself, as in *La Veu de Tarragona*, which actually stated in its 24 June 1922 edition that 'the advertisement accredits products much more than their own quality does'.

In the 1920s, Catalonia's industrial and commercial expansion intensified as a result of Spain's neutrality in World War I, which led the first American advertising agencies to set up shop there. Along with these agencies, such advanced magazines as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Ladies Home Journal* also came to Spain. Consumption was awakened, and the brands ran with it; those without a graphic image wanted to create one. In 1926, the US agency J. Walter Thompson came to Spain, and with it a new way of doing advertising upheld on the strategy of presenting the advert in a well-reasoned, explanatory way; this was novel in a country where the norm was a style based on illustrated poster advertisements which used images that would draw attention and texts that were as brief as possible. This new orientation of advertising technique had begun to be proclaimed on the pages of newspapers some time earlier: 'Advertisements are no longer a means to draw attention but are an entire sales system, with its own reasoning and stages, whereby merchants not only find new markets for their products but also encourage consumption, create new customers and enlighten consumers; in short: they shape the credibility of their company to their whim and solve all product distribution difficulties' (Gardó, 1928).

Naturally, American society was better poised to consume adverts with long, well-reasoned texts that argued for the product because it was much more literate than Spanish society. In Spain as a whole, Catalonia was clearly the main engine driving advertising. If we look at the attendees of the First National Advertising Conference held in Barcelona in 1929, we can see that 94 out of the 123 participants were Catalan. On 19 March of that same year, the journalist Santiago Vinardell Palau published the article 'La publicidad' (Advertising) in *La Vanguardia*, in which he reported on the extreme backwardness of Spanish advertising compared to more developed countries.

8. Conclusions: Certainties and some questions

The research confirms the three essential strands of our hypotheses: a) Spain played a secondary role in the world of advertising theory; b) there was a national interest in adopting advertising in Spanish curricula, primarily through the contributions of Catalan theoreticians; and c) the press was the top platform for disseminating advertising, which was proven to be an essential research instrument as both an object and subject of research processes.

On the threshold of the Second Republic, the Spanish press interpreted the new advertising phenomenon: 'Advertisements are no longer a means to draw attention but are an entire sales system, with its own reasoning and stages, whereby merchants not only find new markets for their products but also encourage consumption, create new customers and enlighten consumers' (Sedó, 1930). This article reports on the profound transformation that advertising experienced thanks to American input, specifically from the US magazine *Printer's Ink*, which announced in 1895, almost anachronistically, that psychology's next application would be in advertising.

Advertising entered Spanish academic circles discreetly yet significantly. In 1934 one local newspaper, *La Voz de Córdoba*, published a report on the rise of advertising in society, although if we believe its business reporter, Gregorio Martínez (the professional name with which he signed the article is very important), a lot of pedagogy was still needed; even though he acknowledged that newspapers in Spain were showing more and more advertising, some businessmen were still reluctant to use it through either 'apathy', 'poorly understood economics' or because they thought 'it would have little influence on the course of their business'. However, the writer did say that adverts had to be created with professional and technical criteria in order to be optimally profitable (Martínez, 1934). This opinion was shared by many other newspapers, which had fully internalised the phenomenon of new, modern advertising.

Our research was essentially conducted by interpreting the scientific evolution of advertising in journalistic sources. Likewise, we also set out to conjoin two communicative worlds which are clearly inseparable: the press and advertising. In the early decades of the twentieth century, the business press, which was modern and had an industrial or business-oriented mission, had gained sway over the ideological press. It was a time of change and transformation in Spanish society as a whole, when the society of mass communication was undergoing an apparently irreversible development. The purpose of newspapers from the professional standpoint was to inform, and from the business standpoint to do business.

The time had come when newspapers' main source of income, beyond subscriptions or newsstand sales, was advertising. The Catalan press reported on the debate that sprang from the International Advertisers Assembly held in Chicago in 1930 to discuss the most appropriate, effective advertising medium. The conclusions revealed that the written press was more effective, given that 85% of budgets earmarked for advertising in US companies was invested in the written press, as reported in the *Chicago Tribune (La Galeria, 20 August 1930)*. Several years earlier, the 18 February 1911 editorial of the weekly *Sometén d'Igualada* reported that if you looked at newspapers published in the US, England or France, it was clear that their main source of income was advertising, which enabled them to hire correspondents and have large newsrooms.

However, Catalonia's progress could be shown by the advent of advertising associations in Barcelona. The creation of this ecosystem, comprised of theoreticians, technicians and professionals from the advertising sector, was crucial in making Barcelona the hub of Catalan innovation in modern advertising. Furthermore, in his article 'Los albores de una técnica: la publicidad en Cataluña' (The Dawn of a Technique: Advertising in Catalonia, *Mundo Gráfico*, 1104, 28 December 1932), Prat Gaballí stated that in 1912 advertising technique had been unknown and ignored in Latin countries. The magazine *Comercio* (1912-1914) had existed in Barcelona, featuring concepts like advertising and sales based on the foundations of an advertising technique which had been founded in the US and was being introduced to Europe through England, Germany and France. Shortly thereafter, a technical advertising agency opened in Barcelona, yet this initiative was premature, because company executives were not yet ready to enlist services whose usefulness they were unaware of and were hard to demonstrate.

The advent of advertising truly took place in the capital of Catalonia in 1915, in the midst of the Great War, when the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce and Navigation incorporated a course on advertising technique into its advanced studies programmes. The same institution published and distributed the first Spanish-language book on advertising, which could be interpreted as revolutionary, as it signalled a time when the sales techniques used in Spain were being updated and modernised. The dawn of advertising technique stood out in Spain through the work of the Catalan school. The first technical agencies were created and the majority of treatises on advertising were published in Barcelona, such as magazines like *Fama* and *Éxito*, which provided the bulk of materials on experimental psychology applied to advertising and the technique of campaign planning and management.

The first Spanish advertising association was also created in Barcelona. In 1926, 27 advertising professionals met at the Hotel Europa on Barcelona's Rambla in 1926 to debate its transformation into the Publi-Club, Associació d'Estudis de Publicitat i Organització. It joined the International Advertising Association of New York, the Union Continentale de la Publicité of Paris and International Mail Advertising of Chicago. Another noteworthy event was Barcelona's Universal Exposition, which was held from 20 May 1929 to 15 January 1930. The First National Advertising Congress in Barcelona was held on 31 August 1929 as part of its programme of events, with talks by Prat Gaballí, Rafael Roldós, José Gardó and Rafael Bori. Modern advertising emerged in Barcelona within this context. All these events took place within Catalonia and its epicentre: Barcelona, the capital.

Furthermore, in 1919 Prat Gaballí founded the agency Fama in Barcelona, an advertising agency which sought to have all the technical departments needed to provide the highest technical quality expected of the modern advertising profession. As Natalia Rodríguez and Francisco Verdera say, 'If he decided to open a business that was risky at the time it was because he must have glimpsed a potential market' (Montero, Rodríguez & Verdera, 2010).

The Fama agency was the first technical agency in Spain; afterwards, its model was replicated all over the country. Its organisation was reminiscent of the American agencies of the time. Agencies no longer just purchased advertisement spaces but also offered customers a full panoply of services. The structure of the Fama agency was comprised of innovative departments such as Market Analysis,

Statistics and Research, Ad Writing, Art Studio, Window Dressing and significant managerial posts: technical director, creative, media expert and CEO.

The Fama agency sought to promote the latest events or developments in scientific, rational advertising, which it also applied internally. Based on these communicative actions, it published a business magazine (Reina, 2015) with the same title as the agency, *Fama*. This model had already been tested in more developed countries like England and the United States. It was a small magazine published periodically which the agency sent to its leading or potential customers, or to any subscriber who requested it in advance. Its content was comprised of professional articles and samples of advertisements that the agency had created.

To conclude, another interesting point is theorising on whether Prat Gaballí actually went to New York in 1911 to receive training. The point of departure is the book *Publicidad combativa* (1959), when the author himself refers explicitly to his particular ‘literary hara-kiri’, a professional transition stage in which he buried his literary passions to devote himself exclusively to advertising. In consequence, two Prat Gaballí quotes on the Alexander Hamilton Institute were compared to gain more clarity on his possible stay in New York.

The first is the quote found at the beginning of the prologue to the book *Mi vida en publicidad* (My Life in Advertising, 1945): ‘[...] the lessons I learned through the excellent texts and admirable “lectures” at the Alexander Hamilton Institute’ (Hopkins, 1945, p. 16). The second is the quotation in the book *Publicidad combativa* (1959) about the ‘[...] admirable collection at the Hamilton Institute’ (Prat Gaballí, 1959, p. XII). We sense that if this stay abroad is confirmed, it may be relevant in the study of the figure of Prat Gaballí. Our theories are that knowledge of the sciences of experimental psychology and economics, along with the construction of the early discourse on contemporary consumption, may have been crucial to Prat Gaballí’s learning.

However, a more divergent line of inquiry that got underway in 1986 with aim of capturing Prat Gaballí the literary artist or poet is the publication ‘Pere Prat Gaballí i el càntic de juvenesa: centenari del seu naixement, 1885-1962’ (Pere Prat Gaballí and the Canticle of Youth: Centennial of his Birth, 1885-1962). This study explains how as a young poet, Prat Gaballí studied at the Ateneu Barcelonès and contributed to the magazine *Auba*, along with his friends Alfons Maseras and Ramon Vinyes. The philologist Maria Àngela Surroca mentions ‘[...] 1962, the same year his last book, *Moments. Poesies* (Moments. Poetry) was published, a compilation of a series of unpublished verses he had written at different life events; he never stopped being a “poet” at any time after having intoned his exquisite song’ (Cerdà, 1986, p. 309).

In short, a documentary search of his journey to New York in 1991 could be conducted through the interpretation of a poem contained in the book *Moments. Poesies*. Below is an excerpt so that each person can reach their own interpretation of whether it is part of the book *Poemes de la terra i el mar* published in 1912:

New York:
 Giant jungle of carved stone,
 you fill with stars that cascade down
 and know how to rein in a flood
 (Prat Gaballí, 1962, p. 73)³

In the ‘Mar enllà’ (Overseas) section her book on Prat Gaballí, the author also shows us ‘where, on his way to America, he went from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, the passion of the “romeu-naut” swelled with the immensity of the sea’ (Cerdà, 1986, p. 309). This reflection stems from a conceptual interpretation of his stay in New York in 1911.

Finally, Prat Gaballí laid the groundwork of his advertising theory in the magazine in *Printer’s Ink* in 1895: ‘when our cultural level is higher, the ad writer and the professor will likely study psychology’ (Prat Gaballí, 1959, p. 15).⁴ Later on, modern advertising grounded on psychology was established in 1908 with the Walter Dill Scott classic *The Psychology of Advertising*, which is usually considered the book that founded this genre.

In summary, all the events in Catalonia, and specifically in Barcelona, outlined above reveal the creative and avant-garde tradition of advertising in Catalonia. These early figures in advertising are the remembrance of the birth of a new sales model, modern advertising, implemented throughout all of Spain. Yet at a time of wars (World War I and the Spanish Civil War), when rationing and autarchy coexisted, these Catalan theoreticians of advertising produced more than they gained. They wasted their talent and foresight. They studied, translated and wrote books. They promoted legal regulations, audience metrics and the creation of advertising schools, at that time in university faculties. It was difficult for them to explain the nature of their profession to their fellow citizens and the people around them, yet it was even more difficult for them to get people to understand that the key to success in communication lay in the truth and honesty of advertising. As Prat Gaballí said, ‘[...] to earn respect in a profession, you can’t enter it impatiently and without a fierce determination to overcome obstacles’ (Prat Gaballí, 1959, p. XV).

³ The article cited by Prat Gaballí which prophesied the future of advertising in the book *Publicidad combativa* (1959) was by Oscar Herzberg and it was entitled ‘Human nature as a factor in advertising’; it was published in *Printer’s Ink*, the magazine put out by the company Lord & Tomas, in 1895. Prat Gaballí described the following: ‘The topic of human nature as a factor in advertising is almost as vast as human nature as a factor of life. In an article like this one, we can only point to its most salient feature. The fact is that the advertiser who speculates on “the noblest study of humanity” will have the best prospects of achieving good results. When our cultural level is higher, the ad writer and the professor will likely study psychology, because no matter how different their occupations look at first glance, the ad writer and the instructor share an overarching goal: to influence the human mind. The instructor has a scientific underpinning for their work, yet at times the ad writer has to be a psychologist, too. Human nature is a huge factor in the success of advertising, and whoever composes adverts without referring to it may well discover what has gone wrong by not bearing it in mind’ (Prat Gaballí, 1959, p. 15).

Notes

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