

6-1-2000

# Gender in Television Advertising: A Thematic Analysis

Jennifer M. Priest

*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork>

---

## Recommended Citation

Priest, Jennifer M., "Gender in Television Advertising: A Thematic Analysis" (2000). *Student Work*. 1848.  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/studentwork/1848>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Work by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).



**Gender in Television Advertising:  
A Thematic Analysis**

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Communication

And the Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

By

Jennifer M. Priest

June, 2000

UMI Number: EP73488

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



UMI EP73488

Published by ProQuest LLC (2015). Copyright in the Dissertation held by the Author.

Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

All rights reserved. This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code


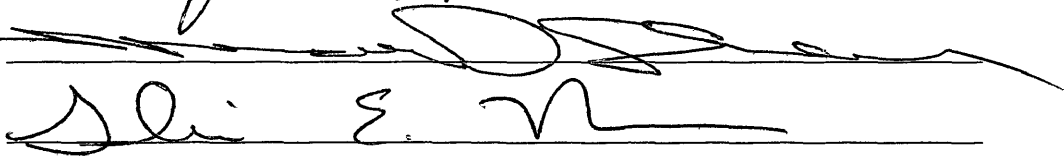



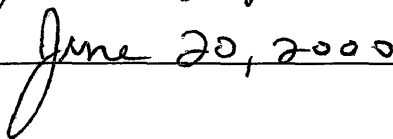
ProQuest LLC.  
789 East Eisenhower Parkway  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 - 1346

# THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,  
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Communication,  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

## Committee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson   
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date   
\_\_\_\_\_

## Abstract

### GENDER IN TELEVISION ADVERTISING: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Jennifer M. Priest, MA

University of Nebraska, 2000

Advisor: Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz

The purpose of this study was to examine the various images of females compared to males in advertising shown during weekdays and weekends from 12:00-2:00p.m. Roles, settings, products endorsed and primary narrator were categories used to analyze and code the advertisements. Data collected were taken from three different networks - ABC, NBC and CBS. A total of twelve hours of programming was studied from the weekend advertisements, as well as twelve hours from weekday advertisements.

There were 281 commercials that were not repeated during both advertising segments which were used for this research. The results suggested that males were portrayed more often in high-ranking, executive positions as well as physical labor positions. Women were portrayed more often than men in the home, cleaning and cooking; however, the parental role was shared equally during weekend advertising.

Males also were shown taking part in the parental role during weekday advertising, although not as much as women. Men were the primary narrators

during weekend advertising, while men and women equally narrated commercials during the weekday television advertising.

Liberal Feminism Theory was the basis for this study, which claims that women are traditionally devalued compared to men. This study suggested that when comparing weekday to weekend daytime advertising, liberal feminism theory was partially supported. Because stereotyping has been a significant part of television advertising, it was important to examine the images men and women are watching during the weekday as well as the weekend.

## Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank my committee of Dr. Sheri Rogers, Dr. Michael Sherer and Dr. Jeremy Lipschultz. They each have taken their time to give me thoughtful insight as well as encouragement to successfully accomplish this project. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Mark Byrd in Institutional Research for his willingness to help me with last minute statistics. Next, I would like to thank my family for their continual words of support and for the extra pushes they have given me to fulfill my goal. Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Scott, who has put up with my stress, late nights of studying and stacks of journal articles all over the house. He has given me the support I needed to keep going and to accomplish something of which I am so proud!

## Table of Contents

Title Page.....	i
Thesis Acceptance.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
Chapter One – Introduction .....	1
Chapter Two – Literature Review.....	6
Development of Gender Ideologies.....	6
Sex Stereotypes and the Male/Female View .....	10
Television Advertising and Effects .....	12
Gender Stereotypes in Television and Television Advertising .....	18
Content Portrayals of Males and Females in Advertising.....	23
Feminist Theories and Television .....	28
Research Questions .....	31
Chapter Three – Methodology.....	32
Technique.....	33
Procedures .....	35
Chapter Four – Results.....	39
Saturday Sports Advertising	
Roles .....	39
Table 1 .....	40
Setting.....	45
Product Endorsed .....	48
Primary Narrator.....	51
Weekday Soap Opera Advertising	
Roles .....	54
Table 2 .....	55
Setting.....	59
Product Endorsed .....	61
Primary Narrator.....	62
Chapter Five – Discussion.....	64
Interpretation of Data	
Roles .....	64
Products Endorsed.....	67
Primary Narrator.....	67
Liberal Feminism Theory .....	68
Limitations and Future Research .....	70
Chapter Six – Conclusions .....	72
References.....	75



Appendix A.....	84
Appendix B.....	85
Appendix C.....	86
Appendix D.....	87
Appendix E.....	88

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

In today's society, mass media are the single largest focus of leisure-time activity and means of entertainment (McQuail, 1994). According to McQuail (1994), mass media are:

- A **power source** – a potential means of influence, control and innovation.
- The **location** where many affairs of public life are played out.
- A **major source** of definitions and images of social reality.
- A **benchmark** for what is normal, empirically and evaluatively.

(p. 1)

Children are exposed annually to approximately 20,000 television commercials (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Many of these show very unbalanced views of males and females. For instance, men portrayed on television were employed in a wide variety of jobs, whereas women occupied a narrow range of jobs (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

Television ads contain many depictions of both males and females in stereotypical roles (Seiter, 1986). Visuals of women in revealing clothing present images of sex symbols, not of business professionals. Some outfits women are required to wear in various television commercials would hardly be permissible

in a professional working environment. In certain instances, women are portrayed as attempting to dress respectably, but still must have a hint of sensuality. Bernstein (1993) cited Barbra Streisand's appearance at the Clinton inauguration as an example. "There she stood in an outfit much in evidence in fashion magazine ads: A three piece pin striped suit . . . she wore a skirt that was slit from ankle to thigh . . . a definite hint of cleavage poked from the form-fitting vest" (16). Bernstein's article concluded that Barbra Streisand can be professionally dressed in a pin-striped suit, but still appear revealing and sensuous. Television use and stereotyping are clearly related (Tan, 1982), and so it is important to examine the degree to which female image is stereotyped.

First, to gain an understanding of why advertisers are compelled to use women in stereotypical gender roles, this thesis examined the development of gender ideologies and expectations of our society on women. Next, studies regarding stereotyping were discussed to understand how stereotypes develop in our society. Wood and Lenze (1991) discussed an important point for students to understand about gender: gender and gender values are socially constructed and learned by individuals and are, therefore, open to question and change.

These two areas, development of gender roles and stereotyping, will bring about a greater explanation as to why advertisers use the roles, clothing and characters they do in various television advertisements. Finally, literature examining gender roles in television advertising, advertising effects, and actual

research on female stereotyping in television advertising, was examined. This study focused on how women are portrayed in the year 2000 in television advertising. The purpose of this study was to take modern-day television advertisements aired on weekdays and weekends and study the roles, clothing and personality traits of women who are portrayed in these ads and relate these findings to a liberal feminist theoretical perspective. Focusing in on certain times of advertising refers to day-part advertising. Craig (1992), in his research, measured the "day-part," which describes a period of time during the day when advertisers consider the audience to be relatively stable demographically. In other words, the age categories and the sex of the viewer are somewhat constant. Liberal feminism recognizes that women are devalued in relation to men, and argues that the relationship needs to change of existing democratic structures (Eaton, 1997). The information gathered in the present study could be used to advocate change in women's advertising.

Some recent television advertisements, however, have become more unisex in nature. Unisex ads appeal to both sexes and contain no apparent gender-biased actors or actresses. For example, Calvin Klein produced advertisements with androgynous men and women displaying similar dress and hair styles. In September 1996, Liz Claiborne, Inc. introduced a new fragrance entitled "Curve." The socially constructed idea that women must wear a feminine perfume scent and men must wear a masculine musk scent is

challenged by this fragrance. One scent for women and one scent for men are available in this cologne. (DeCoursey, 1996). This is one example of a corporation moving away from portraying women in revealing clothing and making a product available for both men and women equally.

Some commercials do portray women as utilizing a product for the purpose of increasing the amount of female consumers. For example, General Motors Corporation (GMC) advertised for the GMC Jimmy, a sport utility vehicle. The advertisement focused on the ease of entry for women in a suit jacket and skirt (Rickard, 1995). Subaru looked to target female-oriented professions such as nursing and teaching because 46 percent of Subaru buyers in 1994 were female (Rickard, 1995). As a result of these female-targeted commercials, as well as unisex advertising, the importance of examining today's advertisements is of great value. By looking at various commercials from different times of the day, it is one measure of advertising that will be taken to consider the degree gender bias. Specifically, television commercials were examined at different times of the day when there are specific demographic types of viewers. Sports advertising on the weekend was examined because of the large number of male viewers. Advertising during weekday soap opera programming was also studied because of the large female viewing audience. After reading this study, consumers should be able to gain a better perspective of

the portrayal of gender roles during different times of the day for different audiences.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Development of gender ideologies

Personal ideologies of gender, which refers to mental images of male and female characteristics and qualities, may originate from various sources. From the moment of birth, infants are “invested” with symbols proclaiming the child’s sex. Headbands, caps and color-coded diapers eliminate questions of the child’s gender (Pennell, 1998). Gender-specific language can be found in young childhood, too, in the form of toys and toy advertisements (Pennell, 1994). For example, bicycles designed for girls are named “LA Lady” and “Fashion Miss.” These bikes contain baskets and purses, making a fashion statement (Pennell, 1994). Boys’ bikes feature water bottles, suggesting they ride their bikes hard enough to establish a need to replace body fluids (Pennell, 1994). Toys also create a more “real life” world for boys than girls. Boys “Big Tex” horse makes real-life sounds depending on how fast it is going, while the “Pastel Prancer” for girls is a scaled-down replica of a carousel pony, which displays more fantasy than reality (Pennell, 1994). Karpan (1997) found that television advertisements which contain only boys are more likely to be shown in an outside setting, and commercials directed towards girls were more likely to take place inside. As cultural artifacts, toys are flooded with symbolic content that reflects the culture.

Exposure to these products provides children with some of their first experiences with the dominant culture's expectations and beliefs regarding gender (Pennell, 1998).

Early in life, many contributing factors play a part in how gender ideologies, or concepts of a group or culture, and gender roles come into existence. The role of the father is a primary piece of the development of gender orientation (Hardesty, Wenk & Morgan, 1995). Methods of parenting and the amount of paternal involvement, too, help children to understand gender roles and what is acceptable in American society. Through modeling of the roles of males and females (cooking, cleaning, yardwork, watching certain television programs), gender roles come to be understood by children. One study indicates that the fact that a father figure is present in the household does not have as much bearing on the development of gender as the nature of the father/child relationship (Hardesty, Wenk & Morgan, 1995). Boys who spend more time with their father may be more fully socialized into the work role, thus influencing their future gender role orientations (Hardesty, Wenk & Morgan, 1995).

In a surprisingly conclusive study by Hardesty, Wenk and Morgan (1995), results indicated that the nature of fathering is less important in the developments of egalitarian attitudes of gender for girls than for boys. The researchers measured the degree of dominance in fathering styles as well as boys' and girls' attitudes of gender equality. Hardesty, Wenk and Morgan (1995)



suggested that “fathers who reject male dominant fathering styles may encourage the development of egalitarian attitudes and orientation in their sons and daughters” (p. 285).

As males and females continue to progress through school, presentation of self in the classroom can shape gender identities. The presentation of a male student’s demeanor denotes masculinity (Czopp et al., 1998). The hypermasculine student, one who displays confidence, calmness under pressure and a disinterest in school was perceived as funnier, more attractive, more popular and dating more (Czopp, et al., 1998). If teachers also perceive male students who employ hypermasculine behaviors and attitudes considerably less favorable academically, then it is possible that this bias would influence teacher-student interactions and evaluations (Czopp et al., 1998).

Not only during school days, but from the beginning of life, female infants receive more touch and verbal communication. As a result, women are socialized in relationships to be more sensitive to others while men are socialized to be removed from others and learn to act independently (Wood & Lenze, 1991).

As adults, attitudes regarding sexual relationships vary between men and women. Males and females vary in their beliefs of sexual power and sexual drives (Kane & Schippers, 1996). Although both men and women agree that men’s sexual drives are more powerful than women, both males and females

believe the other gender has the “power” of sex. Sexual power can be defined as deciding how and when sexual relations take place (Kane & Schippers, 1996).

The image a female has about herself can be as important as the perceptions of the power of sex. According to Monteath and McCabe (1997), adult females also worry about body image. Monteath and McCabe (1997) conducted a video camera apparatus study in which female participants were asked to adjust the female body image on the screen to their perceived body size, the ideal body size for themselves and the ideal body size for society. Results indicated that the perceived ideal societal body image for women was even thinner than their own personal body ideals (Monteath & McCabe, 1997). Ninety-four percent of female participants wish to be thinner. All of these findings suggest that societal expectations are influential and have a direct bearing of how women feel about their bodies (Monteath & McCabe, 1997).

Joanne Cantor (1976) researched reactions to manipulated jokes, using both males and females as the victims of the jokes. Respondents were to indicate which jokes they thought were humorous. The mean funniness score indicated that the male-dominated female score was higher. Cantor (1976) suggested that the socialization process in our society promotes the idea of female inferiority, and female degradation through humor is much more typical than degrading the male through humor.

Finally, in their studies on verbal presumptuousness and attentiveness, Stiles et al. (1997) found that women are more attentive than men. Men, however, were more attentive to strangers than to their spouses, but women were equally attentive to both (Stiles, et al., 1997).

This research on gender roles ties together numerous areas from which ideas about gender roles and stereotypes are acquired. Many people learn gender roles and what is considered "proper" gender behavior from different sources, so it is important to look at how males and females view each other to gain a better understanding of how and why males and females form gender stereotypes.

### **Sex stereotypes and the male/female view**

Males are influenced by the perception of females as sex objects (Power, Murphy & Coover, 1996). Power, Murphy and Coover (1996) found that males, after viewing female rape victims portrayed as sex objects, were significantly less likely in a subsequent situation to perceive a rape victim as credible and more likely to hold her responsible for the incident. These findings can certainly raise questions about how females' portrayal on television commercials may affect viewers' perceptions of women. Power, Murphy and Coover (1996), however, did study viewers' perceptions of females in a counter-stereotypical role. Those

who viewed females in a role which contradicts female stereotypes, gave rape/sexual harassment victims Anita Hill and Patricia Bowman the highest ratings of credibility. These studies suggest that the viewing of stereotypic and counter-stereotypic portrayals and measures of responsibility are related (Power, Murphy & Coover, 1996).

Male and female views of the other sex's argumentativeness may contribute to personality stereotypes. Both males and females stereotyped males as more argumentative and verbally aggressive than females (Nicotera & Rancer, 1994). Males who rated themselves as being high in aggression also generalized other males as being high in argumentativeness (Nicotera & Rancer, 1994). In contrast to females, males tend to stereotype verbal aggression at higher levels, suggesting that males are more likely than females to respond with aggression when confronted in an aggressive manner (Nicotera & Rancer, 1994).

As males and females enter the work force, stereotyping of the sexes continues (Martell, et al., 1998). Martell et al. (1998) conducted a study of 297 male managers asking them to rate female managers compared to male managers in the areas of managerial courage, leadership and initiating change. Women were rated as less inspirational and energetic (Change Agent), less courageous, resilient and resourceful (Managerial Courage) and less of a leader, visionary and strategic thinker than men (Martell et al., 1998). Display of a successful female manager did have some influence on how women were viewed

as managers. When females were depicted as successful middle managers, women were rated higher only in the category of leadership (Martell et al., 1998). Overall, male middle managers were rated more favorably than women middle managers. These findings become important to understand because sex biases may directly affect women's upward mobility in the area of management (Martell et al., 1998).

This research indicates how males and females view each other as well as how credibility may be gained or lost. Depending on how a female is portrayed may sway the viewer's perception of her. These findings may be combined with advertising's effects to acquire a strong foundation for understanding television advertising and gender stereotyping.

### **Television advertising and effects**

Because of the widespread exposure to television advertising, as well as other forms of mass media advertising, it is sometimes difficult to be able to recognize the actual effects television advertising has on people. Plummer (1971) views advertising communication as a process that incorporates both the messages and the receivers with major emphasis on the viewer's perspectives. Viewers also respond to television advertising on four different levels (Plummer, 1971). The first level, unconscious response, may be viewed/perceived by the

heart rate and physiological responses. During this level, differences in response to various stimuli can be measured. The second level is the immediate cognitive response. Laughter, empathy and dislike are examples of this level. These are all types of reactions, outwardly observed, that indicate how a person responds to what they have seen and heard. The third level of response can be explained as a "filing system." How a person retains, recalls and retrieves a message is central to the basis of this third level of response. Finally, the fourth level of response consists of the action or behavior taken as a result of the advertising communication. This level may be as immediate as consuming a beverage after viewing a soda or beer commercial, or could take as long as weeks or months for a consumer to purchase a product (Plummer, 1971). These levels become important to know so actions taken during or after the commercial can be understood.

Television advertising certainly motivates consumers to purchase various products. Even after a single exposure to a television commercial, gains of 25 to 50 percent in choice of product were recorded (Gibson, 1996). A single additional exposure of a TV commercial can change attitudes for an established brand. The possible effects of a single additional exposure is huge - from very positive to very negative (Gibson, 1996).

Many factors about the television commercial itself have a direct bearing on what arouses viewers' interests as well as what viewers recall (Pieters &

Bijmolt, 1997; Gunter et al., 1997; Hitchon & Thorson, 1995; Lang, 1990).

Pleasant emotions communicated through television commercials show an increase in physiological arousal (Lang, 1990), which was measured by the viewer's heart rate. Also, very mild emotional manipulations evoke reliable increases in the heart rate. Lang (1990) also indicated that emotional manipulations created by the commercial need not be long and need not be intense.

Viewers' involvement with a product (amount of usage, amount of importance and meaningfulness) combined with emotional factors in a commercial produce a greater purchase intention for the viewer (Hitchon & Thorson, 1995). Brand name recall was also affected positively by a combination of high involvement products and emotional commercials (those commercials which aroused various emotions in the viewer). For low involvement products (products which did not matter to the viewer), emotion was not a large factor (Hitchon & Thorson, 1995). Finally, repetition was also a factor in brand name recall. The greater number of times a commercial was viewed, the better the viewer became at recalling the brand (Hitchon & Thorson, 1995).

Pieters and Bijmolt (1997) indicated that brand names in longer commercials are recalled significantly better than brand names in shorter commercials. Furthermore, first and last shown advertisements in a commercial block have significant advantages over those shown mid-block in terms of brand

name recall (Pieters & Bijmolt, 1997). Audiences are more attentive to those commercials which are shown immediately after the feature program or directly before the program begins (Pieters & Bijmolt, 1997).

Finally, Gunter, Furnham and Beeson (1997) indicated that program involvement also had an effect on recall of a product. After study participants rated their interest in and involvement with certain programs, commercials were aired in between these programs. A greater liking for a program, greater perceived credibility and greater affective involvement with the program indicated poorer advertisement recall (Gunter et al., 1997).

For a more thorough look at heightened commercial response, television programming can be explained by the Excitation Transfer Theory (Perry et al., 1997; Mattes & Cantor, 1982). This theory is often used to explain why residual simulation from a program can heighten response to commercials aired within the program. Perry et al. (1997) approached this theory from a different angle, examining the effects of humorous commercials on program ratings. Various commercials were shown to subjects, some with the jokes added and some with the jokes removed. Ratings of the programs' entertainment value resulted in higher ratings when more humorous commercials were used (Perry et al., 1997). In conclusion, this study supported the claim that humor levels improve program liking (Perry et al., 1997).



Mattes and Cantor (1982) found evidence supporting Excitation Transfer Theory. Commercials seen after highly arousing segments received more favorable ratings than those seen after less arousing segments. The support of this theory came into play when respondents self-reported their arousal as down, but their measured arousal (blood pressure) was higher, as was the perceived interest in the television advertising (Mattes & Cantor, 1982). These studies regarding heightened commercial response become important to illustrate the power television has on the viewers. Just as the content of advertising has a direct effect on the viewer, children's toys can have a direct bearing on children's perception of gender roles.

In her research, Pennell (1994) indicated that children's toys socialize boys and girls into their gender roles early in life. Television has a strong impact on children by persuading them to buy these toys. Robertson (1979) concluded from his research that television advertising is an important information source for child-oriented products. Television advertising encourages young children's requests to parents for the purchase of toys, but children are also affected, to some extent, by advertising *not* directed toward them (Robertson, 1979). This idea becomes important to understand because if, in fact, today's television advertising is loaded with gender stereotypes, children may be affected by these roles portrayed on television. Five and six-year-olds, when being tested for commercials awareness, recalled more commercials than first and second graders

(Desmond & Fox, 1983). Desmond and Fox (1983) indicated that television commercials are a unique set of stimuli. Children view literally thousands of advertisements by the time they reach school.

Not only are children affected by what they view on television commercials, but adults make inferences and draw conclusions based on what types of settings are on a commercial set (Solomon & Greenberg, 1993). In their research, Solomon and Greenberg (1993) had working adults view props from a commercial set, including furniture style, coffee mugs and exterior house styles. Respondents had to rate, on a Likert Scale, whether or not they would or would not choose that particular style for a male/female or an upper/lower social class. The results were very clear: as props shifted or were changed, respondents selected a different social class and gender (Solomon & Greenberg, 1993). Solomon and Greenberg (1993) concluded that respondents exhibited a strong stereotyping effect. They have clearly internalized a set of assumptions about gender and social class product associations. For example, merely changing the gender of the actor “appears to significantly alter respondents’ perceptions . . . of masculinity and femininity” (p. 18). When viewing the actual depiction of males and females in television commercials, it was males rather than females who view females in a more subordinate role (Melville & Cornish, 1993).

These research findings convey the power television advertising holds over men, women and children. Both physically and mentally, television

advertising affects much more than just people's general knowledge about a product. Social class, gender roles and emotions, as indicated by the previous studies, can be relayed in the length of time it takes to view a commercial. In some cases, this can be as short as fifteen to twenty seconds.

### **Gender stereotypes in television and television advertising**

Due to television's impact on the advertising industry and on viewers, the importance of looking at what the audience is watching is crucial. Current trends in advertising indicate children and adults are absorbing what they see as they watch television. Miller and Reeves (1976) indicated that advertising does have an effect on children who watch commercials. Browne (1998) hypothesized that not as much male and female stereotyping would occur in televised content. The findings, however, indicated that gender role stereotyping still exists (Browne, 1998).

After recording six hours of MTV programming, coders rated various television commercials to analyze the content of the advertisements. As Signorielli, McLeod and Healy (1994) found, women appeared slightly less often than men in commercials. Women's bodies were portrayed as very fit, scantily clad and very attractive (Signorielli et al., 1994). Men, however, were rated as having average bodies as well as being less attractive or beautiful (Signorielli et

al., 1994). Most of the commercials analyzed focused on the men having fun, while the women were focused on looking good, thus creating strong gender stereotypes (Signorielli et al., 1994).

Television commercials advertising beer also were analyzed by Hall and Crum (1994). After looking at 59 different beer commercials, Hall and Crum (1994) indicated that female body exposure in these beer commercials is much greater than male body exposure. For example, there was a 49 percent chance that a commercial in this study would include a shot of a woman's chest, whereas men only would have chest shots 24 percent of the time (Hall & Crum, 1994). Very few commercials portrayed women in work clothes; they even were shown primarily in leisure attire or swimwear (Hall & Crum, 1994). Even when looking at still pictures in advertising, female models are more likely than male models to be placed in submissive, sexually exploitive and violent positions (Rudman & Verdi, 1993). Sexually explicit physical positions and violent imagery was important in creating an illusion of male control and dominance (Rudman & Verdi, 1993).

Stereotypes in television advertising have many effects on viewers' female body perception (Myers & Biocca, 1992), to gender role expectations (Lafky et al., 1996), and recognition of gender equality in advertisements (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). To test what is dubbed "The Elastic Body Image," Myers and Biocca (1992) examined 76 female university students' self-schema. A self-

schema is a person's construction of those traits that make the person distinctive and constitute the sense of "me." Individuals are able to build this sense of self from their own behaviors and social cues (Myers & Biocca, 1992). In their study, the 76 subjects viewed programs containing various body images and then were asked to estimate their body size. The findings suggested that commercial messages resulted in a greater degree of deviation in body size overestimations than regular television programming. Overall, young females tended to overestimate their body size (Myers & Biocca, 1992).

After some students viewed stereotypical advertising images of women (females preparing food for family, teaching young children and homemaker tasks) and other students viewed nonstereotypical advertising images of women (females as doctors and engineers), students rated which females would be more likely to perform certain tasks. Students, after viewing stereotypical images of women, rated females more likely to be a housewife, be a volunteer, perform family chores and to ask permission of their husbands before volunteering (Lafky, et al., 1996). When nonstereotypical images of females were viewed, boys rated women more likely to administer a community recycling campaign and help a son with trigonometry homework (Lafky et al., 1996). These results indicate that brief exposure to an image affects audience perceptions of social reality immediately after exposure, and gender stereotypes within the images reinforce stereotypes about gender roles (Lafky et al., 1996).

Zemach and Cohen (1986) compared subjects' perceptions of social reality (how gender roles are portrayed in society) and symbolic reality (gender roles portrayed on television). Results indicated that, in both realms of reality, willingness to take risks, aggressiveness and leadership abilities were associated with masculine qualities (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). Because both realities, social and symbolic, were rated, data indicated that those who stated they spent more time in front of the television tended to perceive a smaller gap between the two kinds of reality (Zemach & Cohen, 1986). As this study indicates, heavy television viewing may distort somewhat the perception of gender roles and possibly give viewers false images of what roles females are expected to perform in society.

After viewing common negative stereotypes of women in television commercials, men and women rated commercials to recognize stereotypes presented in the advertisements. In open-ended questions asking to describe reactions after viewing the commercials, women were found to comment more often on stereotypes than men (Lull, Hanson & Marx, 1977). This is contradicted by an earlier study reviewed in this paper by Melville and Cornish (1993) which indicated that males, rather than females, view the females in more subordinate roles. Men did comment, however, on the role of the other male characters (Lull, Hanson & Marx, 1977). Male subjects became annoyed when only a male voice

was portrayed in commercials and a male was not capable of being seen (Lull, Hanson & Marx, 1977).

Content of various television advertisements aimed at men and women differed greatly (Rovinelli & Whissell, 1998). Commercials aimed at females contained more words and were more repetitive. These same commercials also contained greater linguistic complexity and were longer (Rovinelli & Whissell, 1998).

When viewing television commercials, males and females appear to use a schema (Hitchon & Chang, 1995). A schema refers to a grouping of others with respect to cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness. To support this theory, Hitchon and Chang (1995) explored the idea of politicians being organized into categories of male and female. Results indicated that after viewing various political advertisements with both males and females included, subjects recalled male characteristics of the male commercials and female qualities of the female political commercials. For example, families of the female, as well as the appearance of the female, were recalled more than male candidates. Males' activities and males' attack ads were recalled more than the females' activities and attacks (Hitchon & Chang, 1995). Overall, men's names were recalled more than female candidates (Hitchon & Chang, 1995).

In her book, *Women Watching Television: Gender, Class and Generation in the American Television Experience*, Press (1991) claimed that television works like an

ideology, by structuring conceptions of the self and the social world. This becomes a poignant argument for studying female images during advertising. Viewers need to understand that what they are watching has an effect on the construction of our social world and surroundings. Press does claim that current images of women on television are viewed as feminist in the sense that women are seen as a legitimate part of the workplace, but also viewed as antifeminist because of their idealized depictions of the nuclear family. Antifeminist portrayals indicate that current programs do not show obstacles that real women face in balancing the responsibilities of home and work (Press, 1991).

### **Content portrayal of males and females in advertising**

The previous studies have shown that women are still portrayed in stereotypical roles in television commercials (Hall & Crum, 1994; Signorielli et al., 1994; Solomon & Greenberg, 1993). Because of these stereotypes, women have different perceptions of their body, causing them to want to become much thinner (Myers & Biocca, 1992). Viewers also come to hold distinct gender role expectations as gender stereotypes are portrayed in television commercials (Lafky et al., 1996) Even in children's television programming, sex stereotypes are found (Smith, 1994). After performing a content analysis on various television advertisements during children's programming, it was found that



more single-sex advertisements were positioned towards boys than girls (Smith, 1994). Results did indicate that both boys and girls performed an equal amount of passive activities, but only boys performed antisocial behaviors (Smith, 1994). Advertisements directed toward girls emphasized the importance of beauty (i.e. Barbie with long, flowing hair), while ads directed towards boys emphasized power and strength (i.e. lawn mowers and work benches) (Karpan, 1997).

Not only in America, but also in Europe, do stereotypical gender roles exist in television advertising. Italian television advertisements portray males twice as often as central figures than females (Furnham & Voli, 1989). Males, in Italian advertisements, were more likely to appear as voice-overs as well as be portrayed as authorities than were females (Furnham & Voli, 1989).

Past content analyses of television programming and commercials have consistently found males and females portrayed differently, usually in a manner less than "liberated" (Miller & Reeves, 1976). Television does help shape children's sex-role perceptions, and they indicate television characters whom they want to be like (Miller & Reeves, 1976).

It becomes important to examine current television advertisements to analyze the gender role portrayals to see if television advertisements currently continue to hold the same stereotypes as past commercials. Although the 1980's commercials do not show quite as many women with body products as the 1950's, there are still more women portrayed with these types of products (Allan

& Coltrane, 1996). Overall, there was little change in the activity of male characters between the 1950's and 1980's. Men still are not shown as parenting very often, and men performing housework actually decreased during the 1980's (Allan & Coltrane, 1996).

Another content analysis showed that boys were significantly more likely to demonstrate and/or explain a product than the girls in the commercials (Browne, 1998). Boys are still more likely than girls to press buttons and engage mechanisms, displaying a high level of skill. Girls are more likely to caress and touch objects gently in commercials (Browne, 1998). Content analyses showed that boys appeared in greater numbers, assumed more dominant roles and were much more active and aggressive than girls (Browne, 1998). Craig (1992b) suggested that advertisers take advantage of stereotypical images of women as home medical caregivers. Over-the-counter medicine ads in the sample show a husband or child turning to a wife/mother for advice and help during a time of illness. The wife/mother also selects the advertiser's product to diminish symptoms (Craig, 1992b). In a completely different product area, Anheuser-Busch believes their market of women beer drinkers is growing and would like to target television advertising more toward women (Arndorfer, 1998).

Silverstein et al. (1986) focused their studies on finding the current standard of attractiveness of women portrayed in media. Because of the researchers' concerns with women's eating disorders, Silverstein et al. (1986)

wanted to find out exactly how thin women were being portrayed. The data presented indicated that mass media play a role in promoting a thin standard of attractiveness more often of women than men (Silverstein et al., 1986).

Bretl and Cantor (1988) conducted extensive content analyses to depict trends over time of how males and females are portrayed in American television commercials. These researchers compared their data with data collected in previous research to understand trends in advertising. Research findings indicated that 21 percent of male characters, as opposed to 11 percent of female characters, were depicted in high status occupations. Females, however, were more likely than males to be depicted without an occupation. In comparison with data collected in 1971, the percentage of men depicted inside the home has risen considerably (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). The percentage of women portrayed inside the home has remained relatively constant. Males and females, though, were portrayed approximately equally in primetime television commercials. This represents a gradual change since the 1970's (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). Signorielli (1989) echoed this research in her findings by indicating that on television, women are less likely than the men to be seen working outside of the home. Women portrayed outside of the home usually are not married, although often they are divorced.

In her study, Lovdal (1989) sought to determine if portrayal of sex roles on television have changed over the past ten years. Specifically, the study explored

male voice-overs, women as product representatives, women in professional roles and males and females portrayed in and out of the home. Male voice-overs still continue to dominate television commercials, still giving an authoritative tone which gives way to more credibility and knowledge (Lovdal, 1989). Women were shown to communicate with others of inferior status and to other women concerning feminine hygiene, headaches and diets. Males did tend to be more of a product representative for items such as food, but females represent more in-home products (Lovdal, 1989; Bretl & Cantor, 1988). Finally, men were portrayed in three times the variety of occupations (Lovdal, 1989). These results were also found in a previous study by Marecek et al. (1987). A male alone was shown as having the last word in 80 percent of commercials, compared to women who were shown having the last word in just 14 percent. Unless the product being advertised was primarily a household product, females were never portrayed as experts on the product. Often females were backed up by males in advertising products such as food, medical and even some household products (Marecek et al., 1978). Females were more likely to advertise laundry soap, dishwashing liquid and dog food compared to males predominantly endorsing oil companies and frozen treats (Kolbe & Langefeld, 1993).

## Feminist Theories and Television

Although there are many definitions of feminism from radical to liberal, the core feminist theories lie in determining inequities between men and women in private and public life (Wood, 1997). Wood also explains the general premise of feminist theories are perceptions of gender roles and attitudes. Gender may be defined as a socially created system of values, identities and activities that are prescribed for women and men (Wood, 1997). Because of gender expectations, according to feminist theories, the overall society expects men to be assertive and women to be passive, men to be independent while women are relationship-oriented, and finally, men to be physically strong and women to be physically attractive (Wood, 1997).

In her study of stereotyping in prime time television, Eaton (1997) used the liberal feminism perspective to examine females in network programming. Liberal feminism acknowledges that women are traditionally devalued in relation to men, and this relationship can be changed through rational argument and creation of alternative female role models within existing democratic structures (Eaton, 1997). Eaton's study used the theoretical framework of liberal feminism to acknowledge female stereotyping and then explained that the data could be used to present alternative televised role models of women. Eaton (1997) hypothesized that female characters will not appear as frequently as

males, and networks which target a younger male audience will contain stereotypical female characters than other programming produced for a more general audience. Results indicated, supporting the liberal feminism theory, that female characters were more likely to be coded in more provocative attire and attractive categories than male characters. No networks portrayed any female characters not wearing provocative attire (Eaton, 1997). In a study comparing more recent advertising with commercials of the 1970's, Ferrante et al. (1988) found that advertisers overwhelmingly associate women in stereotypical locations and roles; however, they portray women in "limbo" settings (settings with no clear location) and avoid associating women with traditional male locations. Overall, female characters are still significantly underrepresented compared to male characters (Ferrante et al., 1988).

In their study of women in television, Rakow and Kranich (1991) used the theory of liberal feminism to argue how women are portrayed on television. Rakow and Kranich (1991) explain that feminists have to comprehend the full significance of gender as a social construction which posits two groups of people, women and men, as unequal. Women's lack of appearance on television news is justified by women's lack of status as authority figures (Rakow & Kranich, 1991). Finally, researchers use liberal feminism to argue that most feminists who appear on television are representative of liberal feminism. According to Rakow and Kranich (1991), liberal feminism recognizes the unequal portrayal of men and

women and advocates equal opportunities for women within the existing hierarchical social structure. In other words, in our society, it is accepted that women are portrayed as a lower status on television because of their lack of authority in society. Liberal feminism seeks to create more equal status among men and women.

Craig (1992a) studied how males and females were portrayed on network television commercials by conducting a content analysis of television advertisements from different time periods of television broadcasting. Craig's (1992a) purpose of his research was "to provide a foundation for further critical analysis of gender and television commercials" (p. 198). Although much research indicates how females are portrayed in specific advertisements, not much research has been conducted by comparing television ads aired at different times of the day and different days of the week. Craig (1992a) states that there is a magnitude of differences found in day-part advertising, and these differences must be revisited. Craig (1992a) indicates, "Large differences suggest that television day-part can't be ignored and commercials from various day parts must now be reevaluated" (p. 197). Based on the indicated need for reevaluation of day-part advertising as well as the liberal feminism theory, the following research questions for this study are:

**RQ1:** How do the roles of females and males differ from weekday television advertisements to weekend afternoon advertisements?

**RQ2:** In what types of settings are the females and males portrayed?

**RQ3:** What types of products are endorsed by females and males?

**RQ4:** Who are the primary narrators in the commercials, males or females?



## Chapter 3

### Methodology

This study's method is thematic analysis. Boyatzis (1998) describes thematic analysis as using both manifest and latent content analysis at the same time. Manifest content analysis can be considered the analysis of the visible or apparent content of something. In this study, for example, the amount of times women are portrayed in certain roles is recorded. In order to explain or understand the meaning of the role as it was portrayed in a particular advertisement, latent content analysis must be used (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis will become particularly important because the amount of times a certain image of females occurs must be recorded as well as the meaning behind these images. Thematic analysis encompasses both types of content analysis.

Boyatzis (1998) describes the method of thematic analysis in the following way:

Thematic analysis has a number of overlapping or alternate purposes. It can be used as:

- A way of seeing;
- A way of making sense out of seemingly unrelated material;
- A way of analyzing qualitative information;

- A way of systematically observing a person, an interaction, a group, a situation, an organization or a culture; and
- A way of converting qualitative information into qualitative data. (pp. 4-5).

Boyatzis (1998) also states that thematic analysis enables researchers to use a wide variety of types of information in a systematic manner that increases their accuracy or sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations about people, events, situations and organizations.

By using thematic analysis to study female images in television advertising, we can code specific portrayals of women as well as construct meaning of roles held by females and reveal any inequities present in the portrayal of men versus women.

### Technique

Boyatzis (1998) indicated four distinct stages in the development of thematic analysis, and it can be summarized as follows:

1. Sensing themes: recognize the codable moment;
2. Use themes or codes reliably; code themes consistently;
3. Develop codes to process and analyze observations; and

4. Interpreting the information and themes in context of a theory or conceptual framework; contributing to the development of knowledge.

In the first stage, the researcher must be open to all information. As themes are sensed and codes begin to develop, all senses should be ready to receive relevant information. Researchers must know what to look for and what to be ready to see.

In the second stage, researchers must train themselves to use themes or codes reliably. In other words, if the researcher were to code themes or patterns one way today, would they be coded the same way tomorrow? This stage involves recognizing consistent patterns and accurately recording them.

The third stage involves developing a process for which to code the recognized patterns. The information collected will offer many different insights into the topic of the study. It is the responsibility of the coder to construct codes and categories which will encompass the findings.

Finally, the fourth stage involves interpreting the information and themes. Here, the researcher will want to link the patterns to a specific theoretical framework. In the case of this particular study, the findings will be linked to the theoretical framework of liberal feminism. The theory may arise from literature or may emerge from the information being analyzed, such as the grounded theory approach (Boyatzis, 1998).

## Procedures

In order to examine gender differences in commercials aired at different times, different day parts need to be sampled separately (Craig, 1992). The daytime segments (weekdays, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.) were chosen primarily for the large number of hours per week watched by females compared to males, aged 18-55, and consists primarily of soap opera programming. The weekend advertising segments (Saturdays, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.), during sports programming, were selected due to the different make-up of the viewing audience compared to the weekdays. The weekend programming consists of a more of a gender-balanced audience during the weekend than the weekday, when females are the primary viewers.

According to the Nielsen Media Research, females aged 18-54 watch approximately 8 ½ hours per week of television during the weekdays, compared to 5 ½ hours watched by males. Therefore, during weekdays, females account for 61.3 percent of the viewers and males account for 38.7 percent of the viewers. On Saturdays during the day, women aged 18 – 54 watch 81 minutes of television and men watch 77 minutes. Women, on Saturdays in the afternoon account for 51.3 percent and men account for 48.7 percent. Although the amount of viewing time is fairly equal between males and females on Saturdays, the percentage of male viewers is higher on weekends than on weekdays. Craig

(1992) wanted to compare gender images when the demographic make-up of the audience differed. The VCR was set to record programs on CBS, ABC and NBC from April 1 to April 15.

In order to perform a random study, specific dates of weekdays were put into a hat (April 3 through April 14). Six weekdates were drawn, indicating which days of the week the afternoon taping would occur. Next, the three stations from which the commercials would be recorded were put into a hat and drawn one at a time. The order of the stations drawn would be the order the networks would be taped for the first three days of programming. After the order of the three stations was set, this sequence was repeated for the last three dates. On Saturdays (April 1 and April 8), programming on all three networks (CBS, NBC and ABC) was recorded simultaneously from 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. If no sports programming was available on one of the three stations, the FOX network was used as a source of sports programming. This procedure yielded 24 hours of television programming from which commercials were studied. Advertisements which reflected only words, public service announcements, movie trailers or television show promotions were eliminated. Repeated showings of commercials were also excluded. A total of 281 commercials that were not repeated were analyzed for this study.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to contact Dr. R. Stephen Craig at the University of Maine - Orono for the purpose of obtaining the coding sheet used

in the 1992 study of day part advertising. Categories indicated in Craig's (1992) journal article were utilized in the coding process. The categories used to code the images of females in both day part segments were as follows: roles of males and females, setting, type of product endorsed and the primary narrator in the commercial. The narrator, or the voice-over in the commercial can be defined as the off-screen announcers, not attributable to any on-screen character (Craig, 1992).

The analysis of the commercials were guided by the following procedures:

1. After all the commercials were recorded, they were viewed by the researcher and coded according to the categories of Craig (1992) (See Appendix A) previously listed. The roles were coded as "celebrity", "homemaker", "interviewer/ demonstrator", "parent/ child care", "professional", "sex object", "spouse/ partner", "laborer" and "other". The roles were determined by the primary career portrayed by the actors/ actresses in the commercial. The type of product endorsed was coded as "service", "body", "home product", "food", "auto" and "technology". The settings of the commercials were coded as "kitchen", "bathroom", "other room of home", "outdoors at home", "outdoors away from home", "business" and "restaurant/ bar".

2. After the coding process was completed, the data were analyzed according to gender.
3. In order to make a thoughtful comparison of the images of males and females in the commercials, the researcher analyzed the differences as well as the similarities of the men and women in the commercials by looking at the roles, setting, primary narrator and product endorsed.
4. The categories were then discussed and compared to the liberal feminism theoretical framework to determine if the examination of day part advertising supports this theory.
5. Finally, meaning was made from the comparisons and theoretical framework to find real-world implications and directions of future research.

## Chapter 4

### Results

#### Saturday Sports Advertising

##### Roles

Of the four categories examined (roles, setting, product endorsed and primary narrator), roles was the category which indicated a statistically significant difference between the roles portrayed by males and females. Some of the most heavily portrayed by males were professional roles. Seventy-nine percent of all professional roles were portrayed by males, and 45 percent of all males were displayed as professionals. This was significantly different than females, as only 20 percent of professionals were women, and only 20 percent of all females were portrayed as professionals. The results also indicate that of the roles of spouse/partner and parent, males and females were represented and equal amount of the time. It is, however, important to note that 13 percent of female roles were parents, compared to only seven percent of the total male roles. Also, of the female roles, 22 percent were a spouse/partner, compared to only 12 percent of the male roles.



Table 1

ROLE		GENDER		TOTAL
		Male	Female	
Celebrity	Count	16	0	16
	% within ROLE	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	11.4%	0.0%	7.4%
	% of TOTAL	7.4%	0.0%	7.4%
Parent	Count	10	10	20
	% within ROLE	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	7.1%	13.0%	9.2%
	% of TOTAL	4.6%	4.6%	9.2%
Homemaker	Count	0	3	3
	% within ROLE	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	0.0%	3.9%	1.4%
	% of TOTAL	0.0%	1.4%	1.4%
Professional	Count	63	16	79
	% within ROLE	79.7%	20.3%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	45.0%	20.8%	36.4%
	% of TOTAL	29.0%	7.4%	36.4%
Sex Object	Count	1	12	13
	% within ROLE	7.7%	92.3%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	.7%	15.6%	6.0%
	% of TOTAL	.5%	5.5%	6.0%
Spouse/ Partner	Count	17	17	34
	% within ROLE	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	12.1%	22.1%	15.7%
	% of TOTAL	7.8%	7.8%	15.7%
Laborer	Count	21	11	32
	% within ROLE	65.6%	34.4%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	15.0%	14.3%	14.7%
	% of TOTAL	9.7%	5.1%	14.7%
Interviewer	Count	2	0	2
	% within ROLE	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	1.4%	0.0%	.9%
	% of TOTAL	.9%	5.1%	14.7%

Other	Count	10	8	18
	% within ROLE	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	7.1%	10.4%	8.3%
	% of TOTAL	4.6%	3.7%	8.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	Count	140	77	217
	% within ROLE	64.5%	35.5%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of TOTAL	64.5%	35.5%	100.0%

Chi Square = 47.32                      p < .01

Out of 217 commercials, 64.5 percent contained males in some type of a role, while only 35.5 percent of roles were held by females. This differed from roles portrayed by men and women during weekday advertising, where out of 143 total roles portrayed, only 35 percent of them were held by men, and 65 percent of them were held by women. Men who were obviously employed in a white-collar job were clothed in business attire. Suits, ties, long overcoats, briefcases, cell phones and button-down dress shirts were displayed by men involved in professional roles.

A great deal of these professional men were also portrayed on the golf course. The appearance of these men suggested they were well-to-do. Each had nicely pressed shorts with a professional-looking polo shirt. The golfers also had brand-name bags (Taylor Made, Callaway, Ping), suggesting they invested a lot of money in the sport.

Professional men were also shown in positions of success and authority. For example, a Compaq commercial portrayed a male executive in demand at a business, as employees were following him around raising their hands, waving papers and shouting out questions to him. Another successful businessman was portrayed driving a Lexus, a symbol of financial success.

Women, on the other hand were shown as professionals only 20 percent of the time, while males were displayed as professionals 45 percent of the time. (See Appendix B). In a Ryder Integrated Logistics commercial, a woman, who is dressed in a sweater - no suit - is shown as a logistics engineer. Her title is flashed across the screen, yet she says nothing and is not dressed in "executive" attire (suit, skirt, etc.).

Another commercial for Office Depot portrays Arnold Palmer endorsing the office supply store and introducing the female as his executive. The woman, however, was shown lifting and carrying boxes and is clothed in a nice sweater and shorts. Taylor Made, a brand of golf equipment, aired their commercial in a hospital setting with a female nurse taking care of a male patient.

Although there were some commercials portraying women as professionals, none portrayed women in an office-executive role. Other commercials coded as "professional females" included women coming home from work in a suit, women dressed in business casual clothes watching a soccer game and women dressed in suits attending investment seminars.

Another role which portrayed women almost as much as men were labor-type roles. Here, women were portrayed in a labor capacity 14.3 percent of the time, while males were shown as laborers 15 percent of the time. The type of laboring was quite different, however. For example, a LaborReady.com advertisement displayed men in overalls, hard hats and a bulky physique in construction-type, physical labor roles. A few motor oil ads, showing NASCAR racers, portrayed an all-male pit crew changing tires during a major car race. Auto repairs and farming were also careers held solely by men. These types of commercials suggested males were more fit for physical or mechanical careers.

Waitressing was a laboring role held primarily by women. Applebees and Sonic portrayed women, usually quite young and attractive, serving food, showing customers to their table or taking orders. One commercial for AMA auto parts did portray a woman working with the men; however, she was just standing among the workers, not holding a great deal of responsibility.

The spouse/partner role was portrayed more often by women (22.1 percent) than men (12.1 percent). During Saturday afternoon advertising, however, a great deal of insurance/investment companies advertised protection and savings for the whole family. Advertisers displayed elderly couples to illustrate that young couples need to think ahead to retirement. Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Sun America and Consec Insurance/Investments portrayed middle-aged, affluent couples, possibly showcasing the good life one can achieve

by investing. Travel, jewelry, retirement and education were all a part of the couples' lives.

Female roles consisted of parenting only 13 percent of the time; however, the males were shown as parents only 7.1 percent of the time. Males and females portrayed as parents were shown in such commercials as investment companies, displaying what Americans should invest in – the family. Uniroyal tires displayed a mother driving a sport utility vehicle to a child's sporting event and driving over a nail sticking out of a board. A father is shown in a Porter Cable ad building a tree house for his children. Although these roles may be somewhat stereotypical (mom toting children to sports practice and a dad building kids a playhouse), the male was also shown taking part in parental responsibilities.

Finally, more women than men were shown as sex objects during Saturday sports programming. Fifteen percent of women were portrayed as sex objects, while only .7 percent of males were portrayed in this role. Levis, for example, portrays a women taking off her jeans down to her underwear in order to lay them across train tracks for the train to cut them into jean shorts. Commercials such as Speed Stick, Coke and Miller Lite went beyond showing women just as a spouse or partner and portrayed them in tight clothing with men gawking at them. Sleep Inn showed men in business suits in the hotel room, while a woman in another room was shown stepping out of the shower in a towel.

The roles portrayed by men and women vary greatly. Men, overall, were portrayed nearly twice as much as females. Men were portrayed as professionals far more than women, while women still were portrayed more as a spouse/partner and a parent. As described above, there were roles such as parenting and a spouse/partner in which men were shown as actively involved, although the percentages were not as high as the females. The setting is just as important to examine in order to find out where men and women are placed in a commercial, whether it be outdoors, in the home or in a business.

### Setting

With males dominating the advertisements, certain settings dominate these commercials. First, business settings occupied men 27 percent of the time, where women occupied these settings almost as much at 25 percent. This is largely related to men portrayed in predominately professional roles. Although the differences in settings between males and females were not statistically significant, the findings are still important to report.

Business locations ranged from office settings (IBM, Intel) to investment firms (Morgan Stanley Dean Witter and Merrill Lynch), thus explaining the high number of men in professional roles. These results do indicate some advancements of women's placement in commercials, by not consistently portraying a woman tied to the home. There were differences, however, in the

capacities in which the males and females were portrayed in the business setting, which was discussed in the *Roles* section.

Other business locations portraying men included retail businesses such as Advanced Auto Parts, Better Business Equipment and AMA Truck Accessories. Men were portrayed as both workers and customers in this setting. These settings help to explain some of the men portrayed in labor-related roles.

Second, another setting which displayed men and women nearly equally were outdoor locations – away from home. Usually, when males were portrayed in these settings, they performed some rigorous or risk-taking stunt. For example, numerous car commercials showed a man behind the wheel of a car, driving in some remote, rocky or hilly location. Chevy and Dodge trucks or sport utility vehicles were frequent advertisers using this outdoor scenario. Other commercials which portrayed men in an outdoor setting were Coke and Speed Stick deodorant. Coca-Cola filmed a man cliff-diving, while Speed Stick showed a group of men playing a rugged game of football using no pads, but the men still take each other and run diligently. The outdoors seem to set the stage for physical, risky activities performed mostly by men.

Some women are portrayed in car commercials (Mercedes, Acura) which were filmed in an outdoor setting away from home, and the females are shown as passengers of the vehicle. Set outside of the home, the women were usually carefree. Chevy Impala portrayed a woman playing with her children, riding

horses and smiling, obviously content with her peaceful life. Buick Regal advertisers did portray a man picking up the kids, but the female was shown in a pool, splashing in the water. Again, this is a carefree setting.

Two rooms in which women were rarely shown were the kitchen and bathroom. Sealy Posturepedic was the only commercial to film a woman as a homemaker in the kitchen. Here, a woman was cooking dinner in the kitchen and taking care of her children in the bathroom and then explained how a busy person needs a good night's rest. This ad ended with the female crawling in bed with her husband.

Finally, the setting of the restaurant and bar were not seen a great deal, but women were portrayed here 8.1 percent of the time, while men were shown 4.7 percent of the time. Both sexes were shown as customers casually dressed eating at Austin's and Applebees. Miller Lite placed four men in a bar to call his buddy and say, "what's up", while Long John Silver's portrayed a woman eating breaded fish by herself in the restaurant.

During this time and day segment, women were not shown in stereotypical "homemaker" settings. A few businesses settings, outdoor settings and other rooms of the house included women as the primary actor. Men, however, were displayed in commercials which take place predominately at a business and outdoors away from home. Examining products endorsed by



males and females will help to explain which items men and women are more likely to promote and if the product is associated with gender stereotypes.

### Product Endorsed

Specific services were the most frequently advertised product by a male during Saturday sports programming. Tying in with men being portrayed in a business setting and men holding professional roles, the majority of men (44.1 percent) advertised a service. Women, too, did advertise a service at a slightly less percentage than men (40 percent). Men endorsed investment services such as Charles Schwab, Salomon Smith Barney, Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, Conesco Insurance and Investments and Sun America. The percentages of products endorsed were not found to be statistically significant.

Merrill Lynch, for example, displayed a man designing products for space travel (technology simulators, items for astronauts), and the man claimed that "Merrill Lynch has helped me fund my creativity." Two famous men, Paul Reiser and Adam Carolla endorsed long distance services such as 1-800-CALL-ATT and 1-800-COLLECT, respectively. Both men tried, single-handedly, to convince potential customers that they would save a great deal of money by using this long distance service.

Investment companies continued to have males endorse their services, portraying men as the primary money managers (See Appendix C). Merrill

Lynch quoted a male investor explaining how impressed he was with his financial consultant, Steve Malone, a male investment broker.

Salomon Smith Barney advertisers presented men dressed in tuxedos at a formal gathering which the narrator indicates, "He is the money manager." Finally, the American Cancer Society used famous male coaches such as Dick Vermeil and Phil Jackson to endorse the organization. The final quote of the commercial said, "A coach in the most important game - the game of life." These coaches coach men's sports and were shown endorsing a service because they are leaders.

Because of these commercials being recorded during two golf tournaments, the "other" products being advertised were golfing supplies (golf balls, clubs). There were a large amount of these golf accessories commercials during this time. Generally, men endorsed the golf accessories.

Forty percent of women were used to display some services, too. Some of these services included Internet web sites that provided certain services to customers. Microsoft Connected Learning Community, for example, used a mother to endorse the capabilities of this website by checking her son's homework as he pretended to be sick from school. A woman was also shown briefly on Kforce.com, a website which posted job openings. She searched for a posting on the Internet.

Just as investment companies used men in executive positions to endorse their service, women were also used to endorse some investment services. Women in families, displayed as mothers, were used to help endorse investment services. Advertisers used these women as a symbol for something solid in which people can invest - the family.

Automobiles and auto parts were endorsed by males 16.9 percent of the time, while women endorsed automobiles 18.3 percent of the time. Chevy and Dodge trucks used men to advertise their vehicles by having men drive them. Auto parts used male mechanics and male salesmen to promote the high quality of their product. Women, on the other hand, did help to endorse automobiles, but were shown as a passenger, navigator and a mother carrying children to a soccer game. Men appeared to endorse the cars for their power and off-road capabilities, where the women endorsed autos for the family convenience and extensive room.

Food is a product which was endorsed more by women (20.0 percent) than men (11.8 percent). Beverages were also coded in this category. The majority of food promoted by men and women were restaurants. Austin's, Wendy's, McDonald's and Applebees were advertised by both male and female customers. Alcoholic beverages, such as beer, were promoted by men drinking the beer and beautiful women - some even models - holding the beer.

Finally, technology was endorsed by women (10.0 percent) twice as much as men (5.1 percent). General computer products, such as hardware and software, Internet providers (Microsoft and IBM) and technology supporters such as Intel were coded in this category. Both men and women were shown promoting the technology products by utilizing the computer and searching on the Internet.

Very few commercials used men and women to endorse home products and body products. The majority of body products were medicines (hay fever, cold, cholesterol), while some were for razors and deodorant. Home products endorsed by both men and women were products mainly used outdoors such as Scott's Turf Builder where men and women endorsing this product were shown enjoying their beautiful lawn. Porter Cable showed a man using the company's products to help build a tree house. There were not any interior cleaning products advertised, nor were there any decorative home products advertised.

### Primary Narrator

Males were the overwhelming choice by advertisers to narrate commercials. Out of 119 commercials during this time segment that contained a narrator, men's voices were used 89.9 percent of the time, while female's voices were used 10.1 percent of the time. Women's narration consisted of very short phrases rather than long explanations. For example, a woman in an Avis commercial asked, "Did you ever get the feeling people stopped trying"? A

woman was also heard adding to a man's description of a computer, "Now you can buy an IBM Thinkpad for only \$1399." The only descriptive, narrative piece heard by a female during Saturday sports advertising was for a Colorado Ski vacation. Descriptions of the ski packages, where guests can ski as well as the number to call for information were given by the woman narrating. A woman did narrate a commercial for Sealy Posturpedic in which she sympathized with other sleepless Americans. The narrator indicated, "We support you night and day . . . you're part of millions of Americans who don't get enough sleep on a bed that cradles and supports your body."

Males were the narrators which stated important slogans, indicated the ease with which something is done and explained the workings of certain products. Men, when stating the products' slogans, were sometimes the last voice a viewer heard when watching a commercial. Some commercials ended with a man stating, "If only everything were as dependable as a Chevy," "When we created a smarter investment company, we created a smarter investor," (Charles Schwab), "Grab a Miller Lite'", and "There's just no substitute for the real thing" (Yellow Pages).

Men, in their narration, also indicated the ease with which something can be performed. First National Bank used a male narrator to express, "Look how easy it is to do banking on the Internet. I can transfer funds and check balances." Gillette razors' commercial also used a male narrator to indicate that "using the

Mach 3 is easy as 1-2-3 . . . It's the easiest way to the closest shave." A male narrator in a Compaq ad stated, "Makes technology easy, so you can enjoy the rest of the day."

Finally, when narrating commercials, men also explained the workings of various products. Autotrader.com, a website to trade various larger-dollar items such as cars, used a male voice to explain how the on-line trading works. A man gave a great deal of detail regarding the Tel-Aid system and maintenance check system installed on the Mercedes Benz. Finally, it is the male narrator which described, for many car companies, the workings of different vehicles. Horsepower, torque, engine size and off-road capabilities were all told by a man's narration.

Numerous aspects of Saturday sports advertising have been examined from products endorsed to the setting. In order to make a comparison of what different demographic segments view, the findings of commercials aired during soap opera programming need to be discussed.

## Weekday Soap Opera Advertising

### Roles

The gender make-up of the roles is quite different than weekend advertising. Here, females composed 65 percent of the roles, where males composed only 35 percent of the roles. During weekday soap opera advertising, the most frequent role held by a woman was a parent or one who cares for her child (25.8 percent). The results from this segment of advertising were found to be statistically significant. Some of the significant findings of roles during weekday advertising fell in the parenting roles and professional roles. First, of the parenting roles, 72 percent were portrayed by females, compared to only 27 percent portrayed by males. This differed from weekend advertising, indicating that more females were shown as parents during weekday advertising than weekend advertising. More professional roles (45 percent) were held by women during this time of day, compared to only 20 percent of professional roles being held by women during the week.

Many food advertisers such as Jif Peanut Butter, Chef Boyardee and Toaster Strudel portrayed a mother preparing food for her children. The children were happy, and the mother appeared to be happy, with a smile on her face, providing a meal for her children. The children, as well, were welcoming the prepared food from their mother with excitement.

Table 2

ROLE		GENDER		TOTAL
		Male	Female	
Celebrity	Count	3	7	10
	% within ROLE	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	6.0%	7.5%	7.0%
	% of TOTAL	2.1%	4.9%	7.0%
Parent	Count	9	24	33
	% within ROLE	27.3%	72.7%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	18.0%	25.8%	23.1%
	% of TOTAL	6.3%	16.8%	23.1%
Homemaker	Count	0	13	13
	% within ROLE	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	0.0%	14.0%	9.1%
	% of TOTAL	0.0%	9.1%	9.1%
Professional	Count	13	11	24
	% within ROLE	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	26.0%	11.8%	16.8%
	% of TOTAL	9.1%	7.7%	16.8%
Sex Object	Count	0	15	15
	% within ROLE	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	0.0%	16.1%	10.5%
	% of TOTAL	0.0%	10.5%	10.5%
Spouse/ Partner	Count	13	13	26
	% within ROLE	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	26.0%	14.0%	18.2%
	% of TOTAL	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%
Laborer	Count	7	1	8
	% within ROLE	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	14.0%	1.1%	5.6%
	% of TOTAL	4.9%	.7%	5.6%
Interviewer	Count	1	1	2
	% within ROLE	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	2.0%	1.1%	1.4%
	% of TOTAL	.7%	.7%	1.4%



Other	Count	4	8	12
	% within ROLE	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	8.0%	8.6%	8.4%
	% of TOTAL	2.8%	5.6%	8.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	Count	50	93	143
	% within ROLE	35.0%	65.0%	100.0%
	% within GENDER	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of TOTAL	35.0%	65.0%	100.0%
Chi Square = 32.42		p < .01		

Cleaning products portrayed women as mothers or childcare providers cleaning up after family members and children. When taking on this role, in a cleaning capacity, the mother didn't seem quite as happy as she did when she was preparing food. For example, in an ad for Pledge cleaner, a mother cleaned the desk/table after her small children's greasy hand covered the table with fingerprints (See Appendix D). In the same commercial, the mother needed to clean up after her husband, who was devouring greasy potato chips on the coffee table while watching a sporting event. A mother who rolled her eyes and takes deep sigh, wiped the table with her dust cloth. Mop and Glo showed a woman who is frustrated with the toy tracks and footprints left behind by her children which she had to clean to create a more comfortable and cleaner household for her family.

Men in parental roles were shown only 6.3 percent, compared to women in similar roles (25.8 percent); however, there were some men playing a significant part in the parenting role during this time. Gerber portrayed a man

washing his young son in the bathtub by himself while using Gerber baby wash (See Appendix E). Commercials such as Connectkids.org showed a father, together with the child's mother, discussing the progress of their child with a teacher. Another commercial promoting Vick's Vapo Rub showed a father and mother tucking their child in bed. Finally, Van De Kamps used a father-figure to play with the children in the yard while mother fixed dinner for the family.

Women were only portrayed as homemakers 14 percent of the time. It should be noted, though, that no males were portrayed as homemakers during this time. Vanish Bowl Cleaner used five women, who clean at home during the day, to discuss the quality job of the bowl cleaner. During the day, while taking care of the kids, the homemaker/mother used Febreze to make sure her upholstery was fresh and clean with no pet scents or children's mess. Palmolive also portrayed female homemakers. Again - during the day - the women were dancing around the kitchen because their hands and dishes carried the fragrance of spring.

Men, just as in weekend advertising, were portrayed as professionals (26 percent) twice as often as women (11.8 percent). An ad for a home dry cleaner kit portrayed a young female professional in a suit interviewing for an office job with a business manager. Frontline animal products used a female veterinarian to endorse their products. A woman with a white lab coat and a career as a pharmacist promoted Maalox (See Appendix B). Men continued to hold

business and management positions during this time period, as they are shown with professional suits, briefcases and overcoats in an office or coming home professionally dressed. Overall, males were shown in various roles only 35 percent of the time, while females were portrayed in roles 65 percent of the time.

Sex objects during this time were portrayed solely by women. Underwear ads for Victoria's Secret showed women in revealing lingerie moving around in various positions. Uncle Ben's rice portrayed a woman in a tank top and tight jeans moving seductively on her husband as the rice is cooking. Body products such as Neutrogena and FA Body Wash showed close-ups of parts of women's bodies as they were applying lotion and shower gel in a seductive manner. The women were shown in the shower or only with a towel.

Men, during this time period, were shown as spouses/partners 26 percent of the time, while women were only shown as spouses 14 percent of the time. Eclipse Gum, for example, displayed a couple, either dating or married, eating dinner at a fancy restaurant together. Diet Dr. Pepper portrays an older couple in a courtroom together. A wife doted over her husband as he suffers from allergies in a Zyrtec allergy medicine ad. Finally, a Milk of Magnesia (M.O.M.) ad, a woman compared various brands of over-the-counter medicine, and recommended M.O.M. to her husband.

Very few men or women took on roles of laborer and interviewer/demonstrator. Roles coded in the "other" category were usually those of no

occupation. Here, there were a few obvious roles taken on by either men (professional and spouse) or women (homemaker). Similar to specific roles carried out by women, there were consistent settings in which females and males were portrayed.

### Setting

Surprisingly, males (24.4 percent) were slightly more in the kitchen than females (17 percent). Men were mainly shown in the kitchen eating with the family. Although these statistics were not found to be statistically significant, the descriptions of the advertisements are necessary to understand the setting of each gender. The woman was placed in the kitchen for a variety of reasons. Kenmore used the kitchen for a woman to show off new appliances. Annie Potts poured her dog a bowl of Alpo in the kitchen, while a mother offered her young child a freezer pop from Pedialyte. Chef Boyardee, 10-10-321 and Tupperware portrayed women in the kitchen cooking. Men, when portrayed in the kitchen, were shown with their spouses or significant others, usually preparing to eat a meal.

The bedroom was a popular room where the woman is shown. This was her own bedroom or a child's room. Kleenex, Vick's Vapo Rub and Pooh Bear accessories are all set in a child's bedroom with the mother pictured with her child. This particular setting was the majority of "other rooms" in the home. The living room was another room which was frequently coded in this category.

Many females were also set outdoors away from home (20.5 percent). Jif Peanut Butter portrays a mother with her children outdoors on a picnic, while Goldfish graham snacks portrays a mother and her children at the baseball park watching a baseball game. A Revelation Flea and Tick medicine ad was set in a park with both males and females walking their dogs. Finally, Sunny Delight was set in many outdoor settings with girls performing outdoor events such as surfing, painting and running. Men who were portrayed in outdoor settings away from home (24.4 percent) were performing the outdoor duties of their career (rancher, land surveyor).

Business settings for women were found in offices, stores (grocery and retail) and doctors' offices. Women were shown taking children to doctors' offices, comparing prices at Gordman's and JCPenney's and applying for jobs at offices.

One extra category was added for coding setting. Many commercials (enough to warrant a separate category) displayed women in a "no setting" background. Here, advertisers such as Loreal, Maybelline and Revlon used a solid color backdrop, indicating no setting in particular. This was a common setting for women, as 20.5 percent were portrayed in a setting with just a solid color backdrop.

The total numbers in these categories differed for various reasons. First, in any particular commercial, more than one setting were portrayed. The roles of

the actors were consistent, but the setting may have changed within the advertisement. Also, different roles of males or females may be displayed in the same setting, so the numbers will differ from setting to role category.

### **Product Endorsed**

Products associated with the body were the most common products women endorsed (46.5 percent). The statistics from this category were not statistically significant. First, many types of medicines were advertised by women such as Aleve pain reliever, Flonase nasal spray and Nyquil. Another category of body products advertised was beauty products. Females endorsed beauty creams, make-up, lotions, shower gels and body sprays. Any products to make a body beautiful, women were advertising. Men who endorsed body products (26.5 percent) were limited to such items as medicines (Nasonex, Alka Seltzer) and some weight loss (Slim Fast).

Men (44.1 percent) also endorsed almost twice as much food products as women (23.6 percent). A wide variety of foods were advertised by women. Candy, such as gum, and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups were endorsed by women. Many foods that kids love were promoted by women such as Toaster Strudel and Chef Boyardee foods. Men did not advertise one specific type of food or food product. Fast food restaurants, Uncle Ben's rice and Van De Kamp's were some examples of food products men endorsed.

Home products advertised by women (14.2 percent) consisted of cleaning products either for the house itself (Pledge, Lysol) or for clothes (Tide, Dryel). Men, who advertised as many home products as women did (14.7 percent) advertised mainly products for the exterior of the home (lawn care). Commercials involving women in the "other" category were products such as pet supplies, cotton fabric, clothing and retail stores. Men, in the "other" category, advertised items such as hardware and tools. The majority of products advertised by both men and women fell into the food, home products or body category. As mentioned before, a variety of products were endorsed by both men and women in the "other" category. Numbers, here in this category may differ from other charts, as males and females both endorse products. Also, more than one female or male could be endorsing a product for each commercial.

### Primary Narrator

Results for this category were very different from Saturday sports advertising. The frequency of the male and female narrators was equal. Out of 94 commercials which used narrators, men and women equally narrated 50 percent of the advertisements. Women typically narrated feminine hygiene products; however, that was the only obvious pattern for male or female narration. Men narrated food commercials (Hidden Valley) when women were the primary actors. Women narrated food commercials, body commercials and retail store commercials. Men's voices were also used in female body products

such as anti-aging cream ads. There were very few patterns and consistencies as far as what types of commercials were narrated by males and females.



## Chapter 5

### Discussion

#### Interpretation of Data

##### **Roles**

Out of all the categories used for coding, this was the only category that found statistically significant differences in both the weekend and weekday advertisements. From weekday soap opera advertising to Saturday sports advertising, there were many differences between the male and female roles, primary narrators and products endorsed. First, the roles of males during the Saturday sports advertising were predominately business and executive positions. Many more men were shown during this advertising spot than women. Women, during this time, were still stereotyped as sex objects, but not so much as homemakers, yet men were shown as the gender to carry out high-ranking, executive positions as well as physical labor careers (construction, assembly lines). Men were shown performing physical tasks, such as golf. Women, for example, were shown holding a golf club while men were shown swinging the golf club. Perhaps this portrayal of men as executives appeals to more of the males watching television during this time than during the week.

The stereotyping was not as pronounced in the female role as it was in the male role.

Women still were portrayed more often as a parent. During the weekend, the percentage was not significantly high (13 percent). During the weekday, however, women were shown as a parent 25.8 percent of the time. Males were shown more as a part of the family on weekends, during an advertising time when more males are viewing. Advertisers may want to convey important messages to males that in this busy environment, it is still important for men to take part in the family life, and that this lifestyle can be rewarding. During the weekday, when women were shown more as parents, advertisers, perhaps want women to relate to moms that are parents and take care of their children, and most of all, are successful at parenting.

Women, during sports advertising, were still shown in lower status jobs than men. Waitressing jobs and retail jobs were shown as careers for women. This still indicates some stereotyping that is harder for a woman to reach an executive position than a man. Women, for example, were portrayed in an office setting; however, the careers women held were administrative-type positions. This portrayal contributes to the glass-ceiling theory, which women can see higher-ranking careers for themselves, but they cannot attain them.

Roles in weekday soap opera advertisements for women were predominantly parental. Men, however, did share in some of the parenting role.

Women's roles were diverse, consisting of an almost even number of homemakers, professionals, sex objects and spouses or partners. Perhaps this indicated women in the 1990's and early 21<sup>st</sup> century wanted to be everything, not just a fixture in the home. Men were shown as spouses a little more than women, perhaps suggesting that advertisers still want to display males as the head of the household. They were, also, shown primarily as a parent or professional.

Women seemed to be active in their roles during weekday advertising. Some advertisements portrayed women running while other ads showed women in a professional career. The male/female roles in both the weekend and weekday advertising seemed to target the viewing audience by portraying roles males and females would like to hold. Males may aspire to be businessmen, while women want to be active and busy in their life while taking on many different roles. The roles may be somewhat stereotypical of men with high-ranking careers, but women were portrayed, especially in the weekday ads, as active in their lives, not just bound to the home. The statistically significant data implies that there is a distinct relationship of the various roles portrayed by males and females.

## **Products endorsed**

Products endorsed varied between the weekend and weekday. Weekend sports were composed mainly of service and auto commercials. Men were commonly shown endorsing various investment services as well as products associated with automobiles. This indicates men were more knowledgeable regarding household finances as well as working on parts of cars. Technology endorsed slightly more by females, but suggesting that this is a part of both males' and females' lives. During weekday advertising, women did endorse mainly simple products such as body products (lotion, make-up) or home products (cleaning products). These products were not as complicated to understand or use, compared to weekend men's advertisements which promoted financial figures and intricate car mechanisms.

## **Primary Narrator**

Primary narrators is one category which had very drastic differences between weekend and weekday advertising. Men dominated the primary narrator role during sports advertising. Advertisers were using a voice with which males associate, possibly making them feel comfortable or at ease with the products being advertised. Females and males narrated equally as much during weekday advertising. For both advertising segments, males explained the product more, while women gave details about "how good this feels on your

skin” or how “easy” the product was to use. This finding suggests that males are more knowledgeable about the workings of a car or computer, while women were more in touch with the ease of a product and how it made them feel.

### **Liberal Feminism Theory**

The liberal feminism theory was partially supported in this study. The theory states that women are traditionally devalued in relation to men. In support of this theory, men held higher-ranking careers, such as businessmen, executives and business owners. Although some women were portrayed as professionals, men playing the role as an executive far outweighed the women.

Men were also more likely to be portrayed as performing physical labor jobs. Construction workers and heavy equipment operators were all male in the commercials. Women were usually portrayed as waitresses or hostesses in the labor category.

Finally, men usually endorsed services which involved financial decisions for the family. Investment companies used men to endorse brokerage services which are important, mathematical decisions for the family. Women, in these commercials, were portrayed in supportive roles as a spouse or partner where it was the man’s responsibility to make the proper financial decisions. Women, still, are the gender which endorses the household products used for cleaning and making the home look better.

When looking at the setting, it is important that the readers not be deceived by the amount of women portrayed in a business. Although it is encouraging to see women portrayed outside of the home and in a business setting, it is also important to look in what capacity the women are being portrayed in these businesses. For example, a man and a woman may be shown in a business, but the male is the executive and the woman is the secretary. It is also important to note that in both segments of advertising women are portrayed as a sex object. Liberal Feminism is supported here.

Liberal feminism theory was partially supported in the role of parenting. During weekend advertising, women are portrayed more often as parents, but not by much. Men still take part in the role, not leaving all of the childcare to the woman. During weekday advertising, women were shown a lot more as parents, but again, men still took part in the role. Men were shown participating in the role of parenting such as giving their children a bath and changing diapers. Men and women were shown a lot of times together as parents with their children, not leaving the parenting role solely to the mother. With today's busy society and many mothers working, the commercials reflected the importance of both mothers and fathers raising the children. Women were also shown in other settings besides the home, such as stores, parks and businesses. Women were not confined to one area, but out and around in the community.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

This study closely followed the study of Craig (1992). In order to duplicate his coding, the preset categories and subcategories of the roles, products endorsed, setting and primary narrator were used. There were other subcategories under these which could have been used to avoid coding under "other". Many commercials took place in a retail store, for example, which could have called for its own category. Because many stores were advertised, a separate category under "product endorsed" would have been helpful.

It becomes very difficult to create a code sheet to cover all the patterns discovered in commercials. There are a lot of different roles, with different numbers of actors/actresses in each commercial, sometimes numerous settings are used as well. Continuous research regarding television advertising needs to be completed in order to stay on top of all the trends and patterns of television commercials. Demographics of audiences may change, as well as the content of the commercials. To get a clear idea of the images portrayed in advertising, scholars must examine this topic in the future.

Future research may also want to look more closely at the interactions of the males and females and the dialogue between them. This would reveal how the actors talk to each other, not just what is said. A few more categories may want to be added to avoid over-coding in the "other" categories.

Another segment of advertising to possibly study would be Saturday morning and weeknight advertisements as cartoons are being aired. Previous research has studied these time frames with different coding categories. It would be interesting to look at how adults are portrayed during these programming times with different viewing audiences. Continuous research needs to be completed in this area to understand how males and females are portrayed to various viewing audiences. Advertisers must appeal to consumers in numerous ways. Studying commercials helps the viewers to understand what advertisers feel will catch the attention of consumers. Since the interests of the viewing audience change rapidly, it is important to continue to study the newest trends in television advertising.



## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

Media constantly changes with new ideas and trends in advertisements. Studying different aspects of the media, such as advertising, helps to recognize the trends of roles, setting and products in commercials.

Based on previous research, women have been portrayed consistently in homemaker, motherly and sex object roles. Research from this study suggests that there is still evidence of women in these roles; however, progress of getting women out of the home and active in their lives is apparent. Women are portrayed more in roles where they are actively working out of the home and actively involved in the community. Men are shown primarily holding business roles, but they are also shown participating in parenting with women, particularly during weekend sports programming.

The core of this study, though, was to examine how gender images differ as the demographic make-up of the viewing audience changes. This research, indeed, suggests that there are differences in roles, settings and products endorsed when the time of day and audience changes. The amount of men and women portrayed in the commercials also shifts as demographics shift. Some stereotyping does exist, which supports the liberal feminism theory. Females are shown in some stereotypical roles (a few housewives, the house cleaner, sex

object), but males are shown mostly in high-ranking, executive careers. Males also narrate commercials much more than women.

The implications of this study are important. First, this research suggests to what extent weekday and weekend afternoon advertising stereotype the male and female image. Second, the data indicate that there are still stereotypical imagery displayed on television, but women are shown much more active and involved in other activities besides their home and children. Finally, future research suggests that scholars should continue to look at television advertising as commercials keep up with the trends of society, thus revealing how our society views males and females.

This study also indicates that it is important to include qualitative data when studying commercials. Numbers can help explain some of the portrayals, but there needs to be follow-up discussions and descriptions of how males and females are portrayed in these roles.

Awareness of men and women's images are important. It is also important that television viewers understand commercials usually portray images - not real-life documentaries - but images. Television audiences need to make thoughtful decisions of the situations, roles and settings in which each gender is portrayed. Viewers have to make a conscious effort not to allow stereotypical images to enter their schema, just as the gender schema theory illustrates. Once this occurs, real-life stereotyping of men and women are played

out. Acknowledging and studying commercials helps to separate women's real-life capabilities and roles from those portrayed on television, which may be stereotypical. When more and more research is published and read, a movement toward a more egalitarian society can emerge.

## References

Arndorfer, J.B. (1998). A-B looking for women via daytime TV programs. Advertising Age, 69, 8.

Allan, K., & Coltrane, S. (1996). Gender displaying television commercial: A comparative study of television commercials in the 1950's and 1980's. Sex Roles, 3, 185 - 203.

Bernstein, S. (1993). Is fashion partly to blame? Advertising Age, 64, 16.

Boyatzis, R.E. (1998). Transforming Qualitative Information. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bretl, D.J., & Cantor, J. (1988). The portrayal of men and women in U.S. television commercials: A recent content analysis and trends over 15 years. Sex Roles, 18 (10), 595-609.

Browne, B.A. (1998). Gender stereotypes in advertising on children's television in the 1990's: A cross-national analysis. Journal of Advertising, 27 (1), 83-95.

Cantor, J.R. (1976). What is funny to whom?: The role of gender. Journal of Communication, 26, 164 - 172.

Craig, R.S. (1992a). The effect of television day part on gender portrayals in television commercials: A content analysis. Sex Roles, 26 (5), 197 - 211.

Craig, R.S. (1992b). Women as home caregivers: Gender portrayal in over-the-counter drug commercials. Journal of Drug Education, 22 (4), 303 -312.

Czopp, A.M., Lasane, T.P., Sweigard, P.N., Bradshaw, S.D., & Hammer, E.D. (1998). Masculine styles of self-presentation in the classroom: Perceptions of joe cool. Journal of Social Behavior & Personality, 13 (2), 281-294.

DeCoursey, J. (1996). Claiborne throws a curve at young men and women. Advertising Age, 67, 20.

Desmond, R.J., & Jeffries-Fox, S. (1983). Elevating children's awareness of television advertising: The effects of a critical viewing program. Communication Education, 32, 107 - 115.

Eaton, B.C. (1997). Prime-time stereotyping on the news television networks. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 74 (4), 859-871.

Ferrante, C.L., Haynes, A.M., & Kingsley, S.M. (1988). Image of women in television advertising. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 32 (2), 231-237.

Furnham, A., & Voli, V. (1989). Gender stereotypes in Italian television advertisements. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 33 (2), 175-185.

Gibson, L.D. (1996). What can one TV exposure do? Journal of Advertising Research, 36, 9-18.

Gunter, B., Furnham, A., & Beeson, C. (1997). Recall of television advertisements as a function of program evaluation. The Journal of Psychology, 131 (5), 541 - 553.

Hardesty, C., Wenk, D., & Morgan, C.S. (1995). Paternal involvement and the development of gender expectations in sons and daughters. Youth & Society, 26 (3), 283-297.

Hitchon, J.C., & Chang, C. (1995). Effects of gender schematic processing on the reception of political commercials for men and women candidates. Communication Research, 22 (4), 430-458.

Hitchon, J.C., & Thorson, E. (1995). Effects of emotion and product involvement on the experience of repeated commercial viewing. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 39, 376-389.

Iijima - Hall, C.C., & Crum, M.J. (1994). Women and "body-isms" in television beer commercials. Sex-Roles, 31 (5), 329-337.

Kane, E.W., & Shippers, M. (1996). Men's and women's beliefs about gender and sexuality. Gender and Society, 10 (5), 650-665.

Karpan, S.C. (1997). Themes and gender portrayals in saturday morning children's television advertisements, Unpublished thesis, University of Nebraska - Omaha.

Kolbe, R.H., & Langefeld, C.D. (1993). Appraising gender roles in TV commercials. Sex Roles, 28 (7), 393-415.

Lafky, S., Duffy, M., Steinmaus, M., & Berkowitz, D. (1996). Looking through gendered lenses: Female stereotyping in advertisements and gender role expectations. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 73 (2), 379-388.

Lang, A. (1990). Involuntary attention and physiological arousal by structural features and emotional content in TV commercials. Communication Research, 17 (3), 275-299.

Lovdal, L.T. (1989). Sex role messages in television commercials: An update. Sex Roles, 21 (12), 715-724.

Lowery, S.A., & DeFleur, M.L. (1995) Milestones in Mass Communication Research: Media Effects. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) White Plains: Longman.

Lull, J.T., Hanson, C.A., & Marx, M.J. (1977). Recognition of female stereotypes in TV commercials. Journalism Quarterly, 54, 153-156.

Marecek, J., Piliavan, J.A., Fitzsimmons, E., Krogh, E.C., Leader, E., & Trudell, B. (1978). Women as TV experts: The voice of authority? Journal of Communication, 28, 159-168..

Martell, R.F., Parker, C., Emrich, C.G., & Crawford, M.S. (1998). Sex stereotyping in the executive suite: Much ado about something. Journal of Social Behavior & Personality, 13 (1), 127 - 138.

Mattes, J., & Cantor, J. (1982). Enhancing responses to television advertisements via the transfer of residual arousal from prior programming. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 26, 553-566.

McQuail, D. (1994). Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Melville, D.J.A., & Cornish, I.M. (1993). Conservatism and gender perception of sex-roles in television advertisements. Perceptual & Motor Skills, 77, 642.

Miller, N.M., & Reeves, B. (1976). Dramatic TV content and children's sex role stereotypes. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 20 (1), 35 - 50.

Monteath, S.A., & McCabe, M.P. (1997). The influence of societal factors on female body image. The Journal of Social Psychology, 137 (6), 708-727.



Myers, P.N., & Biocca, F.A. (1992). The elastic body image: The effect of television advertising and programming on body image distortions of young women. Journal of Communication, 42 (3), 108-131.

Nicotera, A.M., & Rancer, A.S. (1994). The influence of sex on self-perceptions and social stereotyping of aggressive communication predispositions. Western Journal of Communication, 58, 283-307.

Nielsen Media Research. (1997). National Audience Demographic Report, 17.

Pennell, G.E. (1994). Babes in toyland: Learning an ideology of gender. Advances in Consumer Research, 25, 359-364.

Pennell, G.E. (1998). Becoming gendered: The role of toys in children's identity development. Advances in Consumer Research, 25, 363-365.

Perry, S.D., Jenzowsky, S.A., Hester, J.B., King, C.M., & Yi, H. (1997). The influence of commercial humor on program enjoyment and evaluation. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 74 (2), 388-399.

Pieters, R.G.M., & Bijmolt, T.H.A. (1997). Consumer memory for television advertising: A field study of duration, serial position and competition Journal of Consumer Research, 23, 362-325.

Plummer, J.T. (1971). A theoretical view of advertising communication. The Journal of Communication, 21, 315-325.

Power, J.G., Murphy, S.T., & Coover, G. (1996). Priming prejudice: How stereotypes and counterstereotypes influence attribution of responsibility and credibility among in groups and outgroups. Human Communication Research, 23 (1), 36-58.

Press, A. (1991). Women Watching Television: Gender, Class and Generation in the American Television Experience. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Rakow, L.F., & Kranich, K. (1991). Women as a sign in television news. Journal of Communication, 41 (1), 8-23.

Rickard, L. (1995). Subaru, GMC top push to win over women. Advertising Age, 66 (14), 22.

Robertson, T.S. (1979). Parental mediation of television advertising effects. Journal of Communication, 29, 12-25.

Rovinelli, L., & Whissell, C. (1998). Emotion and style in 30-second television advertisements targeted at men, women, boys and girls. Perceptual & Motor Skills, 86, 1048-1050.

Rudman, W.J., & Verdi, P. (1993). Exploitation: Comparing sexual and violent imagery of females and males in advertising. Women & Health, 20 (4), 1-14.

Seiter, E. (1986). Stereotypes and the media: A re-evaluation. Journal of Communication, 36, 14-26.

Signorielli, N. (1989). Television and conceptions about sex roles: Maintaining conventionality and the status quo. Sex Roles, 21 (5), 341-360.

Signorielli, N., McLeod, D., & Healy, E. (1994). Gender stereotypes in MTV commercials: The beat goes on. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 38 (1), 91-101.

Silverstein, B., Perdue, L., Peterson, B., & Kelly, E. (1986). The role of the mass media in promoting a thin standard of bodily attractiveness for women. Sex Roles, 14 (10), 519-532.

Smith, L.J. (1994). A content analysis of gender differences in children's advertising. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 38, 323-337.

Solomon, M.R., & Greenberg, L. (1993). Setting the stage: Collective selection in the stylistic context of commercials. Journal of Advertising, 22 (1), 11-21.

Stiles, W.B., Lyall, L.M., Knight, D.P., Ickes, W., Waung, M., Hall, C.L., & Primeau, B.E. (1997). Gender differences in verbal presumptuousness and attentiveness. Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin, 23 (7), 759-772.

Tan, A.S. (1982). Television use and social stereotypes. Journalism Quarterly, 59, 119-122.

Wood, J.T. (1997). Communication Theories. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Wood, J.T., & Lenze, L.F. (1991). Gender development of self: Inclusive pedagogy in interpersonal communication. Women's Studies In Communication, 4, 1-23.

Zemach, T., & Cohen, A.A. (1986). Perception and gender equality on television and in social reality. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 30 (4), 427-444.

## Appendix A

<u>Date</u>	<u>Station:</u>	<u>Time:</u> 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.	<u>Sponsor:</u>
<hr/>			
<b>GENDER:</b>	MALE		FEMALE
<hr/>			
<b>ROLE:</b>	Celebrity	Laborer	Celebrity
	Parent	Interviewer	Parent
	Homemaker	Other:	Homemaker
	Professional		Professional
	Sex object		Sex object
	Spouse/partner		Spouse/partner
<hr/>			
<b>PRODUCT ENDORSED:</b>	Service		Service
	Body		Body
	Home product		Home product
	Technology		Technology
	Food		Food
	Auto		Auto
	Other:		Other:
<hr/>			
<b>SETTING:</b>	Kitchen		Kitchen
	Bathroom		Bathroom
	Other room in home		Other room in home
	Outdoors at home		Outdoors away from home
	Restaurant/bar		Restaurant/bar
	Business		Business
	Other:		Other:
<hr/>			
<b>PRIMARY NARRATOR:</b>	Yes/no		Yes/no
<hr/>			
<b>NOTES:</b>			

## Appendix B

### Commercial portraying a female in a non-stereotypical role

A female pharmacist, dressed in suit and nameplate, walks through lab past workers and to the cabinet where she grabs a bottle of Maalox.

**Female:** In hospital pharmacies, they dispense medicines that work fast. For heartburn - that's one minute Maalox.

A diagram of Maalox and Pepcid AC working on stomachs is shown.

**Female:** Pepcid AC could take over 45 minutes. Maalox goes to work on your stomach in one minute.

**Female:** Hospitals pharmacies rely on Maalox, shouldn't you?

Female puts a bottle of Maalox in front of the camera.

## Appendix C

### Commercial portraying a male in stereotypical role

Two men are shown at an upscale gathering, dressed in black business suits, shaking hands. One man looks at his wife, who smiles back at him.

**Male narrator:** Bill Kelly just made out his Will. To his wife, he will leave two homes and his investment portfolio. He'll leave all other assets to his children.

Man shown with entire family, wife and four children – all of whom are getting their picture taken.

**Male narrator:** All of his beneficiaries are here – all except the IRS, who could get two-thirds of everything.

A close up of a man's eyes is shown with a depressed look.

**Male narrator:** See how we earn it – Salomon Smith Barney.

## Appendix D

### A female shown in a stereotypical role

Kids run in the living room, drop a cookie on the coffee table, spilling crumbs everywhere.

Kids run around in the living room, laughing, and put their pizza on the bare coffee table, followed by the dog liking the pieces off the table.

Kids dance on the table with bare feet.

The husband sits in front of the television cheering for a sports team while eating potato chips and putting greasy hands on the coffee table.

**Female narrator:** Life happens to furniture – so what can you do? Simple – Pledge every time.

The female is shown spraying the dust cloth with Pledge and wiping the coffee table.

**Female narrator:** You won't just get the dust; you'll get the smudges, greasy fingerprints *and* protect wood, too!

The woman smiles and admires the clean table.

The kids are shown again running through the house, eating on the coffee table, getting crumbs everywhere.

**Female narrator:** And this is how it is. Where life goes on, Pledge goes on.



## Appendix E

### Male shown in a non-stereotypical role

**Jane Seymour**: Gerber has a surprising way to calm your baby down at bedtime. Introducing Gerber Baby Wash.

Male is shown, alone, playing with baby in tub, making faces, splashing water, and cooing with baby.

**Jane Seymour**: The first with natural soothing lavender. It's Gerber-safe and gentle.

Male is shown washing baby's hair, putting the towel on baby and drying it off.

**Jane Seymour**: With warm water, here's a natural way to calm and relax, just in time for bedtime.

**Male voice-over sings**: Yes, your baby has you, and you have Gerber.

Male holds baby in his arms, baby yawns and male kisses baby.

**Jane Seymour**: Shouldn't your baby be a Gerber Baby?