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# Female stereotypes in 21st century news and business magazines

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FEMALE STEREOTYPES IN 21ST CENTURY  
NEWS AND BUSINESS MAGAZINES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by

Gosia Gizycki

May 2009

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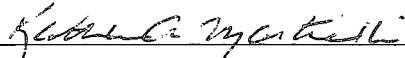

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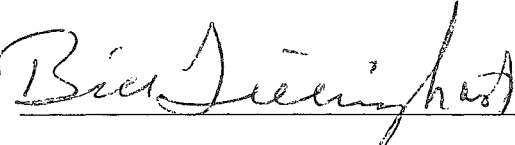
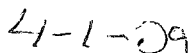
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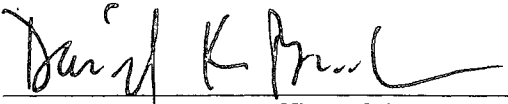
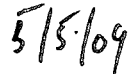
 

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## ABSTRACT

### FEMALE STEREOTYPES IN 21ST CENTURY NEWS AND BUSINESS MAGAZINES

by Gosia Gizycki

This thesis examines the visual representations of women in nationally circulated news and business magazines, based on nine forms of stereotypical nonverbal gender displays identified by Goffman (1979), Kang (1997), Umiker-Sbeok (1996), and Lindner (2004). This study is based on Lindner's (2004) study and duplicates its coding categories. Content analysis was used to examine stereotypical depictions of women in 21st century advertisements. The researcher and a research assistant coded a total of 12,458 advertisements from 2000 through 2007 from *Time*, *Newsweek*, *BusinessWeek*, and *Forbes*, of which 89% or 11,134 contained at least one stereotypical depiction within the nine categories. Advertisements containing one or more females, either in the absence of men or the presence of one or more men, were coded in this study.

Women were shown as objects, whose function in the advertisement was to be looked at at the highest frequency. Women were shown inhibited by their movement at the lowest frequency. Among the four magazines, *Time* had the highest number of ads available to be coded as well as the highest number of stereotypes. The results from Lindner's (2004) study and those of the current study concurred in that there were still low percentages of movement and function ranking. The biggest difference between both studies was in the area of relative size, where the current study had a higher percentage of ads that showed the man taller, larger, or taking up more space than the woman.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction and Rationale

Modern society has made advanced strides toward the acceptance and appreciation of multiculturalism and diversity as well as the gender role identity. However, even in this age of burgeoning tolerance and respect, stereotypes continue to plague our way of thinking.

Stereotypes are representations and impressions of certain groups and aid in explanations according to McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears (2002). Symbols and stereotypes became a way for relaying specific messages and complex ideas, and these messages could be portrayed in a more simplistic fashion through the shorthand of stereotypes.

Stereotypes are often manifested through different forms of media, which exploit both sexes in various ways. Even in the 21st century, female stereotypes are still prevalent through visual depictions in print advertising. The purpose of this study is to answer the question: Do advertisements in 21st century news and business magazines portray women as stereotypes, and, if so, is there a higher prevalence of any particular female stereotype in news and business magazines?

Kang (1997) concluded that not much has changed in the portrayal of women since 1979, but transformations in the types of stereotypical depictions have occurred. Even after decades of the women's movement, there continues to be stereotypical depiction of women in print advertising. As women moved into the workforce at the highest rates in history, more advertising acknowledged this fact and has adjusted female

roles in advertising away from the homemaker and more toward a dual role of homemaker and bread winner. Visual images have an impact, as demonstrated by studies of effects, such as those by Kilbourne (1990), which concluded that exposure to stereotyped gender portrayals in advertising provided for negative gender-role attitudes.

Framing is often seen to have effects on advertising and development of stereotypes within print media. Fortunado (2005) identified framing as how an issue is shown or presented to the media, taking into account the placement of the subject in relation to the frame, as well as the perspective that is emphasized. By using framing, advertisers make content decisions about what will fit into the frame of the advertisement and how the elements are portrayed. Fortunado (2005) stated that visual framing could be critical in regards to audience interpretation of images. Decisions are made by the viewer based on the manner in which the image is portrayed.

In order to study stereotypical depictions of females in magazine advertisements, Goffman (1979) developed a coding scheme for frame analysis, in which subtle clues depicted in visual images could be analyzed to determine key relationships between genders. Goffman's coding categories were comprised of the following: function ranking, relative size, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, and licensed withdrawal. Frith, Cheng, and Shaw (2004) contend that Goffman explained positioning of female models within the frame as mirroring women's roles in society and were the first researchers to identify gaze as being important. Even though Goffman's coding scheme was criticized due to his biased sample extrapolation based on his preconception, studies have used his system with more representative samples.

Kang (1997) revisited Goffman's gender analysis by using Goffman's categories, but also adding body display and independence in order to analyze gender displays in magazine advertisements. Multiple researchers have used Goffman's coding scheme to analyze advertisements for research gender stereotyping. The researchers used Goffman's five coding categories, but each included their own additional categories of analysis: Kang (1997; body display), Umiker-Sebeok (1996; movement and location), Lindner (2004; objectification).

Analyzing 504 advertisements from *Vogue*, *Mademoiselle*, and *McCall's* from 1979 to 1991, Kang (1997) concluded that not much had changed in the portrayal of women since 1979. Lindner (2004) concluded that by comparing analysis of studies of Goffman categories, the research revealed a shift from socially inferior and subordinate visual depictions of women to those images which contain more subtle hints. Instead of blatantly depicting stereotypical images, the trend has been to relay subtle messages about gender roles and social power hierarchy (Lindner, 2004).

Advertising plays a role in the perceptions people have of gender roles. Results of a study by Kilbourne (1990) concluded that significantly more negative attitudes were shown toward women after the subjects in the study were exposed to advertising showing women placed into stereotypical roles.

Since advertising plays a role in the perceptions of gender, it is critical to examine, through quantitative analysis, the contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century images of women in advertising. This study analyzed female stereotypes in advertisements intended for contemporary readers of news and business magazines, from 2000 through 2007. Data

was collected by coding each advertisement based on stereotypical nonverbal gender displays modeled upon Goffman, Kang, Umiker-Seebeek, and Lindner. This study's analysis explored the dispersion of nonverbal gender displays within these ads and drew comparisons between the current study and that of Lindner's (2004). The literature provides a context for stereotypes in general, as well as the progression of female stereotypes, and the effects of stereotyping. Publication year and magazine type are independent variables. The application of categories from Goffman, Kang, Umiker-Seebeek, and Lindner constitute the dependent variables.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

Stereotypes proliferated with the evolution of mass media. In order to communicate specific messages and ideas to the mass market, Wilson, Gutierrez, and Chao (2003) stated that the mass media needed shorthand ways to communicate their messages to the mass audience. Thus, symbols and stereotypes became a way for relaying these specific messages and complex ideas. According to Wilson, et al. (2003), stereotypes are not only shortcuts to character development, but also critical elements of mass communication in entertainment and literary fare. Images are depicted in particular fashions with specific traits, which then evolve to an image for society to identify with. Wilson, et al. (2003) stated that ideas and images that are portrayed in certain fashions, as biased portrayals, or stereotypical fashion, can come to be seen as reality to the mass audience. Images that are often seen on screen and in print may become the images and thoughts that are left behind in the mind of society as validation of truth.

Gauntlett (2002) described stereotypes as useful devices that visual communicators, such as filmmakers, cartoonists, graphic artists, and many others can employ to make ideas more clearly understood. However, these stereotypes, even if helpful in certain aspects, can also illustrate unfair and hurtful messages. Thus, visual images and any stereotypical portrayals they might contain, play a major role in the way in which social memory is constructed. Ashmore and Del Boca (1986) concurred, stating that stereotypes are seen as a group of concepts that relate to a social category and that gender stereotypes are seen as attributes to distinguish between men and women.

Coltrane and Messineo (2000) also agreed and added that media images provide confirmation of a world view and validate currently acceptable social arrangements.

Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) stated that among the different types of visual media, gender-role attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors are strongly impacted through print advertisements. These visual representations in the media are used to both reinforce and magnify stereotypes. Visual images work differently than written words. They are powerful in their impact and effect on memory. Images utilize sense of sight and not cognition, making them very powerful, causing a long lasting impression on memories. Images can create expectations for female behavior and can result in serious negative effects. Kang (1997) stated that in studying advertising it is important to put an added emphasis onto the images as portrayed as nonverbal symbols, as these visuals can have significant impact on attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Johar, Moreau, and Schwartz (2003) stated that seeing a gender specific stereotypical depiction, such as that of a woman as a homemaker, activates and confirms general stereotypes, making it more likely to evaluate other members in the same stereotyped group in a similar fashion. Johar, et al. (2003) concluded that the role portrayal in advertising has an effect on the influence of judgments. Lindner (2004) stated that advertising plays a key role in gender role perception, making it important to conduct systematic analyses of print advertisements. Thus, the importance of studying visual depictions of stereotypes and their impact on society is clear.



## *Female Stereotypes*

Women have often fallen victim to various stereotypes, which are often manifested through visual imagery on television and within print media. Through the modern age multiple means of transferring information such as the internet, instant messaging, and digital media have grown the various means by which information about gender is disseminated.

*Early pictorial stereotypes of women.* Since the women's movement in the mid-1960s-70s, the portrayal of females in print advertisements has come under close examination. Lindner (2004) designated the Women's Movement of the 1970s as the beginning of the earliest studies of gender stereotyping. To fully understand gender stereotyping, it is crucial to examine the onset of gender stereotypes and their beginnings within the magazine industry.

Sexton and Haberman (1974) noted that women models used for decorative purposes increased sharply in 1970-1971 from 15 to 20%. The first images of women in magazines were often portrayed as housewives and homemakers whose primary focus was seen to be their families, keeping up physical appearances, and presenting themselves as submissive beings in comparison to their male counterparts, with no sense of self thought or education. Kang (1997) agreed and commented that there has been a consistent portrayal of women in traditional mother, home-, or beauty sex-oriented roles that are not representative of women's diversity.

Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) were among the first researchers to study female stereotypes in magazine advertising. They identified magazine advertising depicting four

different types of general stereotypes: (a) homemaker, (b) non-decision maker and completer of non-important duties, (c) dependent on men and requirement of male protection, and (d) sex objects. Both Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) and Wagner and Banos (1973) unveiled that in the 1970s advertising women were shown as dependent on their male counterparts, as sex objects, as domestic adjuncts who were not illustrated in office or out-of-home situations. The primary products that women were featured in consisted of home appliances, drugs, clothing, and cleaning products.

Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) followed up Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) and Wagner and Banos (1973) studies by focusing on advertisements found in the year 1983 and studied the comparison of advertisements from the 1950s and 1970s. Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) concluded that more diversity in female roles was displayed in advertising in the 1970s than in previous years.

*Woman workforce increase causes change.* Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) conducted a study of eight general interest magazines in 1958, and concluded that females were placed into the roles of housewives or low-income earners, with limited purchasing power. As time progressed, the number of women in the workforce increased. According to Sohn, Wicks, Lacy, and Sylvie (1999), by 2006, women would constitute over 47% of the work force, thus increasing their overall purchase power. This is a drastic increase, according to MacKay and Covell (1997), who state that in 1958 only 23.4% of women were in the labor force.

Courtney and Lockeretz's (1971) study of print advertising in eight general interest magazines focused on both working and nonworking roles of women and men,

and the products associated with them. They concluded that women's portrayal within advertising did not contain an accurate representation of the roles that women held. Over 90% of the women in the analyzed advertisements were displayed in nonworking roles in the household, such as unpaid housework or raising and taking care of children. Women were also documented as significantly more likely, 11 times, to be associated with housework in comparison to men. Even though the full-time female workers in the United States constituted 33% of the workforce, only 12% of the workers shown in advertising were female (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971). Ducker and Tucker (1977) commented that much advertising that is primarily focused toward women and in which women are featured, does not showcase the variety of women's experiences or aspirations.

Wagner and Banos (1973) did a follow-up study two years later, and discovered that portrayal of the role of the working woman was more frequent in advertisements. They found that there was no substantial change in the decision making roles of men and women in both purchases involving larger expense items and those that were seen as traditional male-dominated purchases. Sullivan and O'Connor (1988) commented that as the number of women in the workforce increased, the portrayal of the traditional homemaker decreased, but had been replaced with more alluring and decorative roles by 60%.

*Women and contemporary working roles.* Different authors identified varied categories of stereotypes. Persing (1983) identified four categories to summarize female role depictions as: homemaker, servant, sex object, and emotional, unintelligent creature.

Kang (1997) identified four distorted stereotypes of women in magazine advertising such as (1) women don't make important decisions or do important things, (2) women depend on men for protection, (3) women's place is in the home, and (4) women are sex objects.

Chi and Baldwin (2004) in their study of gender and class stereotypes across Taiwanese and U.S. advertisements discovered that 27% of females, in comparison to 69% of males, were portrayed in "working roles" (p. 160). In regards to relationship with role portrayal and sex of the model, there was a  $p < .05$  significant statistical difference. Chi and Baldwin (2004) also found that women were portrayed 33% in high-level business roles, 38% in mid-level business/non professional roles, and 14% in entertainment/sports roles. Thus, Chi and Baldwin (2004) concluded that the female stereotype of a servant was confirmed due to the fact that women were shown as inferior to men in regards to the type of work they performed.

Stephenson, Stover, and Villamor (1997) studied modern day business-related advertising to determine if women's roles are in proportion to men, and if women are portrayed in a stereotypical fashion. Stephenson, et al. (1997) conducted research using 709 business-related advertisements in a total of 144 news magazines, concluding that sex inequality still continued to exist. Advertising predominantly featured male figures in business-related advertisements.

Wolin (2003) conducted one of the most recent studies and examined top general interest, business, and e-commerce sites of over 459 advertisements. Wolin (2003) concluded that 68% of the advertisements portrayed males while 32% portrayed females, thus showcasing men with a stronger representation in e-commerce ads than women.

Equal representations were found in depiction of males and females in reference to positions of power, authority, and expertise. Females, in relation to their primary male counterparts, were depicted as having higher levels of expertise. Concluding remarks by (Wolin, 2003) state the sex role depiction in e-commerce advertising appears more equitable than previous research.

*Women as sex objects.* A Thomas and Treiber (2000) study found that *Cosmopolitan* advertising was dominated 54% by appearance promised by a product and 21% by a sex romance promise. Thomas and Treiber (2000) concluded that the female models in their studies of *Cosmopolitan* featured female images as empowered, in active stances, looking straight toward the camera. They found that there was not a great occurrence of everyday female models shown suggestively as homemakers.

Brown (1996) stated that advertisements, by promotion of beautiful bodies and products that assist in enhancement of attractiveness to the opposite sex, set the stage for sexual behavior. Brown (1996) warned that the repetition of women in the role of a sole interest in attracting men could move women in sexual relationships toward disempowerment.

Kang's (1997) study of magazines from 1979 to 1991 revealed that in 1991, 31.9% of women in advertising contained explicit nudity and body revealing, in comparison to 25% in 1979. Kang (1997) concluded that more suggestive and provocative portrayals of females in advertising are evident in 1991 in comparison to 1979, thus there was an increase in the amount of female stereotypes. Chi and Baldwin's (2004) study also documented similar findings and discovered that there was an increase

in seductive dressing from 1988 to 1998. Chi and Baldwin (2004) found that women were twice as likely as men to be depicted in decorative roles and 48% of females were portrayed in decorative/sex object roles (p. 161).

Lazier-Smith (1990) study found an increase in the portrayal of women as sex objects from 27% in 1973 to 37% in 1986 (p. 126). Ferguson, et. al (1990) found dramatic differences in the amount of female sex object representations from the years of 1973-1977 from 6%, to a dramatic increase to 48% for 1983-1987. Sexton and Haberman (1974) documented that from 1950-1951 female sex objects were used 10% of the time, in comparison to 27% of the time for the years 1970-1971. The overall impression is that the frequency of female portrayal in a sexual object or primarily decorative role has increased dramatically during the past 20 years and continues to do so.

Plous and Neptune's (1997) study examined the modern day gender bias in magazine advertising for the period from 1985 to 1994. Their study examined 1,800 advertisements to determine gender bias. They concluded that women are four times more likely to appear exposed in advertising than men. Of the women who appeared in the advertising, 43% were exposed, which increased substantially through the time period examined. They also found that cleavage exposure nearly doubled during the 10-year period examined. Plous and Neptune (1997) stated that in the one-year period of 1993-1994, 42.8% of advertisements including female models contained breast or cleavage display. This could be compared to almost half the number from the year 1985-1986, which was only 22.8%. Plous and Neptune (1997) suggest that the amount of female

model breast exposure in magazines may have hit a record high. They concurred with previous studies that indicated as time progresses forward, more women are portrayed with body exposure and are portrayed as sex objects and decorative elements.

In *Cosmopolitan's* fashion spread for February 2002, mentioned by Gauntlett (2002), the magazine fashion and beauty director was quoted as saying that the cover of *Cosmopolitan* is not complete without cleavage. The same magazine also contains an advertisement for a bust enhancement product, which claims to enhance and enlarge breasts with the headline of "Because Size Does Matter," positioned over the cleavage of a large busted female. Not only is there blatant acceptance by the magazine implying that cleavage is an important aspect of the visual image the company is projecting, the internal advertising reinforces the idea that large breasts are desirable and ideal for women.

*Gender stereotype effects.* The constant repetition of stereotypical images to the mass audience results in various harmful effects. MacKay and Covell's (1997) study showed that gender role stereotyping, rape myth acceptance, and sexual aggression against women, were accepted by both men and women who were exposed to sexually explicit advertisements.

Kim and Ward (2004) discussed potential connections that exist between sexual attitudes and magazine exposure. Kim and Ward (2004) cited cultivation theory, and stated that repeated exposure to commonly portrayed media messages causes media user beliefs and attitudes to be influenced. Gronhaug and Heide's (1992) study confirmed that

advertising effects can have an influence on the image created in the receiver's mind, and can cause standardized stereotypical perceptions.

Lafky, et al. (1996) revealed that conditions existed where exposure to certain stereotypical images reinforced gender role stereotypes for both male and females. Three hypotheses were supported (1) brief exposure of an image affects audience perception of social reality immediately after exposure; (2) brief exposure to advertisements with gender stereotypes reinforces those gender stereotypes; and (3) males and females process visual images in different ways, supporting the hypothesis that exposure to stereotypical visual images will result in a negative impact on the mass audience.

Posavac, Posavac, and Posavac (1998) discussed how the passive exposure to pictures of fashion models from popular women's magazines resulted in increased weight concerns, as well as negative body image, a detrimental problem in that body image dissatisfaction is correlated with eating disorders. Thomas and Treiber (2000) discussed the dangers of media generated stereotypes. They state that the most tragic effect is their ability to generate self-fulfilling prophecies as they transmit a stereotyped image of gender roles. Stereotypical portrayals can also have negative effects to business reputation and profit margins for companies that choose to run stereotypically demeaning advertisements. Wolin (2003) noted that companies can run into problems with advocacy groups, if their stereotypical portrayals are found to be offensive. These groups can cause a media buzz and generate negative publicity for the brand. Negative publicity can impact profit. Women who are exposed to these negative images may view a company



negatively and therefore adjust their purchasing decisions and not purchase the brand, thus causing a decrease in company profits.

*Contradicted message stereotypes.* Female depictions in higher decision-making roles became more prevalent; however, this was counterbalanced with the gender inequality of women appearing in purely decorative and sexualized roles. Lindner (2004) noted that a backlash seems to have emerged as women are shown and illustrated in more influential positions and roles. This is perceived as a threat to societal male dominance. As a result, degrading submissive and objectified images of women serve as a means by which there is a re-establishment of power and imbalance between men and women. Faludi (1991) stated that what seems to be a progression in one sense is counterbalanced by lagging in another as one stereotype was substituted for another.

Gauntlett (2002) commented on the mixed messages sent by print media, from encouraging women to be satisfied and secure with their body and size, yet and at the same time turning the page of the magazine can display diet control pills. Deirdre McSharry, *Cosmopolitan* editor in the 1980s, commented that she was not surprised that women who read *Cosmopolitan* were exposed to these mixed media messages. A woman is expected to be sexy, successful, and glamorous. "It is not surprising that Cosmo women cannot escape contradiction, as she is expected to be so many things: sexy, successful, glamorous, hard-working, sharp, and relaxed in social setting, powerful and likeable at work" (p. 53-54). Lindner (2004) noted similar findings that women were more often portrayed in more dominant and professional roles. However, there was a

significant increase in the amount of sexualized images of women as well as images showing women mentally removed from their situations.

Stephenson, et al. (1997) found that pictorial depictions of workplace advancement for women are still in evidence. The early 1990s advertising still subtly reinforced gender stereotypes. There were token female portrayal of women in the role of business owners, public relations consultants, and real estate agents. However, there was not a large representation of women in higher level positions, thus making the reality that females are seen working outside of the home but in stereotypically female positions and jobs. There was a shift of stereotype from one end to the other. Women were not seen as clerical homemakers, but were shifted into newly stereotypical gender roles (Stephenson, et al., 1997) and continued exclusion in high status positions. Even though this may have been seen as an improvement in the female gender portrayal, it was still a portrayal of women in other stereotypical positions.

As established through the literature review, a great number of studies of female stereotypes were examined within fashion magazines, targeted directly toward women. There were few studies that focused on magazines in the arena of news and business, which are primarily targeted at men. Even though the magazines are targeted to a male audience, the images still serve the same purpose in that they do have an impact on perceptions of the reader. Therefore, it is important not to overlook these magazines.

### *Research Questions*

To add to the current studies conducted in the arena of female stereotypes and to investigate the modern day depictions of women, a content analysis of nationally

circulated news and business magazines was conducted on nine verbal gender displays modeled on the studies of Goffman, Kang, Umiker-Sbeok, and Lindner. These gender displays include relative size, function ranking, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, licensed withdrawal, body display, movement, location, and objectification and are further identified in Table 1.

The four magazines chosen for this study were from the top circulated magazines in the categories of news and business, based on 2007 paid circulation numbers from the Magazine Publishers of America in overall ranking. Thus, they were the most highly read magazines within the news and business category. *Time* was rated number 10, followed by *Newsweek* rated 13, *Forbes* rated 86, and *BusinessWeek* rated 87. Thus *Time*, *Newsweek*, *BusinessWeek* and *Forbes* were used for this study.

A content analysis of these magazines was examined to answer the following questions: 1) Are female stereotypes still present in 21<sup>st</sup> century news and business magazines? 2) What is the most highly prevalent stereotype out of all four magazines? 3) What, if any, comparisons can be made to Lindner's study?

Table 1

*Coding Categories and Definitions*

Coding Category	Definition
Relative size	When both men and women are present, the man is taller and/or bigger than the woman and takes up more space in the picture.
Function ranking	When both men and women are present, the man serves as the instructor or performs an executive role.
Feminine touch	The woman touches herself (e.g. hair, face, lips) or her clothes in an unnatural way or uses her fingers and hands to trace the outline of an object, cradle it, or caress its surface. This type of touching is to be distinguished from the utilitarian kind, which involves grasping, manipulating, or holding objects.
Ritualization of subordination	The woman lowers herself physically in some form or other of prostration; canted postures are associated with acceptance of subordination. This includes lying or sitting on the ground, bed, or sofa, whether in the presence of another person or not, canted of the head or entire body. Also included in this category is a woman being embraced by a man, who inhibits her movement, or a woman leaning against a man's shoulder or holding on to his arm for support, dependant on, and subordinate to the man present.
Licensed withdrawal	The woman removes herself psychologically from the situation at large or is shown mentally drifting from the physical scene, leaving her disoriented and dependant on the protectiveness of others. This is indicated by an expansive smile or laughter, covering the face or mouth, or withdrawing her gaze from the scene at large. Being involved in a phone conversation also falls into this category.
Body display	The woman is shown wearing revealing, hardly any, or no clothes at all, which is often associated with sexualized images of women.
Movement	The woman is inhibited in her movement, by being wrapped in a blanket for example, which limits the amount of control she can exert on the environment.

(Table 1 continued)

Location	The woman is shown in a domestic environment, such as the kitchen, bedroom, or bathroom. This also includes depicting the woman in a decontextualized, that is, unidentifiable, environment that does not allow for any purposeful activities.
Objectification	The woman is portrayed in such a way as to suggest that being looked at is her major purpose or function in the advertisement.

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## Chapter 3

### Method

A content analysis of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *BusinessWeek*, and *Forbes* was conducted to analyze the pictorial depictions of women in advertising. The analysis covered every issue of these four titles from the years 2000 to 2007, so to examine the current, modern day, 21<sup>st</sup> century depictions of female stereotypes. *Forbes* was the only magazine that was published bi-weekly, and the other three, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *BusinessWeek* were all published weekly. The coding of the advertisements was based on nine specific variables: relative size, function ranking, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, licensed withdrawal, body display, movement, location, and objectification.

Because the objective of the research was to evaluate visual female stereotypes, the advertisements in the study needed to contain people. Therefore, images with unrecognizable male or female genders, as well as ambiguous figures, or extremely small images were not included in the study. Only images that showed one or more women were coded. Images including only men were not included.

#### *Procedure*

Each issue of *Newsweek*, *Time*, *BusinessWeek*, and *Forbes* from 2000 through 2007 was coded based on the categories in Table 1, which included a combination of gender displays identified by Goffman (1979), Umiker-Sbeok (1996), Kang (1997), and Lindner (2004). Baxter and Babbie (2004) indicated that the majority of content analysis requires a minimum of two coders. In order for the data that is collected from these two coders to be reliable, according to Cohen's Kappa Statistic, it must fit within a reliability

coefficient of a minimum of 70%. If this is met, then it is evident that the two coders are within agreement and is considered acceptable inter-coder reliability.

As this study involved a large volume of content analysis, and to provide reliability, the researcher trained a research assistant to code advertisements. The research assistant was not provided any information about the purpose of the study. To assess the inter-rater reliability Cohen's Kappa Statistic was used to estimate consensus between the two raters (Baxter & Babbie, 2004).

Cohen's Kappa Statistic

$$K = \frac{P_{obs} - P_{exp}}{1 - P_{exp}}$$

1- Pexp

Pobs=the proportion of agreement observed between two coders

Pexp=the proportion of agreement expected by chance alone.

The first twenty advertisements from *Time*, *Newsweek*, *BusinessWeek*, and *Forbes* from 2000 were used as a practice for both researchers. The two researchers coded each of the twenty advertisements. The coding by both the researcher and the researcher's assistant were analyzed using Cohen's Kappa Statistic based on nine coding categories. As seen in Table 2, reliability measures were established, all variables were coded over .70, thus establishing that the primary researcher and the research assistant had inter-coder reliability.

Table 2

*Inter-Coder Reliability Between Researcher and Research Assistant*

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Relative size	97%
Function ranking	88
Feminine touch	89
Ritualization of subordination	87
Licensed withdrawal	97
Body display	92
Movement	95
Location	96
Objectification	89

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N = 80 Advertisements



## *Coding*

Both the researcher and the research assistant each started with a different magazine and flipped to the first advertisement that contained a female, multiple females, or males and females. Advertisements that did not contain women were not included in this study. Then the researcher would look at the variables, as seen in Table 1, and code the advertisement based on the variables as either 0, 1 or 2. The first two variables, relative size and function ranking, could be coded 0, 1, or 2. If there was no male present a 0 would be entered as the code indicating the ad contained only females and could not be rated on the two variables. For the remaining seven variables: feminine touch, ritualization/subordination, licensed withdrawal, body display, movement, location, and objectifications were coded as either 1 or 2. Yes, constituted a 1 score in the coding system, and was coded as an advertisement that did contain a stereotypical depiction based on the variable being coded.

No, constituted a 2 score in the coding system, and was coded as an advertisement that did not contain a stereotypical depiction based on the variable being coded. Each coder coded each advertisement as yes or no, depending on if it contained stereotypical depiction in the different categories. If advertisements contained only women, with no men, then the categories of relative size and function rank were not used in coding.

*Definitions of coding categories.* Exact definitions of the categories are seen in Table 1. The following will have a more detailed description of the different ways in which the categories could be coded. Relative size is defined as the relationship between the male and the female or males within each advertisement. This category was coded

only when there was a male present in the ad with a female. Relative size as a stereotypical gender display was coded as a 1, or positive, if the male in the advertisement either was taller or larger than the female or took more space in the overall advertisement. If the advertisement tested true to this stereotype, then a 1 score was assigned, or a 2, for no stereotype was assigned.

Function ranking, like relative size, was coded only in the instance of a male subject being present in the advertisement. Function ranking was coded as a stereotypical gender display, or 1, if the man in the advertisement was seen as an instructor or performing any type of executive or leadership role.

Ritualization of subordination is present when a woman is lowered physically in one form or another such as lying or sitting on the ground, bed or sofa, canting the head or the body. It is also seen if there is inhibition in movement by a woman being embraced by, leaning on, or holding onto a man.

Licensed withdrawal is exhibited when a woman was shown mentally drifting from a scene or psychologically removed from the situation. This category is coded as a stereotype present by the subject or subjects in the advertisement either covering the face or mouth, large smiles or laughter, on the phone, or removing her gaze from the scene.

Body display is based on what the female subject in the ad is wearing or not wearing. Body display was coded as a stereotypical display if the woman in the advertisement is shown in either revealing or very little or no clothes.

Movement is the amount of control that a woman has over environment. It was coded as a stereotype, if the woman is inhibited in her movement by being wrapped in a

blanket, or any movement that will not allow her to have full amount of control on her environment.

Location is the area in which the female is placed or illustrated within the advertisement. If the woman is shown in any form of domestic environment, such as a kitchen, bedroom, or bathroom it is coded as 1, as a stereotypical gender display. If the female is in the ad and has either no background behind or around her or is in a decontextualized environment that does not exhibit any purposeful activities, it is a stereotypical display.

Lastly, objectification is identified as the way in which the woman is portrayed within the advertisement. If she is portrayed in a way that suggests that her presence is just for the viewer to look at and this is the major purpose that she exhibits within this ad, then it is categorized as stereotypical.

#### *Time Frame*

The entire time frame for the research took one year, starting June 2007 through June 2008. The magazine advertisements were examined through the use of the public library system. All magazines were available either in bounded printed books, single copies of the magazine, or on microfilm.

## Chapter 4

### Results

Overall, a total of 12,458 advertisements were coded that met the criteria.

Overall, 11,172 (90%) of the advertisements contained at least one stereotype within the nine categories. Within the advertisements that met the criteria, 6,513 (52%), included only females, while 5,945 (48%) had both female and male representation. Thus, in terms of ads that contained females there was only a 4% difference. There was not a significant amount of ads that contained either just females, or a combination of males and females. The 6,513 advertisements that had only female depiction in them, 5,918 (90.8%) contained at least one stereotypical depiction in one of the nine coding categories. In regards to the 5,945 ads that contained both male and female representations, 5,216 contained at least one stereotypical image (87.7%). Thus, advertisements in these 21<sup>st</sup> century news and business magazines do still contain female stereotypes.

In examination of print ads in *Newsweek*, *BusinessWeek*, *Time*, and *Forbes*, since each magazine varied in page length, the percentage of the total ads were examined. In terms of the total amount of ads that contained women, *Time* had the highest percentage, 30% (3,690). Second was *BusinessWeek* with 28% (3,452), then *Newsweek* with 23% (2,897). *Forbes* had the lowest number of women present in its advertising 19% (2,419).

In order to determine which of the four magazines contained the highest amount of stereotypes, data had to be analyzed in a specific way taking a number of things into consideration. Each magazine had a different number of pages, or was published more

frequently than the other, such as *Forbes*, which was only published biweekly. Thus, a percentage comparison was the most relevant way to compare the four magazines.

Each ad was rated on nine categories as seen in Table 1. Therefore, at a maximum each ad could contain a total of nine stereotypes. Overall only eight, less than 1%, out of all 12,458 advertisements contained stereotypes in all eight categories. In terms of advertising that did not contain any stereotypes 1,286 (10%) of all the ads in the study did not contain any of the nine stereotypes. Therefore, it is shown that 90% of advertisements contained stereotypical depictions of women. Table 3 shows the cumulative stereotypes in the study. Overall, there was a maximum possible of 96,568 stereotypes that could be found within the entire study. *Forbes* had the least amount of possible stereotypes overall, while *Newsweek* had the highest percentage of different variables of stereotypes.

Only eight years of advertising were examined in this study, so there was not a significant amount of change to be examined. The number of ads that met the criteria within the eight-year span ranged from 1,314 in 2007 to 1,708 in 2006.

The following data details the findings within each of the nine categories that were coded in this study: relative size, function, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, licensed withdrawal, body display, movement, location, and objectification.

Table 3

*Cumulative Stereotypical Instances of Women in Four Major Magazines*

	<i>Time</i>	<i>Newsweek</i>	<i>BusinessWeek</i>	<i>Forbes</i>	Total
Total Possible Stereotype	(n=29,128)	(n=20,387)	(n=27,600)	(n=19,453)	(N=96,568)
No Stereotypes	70%	67%	72%	74%	73%
Stereotypical	30	33	28	26	29%

### *Relative Size*

Of the 12,458 advertisements that were coded, in terms of relative size, a total of 5,943 ads met the criteria and were coded for this category. In order for an ad to be rated in this category it had to meet the criteria of containing a man in conjunction with a woman. Relative size was examined as relationship between both the male and the female. The relative size stereotype was coded as “yes,” or 1, if the man was taller, bigger, or took up more room than the women. Table 4 shows the percentage of ads with the relative size stereotype per magazine. Based on the ads that did meet the criteria and contained a male and female in the ad, 2,458 out of the 5,943 ads, or 41%, were found to exhibit a stereotype in the category of relative size. The percentage of the relative size stereotype did not vary widely from one magazine to the next ranging from 18% to 21%. Both BusinessWeek and Forbes exhibited the higher percentage of stereotypes in this category, 21%, than the other two magazines.

### *Function Ranking*

Of the 12,458 advertisements that were coded in the study, a total of 5,949 (48%) ads met the criteria and were coded for this category. Like relative size, function ranking, was examined as a stereotype only if there existed both a male and a female in the advertisement.

Table 5 indicates the percentage of ads with the function ranking stereotype by magazine. Based on the ads that did meet the criteria and contained a male and female in the ad, 1,001 out of the 5,949 advertisements coded, or 17%, were found to have a stereotype in that category.

Table 4

*Percentage of Ads with Relative Size Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>Businessweek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Men In Ads	55%	55%	50%	48%	52%
No Stereotypes	27	25	29	31	20
Stereotypical	18	20	21	21	28

$X^2(6, N=12,458) = 52.08 p < .001$



Table 5

*Percentage of Ads with Function Ranking Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Men In Ads	55%	54%	50%	48%	52%
No Stereotypes	39	38	40	43	40
Stereotypical	6	8	10	9	8

$X^2(6, N = 12,458) = 64.577 p < .001$

*BusinessWeek* had the highest stereotypical depiction of function ranking in this category at 10%.

#### *Feminine Touch*

Overall in the category of feminine touch, 20% (2,511) of the 12,458 ads coded showed a stereotype of feminine touch within the advertisements. Therefore, they showed the woman in the ad touching herself in an unnatural way, or using her fingers and hand to trace the outline of an object, cradle, or caress its surface. Table 6 indicates the percentage of ads with the feminine touch stereotype based on magazine. *Newsweek* had the highest percentage of stereotypical depiction in the category of feminine touch at 24%, while *Forbes* had the lowest at 16%.

#### *Ritualization of Subordination*

Advertisements that showed ritualization of subordination of women were found in 4,483 (36%) of all possible ads. Ads were coded stereotypical for ritualization of subordination if the woman would physically lower herself, lay or sit on the ground, or be inhibited by her movement by leaning on or being embraced by a man. As seen in Table 7, *Time* had the highest percentage of ritualization at 44%, while *Forbes* magazine was the lowest with 28%.

#### *Licensed Withdrawal*

Advertisements that showed the stereotypical display, as indicated in Table 8, of licensed withdrawal were 42% (5,173) of all the coded ads. The ads that exhibited licensed withdrawal showed the women psychologically removed from the scene or mentally drifting.

Table 6

*Percentage of Ads with Feminine Touch Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Stereotypes	80%	76%	80%	84%	80%
Stereotypical	20	24	20	16	20

$X^2 (3N = 12,458) = 54.744 p < .001$

Table 7

*Percentage of Ads with Ritualization of Subordination Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Stereotypes	56%	62%	68%	72%	64%
Stereotypical	44	38	32	28	36

$X^2 (3N = 12,458) = 1.801 p < .001$

Table 8

*Percentage of Ads with Licensed Withdrawal Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Stereotypes	60%	54%	61%	57%	58%
Stereotypical	40	46	39	43	42

$X^2 (3N = 12,458) = 38.078 p < .001$

*Newsweek* had the highest percentage of ads, 46%, exhibiting the licensed withdrawal stereotype.

### *Body Display*

Advertisements that showed stereotypical body display were 15% (1,891) out of the total 12,458 coded. Table 9 shows the percentages of ads with the body display stereotype per each of the four magazines examined in this study.

The ads that contained the body display stereotype showed the woman in the ad wearing revealing or a very limited amount of clothing. Both *Time* and *Newsweek* exhibited the highest percentage, 18%, of the body display stereotype.

### *Movement*

Movement as a stereotype was exhibited at 5% (557) of all 12,458 advertisements coded. To be coded as a movement stereotype the woman in the ad would need to be inhibited in her movement, thus limiting the amount of control she had on her surroundings. As seen in Table 10, between the four magazines, there was very little difference in the percentage of the movement stereotype, and only varied about 1% amongst the groups.

### *Location*

Women were shown in stereotypical locations in 34% (4,277) of all the ads coded in the study. Therefore, a women was seen in some type of domestic environment, whether it be a kitchen, bedroom, or a bathroom in 34% of all the ads in the study as seen in Table 11. *Newsweek* had the highest amount of ads with the location stereotype at 39%.

Table 9

*Percentage of Ads with Body Display Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Stereotypes	82%	82%	87%	88%	85%
Stereotypical	18	18	13	12	15

$X^2(3N = 12,458) = 75.127 p < .001$

Table 10

*Percentage of Ads with Movement Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Stereotypes	95%	95%	96%	96%	95%
Stereotypical	5	5	4	4	5

$X^2 (3N = 12,458) = 3.125 p < .001$



Table 11

*Percentage of Ads with Location Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Stereotypes	66%	61%	67%	31%	66%
Stereotypical	34	39	33	69	34

$X^2 (3N = 12,458) = 40.001$   $p < .001$

### *Objectification*

Women were shown objectified in 5,911 ads or 47.4% of all the advertisements coded. To be classified as objectification, the woman in the ad had to be portrayed in such a way that her presence in the ad was for the purpose of being looked at. *Time* exhibited the highest rate of objectification at 53% as shown in Table 12.

Based on the analysis of the nine coding categories and their relationships with the four magazines, the following results were uncovered. *BusinessWeek* had the highest percentage of stereotypes in two categories: relative size and function. *Newsweek* had the highest percentage of stereotypes in three categories; feminine touch, licensed withdrawal, and location. *Time* magazine had the highest percentage of stereotypes overall, and this was in the categories of ritualization of subordination, body display, movement, and objectification. *Forbes* magazine did not rank as having the highest percentage in any category, and also had the lowest percentage of stereotypes in four categories, feminine touch, ritualization of subordination, body display, and location. *Time* had three of the lowest percentages of stereotypes in the categories of: relative size, function, and licensed withdrawal. *Newsweek* only ranked the lowest in the category of objectification.

### *Comparison Study*

Lindner (2004) used the same categories of gender stereotypes to examine women in advertisements in *Time* and *Vogue* from 1955 to 2002. Table 13 illustrates the data examined in this thesis, as well as Lindner's (2004) study. The thesis found that 89% of all advertisements contained at least one stereotypical depiction.

Table 12

*Percentage of Ads with Objectification Stereotype by Magazine*

	<i>Time</i> (n=3,690)	<i>Newsweek</i> (n=2,897)	<i>BusinessWeek</i> (n=3,452)	<i>Forbes</i> (n=2,419)	Total (N=12,458)
No Stereotypes	47%	60%	51%	55%	53%
Stereotypical	53	40	49	45	47

$X^2 (3N = 12,458) = 1.187 p < .001$

Table 13

*Percentage of Stereotypes of this Study to that of Lindner's (2004) study*

Stereotype	Current Study	Lindner (2004)	Difference
Relative size	28.0%	11.1%	16.9
Function	8.0	7.3	0.7
Feminine touch	20.2	21.1	-0.9
Ritualization of subordination	35.9	33.0	2.9
Licensed withdrawal	41.5	31.9	9.6
Body display	15.2	11.0	4.2
Movement	4.5	2.5	2.0
Location	31.0	24.2	10.1
Objectification	47.4	40.0	7.4

Note. Lindner's (2004) results reprinted with kind permission from Springer Science+Business Media: Sex Roles, Images of Women in General Interest and Fashion Magazine Advertisements from 1955 to 2002, Vol. 51, 2004, p.416, Katharina Lindner, Table II, © 2004 Springer Science+Business Media, Inc.

This is 11% higher than that of Lindner's (2004) study. To make an equal comparison both relative size and function have been taken as percentages out of the entire 12,458, and expressed to the nearest tenth, as compared with Lindner's study.

In terms of the closest relationship between both studies, function ranking and movement both ranked as the category that had the two lowest percentages of all the advertisements in both studies. Function ranking was only .7% higher in the current study than that of Lindner's (2004). Feminine touch was the only coding category ranked higher in percentage of ads in Lindner's (2004) study than in the current study. There was a 16.9% difference between both studies in relative size, which was the largest difference between both studies.

The biggest differences between the data in these two studies are in the coding categories of location and relative size. There was a 16.9% increase in the relative size stereotype in the current study in comparison to Lindner's (2004). This is the highest difference between both studies. The second highest difference between both studies was identified in the location stereotype category. Where Lindner (2004) found 24.2% of ads with this stereotypical depiction, the current study finds 34.3%, which is 10.1% higher than and almost double that of Lindner's (2004) study. The third largest difference between the studies is that of licensed withdrawal. There is a 9.6% difference in that Lindner (2004) found licensed withdrawal to be evident in 31.9% of the ads, while the current study found 41.5%. Another difference between the two studies was in the result of relative size. Whereas Lindner (2004) found 11.1% of advertisements exhibiting a stereotype in this category, the current study finds a 28%, an 16.9% greater difference.

Overall, it is shown that there is an increase in stereotypes in all categories, other than feminine touch, when comparing the two studies.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

Even though modern society has made advancements, it is evident even in the 21st century, that stereotypes are still present in advertisements in news and business magazines. The overall results of this study indicated that those stereotypical images of women in advertisement were shown to be at 89%, in that there was at least one type of stereotypical depiction in one or more of the coding categories. This is alarming in that visual stereotype depictions act to activate and confirm general stereotypes (Johar, Molreau, & Schwarz, 2003), making it more likely to evaluate other members in the same stereotype group in a similar fashion, and also have an effect on the influence of judgments (Johar, et al., 2003). Among differing types of media, Sullivan and O'Conner (1988) concluded that gender-role attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors are strongly impacted by the viewing of these print advertisements.

It was shown that female stereotypes are still present in 21<sup>st</sup> century news and business magazines. The most highly prevalent stereotype between *Time*, *BusinessWeek*, *Forbes*, and *Newsweek* was found to be objectification at 47%. The least common stereotype was movement at 5% among the four magazines. *Time* had the highest number of ads available to be coded, as well as the highest number of stereotypes.

The results from Lindner's (2004) study and those of the current study concurred that there were still low percentages of both function ranking, where the man serves as an instructor or plays an executive role, as well as movement, where a woman would be inhibited by her movement. The biggest difference between both studies was in the area

of relative size, where the current study had 16.9% more ads that showed women smaller in relative size to men. The differences between the two studies ranged from 0.9%-16.9%. However, the analysis of the two studies did show that the rate of stereotypical depiction has increased.

### *Limitations of the Current Study*

There were limitations with the coding system used in this study that could be improved to get better results. Modifications and changes within the coding categories, such as making them more detailed, can provide for a more accurate coding of the advertisements. For example, the category of body display in this study was not broken down into different levels of body display. Body display was identified as a woman shown wearing revealing, hardly any or no clothes. The definition for what should be considered revealing was not clarified. The definition of revealing may be different to different types of researchers. More subdivisions in the category could be added. Within the category of licensed withdrawal, being involved in a phone conversation falls into this category. There is no consideration for the product, in that if the advertisement is for telephones, more often than not there will be an image of someone on the phone. Then the ad is automatically considered as a stereotypical depiction.

As the ways and avenues in which advertising messages can be transmitted grow, so does the possibility of images and ideas dispersed to the public. Do the ways in which the genders are depicted within the mass media in print advertising reflect society, or does society become affected by what is seen and make it become a reality? It is important, therefore, to continue to study the images that are portrayed in the media and



the effects of these images on the public. Kim & Ward (2004) showed that repeated exposure to messages results in the influence of beliefs and attitudes. As technology grows and the public continues to be bombarded with millions of messages each day, the amount of images that are processed will increase; thus there is a possibility that with more messages there will be more opportunity for certain stereotypes to permeate into the public sector.

#### *Recommendations for Future Study*

There are a great number of studies that involve the stereotypification of women in advertising. A majority of these studies focus on magazines targeted directly toward women. It would be informative to do a study that takes a closer look at the way in which men are portrayed in magazines. What different roles and categories are men put into, i.e., the provider, the swinger, or the businessman? What are the most common stereotypes of men? Do these stereotypifications change over time? How do they change?

It may be interesting to examine the relationship between ads that contain both males and females. A future study could use a longitudinal approach to examine how the portrayals of male and female gender are depicted. An examination of the relationship between the male and the female within the advertisement can be examined. What would the change be in terms of the different types of interaction that are shown in the ads? Would the type of stereotypical depiction among both men and women change over time? Would there be any type of stereotypical depictions that are seen as a constant between the gender role specifications?

Another idea for a future study can examine the type of product that is being advertised and what types of stereotypes are associated with that product. Are Coke and Pepsi identified by certain types of stereotypes? Do these types of stereotypical depictions change over the different media in which they appear, or are they consistent across the board? Is there a prevalence of a specific gender that is seen in conjunction with certain products?

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