

Dr. Isabel PALOMO-DOMÍNGUEZ

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania. isabel@estudiopalabra.com. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2096-7422>

Dr. Fernando INFANTE-DEL-ROSAL

University of Sevilla, Spain. finfante@us.es. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8146-3207>

Analytical review on the legality of branded content in MasterChef España

Revisión crítica sobre la legalidad del branded content en MasterChef España

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Abstract

MasterChef Spain is a tv-programme on Radiotelevisión Española, the state public medium, which operates under a specific financing law. This law prohibits advertising and permits the use of sponsorship only within specific limits. Since the programme began in 2013, brands with advertising interest have appeared in it, frequently masked in hybrid formats such as branded content. Our research considers whether these brands exceed the legal limits of sponsorship, leading to examples of covert advertising, another illegal practice. Methodologically, we combine documentary research with content analysis. The results describe the advertising representation and relevance of these brands. In turn, they provide evidence on the existence of advertising contracts in MasterChef that justify the promotion of certain institutions through the branded content format, a new infraction since paid institutional advertising is not permitted on Radiotelevisión Española. The original contributions are the specific analysis instrument to question the legality of branded content on public television in Spain and the documentary evidence of the contracts. Among the study's limitations, we consider the problematic access to private brands accounts; this would open a new line of research in which we would seek advertising contracts for private brands present in MasterChef.

Keywords

Branded content; sponsorship; advertising; legality; RTVE; MasterChef

Resumen

MasterChef España se emite en Radiotelevisión Española, medio público estatal que se rige por una ley de financiación específica. Dicha ley prohíbe la publicidad y solo permite el patrocinio dentro de unos límites descritos. Desde su comienzo en 2013, el programa incluye marcas con interés publicitario, frecuentemente enmascaradas en formatos híbridos como el branded content. El objetivo de este artículo es constatar que tales marcas exceden los límites legales del patrocinio cultural o deportivo, desembocando en ejemplos de publicidad encubierta, otra práctica también sancionada. Metodológicamente, se combina la investigación documental con el análisis de contenido. Los resultados describen la presentación publicitaria de estas marcas. Asimismo, se demuestra la existencia de contratos publicitarios que dan pie a la promoción de instituciones a través del formato del branded content. Este hecho supone una nueva infracción, pues la publicidad institucional pagada también está prohibida en Radiotelevisión Española. Son contribuciones originales el diseño de un instrumento de análisis para cuestionar la legalidad del branded content en este medio y la identificación de licitaciones y contratos. Entre las limitaciones del estudio, se hallan las dificultades de acceso a las cuentas de marcas privadas. Este aspecto abriría una futura línea de investigación, centrada en la búsqueda de contratos publicitarios de marcas privadas en MasterChef.

Palabras clave

Branded content; patrocinio; publicidad; legalidad; RTVE; MasterChef

1. Introduction

MasterChef is a gastronomic television programme based on the formula described by Ketchum (2005) as an *avant garde food show*. It is a talent show with a touch of tv reality, in which contenders who have been selected in a previous casting compete against each other under the assessment of a jury (Abdala and Andacht, 2018; Curnutt, 2016).

British in origin, this format has been adapted to over 50 different local media markets (Hogan, 2017; Rodríguez, 2015). In Spain, the programme is produced by Radiotelevisión Española (hereinafter, RTVE) ^[1], in collaboration with the producer Shine Iberia ^[2]. From its first edition in 2013, it has beaten ratings records which has enabled it to consolidate its continuance on air ^[3].

In order to be broadcast within the context of state public television, *MasterChef Spain* (hereinafter MCE) is subject to Law 8/2009, of 28th of August, on the Financing of the Spanish Radiotelevision Corporation (hereinafter, LFCRTVE) which forbids advertising as a means of income for this public media. It only permits funding from brands which participate as sponsors whether these be cultural or sporting events.

The main objective of this research is to show the presence of brands with advertising interests on MCE which exceed the limits of cultural sponsorship which would mean this law has been violated. In turn, we will analyse how the narrative mechanism of branded content operates in this programme. Branded content is understood as a hybrid strategy consisting in promotional messages are blended with entertainment contents. This creates a kind of confusion which leads to covert advertising and encourages lax application of the regulation.

The specific objectives (hereinafter SO) are described as:

SO1 to analyse and measure the impact of brands shown by branded content.

SO2 to become acquainted with the regulations and clarify their limits.

SO3 to review precedents in case law relating to this.

SO4 to research whether there are contracts between the promoted brands and MCE.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate the hypothesis that MCE repeatedly infringes the regulation on advertising and sponsorship with total impunity. For this purpose, the research provides an analysis instrument with which the presence of these brands can be described and evaluated. Also, documentary evidence of advertising contracts which infringe the law are also provided.

We understand that this is an important contribution, in a field worth researching. This is especially true within the context of the public media, which presupposes must provide a public service and has a commitment to being an example of ethical conduct. Also, the research coincides with the designation in 2021 of José Manuel Pérez Tornero as chairman of RTVE, who announced an open consultation to redefine the future of the corporation and make it "more integrated, more coherent and more participatory" (Europa Press, 2021).

It is hoped that the contributions the research has made are helpful for improving the funding system for radio and television broadcasting in Spain, nurturing a situation in which the interests of the media, producers, advertisers and the public are taken into consideration. In turn, this study aims to broaden knowledge of hybrid formats and transmedia strategies, so that integrating brands and contents creates attractive media products. There is an analysis of the form they may take without implying any violation of the rights of the audience, especially, in terms of the public media.

1.1. Legal framework

As stated before, the LFCRTVE establishes that:

Sponsorship and advertising of cultural and sporting events is permitted which is within the bounds of the mission of public service the corporation provides, which is not commercial, and providing that this system is the only possibility of disseminating and producing them (art. 7.1).

Even though it might go without saying, it stresses that the law does not fully accept sponsorship in a broad sense. That is, as a marketing communication tool with a direct, clear and obvious commercial intention (Capriotti, 2007; Johnston and Spais, 2015; Lin and Bruning, 2021). Instead, the LFCRTVE sets limits and merely enables a type of cultural and sports sponsorship in which the following conditions are met:

- which are not commercial;
- which are aimed at cultural or sports events;

- which are in keeping with the duties of public service which has been attributed to the RTVE, corporation included in Law 17/2006 (art. 3.2) and covered by LFCRTVE (art. 9.1).

The LFCRTVE also envisages other activities permitted which "are not deemed to be advertising" and which "if carried out will not give rise to any financial gain". Among these are institutional advertising and communication (art. 7.3).

The first consequence of the LFCRTVE was the redistribution of the Spanish advertising market. This created a need to adapt all programming and broadcasting to the new regulatory framework (Jiménez-Marín, Polo and Jódar-Marín, 2012; Jivkova-Semova, 2011; Muñoz, 2015; Ojer, 2011; Ortiz, 2010). However, it may seem that RTVE has merely replaced the term, "advertising" with "cultural sponsorship" since the public media continues to be paid significant amounts of money in return for providing visibility to advertised brands (Escudero, 2019). This way, a low cost audiovisual production model has been established in which there are attempts to create programmes at zero cost, funded by brands which cannot be deemed as cultural sponsors (Heredero and Reyes, 2016). This is frequently reported on in the general press, with headlines such as the following ones taken from the newspapers *La Información* and *Sur*:

"*MasterChef*: advertising returns to TVE (without realising)". (Terán, 2015).

"RTVE has earned almost 92 million euros in 'advertising' since it stopped advertising. *MasterChef* is the hen which laid the golden egg" (Villarreal, 2019).

1.2. Branded content in *MasterChef Spain*

Branded content, which some authors define as "covert advertising in entertainment contents" (Ron, Álvarez and Núñez, 2014: 24), is an alternative corporate communication format, which has become ever more popular as a supplement or replacement of traditional communication practices. Castelló-Martínez and Del Pino-Romero (2014) explain that this trend corresponds to the need for advertising interests to adapt, which strives to survive in a rapidly changing media world subject to new rules.

Branded content is defined as a set of actions which incorporate elements of a brand (values, philosophy, identity) into different types of contents and by means of different formats or tools (Formoso-Barro, Sanjuán and Martínez-Costa, 2016; Ramos-Serrano, 2006). In branded content, the brand message merges with the communicative flow of culture, information, or entertainment and makes up a continuum. That is, the brand becomes part of the main message; it is not an accessory, annoying, nor even something that can be put to one side or differentiated (Dahlen and Rosengren, 2016; Halligan and Shan, 2014; Hardy, 2021; MacRury, 2017).

Hidalgo-Marí and Segarra-Saavedra (2013: 321) stress that the role of branded content in promoting brands within the gastronomy context. They also emphasise that this formula "also enables the legendary crisis in public sector television, media saturation, as well as the regulatory laws themselves on advertising contents on television to all be evaded".

In light of this description, branded content is presented as an advantageous format for MCE, a televisual space for cooking in which advertising on a public media is strictly forbidden. In fact, although cultural sponsorship is the legal formula which covers the brands contained in the programme, MCE has a closer relationship with them. This surpasses the boundaries of what we understand to be cultural sponsorship and results in branded content (Segarra-Saavedra and Hidalgo-Marí, 2014). This way, the brands embrace the philosophy of the programme, project their CSR and associate their values with those of MCE (Gallardo, Jiménez-Marín and Elías, 2018).

This reality can be illustrated with the example of the ham producer brand Navidul (see image 1), included on the website of the specialist publication *Marketing Directo* and explained by Miguel Bartolomé, project manager from the agency Zenith NewCast

a branded content project, which provides content and simultaneously enables interaction with the brand [...]. So, we were on the special Christmas edition of *Masterchef* on 23rd of December [...]. Their *Master Classes* were given by big-name chefs [...] four minutes of *Master Class* on *Prime Time* on TVE, on the most watched programme, in which the ham Navidul was centre-stage.

("Navidul sneaks onto the *MasterChef* kitchens with a new strategy", 2015).

Image 1: Branded content from Navidul in the Special Christmas Edition of *MasterChef 2014*



Source: shot of programme (Escorial and Sanz, 2014).

In turn, branded content encourages a transmedia strategy to be created (Du Plessis, 2019; Jakus and Zubčić, 2016; Jenkins, 2010). As can be seen in MCE, the commercial and persuasive nature of the format is such that it does not exceed the physical limits of the set. It is broadcast by means of other media (such as social networks and public relations events). In addition, there are even sales channels, with in-house brands (oils, wines, recipe books...) and the gastronomy experience of the programme is recreated in the *MasterChef*^[4] restaurant, a physical space which constitutes a new example of branded content (Álvarez, 2020).

1.3. The only case of a sanctioned branded content in *MasterChef Spain*

Since MCE began broadcasting from 2013 and to date, RTVE has only been sanctioned once on account of covert advertising made on this programme. To be specific, this occurred in reference to an off-site test. It concerned the test shot at González Byass wineries, broadcast on 18th of May 2016, on the seventh programme of the fourth series (hereinafter, MCE 4 P7^[5]).

The Secretariat of the Council for the National Commission of Markets and Competition (hereinafter, CNMC) resolved the following, in text SNC/D TSA/030/16/CRTVE:

CRTVE is deemed responsible for a continuous administrative infringement of a serious nature according to article 58.8 of Law 7/2010, of 31st March, on General Audiovisual Communication (hereinafter, LGCA) for having broadcast on the national channel LA 1, covert advertising from the brand "González Byass wineries" and their products [...].

CRTVE was fined the amount of 219.342€ (two hundred and nineteen thousand, three hundred and forty-two euros), in application of that set out in article 60.2 of Law 7/2010, of 31st of March, on General Audiovisual Communication (CNMC, 2016: 23-24).

The fine according to the CNMC was based on the following verifications (see image 2):

Appearance on the upper left hand side of the screen of the banner "Tío Pepe Wineries, Jerez de la Frontera, González Byass" [...].

The demonstrations made for and by the contenders using the *venencia*^[6], made in front of a barrel from Tío Pepe from González Byass, with the brand clearly visible in the foreground [...].

Wine tasting at the winery [...] during which the different wine brands from González Byass were mentioned expressly [...].

The responsible staff at the winery were clearly identified on screen with the name of the parent company of the brand on a banner on the screen (e.g. A.F, enologist from González Byass and Master Blender) [...].

The wine brand "Beronia" from González Byass was promoted by using barrels from this brand for the tables for the country barbeque prepared by the contenders [...] (CNMC, 2016: 5-6).

Image 2: Branded content sanctioned on MCE 4 P7



Source: shots of programme (Escorial and Sanz, 2016).

This off-site test lasted almost an hour (from 0:52:00 to 1:44:00) and is a clear example of branded content. Despite being fined, the whole programme was available to see on the online platform of the public media until 2021, five years after it was broadcast [7].

2. Methodology

The objective of this study is to analyse the presence of brands on MCE [8], observed from a legal point of view, especially, those cases in which brands are shown by means of branded content. To tackle this, the following corpus was delimited which was made up of 20 programmes (N=20):

- The full series of MCE 6, broadcast in 2018 (13 programmes). This series was chosen for analysis as it coincided with a change in the Spanish government, in which the People's Party (PP), was ousted by their adversaries, the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE). This event provides the opportunity to observe whether such a change has influenced the criteria of Corporation RTVE or not in terms of the inclusion of sponsored brands.
- There is also a selection of seven programmes belonging to other series, from MCE 1 to MCE 8, covering the period from 2013 to 2020. This enables any trends to be seen and to assess whether the results obtained from an analysis of MCE 6 is representative of MCE overall. In order to keep the criteria normalised in all series, programme number 7 was chosen. This number is preferred because it was in MCE 4 P7 when González Byass winery appears, which is essential to our study.

Within this study corpus, there will be a special focus on the results related to the off-site tests, as this is the stage of the programme where the branded content format continuously appears.

Regarding the methodology, this was a combination of documentary research with content analysis. The latter is a technique which has been broadly consolidated within the field of communication (Herring, 2004). Within this methodological approach, it is worth mentioning the work by Marí-Parreño (2011), who proposed a tool for content analysis for product placement. From this reference point, an analysis sheet was drawn up especially for MCE, with nine categories and a numerical values scale. This enables the advertising significance of the brands displayed to be measured, as well as to describe other hybrid formats, especially those of branded content.

The sheet contains a total of 36 variables, grouped into the following batches:

- Analysis unit (B): identifies each study unit and specifies at what time and section of the programme it is added.

- Brand data (C): provides information about the advertiser, regarding the brand, sector and owner.
- Value (D): these variables describe the way in which the brand appears. As a whole, the degree of advertising significance is measured by means of this values scale. On this scale three levels can be distinguished, from 1 to 3 in a rising order (see table 1).
- Dichotomic (E): used to analyse key points related to legality. That is, whether the brand appearances are intentional or not, whether they are of advertising interest, whether they are related to the duties of public service of the media or whether they are related to promoting culture (see table 2).
- Coments (F): is an open field variable for collecting points of interest which enable a more qualitative reflection.

Table 1: Value variables

Variables	Categories	Value
D#1: Category	D#1#1: Visual (the brand is only perceived by means of the sense of sight) D#1#2: Auditive (only by means of hearing) D#1#3: Audiovisual (by sight and hearing)	1 2 3
D#2: Proximity	D#2#1: Focal (the brand appears in the first term or is emphasised) D#2#2: Peripheral (appears in the background)	3 1
D#3: Visual encoding	D#3#1: Titles/banners of text (included in post-production) D#3#2: Logotype (in the scene shot) D#3#3: Corporative visual elements or products (in the scene shot)	1 3 2
D#4: Auditive encoding	D#4#1: On-screen D#4#2: Off-screen D#4#3: Indirect reference (the brand is not named but it is recognised) D#4#4: Advertising theme music (highlights the presence of the brand)	3 1 1 2
D#5: Status of the person mentioning the brand	D#5#1: Presenter D#5#2: Jury D#5#3: Contenders D#5#4: VIP (chefs and famous people who come onto the programme) D#5#5: Others	3 3 2 3 1
D#6: Degree of integration	D#6#1: On screen presence (the brand is part of the scene) D#6#2: Presence in the script (the brand fulfils a role in the narrative)	1 3
D#7: Narrative significance (only applies if D#6#2)	D#7#1: Low (if the brand is named as an accessory) D#7#2: Average (it is necessary in the course of a test) D#7#3: High (it is centre-stage)	1 2 3
D#8: Diegetic connection	D#8#1: Diegetic (the brand is part of the programme narrative) D#8#2: Non-diegetic	3 1
D#9: Interaction with the brand	D#9#1: There is (a person values the brand, uses their products...) D#9#2: There is none	3 0

D#10: Status of the character who is interacting with it	D#10#1: Presenter D#10#2: Jury D#10#3: Contenders D#10#4: VIP D#10#5: Others	3 3 2 3 1
D#11: Exposure time of brand	D#11#1: Seconds (open field) D#11#2: Up to 10 seconds D#11#3: From 11 to 30 seconds D#11#4: Over 30 seconds	1 2 3

Levels of persuasive significance according to the total score:
D#12#1: Level 1, up to 15 points (low significance)
D#12#2: Level 2, from 16 to 30 points (average significance)
D#12#3: Level 3, over 30 points (high significance)

Source: prepared by the authors

Table 2: Dichotomic variables

Variables	Value
E#1: Public service	E#1#1: Yes (the brand appearance helps fulfil the duties of public service defined for the CRTVE) E#1#2: No
E#2: Cultural value	E#2#1: Yes (the appearance of the brand promotes culture) E#2#2: No
E#3: Advertising interest	E#3#1: Yes (the brand shows interest in advertising yields) E#3#2: No
E#4: Intentional presence	E#4#1: Yes (the programme intentionally shows the brand) E#4#2: No
E#5: Hidden brand	E#5#1: Yes (the brand is either partially or totally hidden) E#5#2: No

Source: prepared by the authors

3. Results

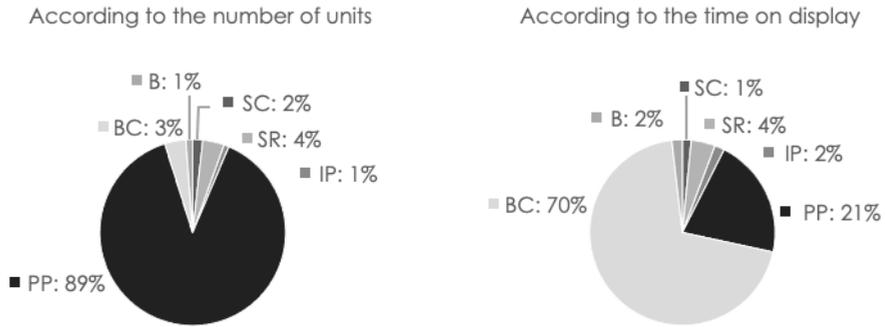
3.1. General results

In the full corpus of the study (N=20) there is a fixed and stable structure on MCE, which has been maintained throughout all the series. The main sections of each programme are the three tests: two of which are carried out on set (the initial and elimination test); unlike the off-site test, which is the middle of the programme. It is in the off-site test where the most significant cases of branded content are recorded although this formula can also be seen in other sections of the programme.

Observing the number of units analysed, the format of the most recurring brands which appear on MCE is product placement. In fact, out of the 2,987 units analysed on MCE 6 (N=13), 2,652 corresponded to brands shown by product placement. Other formats are spokesperson recommendation, sponsors tv commercial, banners, internal promotional spots and branded content (see graph 1, on the left). The latter is the format with the highest incidence on the programme if we bear in mind the time the brands are on display. This is related to the inherent nature of branded content which, given its narrative character, is usually presented for a longer duration^[9]. Therefore, in the 33,955 seconds counted with brands present on MCE 6 (N=13), 23,695 seconds (over 6 hours) show examples of branded content (see graph 1, on the right).

Likewise, branded content is the format which provides greatest advertising significance for the brands displayed (level 3), in accordance with the sum of the categories fulfilled in the variables value. In fact, as seen in graph 2, over half of the units which reached level 3 of advertising significance on MCE 6 are cases of branded content.

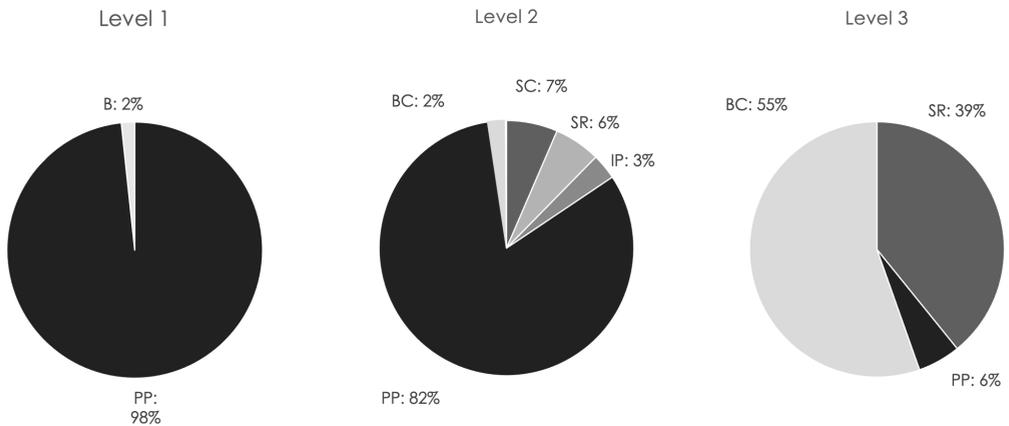
Graph 1: Incidence of formats on MCE 6



PP (*product placement*); B (*banners*); BC (*branded content*); SC (*sponsors TV commercial*); SR (*spokesperson recommendation*); IP (*internal promotional spots*).

Source: prepared by the authors

Graph 2: Percentage of units of each format in the different levels of advertising significance



PP (*product placement*); B (*banners*); BC (*branded content*); SC (*sponsors TV commercial*); SR (*spokesperson recommendation*); IP (*internal promotional spots*).

Source: prepared by the authors

Apart from the cultural sponsors of MCE, the supermarket El Corte Inglés and the electrodomestics company, Bosch¹¹⁰, the variety of brands displayed on the programme is plentiful, and a total of 183 different ones were registered over the full series of MCE 6 (see table 3).

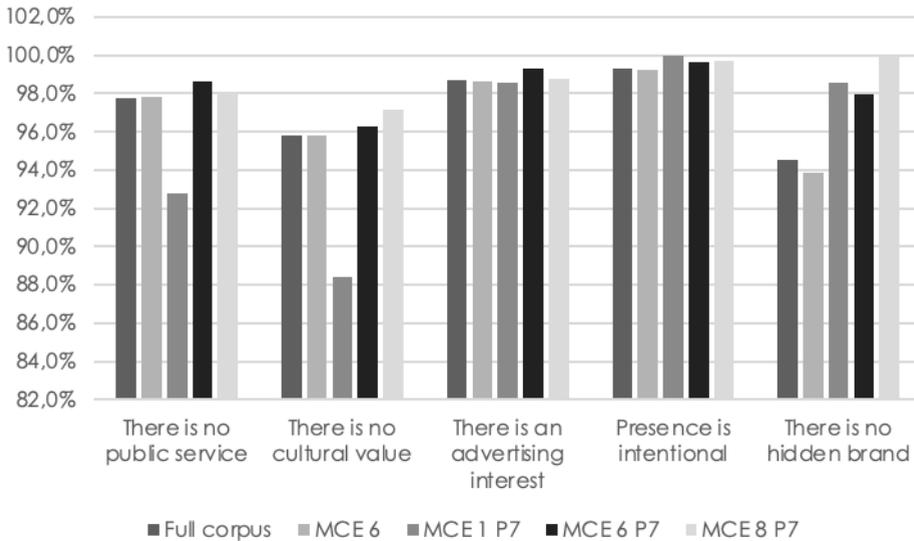
Table 3: Category of brands on MCE 6 according to sector

Products categories	Number of brands	Percentage
Hotel & Catering	65	31.7%
Culture & Performance	11	8.3%
Food & Drinks	13	6.3%
Household items & Electrodomestics	11	5.4%
Sport	9	4.4%
Tourism & Transport	8	3.9%
Training	6	2.9%
Publishing	5	2.4%
Child and family leisure	2	1%
Large distribution	1	0.5%
Other: fashion, government, health and defence	52	25.4%

Source: prepared by the authors

As can be seen on graph 3, in the dichotomic variables, the vast majority of the units analysed correspond to brands which do not provide a public service (E#1#2) and lack any cultural value (E#2#2). Moreover, they have a clear advertising interest (E#3#1), as well as a desire to appear on the programme (E#4#1), against which there is no mechanism for hiding the brand (E#5#2).

Graph 3: Dichotomic variables in the analysed units on MCE 6



Source: prepared by the authors

The cases of branded content (are scant, if we consider the number of units but outstanding in terms of the time the brand is on display) are those which are most concentrated in the presence of brands related to public service and cultural interest. This can be seen in table 4 where the number of units of branded content related to public service and those providing cultural value are shown. On the same table the time on display is expressed (in seconds) and, finally, the percentage these seconds account for is calculated in comparison to total programme time where the categories of contribution to public service (E#1#1) and cultural value(E#2#1) are given associated with the brands.

Table 4: Incidence of the branded content format in the variables of public service and cultural value

Prog.	Cross tabulation of Branded content x Public service			Cross tabulation of Branded content x Cultural value		
	Number of units	Seconds of exposition	% exposure by programme	Number of units	Seconds of exposition	% exposure by programme
P1	1	514	91.9%	1	514	74.6%
P2	3	952	99.0%	8	1317	96.0%
P3	1	563	91.4%	2	833	95.4%
P4	1	230	79.6%	2	1542	97.4%
P5	2	360	84.1%	3	1681	97.1%
P6	2	712	94.4%	3	1097	95.1%
P7	1	310	91.4%	4	1732	96.6%
P8	1	570	92.4%	2	525	92.1%
P9	1	701	92.4%	4	705	92.2%
P10	2	865	92.2%	4	1431	96.8%
P11	1	662	92.7%	3	1242	96.7%
P12	0	0	0.0%	7	1727	97.7%
P13	1	1005	93.2%	3	3095	97.4%

Source: prepared by the authors

Due to the comparison with the programmes selected with the other series, it can be stated that in all points dealt with, the results obtained in the analysis of MCE 6 (N=13) have been extrapolated to the reality observed on MCE from 2013 to 2020 (N=20).

3.2. Results in the off-site tests

The brands shown in the off-site tests are generally tourist destinations and institutions which act as hosts for filming the test. There are also plenty of private companies in sectors such as hotel and catering, performances, sport or fashion, amongst others. These brands are not identified on the programme as cultural sponsors. Instead, they are mentioned at the end of the programme in a banner of text under the title "Acknowledgements". In this way, the role these brands play is not clear, as it is not known whether they have provided funding, or, have just helped with the filming.

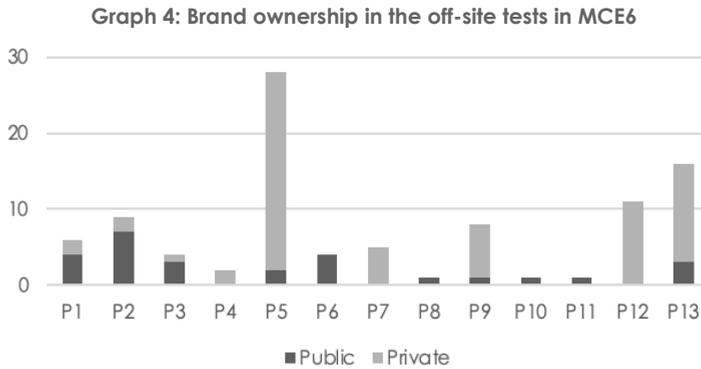
The off-site tests are characterised by providing a very similar treatment to the brands involved, which are considered in batches to demonstrate the narrative cohesion which binds them. This uniformity stands out especially in what is referred to as the variables value. On all the programmes, the batch of brands in the off-site test is shown with the same branded content format (B#4#4), which takes centre stage in the script of the test (D#6#2 y D#7#3) and lasts far more than 30 seconds (D#11#4).

This is carried out in the audiovisual category (D#1#3), with plenty of visual elements which identify the brands; whether this is by titles (D#3#1) and logotypes (D#3#2), or with products and corporate elements from them (D#3#3). The brands are also mentioned both on screen (D#4#1) and off screen (D#4#2). Likewise, extradiegetic shots are added (D#8#2) which promote the brands even more. Moreover, interaction is guaranteed (D#9#1) between these brands and presenter, jury, contenders and guests. Given this description of all the programmes in the corpus analysed, the batch of brands in the off-site tests seems to be represented at the highest level of significance (level 3, over 30 points).

As for the dichotomic variables, the advertising interest of the brands (E#3#1), the intention behind the programme when showing them (E#4#1) and the lack of hiding mechanisms for these brands (E#5#2) have been kept as constants. However, according to what the brands are that make up the batches, at times a vocation for public service is identified (E#1#1) or not (E#1#2), as well as the presence of cultural

value (E#2#1) or lack of it (E#2#2). This point is closely related to brand ownership: in the institutions contribution to public service is usually what stands out; in private brands, it is the link to culture.

In general, the off-site tests contain a balance of public and private brands. In the sample, on MCE 6, we can see graph 4, on whose vertical axis the number of brands per batch and ownership is distinguished by colour code. We can also see this in the comparison made with the other series (see table 5).



Source: prepared by the authors

Table 5: Batch of brand ownership in the off-site tests in P7 in MCE

Series and programme	Batch of brands in off-site test	Public brands only	Private brands only	Public and private brands
MCE 1 P7	Luxury hotels in Madrid		X	
MCE 2 P7	Toledo & Art Experts			X
MCE 3 P7	Tenerife & Cooks/Local Restaurants			X
MCE 4 P7	González Byass		X	
MCE 5 P7	Menorca & Cooks/Local Restaurants			X
MCE 6 P7	Atlético de Madrid & Wanda Metropolitano		X	
MCE 7 P7	Pedraza & Catering Samantha de España			X
MCE 8 P7	Higher Council of Sports and Centre for High Performance	X		

Source: prepared by the authors

3.2.1. Off-site tests with public and private brands

As induced in the analysed corpus, in MCE off-site tests are predominantly those which combine privately and publically owned brands. In these cases, public brands are typically used as a context to carry out the test (local administration, tourist institutions, regulatory bodies for local products...). From these places, private brands are promoted. By way of example, the analysis of the off-site tests on MCE 6 P2 and MCE 6 P13 was provided.

The first of these was carried out in the Galician town of Baiona, specifically in the *Parador*^[11]. On table 6 the list can be seen. The recount and classification of all the brands represented is displayed as well as the categories fulfilled in the dichotomic variables. In the test on the whole shots of the landscape and buildings with large tourist appeal predominated, where Baiona and its *Parador* were identified with titles added in postproduction and logotypes in the scene (see image 3, upper row).

One excerpt stands out in which the presenter looks for a testimonial from one of the diners identified by a title as "Carlos Gómez, owner of Adegas Valmiñor" (see image 3, lower row, right). In a dialogue, the

cultural message about the designation of origin of the wine and covert advertising of a private brand is combined by means of hybridisation (from 1:19:14):

Presenter: You have spectacular, gourmet gastronomy. Well, not just the gastronomy, but the wines are very good too, eh.

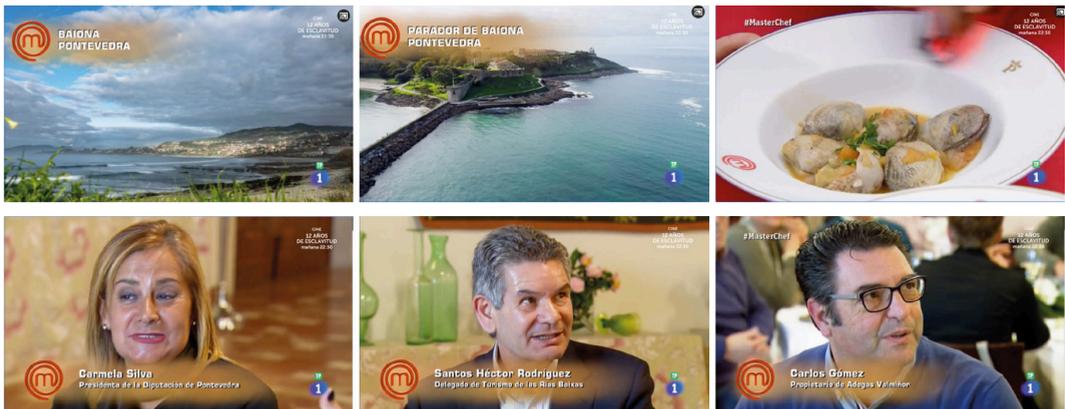
Winery owner: Spectacular, truth be told is that Rias Baixas go perfectly with the dishes.

Table 6: Off-site tests in MCE 6 P2. Batch of brands Baiona & Parador

Brands cited in Acknowledgments	Brands on screen during the test	
Pontevedra Council Rías Baixas Tourism Baiona Parador Nigrán Council Adegas Valmiñor Esc. CIPF Hotel and Catering Carlos Oroza	Pontevedra Council Rías Baixas Tourism Sande Brito Forestry and Residents Community Voluntary Help for Fire Victims in the Locality ^[12] Valmiñor Winery Montes de Camos Community	
Types of brands	Sectors	Dichotomic variables
Public and institutional (7 brands) Private association (1) Private commercial (1)	Tourism (2 brands) Food & Drinks (1) Training (1) Other (5)	Public service (E#1#1) Cultural value (E#2#1) Advertising interest (E#3#1) Intentional presence (E#4#1) Brand not hidden (E#5#2)

Source: prepared by the authors

Image 3: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P2. Outstanding shots



Source: shots of programme (Fernández and Tomás, 2018).

In the case of MCE 6 P13, the off-site test was carried out in Illescas, a locality in the province of Toledo. In fact, the first 25 seconds of the test were dedicated to making a presentation akin to an advertisement in which the tourism landmarks in Toledo capital were highlighted (from 0:57:14, see image 4, upper row, left):

Presenter (*off-camera*): All good endings need an exceptional setting and Toledo is just that. Declared a World Heritage Site and of international tourism interest, Toledo has a historic centre which is truly a monumental gem.

After giving a brief overview of the cultural appeal of the city which may be understood as fulfilling the mission of public service, a commercial brand is presented which captures our interest for the rest of the test. El Bohío is a restaurant run by Pepe Rodríguez, one of the people in the MCE jury. Apart from explaining the history of El Bohío, repeated shots of the restaurant are shown, with visible logotypes which reinforce the brand visually (see image 4). Finally, the winners of previous editions of MCE and *MasterChef Junior* come onto the programme as diners, which gives the programme a certain air of self-promotion (see table 7).

Table 7: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P13. Batch of El Bohío brands & MasterChef winners

Brands cited in Acknowledgments

El Bohío Restaurant
Castilla-La Mancha Regional Government.
Toledo council
Illescas Council

Types of brands

Private commercial (1 brand)
Public and institutional (3)
Personal brand (12)

Brands on screen during the test

El Bohío (mentioned and on screen)
Cayetana Guillén Cuervo, *MasterChef Celebrity 1* (in a title)
Winners of previous editions of MCE and *MasterChef Junior* (in a title)

Sectors

Hotel and catering (6 brands)
Culture and Performance (1)
Sports (1)
Other (govt and studios) (8)

Dichotomic variables

Public service (E#1#1)
Cultural value (E#2#1)
Advertising interest (E#3#1)
Intentional presence (E#4#1)
Brand not hidden (E#5#2)

Source: prepared by the authors

Image 4: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P13. Outstanding shots



Source: shots of programme (Fernández and Tomás, 2018).

3.2.2. Off-site tests with private brands only

In second place in terms of representation within the analysed corpus, came the off-site tests which only showed private brands. To illustrate these, the cases for programmes MCE 6 P4, MCE 6 P7, MCE 6 P12 and MCE 1 P7 were presented.

In the off-site test for MCE 6 P4, although the renowned chef Dani García, was also present, the one who received the most outstanding promotional treatment was the singer Pablo Alborán, who appeared with the backing of his record label, Warner Music (see table 8). The test is recorded in his rehearsal studio and his songs are heard repeatedly and are played whenever the artist appears (from 0:49:40):

Presenter: A singer who in little over two years has sold over two and a half million copies of his first three records, and that is not all. He received 45 platinum records and won a Goya award for the Best Original Song in 2016. Can you imagine who this might be?

During the test, the presenter interviews the singer, something which happens aside from the culinary activity in the programme: both sit down directly opposite each other on the stage and talk exclusively about the musical career of the singer and his new tour *Prometo* (see image 5, lower row, left). At a high point, Pablo Alborán puts on a free performance exclusively for MCE, which on screen lasts exactly one minute (from 1:40:30).

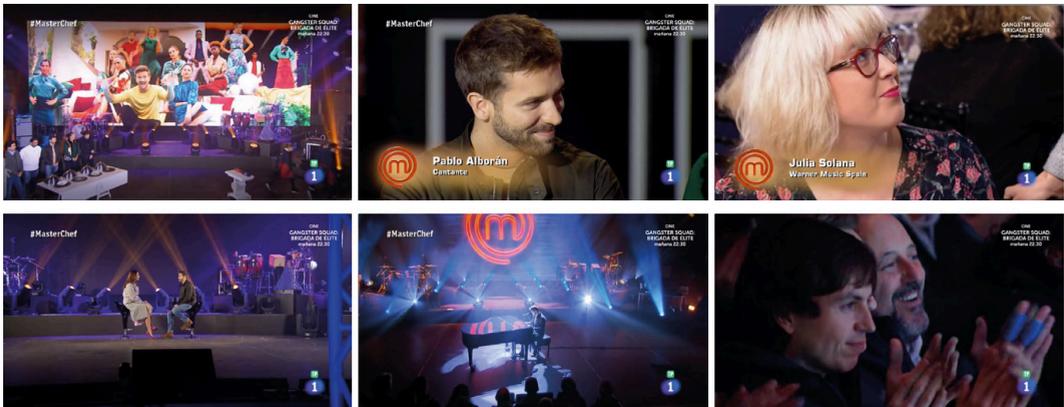
As this concerns promoting the Spanish cultural industry, this case of branded content might be linked to the duties for public media set out in Law 17/2006, specifically in art. 3.2.i.

Table 8: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P4. Batch of brands Pablo Alborán & Dani García

Brands cited in Acknowledgments	Brands on screen during the test	
Pablo Alborán Warner Music	Pablo Alborán, singer (title) Dani García, chef Dani García restaurant (Marbella), two Michelin stars (title) Team of Warner Music Spain (title) Rocío Satrustegui (title) Sonia Vergara (title)	
Types of brands	Sectors	Dichotomic variables
Private commercial (1) Personal brand (2)	Culture and Performance (2) Hotel & Catering (1)	Public service (E#1#1) Cultural value (E#2#1) Advertising interest (E#3#1) Intentional presence (E#4#1) Brand not hidden (E#5#2)

Source: prepared by the authors.

Image 5: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P4. Outstanding shots



Source: shots of programme (Fernández and Tomás, 2018).

The off-site tests on MCE 6 P7 are carried out at the Wanda Metropolitano, the Atlético de Madrid stadium. There are plenty of hyperbolic texts praising the club (such as that included below, from 0:54:48), accompanied by a song by Joaquín Sabina *Motivos de un sentimiento (Reasons for a feeling)*, a non-official anthem of the team. Also noteworthy are the shots which show the corporate elements of the club and how spectacular the new architectural construction is (see image 6, upper row):

Presenter (off-screen): This is the newest football pitch in Europe and also the leading one. A year has not gone by since it was inaugurated and applause is pouring down on it [...].

Judge Samantha: Contenders, welcome to the heart of Atlético de Madrid. Welcome to Wanda Metropolitano. I can see you're impressed and no wonder, this is an amazing stadium, incredible.

Judge Jordi: Contenders, Atlético de Madrid represents all the values we uphold on *MasterChef*. It has won 30 big titles and has done this thanks to the passion the players who go onto the pitch have.

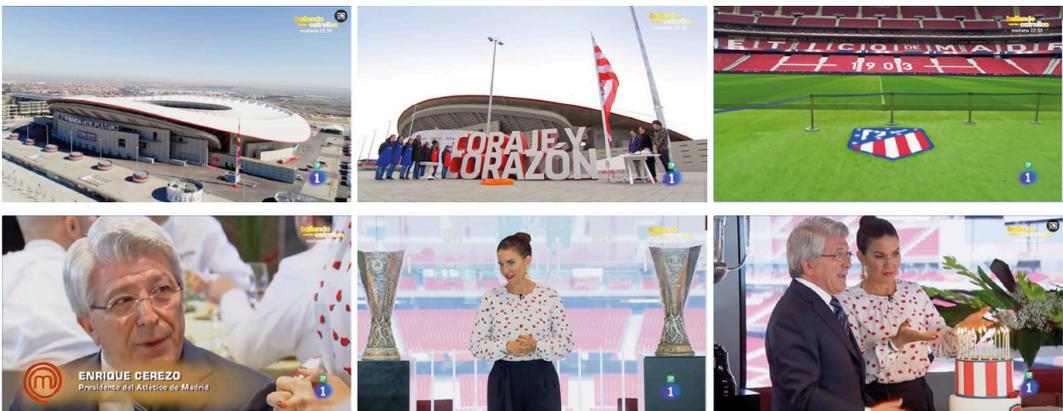
Among the people interviewed, is Enrique Cerezo, chairman of Atlético Madrid. On its visit, MCE organises a surprise birthday party for him, a good occasion for highlighting the history of the club and showing his trophies. The cake is from Catering Samantha de España, a catering business which belongs to this MCE judge. The birthday cake comes in the Atlético colours, as does Samantha herself who comes dressed for the occasion, in red, white and blue (see image 6, lower row).

Table 9: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P7. Batch of brands Atlético de Madrid & Wanda Metropolitano

Brands cited in Acknowledgments	Brands on screen during the test	
Club Atlético de Madrid S.A.D. Wanda Metropolitano Centerplate	Wanda Metropolitano (on screen and mentioned) Atlético de Madrid (on screen and mentioned) Andrea Tumbarello, chef Don Giovanni restaurant (title) Sandro Silva, chef Amazónico restaurant (title) Enrique Cerezo, chairman of Atlético de Madrid (title) Personalities and fans of Atlético de Madrid (title)	
Types of brands	Sectors	Dichotomic variables
Private commercial (3) Personal brand (2)	Sports (2) Hotel & Catering (2) Others (management) (1)	Public service (E#1#2) Cultural value (E#2#1) Advertising interest (E#3#1) Intentional presence (E#4#1) Brand not hidden (E#5#2)

Source: prepared by the authors

Image 6: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P7. Outstanding shots



Source: shots of programme (Fernández and Tomás, 2018).

The off-site test on MCE 6 P12 is carried out at Club Alma, a meeting point for business and social purposes where, on account of this test, different experts in the world of catering appear (see table 10). As in all the off-site tests, the format of branded content is identified, although this time it may be considered as an infomercial.

Shots are repeated in which the uniqueness of Club Alma is shown, with the corporate symbol (A) in full view. Some of these shots are extra diegetic and no doubt come from the promotional resources archive of the club. There also appear titles added by the programme which literally cite the name of the brand (see image 7, upper row).

In the interviews Samantha has with the diners, the professional profile of each of them is relegated to second place, overshadowed by the praise heaped on Club Alma for all its attributes. Even practical information is provided on how to become a member of the club and there are statements in which Samantha and the interviewees act as endorsers (from 1:13:15, see image 7, lower row):

Judge Samantha: How are you?

Rosa Rivas and Cristina Jolonch: Hi Fine.

Samantha: Rosa, Cristina, two amazing gastronomy journalists. It is an honour to have you here today on *MasterChef* to sample our dishes.

Rosa and Cristina: Thank you very much.

Samantha: Well, do you know this place?

Rosa and Cristina: No.

Samantha: Club Alma is a wonderful place.

Cristina: It's very nice, isn't it?

Rosa: It's very nice. This is one of those very elegant manor houses in Madrid.

Samantha: Yes, it's a club you need to be a member of. Then you can come here and enjoy it, spend the day here, work... there are loads of things to do. Yes, if you like, you can come and try it one day. Then you can become a member, which would be great.

Rosa: Let's try.

Samantha: Yes, you should. You'll love it.

Table 10: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P12. Batch of brands Club Alma & experts in gastronomy

Brands cited in Acknowledgments	Brands on screen during the test	
Club Alma	Club Alma (mentioned, on screen, in a title) Fina Puigdevall, chef R. Les Cols (in a title) Macarena Castro, chef R. Maca de Castro (in a title) Manuela Romeraldo, sommelier and director R. El Poblet (in a title) M ^o José San Román, chef R. Monastrell (in a title) M ^o José Huertas, sumiller R. La Terraza del Casino (in a title) Sara Moreno, front of house manager at R. Media Ración (in a title) Esther Manzano, chef R. La Salgar (in a title) Rosa Rivas, gastronomy journalist from <i>El País</i> and <i>7canibales</i> (in a title) Cristina Jolonch, gastronomy journalist, <i>La Vanguardia</i> (in a title) Paz Ivison, gastronomy journalist and writer (in a title)	
Types of brands	Sectors	Dichotomic variables
Private commercial (1) Personal brand (10)	Hotel & Catering (8) Publishing (3)	Public service (E#1#2) Cultural value (E#2#1) Advertising interest (E#3#1) Intentional presence (E#4#1) Brand not hidden (E#5#2)

Source: prepared by the authors

Image 7: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P12. Outstanding shots

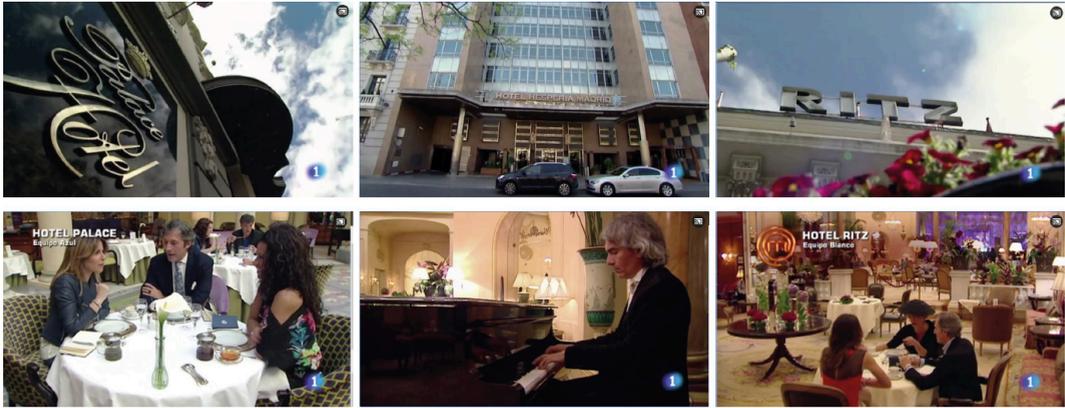


Source: shots of programme (Fernández and Tomás, 2018).

The marked presence of private brands is frequent throughout the whole corpus analysed. Various examples of this are given in the first series. In the off-site test on MCE 1 P7 three private brands stand out

from the hotel and catering trade: The Westin Palace, Hotel Hesperia and the Ritz, three luxury hotels in Madrid. There are plenty of shots which highlight the attractiveness of the premises (see image 8, lower row), in which their logotypes are clearly visible as are titles added in postproduction with the brand name (see image 8, upper row).

Image 8: Off-site tests on MCE 1 P7. Outstanding shots



Source: shots of programme (Escorial and Sanz, 2013).

3.2.3. Off-site tests just with public brands

Taking the analysed corpus as a reference, the off-site tests which just show public brands are the least plentiful in MCE. Unlike the other ones, in these tests there is no perception that the brands shown have commercial value. This does not mean such brands have an interest in promoting themselves from the perspective of what we understand as institutional communication or advertising. Examples of this can be seen on programmes MCE 6 P8 and MCE 8 P7.

In the former the armed forces stand out as an institution. In order to display their capabilities, the test begins with a dramatised recreation of a kidnapping. This is an example of merging fiction and a brand which typifies the branded content format. During the test, there are plenty of references to sacrifice and the humanitarian work this institution carries out. The role of women in the armed forces is also mentioned, stressing their equality. At this point, we must remember that fostering gender equality is one of the responsibilities Corporation RTVE has, as is reinforcing the Spanish national identity and supporting its institutions.

Table 11: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P8. Batch of brands Brigada Aragón I & Ejército de Tierra (Aragón I Brigade & the Army)

Brands cited in Acknowledgments	Brands on screen during the test	
The Army Brigada Aragón I Automobile forces from the Army	Brigada Aragón I (mention) The Army (mention) Members of Brigada Aragón I (title)	
Types of brands	Sectors	Dichotomic variables
Public and institutional (3)	Others (defence) (3)	Public service (E#1#1) Cultural value (E#2#2) Advertising interest (E#3#1) Intentional presence (E#4#1) Brand not hidden (E#5#2)

Source: prepared by the authors

Image 9: Off-site tests on MCE 6 P8. Outstanding shots



Source: shot of programme (Fernández and Tomás, 2018).

Similar cases of branded content were observed in other series, as seen in the off-site test on MCE 8 P7. This time, the sports sector is supported from an institutional approach from the Centre for High Performance from the Higher Council of Sports (see image 10). The premises are shown and the function these kinds of centres have is explained. Also, the capacity of those preparing for an elite sport for overcoming obstacles is also praised. Spanish sport, in turn and generally speaking, is promoted as well as the position it has in the international arena. In this respect, it is understood that there is a contribution to public service.

Image 10: Off-site tests on MCE 8 P7. Outstanding shots



Source: shots of programme (Fernández and Sagasti, 2020).

3.3. Advertising contracts

Due to the documentary research carried out, there is evidence that there are advertising contracts with MCE. The awards mentioned are available on the Contracting platform for the Public Sector from the Treasury from the Government of Spain [13]. It should be stressed that as this is the source, only evidence related to public companies or institutions has been found. However, seeing that there are also off-site tests in which private brands are promoted, there are signs that the *modus operandi* could be the same with them.

In table 12 a summary of the contracts related to MCE 6 and other series have been included. The terms on the table have literally been taken from the original documents. Note that in the "object", "classification" and "amount" columns the advertising nature of these paid actions is indicated explicitly.

Note that the first two cases corresponded to the off-site tests on MCE 6 P2 and MCE 6 P13, analysed previously. It is now seen that the presentations which advertise the beauty of Baiona and Toledo do not fall within the commitment RTVE has in promoting the whole of Spain. In fact, they correspond to institutional advertising campaigns in which the public entities involved pay a fee for this.

Table 12: Institutional advertising contracts paid in MCE

Prog.	Contracter	Purpose	Classific.	Amount	File No	Date
MCE 6 P2	Chairperson of Pontevedra Provincial Council	"Advertising sponsorship for the television programme <i>MasterChef-Programme 2-Series 6</i> "	Advertising services	€10,610	2018/001926	23/01/2018
MCE 6 P13	General Directorate of Tourism, Trade and Crafts from the Castilla-La Mancha Regional Government	"Sponsorship 6th edition, programme no13 <i>MasterChef Toledo Claim</i> , as a tourism campaign for Castilla-La Mancha"	This data does not appear.	€3,630	2018/006732	30/05/2018
MCE 7 P1	Institute of Agrarian Technology of Castile and León	"Inclusion in MG ' <i>Tierra de Sabor</i> (Land of taste)' during the off-site shooting for programme <i>MasterChef 7</i> which will be held on 16th and 17th of January 2019 at the Monastery of San Pedro de Cardeña in Castrillo del Val (Burgos)"	Advertising services	€17,974	B2019/001306	15/01/2019
MCE 7 P2	Chairperson of Castellón Provincial Council	"Sponsorship of an off-site test of <i>MasterChef 7</i> in the province of Castellón"	Tv production services	€30,250	27/2019	21/01/2019
MCE 7 P10	Institute of Agricultural Technology of Castile and León	"Inclusion of products from Zamora in MG ' <i>Tierra de Sabor</i> ' while shooting off-site on the programme <i>MasterChef 7</i> Edition/Series, which will be held on 20th of March 2019 in Zamora"	Advertising campaigns services	€17,974	B2019/001584	15/03/2019
MCE 8 P3	Murcia Regional Government	"Services for shooting the programme <i>MasterChef</i> in Murcia"	Services for cultural and sports dissemination; radio and tv; tv, tv production	€18,004	F/2020/2727	24/01/2020

MCE 9 P4	Institute of Agricultural Technology of Castile and León	"Placements in M.G. <i>Tierra de Sabor</i> during off- site shooting for the programme ' <i>MasterChef</i> Anonymous Edition, Series 9', recorded on 10th of February in the San Isidro (León) ski station including its subsequent edition and broadcast on TVE"	Advertising campaigns services	€18,029	B2021/ 001537	08/02/2021
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Source: produced by the author from the Contracting Platform for the Public Service.

Apart from the cases cited in MCE, at least another ten similar tenders were found for paid institutional communication on *MasterChef Junior* and *MasterChef Celebrity* on the same platform; this shows that this format is in the order of the day on *MasterChef* within the context of RTVE.

4. Discussion

By means of this content analysis, the appearance of brands with advertising interests on MCE is suitably documented and described. The programme was shown to include a broad number of brands, apart from the so called cultural sponsors. In some cases, the appearance of these brands is not linked to the mission of public service of the media and its cultural value is debatable. In turn, the brands frequently appear that are represented by means of a range of commercial communication formats. Once again, these cannot be deemed to be within the formula of cultural sponsorship permitted in RTVE and reveal there is a commercial purpose.

Among other formats branded content acquires special protagonism, which incorporates the brands into the narrative of the programme. This makes it difficult to tell the entertainment contents apart from those that are merely promotional. Also, cases of branded content, mainly those in the off-site tests incorporate cultural values and/or a public service, without renouncing the commercial value promoting these brands entails.

Reading these results in light of the law helps to verify that the presence of brands on MCE, especially on MCE 6, exceeds the figure of cultural sponsorship and infringes the LFCRTVE, with total impunity. This enables the starting hypothesis to be validated.

Furthermore, with the findings of the documentary research the limits of this hypothesis can be broadened. It is not just that MCE violates the LFCRTVE; also cases which may be considered as examples of covert advertising have been identified. This is a practice that is forbidden by European (Directive of Television without Frontiers) and Spanish law (Law 25/1994 and LGCA).

To make this assertion, the previously cited resolution SNC/D TSA/030/16/CRTVE has been taken as a reference, in which the CNMC fines MCE for broadcasting covert advertising from González Byass wineries. Comparing evidence and proven facts, great similarity can be seen between this case and the vast majority of off-site tests.

- There is a presentation of goods or services.
- There is a promotional purpose.
- The public is misled in terms of the nature of the programme (due to the hybridation of entertainment contents and promotional messages).
- The infringement is continuous.

In the case of González Byass, Corporation RTVE claimed there was no "business relationships or any other link between CRTVE and González Byass wineries", and, also no payment had been received" (CNMC, 2016: 3). CNMC responded that, although there was no commercial relationship (or one could not be proved), the intention of making covert advertising is still serious and constitutes an illicit activity, as included in article 2.32 of the LGCA.

In any event, it should be remembered that, by means of the documentary research, two examples of a business relationship with the institutions promoted on MCE 6 have been identified. It is true that the

relationship was not directly established with Corporation RTVE, but, rather, with the producer, Shine Iberia. Nevertheless, apart from having a visage of legality, this does not make any difference to either the spirit or the essence of the matter.

That is, the law has been broken in a third way. As already commented on, the LFCRTVE only permits advertising and institutional communication when there is no financial benefit (article 7.3). In short, the starting hypothesis has not only been validated, but also enlarged on verifying there have been new violations of the regulation.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Triple infraction of the regulation

The commercial exploitation on the programme MCE by means of brands with advertising interests is an ever-growing and consolidated practice and one it intends to continue. As the main conclusion from the research, this practice is deemed to break the law in three senses:

- MCE not only exceeds the legal figure of cultural sponsorship as set out in the LFCRTVE;
- it also makes paid institutional communication, which is equally forbidden by the LFCRTVE
- it engages in covert advertising, forbidden by the Directive on Television without Frontiers in Law 25/1994 and the LCCA.

5.2 Hybrid language which causes confusion

As a communicative strategy, the programme strives to hide the presence of brands by means of hybrid language, which give rise to confusion which breaches the principle of differentiating commercial messages and feeds the illegal activity of covert advertising.

We can confirm, in this regard, something that Segarra-Saavedra and Hidalgo-Marí (2014) and Álvarez (2020) warned about: branded content is the most represented formula on this programme. This provides a differentiating character, which gives greater significance to the brands and more exposure time (70% of the total time with the presence of brands^[14]).

5.3 The whitewashing role of culture and public service

It is difficult to find an off-site test in which some type of contribution to public service or a certain contribution to culture cannot be used. However, veiled as these elements are, there are messages with a clear commercial value, a point which is expressly forbidden by the type of cultural and sports sponsorship contemplated by the LFCRTVE. Moreover, especially in other sections of the programme, there are plenty of brand appearances which also have a commercial value, although on these occasions they are not usually related to the mission of public service nor to promoting culture.

If a gastronomy simile is permitted, we could say that MCE has come up with the recipe to including just the right amount of ingredients which ensure favourable (or even kind) criticism. In other words, MCE (especially in its off-site tests) uses public service and culture as a safe-conduct, a door which opens it to redemption. This exempts it from scrutiny by the law and enables it to act with more flexibility, and often enjoys impunity.

5.4 Cultural contents and public service which hide a new illegality

At the heart of this mission to promote cultural values and provide a public service, there is great contradiction. The times in which a tourist destination is visited or when the benefits of local products are explained is precisely what may be identified as cultural elements on the programme MCE. They are even related to the obligations RTVE has.

Therefore, these are the elements which provide the justification for the programme to receive funding by means of cultural sponsorship. However, as has been seen, some of the products and services on the programme are included as institutional advertising in exchange for financial gain, an activity which is a violation of the LFCRTVE.

6. Specific contribution of each author

Contributions	Author
Conception and study design	Signee 1, signee 2
Search for documents	Signee 1
Data collection	Signee 1
Analysis and critical interpretation of data	Signee 1, signee 2
Draft, format, review and approval of versions	Signee 1, signee 2

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Notes

1. RTVE is the public radio television media in Spain.
2. Shine Iberia belongs to The Banijay Group, a large Chinese multinational in the audiovisual production sector.
3. On the date this article was drafted MCE has had nine series developed in consecutive years. The other versions of the programme which are also carried out in Spain, *MasterChef Junior* and *MasterChef Celebrity*, together have had eight and five series respectively.
4. Restaurant opened to the public in Madrid (Calle Velázquez, 150).
5. From here onwards the following criteria will be followed for abbreviating series and programmes. For example, in the first series, programme 3 is identified as MCE 1 P3.
6. *Venenciar* is an activity in which a *venencia* is used. A *venencia* is an implement for extracting samples of sherry from aging barrels.
7. In the second semester of 2021, all the MCE series, *MasterChef Junior* and *MasterChef Celebrity* prior to 2020 were taken off RTVE Play, the online platform for the public media. On enquiring at the RTVE Office for the Spectator Rights as to the reason why, the response given was that this was due to a matter of broadcasting rights, according to which only the last series could be provided.
8. See that the research focuses on MCE. That is, the version with anonymous adult contenders; not child contenders (*MasterChef Junior*), nor famous ones (*MasterChef Celebrity*).

9. In cases of branded content, measuring the time it is exhibited has been made by recording the exact time it starts (when the brand first appears) and adding the duration of the shots in which the presence of the brand is significant.

10. The supermarket El Corte Inglés and the electrodomestics company Bosch are two cultural sponsors which are maintained throughout all the series. Specifically, MCE 2 was also sponsored by the Burgo de Arias cheese brand.

11. The network of *Paradores* in Spain is a group of hotels from the public sector. It arose from an initiative in 1910 aimed at boosting tourism in the country, *Paradores* are located in areas of exceptional beauty and are outstanding for their architectural merits.

12. In the summer of 2020 a locality in the Spanish region of Galicia was devastated by forest fires. In this edition of *Masterchef* there is a tribute to all those who volunteered their help to the victims of these fires.

13. <https://contrataciondelestado.es>

14. Average result considering the 13 MCE 6 programmes.

