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## Sex and Stereotyping in Sin City: A Content Analysis of Las Vegas Magazine Advertisements

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SEX AND STEREOTYPING IN SIN CITY: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF  
LAS VEGAS MAGAZINE ADVERTISEMENTS

By

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the requirements for the

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## ABSTRACT

There have been numerous studies regarding gender stereotyping, the objectification of women, and how sex is used to sell products and services. In a city that is notorious for “what happens here, stays here,” it is important to be aware of Las Vegas cultural marketing trends and how they compare with society-wide values. Using sex excessively in advertisements may have a negative impact on the Las Vegas community and the shaping of a negative image of the city. How much sex appeal is used and the levels of sexuality in Las Vegas print advertisements has not yet been researched. A content analysis of Las Vegas magazine advertisements will be used to determine how advertisers have recently used gender stereotyped ads and sexual imagery to sell Sin City. The findings of this study will determine whether or not Las Vegas advertisers follow national marketing trends. Examining Las Vegas advertisements will provide a better understanding of the possible effects it may cause on the local and national level as well as how Sin City’s business culture challenges societal norms.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Deemed the “Entertainment Capital of the World,” Las Vegas is famous for luxury casinos, extravagant shows, and endless entertainment (City-Data, 2010). There is another side to this city that has produced nicknames such as “Sin City” and the “City Where Anything Goes.” As one of the world’s biggest tourist destinations, people come from all over to experience what this city has to offer. Las Vegas is a place where people can live out their fantasies and experience the unreal. It “...contain[s] a number of similar elements of magic, seduction, and the promise of something that is marvelously different from normal...” (Belk, 2000). It is a city that capitalizes on dreams of wealth, indulgence, leisure, abundance, and sex (Goodwin, 2002). Many people come to Las Vegas to escape their everyday lives, let go of their inhibitions, and immerse themselves in total gratification of their desires and pleasures (Firat, 2001).

Las Vegas is not just a tourist destination; it is a city where people live, work, go to school, and raise families. Over 599,000 people live in Las Vegas. There are almost two million people who reside in Clark County. The entertainment and service industries are the largest employers in Las Vegas (City of Las Vegas, 2010). Although considered one of the most famous cities in the world, Las Vegas in many ways is just like any other city in America. One main difference is that residents are exposed to advertisements on billboards and in local publications that have an immense amount of gender stereotyped and strong sexual imagery.

Advertising plays a significant role on how Las Vegas is perceived. One of the most common appeals used in Las Vegas ads is sex. The city has “...cultivated a sexual



persona” (Engstrom, 2007). The sexual imagery used by the casinos and entertainment industry utilizes women’s bodies as attractions and for advertising the resort style city. According to Goodwin (2002), the female body shaped the city’s identity. It has even been said that the city was built on the symbol of a woman (Mullen, 2007). Although the imagery and levels of sexuality used in Las Vegas advertisements has changed, the city has been objectifying women since the early 1940s (Goodwin, 2002). Women as sex objects have become a symbol of Las Vegas.

In the 1940s, women were used to draw visitors to the city. Female strippers and dancers were employed to entertain hotel guests (History of Las Vegas, 2011). In the 1950s, to attract national attention, Las Vegas utilized the promotion of extreme forms of behavior for that time including parading showgirls around and showcasing near-naked women to get the media’s attention. Topless showgirls were introduced on the Strip for the first time in 1957. It was during this decade that the city began to spend large amounts of money on advertising. The spectacular hype Las Vegas received as a result, garnered a reputation of a city that was full of beautiful women and sex (Gottdiener, Collins, & Dickens, 1999).

In the 1970s, other cities, such as Atlantic City in New Jersey, legalized casino-style gaming. This new competition drove Las Vegas’ hotels-casinos to promote the city more zealously. Women as sex objects, as well as the use of gender stereotypes, were used in national and local advertising to attract tourists to visit Sin City (History of Las Vegas, 2011). Puzo (1977) argued that at this time, Las Vegas made sure that there were more beautiful women in that city than anywhere else in the world. He stated “money and

beautiful women zing together like two magnets” (Puzo, 1977). This reinforces the point that women were used as a tool or object to bring money into the city.

By the 1990s, Las Vegas tried to tone down the sex haven image and shift from Sin City to a place of fun for the whole family. This did not last long for three main reasons. The first was that many casinos did not adopt the “family Vegas” marketing theme, such as the Bellagio and the Venetian, and maintained an emphasis on upscale adult entertainment. The second reason was that the average visitor’s gambling budget did not increase proportionally to the increase of people coming to the city. And the third was that the amusement parks designed to attract children failed to make money (Gottdiener, Collins, & Dickens, 1999).

The new millennium brought about an innovative and strong brand for the city. Rob O’Keefe, Group Account Director for R&R Partners, the main public relations company in Las Vegas, stated “this is the essence of the Las Vegas brand and sets up our positioning statement – ‘Adult Freedom means Las Vegas is the place where you do things you can’t or wouldn’t do anywhere else’ ” (2007). Las Vegas advertisements today still use this brand and mentality of “Adult Freedom.” Sex and women as objects continue to play a role in the city’s marketing strategies.

Currently, national trends show a shift in how women are perceived in advertisements. Marketing has generally moved toward a less stereotypical stance (Wolin, 2003; Lanis & Covell, 1995). The majority of these changes have been within the last 50 years (Mager & Helgeson, 2010), with Las Vegas as an exception. With ad campaigns such as “What happens here, stays here” and “Everything is sexier,” Las Vegas advertisers have continued to use sexual depictions of women and have pushed the

limits of what is and is not acceptable overt sexual imagery in ads. This is an example of how local business cultures overpower societal norms.

Looking specifically at gender stereotypes and sex in Las Vegas ads has yet to be explored, but since the 1970s, researchers have examined how women are portrayed in advertisements. Many of these findings helped change the way marketers use females in ads. In the last 30 years, there has been a decrease of studies focusing on this issue. It is important to continue research and discussion of this topic because "...although the variety of roles of women represented in ads has increased, current feminist literature on gender and advertising argues that these content categories [gender stereotypes] have changed very little" (Shields, 2003, p. 251). It is also important to continue to address the issue now because women's portrayal in ads continues to be inaccurate. Research and discussion on the subject may provide awareness to marketers and their audiences which could provoke further change in gender representation in ads.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The sources pertinent to this study fall into four categories: (1) advertisements, (2) gender stereotyping, (3) sex appeal, and (4) feminist theory. A detailed discussion of each of these topics will provide background on previous research and supply an overview of information needed for a better insight on national trends and cultural influences regarding females' representation in ads.

#### Advertisements

A typical adult comes into contact with over 5000 ads a day (*Number of Advertisements Seen in a Day*, 2011). People spend a daily average of 25 minutes looking at magazines (Odekerken-Schroder, Wulf, & Hofstee, 2002). This is shifting due to increased online use and magazines switching to web base only. Advertisements convey numerous messages and some of them illustrate stereotypes, controversial topics, and use negative imagery. Investigating the types of ads people are exposed to is important because research has shown they have a strong influence on our culture as well as profound consequences. Marketers design advertisements to attract attention, to change attitudes, to be readily intelligible, and to sway our behavior. Commercial persuasion affects our social roles, language, values, goals, and the sources of meaning in our culture (Pollay, 1986).

According to Pollay (1986), there are several reasons that explain advertising's effects. They are "(1) pervasive, appearing in many modes and media; (2) repetitive, reinforcing the same or similar ideas relentlessly; (3) professionally developed, with all of the attendant research sophistications to improve the probabilities of attention,

comprehension, retention, and/or behavioral impact; and (4) delivered to an audience that is increasingly detached from traditional sources of cultural influence like families, churches, or schools” (p. 21).

Many people would like to think that they are immune to advertising’s effects, but research has shown that there is a connection between exposure to ads and how individuals feel they should look, act, and even strive to be (McMahan, Shoop, & Luther, 2008). Belknap and Leonard (1991) stated that mass media are significant agents of socialization and advertisements have a powerful impact on attitudes, beliefs, values, and behavior. Stankiewicz and Rosswili (2008) further claim that advertising defines reality and the world we live in.

In contrast, Eisend (2010) argues that advertising does not impact values and behavior in society, but rather it reflects what already exists. When cultural changes occur, advertisers adapt to those changes by portraying images they view as widely accepted. This position is “...usually bolstered by the fact that, given the many factors that influence the value system of a society, the impact of advertising is almost negligible” (p. 421).

Odekerken-Schroder, Wulf, and Hofstee (2002) would agree with Eisend to some extent stating that cultural norms are transferred from one generation to the next. Family, peer groups, and school help shape these attitudes and beliefs, but it is also important to acknowledge that the perceptions of cultural norms are constantly nourished by the media. This argument can be supported in that there appears to be a time lag between change in societal roles and the portrayals of these roles in advertising.

Does advertising impact society or does it simply reflect what already exists? “Both positions have their supporters in the literature, but so far none of the previous studies has provided unambiguous empirical evidence that is supportive of either position” (Eisend, 2010, p. 419). Although there is an inconsistency in research on this topic, the fact still remains that researching advertisements and its audience is significant and can provide further knowledge and information to answer this question and address how ads influence national and local trends and societal norms. Examining Las Vegas advertisements will expand on this issue and provide a better insight of local trends that may challenge or defy national trends as well as societal norms.

### Gender Stereotyping

Throughout the years, researchers have studied stereotyping in advertisements and have defined the word stereotype in several different ways. Odekerken-Schroder, Wulf, and Hofstee (2002) summed up definitions from other scholars and concluded that stereotyping is the assignment of a usually negative label to certain groups of people, based on ideas of how people are and tend to behave. Gender stereotyping, more specifically, is concerned with the attitudes about why men and women differ and the assumption that there is a difference. Marshall (1998) defines gender stereotyping as one-sided and exaggerated imagery of women or men. Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2008) describe it as general beliefs about “...sex-linked traits and roles, psychological characteristics and behaviors describing men and women” (p. 1413). Regardless of how it is defined, gender stereotyping is prevalent in marketing appeals.

For more than 40 years, researchers have investigated how gender roles are portrayed in ads and have been a topic of research and in literature. Although there has

been a decline in stereotyped advertisements in the United States (Mager & Helgeson, 2010; Wolin, 2003), advertisers are still depicting women as dumb blondes, halfwits, indecisive, child-like, frivolous, obsessed with men, submissive to men, simple housewives, sexual objects, overly concerned with appearance, and super-slim (Gustafson, Thomsen, & Popovich, 1999). Numerous studies have shown that gender stereotyped advertising can contribute to false ideologies and negative impacts in society (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999).

According to Lafky, Duffy, Steinmaus, and Berkowitz (1996), stereotyping in advertisements “...influences the ways individuals socially construct reality and produce (and reproduce) gender traits” (p. 380). Due to the fact that these ads are embedded in social, political, and economic institutions, gender-based inequalities are formed and reinforced. Advertising plays a contributing role by repeated exposure of images and messages that reinforce stereotypes. They also reflect a “...false picture of women’s real lives” (Shields, 2003, p. 248).

Gender stereotyped ads tend to depict women as dependent, decorative, unemployed homemakers and care givers, sex-beauty objects (Thomas & Treiber, 2000), passive, young, thin, ornamental objects, and less outspoken than men (Wood, 1994). A study by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) of advertisements in general audience magazines found that women were portrayed primarily in four major sexual stereotypes. They include (1) women’s place is in the home, (2) women do not make important decisions or do important things, (3) women are dependent and need men’s protection, and (4) men regard women primarily as sexual objects. Other researchers, such as Wiles and Wiles (1995) and Sullivan and O’Connor (1988), have replicated this study and used

these four categories to determine the use and kind of stereotyping depicted in ads. The four major stereotypes have remained a constant trend for marketers to use in advertisements. In the last 20 years, new themes have emerged in advertising. Some advertisers are placing an emphasis upon female empowerment, portraying women as vengeful, and using the “hot lesbian” in ads (Gill, 2008).

Women portrayed as housewives or in occupations considered to be inferior may lead to inequalities such as inadequate day care and unequal pay. On average, a full-time working woman only makes 80 cents for each dollar a male makes (Lips, 2008). Placing women in these roles for marketing purposes can “...provide cognitive cues from which a viewer draws conclusions about the woman in the advertisement and then generalizes these characteristics to other women,” (Lafky, Duffy, Steinmaus, & Berkowitz, 1996, p. 381). According to this viewpoint, if a female model is depicted as a housewife in an advertisement, it is presumable to say that the audience will adopt this stereotyped thinking that women being housewives is the norm.

An additional theme in advertising is illustrating women as dependent. These types of advertisements suggest that women need men to provide for them and make decisions. When women are depicted in traditional family roles, they are more likely to be placed in a role in which they are dependent on men (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971). A meta-analysis of research conducted about gender roles in ads in the last 40 years shows that females are four times more likely to appear in a dependent role than males (Eisend, 2010).

Women as sex objects is one of the more common gender stereotypes in ads. Half of magazine advertisements that feature female models portray them in a sexually



objectifying manner. Exposure to these images may lead to social problems such as violence against women or sexual harassment. Media images of objectified women maintain men's dominance by identifying women's bodies as property (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008).

It has been argued that these types of ads are psychologically and physiologically harmful. Research has shown that these images "...can affect the self-image, self-esteem, and even the physical and emotional health of women" (Gustafson, Thomsen, & Popovich, 1999, p. 5). Exposure to advertisements that use the stereotype of women as super-thin and/or sex objects can lead to body dissatisfaction which may lead to eating disorders (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999).

In contrast to objectification, empowered subjectification is also being used in advertising. Women are presented as active, empowered, sexual subjects who choose to present themselves in a manner that liberates their sexuality. "Women's sexual agency is flaunted and celebrated, rather than condemned or punished" (Gill, 2008, p. 52). This representation in ads shows the trend of sexual freedom and empowerment. According to Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, and Zavoina (1999), this sexual revolution of female empowerment is unstoppable.

Some scholars argue that advertising which appears to empower women actually serves as a backlash to feminism (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009). Women are still presenting themselves in a seemingly objectified manner. Further research is needed to determine how different women perceive these various depictions (Gills, 2008).

Another gender stereotype seen in advertisements is women being vengeful towards men. This theme depicts women as gaining the upper hand by "...punishing a

man who has transgressed in some way” (Gills, 2008, p. 46). It has been argued that these depictions are not about violence towards men, but rather women feeling stronger now than in the past and embracing “girl power” (Winship, 2000).

Others would disagree, stating that women displayed in ads as vengeful does not empower them, but rather shows a lack of power. According to Gill (2008), illustrating women as vengeful has nothing to do with girl power, but instead demonstrates that females “... cannot really change things, but simply respond momentarily with an angry, vengeful gesture that may feel cathartic but leaves the status quo of gender relations intact” (p. 47).

A gender stereotype increasingly seen in contemporary advertising is the hot lesbian, which is two or more women depicted in an erotic encounter. The models are usually extraordinarily attractive with a conventionally feminine appearance. They are slim yet curvy, with long hair and makeup. According to Gills (2008), this theme portrays women “... to be constructed primarily for a straight male gaze” (p. 50). Critiques of this type of advertising include a negative image of women being objectified and that such portrayals work to annihilate the “butch.” Others would counteract this by stating that such ads portray women’s mutual desires and that they are active sexual subjects.

Numerous studies have suggested gender stereotyping has decreased over the years. Wolin (2003) conducted a comprehensive oversight synthesis of three decades of gender-related advertising research and found that gender stereotyped ads do exist, but there has been a decrease over time. The literature holds a strong argument that there is a trend of a decline in marketers using this type of appeal. Lanis and Covell (1995) would agree, stating that women are presented less frequently in stereotyped depictions than in

the past. Some have stated that this decrease is due to other developments in the country (Eisend, 2010).

Wolin (2003) also found studies that suggested the kinds of stereotypes used in ads have changed over time. The type of magazine also plays a significant role on the appeal used in the advertisement. For example, women are more likely to appear in men's magazines as sex objects than in gender-neutral and women's magazines (Monk-Turner, Wren, McGill, Matthiae, Brown, & Brooks, 2008).

Previous studies have supported that the societal norm for advertising industry trends show a decreased use of gender stereotyping and the shift of types of stereotype used. What has not been addressed is how local business cultures affect and influence these norms. Las Vegas advertisers have followed their own marketing trends to sell the city to tourists. This advertising technique has allowed for Las Vegas to be unique and stand out from other tourist destinations.

With regard to how important it is to address gender stereotyping in advertisements, Eisend (2010) pointed out that "...avoiding stereotypes and achieving equal life opportunities for both genders in different spheres of life is a central concern of gender policy and has been a social objective in many societies" (p. 419). It is not only important to be aware of stereotyping in the media, it is imperative to seek ways to take steps that may lead to changes in how gender is depicted in advertising.

### Sex Appeal

One way for marketers to break through media clutter and draw attention is to use sexual imagery in their ads. On average, one of every two magazine advertisements that include models uses sex appeal (Stankiewicz & Rosselli, 2008). There are a number of

reasons why advertisers use sex to sell products and services: "...to attract attention to their messages, to appeal to audiences that approve of its use, and to demonstrate the 'outcomes' of buying and using the brand" (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004).

According to Monk-Turner, Wren, McGill, Matthiae, Brown, and Brooks (2008), there are three different ways women are portrayed in advertisements as sex objects: (1) a female could be the object of another's gaze, (2) she might express alluring behavior such as winking, puckering, flirting, batting eyes, or sexual teasing, or (3) she may be wearing provocative clothing. In addition, women's body parts are used as the main focal point for the ad instead of their faces (Iijima Hall & Crum, 1994).

Putrevu (2008) stated that using this type of appeal increased attention and led to better memory of the product or service. Marketers not only use sex to attract and maintain attention, it is used to evoke a positive emotional response which generates greater revenue and favorable attitudes toward the ad and brand (Reichert, 2007).

Reichert and Zhou (2007) would agree stating that viewers rate ads with sexual content as attention-getting, engaging, appealing, and interesting. Sex sells and motivates action in a consumer context.

Other studies have shown that using sex appeal in advertisements is less effective than the use of non-sexual appeals. Message comprehension and product recall were lower when sexual imagery was used (Severn, Belch, G., & Belch, M., 1990). People who are older, conservative, and sex-negative tend to respond less favorably to sexual imagery in ads (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004) Some viewers perceive sex appeal as unethical and offensive, which may lead to disapproving attitudes toward a brand (Putrevu, 2008).

Reichert and Carpenter (2004) argued that attitudes towards these advertisements depend on the audience, context, and intensity of sexual content. The levels of involvement also play a role in how people feel about sex appeal. Women, in general, do not have an unfavorable predisposition toward sexual imagery, but if the sex appeal seems irrelevant in the ad context, then they tend to have more negative attitudes about the advertisement. Men, on the other hand, do not show a strong change in attitudes toward sex appeal ads because of certain conditions such as context and level involvement (Putrevu, 2008).

Advertisers are pushing the boundaries of acceptable sexual content because of “direct competitive pressure” (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). Viewers are being exposed to overt sexual imagery. This type of marketing has been termed commercial pornography (Elliott, Jones, Benfield, & Barlow, 1995). Poses, props, and positions that are used in pornography can be found in mainstream magazine advertisements (Merskin, 2003). Severn, Belch, and Belch (1990) found that using overt sexual appeal was less effective than other appeals. On the other hand, Elliott, Jones, Benfield, and Barlow (1995) conducted a study that showed people were more accepting of the overt sexual imagery if there was gender equality in sexual representations in the advertisement.

Many ads that use sex appeal do not portray men and women equally. Women, for the most part, are depicted as sex objects. When women are used as sex objects for the purposes of marketing a product, they are stripped of their individual identities and are “...viewed as ‘things,’ objects of male sexual desire, and/or part of the merchandise rather than people” (Iijima Hall & Crum, 1994, p. 330). This objectification can lead to gender stereotyping, sexist attitudes and beliefs, sexual harassment, eating disorders,

body dissatisfaction in women, violence against women, and numerous social problems (Lavine, Sweeney, & Wagner, 1999).

Others would argue that the use of sex appeal in advertising does not depict women as passive objects, but rather as knowing, active, and desiring sexual subjects. Women have the power to choose to become sexual and desirable because this suits their liberated interests (Gill, 2003). If the sex appeal shows gender equality, the “...advertising may be assisting both women and men to achieve an ‘independence not just *of* sex, but *with* sex’ ” (Elliott, Jones, Benfield, & Barlow, 1995, p. 211). This sexual content reflects the cultural values and attitudes of sexual freedom (Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, & Zavoina, 1999). Suggesting sexual imagery in ads is an empowerment to women is debatable and research has shown a strong disagreement with this position.

Las Vegas marketers break through the media clutter and compete with other tourist destinations by pushing the limits of what is and what is not acceptable levels of overt sexuality used in advertisements. Dreams of wealth, indulgence, leisure, abundance, escape, and gratification of pleasures can all be marketed by using sex appeal. Although this type of appeal is used throughout the country, it is important to address how certain cities, such as Las Vegas, are using sex in their ads and how it differs from the rest of the society's trends.

### Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is used to examine the “...structural nature of power relations, socioeconomic exclusion, and the representation of gender in public discourse” (Gallagher, 2003, p. 26). This argument looks at the molding, direction, and expression of

sexuality which organizes society into two sexes. MacKinnon (1982) stated that there are two key concepts – power and destruction – which lead to inequality. The most effective way to raise consciousness as well as to uncover and analyze this inequality is to have a collective speaking of women’s experience, from the perspective of that experience.

Stern (1993) addressed feminist theory as exploring the difference between male-orientated (androcentric) and female-oriented (gynocentric) media, politics, and society. One of the missions for feminist theorists is “...to raise society’s consciousness by bringing out the previously hidden androcentric bias” in society. She also stated that maleness is viewed as the human norm and femaleness as the other. Steeves (1987) defined feminist theory as aiming “...to understand the origins and continuing nature of women’s nearly universal devaluation in society.” The term also implied a theoretical acknowledgment of women’s traditional devaluation.

According to Gallagher (2003), there are two central axes when using feminist theory with media. The first is analyzing the structures of power in which women are “systematically subordinated.” The other is focusing on the politics of the production of knowledge and representation of women as objects. She also stated that examining women in the media profession, or lack of, is just as important as researching women portrayed in the media.

Media feminist theory provides an understanding that “...sexual representation in contemporary advertising is really a combination of the historical legacy of patriarchy together with the economic engine of consumer capitalism” (Meehan & Riordan, 2002). An important role in the feminist media project has been to understand the role that

magazines play in “defining” women and femininity. Another strong component is how these images affect individuals and society as a whole (Byerly & Ross, 2006).

This theory has been used in previous studies when addressing topics such as gender stereotyping and female objectification in sex appeal advertisements. In order to achieve equality, it is imperative that people are educated about the issues revolving around this type of marketing. Feminist theorists need to continue researching the effects and oppression that may be caused by certain advertisements. The feminist movement has made progress in the last few decades, but researchers such as MacKay and Covel (1997) and Plakoyiannaki and Zotos (2008) show more change is needed in how women and men are represented in advertising.

The contribution and possible effects of the feminist movement can be seen in the recent marketing trend of the decreased use of males playing the executive role. Males and females are shown more equally sharing different role positions. The movement also contributed to the increased portrayal of women in the public sphere (Mager & Helgeson, 2010). Another example is feminist groups emerging in the advertising industry such as the Advertising Women of New York (AWNY). They put pressure on national advertisers to portray women as multi-dimensional characters instead of “sexually available décor” (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004).

Although there has been progress in how marketers portray women in advertisements, further action is needed before people are presented as equals and gender stereotypes and objectification of women are no longer used. In regards to this paper’s topic, feminist theory provides ways to address sexism, objectification, oppression, and the patriarchal system within the print advertising world. Many feminist theorists have



pointed out that some of the most obvious gender stereotyping and objectification of women in the media are in magazines (Byerly & Ross, 2006).

MacKay and Covell (1997) stated that to obtain true equality, one step that must be taken is for advertisers to present men and women as equals in advertisements.

Although national trends show a shift in the progression of gender equality in marketing, it is essential to also look at local climates such as Las Vegas, a city that uses women as a “capital asset” (Puzo, 1977).

Previous research on female stereotypes and sexual imagery in ads has primarily focused on a national and global level. It is important to study whether a local commercial culture is stronger than the national trends. Exposure to Las Vegas advertisements is not limited to geographical boundaries. The city markets to potential tourists all over the world. Research on Las Vegas marketing will provide an insight to the impact of cultural influences and pave the way for further research that may address effects to exposure of these types of ads.

## CHAPTER 3

### HYPOTHESES

H1: Las Vegas magazine ads will not follow the national trend of decreased use of gender stereotyped advertisements.

National trends show a shift in how women are perceived in advertisements. Throughout the United States, there has been a decline in the use of gender stereotypes in ads (Mager & Helgeson, 2010; Wolin, 2003; Lanis & Covell, 1995). Las Vegas is a unique place, economically, socially, and ethically. Because it is considered a “one industry” city (tourism), advertisements must draw attention and convince the audience that Sin City is the place for adult freedom. Following the national trend of decreased use of gender stereotypes may not be an option for Las Vegas if the city wants to fulfill their marketing goals and stand out from the rest of its competition.

H2: The use of gender stereotyping in Las Vegas ads will not have decreased, but the type of stereotype used will include more of the new themes that have recently appeared more in marketing.

Studies have suggested that the kinds of stereotypes used in ads have changed over time (Wolin, 2003). New themes and gender stereotypes have emerged in advertising. Some advertisers are placing an emphasis upon female empowerment, portraying women as vengeful, and using the “hot lesbian” in ads (Gill, 2008). These appeals are replacing traditional stereotypes. Las Vegas marketers may use these new themes to stay competitive and more edgy.

H3: High levels of sexuality will be predominately used in Las Vegas magazine advertisements.

Advertisers are pushing the boundaries of acceptable sexual content because of “direct competitive pressure” (Reichert & Carpenter, 2004). Viewers are constantly being exposed to sexual imagery because this appeal is an effective way to market a product or brand. With other cities offering great tourist destinations, Las Vegas must break through the media clutter and draw attention by pushing the envelope farther and generating a memorable brand. One way to do this is by using sex.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

A content analysis was used to examine women in Las Vegas advertisements and test the hypotheses. This methodology was chosen because it is best at providing “...a scientific, quantitative, and generalizable description of communications content” (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009, p. 1420). The research consisted of two parts. The first part addressed gender stereotyping and the second part evaluated the levels of sexuality used in the advertisements.

Gender stereotyping was measured by using a replicated approach developed by Courtney and Lockeretz (1971). Their journal article, *A Woman's Place: An Analysis of the Roles Portrayed by Women in Magazine Advertisements*, has been cited almost 300 times. This scale has been adopted and used by numerous other researchers (Wiles & Wiles, 1995; Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988; Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia, 1977; Belkaoui & Belkaoui, 1976; Wagner & Banos, 1973). Although the original study is over 40 years old, the four major gender stereotypes in this scale are still prevalent today. Three additional gender stereotypes from Gill (2008) were used. If a stereotype is not used in the ad, then the coder will use the “none of the above” variable. The seven gender stereotypes of women that were used for coding variables are in Table 1.

Table 1

<i>Gender Stereotypes</i>	
Stereotype	Description
Female's place is in the home	Housewife, mother
Female does not make important decisions or do important things	Inferior occupation, less involved with expensive purchases and important business and societal institutions
Female is dependent and needs men's protection	Men are providers, woman is helpless
Female is sex object	Decorative role, woman's body is men's property, the object of another's gaze, expressing alluring behavior, wearing provocative clothing, woman's body parts are used as the main focal point
Female is empowered subject	Independent, sexually powerful, in control
Female is vengeful	Female has revenge on male, female is constructed as powerful and feisty
Female is hot lesbian	Two women depicted kissing, touching, or locked in an embrace with each other, extraordinarily attractive with conventionally feminine appearance. Excludes "butch"
none of the above	No gender stereotype is used in ad

Levels of sexuality were measured by implementing previously used scales from Soley and Reid (1988) and Miller (1997). The scale developed by Soley and Reid (1988) has been used by other researchers including Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, and Zavoina (1999) and Reichert and Courtney (2004). Nudity and the amount of clothing were evaluated to determine the levels of sexual imagery being used in the ads.

“Clothing, or lack thereof, is a primary determinant of sexual response” (Reichert & Ramirez, 2000, p. 267). Suggestiveness was not used because it has a less concrete definition compared to nudity. There is a wide range of factors that may be categorized as suggestiveness such as camera angles, language, and other behaviors that may be considered as sexual. These factors are beyond the scope of this research and were not used to determine levels of sexual imagery for this paper.

Each discernible female model was placed into one of four categories depending on the amount of clothing worn. If the advertisement contained more than one female model, each model was categorized separately. The categories are shown in Table 2.

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Table 2

*Amount of Clothing Female Model is Wearing*

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Amount of clothing	Description
Demure	Everyday dress, fully clothed, gym clothes such as walking shorts and tennis outfit, excludes underwear and evening gowns which expose cleavage
Suggestive	Clothing that exposes the upper body such as unbuttoned blouses, muscle shirts, thin straps shirts, mini-skirts, short-shorts, full-length lingerie (unless see-through)
Partially-clad	Bathing suits, wearing under apparel, three-quarter length or shorter lingerie
Nude	Unclothed models, suggestion of nudity present, including silhouettes, translucent under apparel and lingerie, nothing but a towel
cannot be determined	

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Levels of clothing and dress on the female models were further analyzed by using parts of a scale developed by Miller (1997). How the clothing fits, shirt, chest, and skirt/shorts/dress were examined. If there is more than one female model, each model was coded separately. There were advertisements that were not applicable to some of these variables. The levels of clothing and dress are in Table 3.

Table 3

*Levels of Clothing and Dress*

Clothing	Level	Description
Fit of clothing	Very low	Clothing is loose
	Low	Clothing barely clings to skin
	Medium	Clothing clings to skin somewhat
	High	Some clothing is tight
	Very high	All clothing is tight
	NA	This includes nudity
Shirt	Very low	Shirt covers complete torso
	Low	Some stomach is exposed
	Medium	Navel is visible
	High	Bottom of shirt ends about 2” above navel
	Very high	Bottom of shirt ends about 4” above navel or more
	NA	This includes nudity
Exposure of chest	Very low	No bare skin is visible on chest
	Low	One button undone; zipper unzipped to middle of chest; neckline of shirt drops to middle of chest
	Medium	Two buttons undone; zipper unzipped to just above cleavage; neckline of shirt drops to level just above the cleavage
	High	Some cleavage is visible
	Very high	All cleavage is visible
	NA	Cannot be determined
Skirt/shorts/dress	Very low	At knee level or longer
	Low	Slightly above the knee
	Medium	Midway between top of knees and thighs
	High	At the top of the leg
	Very high	“booty shorts”; mini skirt; bathing suit; underwear
	NA	Nude; wearing pants; cannot be determined



Other coding variables that were used in the content analysis are age, race, product or service being advertised, and how many male and female models are present. The age scale was adopted from *The Content Analysis Guidebook* by K. A. Nueendorf (2002). The race categories were determined using the U.S. Census Bureau (2010). These variables may provide insight on other trends in Las Vegas magazine advertisements.

The sample was from *Las Vegas Weekly* magazine. It was coded for years from 2007 to 2011. This provides five years of the most recent female depictions. January, May, and September of each year were used for the study. Full page and half page ads featuring female models were analyzed. Each ad was photocopied and numbered for coding. Female models were coded from left to right. Advertisements that did not include models were excluded. Ads that have large crowd scenes or have models that are not easily visible were also omitted. Face profile ads were also discarded. Copy was not examined for this research.

*Las Vegas Weekly* is a free magazine that is published once a week. It is a newsprint style publication that covers a broad range of topics from politics and social issues to nightlife and dining in Las Vegas. There are more than 1,600 distribution outlets throughout the city. Both locals and tourists have easy access to the magazine. Some of the hotels on the Strip provide one in each room. The magazine can be obtained from stores, newsstands, and various outlets throughout the city (“Las Vegas Weekly,” 2011). There is an online version that provides similar content, but for the purposes of this research, only the print edition was examined.

This magazine is a member of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies (AAN). It has earned numerous awards including 63 Nevada Press Association Awards,

the Maggie Award from the Western Publications Association, and AAN first place for cover design (“Las Vegas Weekly,” 2011). *The Unofficial Guide to Las Vegas* (2010) named *Las Vegas Weekly* the best magazine for information about night life, concerts, and happenings in the city. This guide also warned that although it “contains valuable information, they are the rah-rah rags, and their primary objective is to promote” (p. 14).

Audience demographics were obtained from the *Las Vegas Weekly* website through The Media Audit International Demographics, Inc. company. Weekly readership totals more than 135,000 adults. The largest age group for this publication is 21 to 34 with 32 percent. Twenty percent are ages 35 to 44 and 21 percent are 45 to 54. The majority of readers are women with 56 percent (“Las Vegas Weekly,” 2011).

Two coders, one female and one male, were used for the content analysis. Both sexes were used because according to Reichert and Ramirez (2000), “...gender is an important determinant of evaluations and interpretations of ads with sexual content both within and between genders” (p. 268). The coders were both undergraduate students with journalism majors. They also participated in the pilot test that took place prior to the actual coding. They were briefed about content categories and definitions.

The pilot test consisted of both coders analyzing a copy of *Las Vegas Weekly* dated September 8-14, 2011. Five advertisements were evaluated. There were only two instances where the coders did not have a synonymous answer. One was under the race category. One coder put “other or cannot be determined” and the second coder put “Asian”. The advertisement was for TAO nightclub in Las Vegas and showed a woman’s bare back with Asian writing on it. See Image 1. One coder said that she assumed the lady was Asian because of the text. The other said that because he could not see the

female's face that he could not determine what the model's race was. After discussing the issue with both coders, an agreement was made that it would be "other or cannot be determined" because this research did not include evaluating text in the advertisements. The second instance was where the coders marked differently on "chest exposure" on one of the models. After discussion, an agreement was reached and levels were reviewed in further detail.

Minor changes were made to the original code sheet and code book. "N/A" was added to all the variables involving clothing. This was brought up when an advertisement displayed a "nude" model. If the woman is considered to be nude, there would be no clothing to evaluate. One of the stereotypes was rephrased on the code sheet. The "female is empowered subject" was slightly adjusted to not cause confusion to the coders. They were briefed to note on the code sheet if the female model showed only certain body parts, for example if the ad did not show the female's legs, they would state that on the code sheet.

Three hundred and fifty-four models in 209 advertisements were analyzed. Disagreements among coders were settled via discussion and consensus (Milner & Collins, 1998; Gilly, 1990; Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988; K. Schneider & S. Schneider, 1979). To check for reliability, a random sample of 10 percent of the models was recoded by the same male and female coders (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001). An online tool developed by Deen Freelon at the University of Washington was used to calculate inter-coder agreement (Freelon, 2010). Inter-coder percent agreement for the eight variables ranged from 67.6 to 100 percent. The average percent of agreement was 88.96 percent.

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS

Data were entered and analyzed using SPSS statistics program. Statistical analyses used were variable frequencies, descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations of variables, and bivariate correlations. Cases entered as information that cannot be determined were treated as missing in the analysis. Quantitative data was used to address the hypotheses. Findings for each hypothesis will be addressed separately, as well as additional information that was found in the data.

H1: Las Vegas magazine ads will not follow the national trend of decreased use of gender stereotyped advertisements.

Hypothesis 1 was supported. A frequency analysis was used to establish how many of the models were identified as a gender stereotype in Las Vegas advertisements. The magazine chosen for this study did not follow the national trend of decreased use of stereotypes. Only 4 percent of the models analyzed were not depicted as a gender stereotype. The majority of ads used the stereotype that fell under the Sex Object category with 80.8 percent. Variable frequency of gender stereotypes is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

<i>Variable Frequency, Gender Stereotypes in Advertisements</i>		
Stereotype	Frequency	Valid %
Place is in the home	2	.6
Dependent or needs men's protection	10	2.8
Sex object	286	80.8
Empowered subject	22	6.2
Vengeful toward male	0	0
Hot lesbian	20	5.6
None of the above	14	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Cross-tabulation of stereotype and year revealed there was not a pattern of decreased use of gender stereotyping during the years analyzed. In 2007, 94.9 percent used a stereotype, 2008 was 97.8 percent, 2009 was 98.8 percent, 2010 was 98.2 percent, and 2011 was the lowest with 81.5 percent. Using Pearson Chi-Square test, 2-sided significance was 0.011 with a value of 37.346. For the chi-square test, 66.7 percent of cells have an expected count of less than 5, with a minimum expected count of .15. A larger sample size may offer a more meaningful chi-square value. Due to the limitation of analyzing only five years, it could not be determined what the trend has been over a longer time span.

Las Vegas advertisers are not following the national trend, they are portraying women in a gender stereotypical manner in the majority of their ads. This may be due to

Las Vegas being unique and a “one industry” city (tourism). There may be pressure to continue the use of stereotyping in ads to draw attention and stand out from the rest of its competition. It can be argued that Las Vegas’ main advertising appeal is sex, with 80.8 percent of the models coded as sex objects.

H2: The use of gender stereotyping in Las Vegas ads will not have decreased, but the type of stereotype used will include more of the new themes that have recently appeared more in marketing.

Hypothesis 2 was not supported. The new themes were empowered subject, vengeful toward male, and hot lesbian. Only 11.8 percent of the models coded accounted for these stereotypes, with 6.2 percent as empowered subjects, 5.6 percent were hot lesbians, and there were no females coded as vengeful toward male.

The empowered subject variable can arguably be subjective. Although it is defined in detail in the code book, it is still up to the individual if the female model is empowered or not. Further research is needed to provide a more meaningful insight of how women are represented as empowered subjects in advertisements.

Of the 354 models, 286 were sex objects. Because the majority was coded as this gender stereotype, a sub-category of the different types of “sex object” may provide a better detail of how females are being portrayed in Las Vegas advertisements. This is discussed more in Chapter 6.

H3: High levels of sexuality will be predominately used in Las Vegas magazine advertisements.

Hypothesis 3 was supported. Levels of sexuality were determined by amount and fit of clothing each female wore. Frequencies were run on clothing amount, fit of

clothing, shirt, chest exposure, and length of skirt/shorts/dress. Using correlation analysis on these five variables showed a 2-tailed significance of 0.000 with it being significant at the 0.01 level. A scale was made by computing these five variables together to determine an overall level of sexuality. A frequency analysis of this scale is shown in Table 5. The scale showed that the percentage of females increased as the levels of overall sexuality increased. This scale was also used to cross-tabulate with other variables such as stereotype, brand/service/product, and year.

Table 5

*Levels of Sexuality Scale Using Combined Variables  
(clothing amount, fit of clothing, shirt, chest exposure, and length of skirt/shorts/dress)*

Level of Sexuality (5=lowest; 25=highest)	Frequency	Valid %
5	1	.6
6	2	1.2
7	1	.6
8	1	.6
9	4	2.4
10	4	2.4
11	4	2.4
12	5	3.0
14	8	4.8
15	4	2.4
16	4	2.4
17	11	6.6
18	9	5.4
19	8	4.8
20	8	4.8
21	9	5.4
22	57	34.3
23	26	15.7
Total	166	100
Valid N=166, Missing=188		

Each individual variable for level of sexuality showed interesting results. The clothing amount variable results showed that demure had a valid percent of 19.9, suggestive was 15.9 percent, the highest was partially-clad with 54.6 percent, and suggested nude was 9.3 percent (N=346, Missing=8). This shows that Las Vegas advertisers tend to go as far as partially-clad, but do not cross the line of using nudity. A cross-tabulation of year and clothing amount showed there has been an increase of demure clothing amount from 15.5 percent in 2007 to 33.3 percent in 2011. Suggestive, partially-clad, and nude did not show a significant change over the years. An analysis of additional years may offer a more meaningful insight to trends over time.

Fit of clothing on the females was predominately very tight with a valid percent of 66.6. Very loose was the lowest with only 1.8 percent (N=326, Missing=28). Results of the shirt variable showed that most of the female models wore either least revealing with 31.4 percent or most revealing which was 44.1 percent (N=286, Missing=68). The shirt was measured by the exposure of the stomach. There were advertisements in the sample that were coded as partially-clad or very high cleavage exposure, but the shirt was coded as least revealing because it only focused on the torso. For example, one advertisement has a female wearing a sports referee outfit. The skirt is very short and chest exposure is high, but her stomach is not showing. See Image 2. Although this is an important variable when determining what female models are wearing, it may not provide a valid insight to the overall levels of sexuality.

The majority of female models coded in this sample had high chest exposure with a valid percent of 50.9. Very high chest exposure was 22.8 percent. The lower three levels accounted for 26.2 percent (N=320, Missing=34). The fifth variable used to



determine levels of sexuality is the length of skirt, shorts, or dress. Like many of the other variables, the most revealing was the highest valid percent with 80.5. (N=200, Missing=154). Of the 354 models coded, 43.5 percent were cannot be determined for this variable. This was due to many of the advertisements not including the lower half of females' bodies, showing them above the waist. See Image 3. The issue of certain body parts of the model not being included in the ad also contributed to missing data for the other variables. For example, one advertisement only showed the female's legs; so shirt, chest exposure, and fit of clothing could not be determined. See Image 4.

A cross-tabulation of the levels of sexuality scale and gender stereotype showed when there was not a stereotype used, the level of sexuality was lower. These ads did not exceed 10 on the scale (5 is the lowest level and 25 is the highest). As expected, the sex object stereotype had high levels of sexuality with the majority over 22 on the scale. The hot lesbian variable also had high levels of sexuality with 80 percent over 20 on the scale. See Image 5. Due to the small number of models coded as place in the home, dependent on men, and empowered subject, levels of sexuality did not show significance. A larger sample size may offer a more meaningful insight on the correlation of gender stereotypes and levels of sexuality used in advertising.

Additional findings outside the scope of the hypotheses revealed interesting data that may provide more of an understanding of Las Vegas print advertisements. The number of ads and pages in *Las Vegas Weekly* has decreased over the five years examined. In 2007, there was an average of 85 pages and 22 advertisements (coded for this research) per issue. In 2011, the amount dropped to an average of 63 pages and 6 ads. A factor that may have affected this decline in magazine size and amount of ads is the

economy. A larger sample size as well as additional research may offer a more meaningful insight on the decreasing size of this publication and other magazines.

A frequency analysis of race showed that a valid percent of 81.5 were White. Asian was 7.9 percent, Hispanic or Latino was 7.3 percent, African American was 3 percent, and one female was coded as American Indian with .3 percent (N=329, Missing=25). The lack of representation of minorities is an issue in itself and should be addressed more in detail in further research. A larger sample of Las Vegas advertisements may provide a better insight on this subject.

Brand, service, or product of each ad was coded. An additional variable was created to combine the results into categories of nightclub, strip (tease) club, casino/hotel, bar, and other. Frequency analysis showed 35.6 percent were nightclubs, 21.2 percent were strip clubs, 10.5 percent were casinos/hotels, 8.2 percent were bars, and 24.6 percent were other, which included shows, various products, and events. Cross-tabulation of gender stereotype and brand/service/product showed that 40 percent coded as sex object were nightclub advertisements and 23 percent were strip (tease) clubs. Of the 14 models that were coded as not being gender stereotyped, 2 were for nightclubs, 1 was for casino, 1 for bar, and 10 as other. From this data, it can be argued that nightclubs in Las Vegas stereotype females as sex objects in their marketing. Of the categories analyzed, each one was found to have used gender stereotyping.

Frequency analyses of the amount of males and females in each advertisement showed 74 percent of the ads analyzed did not include males. The majority of ads had less than 3 females, with 39.5 percent having one female, 17.5 percent with two, and 12.7 percent with three. The most females in one ad were seven with 4 percent. Cross-

tabulation of males and females showed that when there were males in the ad, females outnumbered them. Advertisements with four females would have two males, four females would have two males, and six females would have three or four males. There were a couple of instances that this pattern did not fit. These ads were for events or concerts that showed famous people or bands. See Image 6. Cross-tabulation of number of females and number of males is shown on Table 6. The few exceptions excluded, this data shows that Las Vegas advertisers market the appeal that the women in this city are single or “available”. This tactic may also create the appearance that there are more women in Las Vegas than men.

Table 6

*Number of Females and Males in Advertisements Using Cross-tabulation*

		Males								
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	8	Total
Females										
1		109	18	7	3	0	1	2	0	140
2		44	10	4	4	0	0	0	0	62
3		30	9	0	6	0	0	0	0	45
4		16	0	12	0	0	0	0	4	32
5		25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
6		24	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	36
8		14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Total		262	37	23	19	6	1	2	4	354

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSION

As national marketing trends in the United States show a shift in the use of gender stereotyping and how women are presented in advertisements, it is important to look at how local and cultural influencers challenge societal norms. The research and data found in this thesis show Las Vegas does not follow the national trend of decreased use of gender stereotyping and has high levels of sexual imagery in their ads. These influences may have a stronger effect on Las Vegas because it is a unique city with a marketing goal emphasizing a tourist destination of adult freedom and “the city where anything goes”.

Sex appeal in advertisements is a common theme. Las Vegas differs from national marketing in that very high levels of sexual imagery are used. The city is pushing the boundaries and using overt sexuality to break through the media clutter and draw attention to generate a more memorable brand. One example is an advertisement displaying a naked female covering herself with a disco ball. See Image 7. Competitive pressure with other tourist destinations may have led to Las Vegas using this type of marketing which has been termed “commercial pornography”.

Placing females as the role of sex objects was used 80.8 percent of the time in Las Vegas ads. People who are exposed to these ads may have a skewed perception of reality of the city of sin. Previous research on the objectification of women in advertising shows this method of marketing may lead to social problems such as violence against women or sexual harassment. It has been argued that that these types of ads are psychologically and physiologically harmful to women.

This research contributes to feminist theory by raising consciousness of the continuing nature of the devaluation of women and bringing awareness of how females are portrayed as sex objects in Las Vegas advertisements. The findings in this thesis provide a better understanding of how cultural influences affect how women are represented in the media. Although there has been a national shift in the progression of gender equality in marketing, these findings illustrate that taking a closer look at local climates, such as Las Vegas, reveals that change is needed to improve the representation of females in ads. To obtain equality, one step that must be taken is for advertisers to present men and women as equals in advertisements. Research that exposes gender inequality in advertising may aid in the movement of gender equality by informing the public and putting pressure on advertisers.

Findings in this thesis can be applied to future research when examining how gender stereotypes and levels of sex appeal are used in Las Vegas advertising. Implementing this research in future studies may also provide an insight to how other cities and cultures with unique marketing strategies differ from societal norms. The three new variables added to the traditional stereotypes provide a better awareness of how representations of females in ads are changing. The advertising world is in a constant state of transformation. Research on new developments and trends in marketing provide an insight to how this media affects individuals and society.

These findings are interesting in that several elements of Las Vegas have mainstreamed, but the local culture retains a strong emphasis on stereotypes. Implications of this marketing strategy may be that Las Vegas advertisers think sex is the most effective way to promote the city and attract tourists. The cons of having a reputation of a

city of sin and sex may be outweighed by the pros of using shock-valued advertising to stand out from the rest of the competition.

#### Limitations of Study

The sample of Las Vegas advertisements was limited due to availability of publications. Only five years of *Las Vegas Weekly* were accessible for coding. Additional Las Vegas magazines were not analyzed in this research because most current publications have been in circulation for a short amount of time or were not available. These limitations were the primary factors for a small sample size. A larger sample may provide a better representation of Las Vegas advertisements over a longer span of time.

Due to the scope of this research, not all ads were analyzed. Advertisements that did not have females, had large crowd scenes, were less than half a page in size, or were face-profile ads were omitted. Excluding these ads may have limited the overall representation of Las Vegas marketing. Copy, gestures, suggestiveness, camera angles, language, and other behaviors were not examined. Not applying these variables may have also limited a full analysis of these ads.

Advertisements that showed only certain body parts of the female model were a factor in cases of missing data. Variables affected by this were race (Missing=25), age (Missing=13), clothing amount (Missing=8), fit of clothing (Missing=28), shirt (Missing=68), chest exposure (Missing=34), and skirt/shorts/dress (Missing=154). Not all cases of missing data were due to this issue. Advertisements coded as nude for clothing amount had missing data of fit of clothing, shirt, and skirt/shorts/dress because the female was not wearing items of clothing. Missing data limits the assessment of this research.

Context is needed to provide a better understanding of the portrayal of females in Las Vegas advertisements. Although content analysis provides data of how women are represented in ads, it does not supply information for the why questions. Qualitative data is needed to address why *Las Vegas Weekly* and other publications choose certain ads for their magazines and why advertisers use certain appeals in their marketing. The findings in this study can be used to aid in further research that may address the why questions and provide a more meaningful insight and context to this topic.

#### Further Research

Local and cultural influences affect how Las Vegas advertisers market the city. Gender stereotypes are still predominately used in Las Vegas print ads. Further discussion and examination will contribute to additional research done on this topic. This may provide a better insight of gender stereotypes and levels of sexual imagery in Las Vegas advertisements as well as how cultural influences shape local marketing trends that do not conform to national advertising.

With 80.8 percent of Las Vegas advertisements using females as sex objects, a sub category of this gender stereotype may provide a more meaningful insight on how women are portrayed sexually in ads. More narrow themes may include empowered sex subject (Gill, 2008; Gill, 2003), sensual, exotic, cute, and sex kitten (Englis, Solomon, & Ashmore, 1994), to name a few. Although hot lesbian was coded as a separate variable for this research, it may also be used as a sub category for sex object because it depicts two or more women in an erotic encounter.

Previous research on gender stereotyping and objectification in advertisements has consisted mainly of females. Men, the LGBT community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and

transgender) and other minorities are also being portrayed in stereotypical manners and being presented as sex objects in marketing. Future studies may provide insight on how these groups are represented in ads as well as the possible negative psychological and physiological effects.

Examination of advertisements in alternative media besides magazines will provide a more complete analysis of trends and methods in Las Vegas marketing. Print publications now have online versions, with many of them shifting to web-based only. Advancements in media technology are changing the way advertisers market to consumers. Future research should include the internet as well as television, radio, and billboards.

Applying other methods in further research may provide insight on how people are affected by Las Vegas advertisements. Interviewing the city's residents will present a better understanding of how exposure to gender stereotyped and sexual imagery in Las Vegas ads impact the local community. Conducting interviews of people on the national level can provide insight on how Las Vegas ads influence the perception of the city.

The findings in this research have shown that local and cultural influences can have a stronger impact than national trends in marketing. Las Vegas continues to use gender stereotyping and high levels of sexual imagery in ads. Future research on this issue is needed to bring awareness of how females may be depicted in demeaning and unequal manners in Las Vegas marketing.



APPENDIX 1

EXAMPLE CODE SHEET

Coder _____			
date _____			
brand/service/product _____			
advertisement # _____			
number females _____ males _____			
Female model (evaluate each one individually, starting left to right) _____			
age	12 or younger	age	White
	13-19		Black or African American
	20-39		Asian
	40-64		Hispanic or Latino
	65 or older		American Indian
	cannot be determined		other or cannot be determined
stereotype	female's place is in the home		
	female does not make important decisions or do important things		
	female is dependent and needs men's protection		
	female is sex object		
	female is empowered subject		
	female is vengeful toward male		
	female is hot lesbian		
	none of the above		
clothing amount	demure: everyday dress, fully clothed, gym clothes...		
	suggestive: unbuttoned blouses, mini-skirts, short-shorts, full-length lingerie...		
	partially-clad: bathing suits, wearing under apparel, three-quarter length lingerie...		
	nude: unclothed, suggestion of nudity, translucent under apparel, nothing but a towel...		
	cannot be determined		
fit of clothing	very low: clothing is loose		
	low: clothing barely clings to skin		
	medium: clothing clings to skin somewhat		
	high: some clothing is tight		
	very high: all clothing is tight		
	NA: (this includes nudity)		
shirt	very low: shirt covers complete torso		
	low: some stomach area is exposed		
	medium: navel is visible		
	high: bottom of shirt ends above 2" above navel		
	very high: bottom of shirt ends above 4" above navel or more		
	NA: (this includes nudity)		
chest exposure	very low: no bare skin is visible on chest		
	low: one button undone, unzipped to middle or chest, neckline drops to middle of chest		
	medium: two buttons undone, unzipped or neckline dropped just above cleavage		
	high: some cleavage is visible		
	very high: all cleavage is showing		
cannot be determined			
skirt/shorts/dress	very low: at knee level or longer		
	low: slightly above the knee		
	medium: midway between top of knees and thighs		
	high: at the top of the leg		
	very high: "booty shorts", bathing suit bottoms, underwear, or mini skirt		
	N/A: wearing pants, nude, or cannot be determined		
comments/notes			

## APPENDIX 2

### EXAMPLE CODE BOOK

#### General:

- Coder - - number that is assigned to each ad coder.
- Date - - the date of the publication.
- Business/service/product - -the business, service, or product that is being advertised in the ad. If there is more than one being advertised in a single ad, choose the main business/service/product.
- Advertisement number - - number assigned to ad in issue of publication.
- Number of females and/or males in ad - - the amount of female and male models in ad.
- Female model number: the number assigned to the female model if there is more than one model in a single advertisement.

#### Stereotype of female model:

- 1 - - female's place is in the home: housewife, mother.
- 2 - - female does not make important decisions or do important things: inferior occupation, less involved with expensive purchases and important business and societal institutions.
- 3 - - female is dependent and needs men's protection: men are providers, woman is helpless.
- 4 - - female is a sex object: decorative role, woman's body is men's property, the object of another's gaze, expressing alluring behavior, wearing provocative clothing, woman's body parts are used as the main focal point.
- 5 - - female is empowered subject: independent, sexually powerful, in control.
- 6 - - female is vengeful: female has revenge on male, female is constructed as powerful and feisty.
- 7 - - female is hot lesbian: two women depicted kissing, touching, or locked in an embrace with each other, extraordinarily attractive with conventionally feminine appearance. Excludes "butch."
- 8 - - none of the above or cannot be determined.

#### Amount of clothing female model is wearing:

- 1 - - demure: everyday dress, fully clothed, gym clothes such as walking shorts and tennis outfit, excludes underwear and evening gowns which expose cleavage.
- 2 - - suggestive: clothing that exposes the upper body such as unbuttoned blouses, muscle shirts, thin straps shirts, mini-skirts, short-shorts, full-length lingerie (unless see-through).
- 3 - - partially-clad: bathing suits, wearing under apparel, three-quarter length or shorter lingerie.
- 4 - - nude: unclothed models, suggestion of nudity present, including silhouettes, translucent under apparel and lingerie, nothing but a towel.

- 5 - - cannot be determined.

Fit of clothing:

- 1 - - very low: clothing is loose.
- 2 - - low: clothing barely clings to skin.
- 3 - - medium: clothing clings to skin somewhat.
- 4 - - high: some clothing is tight.
- 5 - - very high: all clothing is tight.
- 6 - - NA: this includes nudity.

Shirt:

- 1 - - very low: shirt covers complete torso.
- 2 - - low: some stomach area is exposed.
- 3 - - medium: navel is visible.
- 4 - - high: bottom of shirt ends about 2" above navel.
- 5 - - very high: bottom of shirt ends about 4" above navel or more.
- 6 - - NA: this includes nudity.

Exposure of chest:

- 1 - - very low: no bare skin is visible on chest.
- 2 - - low: one button undone; zipper unzipped to middle of chest; neckline of shirt drops to middle of chest.
- 3 - - medium: two buttons undone; zipper unzipped to just above cleavage; neckline of shirt drops to level just above the cleavage.
- 4 - - high: some cleavage is visible.
- 5 - - very high: all cleavage is visible.
- 6 - - cannot be determined.

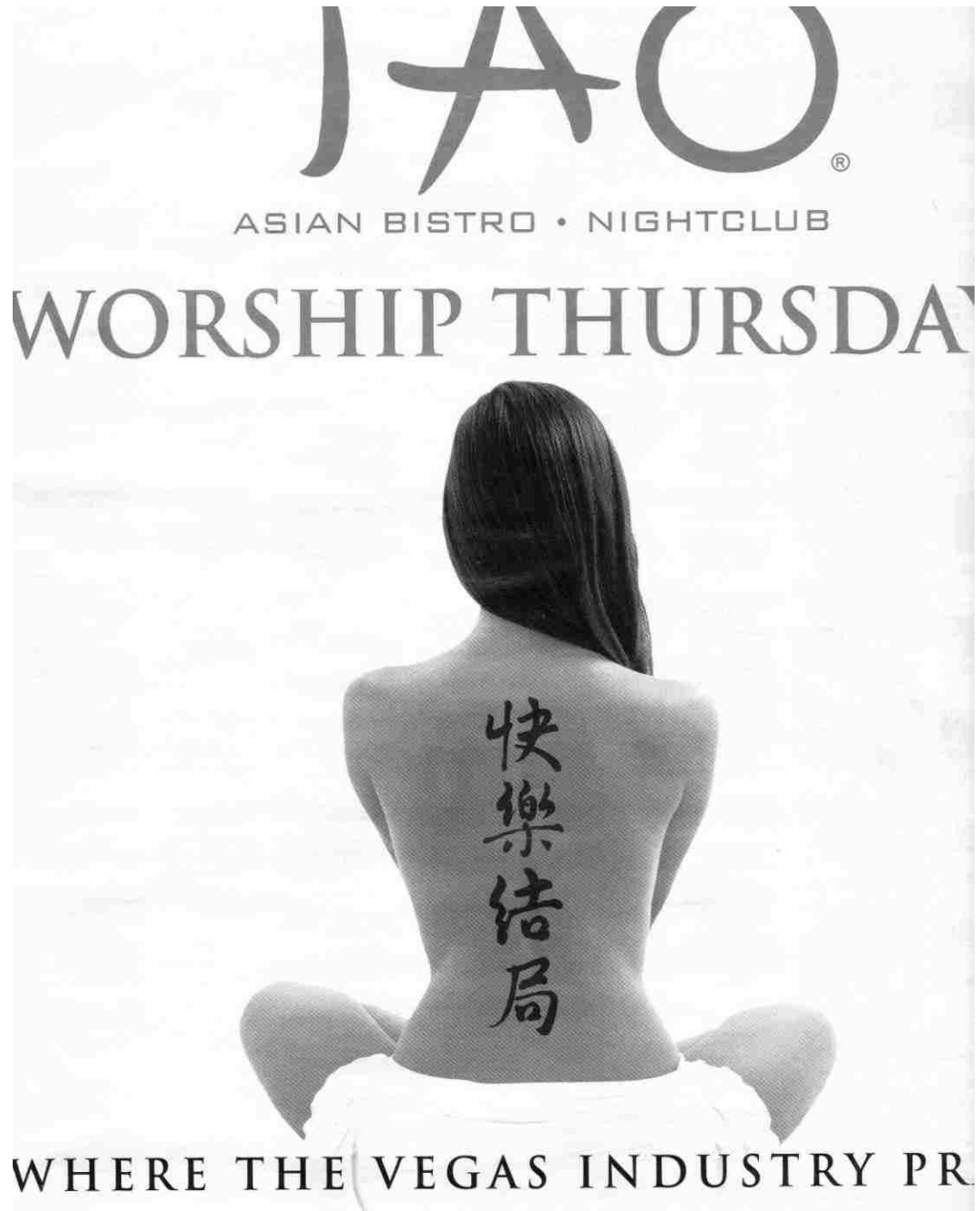
Skirt/shorts/dress:

- 1 - - very low: at knee level or longer.
- 2 - - low: slightly above the knee.
- 3 - - medium: midway between top of knees and thighs.
- 4 - - high: at the top of the leg
- 5 - - very high: "booty shorts"; mini skirt; bathing suit; underwear.
- 6 - - NA: wearing pants; nude; cannot determine.

APPENDIX 3

IMAGES

IMAGE 1



*Las Vegas Weekly*, September 2011

IMAGE 2

**PARLAY CONTESTS & FREE BEER MONDAYS!**

**1,000 FREE PARLAY CONTESTS!**

**\$1,000 winner each week!**  
great weekly prizes at each tavern!

**FREE BEER MONDAY NIGHTS!**

Host picks a player, he scores a touchdown,  
**EVERYONE** gets a **FREE Budweiser®**  
and **Bud Light®** draft\*!

**FOOD & COLLEGE  
FOOD & DRINK SPECIALS!**

& Bud Light® Pints	\$2.50
& Bud Light® Mugs	\$3.50
Bucket of Wings or Sliders!	\$16.99

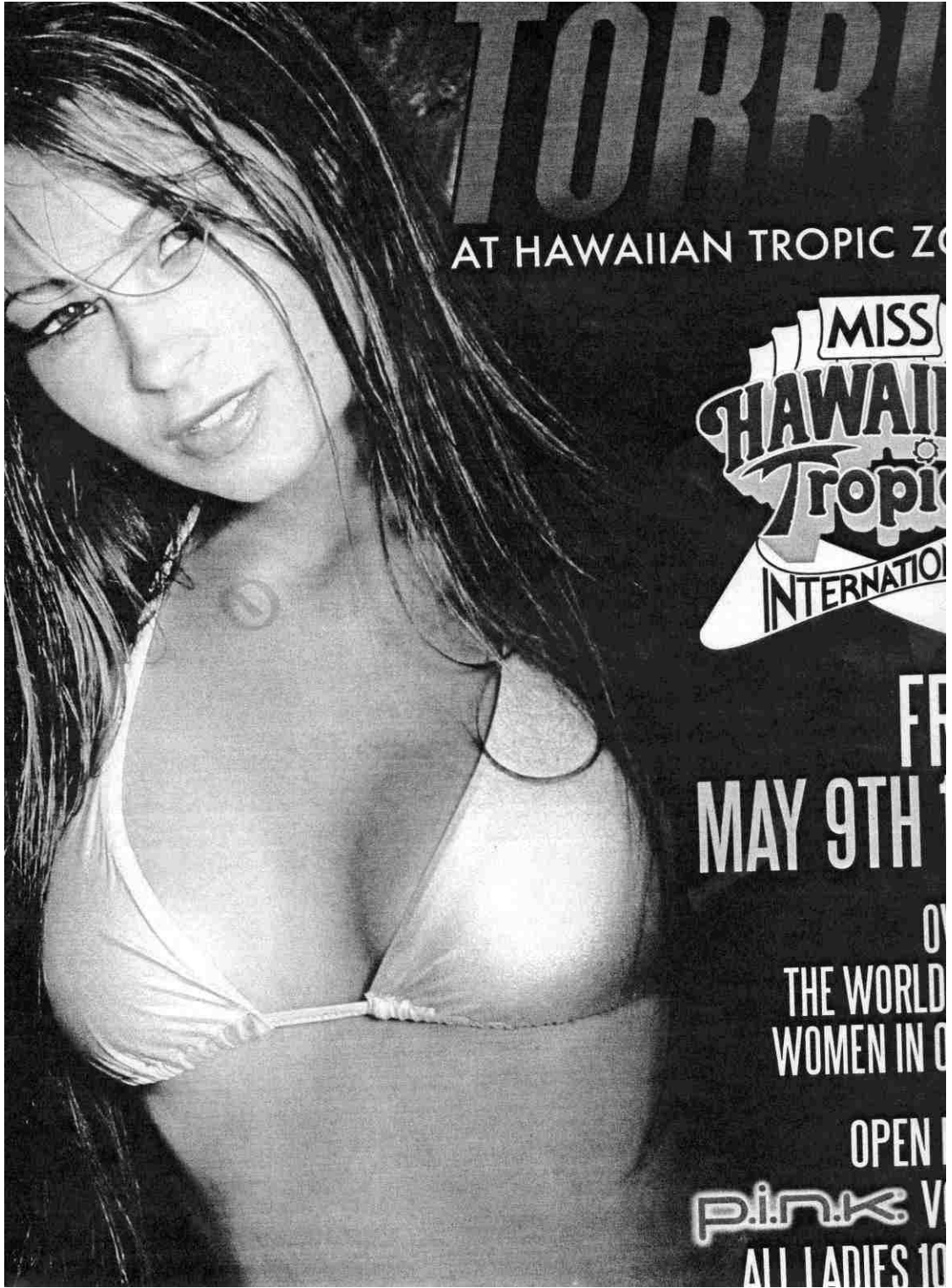
**PT'S**  
OLD • PLACE • PUB  
WANT MY PT'S!

[www.goldentaverngroup.com](http://www.goldentaverngroup.com)

Sept 21. Non-Golden Rewards members will win \$500 for parlay contest. Food and drink specials valid 9a-9p. Monday from 5p-9p. Saturday & Sunday from 9a-9p. \*Free beer Mondays are special

Las Vegas Weekly, September 2008

IMAGE 3



*Las Vegas Weekly*, May 2008



IMAGE 4



**tripleXXX**  
**TUESDAYS**

 **Pink Visual**  
www.pinkvisual.com

**Sign up now for drink specials and lap dances**  
TEXT "SEAMLESS" TO 30364      TEXT "NUDE" TO 30364

  
**seamless**  
the sexier side of nightlife  
ENTERTAINMENT 24 HOURS A DAY 7 DAYS A WEEK  
S. Arville www.seamlessclub.com  
myspace.com/seamlesslasvegas  
Free Shuttle Call 702.227.5200

**SHERI'S**  
**CABARET**

  2580 South Highland Drive, just off Sahara near the  
www.sheriscabaret.com  
www.myspace.com/sheriscabaret

Las Vegas Weekly, May 2007

**SELL YOUR CAR CHEAP!**



Reach 195,000 readers!  
4 weeks - **ONLY \$45!** 990-2422

**LAS VEGAS**

**WEEK**

NOW OPEN

# BAVES

ADULT BOUTIQUE &

GENTLEMEN'S CLUB

**NUDE**

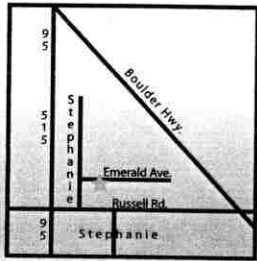
LARGEST SELECTIONS OF  
ADULT NOVELTIES & DVD'S

CLUB WEAR | SHOES | LINGERIE  
JUSTLER • PLAYBOY • LEG AVENUE • AND MORE

ADULT ART  
& THEATRE

186 CHANNEL P  
COMFORTABLE BO

2 MINI THEATRE  
ALL NEW RELEA



5901 EMERALD AVENUE, LAS VEGAS | 702-435-7545

*Las Vegas Weekly, January 2008*



IMAGE 6

**METAL SKOOL**  
DJ Scotty Boy - OPENING SET @ 9PM  
KICK OFF YOUR WEEKEND WITH AN HOUR AND A HALF OF METAL MAYHEM!  
HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO

**BCBG MAX**  
GIVING AWAY C  
\$5,000  
WATCHE  
SEPTEMBER  
LADIES ENTERING BEFORE MIDNIGHT DRINK FREE CH  
HARD ROCK HOTEL

*Sunday School*  
BODY ENGLISH  
NIGHTCLUB - LAS VEGAS  
SB  
SWIZZ BEATZ  
SEPTEMBER 9th  
SWIZZ BEATZ  
BIRTHDAY PARTY  
GIRLS IN SCHOOLGIRL OUTFITS  
DRINK FREE CHAMPAGNE.

re:bro  
featuring  
max  
groove

Las Vegas Weekly, September 2007

IMAGE 7

TAO  
NIGHTCLUB

THURSDAY JANUARY 11

道  
TAO  
NIGHTCLUB | AVN WEEK

**DIVA PARTY**  
DON'T MISS THE PREMIERE OF MISTRESS COUTURE, THE NEW LINGERIE/CLOTHING LINE FROM TERA PATRICK. FASHION SHOW AT MIDNIGHT, STARRING-TERA

THE SECOND ANNUAL DIVA LAS VEGAS PARTY  
THURSDAY JANUARY 11, 2007

**TERA PATRICK**

Worship  
pv PureVanilla.com  
Tommie  
Mistress

THE VENETIAN • 702.388.8588 • SPECIAL TAO VALET PARKING AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE • WWW.TAOLASVEGAS.COM • WWW.CLUBTERA.COM

Las Vegas Weekly, January 2007

APPENDIX 4

IRB EXCLUSION FORM



**Social/Behavioral IRB –Review  
Notice of Excluded Activity**

**DATE:** April 2, 2012

**TO:** Dr. Daniel Stout, School of Journalism and Media Studies

**FROM:** Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects

**RE:** Notification of IRB Action  
Protocol Title: **Sex and Stereotyping in Sin City: A Content Analysis of Las Vegas Magazine Advertisements**  
Protocol# 1203-4094M

---

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45CFR46.

The protocol has been reviewed and deemed excluded from IRB review. It is not in need of further review or approval by the IRB.

*Any* changes to the excluded activity may cause this project to require a different level of IRB review. Should any changes need to be made, please submit a Modification Form.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at [IRB@unlv.edu](mailto:IRB@unlv.edu) or call 895-2794.

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Thesis Title:

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Thesis Examination Committee:

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