



# Visual Data Analysis – New Quality in the Interpretation of Advertisements. The Proposal of the Tool for Commercials Analysis

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## Abstract

The issue that sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists are still facing is developing new and effective methods of qualitative research into advertising – one of the most important elements of modern word of broadly defined consumption.

This text presents not only a detailed description of visual analysis method in the qualitative research but also a proposal of an authorial and universal tool for advertising messages analysis while providing empirical examples of its application.

## Keywords:

visual analysis, qualitative methods, advertising, advertising research.

## Introduction

The article is based on the own research experiences which influenced to a large extent creation of the authorial research instrument. The aim of the text is to demonstrate usefulness of visual analysis in qualitative research with paying great attention to the utilization of methodology of the social research for the analysis of advertising images. The article emphasizes the tool which is used for visual analysis of advertising messages. Application of the tool was demonstrated on the example of two commercials which were subjected to analysis in the research conducted in 2013 and 2015.

## Visual Culture in the Social Reality

“Modern life takes place on screen” – Nicholas Mirzeoeff (2012, s. 158) begins his dissertation on visual culture by this conceptualization. He justifies this bold thesis by technological revolution due to which people tend to use various devices more eagerly therefore, concentrating social life on visual media such as Internet and television (Mirzeoeff, 2012, s. 158). As a result of ensuing transitions modern world can be observed as being riddled with “images and visual impressions” (Sztompka, 2012, s. 12). The change had a great impact especially on the visual culture. Ubiquitous and pervading social structures postmodernity influences the need to become acquainted with visualizations which are present all around us in a wider sociological perspective. The area of evolution involves “creation, diffusion and perception of image as well as observation of other people or their civilizational environment” (Sztompka, 2012, s. 12). Currently, owing to modern technology, widespread access to the Internet and media, elite circle no longer exists. However, it used to be responsible for paintings diffusion only as art presented in museums or on exhibitions. Due to popularization of gadgets

such as mobile phones, tablets, PCs or video cameras, images that are spread around by people gained a completely different meaning. They form some sort of personalized art seen through their eyes. The interpretation of Keith Moxey – an American cultural expert concerning comprehension of the modern art only confirms its inclusivism: “Works of art, which status has traditionally been guaranteed by notions of aesthetic value, are not the only kind of visual objects whose presence requires recognition.” (Moxey, 2008, s. 136).

The notion of visual culture belongs in the four categories – iconosphere, social sphere, regimens of imagery and visual regimens

1. Iconosphere – images which can be observed in one’s environment “ranging from pieces of art to billboard advertisements on the streets”.
2. Social sphere – space of social life “how people, things and objects look which is a content of visual impression and can later become an intentional image.
3. Regimens of imagery – “rules, models and styles of producing images, image creation or design of manufactured objects”.
4. Visual regimens – rules allowing for or prohibiting observation of given individuals, “preserving images”, for example through photography. (Sztompka, 2012, s. 13)

Saturating the world with visuality makes it possible for individuals to live in culture “in which technological progress enables production and distribution of images in a range that used to be unimaginable” (Jay, 2002, s. 88 as cited in Sztompka, 2012, s. 14). Apart from innovative technologies which enriched the structures of the visual culture, attention should be also paid to the economic logic having a great impact on construction of given message. Capitalism which promotes consumerist attitudes causes that “appearance, form, packaging and image are major marketing

strategies of products as well as people and have become crucial markers of social status and success” (Debord, 1994 as cited in Sztompka, 2012, s. 14). Despite ubiquitous communication noises, multitude innovative forms of message construction to specific target groups can be observed. It is done in such a way that they would involve expressive elements, be engraved on memory and answer individuals’ needs and interests. Consumer takes part in game of some sort, in which new sensations that have not been aroused and recognized before play the most crucial part.

## The Interpretation of Visuality

Visuality refers to the way “how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein” (Rose, 2010, s. 20). In the modern society the visual sphere is understood as the one that is perceived thanks to sight and due to possibilities that new technologies give us, people are able to benefit from visual messages.

Sociologists deciding to use visual research techniques such as photography, video recordings or other electronic visual forms contribute to the fact that visual sociology is having more and more meaning in the scientific environment (Konecki, 2005, s. 43). Research connected with action, communication and interpretation processes or interactions is according to Krzysztof Konecki (2005) the main basis of visual sociology which is particularly adjusted to such type of exploration through its relationship with the phenomenologist tradition and social constructionism.

Considerable role in the processes of the visual analysis plays semiotics<sup>1</sup>. Semiotics as the study of signs enables to interpret received

image – “Human culture is made up of signs, each of which stands for something other than itself, and the people inhabiting culture busy themselves making sense of those signs.” (Hawkes, 1988). There are many definitions of signs however, the most relevant approach in the context of qualitative research, taking into account vast spectrum of meanings that can be incorporated into analysis is represented by Terence Hawkes (1988) who stated that “anything which can be isolated, then connected with something else and ‘interpreted’, can function as a sign.” In the visual research it is essential when it comes to interpretation of received images. A lot depends on the researcher himself as he can abstract the signs constituting the basis for the particular analysis.

Charles Sanders, recognized as one of the main creators of semiotics, presents many viewpoints concerning the essence of sign interpretation. Irena Hubner in the article on the subject of semiotics condenses Pierce’s chosés theses whilst paying attention to the fact that they constitute an established set of semiotics’ claims (Hubner, 2005, s. 17):

A sign gains meaning during substitution, i.e. replacing something that it is not itself.

There are three basic types of substitution (replacing, representation) and accordingly three types of signs: icons (based on resemblance or imitation), indexes (in which occurs actual connection and often cause and effect relationship between the sign and the object) and symbols (connected with the object in a fictitious way).

A sign exists for somebody (but not necessarily through somebody, because of somebody), it requires recognition and “reading” i.e. recipient’s interpretation.

Gillian Rose recognizes concrete methodological areas which are useful during the

<sup>1</sup> Taking into consideration differences resulting from defining the notion of sign in Anglo – Saxon tradition opposite to the French tradition, in the article I will be using the notion semiotics not semiology taking account of Charles Peirce’s terminology.

analysis of the visual materials. There are three spheres enabling to create meanings. The production of an image is the first aspect and it primarily involves aspects such as how visual materials were made and how the circumstances of their production may contribute to the effect they have. The second aspect is the image itself and its detailed characteristics, the third one is the audience – recipients of the image. It must be borne in mind that all the theoretical considerations about visual materials interpretation have to take account of those three aspects and the researcher can but does not have to include all of them during the analysis of the given research material (Rose, 2010).

Qualitative analysis in the visual sphere is mainly aimed at sociological visual data. According to Piotr Sztompka any objects or occurring empirical phenomenon can give a chance providing with an opportunity to become acquainted with social reality in a deeper, descriptive and generalized way. Moreover, in visual sociology a great importance is attached to human actions as well to circumstances which activated the person. Visual analysis enables to verify whether the presented image can lead the researcher to hidden layers, features or accuracy of a given problem which would not be seen by the naked eye (Sztompka).

## Research on Advertisements

Contemporary meaning of the word advertisement does not say much about its genesis. In Latin the word *reclamo* means to scream, to call and it was used while calling someone over to the stand at the market. The term advertisement derived from English means the same as announcement and in Polish is translated as *reklama* which does not reflect ambiguity of this term (Golka, 1994). However, using definition sources it can be seen how many meanings has the word advertisement. According to Marian Golka (1994, s. 13) it is:

Every payable way of nonpersonal presenting and reinforcing purchase of goods (services, ideas) with the help of specified measures in specified legal frameworks and conditions along with providing information about products themselves – their virtues, alternatively prices, location and possibilities of purchase fulfillment.

It plays the role of institution, it is something more than only a way to publicize information about a product – it as a significant communication instrument. It is also of an importance as a medium for diverse persuasion, which is an ability to persuade other person to one's own reasons. "Advertising is a type of persuasive communication – its function is to exert influence on choices that consumers make" (Lewiński, 1999, s. 9).

Total record of researches on advertising has currently two dimensions. On the one hand emerges a conception of studying advertisements as elements of marketing strategies – whether the advertisements achieves the desirable effect and what are the consumers' preferences and needs, on the other appears an idea of studying the advertisements content and what it communicates.

As a result of mass market development and increasing competition advertisers started to treat the research as a basis for their activity. Sociological research is used by advertisers in order to forecast the probability of purchasing the product by potential consumers and to create consumer's profile as detailed as possible (Russel, Lane, 2000, s. 478). Copy testing, media research and campaign assessment are the most important areas in advertising research. Moreover, as it is indicated by Roger D. Wimmer and Joseph R. Dominick specific strategies of qualitative research are distinguished. Employing them is aimed at testing the effect of advertising messages. Screening methods, respondent journals and participant

observation are among these strategies (Wimmer, Dominick, 2008, s. 548). Thomas J. Russel and Ronald W. Lane presented their conception in a slightly different way by separating phases of marketing research in a strictly oriented strategy, in which respective research papers are to help in whole campaign creation. One of the significant research methods in that perspective is cohort analysis which enables to identify long – term consumer preferences due to research of demographical, psychological and behavioral layers and life style (Russel, Lane, 2000, s. 478).

Specialists from the social science field raise numerous research problems and areas for which advertising forms a starting point for theoretical speculations. Among other things they pay attention to messages transmitted in advertisements while exploring issues of stereotypes, studying advertisement perception, ethical and moral aspects, dealing with the issues of gender relations and consumer manipulation.

Krzysztof Arcimowicz for an example made a profile of research instruments for the analysis of man's image appearing in commercials. The framework for the analysis was Erwin Panofsky's and Umberto Eco's iconographic analysis and Ewelina Nurczyńska's method of film work analysis.

Erwin Panofsky – a prominent German art historian and theoretician known for the study of iconography and proposal for visual representations interpretation. As Krzysztof Arcimowicz noticed Panofsky's model was used for analysis of visual communication and had three layers which are crucial when it comes to the advertisement analysis conducted contemporarily.

1. Primary level: scheme of lights, colors, shadows, basic understanding of the presented characters, objects, gestures, expressions, linkage between meanings presented in the given painting;

2. Conventional level relating to a given culture: motives or combinations of motives with themes and notions;
3. Intrinsic level: content.

Method of interpretation advertising messages through identification of functions that the text has in advertisements proposed by Umberto Eco in "A Semiotic Landscape" book is another aspect taken into consideration in Krzysztof Arcimowicz's research analysis. Moreover, the author recalls Ewelina Nurczyńska's views. She notices that when it comes to an analysis of film messages general principles which could be applied to-down do not exist however, it is possible to indicate its basic foundations applying to the content as well as the form and the message. The analysis of the content involves categories such as the topic, plot, threads, characters and the ideological content. The style and composition of the piece are the elements of the form the analysis. Krzysztof Arcimowicz in his interpretation concentrates mostly on the content analysis (Arcimowicz, 2003, s. 20).

Method of commercials analysis proposed by Krzysztof Arcimowicz refers to the leading authors, classics in their field however, it should be noticed that the author does not give away the detailed directives connected with the process of conducted analysis, he just points out the theoretical sources which he has used.

## A Research Instrument – the Tool for Advertisements Analysis

Due to possibilities that the visual analysis gives it is possible to get wider sociological perspective that explains essence and reveals secrets of the message which frequently influences potential consumers in a significant way. It is difficult to attribute an unambiguous sociological method of analysis to advertisement

as verbal visual communication act (Lewiński, 1999). That is why during the attempts to interpret advertising spots, all the aspects accompanying visual analysis should be taken into consideration. That sphere of social life which is represented by the visual materials needs special research methods. Essential dimensions of the analysis are image, sound with verbal side and the characters that perform in the commercial.

While analyzing and interpreting commercials 10 universal categories presented below should be taken into consideration.

1. The title of the commercial is a relevant category having classificatory function of the tool for commercials analysis. It enables recognition of the research material. It is useful to establish an exact name of advertising message because of potential persuasive techniques which can be seen as a hint for interpretation.
2. The product name enables the researcher to pay attention to commercial creators' linguistic strategy. Moreover, it determines what the advertised product is – an object, a food product, clothing, a piece of furniture, a cosmetic. Simultaneously a field of market emerges where the product comes from (e.g. marker of merchandise, services, fashion).
3. The most important element of the tool is the context of the whole commercial. Its scope depends on elements such as the time of the spot and the image presented – what the researcher sees on the screen while watching advertising material. The commercials are usually from 15 to 45–60 seconds long<sup>2</sup> depending on whether producers decide to air the spot during the commercial break or to broadcast the spot on the Internet, or in the cinema

before a movie – then the commercial may last even a few minutes. Very often there is a possibility to view a given spot in an extended version on the Internet where producers are not restricted by the time specified in the agreement with a given media broadcaster. In the proposed tool division of the commercial into three parts of proportional duration – the beginning, middle and ending of the commercial is taken account of. Due to that the researcher is able to precisely take in seen image, taking account of the action in the commercial to the very second so that nothing would escape his notice. The register process of the commercial spot shifts the researcher's attention to the issues that could be unnoticed after having seen the commercial just one time. Exact description of the episodes enables to pick out a basis for interpretation of the events and to begin arriving at some conclusions.

4. Registering the sound that appears is another aspect of commercials' analysis and interpretation. Sound in the spot can have a crucial role: first of all through the use of proper music in the background of the spot can evoke certain feelings and sensations in recipient's mind or the use of sounds of nature connoting particular impressions and even lack of sound can also call recipient's attention. Another common situation in commercials is the use of music known by wider audience which can highly influence the fact that the recipient will be more eager to look at the screen just after hearing a trendy song.
5. Characters performing in the commercial are essential aspect in analysis and interpretation of the spots because of the function that they have in the commercial. Thanks to them the linkage with the given brand can be made. Characteristic features of the protagonists are memorized by

the recipient, who later on recreates the commercial when he sees people from the spot or billboard on the products packaging. The protagonists are the ones that tell a story to watchers, create image of product and by the way they act they present stereotypical behaviors. What is more, such a message can appear where the protagonist will be a product itself, playing the leading role – anthropomorphism of a product is also a technique that should be taken into consideration during analysis and interpretation.

6. Recipients of the commercials is the group for which a particular product is intended. Possibility to grasp this category enables to notice whether in a given advertising message the product that is advertised is aimed at clients of a specific gender, at children, elderly people or whether it is presented as universal product for a group of all ages.
7. Following category is a semiotic layer. It forms a compilation of meanings and symbols which the advertising message presents, sometimes it can be indistinguishable at the first glance.
8. Persuasion function is the category that enables the researcher to notice which (if any) mechanisms are used in the commercial so it would evoke certain emotions in recipients, be memorized and influence individuals through appearance of given

schemes. The researcher can determine himself which functions of persuasion he decides to study in chosen advertising messages.

9. Own comment is the category enabling to register the researcher's interpretation that could appear during filling in the previous parts of the tool. Moreover, depending on what is the subject matter of the research and what problems and hypotheses were made, it is possible to take into consideration other important aspects which were spotted during analysis and write them in comments. It is about ensuring that any important information will not escape the researcher's notice as they may influence drawn conclusions. In this category it is also possible to distinguish additional subcategories for instance: the man's image in the commercial, the child's image in the commercial or matters of the commercial's ethics.
10. Visualization of the message – arrangement of screenshots of the spot in the form of single illustration which highlights significant visual elements of the commercial that the researcher wants to analyze.

The picture below presents a blank form of the tool for commercials analysis in the form of a whole table.

<sup>2</sup> <http://4e.com.pl/spoty-reklamowe/spot-telewizyjny-agata-meble/> dostęp z 7.12.2015

**Table 1.** The tool for the analysis of commercials. Source: Author's own research

<b>Title of the commercial</b>		
<b>Product name</b>		
<b>Image</b>	Time (secs.) 0-10	The image depicts:
	11-20	
	21-30	
<b>Sounds</b>		
<b>Characters</b>		
<b>Recipients</b>		
<b>Semiotics</b>		
<b>Persuasive functions</b>		
<b>Own comment</b>		
<b>Visualization</b>		

Methodology, Scope and Exemplification of Conducted Empirical Research Using the Proposed Tool for Commercials Analysis

Examples of using the proposed tool will be presented basing on two pieces of empirical research. Because of restricted length of the article only the most important aspects of these analyses will be raised.

The first study was conducted for purpose of a bachelor thesis and involves visual analysis and interpretation of commercials starring children. Main research questions were connected with three problem areas. The first one is an attempt to answer the question about what kind of children images were presented in chosen media messages. Typology of child image was derived from Beata Łaciak's work and served to reason out what if any persuasive mechanisms are used in commercial so it would evoke specific feeling in recipients and be memorized. The second one was verification of a hypothesis whether socio – psychological mechanisms used to exert an influence were prevalent in the commercial spots. This and last area was concentrated on child's role in commercial hence whether its appearance in the spot is it ethical and necessary for message comprehension and whether products advertised came from child's world.

In the second research conducted for master thesis purpose, combination of two research techniques from the field of qualitative methods was employed. The visual analysis of commercials was used to reconstruct typical images of men appearing in advertising messages as well to observe whether persuasive mechanisms which may influence recipients appear in the spots. In the research it was attempted to observe which commercials depict a man and then confront images presented in media with men's opinion in this problem area. Unstructured interviews with respondents were conducted in order to check whether men can clearly recognize strategies of creating a specific type of male characters in commercials and to see what a broadly defined concept of masculinity means to

them. The aspect of paramount importance while analyzing commercials was observation of characters performed by men but overall context of the whole commercial was also meaningful. The types of men's images – essential for commercials interpretation – were distinguished based on the typology of Krzysztof Arcimowicz (2003), Zbyszko Melosik (2002) and Piotr Lewiński (1994) while taking into consideration the researcher's authorial premises. The typology of men appearing in commercials was used to verify what (if any) mechanisms are used in commercials so that it would evoke specific emotions in recipients, be memorized and influence consumer's choices through activation of particular masculinity schemes appearing in those commercials.

In both cases commercials were selected purposely – 20 commercials in the first research and 20 commercials in the second one. In the research "A child in commercials as a subject of consumer's manipulation" the main choice criterion was the age of children appearing in the spots. Through using the category of children's age attention was paid to the fact that in case of children under the age of 10 parents are the decision makers, they exert influence on them, control their behavior, it can be even said that they treat them in an instrumental way. The chosen commercials were broadcasted on Polish television channels– TVP 1, TVP 2, Polsat and TVN in the time span from 17th of January to 15th of May 2013. The exception were foreign commercials which were accessible only in the Internet and it remained unknown were exactly they were broadcasted. Moreover, some of these commercials were officially banned due to not being in a good taste and bending ethical norms e.g. a child playing with a vibrator.

The research "Men's images in commercials and social perception of them" included commercials broadcasted on Polish television

channels– TVP 1, TVP 2, Polsat, TVN and MTV in the time span from 3rd of January 2014 to 22th of April 2015. The main choice criterion was the man appearing in the commercial, his image presented in a given way by authors of

the commercials that caught the researcher’s attention.  
The examples of applying the proposed tool derived from unpublished graduated works are listed below.

**Table2.** Visual analysis of the commercial “Ibum malinowy” Source: “A child in the commercial as a subject of consumer’s manipulation”, unpublished graduate work, Institute of Sociology UŁ, Łódź 2013

<b>.Commercial title</b>	„Ibum malinowy”	
<b>Name of the product</b>	Medicine for fever for babies	
<b>Image</b>	Time (secs.)	The image depicts:
	0–10	A baby whose gender is not determined. The child is depicted in the scenery of a pink, fluffy carpet. It is wearing a pink bunny costume. In the initial phase a narrator is talking about the child and calls it a bunny, the narrator plays the role of baby’s mother and speaks in the first person singular. The child is smiling and crawling. Then objects suggesting headache connected with fever start appearing. The narrator is informing that that is the moment when child’s happiness disappears. Later there is a close-up on the child’s face, its eyes are filled with tears. The woman appears, is throwing away the objects correlated with fever. Then she is putting in baby’s mouth an object by which she gives a medicine for fever.
	11–20	The narrator is informing that the child likes Ibum malinowy the most because it has a taste of raspberries. Twirling raspberries are appearing all around the baby and it is not having problems with downing the medicine. A smile is appearing on children’s face and it has sparkling eyes. Fever and pain disappear after taking Ibum. The child heads towards a giant soft toy imitating a big raspberry.
	21–30	The baby is leaning against the raspberry. The second narrator starts reading pharmaceutical formula and lowers his voice when the child sleeping on the big raspberry appears. At the end apart from the baby and the toy there is also the woman sitting and above her there is also a rhyming slogan – <i>pyszny ibum malinowy gorączka i ból z głowy</i> (eng. Tasty ibum malinowy and the pain is out of the way) and on their left side the syrup Ibum with device for application and the packaging appears.
<b>Sound</b>	At the beginning of the commercial there is calm melody such as lullaby without any words in the background. Then the melody turns into more nervous and gloomy one. During the change of the child’s mood the music in the commercial also changes into more calm.	
<b>Characters</b>	The baby, the woman	

<b>Recipients</b>	The commercial is aimed at mothers who have a problem while giving their babies medicine and generally at parents whose children have fever.
<b>Semiotic layer</b>	Objects connoting specific associations and emotions (fever, headache), taste of the syrup (plush raspberry), caring mother acting in defense of the baby’s health (throwing the objects connected with headache away)
<b>Persuasive functions</b>	Declaration – the commercial shows that this is a new product and encourages to try it Justification – Advantages of having the product are shown in the commercial Emotional aspect – The commercial aims to evoke positive emotions connected with the product Reinforcement – it highlights values such as responsibility for the family
<b>Own comment</b>	The child taking part in that commercial is an unaware, innocent baby and is not able to perform many activities on its own. For the purpose of the commercial it had to be dressed up as a pink bunny. Moreover, people responsible for the set had to somehow control child’s behavior treating it almost as a puppet so that it would cry or smile in the right moment. Probably it was generated artificially for the commercial purposes also putting drops into the baby’s eyes is ethically questionable.

**Visualisation of the image**



**Table 3.** Visual analysis of “REVEAL Calvin Klein” commercial. Source: “Men’s images in commercials and social perception of them”, unpublished graduate work, Institute of Sociology UŁ, Łódź 2015.

<b>Title of the commercial</b>	„REVEAL Calvin Klein”	
<b>Name of the product</b>	Perfume for women	
<b>Image</b>	Time (secs.)	The image depicts:
	0–10	A landscape of a modern city with skyscrapers. The scene shows turned away blonde woman opening curtains. She is wearing sexy, black, lace underwear. The scene depicts a man looking out a window of a modern apartment. The man is holding his hands in pockets and is wearing elegant, black trousers and shirt. The scene emphasizes the woman’s face looking into the distance in a sensual way. She is probably looking at the man while she is moving the curtain. The man is watching the woman with interest from his apartment. The next shot depicts woman’s eyes with heavy makeup which suggests growing desire.
	11–20	The scene shows blurred back of the man’s head who is observing blonde woman standing wearing black dress that exposes her leg with a stocking on it. The woman is approaching the window in a sensual way, is slightly brushing her hair back, corners of her lips are parted. They are observing each other. The man cannot take his eyes off the woman, they flirt with each other through exchanging glances in a seductive way.
	21–30	The next scene presents the woman wearing a black dress, behind her there is a vague figure of the man observing her while entering her sleeping room and unfastening a button of his shirt. The scene shows the lovers kissing passionately, then the man is embracing the woman and is breathing her scent in. Then the shot shifts into a modern urban landscape and on the screen the perfume with its name Reveal and the designer’s – Calvin Klein’s logo appear. Woman’s voice is saying in English: <i>The new fragrance for her, from Calvin Klein</i>
<b>Sound</b>	Sensual song by Gary Clark Jr. „Bright Light”	
<b>Characters</b>	The man – an actor Charlie Hunman, the woman – a model Doutzen Kroes	
<b>Recipients</b>	Product for men and well as women who plan to purchase women perfumes	
<b>Semiotic layer</b>	Looks, gestures, clothes, makeup, black indicating sexuality, elegance and sensuality. Gestures of actors taking part in the commercial create an emotional bond. Breathing in the woman’s scent has become a significant factor in the reception of the promoted product.	
<b>Persuasive functions</b>	Emotional aspect – The commercial aims to evoke positive feelings for given product. Due to the music, image and sounds it creates positive aura about the product. The scene from the characters’ life who achieve outstanding results because of the product.	

<b>Own comment</b>	Image of a seducing man. Perfumes are the key to success when it comes to seducing an attractive man such as a famous character. Scenery of the modern city with young and well known characters and presence of plush interiors enables to assume to the product is aimed at people from higher social classes. The character played by Charlie Hunman is elegant, handsome, dominant over women through making some gestures in the woman’s direction, seducing her by attracting her sight
<b>Visualisation</b>	

After filling the form it is possible to move on to further part of the analysis. Data compressed thanks to the tool should be presented as short characteristics of the commercial which would enable to organize the gathered material. The next step is the process of spots analysis and conclusions. As during studying men’s images presented in commercials it is useful to group the commercials according to typology of images described earlier. In order to systematize the research conducted. The segregation will allow the researcher to spot instantly amount of the commercials in which a given image appears. Moreover, it will indicate which one is dominant or sporadic in the advertising messages, enable to separate persuasive functions that it has. In this manner it is possible to point out other issues that the researcher considers important. Preserving

logical system of the categories appearing in the tool grants that one category will lead naturally into the next one and the researcher will be able to make conclusions based on obtained data.

### Advantages and Limitations of the Tool for Commercials Analysis

It seems that an indisputable advantage of the tool is introducing very precise timeline and detailed analysis of many dimensions of the visual message. In that way the tool enables to spot various elements of the message and separate factors and layers increasing the commercial’s persuasive power. Moreover, it shows the commercial’s visual aspects in a dynamic and multidimensional way – not a static one – although not a whole commercial is shown

but only its categorized fragments. What is more, the tool also takes into consideration ethical dimension which is significant in terms of the analysis. It seems that a limitation can be a fact that the tool is more adjusted to analysis of the commercials with a narrator that tells a story (narrates also in a visual way) embedded in everyday experiences and social rituals that recipients know very well. It is unknown how the tool would perform in the commercials that are less narrative and differ from everyday experiences or are visually shocking ones. Analysis of them could require different interpreting competences, ones that are more avant-garde.

### Summary

Persuasive techniques used in the spots were deliberate and planned by their authors and induce to deeper reflection about their sense and meaning (Arcimowicz, 2003). Referencing to psychological mechanisms, stereotypes treated as thinking patterns, daily routine and specific behaviors, individuals can be classified by recipients due to given criterions. All these techniques are treated instrumentally in order to promote given product in the most attractive way.

It should be crucial for a social researcher to spot and describe persuasive mechanisms used in commercials based on available psychological and sociological knowledge as they serve to exert influence on potential recipients. As Piotr Lewiński claims in "Retoryka reklamy" (1999) subliminal messages play very important role in influencing people in front of TV. I hope that the tool proposed in the article can be a universal tool for advertising researchers who would like to use visual qualitative methods and that it would enable them to verify their hypotheses and answer problematic questions. 📖

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