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Gender through the Generations: Changes in the Representation of Women in Spanish Advertising

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Senior Honors Project

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Abstract

This project examines the portrayal of women in Spanish television commercials. The objective of the investigation is to determine if there are significant increases in the representation of women in commercials from three separate years (1990, 2000, and 2010) in order to observe the level of responsiveness of advertising to a more gender-equalized Spanish society. Throughout Spain's history, women's roles in the country's society have changed, with a stronger female presence in the work force as well as in the media. Upon completing this study, it will be determined whether television advertisements in Spain follow these societal trends by increasing the number of women portrayed as central figures in commercials.

The study consists of content analysis of a sampling of randomly generated Spanish commercials from each observed year, with an equal number of commercials falling into seven categories of products every year. The chosen years allow for focus on the advertising industry's responsiveness to changes in society over two ten-year periods (1990 to 2000 and 2000 to 2010) and the entire twenty-year period (1990 to 2010). The categorization of variables is based on the 1975 pioneering work of McArthur and Resko.

Introduction

The differentiation and adaptation of advertising to various cultures is a common tactic used by firms. Market researchers discover the values of the cultures in which their companies advertise and adjust their ads to reflect those values (de Mooij, 2014). According to a 2010 study conducted by Bowling Green State University professor Linda C. Ueltschy, consumers view and perceive advertisements through the lens of the culture to which they are accustomed; therefore, it is imperative that these ads reflect familiar cultural aspects and phenomena in order to attract a company's target market. These well-known concepts of international marketing can be applied to television advertising in Spain. In their 2007 study, University of Missouri marketing professors Dr. Morris Kalliny and Dr. Lance Gentry cited eight different sources supporting the notion that culture has a substantial impact on international advertising strategy. So, as culture evolves, advertising strategy and the ads seen by viewers should logically evolve as well. The purpose of this study is to examine the central figures in Spanish television advertisements and to determine if there are significant increases in the representation of women from 1990 to 2000, from 2000 to 2010, and from 1990 to 2010, following the patterns of increased gender equality in Spanish society.

Gender Roles in Spain

Spanish society is evolving and gender roles in Spain are equalizing. Although women are still less active in the Spanish labor force than men, Spanish women have experienced a more dramatic movement towards equality compared to women in other countries (Lopez-Zafra & Garcia-Retamero, 2012). In the late nineteenth century, there was very little, if any, concept of gender equality in Spain. The contents of the Spanish Civil Code of 1889 illustrate the sexist and

male-centered society of the time: Article 57 stated a husband's obligation to protect his wife and his wife's obligation to obey her husband; Article 58 declared that a married woman was required to follow her husband and move to wherever he decided to live; Article 60 defined a husband as "representative" of his wife, which meant that the wife could not appear in trial without her husband's license; and Article 62 stated that a wife could not buy anything not classified as being within the family's "ordinary consumption" without her husband's consent. Also, a woman could not purchase jewelry, furniture, or precious objects without her husband's approval (Gutiérrez San Miguel et. al., 2014).

A brief new era began in Spain in 1931. The 1931 election marked the beginning of the regime known as the Second Spanish Republic, which was a period of democracy lasting until 1939. The era was a short time of progress for women fueled by the more liberal government. For example, the 1931 Constitution declared the right to equality between men and women in marriage (*Spanish Women's History*, 2006-2007), divorce was legalized and women were granted the right to vote in 1933 (Smith, 2009), and the women's rights group called *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women) was formed in 1936. *Mujeres Libres* fought for gender equality but was different from groups of the time with the same goal: The majority of members of other groups were men, and although those men claimed to be activists for women's rights, they frequently neither respected women nor acted as if women were their equals at the groups' meetings. To illustrate, at some gatherings of liberation groups such as those of the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth, male members actually teased and laughed at female members (Ackelsberg, 1991). Because of the lack of men's full support and respect for women's rights even in organizations supposedly dedicated to gender equality, *Mujeres Libres* was formed by three women with the intention to be composed only of women and to be independent of other, similar

groups dominated by men. Although the revolution of the Second Spanish Republic was short, the effects of *Mujeres Libres* were felt for a longer time. The group's formation, goals, and actions gave Spanish society a sense that there was a possibility for change in the roles of women, and that these changes could be made by women themselves. However, many of these hopes and positive changes were taken away after the civil war at the end of the Second Republic (Ackelsberg, 1991).

The Spanish Civil War marked the end of the brief period of the advancement and liberation of women. After the war, which ended in 1939, Francisco Franco seized control of Spain and placed the country under his authoritarian regime. During the era of Franco, much of the oppression of women established by the Spanish Civil Code of 1889 was restored, and many of the privileges granted to women during the Second Republic were taken away (Ackelsberg, 1991). Once again, under Franco, women found themselves expected to stay at home, care for children, not to work, and to be without the freedoms they began to acquire during the time of the Second Republic. In the age of Franco, traditionally "female" roles were widely accepted as the only appropriate roles for women. A woman participating in the same day-to-day activities as a man such as working, handling finances, representing herself and her family, and making decisions simply did not occur (*Spanish Women's History*, 2006-2007).

The start of the major movement towards gender equality in Spain occurred at the end of the oppressive era of Francisco Franco, during Spain's transition from a dictatorship to a democracy around the mid-1970s (Fernández Fraile, 2008). The movement was marked by the reform of the Civil Code in April of 1975. The reformed Civil Code granted women freedoms such as the right to own assets, collect inheritance, appear in trial, use banking services, and obtain a passport independently. Also, husbands were no longer referred to as the sole "heads of

the family” (Gutiérrez San Miguel et. al., 2014). In 1978, the Spanish Constitution guaranteed an end to sex discrimination and the contraceptive pill was reintroduced as legal, and in 1985 the Spanish government legalized abortion with some limitations (Fernández Fraile, 2008). A notable factor in the gender equality movement was the founding of the Woman’s Institute of Spain in 1983. At the time of its creation, the organization’s objective was “The promotion of conditions to facilitate the social equality between the sexes and the participation of women in political, cultural, economic, and social life.” The organization, which is still active today, worked to make information, assistance, and training programs readily available for women and to promote public policies in favor of women’s equality (*Instituto de la Mujer*, 2013).

Since the 1980s, during which time when Spain made the most significant progress toward gender equality, still more advancements have been made to further equalize men and women. For example, in 2004 the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, or PSOE, which is the country’s more democratic-leaning political party, won the election and for the first time in the history of Spain a woman served as Vice President and the President’s cabinet was comprised of an equal number of male and female members (*Spanish Women’s History*, 2006-2007). In 2010, the socialist party implemented the 2/2010 Organic Law declaring abortion legal for any reason within the first 14 weeks of the woman’s pregnancy, and legal for young women aged 16 and 17 without a parent’s consent (Betancort, 2014).

Gender in the Labor Force

Table 1 displays data about the Spanish labor force. Participation in the labor force is defined as either being employed for any number of hours per week or actively searching looking for employment. For the purpose of this study, the years included are 1990, 2000, and

2010. The percent of the labor force made up of women grew from 34.5% in 1990 to 44.6% in 2010, and the difference between men's participation in the labor force and women's participation in the labor force decreased from a difference of 35.3% to a difference of only 15.7%. Therefore, based on the labor data presented in Table 1, there was a visible increase in gender equality in the labor force.

According to a survey by the Spanish Institute of Women, 49.1% of all Spanish males compared to 38.9% of all Spanish females were considered actually employed in 2013. In examining the motives of Spanish citizens of each gender who were not even members of the labor force, the Spanish Institute of Women found that in 2013, 26.3% of women not in the labor force reported that they neither worked nor were looking for a job because of responsibilities of caring for children or other family members, or because of other personal responsibilities. Only 2.1% of men not in the labor force reported the same reason for not participating. The Great Recession in Spain, which began in 2008, both helped women's progress in the labor force but also caused many women to have to balance work and home responsibilities. The recession resulted in the necessity of social cuts in programs such as education, healthcare, and elderly care in Spain, and women were frequently, as evidenced by the above statistics, the family members to care for children and dependent family members (Gutiérrez San Miguel et. al. 2014). However, many women began to work part-time, even for a few hours per week, classifying them as "employed" and therefore as participants in the labor force. To make up for the loss of income when many men lost their jobs as a result of the financial crisis, there began a pattern of women entering the workforce part-time as men exited the workforce due to the economic situation. Therefore, because of the Great Recession, more women had jobs in addition to household responsibilities: In 2008, women who worked outside of the home on average

dedicated twice as much time to housework as men (López-Sáez, Francisco Morales, & Lisbona, 2008), placing them back into the traditional housewife role, as well as with the new task of bringing in household income. Additionally, according to a 2008 study of the evolution of gender stereotypes in Spain, the number of unemployed female university graduates in 2006 was twice that of men, and women’s salaries were on average 27.2% less than men’s for the same job (López-Sáez et.al., 2008). Therefore, even with modernization and gender equalization and with more women participating in the labor force, in the early twenty-first century women are still more often than men the designated family “caregivers,” stay-at-home-mothers, and housewives, must balance these roles with their new roles of family providers, and still face inequality when they do join the work force. Despite Spain’s progress, there is still disparity between the genders.

Table 1. Labor force in Spain, years 1990, 2000, 2010

| Year | Percent of labor force made up of women | Labor force participation rate – Women | Labor force participation rate – Men |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <i>1990</i> | 34.5% | 33.3% | 68.6% |
| <i>2000</i> | 39.2% | 39.7% | 65.7% |
| <i>2010</i> | 44.6% | 52.1% | 67.8% |

(U.S. Department of Labor, 2013)

The Role of Advertising

Culture and advertising are strongly connected. According to marketing professors Kalliny and Gentry (2007), who cite philosopher of communication theory Marshall McLuhan, “Advertisements are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any culture ever made of its entire range of activities.” In 2013, 99.4% of Spanish households possessed a TV (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística*, 2014), so practically every individual in Spain saw a television at some moment and thus viewed television commercials. Therefore, television advertising had and still

has a strong presence and influence in Spanish society. This influence is also reflected in the 2014 statistics provided by *Infoadex* about investment in the advertising market: In 2013, the total Estimated Real Investment in the advertising market was about 10.5 billion Euros, of which over 1.7 billion Euros (more than 16.2%) were invested into television publicity. Television advertising was the channel which received the highest proportion of Spain's total advertising investments, compared to other conventional advertising channels such as the internet, the radio, or print ads.

There are various laws and regulations meant to control the content of Spanish commercials. The *Ley General de Publicidad* (General Advertising Law) of 1988 prohibits television advertisers from portraying the female form as only a sexual object without any relation to the advertised product and prohibits the portrayal of females in a manner so stereotypical as likely to stimulate gender-based violence. Additionally, a section of the *Ley Orgánica para la Igualdad Efectiva de Mujeres y Hombres* (Organic Law for the Effective Equality of Men and Women) of 2007 establishes that any advertising that uses or promotes the discriminatory behavior described within the law would be considered illegal (Navarro & Martín, 2013).

Literature Review

There exists an abundance of previous studies about gender roles in all types of advertisements, including in television commercials. According to business professors Michael Stoica, Darryl Miller, and Dan Ardelea (2011), "Many studies of gender roles in advertising have been conducted, largely to determine whether the increased economic, political, and social power of women in many parts of the world is reflected in advertising images." In 2010, psychology

professors Adrian Furnham and Stephanie Paltzer produced a comprehensive review of 30 studies conducted between 2000 and 2008 of sex role stereotyping in television commercials. Overall, the results of all the studies were mixed, revealing some traditional and some modern portrayals of gender roles in the observed commercials. In the review, Furnham and Paltzer found that most European ads in the studies showed women as the users of advertised products, which was a phenomenon also observed in the study of Spanish commercials by María Rosa Berganza-Conde and Mercedes del Hoyo Hurtado (2006), a study outside of the 30 observed in Furnham and Paltzer's comprehensive work. In their work, Furnham and Paltzer also revealed the traditional aspect of commercials in Spain, affirming that within the observed studies, in the Spanish commercials, 49.5% of men were shown in work settings compared to only 30% of women. Additionally, Furnham and Paltzer cited the 2008 study of British food commercials by Aronovsky and Furnham, which found differences in gender roles during daytime and evening broadcasts, with females depicted in more modern roles during the day and more traditional roles during the evening. The authors believed that their results demonstrated advertisers' awareness of viewership at various times of day. Furnham and Paltzer's 2010 comprehensive analysis of 30 studies concluded that in certain categories, specifically credibility, role, and age, gender-role stereotyping in television commercials was declining in western countries, but gender stereotyping by product type in commercials was not.

There is a variety of literature not encompassed by the 2010 comprehensive study by Furnham and Paltzer. The 1983 study by WED Enterprises manager Dean Sharits and associate professor of marketing H. Bruce Lammers consisted of the observation of both primetime and daytime commercials in the United States and measured social and psychological attributes perceived to be possessed by models in the commercials. The results demonstrated that in

daytime commercials, female models were portrayed more stereotypically, possessing conventionally “feminine” characteristics such as appearing to be good mothers and spouses, and being mature, wise, and logical. The authors of the study believed that marketers chose this portrayal of women in order to appeal to the large segment of female viewership that occurs during the daytime, while women are at home and men are at work. In evening commercials, to appeal to the broader audience of both males and females, advertisers portrayed each gender in a more “modern” and less “traditional” manner. These observations contradict those of Aronovsky and Furhnam (2008) cited in the comprehensive study, who observed more modern gender roles in daytime commercials and more traditional roles in evening commercials. Overall, the 2010 study of commercials in the United States by Sharits and Lammers found that women were not portrayed in a manner overwhelmingly less positive than men.

A study conducted in 2000 by Furnham, Mak, and Tanidjojo of television commercials in Hong Kong and Indonesia was hypothesized to yield opposite results. The authors predicted that women in commercials from Hong Kong would be portrayed in a stereotypical manner because of the country’s traditional gender roles, and women in commercials in Indonesia, a poor, rural, and non-westernized country, would be portrayed in an even more stereotypical fashion. The results of the study confirmed the hypothesis, with women in the observed commercials from Hong Kong seen in more stereotyped positions than women in commercials observed for comparison from Italy, Britain, and the United States. In the Hong Kong commercials, Furnham, Mak, and Tanidjojo observed more male central figures, and like in a similar study conducted in Spain in 2006 by Rey Juan Carlos University professors María Berganza-Conde and Mercedes del Hoyo Hurtado, women were seen more frequently as product users while men served as informed authorities, interviewers, and narrators, and women served more frequently in a

dependent role in commercials than men. The authors had similar findings in the Indonesian commercials, observing that females were about twice as likely as males to serve as users of the advertised products rather than experts providing factual information about the product.

In 2011, Stoica, Miller, and Ardelea published a similar study of Romanian television commercials in 2005 and 2006. It is interesting to compare the results of this study to those of studies conducted in Spain, because according to the authors of this study, Romanian ideals at the time of the study would suggest gender equality, but “Romania represents a Latin culture where women have been typically assigned to traditional roles” (Stoica et. al., 2011). Spain is also a Latin culture with a history of women in a secondary role. The results of the Romanian study showed a mixture of traditional and modern gender roles. Unlike a 2006 study of Spanish commercials by Berganza-Conde, this study by Stoica, Miller, and Ardelea found females and males equally providing voiceovers and serving as spokespeople in commercials, demonstrating modernized gender roles. However, the authors did observe some traditional gender roles, since more of the female figures in the commercials were seen associated with domestic products, in home settings, and serving in inactive roles compared to the male figures. The combination of modernity and tradition observed in Romanian commercials in 2011 can serve as a point of comparison for Spanish commercials, as the Latin-rooted Romanian culture is similar to that of Spain.

A study conducted in Spain by Rayo-Vela, Aldas-Manzano, Küster, and Vila (2007) consisted of the analysis of Spanish primetime television commercials in 2000. The authors’ findings demonstrated the changing Spanish society, but there still existed traditional and even stereotypical portrayals of both genders. Another Spanish study is that of Berganza-Conde and Hurtado (2006) in which the authors studied commercials from major broadcasting networks in

2004. The study concluded that like in the comprehensive study mentioned previously, females were most often the users of the product, while males most often had voiceover credibility and explained the product in the observed commercials. Additionally, 65% of women and 60% of men in the commercials were observed in a traditional role for example women as mothers or housewives and men as breadwinners, and 40% of women compared to 9% of men served in dependent roles such as spouse or significant other.

In 2012, Spanish professors Esther Lopez-Zafra and Rocio Garcia-Retamero conducted a questionnaire investigating participants' perceptions of gender-stereotypic characteristics, gender roles, and gender demographics in Spain. The authors found that participants in the study believed gender characteristics and gender roles to be changing over time, but believe the changes in women to be stronger than those in men.

Research Question

It has been established that television and marketing are two common parts of daily life in Spain. Culture shapes advertising, and consumers most value the advertisements which reflect their own personal values (de Mooij, 2014). Therefore, it can logically be predicted that television advertising not only reflects the values and current state of a culture, but also that it reflects cultural changes that occur over time. In other words, it can be predicted that advertising changes with time in a manner that mirrors the changes in culture.

In this study, the changes in trends of the representation of women in television advertising in three specific years (1990, 2000, and 2010) were observed. Therefore, a total duration of twenty years, from 1990 to 2010, was observed, with data recorded and used for

investigation to see if the representation of women in television commercials has changed in a way that follows the movement towards gender equality in Spanish society.

The research question to be answered in this project is as follows: Is there an increasing representation of women in Spanish television commercials from 1990, 2000, and 2010?

Hypotheses

Based on the information in the literature, the hypotheses for the study are as follow:

H₀: There is no change in the number of women represented in Spanish television commercials between 1990 and 2000.

H₁: There is a significant increase in the number of women represented in Spanish television commercials between 1990 and 2000.

H₀: There is no change in the number of women represented in Spanish television commercials between 2000 and 2010.

H₁: There is a significant increase in the number of women represented in Spanish television commercials between 2000 and 2010.

H₀: There is no change in the number of women represented in Spanish television commercials between 1990 and 2010.

H₁: There is a significant increase in the number of women represented in Spanish television commercials between 1990 and 2010.

Methodology

Sample of Advertisements

Data was collected from 1990, 2000, and 2010, and the changes from 1990 to 2000, from 2000 to 2010, and from 1990 to 2010 were recorded to see if they reflected the changes in gender roles in Spanish society. To collect this data, 144 Spanish television commercials were viewed: 48 from 1990, 48 from 2000, and 48 from 2010. The study was limited in both the years observed and the numbers of commercials from which to collect data because of the availability of information on the databases. The databases used were *www.tvanuncios.com* and *www.advertolog.com*, both of which contain a collection of Spanish commercials from various years and advertising a variety of products. The earliest year for which there were commercials available in both of the databases was 1990, which had only 48 available and usable commercials in that year, thus limiting the study to the observation of 48 commercials in each of the three years. The selection of commercials to be studied was made in the following manner: All of the available commercials fitting in any of the product classes were selected to study. The product classes chosen were those used in a marketing study by Sharits and Lammers (1983), which examined the perceptions of models in television advertising. The distribution was simply based on the availability of commercials in each product class in 1990. Table 2 shows the distribution of the commercials across product classes. For the selection of the commercials to be observed in 2000 and 2010, the first 48 commercials that fit the product class distribution from 1990 were chosen. If there were less than the indicated quantity of commercials in a given product class available on *www.tvanuncios.com*, the first available commercials from *www.advertolog.com* were selected as supplements to equal the indicated quantity for the product class.

Table 2. Distribution of commercials by product category

| Product category | 1990, 2000, and 2010 | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| | Quantity | Percentage |
| Food | 12 | 25.0% |
| Cars | 9 | 18.8% |
| Household and pet products | 8 | 16.7% |
| Alcoholic beverages | 5 | 10.4% |
| Non-alcoholic beverages | 5 | 10.4% |
| Pharmacy and personal hygiene | 4 | 8.3% |
| Fashion and accessories | 4 | 8.3% |
| Electronics and household appliances | 1 | 2.1% |

Selection of Central Figures

In each commercial one or two “central figures” were identified. The central figure of a commercial was defined in the 2000 study by Furnham, Mak, and Tandijojo as “any adult portrayed in a central role, either visually, vocally, or both” and by marketing professor Dr. Laura Milner and marketing lecturer Bronwyn Higgs (2004) as either having a line of speech or appearing for at least three seconds in the commercial. In accordance with Milner and Higgs, “the one or two most distinguishable central figures were chosen” in each commercial. In this project, the criteria defined in both studies were combined and used to choose the central figures.

Central Figure Attributes

There were three measured attribute categories. Within each attribute category, any central figure could possess one, multiple, or no attributes. The three measured attributes were taken from McArthur and Resko (1975) and Furnham, Mak, and Tanidjojo (2000) and were the following:

1. *Mode of presentation*: Central figures were categorized as presenting with *voiceover* (off-screen); *visual/silence* (seen with no speaking part and with silence in the background);

visual/voice (seen and speaks); or *visual/music* (seen with no speaking part with music in the background).

2. *Role in commercial*: Central figures were classified as *dependent*, which included parent, spouse, partner, and gender object; *professional*, which encompassed those portrayed as experts or researchers; and *interviewer/narrator*, defined as those who described the advertised product.
3. *Credibility basis*: Central figures were categorized as the *user* (central figure's primary role in the commercial was to use the advertised product) or *authority* (central figure's primary role in the commercial was to provide information about the advertised product). *Other* means that the central figure served as neither a user nor an authority in the commercial.

Statistical Analysis

Tests of Proportion were used to determine if the changes in the percentages of female central figures observed between the years were statistically significant. The number of commercials observed each year was 48, so $n=48$. Therefore, using a 95% confidence interval, if the percentage from a given year increased by more than $P = \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{48}}\right)$ to the next measured year, the change was considered significant, supporting the hypothesis.

Results

Characteristics of the sample

Table 3 presents data about the distribution of central figures in the commercials. In each observed year, there were similar total quantities of central figures: 73 in 1990, 77 in 2000, and

75 in 2010. The average number of central figures per commercial was 1.52 in 1990, 1.60 in 2000, and 1.56 in 2010. Of the total central figures observed, there was a significant increase in the percent of female central figures between 2000 and 2010 (23.4% to 42.7%) and between 1990 and 2010 (21.9% to 42.7%).

Table 3. Distribution of central figures in commercials

| | 1990 | 2000 | 2010 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Number of commercials | 48 | 48 | 48 |
| Number of central figures | 73 | 77 | 75 |
| Number of female central figures | 16 | 18 | 32 |
| Percentage of female central figures | 21.9% | 23.4% | 42.7% ^{2,3} |
| Number of male central figures | 57 | 59 | 43 |
| Percentage of male central figures | 78.1% | 76.6% | 57.3% |
| Average number of central figures per commercial | 1.52 | 1.6 | 1.56 |

¹Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 1990 and 2000.

²Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 2000 and 2010.

³Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 1990 and 2010.

Table 4 shows the characteristics of the sample of commercials more specifically by displaying the distributions of the central figures of each gender within the various observed product classes. It is interesting to note that in 1990, the first observed year in this project, seven out of the eight product classes possessed a minority of female central figures. The one exception, in which the majority of central figures were females, was “Pharmacy and personal hygiene.” In 2000, once again in seven out of eight classes of products female central figures were the minority, but in 2010, female central figures were only the minority in four out of the eight product classes.

Table 4. Distributions of gender by product class

| Product class | 1990 | | 2000 | | 2010 | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------------|------------|----------------------|
| | Percentage | Percentage | Percentage | Percentage | Percentage | Percentage |
| | males | females | males | females | males | females |
| Food | 94.4% | 5.56% | 71.4% | 28.6% ¹ | 60.0% | 40.0% ³ |
| Cars | 90.9% | 9.10% | 100% | 0.00% | 84.6% | 15.4% ² |
| Household and pet products | 76.9% | 23.1% | 76.9% | 23.1% | 41.7% | 58.3% ^{2,3} |
| Alcoholic beverages | 62.5% | 37.5% | 66.7% | 33.3% | 100% | 0.00% |
| Non-alcoholic beverages | 75.0% | 25.0% | 88.9% | 11.1% | 62.5% | 37.5% ² |
| Pharmacy and personal hygiene | 42.9% | 57.1% | 60.0% | 40.0% | 28.6% | 71.4% ² |
| Fashion and accessories | 71.4% | 28.6% | 50.0% | 50.0% ¹ | 16.7% | 83.3% ^{2,3} |
| Electronics and household appliances | 100% | 0.00% | 100% | 0.00% | 0.00% | 100% ^{2,3} |

¹Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 1990 and 2000.

²Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 2000 and 2010.

³Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 1990 and 2010.

There was a significant increase in the percent of female central figures in the product class “Food,” from 5.56% to 28.6% between 1990 and 2000, and the increase over the whole observed period from 5.56% in 1990 to 40.0% in 2010 was also significant. The only significant increase observed in the product class “Cars” was between 2000, when 0.00% of the central figures were females, and 2010, when 15.4% were females. In the product class “Household and pet products,” the percent of female central figures increased significantly from 23.1% in 2000 to 58.3% in 2010, and also over the whole observed period from 23.1% in 1990 to 58.3% in 2010. There were no significant increases in female central figures in the product class “Alcoholic beverages,” but there was a significant increase from the 11.1% of female central figures in

commercials for non-alcoholic beverages in 2000 to the 37.5% in 2010. There was a significant increase in the product class “Pharmacy and personal hygiene” between 2000 (40.0% female central figures) and 2010 (71.4% female central figures). The product class “Fashion and accessories” had significant growth in the percent of female central figures in each observed time span: From 28.6% in 1990 to 50.0% in 2000, from 50.0% in 2000 to 83.3% in 2010, and over the whole period from 28.6% in 1990 to 83.3% in 2010. Finally, the product class “Electronics and household appliances” experienced significant growth from 2000 to 2010 and overall from 1990 to 2010, since the percent of female central figures in both 1990 and 2000 was 0.00%, and in 2010 was 100%.

Table 5 presents the specific attributes assigned the central figures: Mode of presentation, Role in commercial, and Credibility basis. For the simplicity and clarity of the table, and for the fact that this project focuses specifically on the changes in the representations of women in commercials, only the data relating to female central figures is displayed in Table 5. The columns labeled “Number of females” contain the numbers of female central figures seen in all of the 48 commercials for each year possessing the given attributes, and the columns labeled “Percentage females” contain the percent of the central figures possessing the given attribute in each year that were females.

The percentage of women providing a voiceover in the commercials experienced a significant increase over the entire 20-year span, from 8.89% in 1990 to 27.5% in 2010, but not in either of the ten-year spans. However, the percentage of women portrayed visually but without a speaking role saw a significant increase in all three measured time spans, from 0.00% in 1990 to 16.7% in 2000, from 16.7% in 2000 to 62.5% in 2010, and from 0.00% in 1990 to 62.5% in 2010. Women portrayed visually and with speaking parts increased significantly from

35.3% in 2000 to 55.6% in 2010. Finally, the percentage of women portrayed in the observed commercials without speaking parts but with a background of music saw a significant increase from 31.6% in 2000 to 70.0% 2010, and over the entire timespan, from 40.0% in 1990 to 70.0% in 2010.

All four of the observed attributes in the attribute category “Role in Commercial” experienced a similar pattern. Each attribute, Dependent, Professional, Interviewer/narrator, and Other had a significant increase in the percentage of female central figures from 2000 to 2010, and a significant increase overall from 1990 to 2010. However, not one of the attributes experienced a significant increase from 1990 to 2000, though “Other” was the only attribute to actually decrease. The percentage of female central figures with the attribute of “Dependent” increased significantly from 35.7% in 1990 and 42.9% in 2000 to 58.3% in 2010. Females with the attribute “Professional” increased significantly from 0.00% in both 1990 and 2000 to 33.3% in 2010, and females serving as “Interviewers/narrators” increased significantly from 12.5% in 1990 and 18.2% in 2000 to 35.4% in 2010. Finally, the percentage of females attributed with an “Other” role in the commercials increased significantly from 24.0% in 2000 to 66.7% in 2010, and from 45.4% in 1990 to the 66.7% in 2010.

The User and Authority attributes under the “Credibility basis” category also experienced significant increases from 2000 to 2010 and overall from 1990 to 2010. The percent of female central figures with the attribute “User” increased significantly from 21.9% in 2000 to 64.3% in 2010, and overall from 46.1% in 1990 to 64.3% in 2010. Also, females with the attribute “Authority” increased significantly from 14.8% in 2000 to 36.0% in 2010, and overall from 10.9% in 1990 to the 36.0% in 2010. However, neither attribute experienced a significant increase in the percentage of women observed from 1990 to 2000. The attribute “Other”

experienced significant increases in all three observed time spans: from 0.00% in 1990 to 38.9% in 2000, to 66.7% in 2010.

Table 5. Gender differences: Mode of presentation, Role in commercial, Credibility basis, Argument, Location, Societal role

| Attribute | 1990 | | 2000 | | 2010 | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| | Number of females | Percentage females | Number of females | Percentage females | Number of females | Percentage females |
| <i>Mode of presentation</i> | | | | | | |
| Voiceover | 4 | 8.89% | 4 | 13.8% | 11 | 27.5% ³ |
| Visual/silence | 0 | 0.00% | 2 | 16.7% ¹ | 5 | 62.5% ^{2,3} |
| Visual/voice | 4 | 80.0% | 6 | 35.3% | 10 | 55.6% ² |
| Visual/music | 8 | 40.0% | 6 | 31.6% | 7 | 70.0% ^{2,3} |
| <i>Role in commercial</i> | | | | | | |
| Dependent | 5 | 35.7% | 6 | 42.9% | 7 | 58.3% ^{2,3} |
| Professional | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 33.3% ^{2,3} |
| Interviewer/ narrator | 6 | 12.5% | 6 | 18.2% | 17 | 35.4% ^{2,3} |
| Other | 5 | 45.4% | 6 | 24.0% | 10 | 66.7% ^{2,3} |
| <i>Credibility basis</i> | | | | | | |
| User | 12 | 46.1% | 7 | 21.9% | 18 | 64.3% ^{2,3} |
| Authority | 5 | 10.9% | 4 | 14.8% | 18 | 36.0% ^{2,3} |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% | 7 | 38.9% ¹ | 2 | 66.7% ^{2,3} |

¹Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 1990 and 2000.

²Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 2000 and 2010.

³Significant increase in the percent of female central figures between years 1990 and 2010.

Analysis

The total quantity and percentage of female central figures observed in all the commercials increased between each observed year, and there was a significant increase overall from 1990 to 2010. In the observation of specific attributes, there was an increase in the percent

of female central figures in the overall studied timespan between 1990 and 2010 in ten of the eleven total studied attributes.

The increases in the amount of female central figures can likely be attributed to the changes in Spanish society. According to the history in the changes to and additions of laws and the data regarding women in the Spanish labor force, it is evident that there has been growth in women's freedoms and in gender equality. Therefore, the patterns observed in both the growth in the number of female central figures in the commercials overall, and the growths in the numbers of female central figures with specific attributes follows the patterns of the real world in Spain. Spanish women are more integrated in every aspect of life, just like they are more integrated, both visually and audibly, in the commercials in general and also possess a wider variety of attributes within them. These results are logical and in accordance with the hypotheses (**H₁**: There is a significant increase in the number of women represented in Spanish television commercials between 1990 and 2010).

The growth of the total number of female central figures observed was larger between 2000 and 2010 than between 1990 and 2000. This trend of greater growth in the later ten-year span also occurred with the following six attributes: Voiceover, Visual/silence, Dependent, Professional, Interviewer/narrator, and Authority. Therefore, not only can the initial hypothesis of a significant increase in the total representation of women in Spanish television commercials between 1990 and 2010 be confirmed, but it can also be stated that the observed total increase in female central figures and the increase in female central figures possessing the above listed six of the eleven studied attributes was more rapid between 2000 and 2010 than between 1990 and 2000. The same pattern of more rapid growth in the later part of the observed time span can be observed in the labor force data presented in Table 1. The percent of the labor force comprised

of women increased by 5.3 percentage points between from 1990 to 2000 and by 5.4 percentage points from 2000 to 2010, and the percent of women participating in the labor force increased by 6.4 percentage points from 1990 to 2000 and by 28.1 percentage points from 2000 to 2010. The increases were greater in both of the statistics between the second ten-year span, which was reflected in the greater increases in the representation of women in commercials in the second ten-year span of this study.

Women's increased participation in the labor force between 2000 and 2010 can also be attributed to the Great Recession of 2008. During the Recession, also referred to as the Crisis, more women were trying to support their families by working or at least looking for work. This can be thought of as women taking on traditionally male "breadwinner" roles. Due to financial necessity caused by the Crisis, women in the workforce became more commonplace, which contributed to equalization of the gender roles. Both men and women were working, and a wife bringing home a paycheck was becoming more mainstream. This newfound equality with women alongside men was reflected in the increases in female central figures in the observed commercials. Just as women joined men in the workplace, women joined men in television advertising and in being perceived by marketers as equally or at least almost equally capable of selling their products.

Ultimately, the decisions to incorporate more women in commercials are made by the marketing departments of companies that utilize television advertising. The members of these departments are conscious of the most useful and effective strategies for their respective companies, brand images, and products. Therefore, it is possible that the fact that there are more women in commercials released in later years demonstrates the beliefs of marketers that seeing

female central figures will increase the interest and better capture the attention of viewers of commercials, thus making them more likely to buy the products.

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

This study found that commercials reflect the patterns of change in Spanish society. Also, as it is known that what is seen in advertising influences the values, opinions, and the behaviors of viewers (de Mooij, 2014), and since television is a major aspect of daily life (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística*, 2014) and is the most used vessel for advertising in Spain (*Infoadex*, 2014), it is imperative to continue to grow equality and eliminate sexism within television advertising. If the pattern of increasing representation of women in commercials as observed in this study continues, even until reaching an approximate equal quantity of male and female central figures, the equality will begin to be seen as common and normal. Also, as women see their own gender right alongside that of males in television commercials, women will benefit from feeling represented fairly and as more than just the “sidekick” gender in television.

Finally, continuing to equalize gender representation in television will help to avoid a situation similar to the oppression which occurred during the era of Francisco Franco. Although women experienced some increases in opportunities from the more liberal environment during the Second Spanish Republic, their increased freedom was short-lived because Franco was easily able to overturn the new laws and reestablish a state of gender inequality when he gained power. But, when influential sources such as commercials that help form cultural norms begin to regularly portray gender equality, this equality then becomes the norm, and thus becomes more difficult to take away, should such a threat occur. In conclusion, not only does the path of

change in society influence the changes in advertising trends, but advertising has the power to impact society.

Limitations

It is important to highlight the limitations of this project. First, there was only a small quantity of advertisements used for this study, due to the low availability in both databases. Second, the use of databases was limited to two due to high subscription prices.

Although the project has provided useful results, in order to improve the methodological precision in future, similar projects, it is always more accurate to obtain more data. Therefore, it would be better to use more commercials, and to observe commercials from multiple years, not just the three that were chosen for this project. It would be useful and more accurate for research purposes to study commercials from years between the three chosen years to search for more patterns, and to see if all the years within the twenty-year span follow societal trends. Also, this project was done by one person who watched the commercials, selected the central figures, and then chose the attributes to assign to each central figure. In order to better avoid possible bias, it would be more impartial if there were multiple researchers collecting and coding the data. To expand the scope and improve the accuracy of this project, the aforementioned limitations should be eliminated as much as possible.

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