

The portrayal of women in online and print advertising

By

Hazel Gordon

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MA in Journalism &
Public Relations (QQI)**

Faculty of Journalism & Media Communications

Griffith College Dublin

August 2017

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Public Relations, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Abstract

Advertising and the media have a significant and influential role in society, because we want to know what is going on around us and they set the agenda for this. Advertisements tell people what to buy, what to look like, and what to desire. Images are used to grab the attention of the potential market. Advertisers often use women for this, and in doing so exploit and demean women's rights. Consumers are exposed to these negative portrayals of women continuously due to smart phones, social media platforms, and outdoor advertisements, as well as the traditional forms of media.

This study investigates a particular group of sexist image adverts, from the years 2007 to 2017, in order to identify what form of sexism is present, documenting trends that occur along the way. A second source of research is in the form of a focus group to gather opinions from a third party regarding the depiction of women, including how/ if this depiction has changed since the 1960s. The 1960s was chosen as a comparative decade as this was the time when the degree of women's rights was argued, leading to the emergence of the second wave of Feminism. It was found that the female depiction had altered to a different form of sexism, but had not progressed significantly, and did not reflect a modern societal attitude. Throughout the research, the impact advertising has on men, and how women are used to market to a male audience is considered.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	2
ADBSTRACT	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	8
1.1 SUMMARY	9
1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND QUESTIONS	9
1.3 EXPECTED RESULTS	10
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1 OVERVIEW	11
2.2 THE PROGRESSION OF FEMINISM SINCE THE 1960S	11
2.2.1 THE EMERGENCE OF SECOND WAVE FEMINISM	12
2.2.2 IRELAND DURING THE 1960S	13
2.2.3 THE PROGRESSION MADE IN THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN IRELAND	14
2.3 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORL OF AMBIVALENT SEXISM	17
2.3.1 HOSTILE SEXISM	17
2.3.2 BENEVOLENT SEXISM	19
2.4 THE PORTRAYAL OF MEN IN ADVERTISING	26
2.4.1 GENDER ROLE REVERAL	26

2.4.2	SEXUAL OBJECTIFICATION OF MEN	27
2.4.3	THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PORTRAYAL OF MALE AND FEMALE CHILDREN	27
	CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	30
3.1	OVERVIEW	30
3.2	SIGNIFICANCE OF USING A MIXED-METHOD APPROACH	30
3.3	CONTENT ANALYSIS	31
3.3.1	DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	32
3.3.2	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST ANALYSIS	32
3.3.3	ONLINE AND PRINT ADVERTISING IN IRELAND	33
3.3.4	CODING RATIONALE	35
3.4	FOCUS GROUP	37
3.4.1	TYPES OF GROUP RESEARCH	38
3.4.2	THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER	40
3.4.3	PREPARING THE FOCUS GROUP	40
3.4.4	FOCUS GROUP CONCLUSION	41
3.5	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	42
3.6	CHALLENGES	42
	CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	44
4.1	OVERVIEW	44
4.2	FOCUS POINTS	45
4.3	CONTENT ANALYSIS RESULTS	46
4.3.1	DEPENDENT/ HOUSEWIFE	46

4.3.2	SEXUALISE IMAGES USED TO MARKET PRODUCTS TO MALE AND FEMALE AUDIENCES	47
4.3.3	WOMEN AS OBJECTS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	54
4.3.4	WOMEN PORTRAYED AS BEING IRRATIONAL	56
4.3.5	ADVERTISEMENTS REMOVED	57
4.4	FOCUS GROUP	63
4.4.1	HOW AGE AFFECTS REACTION TO ADVERTISEMENTS	64
4.4.2	BODY IMAGE AND SELF-ESTEEM	65
4.4.3	MEN AND ADVERTISING	66
4.4.4	IRISH SOCIETY AND ADVERTISING	67
4.4.5	CHANGES SINCE THE 1960S	68
4.4.6	CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP	69
	CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS	72
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	78
	APPENDICES	87
	APPENDIX 1: ADVERTISEMENTS USED	87
	APPENDIX 2: GRAPHS	88
	APPENDIX 3: FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION SHEET	89
	APPENDIX 4: FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM	90
	APPENDIX 5: TRANSCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP	91

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents and all my friends who supported me this summer, throughout this dissertation. I would also like to especially thank my supervisor, Bláthnaid Nolan for her guidance and helping me feel better about my work.

Thank you to the Faculty of Journalism and Media Communications for providing the course, it was one of the toughest but most enjoyable years of my life.

Finally, to Emma, Éadaoin, Lauren, and Lydia, I wouldn't have survived the year without you!

Chapter 1: Introduction

“Advertising produces and reflects values, attitudes, and behaviours of the social realm where it is embedded. It gives meanings to words and symbols, playing a special role in the interpretation frame of the current world” (Kang, 1997; Acevedo, et al., 2006, p. 59).

Advertising and the media have both a significant role and influence on society as there is a continuous desire to be aware of what is happening around us. As we are currently in the Information Age, or Digital Age; our repeated interaction with technology and computers means we are exposed to advertising at all times. Interactive media technologies are incorporated into modern everyday life and replacing traditional means of communication such as “newspapers, magazines, old-school television, and even the traditional telephone” (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 201). A study carried out in 2016 by *Millward Brown* on behalf of *Liberty Insurance* found that 81% of participants have a smartphone, and one in five Irish people spend an average of two hours on social media daily (Irish Examiner, 2016). Time spent on social media is time spent being exposed to advertisements.

The Irish advertising industry is self-regulated by the *Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland* (ASAI). The ASAI published updated guidelines on advertising standards, which required marketing communications “to respect the principle of gender equality and to avoid sex stereotyping and any exploitation or demeaning of men and women” (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2017, p. 59). These guidelines were put in place 10 years ago, yet women are still objectified, manipulated, and stereotyped for the sake of promoting brand/ product.

The objectification theory may be applied to many modern advertisements, including those that are analysed in this study. The objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) occurs when “a woman’s body or body parts are singled out and separated from her as a person and she is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire” (Bartky, 1990; Szymanski, et al., 2011, pp. 7-8). Advertisements also portray women are vulnerable/ weak

without the guidance of a male, or as the inferior sex. Over half of the adverts used in the content analysis for this research showed examples of the objectification theory.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate *the portrayal of women in Irish print and online advertisements*.

1.1 Summary

This dissertation is structured in various chapters, beginning with the research aims, research questions, and expected results in chapter one. Chapter two will review relevant literature to the study. It is made up of three main components; Feminism and advertising in the 1960s, the framework of ambivalent sexism, and the portrayal of men in advertising. The methods used for this research are content analysis and focus group. The work of social psychologists, Susan T. Fiske and Peter Glick in regard to the framework of ambivalent sexism influenced this research. Their definitions of hostile and benevolent sexism assisted in denenerating the labels in the content analysis coding. The significance of using the content analysis and the focus group or the study is detailed in chapter three, as well as the coding schedule for the content analysis and the preparation for the focus group.

Chapter four presents and discusses the results, including visual aids such as graphs and examples of advertisements from the sample. The final chapter, chapter five concludes the study and arguments raised from the research findings. It also includes points to consider and recommendations for future studies.

1.2 Research Aims and Questions

The aim of this research is to explore how sexist print and online advertisements portray women. This was carried out by conducting a content analysis of 35 modern adverts that contain sexism against women. A focus group was also used as a non-factual, opinion based source of information. The content analysis will count the number of times a particular form of sexism is present in the advertisements, while the focus group will allow for a potential consumers reaction to the advert to be considered. In order to understand how women are portrayed, the following research questions will act as a guide for the research;

- Is there a difference in attitudes in how the advertising industry perceive women in modern times compared to in the 1960s?

- Does sexism in advertising affect men/ how products are marketed to men?
- Are modern advertisements a fair representation of modern society?

1.3 Expected Results

The content analysis will provide a detailed examination of each of the adverts in the study. A criteria for selecting the adverts is that they must be sexist, so the results are not about *if* an advert is sexist, but *how* it is sexist. The focus group is made up of men and women of various ages, backgrounds and areas of employment. It will provide a variety of opinion regarding the topic at hand.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

There is an extensive source of information on how women are portrayed in advertisements and why this is. This chapter will discuss the issues brought up by these studies, theories, and articles, seeking a potential trend in how women are treated. As the “priorities of the media strongly influence the priorities of the public” (McCombs, 2002, p. 2), to address how advertising and the media treat women, societal attitudes must also be considered. The accuracy of the media’s role in reflecting society is questioned by many, including Feminist, Marilyn Crafton Smith. She wrote that “the media operate[s] within the bounds of... a ‘field of allowable images’ that limit how outside viewpoints such as Feminism are presented – if they are presented at all” (Smith, 1993, p. 76; Beck, 1998, p. 141).

The literature review will take the following form; the 1960s will be discussed firstly, as this is when the Feminist revival reportedly took place. Referring to 1960s culture prior to analysing the advertisements will give a better understanding to their meanings, concepts and whether they were an accurate impression of society. The established framework of ambivalent sexism will then be analysed and applied to the advertising industry. The two main forms of sexism as per the framework are hostile and benevolent sexism. The last section addresses how advertisements may be sexist against men. This section is to act as a comparative to the main study.

2.2 The Progression of Feminism since the 1960s

The “first wave” of Feminism came about during the last decade of the 19th century with campaigns for women’s suffrage. Early Feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, who is considered one of the mothers of modern Feminism, looked for equal education rights for women and men, to allow women independence of mind. Second wave Feminists came about first in the West, in conjunction with student protest movements, anti-war movements and in the U.S., the civil rights movement (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, p. 13).

2.2.1 The Emergence of Second Wave Feminism

The 1960s is an important part of the history of Feminism as in the U.S. it is thought to mark the beginning of the women's movement. Groups such as New York Radical Women were established and used activism to fight for women's rights. The National Organization for Women, which was founded in 1966, challenged prejudice against women in the mass media (Advertising Age, 2003).

Up until the 1960s in the U.S., women in advertisements were primarily portrayed as homemakers. Even during World War Two, when women were encouraged to work in factories, they were still urged by advertisers to "remain glamorous and keep the home running smoothly" (Advertising Age, 2003). There was a discrepancy between the role of women advertisers were portraying and women's actual role in society during the war. The majority of advertisers during the 1950s showed women as homemakers and mothers. There was an increase in adverts with employed women, but they were often roles in which women were working for men such as secretaries. The underlying message in both types of advertisements is that a woman's job is to serve and look after the men in her life (Advertising Age, 2003).

John Fiske has studied television culture but his findings are relevant across the different media platforms. He says that the media uses codes to define what 'reality' means to them. These codes are made up of signs that are present in and associated with a certain culture or gender. The codes are used to establish meaning for that particular group (Fiske, 1987, p. 4). Fiske's point is relevant to this study as there is a culturally coded definition for women that is used by the media, including advertisers: for example, the white, middle class, Christian male is the standard code for Western media. According to Beck, if you do not fit this criterion you are portrayed in an unfavourable light by the media, she says that "even a concept as basic as 'woman' is riddled with cultural codes conveyed and interpreted in the various media texts we encounter on a daily basis." (Beck, 1998, p. 140).

"In popular media... Feminism is situated culturally as an identity that depends on active hostility toward men" (Anderson, et al., 2009, p. 216). Misandry is the dislike of, or prejudice

against men and is often linked to radical Feminism which is a negative stereotype. Studies by Alexander and Ryan (1997), and Aronson (2003) found that women who hold Feminist beliefs are often wary about expressing them due to the “stereotype that Feminists are anti-male” (Anderson, et al., 2009, p. 216).

The unsavoury classification of Feminists as bitter man-haters who disrespect family values dates back to the media coverage of the protest organised by New York Radical Women at the Miss America Pageant in 1968. During the 1960s in the United States, mainstream media mostly ignored the Feminist movement but the Miss America Pageant protest was an exception (Beck, 1998, pp. 142-143). This could be because the media saw an opportunity to report on the women in a negative way, considering it was more convenient for the media to ignore activism that promoted equality amongst the sexes “over such issues as jobs, pay equity, child care, and other less inflammatory causes” (Beck, 1998, p. 142). The protestors were called ‘bra burners’ by the media, a nickname that is still associated with Feminism but is often used in a negative sense. It could be argued that the media were subtly trying to get the public to associate Feminist protesters as aggressive and destructive, despite the fact that nothing was actually burned and it was confirmed that a number of feminine items were collected in a bin, along with the bras such as, false eyelashes and dish washing powder which was considered to be feminine (Lanset, 2017).

2.2.2 Ireland during the 1960s

An important note about Feminism in the 1960s is that the changes being made in the United States were not being felt strongly in Ireland. In Ireland during the 1960s the Catholic Church was the dominant figure who encouraged women to be housewives. The marriage bar, introduced in the early 1930s prevented women who had jobs in the Civil Service from working once they were married. The law was not abolished completely in Ireland until 1973 (Duncan, 2013), over a decade after the practice was socially seen as sexual discrimination and as a form of employment inequality. It makes sense, therefore that Irish print advertisement during the 1960s portrayed women mostly in a home setting as a wife and mother, as it was reflected by society at the time.

Also in the 1960s, women in the United States gained access to oral contraceptives, while in Ireland all contraception was illegal until 1980. The Irish media followed the idea that

women were second-class citizens in the country. The annual *Calor Gas Housewife of the Year* competition judged housewives on their cooking skills, personality, appearance, interests, and humour (Melia, 2012). The winner who was named Housewife of the Year and won a new kitchen. The competition was broadcast on *RTE* as late as the 1980s through to the 90s when it was cancelled after complaints. However, it was not cancelled due to complaints of sexism, but because too many women who had a job outside of the home were getting involved in the competition (Melia, 2012). Ireland has still not advanced from the idea of celebrating 'lovely girls,' with the Rose of Tralee still running after 58 years. Competitions such as this and the Housewife of the Year differ to beauty pageants like Miss World, as they are not based upon beauty alone. The Rose of Tralee "may be a doctor or a lawyer, a professional high-achiever, but the message overall is that she is really still the little girl she always was, from the Irish sticks" (O'Doherty, 2014). The fact that the competition is still considered to be a national treasure is proof that the country still has a long way to go in accepting women as fully independent, equal to and as capable as men.

The efforts to improve women's rights in the United States spread to other locations, including Ireland. The Irish Women's Liberation Movement was an alliance of women founded in Dublin in 1970. They were one of the groups that brought to light issues of sexism in Irish society. The introduction to the first document that they produced stated,

"Article 40 of equal rights before the law to all citizens of Ireland. One million, four thousand, nine hundred and seventy Irish citizens are not accorded such equal rights. These are the women of Ireland" (O'Duffy, 1982, p. 7).

The movement had a short, but successful run, leading to the introduction of statutory benefits to unmarried mothers, for example (O'Duffy 1982, p. 7). However, this study is focusing on the 1960s, before this group was established and a time that Ireland was still a hostile place for women. Adverts from the 1960s will be compared with current adverts, in order to discover if the change in attitudes towards women is significant.

2.2.3 The Progression made in the Treatment of Women in Ireland

In Ireland, print advertisements by brands such as *Dunnes Stores* (figure 1), *Penneys* (figure 2), and even by the government organisation The National Dairy Council (figure 3) marketed

their products at women by claiming that they could help her to 'get' a man, and keep him happy. Concerning the progression made in the last 50 years, the change in attitudes towards women is not as prominent as would be expected, not only in the media but also in society. The United Nations CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) assessed Ireland's women's rights and equality record, publishing a report in March 2017. The evaluation found "several crucial gaps in Ireland's compliance with international obligations on women's rights and equality" (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2017). A noted area of concern in the report is *Article 41.2 of the Irish Constitution*, which states;

"The State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.

The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home." (Bunreacht na hÉireann, 1937).

The UN recommended for the second time that this article be amended due to the stereotypical language used, and to "introduce legislative provisions that underline the obligation of the State to pursue actively the achievement of substantive equality between women and men" (UN CEDAW, 2017).

Perhaps the details of this report can partly explain why advertisers see the need to only market certain items to women in advertisements. Modern day adverts such as one for *Mr. Clean* (which is sold as *Flash* in Ireland) (figure 4) in 2011 used Mother's Day to market their cleaning product with the tagline, "This Mother's Day, get back to the job that really matters." This advert is very similar to those that were marketed to housewives in the 1960s, insinuating that the housework should be the only priority of the woman. While society is progressing in its attitudes towards women, the repeated representation of women in a traditional homemaker role or as a sexual object leads to prejudice against women's rights and Feminism.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

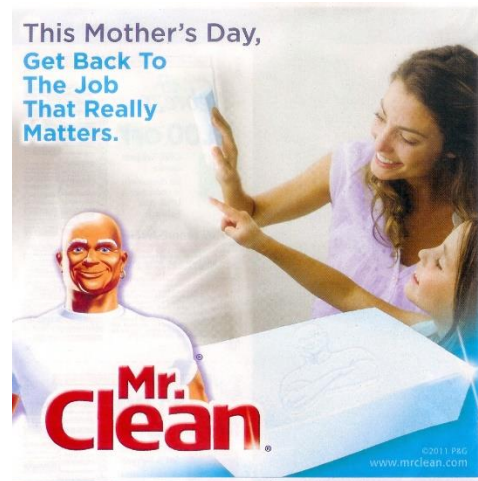


Figure 4

2.3 The Theoretical Framework of Ambivalent Sexism

Social psychologists, Susan T. Fiske and Peter Glick (1996) have largely developed the framework of ambivalent sexism. They see sexism as “multidimensional construct that encompasses two sets of sexist attitudes” (Fiske & Glick, 1996, p. 491). Both of these sexist attitudes portray women as physically and mentally weak, reliant on men, easily manipulated, and as sexual objects. However their interpretations differ. Hostile sexism mirrors misogyny, or a hatred for women and benevolent sexism has a tone to it so that it may be seen as positive (Fiske & Glick, 1996, p. 491). For example, a certain situation could be viewed as a woman being inferior to a man, or as a man helping a woman.

2.3.1 Hostile Sexism

Hostile sexism defines females as easily manipulated and controlled, reliant on men, physically weak, but also weak in decision-making. Hostile sexism is a component of the theoretical framework of “ambivalent sexism” (Fiske & Glick, 1996, p. 491). This type of sexism in advertising is likely to portray women in housewife roles that are vulnerable and reliant on the men in their lives. A study by Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki, Kalliopi Mathioudaki, Pavlos Dimitratos and Yorgos Zotos (2008) found that hostile sexist print ads are most common in women’s magazines. Women’s magazines include the most adverts for household products, which will most likely picture a female model. These magazines also contain decorative sexism from the beauty product ads. Women are portrayed as being “unable to cope with complicated tasks” as they are only concerned with their appearance (Plakoyiannaki, et al., 2008, p. 104).

The 1963 text *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan is credited with contributing to the emergence of second wave Feminism. Friedan refers to Feminism as “the problem that has no name” due to how it was ignored by the media up until the 1960s. She also claims that the women she spoke to were living a lie, as their typical lifestyle involved the duties of a wife and mother overshadowing their sense of need and potential (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, pp. 9-12).

Scholars, including Patterson, O’Malley, and Story have clarified that sex refers to male and female, while gender is an invented term differentiating masculinity and femininity

(Patterson, et al., 2009, p. 10). The typical role as portrayed by woman is mother, wife, and as an object who rarely ventures outside the home (the domestic sphere) without being accompanied by a man in public (the public sphere). In terms of consumerism, women are seen to be naïve and unintelligent consumers, while the male is a rational decision maker, exhibiting authority (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, pp. 16-18). *Sex, Lies and Advertising* (1990) by Gloria Steinem follows the relationship between the liberal Feminist magazine *Ms.* and their potential advertisers. The attitudes of many advertisers confirm the claims made by the theory of hostile sexism. In meetings with executives in the U.S. it is revealed that advertisers believe that women have no knowledge of technology, they buy what their husband or boyfriend suggests. The magazine received letters from readers about condescending salesmen saying things like “let me know when your husband can come in” (Steinem, 1990, p. 225).

The attributes of hostile sexism are part of the stereotypical traditional role of women in Irish society, a housewife who looks after the family but is not capable of making decisions and needs a male figure to guide her, the previously mentioned *Article 41.2* of the *Irish Constitution* is an example of this. The 1986 census revealed there were 653,398 female homemakers in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 1993, p. 27), a number that dropped to 321,878 by 2011 (Central Statistics Office, 2012, p. 9), and decreased further in 2016 to 284,809 (Central Statistics Office, 2017, p. 8). Despite this continuous change, there are still countless Irish advertisements that portray Irish family life with the woman as a housewife who looks after the house and children, and the man as the head of the household and the provider of the family’s income. The majority of these adverts are for household cleaning supplies or food products aimed at children.

None the less, it is important not to undermine the role of mother and homemaker, as Feminist Joan Williams points out that certain women see child rearing as empowering and paid employment is just a necessary drudgery. “The real source of women’s oppression is not their exclusion from paid work, but the marginalisation and devaluation of women’s family work in favour of the male-identified public sphere activities and values of instrumental work, profit-making, competitiveness and aggressiveness” (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, p. 20).

Prominent examples displaying hostile sexism concerning a woman's role of wife and mother are seen in certain advertisements for Mother's Day. Both *Samsung* and *Mr. Clean* (figure 4) advertised a washing machine, vacuum cleaner, and a as suitable gift for Mother's Day, with the slogan for the *Mr. Clean* sponge saying, "get back to the job that really matters." Examples such as this are a poor display of the progression in attitudes towards Feminism since the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

Hostile sexism is still an issue but it has progressed over time in the advertising industry when compared to the objectification of women by advertisers.

2.3.2 Benevolent sexism

Another component of "ambivalent sexism" is benevolent sexism which oppresses women based on their physical attractiveness. In such cases, women are regarded as the inferior sex, or as inadequate. This elicits feelings of protectiveness and affection (Fiske & Glick 1996, p. 491). Women's bodies are similar to their lives in that they are, "affected on all sides by various forms of explicit and implicit social, political, legal, symbolic, and discursive control" (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, p. 45).

Many theorists in the twentieth century argued, "women were biologically incapable of the same development of their minds and reason as men, and that black women were even less capable of such development than white women" (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, p. 48). This belief was justified at the time by women's reproductive systems in regards to menstruation, pregnancy, and lactation which suggested that women had no control over their bodies (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, pp. 48-49).

Feminists, such as, poet and theorist Adrienne Rich have challenged these earlier beliefs, celebrating the female body for its strength, power, endurance and creativity, particularly in terms of the female body's capacity for motherhood. However, in her essay, *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* (1984) Rich still recognises that women's control of their bodies is still contested as male power traditionally has had preference over women's bodies including chastity belts, punishments for adultery and lesbianism, and psychoanalytic denial of the clitoris (Bowden & Mummery, 2009, p. 52).

In her paper *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), Feminist, and film critic Laura Mulvey coins the term the 'Male Gaze,' the idea that literature and the visual arts depict the world as being split between the active male and passive female. "Women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact," women are coded with "to-be-looked-at-ness," while men are the bearer of the look (Mulvey, 1975, p. 809). Emphasising women as objects is referred to as fetishistic scopophilia (Mulvey, 1975, p. 811). In this situation, the audience identifies with the male, both of which, are looking at the woman, or the image. Women are exploited as they are seen as an object of desire, to be acquired by the male, and by the audience.

Mulvey's paper was written to address issues in cinema but the theory can also be applied to advertising, especially to the beauty and fashion industry as benevolent sexism in these advertisements is common. For example, *Lynx* (figure 5), a male grooming brand has had several advertising campaigns worldwide including their 2011 campaign, "Even angels will fall" in which women are objectified as prizes for the male protagonist and essentially for the consumer. Similarly, in 2013 *American Apparel* (figure 6) advertised the same type of flannel shirt, with it being modelled on both a man and a woman in different ways. The woman was only dressed in her underwear with the open shirt, crawling on the floor while the man was fully dressed and standing looking in to the camera. Lanis and Covell (1995) found that women's magazines promote decorative sexism due to the advertisements they print. It is assumed that women only pursue beauty ideals and are incapable of coping with complicated tasks (Plakoyiannaki, et al., 2008, p.104). Studies by Knupfer (1998) refer to online advertisements and how they present women in submissive roles, assisting men in their much important work. These adverts emphasise sexual attractiveness and the notion of the helpless female who is dependent on male protection (Plakoyiannaki, et al., 2008, p. 103).

Lynx, is just one of many in the fragrance industry, who have been criticised for their portrayal of women in their adverts. As a whole, the industry has been repeatedly accused of glamorising rape culture. A typical ad will show a female model half undressed with a male model standing behind her with his arms around her neck or arms. They portray men as the figure of authority. As this is the case in ads for women's fragrances, as well as men's,

it could be considered that advertisers believe that women find it appealing to be perceived as vulnerable. *Tom Ford* (figure 7) and *Dolce & Gabbana* (figure 8) amongst others have used this advertising technique for their products.

A modern trend for charities is to use shock tactics in their ad campaigns to gain more attention from the public. Often, the shock tactic is to objectify women. Using scantily clad women as sympathetic bait for an audience for charity campaigns puts an ominous streak through positive efforts.

Animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or *PETA* use degrading images of women to support their cause. The purpose behind the shock tactics used by *PETA* is to cross the perceived divide between humans and animals that people have and make the audience realise the similarities between the two (Malik, 2014). The charity does this by portraying naked female models as animalistic, photographing women as caged animals or meat, for example. One poster and online campaign (figure 9) condemning circus' shows a female model wearing little clothing and feathers, sitting on a swing with the caption reading "wild birds don't belong in the circus." An online campaign by the charity group last year was met with mass criticism for comparing rape victims to the treatment of livestock on farms. One of their most famous campaigns is the ongoing "I'd rather go naked than wear fur" campaign which has featured numerous celebrities such as Claudia Schiffer, Eva Mendez, and Khloe Kardashian. The latest ad from this self-proclaimed 'iconic' campaign features Italian actress, Elisabetta Canalis (figure 10) (*PETA*, 2017). The organisation have published adverts in which women are wrapped naked in cling film to resemble meat, and also showing women as animals at the hands of a violent male figure (figure 11) (Richardson, 2009).

What is ironic about *PETA's* campaign tactics is that they are promoting animal rights but in doing so they overlook the rights of women by portraying them as equal to or lesser value than animals. Research included in Malik's paper on the charity, argues that advertising tactics such as those used by *PETA* result in increased aggression against women, and normalise rape attitudes amongst the male audience (Malik, 2014).

Certain breast cancer campaigns have been called demeaning as they "use sex and women's bodies to sell products, ideas, and a way of life" (Sulik, 2012). The pink ribbon was originally

an icon for breast cancer advocacy, but soon became commercialised and is now featured on items from cosmetics to clothes and household items. There are posters for breast cancer awareness that use slang language for breasts such as “jugs,” “knockers,” and “cans” (figure 12). Other posters have featured naked women having their breasts being touched or groped by a man such as the campaign that Spice Girl Mel B was involved in for the charity CoppaFeel! (figure 13) (Sulik, 2012). Women are also used to promote charities for men’s health. In June 2017, Dublin bakery *Aungier Danger* posted an image to their *Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter* accounts of two female employees about to eat donuts shaped like penises for men’s mental health week. The image was later removed from social media, with no explanation given as to why.

It can be assumed that charities use these shock tactics in their campaigns because they are likely to gain media and public attention. They get away with presenting sexist and misogynistic advertisements because they are campaigning for ‘good.’ However, these acts are damaging in the efforts for equality amongst the sexes. Irish airline, *Ryanair* published a charity calendar featuring half naked air stewardesses, with all proceeds going to the children’s charity ‘Angels Quest.’ When asked about it the airline defended themselves saying that the calendar was “for a good cause and that the hostesses volunteered to pose for the pictures” (Bindel, 2008). The tactics are not always effective as they can cause more harm than good. In regards to *PETA’s* posters, a study by Bongiorno, Bain, and Haslam found that men they surveyed thought that *PETA’s* adverts were arousing but they did not effect their opinions on animal rights (Bongiorno, et al., 2013). The objectives of the charity, it could be argued, are not met. Although, whether celebrities are seemingly willing to pose nude for the campaign or not, would presumably raise the profile of said charity.



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

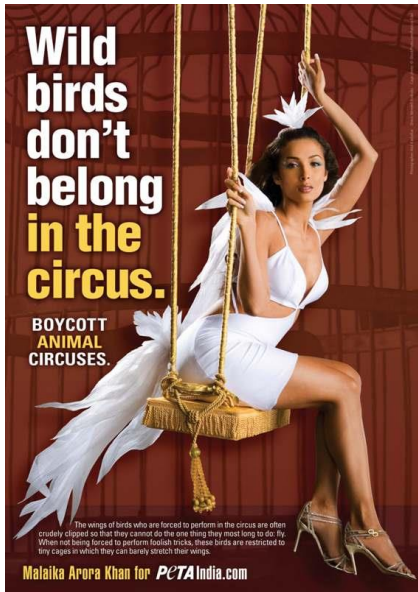


Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

or husband who is lazy and unaware of the unpleasant smell in the room (figure 14). This type of advertisement portrays men as incompetent or stupid, particularly husbands and fathers. Studies found that there is an increase in advertisers presenting men as lazy fathers and husbands who sit in front of the television while the woman is seen to be caring for children or doing housework (Sacks, 2008).

2.4.2 Sexual Objectification of Men

Similar to the Male Gaze theory penned in 1975, consumer analyst *Mintel* has coined the term 'hunkvertising' to describe the sexual objectification of men. Products aimed at women such as *Diet Coke* (figure 15) use half undressed male models who are being objectified by a group of women. *Mintel* conducted a survey of 998 men and found that 26% think that men are sexualised just as much as women are, so while it is still an important issue it does not seem to be on the same scale of female objectification (Mintel, 2016). In 2010 *Old Spice* ran the campaign "the man your man could smell like" (figure 16). In response to this David Gianatasio from *AdWeek* analysed the rise in sexual objectification of men in advertising. However, it is different to how women are objectified as many of the adverts featuring naked men are done so humorously. According to advertising expert Lisa Wade, it is because "we don't really take women's sexuality very seriously" and we find it funny to think of women as being lustful (Gianatasio, 2013), as this places the female in a place of dominance over the male which goes against stereotypical roles.

2.4.3 The Difference in the Portrayal of Male and Female Children

In regard to adolescents, adverts aimed at boys or feature males, are more likely to be concerned with athleticism, or achieving victory. *Lacoste* and *Nike* are brands that have advertised in this way. Female teenagers are often shown in adverts to be less active and mainly concerned with their appearance. This is represented in the types of products that are marketed to girls and the way in which the ads are shot. They will often be either photographed as a close up shot of the face or standing in a flattering or suggestive pose, girls at this age are rarely active in adverts compared to boys. The gender divide begins earlier than adolescence, proved by an advertisement by clothing brand *GAP* (figure 17). Two young children are modelling clothes, the text beside the boy reads "the little scholar, your future starts here." The little girl is called "the social butterfly" and "the talk of the

playground” (Hodgkin, 2016). This advert is an example of how society still expects males to be well educated and to be the decision makers for their family, while females’ main concern should be with appearance and social status.

It is not just women who are stereotyped and objectified by advertisers and the media. While the advertising does often depict men negatively, it is not in any way as severe as the sexism the advertising industry shows against women.



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Chambray shirts + logo sweaters
are the talk of the playground.

HER LOGO STYLES ▶

HER TROUSERS ▶



THE LITTLE SCHOLAR

Your future starts here.
Shirts + graphic tees = genius idea.

HIS T-SHIRTS ▶

HIS TROUSERS ▶

Figure 17

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This study involves two forms of research methods, one of which involves both qualitative and quantitative aspects. Cresswell writes that the mixed-methods approach “employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand research problems. The data collection also involves gathering both numeric information as well as text information so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information” (2003).

The goal was to understand how women are portrayed in modern print and online advertisements, with a particular focus on advertisements that have featured in the Irish media. In doing so the study will incorporate a content analysis and a focus group.

The content analysis involved collecting adverts from print publications, online and from outdoor advertisements. All of the ads used are images, and have been shown in Ireland at some point. The duration of the study period is the last decade (2007 – 2017). The adverts were all for one of four products; cosmetics, clothes, food, and cars. This was to narrow down the criteria for ads that could be added to the sample.

The second research method is in the form of a focus group. The purpose of this method was to examine the thoughts and opinions of the members regarding modern advertisements to see if they mirror society accurately. The group was made up of a mixture of ages, backgrounds, including both men and women from a variety of locations. There was six members in the focus group as this was a sufficient number to have diversity amongst the participants, but also an ideal size so that everyone was able to respond to the questions without it being rushed or overwhelming.

3.2 Significance of using a mixed-method approach

The research was comprised mainly of qualitative methods; however, it did include quantitative aspects, in the content analysis. Using both methods was of benefit to the study as it described more aspects of the results than if only one method was used.

The focus group results consist of detailed descriptions of the adverts from the labels set out. Graphs made on *Meta Chart* (<https://www.meta-chart.com/>) were used to express the data clearly, and conveniently to be seen at a glance.

When focus groups re-emerged as a 'newcomer' form of methodology in the 1980s it was subject to comparisons with other traditional methods. One reason for this was to "determine whether the two methods produce equivalent data" (Morgan, 1996, p. 136). Another reason was focused on how this method could make unique contributions to a study as it includes the opinions of respondents. Its purpose is to include a non-professional input in the study. Research into focus groups from a content analysis of *Sociological Abstracts* found that they are commonly used as part of a mixed method approach to a study (Morgan, 1996, p. 133).

3.3 Content Analysis

One of the earliest definitions of content analysis is by Bernard Berelson who calls it "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). This definition has since been developed and broadened to include more aspects of society. "Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). Klaus Krippendorff explains that content analysis is referred to as a technique because "it provides new insights, increases a researcher's understanding of a particular phenomenon, or informs practical actions" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 18). Over time, the technique was used for qualitative research, with modern research often using computer technology to analyse "big data" from the web, or data that is too large or too complex for traditional methods of analysis (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 204). The main aim of a content analysis is to study "how news, drama, advertising, and entertainment output reflect social and cultural issues, values and phenomena" (Hansen, 1998, p. 92).

Today, the process of analysing content is used in many fields including the media, and specifically when dealing with online media sources. This is because it centres on the big data methods by using computers and removing direct human contribution research. As the internet is a primary source of news and social updates, vast amounts of information,

generated by user behaviour can be collected from social media platforms and other websites. There are ethical implications to this means of content analysis, such as the fact that human traits and communication are being analysed without being managed by humans. (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 204). For this research, these particular ethical implications will not apply as a more traditional form of content analysis will be used, without computer support.

3.3.1 Discourse Analysis

A qualitative approach to content analysis is discourse analysis, which focuses on “how particular phenomena are represented” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 16). An example by Van Dijk (1991) studied racism in the press, analysing how minorities are portrayed and the way foreign conflicts are described. This study will feature gender, concentrating on female experience and treatment. Gender has been established by feminists as a term to classify the phenomena of the relationship between the sexes, it is “a socially agreed-upon system of distinctions, rather than an objective description of inherent traits” (Wallach Scott, 1986, p. 153).

3.3.2 Social Constructivist Analysis

Another form of content analysis is social constructivist analysis. It is similar to discourse analysis although it concentrates more on understanding how reality fits into human interactions and language. Katz (1995) used this method in exploring the changing notions of sexuality (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 16). Despite the fact that discourse analysis is more associated with semiotic studies, it is still relevant. This research combines the two protocols. The content analysis analyses the representation of women as per the discourse analysis method, based on the amount of adverts that faced backlash or were removed/banned it was made clear as to how the advertising techniques were received. Also the developments over time of how women were seen by the media is addressed, using the social constructivist analysis method.

“Researchers who conduct social constructivist analyses focus on discourse as well, but less to criticize (mis)representations than to understand how reality comes to be

constituted in human interactions and in language, including written texts” (Gergen, 1985; Krippendorff, 2004, p. 16).

3.3.3 Online and Print Advertising in Ireland

As mentioned, the content analysis will include print and online advertisements that have been accessible to the Irish consumer market. These particular forms of advertising have been chosen as they are more incorporated in to everyday life than television and radio. Ireland has the fastest growing digital advertising market in Europe. The media research firm eMarketer, located in New York reported in early 2017 that they were expecting Ireland to spend €433 million on online advertising for the year. This is not only a 12% increase on the amount spent in 2016 but also the first time when more money will be spent on digital advertising than traditional forms of advertising. The researchers also estimate that by 2021 80% of all advertising funds will be spent on digital adverts (McMahon, 2017) Print media is still very much relevant in modern advertising, despite the emergence of the digital generation. Independent News and Media found that print advertising is more effective than television advertising, based on return investment in the automotive sector. The findings, which were published in 2016 show that print advertising amounts to 25% of sales overall delivered by the media (Independent.ie, 2016).

Thirty-five print and online advertisements that were first published between 2007 and 2017 were the main unit of analysis for this study. The online advertisements featured may originate from any part of the internet, while the inclusion of print advertisements refers to any ad from newspapers, magazines, billboards, posters in the streets, or adverts on public transport that was displayed in Ireland. The advertisements analysed were gathered online, cut out from publications, or photographed at the location they were displayed. Potential sources were also gathered from searching terms such as ‘benevolent sexism’ and ‘hostile sexism’ online, or investigating public condemnations of offensive advertisements. The adverts collected were then divided into categories, based on what the advert was for;

- Cosmetics
- Clothing
- Food

- Cars

The categories were influenced by a study carried out by Courtney and Lockeretz, who found that women were most frequently featured independently in adverts for food, cosmetics, and cleaning products. This is because these items were considered to be relatively inexpensive, “for more expensive household purchases, men were brought into the ads” (Courtney & Lockeretz, 1971, p. 94). However, as this study is over 40 years old the categories were modified to apply to modern advertisements. According to Klaus Krippendorff (2004), when conducting a content analysis, it is important for “researchers to plan, execute, communicate, reproduce, and critically evaluate their analyses whatever the particular results.” This is because contemporary content analyses face larger contexts (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 32).

The literature review and content analysis cross-referenced each other during the process of collecting and categorization of the advertisements. Information from the literature review was used in establishing the criteria in determining if an advert can be justified as displaying prejudice against women.

3.3.4 Coding Rationale

Once the advertisements were categorised, a method of coding was established. There are two main forms of sexism, hostile and benevolent. The type of sexism displayed in the advertisement being analysed was identified from the following set of labels:

<u>Hostile</u>	<u>Benevolent</u>
<p>Dependent/ Housewife:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Female is helpless financially, emotionally, or psychologically without a man. 2. Female is depicted as a housewife. 	<p>Feminine Touch/ "Hanger":</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Female is touching/ caressing herself or the item (Goffman, 1976, p. 29). 2. The female body is being used to display an item, the body may be dismembered. In this case, the female is dehumanised (Rajagopal & Gales, 2002, p. 3334; Szymanski, et al., 2011, pp. 7-8)
<p>Submissive/ Vulnerable:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In adverts featuring both men and women, the female is depicted as being inferior to the male. 2. There is a threat of violence and/ or sexual assault against a female 	<p>Female is dressed in little or no clothing</p>
<p>Irrational: Female is depicted as being unintelligent</p>	<p>Decorative: Female has no relation to the product, is purely present for decoration</p>

The purpose of the labels was to distinguish between the different types of sexism used by the advertising industry. Upon completion of coding the recorded data, the advertisements were compared and contrasted, and analysed based on how my adverts applied to each

label. This was the first set of results displayed, using a bar chart. The bar charts and pie charts used in the results section of this study were made online using *Meta Chart*.

A discussion followed the first bar chart, discussing what was unexpected about the results. The adverts containing sexualised images of women were further analysed as these labels contained adverts that were aimed at both men and women. It was counted how many of the adverts containing sexualised images were aimed at men, aimed at women, or had no specific audience. The product being advertised and the language used helped to determine who the intended target audience was for each advert. The results of this were shown on a pie chart.

Designer fashion brands and car brands were intentionally examined together for the treatment of women as objects and glamourising violence against women. This was because of a prior knowledge of the treatment of women in both of these forms of advertising due to the controversies they face. Fashion photographer, Terry Richardson has shot several controversial advertising campaigns for designer fashion brands. Many adverts using his images have been criticised and/ or banned for their portrayal of women. He has also been accused of inappropriate sexual behaviour towards models (Davies, 2010). The editor of Richardson's book, Dian Hanson has called him "the innovator, the father of fashion-porn" (Nelson, 2004). Adverts shot by Richardson have been used for this study, such as *Tom Ford* (figure 22) and *Sisley* (figure 33). Also, treating women as possessions is a recurring theme in car advertisements. In July 2017 German carmaker *Audi* released a video advert online and in cinemas in China comparing a woman to a second hand car. The advert shows a wedding ceremony being disrupted as the groom's mother examines the bride's body. After negative reaction to the ad it was withdrawn (Coonan, 2017).

The aim of the content analysis was to study adverts that mistreat women by determining the degree of prejudice, the type of prejudice, and how often it occurs. It was also noted where they are displayed, who is the target audience, and what product or service is being advertised. Content analysis is an ideal means of research to document trends over time. However, any type of research will benefit and work more efficiently with the incorporation of other methods. In this case, the content analysis is teamed with a focus group, an

interactive methodology that involves a third party. Therefore the research goals of the content Analysis will also be incorporated into the focus Group.

3.4 Focus Group

“The opportunities that focus groups might present for hearing more detailed revelations about people’s thoughts and ideas – particularly about the social world, as made and experienced through human dialogue – has ensured that the method has increasingly been seen as capable of generating particularly high-quality data” (Jowett and O’Toole 2006, p. 454).

Focus groups were first introduced to the Social Sciences in the 1940s (Liamputtong, 2011, p. 9; Cyr, 2015, p. 232) after being developed from research methods designed by Paul Lazarsfeld, Robert Merton, and other colleagues “to gauge audience responses to propaganda and radio broadcasts during World War Two” (Kidd and Parshall, 2000, p. 295). As a research method, it was dismissed until the 1980s when several social scientists published research on focus groups (Morgan, 1996, pp. 129-130). It is linked to social science as a research method. There is also a relationship to this study with social science and Feminism.

“In its simplest recent usage, ‘gender’ is a synonym for ‘women.’

In some cases, this usage though vaguely referring to certain analytic concepts, is actually about the political acceptability of the field. In these instances, the use of ‘gender’ is meant to denote the scholarly seriousness of a work, for ‘gender’ has a more neutral objective sound than does ‘woman.’” (Wallach Scott, 1986, p. 155).

‘Gender’ is the phrase associated with the social sciences in an attempt to distance the subject from political Feminism. It is used to denote “cultural constructions” of femininity (Wallach Scott, 1986, pp. 155-156). New technologies have made costly data collecting techniques more affordable and reintroduced it as a possibility for researchers (Cyr, 2015, p. 233; Jowett and O’Toole, 2006, p. 454).

There is no universally agreed upon definition of a focus group, as there are many components following involved. David L. Morgan (1996, p. 130) calls it “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the

researcher,” however, there are exceptions to this. The three components following this particular definition that are required in establishing a focus group is that the aim is;

- for data to be collected,
- the source of this data must come from the participants,
- the role of the researcher in creating the group discussion should be acknowledged (Morgan, 1996, p. 130)

A short and simplified description of a focus group by Agar and MacDonald describe it thus; “somewhere between a meeting and a conversation” (Agar and MacDonald, 1995, p. 80; Kidd and Parshall, 2000, p. 294).

3.4.1 Types of Group Research

Another method of defining a focus group is to distinguish it from other types of group research. Certain types of group research methods, for example nominal groups also use multiple participants but do not involve interactive discussions. Taylor, Berry, and Block (1958) employed the term nominal grouping, “to refer to a process in which individuals work alone with the results of their efforts later combined and viewed as if the individuals had worked together in a group” (Green, 1975, p. 63). Other types of group research involve ‘naturally occurring’ group discussions that are not led by an interviewer, “the distinction here is not whether the group existed prior to the research, but whether the researcher’s interests directed the discussion” (Morgan, 1996, p. 130). Finally, groups with therapeutic, decision making, education, organising, behaviour changing aims are all separate to focus groups, whose main objective is again, data collection. However, it is worth noting that a by-product of the focus group may result in some of these outcomes. These distinctions ask, “whether focus groups should be distinguished from other types of group interviews” (Morgan, 1996, pp. 130-131). Adding to this, Frey and Fontana (1991) created typology casting focus groups as one of many forms of group interviews. According to the criteria they set, group interviews do not qualify as being a focus group if they occur in an informal setting, use nondirective interviewing, or use an unstructured questioning format. Conversely, disputing this claim is Knodel (1987, 1995) who published work on the topic

claiming that the guidelines for carrying out a focus group may be adapted to a wide variety of settings and cultural practice (Morgan, 1996, p. 131).

As mentioned previously, although it is now considered a reliable and credible means of collecting data, focus groups are often combined with other methods, as opposed to being a self-contained method. Results from a content analysis from the publication *Sociological Abstracts* included by David L. Morgan showed that “over 60% of the empirical research using focus groups during the past decade combined them with other research methods (Morgan, 1996, p. 130).” However, it is also mentioned that the number of studies using focus groups as their sole form of methodology was increasing at the time (Morgan, 1996, p. 130).

As a form of research, the focus group has been analysed from several different angles, revealing strengths and weaknesses. Firstly, involving others in a study gives multiple third person perspectives, and a well-organised focus group, depending on the topic, will give a diversity of opinions. The group can introduce new questions and queries to the researcher, as well as challenge the style of the project (Cyr, 2015, p. 235; Jowett and O'Toole, 2006, p. 455). The participants may also question each other to explain themselves or challenge opposing thoughts on the topic. This situation could be useful for the interviewer to witness, “all knowledge is produced in someone’s interest so all knowledge is generated from positions of power/ powerlessness” (Skeggs, 1995, p. 50; Jowett and O'Toole, 2006, p. 458). A negative aspect to this is the fact that working with others can be unreliable. There is the issue that strangers will be uncomfortable and nervous amongst one another, in an unusual setting which could potentially affect their concentration and personalities. A focus group is a “social moment,” in that it combines several individuals but it is not a natural situation as the participants have gathered at the request of the researcher (Jowett and O'Toole, 2006, p. 458). Critics of focus groups also discuss the issue of censoring, that there may not be a debate in the discussion as participants are likely to alter their input or not express certain opinions so they may be socially accepted by the group. Carey (1994) notes that “the major pitfall of the focus group technique is the potential impact of censoring and conforming” (Jowett and O'Toole, 2006, p. 459).

There is a means for the data collected to be interpreted in many ways regardless of whether the participants interact successfully with one another or not. The interviewer can note and use

- how questions are received,
- how many respondents there are to each question,
- the phrases used,
- body language,
- the level of agreement and the level of interest amongst the group as forms of data to interpret.

The results of this observation are called “the group effect” (Morgan and Krueger, 1993; Morgan, 1996, p. 139; Cyr, 2015, pp. 234-235).

3.4.2 The Role of the Researcher

Agar and MacDonald (1995) found that the presence of a moderator amongst the group disrupted the flow of the conversation and made the experience less natural. This was compared to one on one individual interviews in which the interviewees tended to explain themselves better, due to pressure they felt from the moderator (Morgan, 1996, p. 140). A conflicting point to this, is by Jowett and O’Toole who claim that “the power of the researcher is challenged, simply by virtue of the numbers involved in the research encounter” (Jowett and O’Toole, 2006, p. 455), the research being viewed as an authority or as being ‘in charge’ can affect the atmosphere of the conversation.

Sussman et al (1991) discovered through questionnaires given participants after the group discussion, that their views on the subject at hand had become more extreme with a 4% variance in the attitude. It shows that there is little knowledge on how members of the focus group influence and affect one another (Morgan, 1996, p. 140).

3.4.3 Preparing the Focus Group

The purpose of this particular research study was to examine the participants’ thoughts and opinions regarding modern advertisements to see if they represent society accurately. The

study sample comprised of six unrelated individuals. Extensive knowledge on the subject was not necessary, as the desired results were based on opinions and possible personal experiences. The participants ages range from 23 to 85 years old and are from a variety of backgrounds, including both women and men, and commuters from a different location. Having six participants was intentional as it was considered a large enough group to have diversity, but also an ideal size so that everyone would be able to respond to the questions without being rushed. The participants were recruited through a poster advert in the local library and through acquaintances of the researcher. Every member of the group was given an information sheet about the study and a consent form to sign. Both of these can be found in the appendix section, listed as appendix 3 and appendix 4, respectively.

The focus group discussion lasted for approximately one hour and took place in a booked group study room in Longford County Library. Tea and coffee were available as refreshments to the participants in an effort to create a casual and relaxed atmosphere. The focus group session was recorded with an audio recorder, with the permission of all participants. The focus group was led by the researcher, who distributed the sample advertisements for the discussion and asked the questions to the group. The researcher was not involved in the discussion at all. It was important that the researcher was not seen as an authority figure, as mentioned previously this is proven to affect how participant behave during the discussion.

Before the discussion began, the group was reminded that their participation was completely voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. They were also assured that personal participant information would not be used for any reason and participants would not be identifiable in any material published from the study.

3.4.4 Focus Group Conclusion

Certain topics are seen as inappropriate or too sensitive for a focus group, but this is changing. For example, Hughes and DuMont (1993), and Zeller (1993) amongst others, conducted studies with marginalised groups from society using focus groups. In addition, these groups can be seen as empowering to marginalised groups of society as they “give a voice” and an insight into how they think. “Feminist researchers have noted the appeal of

focus groups because they allow participants to exercise a fair degree of control over their own interactions” (Morgan, 1996, pp. 133-141).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

As there was no third party to consider for the content analysis research, the ethical considerations for this research is in regard to the focus group. When working with others is essential to be respectful, their input is all voluntary and beneficial to the researcher. It was made sure that all of the participants were well informed about what the research topic was, and what was being asked of them. Each of them were provided with an information sheet containing these details. Permission was also gotten to record the focus group discussion and was guaranteed to be stored on a laptop protected with a password.

Every member of the group was given a consent form to sign that included a reminder that involvement in the study was not mandatory and they may withdraw from the focus group whenever, or if ever they chose. Also included was a declaration that all participants and all responses would be documented anonymously. Before the discussion began, the group was made to feel comfortable and at ease, as it was an out of the ordinary situation.

3.6 Challenges

There is challenges in every study, as plans may not go accordingly, and research may not develop the way it was intended. As it is based on the interpretation of the researcher, “content analysis is frequently obligated to isolate and process the more intricate characteristics of a sample; and whenever this happens it runs the risk of treating them inadequately” (Kracauer, 1952, p. 631). The results may not be fully representative to others, but this can be used as a matter for debate.

- Initial challenges regarding the content analysis emerged in establishing criteria for the potential adverts so as to narrow the sample. After further research on the topic, it was eventually decided that all adverts featured must be for either cosmetics, clothes, food, or cars.
- Due to the size of the sample of adverts used, it took a significant period of time to gather all of the ads. As they are all potentially controversial, the issue of certain adverts being altered or removed arose.

- Sourcing archived advertisements was time consuming.

The challenges regarding the focus group area of the study was predominately in relation to relying on others;

- The focus group discussion was delayed by a week due to the availability of most of the group.
- There was the issue of respondents influencing each other and not expressing their true opinion.
- In relation to the adverts from the 1960s used, they were all taken from women' magazines as Ireland's first magazine for men was not published until 1974 (Brand New Retro, 2011). It would have been useful to compare the types of ads featured in both kinds of magazines during this time.

Chapter 4: Results and Analysis

4.1 Overview

This chapter will present and discuss the results of the data analysis. In total, 39 advertisements were used for this study; each advert selected fit into one of four categories. For the content analysis, 35 advertisements containing sexist images in relation to women from 2007 to 2017 were selected and analysed to identify what form of sexism was being displayed. The results from the content analysis are presented in both a qualitative and quantitative form. Bar charts and pie charts are used to express data, with a discussion following.

Cosmetics	Clothes	Food	Cars
<i>Benefit (concealer)</i>	<i>Alexander Wang</i>	<i>Aungier Danger</i>	<i>Lexus</i>
<i>Benefit (eyeliner)</i>	<i>American Apparel (Lolita)</i>	<i>Club Orange</i>	<i>Mercedes-Benz</i>
<i>Trilogy Natural Skincare</i>	<i>American Apparel</i>	<i>Diet Coke</i>	<i>Skoda Auto</i>
<i>Tom Ford</i>	<i>Diesel</i>	<i>Sprite</i>	<i>BMW</i>
<i>Lynx Dry</i>	<i>Sisley</i>	<i>Dr. Pepper</i>	<i>Ford Motor Company</i>
<i>Lynx (shower gel)</i>	<i>Marc Jacobs</i>	<i>Hunky Dory</i>	
<i>Dolce & Gabbana</i>	<i>Calvin Klein</i>	<i>Pot Noodle</i>	
<i>Sean John (Unforgiveable Woman)</i>	<i>Vera Bradley</i>	<i>Steggles</i>	
<i>Old Spice</i>	<i>Suit Supply</i>	<i>Chicago Town</i>	
<i>Veet</i>	<i>Supreme</i>	<i>Belvedere Vodka</i>	

Four advertisements from the 1960s as well as four randomly selected ads from the content analysis were selected for the focus group. There was one advert from each category for each decade presented to the group for discussion. The advertisements from the last decade that were used in this study were sourced online, collected from media publications, or photographed from public transport and outdoor advertisements. The advertisements used from the 1960s were all sourced online at *Brand New Retro* (<https://brandnewretro.ie>), an Irish website of pop culture archives.

Cosmetics	Clothing	Food	Cars
<i>Benefit</i> (2017)	<i>Calvin Klein</i> (2016)	<i>Sprite</i> (2016)	<i>BMW</i> (2008)
<i>Arrid</i> (1969)	<i>Penneys</i> (1969)	<i>Denny's</i> (1967)	<i>Honda</i> (1968)

4.2 Focus Points

In order to identify and distinguish what form of sexism was portrayed in the advertisement, six labels were established. Most advertisements had more than one label featured;

- Female as **dependent** on a male or in a **housewife** role
- Female is portrayed as **submissive** to a male, or **vulnerable** to the threat of (sexual) violence
- **Irrational**, or unintelligent female
- **Feminine touch**- female is touching/ caressing herself or the item (Goffman, 1976, p.29), or "**Hanger**" - the female body is being used to display an item, the body may be dismembered (Rajagopal & Gales, 2002, p.3334; Szymanski, et al., 2011, pp. 7-8)
- Female is dressed in **little or no clothing**
- **Decorative** - Female has no relation to the product, is purely present for decoration

4.3 Content Analysis Results

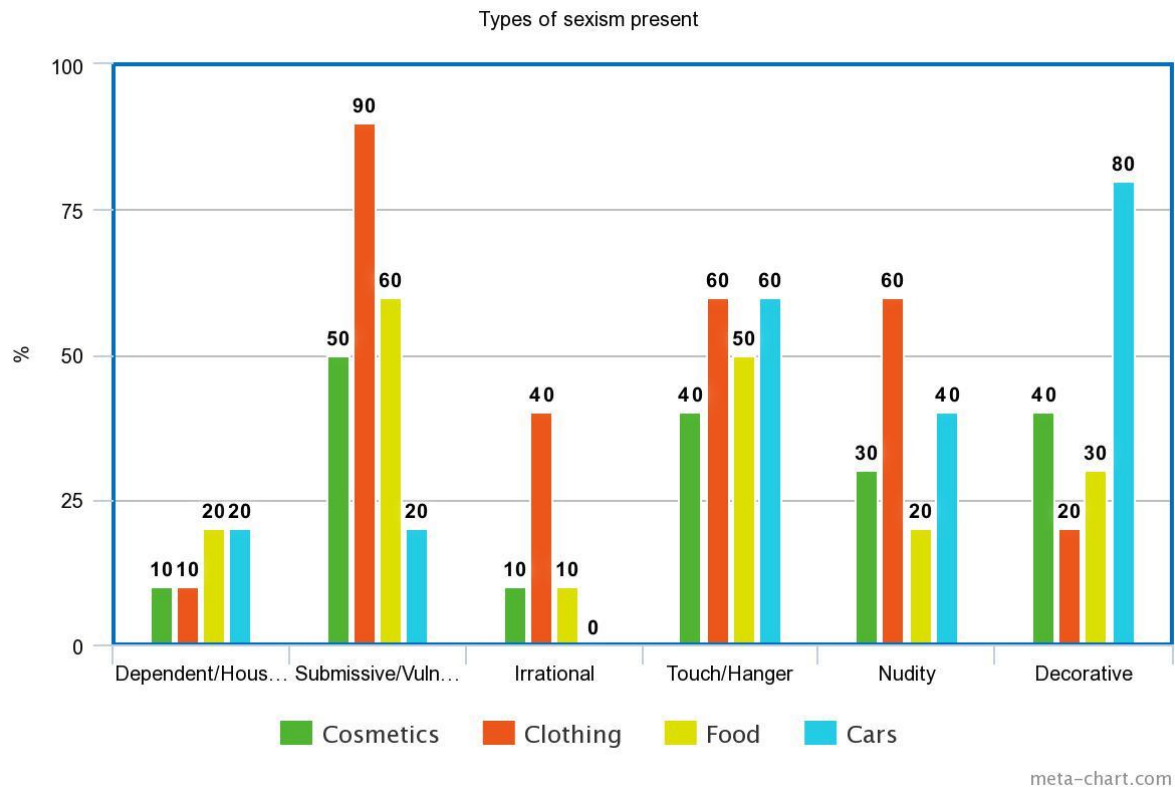


Chart 1

The results are shown as percentages, to display the results as clearly as possible. Not all of the categories contained the same number of advertisements.

4.3.1 Dependent/ Housewife

The results of the content analysis show that the dependent, or housewife label is the least common form of sexism conveyed in the advertisements. This is a hostile form of sexism, portraying women as housewives and as helpless financially, emotionally, or psychologically without the aid of a male. In the food category, this code appeared in 20% of the adverts, which is evidence of this form of sexism shrinking in advertising, as in old adverts, from the 1960s, for example women were often shown as housewives and as responsible for all housework and cooking for the family. This result could be a mirror of modern Irish society, figures from the last census which show that in 2016 there were 929,967 women workers employed in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2017, p. 10).

“Female participation [in work outside the home] has been increasing since 1981. In 2016, the difference in rates between males and females was at its lowest ever at 12.7 percentage points.

The number of women looking after the home or family has been falling since 1981 with the most recent inter-censal period showing a decline of 11.5 per cent” (Central Statistics Office, 2017, pp. 10-15).

Despite the fact that women still make up the majority of homemakers in the population, the figure is continuously falling. It is possible that the advertising industry is responding to these changes in Irish society by displaying more equality amongst the sexes in scenes depicting the home and work environment. The adverts from the research that contained this type of sexism, also portrayed all women to be subordinate to men.

4.3.2 Sexualised Images used to Market Products to Male and Female Audiences

The results of the content analysis show that the most common form of sexism used in the advertisements was in relation to the female body, with women being depicted as inferior to men. Altogether 32 out of 35 adverts contained at least one example of the feminine touch, women were presented as submissive, vulnerable, or used the female body as a peg to display a product.

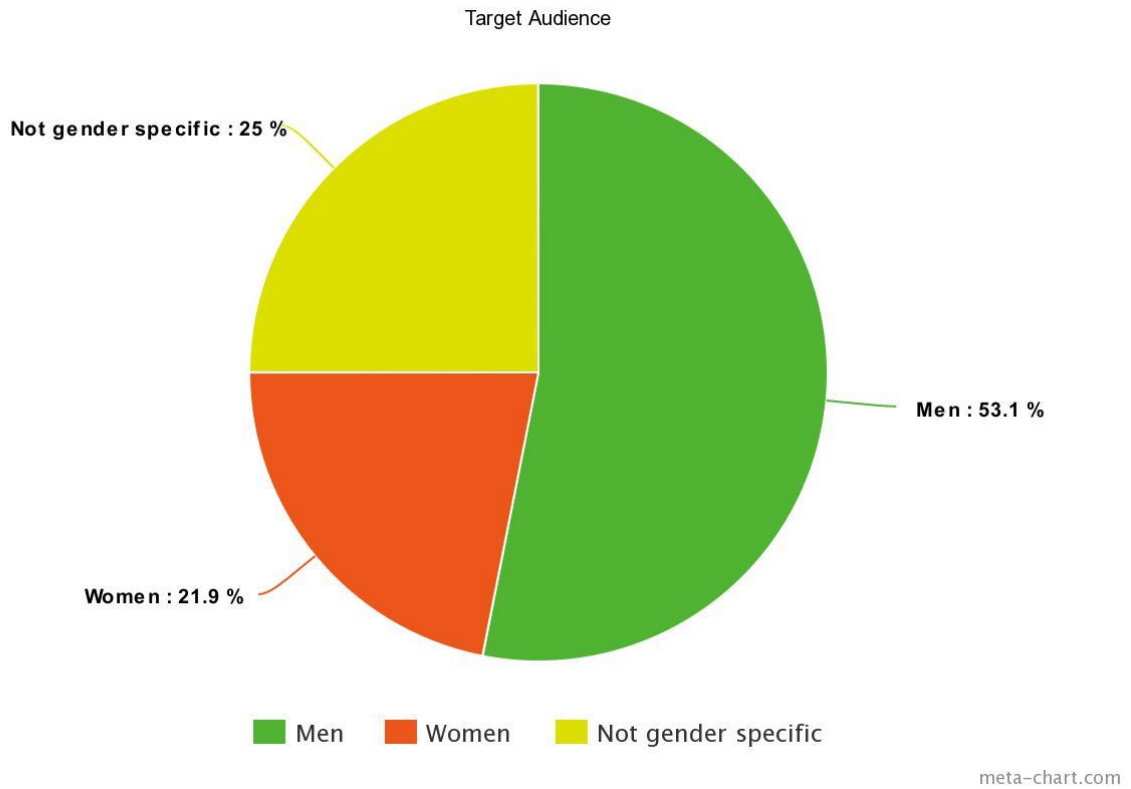


Chart 2

As Chart 2 illustrates, 53.1%, or 17 of these ads were aimed specifically at men, featuring men’s products, or referring to men in the advert. Five of these adverts were for men’s products, but only one of them featured a male in the advertisement. All of the advertisers took a similar approach of marketing their product in relation to sex.



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 22

In all of these adverts, the women are shot in a provocative form. Figure 22, for luxury brand *Tom Ford*, is a clear example of the feminine touch and hanger or clothes peg category. The woman's chest is being used to catch the eye of the consumer and to display the product. The use of a female in figures 18-22 is purely decorative as they are all advertising men's products. The ad for *Old Spice* (figure 20) is different to the others in this category by the fact that it does not feature the woman's body. However, the model for the advert is eating an ice-cream in a way that is an example of the feminine touch. The tagline on the advert reads, "she is only eating it because it tastes good and it is hot where she happens to be." *Old Spice* seem to be acknowledging the practice of advertisers using sexualised images of women to market to men, by sarcastically downplaying the nature of the image. The advert describes the literal context of their image, leaving the sexually suggestive nature of it to be discovered by the consumer.

It was concluded that the majority of women used in adverts for products aimed at men were overly sexualised. In relation to the adverts in this category aimed at women, six of these were for specifically for female products.



Figure 23



Figure 24

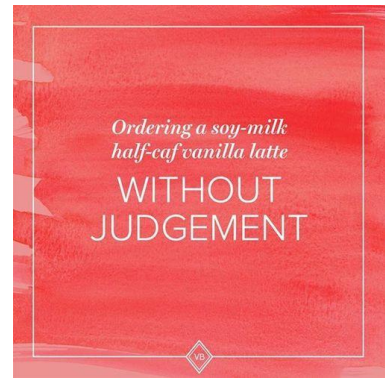


Figure 25



Figure 26

American Apparel®

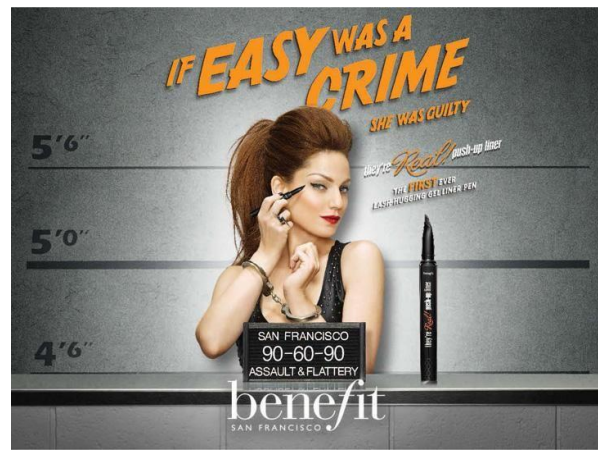


Figure 27



Figure 28

There is a significant difference, visually in figures 23-28, compared to figures 18-22. Nevertheless, all the advertisements contain the same forms of sexism. Figures 24, 26 and 27 all sexualise and objectify the women featured. The women are shown to be vulnerable

and submissive to men. The clothing brand *American Apparel* frequently published advertisements of models in vulnerable positions, wearing little clothing. Figure 26 is a 2014 advert that received backlash for being “overtly sexual and inappropriate for a skirt advertised as school wear” (Harris, 2014). Figure 27 is an advertisement for an eyeliner by *Benefit*. The ad’s tagline “if easy was a crime, she was guilty” has a double meaning – it is referring to the product being easy to use, but also the image of the “guilty” model in handcuffs insinuates that the woman who uses the product is easy as well.

The adverts for women’s products use images that are degrading and offensive to their target audience as a means of attracting them. The advertising industry tries to convince women that their appearance and sexuality are their most valuable qualities and that a woman’s goal should be to be desirable to men. Figure 23 for the skincare band *Trilogy* is offensive to women in a unique way to the other adverts in this study. They refer to their skincare products as “new weapons in the war against other women.” This advert is pitting women against each other, and that it is a beauty item, presumably the “war” is to gain the attention of men. The specific enemies referenced could be younger women, based on the product that is being advertised.

The results of the content analysis show a link in how advertisers may objectify women to appeal to both men and women. Advertisers tend to portray women as sexual accessories to products in order to appeal to men, and those aimed at women advertised products based on the fact that the product will make the consumer desirable to men.

The fashion industry often portrays women as overtly sexualised in comparison to men. An example of this is figure 29, *Calvin Klein*. The male model is rapper Fetty Wap, who is recognised for his economic success and motivation. The advert also includes actress Klara Kristin, whose inspiring achievement is seduction. What further degrades Kristin in this advert is the fact that Fetty Wap’s photograph is a portrait of his face, while her full body is in shot in a sexually suggestive pose. The main focus point of Fetty Wap’s photograph is his face and the main focus of Kristin’s is her crotch. Sexual exploitation of women in advertising is not just limited to adverts aimed at men. In both circumstances, women are degraded and their worth is reduced to their sexual appeal.



Figure 29

There were a further 8 adverts that were aimed at both men and women. These were general adverts with no gender specific product to show from brands catering for men and women, such as *Dolce & Gabbana* and *Diet Coke* (figure 30). Only three advertisements from the study were not in the submissive/ vulnerable or touch/ hanger categories. One of these was considered to be aimed specifically at women, and the other two did not have a gender specific target audience.

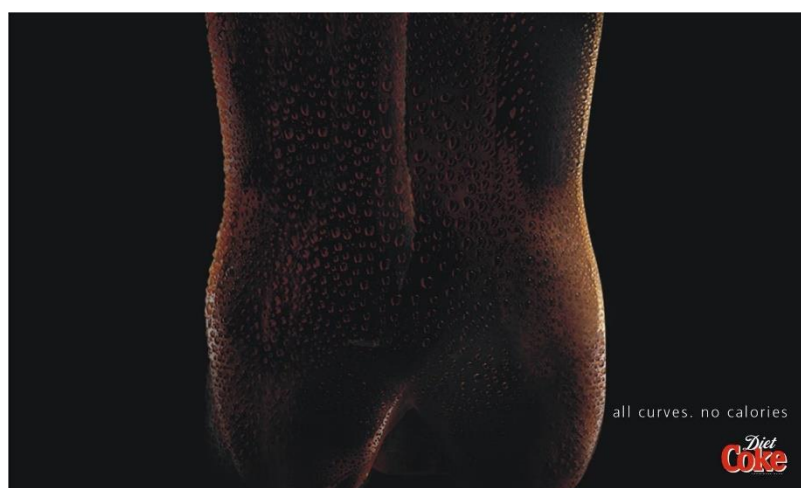
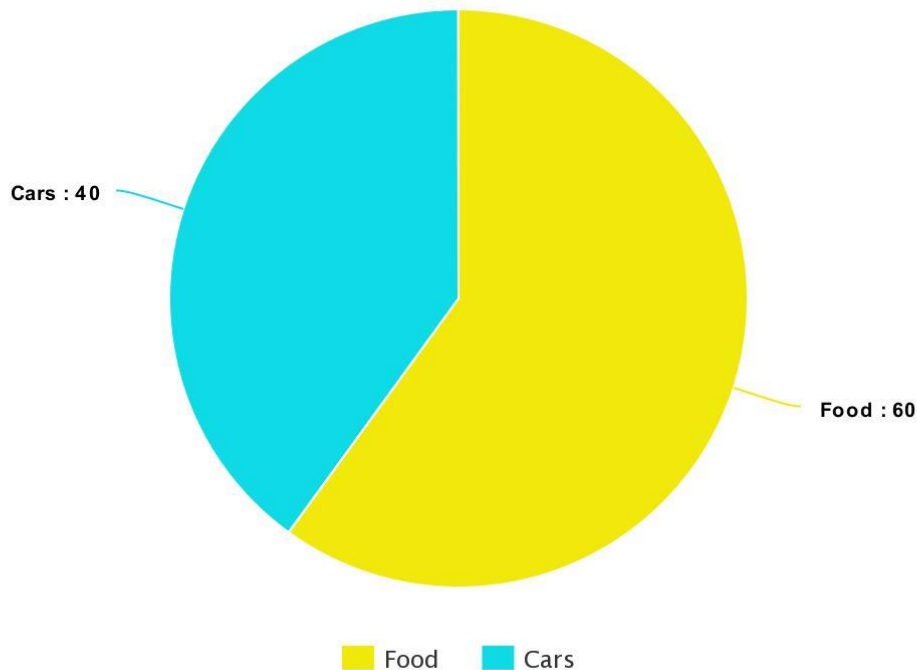


Figure 30

4.3.3 Women as Objects and Violence Against Women

While there are numerous cases in this study of women being objectified as sexual objects, the car and food category were the only two that embodied objects representing women, or comparing a woman's body to the product being sold.

Examples of women being treated as the product being sold/Product being personified as a woman



meta-chart.com

Chart 3

Of the entire group of car advertisements in this study, none featured the female model driving the car, or even inside the car. A pattern emerged of females being used purely for decorative purposes or being compared to the car itself, figure 31 for example is for airbags, but the advertisers have replaced the airbags in the shot with four pairs of breasts. The continuous connection between cars and the degradation of women is damaging for women's rights as the two are associated with each other in the mind of the consumer. The connection between cars and the pose of the female model is for the benefit of the male audience's consumption could be the idea of cars being 'boy's toys.'

It is not just the automotive industry that dehumanises women to increase the success of their business. Several food advertisements use the same phrasing to describe both the food item and the female, i.e. figure 32 dangerously links *Belvedere Vodka* to sexual assault.

The double meaning of the tagline is that some people do not go “down smooth,” or engage in sex as easily as their vodka goes down.



Figure 31



Figure 32

Violence against women, especially sexual violence is used frequently by luxury fashion brands as it is seen as a form of ‘art.’ However what it actually does is glamorise violence and rape, sending a dangerous message to consumers especially those who are young and impressionable, such as the advert for *Sisley* (figure 33) featured. A reason for the continued use of adverts like this is that they cause controversy and gain attention from social media and the news media. Gervaise Slowey of the advertising company, *Ogilvy & Mather*, has said that due to the growing number of competitors in the fashion industry, shock tactics are necessary in order to stand out. In explaining the use of over sexualised images he says “we use sex in communication and it’s more socially acceptable than ever. If you spend an hour looking at MTV, you see a lot worse” (Sweeney, 2010).



Figure 33

4.3.4 Women Portrayed as being Irrational

The 'irrational' category of the study included adverts that depicted females as being unintelligent. This form of sexism made up a minute section of the results, appearing in approximately 17% of the advertisements.

Figure 34 is part of a 2017 advertising campaign by the cosmetic brand *Benefit*, the tagline on the ad reads "skip class, not concealer." They were condemned for sending an irresponsible message to school girls that their appearance should take priority over their education (Lubitz, 2017). The advert was then edited, with the tagline removed. Figure 35 shows the new advert as shown on the *Benefit* and *Debenhams'* websites in July 2017.

The majority of the remaining adverts in this category incorporated irrational decision making with nudity, or women displaying their body such as figure 29 which was previously discussed, and figure 36 for *Diesel*. The subject of this advert has links to revenge porn, the act of "sharing photos or videos of a sexual nature of another person without their consent" (Bardon, 2016). The woman in the image is revealing her breasts to a security camera, and the tagline featured, "smart may have the brains, but stupid has the balls" proves that the company did not consider how this advert could affect impressionable younger members of their audience. The Law Reform Commission report, published in September 2016 found that abuses such as revenge porn "could have a substantial impact on a person, and could

be linked to serious psychological harm” (Bardon, 2016). The advert is also sending out the message that being smart is less fashionable than being irresponsible. It encourages the consumer to carry out potentially dangerous acts, without considering the consequences of their actions.



Figure 34



Figure 35

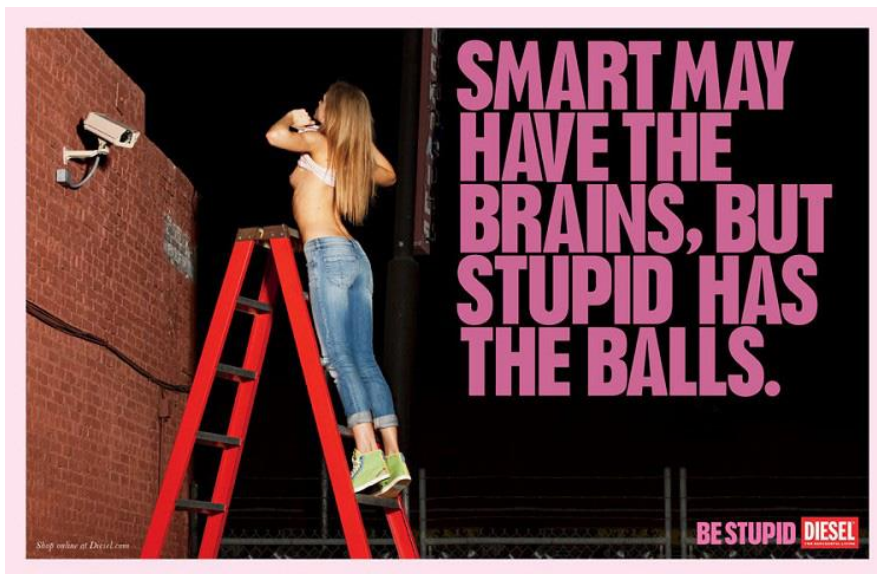


Figure 36

4.3.5 Advertisements Removed

Of the 35 modern advertisements included in the study, 18 were removed or banned by the Advertising Standard Authority.

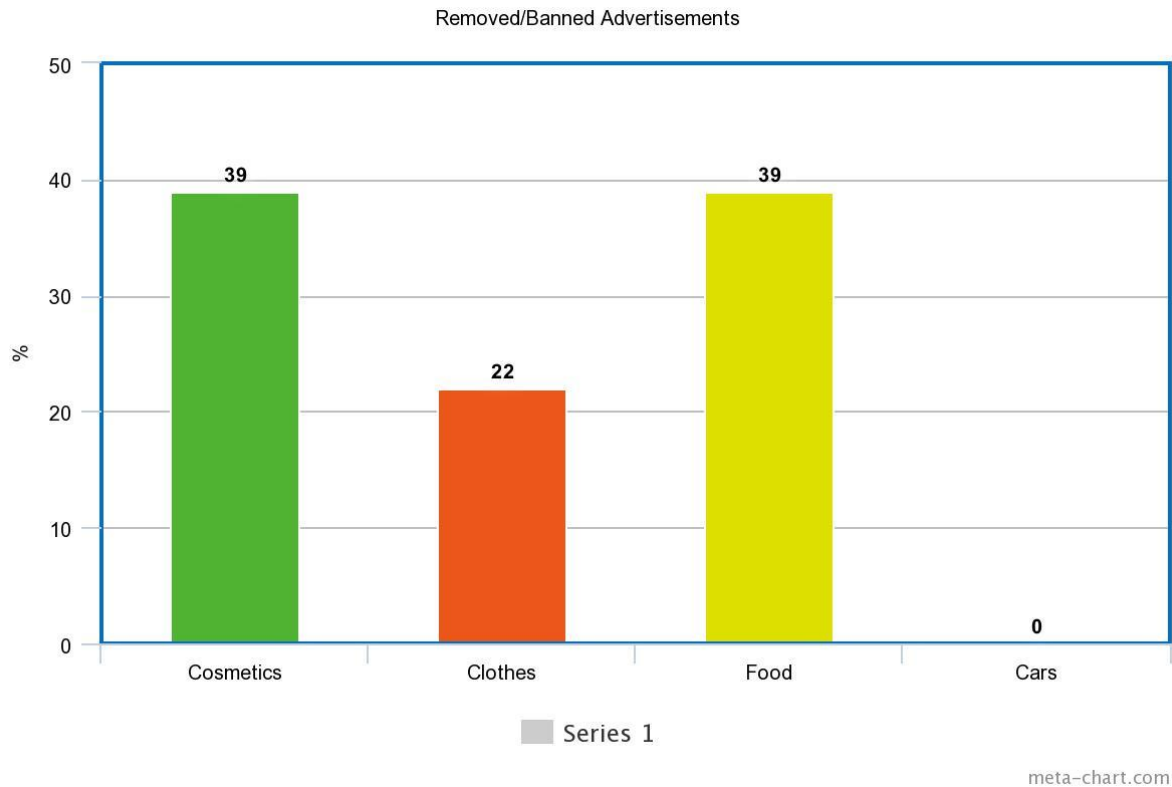
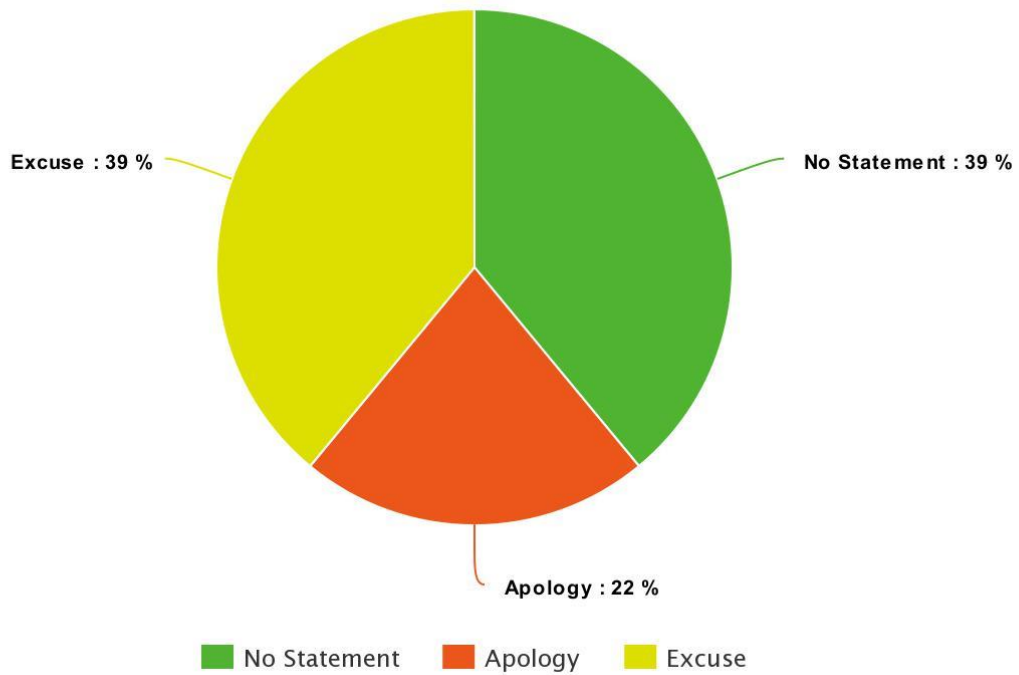


Chart 4

Many were removed after receiving backlash online. Social media platforms such as *Facebook* and *Twitter* have made it more difficult for advertisers to get away with controversial ad campaigns. Even after the advert is removed, screenshotting means it is still difficult for brands to protect their reputation from backlash. Many of those used in this study had been removed years previously but are still available on the internet due to available screenshots.

Of the 18 that were removed or banned, only half of the advertisers made a public statement explaining their logic behind the ad. The reaction of the brand to their ad being removed was analysed and the results are shown in chart 5. In total, 7 advertisers did not make any public statement regarding their advert, leaving 11 advertisers who did respond to the situation. Depending on the nature of the advert and what was said, the responses were seen as either apologies or as excuses. In this instance, an excuse given is defined as a statement by the brand defending their advert instead of just apologising for causing offence.

Brand's reaction to advert being removed/banned



meta-chart.com

Chart 5

Of all the adverts that were removed or banned, 22% were defended by the brands that released them. It was noted that many of the advertisements removed were aimed at men, and there was a pattern of using the desired demographic as an excuse for degrading women. These statements are included in the following table, it should be noted that the statement for *Lynx* by *Unilever* applies to the two *Lynx* adverts in this study as they were banned during the same time period.

Lynx	Unilever said that any offence was unintentional, their products are “aimed at men aged 17-27 and had been popular over the years for its playful, sexy, tongue-in-cheek take on the ‘mating game’ narrative” (Poulter, 2011).
Dolce & Gabbana	Designer Stefano Gabbana defended the ad, he said “its intent was to show an erotic dream, a sexual game” (Drohan, 2014)
American Apparel (Lolita)	The company said that the images had been removed for a “variety of reasons.” They continued by defending the images saying the “approach was not graphic, explicit or pornographic – but features models who were happy, relaxed and confident in expression and pose and were not portrayed in a vulnerable, negative or exploitative manner (Harris, 2014)
Calvin Klein	This advert was not removed online, where it reached the Irish market but a billboard poster replica was removed in New York. <i>Calvin Klein</i> claimed it was removed due to a planned rotation of images from the particular campaign – not due to protests. However, their PR team released a statement at the time saying, “we take all of our consumer’ concerns seriously and as a global brand, we promote gender equality and the breakdown of gender stereotypes across the world (Stern, 2016).
Club Orange	“The marketing campaign is aimed at its core target audience, primarily 18-30 year-old males, and it was intentionally tongue-in-cheek” (Collins, 2013).
Pot Noodle	The campaign was “not intended to demean women in any way. As a brand targeting a male, young audience, we do push the boundaries” (Duffy, 2013).

The fact that spokespeople for numerous brands used the excuse that their target audience is young adult males shows that it is seen as acceptable to objectify women as long as it is

intended to be 'tongue-in-cheek.' The use of this language when describing sexism dismisses the seriousness of the offence caused and the damage it causes to women's worth.

Following the discussion in a previous section of this dissertation regarding the degree of sexism present in all of the car adverts, the fact that no adverts were removed or banned, further proves the idea of cars as 'boy's toys' and this being used as an excuse to degrade women.

There were adverts who received complaints and criticism but were not removed or banned. In 2011, *Diesel's* "Be Stupid" campaign (figure 36) won awards despite being banned in poster form and complaints that the campaign "encouraged anti social and sexualised behaviour of children" (Drohan, 2014). Figure 37 is from *Alexander Wang* who defended his ad saying the campaign is "not provocative just in terms of sexy, but provocative to provoke conversation" (Feldman, 2014).

Another advert that was not removed but caused controversy is by *Skoda Auto*. They caused offence by comparing a bride to a car (figure 38) in an advert featured in *The Irish Independent* in 2013, and after backlash online released a statement saying, "finance offers can be boring so we're being firmly tongue-in-cheek to make it more engaging" (Withnall, 2013). They also released what was planned to be the next advert (figure 39), showing the roles reversed from the first ad. This attempt at redemption saw the company trying to show that as long as both sexes are objectified, no one should be offended.

The fact that so many adverts of this nature are approved and published everyday is of concern as it shows that there are many with little regard for women's dignity.



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39

4.4 Focus Group

This study included one focus group made up of six participants. There were 4 females and 2 males with a mean age of 48.1 +/-, ranging from 23 to 85 years old. The group consisted of a homemaker, a teacher, a farmer, an engineer, a retired business owner, and a law student. Before any questions were asked to the group or the discussion began, the participants were shown the six adverts for the focus group. They were asked to examine each image, and to consider how the old and new adverts were similar or different to one another. The adverts were also displayed on a projector in the room for the entirety of the group discussion. The group were asked one question at a time, only after it was confirmed that everyone had an opportunity to voice their thoughts the next question was asked. The framework design for the questions was intended to reveal participants' opinions on the topic;

1. Do you think that advertisements are insensitive to body image and self-esteem?
Why/ Why not?
2. Do you think that advertisements over sexualise women or do you think that it is a harmless sales technique?

3. Do you think that advertisements treat men and women equally? In what way are consumer goods and services marketed to men in comparison to how they are marketed to women?
4. Do you think that the advertising industry is failing to keep up with a society that is progressing past negative attitudes towards women, or do you think that advertising accurately reflects traditional Irish values?
5. What has changed since the 1960s in regard to how women are represented in advertising?

4.4.1 How Age affects Reaction to Advertisements

The two oldest members of the group, participant 3 and participant 5 were aged 64 and 85 respectively and it was noticeable that within the group, the techniques of advertising did not affect them as strongly as the other members of the group. Both said that they had not noticed or considered that the advertising industry may be insensitive to body image and/or self-esteem. However, they did answer yes to question 1 based on the advertisements that they had seen at the beginning of the focus group. These two participants did not give reasons but both agreed that adverts over sexualise women, with participant 5 adding that they were “shocked the *BMW* [(figure 46)] was allowed to be printed.”

A benefit from having members of the group of this age range in regard to the old adverts from the 1960s, is that the two participants were able to discuss how advertising differed to current times. Participant 3 and 5 both agreed that one of the most notable changes in how advertising represents women is that their role has changed from being portrayed as a homemaker, to being objectified sexually.

“The image of the Irish housewife, who stays at home to look after her children, husband and the housework has seemed to disappear – because people find it offensive; but I think that the way women are seen in ads now is much more offensive because they are animalistic and unnatural.”

4.4.2 Body Image and Self-Esteem

Advertisements that use women solely for their appearance are not only degrading but can cause body image and self-esteem issues amongst consumers as “the models and actors they use often have the perfect body type.” Brands use holidays such as Christmas and summer to launch campaigns to urge people to use their product to lose weight. You can see it with products that are aimed specifically at women such as *Danone* yoghurts and *Special K* cereal.” This was the first answer given by participant 6 when the group was asked about how body image issues can be linked to the advertising industry.

Consumers, especially adolescent girls are vulnerable to the effects of advertisements that are insensitive to body image and/ or self-esteem, due to the fact that the media often “emphasise that female self-worth should be based on appearance” (Clay, et al., 2005, p. 452). In regard to this issue, all 6 participants in the study agreed on the similarities between the *Benefit* (figure 40) and the *Penneys* (figure 43) ad, that show two females prioritising their vanity over education, exemplifying women as irrational, or weak at decision making. There is 46 years between the publishing dates of these two advertisements and yet they are both selling similar concepts. Participant 6 mentioned that both of these adverts used a school as the context for their advert, “showing that the pressure to look good begins at an early age.” Modern advertisements not only encourage vanity over education amongst children and adolescents, the group also discussed how children are exposed to the sexualised imagery in certain ads. Participant 1 made the point that it is difficult to control the adverts that children see as advertising exists in all parts of society;

“There are aspects of the media such as television programmes are censored and give warnings about being unsuitable for certain age groups, but adverts that are shown on billboards, and on public transport for example are uncensored and children of all ages are exposed to inappropriate material.”

In relation to children and adolescents, it was discussed how not only women are exploited by the advertising industry, participant 6 recalled seeing examples of “children being sexualised, in adverts for products such as underwear.”

The whole group said that they believed advertisements over sexualise women and may cause self-esteem and body image issues. Participant 2 attempted to understand why this might be.

“The point of advertising is to try and find a market for their product and convince this market that they need it. It should be expected then that cosmetic brands’ advertising will feature beautiful women to make their product look good. It is unfortunate but affective for them that the insecurities of the audience lead them to being customers to the product.”

4.4.3 Men and Advertising

There were two discussions about men during the focus group meeting. The first was concerned with how offensive adverts may influence how men treat women, and the second was how men are also victims of sexism in advertising.

The topic came about after participant 1 said that “after exposure to offensive advertisements, impressionable males may think that it is acceptable to treat women as sexual objects, or as inferior to themselves.” From this, participant 4 added the issue of car advertising by calling the *BMW* (figure 46) ad “offensive, as it strips away all but one of the woman’s qualities – her sexual appeal.” Car adverts were the example used when deliberating how women are used to sell and market products to the consumer.

Participant 3 pointed out that there are adverts that use women only to attract men to their brand or product and participant 2 added that the same, overly sexualised imagery is often used in marketing to women as well. For the advertiser, the goal is for the male audience to find the model or actor desirable, and the female audience to be envious of the model or actor’s appearance. Participant 2 said that this was a dated concept that advertising has not evolved from. A male member of the group, participant 4 offered an insight into his thoughts on marketing to men;

“As well as the advertisers who release these ads, the men they are aimed at are getting blamed when women are sexualised for the sake of making a sale, but men find this offensive too because men are also objectified.”

When asked do they think that adverts treat men and women equally, 67% of the answers were no, with the rest being unsure and participant 5 believing they are treated equally when compared the past. This was in regard to women being shown only as homemakers in the past, while modern adverts show men and women in the kitchen. However, the group did acknowledge that men are also objectified. Adverts for *Diet Coke* (figure 15) were used as an example multiple times, in which the product is aimed at a female audience and features a group of women staring at a half-undressed man. This conversation concluded on the note that both sexes are victims of advertising, but women are objectified to a more severe degree.

4.4.4 Irish Society and Advertising

If there is so much backlash and disgust with how the advertising industry portrays women, then it is questionable as to whether they are reflecting society accurately. Overall, the group did not think that the adverts they were shown are an accurate reflection of society, nor did they think that they were reflection of traditional values but opinions on this topic were split.

Participant 6 said that although the adverts are more oppressive, modern society has not surpassed the issue of misogyny;

“there are certain attitudes that exist that are very demeaning to women, such as the idea of placing blame on a rape victim, for example, by questioning her on what she was wearing, what she said, or if she was drunk.”

This statement was built on by the group, by talking about the inequalities shown towards public figures as well;

“Female politicians are often asked about, or it will be mentioned if they are married, how many children they have, or what they are wearing. Couples that are in the public eye are also often referred to as the wife of, or the girlfriend of – their own career is seen as inferior to their relationship status.”

Other members of the group suggested that perhaps adverts that are overtly sexual are intentional as a form of humour or irony and that they are unintentionally offensive.

Participant 2 suggested that adverts showing women as inferior to her husband or as a

homemaker could be making light of traditional Irish values, while sexual adverts are an example of 'lad banter.' Of the adverts shown to the group, 34% said that they could see how *Sprite* (figure 44) thought their banned advertisement would be received as humorous.

This topic ended with the point that due to the amount of backlash the adverts shown to the group received on social media, is proof that they are not accurately mirroring modern societal values.

4.4.5 Changes since the 1960s

When discussing what has or has not changed since the 1960s, 5 of the 6 participants mentioned women as homemakers in their response. The older members of the group, who remember the adverts of this era, said that the husband and wife roles shown in adverts were not sexist at the time; they were an accurate impression of society. They said that when it is analysed now, these ideas are sexist but they believed that during the 1960s the adverts would not have been seen as oppressive. It was also mentioned that the Irish public would not have been used to the overly sexual imagery we see today in advertising. In regard to adverts for household chores and cooking, modern adverts have a much more improved gender balance than 1960s adverts.

What has not changed and is a similar concept used from both decades is women being encouraged to be vain for the sake of men. The *Arrid* (figure 41) advert from 1968, markets deodorant to women based on the encounters they may have with men, and the *Calvin Klein* (figure 42) ad from 2016 markets their clothes to women by saying they will aid them in being more seductive.

Participant 4 made the point that sexist imagery used by modern advertisers is often subtler, and calling these images art is an excuse to escape the terms sexism and misogyny. Whereas adverts from the 1960s, such as the *Denny's* (figure 45) advert from the study that says, "Mary should eat no fat" are much less subtle in their sexist attitudes.

Overall it was the agreed opinion of the group that sexism has existed and still exists in advertising, it has just changed in its execution. The most noted point was that women in Irish advertisements are more sexualised in modern times, and less likely to be portrayed as a homemaker. However, they are still seen as the inferior sex.

4.4.6 Concluding Thoughts from the Focus Group

The focus group ended with a summary of the main points made.

- The role of women has changed in advertising, from primarily being cast as a homemaker, to being used as an object of desire.
- This role has a damaging effect, with the group agreeing it can cause self-esteem issues, especially amongst young people.
- These issues also affect men as they are too objectified, but not to the same extent as women.
- Issues of self-esteem are unfortunate, but also mean that the advertisement is successful, depending on the product. These consumers may see the product being advertised as the solution to their issues.
- Backlash and controversy over the treatment of women in advertisements is proof that they are not a suitable mirror of people's current attitudes.



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42

LET ME IN! LET ME IN!

SCOLL

REALLY SHE ONLY WANTS TO SHOW OFF THE NEW OUTFIT I BOUGHT FOR HER IN PENNEYS

39/11 BRINGS YOUR DAUGHTER SMARTLY BACK TO SCHOOL IN THIS WOOL AND COURTELE GYM SKIRT. (AVAILABLE IN SIZES 22" TO 24"). THE STIFF COLLAR, BLOUSE, SIZES 22" TO 40", COMES IN POPLIN AT 12/11 OR NYLON FOR ONLY 14/11. COMPLETE THE OUTFIT WITH ONE-BAR SHOES, SIZES 11-1, IN BEIGE, RED OR BLUE FOR 36/11.

8/11 UPWARDS AND THE BOY IS READY IN HARD-WEARING CORD SLACKS. THE SHIRT IS NYLON AND COSTS 17/6 WHILE THE V-NECK OXFORD JUMPER CARRIES THE ST. MICHAEL LABEL AND COSTS 37/6 IN SIZES 28-30, OR 43/- IN SIZES 22-36. COMPLETE THE OUTFIT WITH NYLON SOCKS AT 6/11 AND KNITTED TIE FOR 6/11.

40/11 BUYS THIS ATTRACTIVE TWEED FROCK TO BEAT THE WINTER CHILL. HAVE HER WEAR IT WITH BR1-NYLON KNEE SOCKS AT 2/11 OR 3/11 AND RED OR BLACK PATENT SHOES (SIZES 5 TO 6) AT 24/11. THE DIRTY LITTLE CASE COMES IN BLUE, RED, BEIGE OR GREY AND COSTS 7/11.

19/11 FOR THIS NEAT SKIRT IN COURTELE AND WOOL. (AVAILABLE IN SIZES 18-30.) SHE CAN WEAR IT BEAUTIFULLY WITH A GAGLIARDI EIREANN JUMPER OR GARDIAN IN NAVY, ROYAL OR GREEN (SIZES 22 TO 36) FROM 2/11. SHOES, IN RED OR BROWN COST 24/11.

PENNEYS

DOWNTOWN HENRY STREET, TEL. 4-6771; FINGLAS, TEL. 34-2966; DUN LAOGHAIRE, TEL. 80-9726.

WILKIN HASENELL

Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Advertisements are supposed to reflect real life; but this does not seem to be the case as society looks to be progressing past misogyny at a faster pace than the advertising industry.

Zhou and Chen wrote that unfavourable stereotypes in the media results in “undesireabe social consequences” because “advertising is also a means of social communication” (Zhou & Chen, 1997, p. 485; Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1970; Darmon and Laroche, 1991). This means that an impressionable audience may associate a particular group with a negative portrayal of them from the media. This study looks to understand

the portrayal of women in Irish print and online advertisements.

There is also a focus on how sexism against women is used in adverts marketing to men, and marketing to women. The amount of criticism/ removed adverts were used as guidelines in determining if the adverts were using dated concepts, or accurately reflecting societal attitudes. Also, adverts from the 1960s were used as a comparison to modern ads. The key findings from the study reveal that;

- Modern advertisements portray women more as a sexual object, and less in a housewife role (chart 1).
- Images of sexually objectified women are used to market to both men and women, but for differet reasons. The adverts appealing to men aim for the woman to be desireable to the male audience, and the images aimed at females are intended to evoke insecurities and envy at the model (figure 18-28).
- Advertisers glamorise violence against women, and the treatment of women as submissive objects; it is a trend used by many luxury brands such as *Tom Ford* (figures 7, 22), *Belvedere Vodka* (figure 32), and *BMW* (figure 46). These adverts are examples of the objectification theory, which de-humanises females (Szymanski, et al., 2011, pp. 7-8).
- Despite the inequalities amongst men and women in society, the adverts used in this study are not seen as an accurate reflection of modern Irish society (chart 4).

Advertisers often market women's products as a method of gaining male attention. The adverts for *Arrid* (figure 41) and *Trilogy* (figure 23) were first published four decades apart, but are using the same technique to appeal to their target audience. The advertisements from the 1960s used the same technique to gain the attention of housewives. Adverts for food from the 1960s, such as *Denny's* (figure 45), and an advert promoting cheese (figure 4) marketed the items as being appealing to men, but the target audience for the ads was women. The *Denny's* ad used female pronouns when detailing purchasing their product, and a section of The National Dairy Council's tagline read, "Serve a man cheese. And win his heart." These adverts are proof of how male dominance is present in the choices female consumers make.

"Stereotypes are often used in advertising to convey images with which potential buyers may identify so as to increase advertising effectiveness" (Zhou & Chen, 1997, p. 485). These stereotypes are used by all forms of media and can have damaging effects to a group, such as Feminists. Studies from various years have found that despite supporting Feminist causes and activism, many people are hesitant to refer to themselves as a Feminist. A survey from a 1989 study by Wallis resulted in an overall majority support for Feminist issues and the Feminism movement, but only 33% of women surveyed considered themselves to be a Feminist (Beck, 1998, p. 140).

"'I'm not a Feminist but...' is a common refrain among women who reject the label. The 'but' is usually followed by expressions of support/ concern for the issues championed by the movement, such as equal pay (74%), day care (90%), job discrimination (82%), and abortion rights (74%)" (Wallis, 1989, p. 82; Beck, 1998, p. 140).

The findings from Wallis' study are applicable to certain attitudes towards Feminism in Ireland. Aisling O'Connor of *Sibéal*, a network of postgraduate students working on gender studies, found that many young people in Ireland who have part in and initiated protests over issues of equality and women's rights are unwilling to call themselves Feminists (McKay, 2012). It is clear therefore, that the negative 'bra burning' stereotype has not yet disassociated itself from Feminism.

This study was based on the analysis of 35 advertisements, that all fit into one of four categories; cosmetics, clothes, food, and cars. A content analysis and a focus group were carried out. The content analysis was a mixed method form of research as the results were presented in both qualitative and quantitative forms. The coding for the analysis was made up of various types of sexism. Data from the key findings was expressed on graphs made on the website *Meta Chart*, with a discussion following. In order to establish if the advertising industry is failing to keep up with a society that is progressing past misogyny, it was noted if the advert received any significant backlash in the media.

The focus group was made up of six unrelated individuals, of a variety of ages and backgrounds. The group were shown eight adverts, half of which were from the last decade and half from the 1960s. there was one advert from each of the four categories of ads, for both decades. The group were asked questions that allowed them to express their opinions on the topic; this was the point of the focus group. Opinions and experiences are valued over facts and statistics in a focus group.

The aim of including references to old advertisements in this research was to investigate whether the portrayal of women by advertisers in the media has developed and to what degree. It was found that the portrayal of women has developed, but not progressed significantly. Men were acknowledged during the study also. The literature review discussed sexism against men by the advertising industry, to act as a comparative. A survey of 998 men by *Mintel* resulted in 26% believing that men are sexualised just as much as women (Mintel, 2016). The issue does exist, and is important, it does not seem to be of the same severity as sexism against women in advertisements.

In 2012, clothing brand *Victoria's Secret* (figure 48) were criticised for an online ad with the tagline, "the perfect body." The ad featured a group of models who were all of similar body type. The advert received backlash as it was seen to be an advert that pertuated "low self-esteem among women who are made to feel their bodies are inadequate and unattractive because they do not fit the narrow standard of beauty" (Bahadur, 2014). Clothing brand *Dear Kate* (figure 49) responded to the campaign by releasing their own advert with the same tagline, featuring women of various body types. Introducing the image on to their website, the company said, "through this photo, we showcase women who are often

neglected by the media and traditional retailers” (Bahadur, 2014). This study focused on the adverts that convey women in a negative light, but there are also modern advertisements that challenge the negative stereotypes and campaigns that aim to boost self-esteem amongst women. Also, in 2015, *Always* won an *Emmy* for their “#likeagirl” campaign (Diaz, 2015). The campaign questioned several participants about why the phrase, “like a girl” is used as an insult. The video advert featured one person at a time being asked to act out, “run like a girl,” “fight like a girl,” and “throw like a girl.” Some participants acted out the requests as if they were weak, or incapable. The campaign aims to boost the self-esteem and self-worth of females by questioning why it is considered to be an insult, to do something like a girl.

These positive campaigns challenge the negative and degrading advertising techniques of using women’s bodies to sell products, and portraying them as inferior to men. However, it should be considered that these trends are recent, and do not get equal recognition to those that contain sexism.

In relation to tackling the issue of sexism in advertising, this is up to the media, as it is an issue that reaches all parts of the media, for example how the media report on world leaders (figure 50). Advertisers try to relate to their desired audience to gain their interest. Therefore, adverts should reflect public opinion which is often influenced by the media.

Future studies under the topic of sexism in advertising/ sexism against women could further detail the implications of sexism in charity campaigns, which was briefly discussed in this study. The same research employed in this study could be applied to television and online video adverts to investigate if the severity of the issue is as prominent as in image advertising.

The media has progressed since the ‘bra burning’ incident in the 1960s, but sexism in advertising still seems to be considered as a necessity.



Figure 48



Figure 49

Never mind Brexit, who won Legs-it!

It wasn't quite stilettos at dawn, but there was a distinctly frosty atmosphere when Theresa May met Nicola Sturgeon yesterday

SEE PAGES 6-7



BLUEPRINT TO SAVE THE NHS

EXCLUSIVE

By Sophie Borland
Health Editor

PAINKILLERS, cough remedies and gluten-free foods will no longer be available on the NHS.

GPs will have to stop prescribing items that can be bought cheaply in supermarkets and chemists. Unveiling a major cost-cutting plan in the Daily Mail today, the head of the

■ Dramatic drive to cut costs unveiled

NHS says patients will also be expected to pay for their own indigestion pills, hayfever remedies and sunscreen. Simon Stevens says that free travel vaccinations will come to an end. His new national guidance will say these should no longer be 'routinely'

■ Doling out of painkillers to be scrapped

prescribed on the NHS. There will also be a big drive to recover the costs of treating European Union citizens. The crackdown is part of a blueprint to be formally announced by Mr Stevens later this week to save the Health Service up to £1billion in two years. He

■ GPs ordered to crack down on health tourists

wants to use the savings to improve patient care and pay for lifesaving drugs. The reforms come as the NHS struggles to keep pace with the pressures of both a growing and ageing **Turn to Page 2**

Figure 50

Bibliography

Acevedo, C. R. et al., 2006. How Women Are Depicted In Ads? A Content Analysis Study With Brazilian Advertisements. *International Business & Economics Research Journal*, 5(10), pp. 59-72.

Advertising Age, 2003. *Women: Representations in Advertising*. [Online]
Available at: <http://adage.com/article/adage-encyclopedia/women-representations-advertising/98938/>
[Accessed 29 May 2017].

Anderson, K. J., Kanner, M. & Elsayegh, N., 2009. Are Feminists Man Haters? Feminists' and Non-feminists' Attitude Towards Men. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Issue 33, pp. 216-224.

Anon., n.d. *Brand New Retro*. [Online]
Available at: <https://brandnewretro.ie/>
[Accessed 5 June 2017].

Anon., n.d. *Meta Chart*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.meta-chart.com/>
[Accessed 11 July 2017].

Bahadur, N., 2014. *Victoria's Secret 'Perfect Body' Campaign Changes Slogan After Backlash*. [Online]
Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/11/06/victorias-secret-perfect-body-campaign_n_6115728.html
[Accessed 29 July 2017].

Bardon, S., 2016. *Stalking and revenge porn to become criminal offences*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/stalking-and-revenge-porn-to-become-criminal-offences-1.2921564>
[Accessed 1 July 2017].

Beck, D. B., 1998. The "F" Word: How the Media Frame Feminism. *NWSA Journal*, pp. 139-153.

Berelson, B., 1952. *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. s.l.:Hafner Press.

Bindel, J., 2008. *Who is this supposed to help?*. [Online]

Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2008/apr/04/women.voluntarysector>

[Accessed 1 June 2017].

Bongiorno, R., Bain, P. G. & Haslam, N., 2013. When Sex Doesn't Sell: Using Sexualized Images of Women Reduces Support for Ethical Campaigns. *PLOS One*, 18 December.

Bowden, P. & Mummery, J., 2009. *Understanding Feminism*. London: Routledge.

Brand New Retro, 2011. *Man Alive – Ireland's first magazine for men – 1974*. [Online]

Available at: <https://brandnewretro.ie/2011/05/14/man-alive-irelands-first-magazine-for-men-1974/>

[Accessed 5 July 2017].

Bunreacht na hÉireann (Constitution of Ireland, enacted in 1937), *Article 41.2 (on the rights of the family)*.

Central Statistics Office, 1993. *Census '86*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Central Statistics Office, 2012. *This is Ireland - Highlights from Census 2011, Part 2*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Central Statistics Office, 2017. *Census 2016 Summary Results - Part 2*, Dublin: Central Statistics Office.

Clay, D., Vignoles, V. L. & Dittmar, H., 2005. Body Image and Self-Esteem Among Adolescent Girls: Testing the Influence of Sociocultural Factors. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 4(15), pp. 451-477.

Collins, O., 2013. *Advertising Standards Authority of Ireland bans yet another Club Orange advert*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.joe.ie/uncategorized/advertising-standards-authority-of-ireland-bans-yet-another-club-orange-advert-39427>

[Accessed 30 June 2017].

- Coonan, C., 2017. *Sexist car ad provokes online outrage in China*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/asia-pacific/sexist-car-ad-provokes-online-outrage-in-china-1.3160226>
[Accessed 28 July 2017].
- Cottle, S., Hansen, A., Negrine, R. & Newbold, C., 1998. *Mass Communication Research Methods*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Courtney, A. E. & Lockeretz, S. W., 1971. A Woman's Place: An Analysis of the Roles Portrayed by Women in Magazine. *Journal of Marketing Research*, pp. 92-95.
- Cresswell, J., 2003. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. California: Sage Publications Inc..
- Cyr, J., 2015. The Pitfalls and Promise of Focus Groups as a Data Collection Method. *Sociological Methods & Research*, pp. 231-259.
- Davies, C., 2010. *Fashion photographer Terry Richardson accused of sexually exploiting models*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/mar/19/terry-richardson-fashion-photography-pornography>
[Accessed 28 July 2017].
- Diaz, A.-C., 2015. *Always' Hard-Hitting 'Like a Girl' Wins 2015 Outstanding Commercial Emmy*. [Online]
Available at: <http://adage.com/article/advertising/always-like-a-girl-wins-2015-emmy-outstanding-commercial/300343/>
[Accessed 31 July 2017].
- Drohan, F., 2014. *Seven of the most controversial fashion ads... ever*. [Online]
Available at: <http://www.independent.ie/style/fashion/fashion-news/seven-of-the-most-controversial-fashion-ads-ever-30349497.html>
[Accessed 30 June 2017].
- Duffy, M., 2013. *"Degrading" Pot Noodle Facebook Ad Banned*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.buzzfeed.com/copyranter/pot-noodle-facebook-ad-banned->

[for-being-degrading?utm_term=.qcJqkrb5N#.aqLzMV7g2](#)

[Accessed 2 July 2017].

Duncan, P., 2013. *Women at Work: 40 years of change*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/women-at-work-40-years-of-change-1.1420721>

[Accessed 1 June 2017].

Feldman, J., 2014. *Alexander Wang's New Denim Ads Are More Offensive And Tired Than 'Provocative'*. [Online]

Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/03/alexander-wang-denim-ads_n_6262924.html

[Accessed 30 June 2017].

Fiske, J., 1987. *Television Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Fiske, S. T. & Glick, P., 1996. The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, pp. 491-512.

Furnham, A., 2016. *Are Men and Women Portrayed Differently in TV Ads*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/sideways-view/201604/are-men-and-women-portrayed-differently-in-tv-ads>

[Accessed 5 June 2017].

Gianatasio, D., 2013. *Hunkvertising: The Objectification of Men in Advertising*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/hunkvertising-objectification-men-advertising-152925/>

[Accessed 19 May 2017].

Goffman, E., 1976. *Gender Advertisements*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Green, T. B., 1975. An Empirical Analysis of Nominal and Interacting Groups. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 18(1), pp. 63-73.

Hansen, A., 1998. *Mass Communication Research Methods*. 1st ed. New York: NYU Press.

Harris, S. A., 2014. *Ads for 'back to school' range banned for 'inappropriately sexualising school-age girls'*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/506616/American-Apparel-back-to-school-adverts-banned>

[Accessed 1 July 2017].

Hodgkin, E., 2016. *'How can you seriously think this is OK?' Gap Kids provokes fury with a 'sexist' ad calling little boys 'scholars' and girls 'social butterflies' (and it even spells Einstein's name wrong)*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3718308/How-seriously-think-OK-Gap-Kids-provokes-fury-sexist-ad-calling-little-boys-scholars-girls-social-butterflies-spells-Einstein-s-wrong.html>

[Accessed 1 June 2017].

Irish Examiner, 2016. *Study shows how many hours we spend on social media every day*.

[Online]

Available at: <http://www.irisht Examiner.com/breakingnews/ireland/study-show-how-many-hours-we-spend-on-social-media-every-day-750530.html>

[Accessed 29 July 2017].

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2017. *Ireland and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, Dublin: Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission.

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 2017. *UN Publishes Assessment of Ireland's Women's Rights and Equality Record*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.ihrec.ie/un-publishes-assessment-irelands-womens-rights-equality-record/>

[Accessed 25 July 2017].

Independent.ie, 2016. *Quarter of all sales delivered by media driven by print advertising - New INM research*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.independent.ie/business/media/quarter-of-all-sales-delivered-by-media-driven-by-print-advertising-new-inm-research-34722023.html>

[Accessed 30 June 2017].

Jowett, M. & O'Toole, G., 2006. Focusing researchers' minds: contrasting experiences of using focus groups in feminist qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, pp. 453-472.

Kidd, P. S. & Parshall, M. B., 2000. Getting the Focus and the Group: Enancing Analytical Rigor in Focus Group Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, pp. 293-308.

Kracauer, S., 1952. The Challenge of Qualitative Content Analysis. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, pp. 631-642.

Krippendorff, K., 2004. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. 2nd ed. California: Sage Publications Inc..

Lanset, A., 2017. *First Protests at the Miss America Pageant*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.wnyc.org/story/first-protest-miss-america-pageant-1968/>

[Accessed 1 June 2017].

Lubitz, R., 2017. *A beauty brand told women to 'skip class, not concealer' — and people aren't happy*. [Online]

Available at: <http://uk.businessinsider.com/a-beauty-brand-told-women-to-skip-class-not-concealer-2017-7?r=US&IR=T>

[Accessed 6 July 2017].

Malik, A., 2014. PETA's Objectification of Women. *Undergraduate Research Posters*.

McCombs, M., 2002. The Agenda Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion. *Mass Media Economics 2002 Conference, London School of Economics*, pp. 1-21.

McKay, S., 2012. *Feminism Now*. [Online]

Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/century/century-women-and-the-vote/feminism-now-1.553554>

[Accessed 6 June 2017].

McMahon, C., 2017. *The amount spent on digital ads in Ireland should overtake traditional media this year*. [Online]

Available at: <https://fora.ie/digital-advertising-ireland-3-3309101-Mar2017/>

[Accessed 29 June 2017].

Melia, P., 2012. *'Rose of Tralee for mummies' that picked out our housewife of year.*

[Online]

Available at: <http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/rose-of-tralee-for-mummies-that-picked-out-our-housewife-of-year-28817958.html>

[Accessed 1 June 2017].

Mintel, 2016. *Over one quarter of males agree that men are sexualised in adverts just as much as women.* [Online]

Available at: <http://www.mintel.com/press-centre/social-and-lifestyle/over-one-quarter-of-males-agree-that-men-are-sexualised-in-adverts-just-as-much-as-women>

[Accessed 19 May 2017].

Morgan, D. L., 1996. Focus Groups. *Annual Review of Sociology*, pp. 129-152.

Mulvey, L., 1975. Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema. *Screen*.

Nelson, A., 2004. *It's Terry's World and You're Just Afraid of It.* [Online]

Available at: <http://www.laweekly.com/arts/its-terrys-world-and-youre-just-afraid-of-it-2139001>

[Accessed 28 July 2017].

Neuendorf, K. A., 2017. *The Content Analysis Guidebook*. Cleveland: Sage Publications Inc..

O'Doherty, M., 2014. *Rose of Tralee: Why this "lovely girls" contest will always have one very ugly aspect.* [Online]

Available at: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/opinion/columnists/rose-of-tralee-why-this-lovely-girls-contest-will-always-have-one-very-ugly-aspect-30535198.html>

[Accessed 1 June 2017].

O'Duffy, M., 1982. Irish Women's Liberation Stalled?. *Off Our Backs*, pp. 7, 15.

Patterson, M., O'Malley, L. & Story, V., 2009. Women in Advertising: Representations, Repercussions, Responses. *Irish Marketing Review*, 20(1), pp. 1-22.

PETA, 2017. *Elisabetta Canalis: I'd Rather Go Naked Than Wear Fur.* [Online]

Available at: <https://www.peta.org/features/elisabetta-canalisis-rather-go-naked-wear->

fur/

[Accessed 26 July 2017].

Plakoyiannaki, E., Mathioudaki, K., Dimitratos, P. & Zotos, Y., 2008. Images of women in online advertisements of global products: Does sexism exist?. *Journal of Business Ethics*, pp. 101-112.

Poulter, S., 2011. *Degrading' Lynx adverts featuring glamour model Lucy Pinder banned by watchdog*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2064946/Degrading-Lynx-adverts-featuring-Lucy-Pinder-banned-watchdog.html>

[Accessed 30 June 2017].

Rajagopal, I. & Gales, J., 2002. It's the Image That Is Imperfect: Advertising and Its Impact on Women. *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp. 3333-3337.

Richardson, J., 2009. *Bollywood Beauty Celina Jaitley Poses for PETA Elephant Ads*.

[Online]

Available at: <http://planetsave.com/2009/02/14/bollywood-beauty-poses-for-peta-elephant-ads/>

[Accessed 26 July 2017].

Sacks, G., 2008. *Advertisers: Men are not Idiots*. [Online]

[Accessed 30 May 2017].

Steinem, G., 1990. Sex, Lies, and Advertising. In: *Marketing a Consumer Culture*. s.l.:s.n.

Stern, C., 2016. *Calvin Klein removes controversial billboard saying Fetty Wap is 'making money' while a scantily-clad actress 'seduces' after furious protesters labeled the campaign 'sexist'*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3502932/Calvin-Klein-removes-controversial-billboard-saying-Fetty-Wap-making-money-scantily-clad-actress-seduces-furious-protesters-labeled-campaign-sexist.html>

[Accessed 2 July 2017].

Sulik, G. A., 2012. *Do Sexy Breast Cancer Campaigns Demean Women?*. [Online]
Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/pink-ribbon-blues/201211/do-sexy-breast-cancer-campaigns-demean-women>

[Accessed 21 May 2017].

Sweeney, T., 2010. *Shock Tactics*. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.independent.ie/lifestyle/shock-tactics-26681830.html>

[Accessed 28 June 2017].

Szymanski, D. M., Moffitt, L. B. & Carr, E. R., 2011. Sexual Objectification of Women: Advances to Theory and Research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 1(39), pp. 6-38.

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2017. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ireland*, s.l.: United Nations.

Wallach Scott, J., 1986. Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis. *American Historical Review*, pp. 152-180.

Wallis, C., 1989. Onward Women!. *Time Magazine*, pp. 80-89.

Withnall, A., 2013. 'Sexist' Skoda advert comes under fire in Ireland. [Online]

Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sexist-skoda-advert-comes-under-fire-in-ireland-8901646.html>

[Accessed 1 July 2017].

Zhou, N. & Chen, M. Y. T., 1997. A Content Analysis of Men and Women in Canadian Consumer Magazine Advertising: Today's Portrayal, Yesterday's Image?. *Journal of Business Ethics*, April, pp. 485-495.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Advertisements used

- Figure 1. *Dunnes Stores*
- Figure 2. *Penneys*
- Figure 3. *The National Dairy Council*
- Figure 4. *Mr. Clean*
- Figure 5. *Lynx*
- Figure 6. *American Apparel*
- Figure 7. *Tom Ford*
- Figure 8. *Dolce & Gabbana*
- Figure 9. *PETA*
- Figure 10. *PETA*
- Figure 11. *PETA*
- Figure 12. *Breast Cancer Awareness*
- Figure 13. *CoppaFeel!*
- Figure 14. *Febreze*
- Figure 15. *Diet Coke*
- Figure 16. *Old Spice*
- Figure 17. *Gap*
- Figure 18. *Lynx*
- Figure 19. *Lynx*
- Figure 20. *Old Spice*
- Figure 21. *Suit Supply*
- Figure 22. *Tom Ford*
- Figure 23. *Trilogy*
- Figure 24. *Sean John*
- Figure 25. *Vera Bradley*
- Figure 26. *American Apparel*
- Figure 27. *Benefit*
- Figure 28. *Veet*

- Figure 29. *Calvin Klein*
- Figure 30. *Diet Coke*
- Figure 31. *Mercedes Benz*
- Figure 32. *Belvedere Vodka*
- Figure 33. *Sisley*
- Figure 34. *Benefit*
- Figure 35. *Benefit*
- Figure 36. *Diesel*
- Figure 37. *Alexander Wang*
- Figure 38. *Skoda*
- Figure 39. *Skoda*
- Figure 40. *Benefit*
- Figure 41. *Arrid*
- Figure 42. *Calvin Klein*
- Figure 43. *Penneys*
- Figure 44. *Sprite*
- Figure 45. *Denny's*
- Figure 46. *BMW*
- Figure 47. *Honda*
- Figure 48. *Victoria's Secret*
- Figure 49. *Dear Kate*

Appendix 2: Graphs

- Chart 1. Types of Sexism Present
- Chart 2. Target Audience
- Chart 3. Examples of women being treated as the product being sold/ product being personified as a woman
- Chart 4. Removed/ Banned Adverts
- Chart 5. Brands' reaction to advert being removed/ banned

Appendix 3: Focus Group Information Sheet

Information Sheet

Title of Research Study:

“How are women portrayed in modern print and online advertisements?”

Researcher: **Hazel Gordon**

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear interviewee,

You are invited to take part in a research study to examine how women are portrayed in modern print and online advertisements, focusing particularly on Irish advertisements. I would like to invite you to be a part of a focus group discussing this topic. This research is part of a Master’s Dissertation in Journalism and Public Relations for Griffith College, Dublin.

Before you decide whether to take part in the study it is important that you understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

The purpose of the research study is to examine your thoughts and opinions regarding modern advertisements to see if they reflect society accurately. You have been selected at random to share your thoughts on the chosen topic to keep the results as free from bias as possible. Prior or extensive knowledge of the subject is not required to take part in the study, as the answers to the questions should be opinion based.

If you choose to take in the focus group, it will last approximately one hour and will be arranged at a time that suits all participants.

Information from the focus group will be used to assess the portrayal of women in modern adverts. You are free to leave the discussion at any time without giving a reason.

The results will be recorded and transcribed, however all participants will be anonymous when referenced in the research paper

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Gordon

083 134 6743

hazelgordon11@outlook.com

Appendix 4: Focus Group Consent Form

Consent Form

Researcher: Hazel Gordon

- The aim of this study is to examine the portrayal of women in modern advertisements. It will focus on Irish print and online ads.
- You will be asked 5 questions about this topic as part of a focus group. The discussion will last no longer than one hour.
- This research will be of benefit as it will provide me with the opinions of random participants about modern advertisements that are very much incorporated into everyday life. Prior or extensive knowledge of the subject is not required to take part in the study, as the answers to the questions should be opinion based.
- All information will be anonymised with the key kept in a password protected computer.
- Personal participant information will not be used for any reason and participants will not be identifiable in any published material.
- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
 - Hazel Gordon – 083 134 6743 – hazelgordon11@outlook.com (researcher)
 - Blathnaid Nolan – blathnaid365@gmail.com (research supervisor)
- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature _____

Researcher Signature _____

Appendix 5: Transcription of Focus Group

Researcher: Hazel Gordon

Date: 15th July 2017

No. of participants: 6

Person	Discussion
Hazel	<p>Hi, everyone. Thank you all for agreeing to participate in this study, I really appreciate your help. I'm Hazel, and I am conducting this research for my dissertation. I want you all to remember that this is about your opinion, and gathering your opinions is the reason we are all here. Just to remind you all as well, as this is a recorded discussion, it will be transcribed and feature as an appendix in the final paper, but everyone will remain anonymous, you will only be referred to by a number. No personal information will be shared with anyone. Now, if you're all ready, let's get started.</p> <p>Before I ask you any questions, I'm going to pass around some adverts for you to look at. I'll keep them displayed on the projector as well. There are 6 ads here, 3 from the last ten years, and 3 from the 1960s. I'd like you to examine</p>

	<p>the ads for a couple of minutes and consider the old and new adverts are similar or different to one another.</p>
Hazel	<p>Okay so, first question; do you think that advertisements are insensitive to body image and self-esteem? Why, or why not? Shall we go around the room?</p>
Participant 1	<p>I think so, yes. Especially to women.</p> <p>There is a body ideal the ads seem to highlight, the models and actors they use often have the perfect body type.</p> <p>They promote this perfect female body and obviously it's ridiculous to think that we can all have the same figure.</p>
Participant 2	<p>I agree with you completely that it's ridiculous, but do you not think that that is what the aim of the ad is? The point of advertising is to try and find a market for their product and convince this market that they need it. It should be expected then that cosmetic brands' advertising will feature beautiful women to make their product look good. It is unfortunate but affective for them that the insecurities of the audience lead them to being customers to the product.</p>

Participant 4	I agree with both of those answers, but also, it's not just women who are victims of this. Insecurities are used to manipulate men into thinking they need a product to feel confident.
Participant 6	Brands use holidays such as Christmas and summer to launch campaigns to urge people to use their product to lose weight. You can see it with products that are aimed specifically at women such as <i>Danone</i> yoghurts and <i>Special K</i> cereal - but it is done in a condescending and 'fat-shaming' way that I think would harm someone with low self-esteem.
Participant 5	I never really noticed this about ads but I would agree after looking at the ads you showed us. I'm surprised that any of these were allowed to be published.
Participant 3	Yes, I'm the same, I hadn't really noticed or considered it until I saw those adverts, but I agree they are insensitive.
Participant 6	Yeah, the ads up there do show a lot, don't they? The ones for <i>Benefit</i> (figure 40) and <i>Penneys</i> (figure 43) are both school themed, and this is showing that the pressure to look good begins at an early age.
Participant 1	Those two are very similar.

Participant 5	It's mad how many years are between the two and how similar they are, it's sending a very bad message to school girls.
Participant 2	It's one of those ads that makes women look stupid and vain.
All participants agree, by nodding their head, and no debate is raised	
Hazel	Next question; Do you think that advertisements over sexualise women or do you think that it is a harmless sales technique?
Participant 4	I think that it is very harmful, women are reduced to one thing – their sexual appeal.
Participant 6	These ads can be so easily seen by a child, which is sad. In modern ads, I've even seen children being sexualised, in adverts for products such as underwear. This is how ads are linked to causing poor body image and self-esteem.
Participant 1	There are aspects of the media such as television programmes are censored and give warnings about being unsuitable for certain age groups, but adverts that are shown on billboards, and on public transport for example are uncensored and children of all ages are exposed to inappropriate material.

	<p>Young men are the most concerning, after exposure to offensive advertisements, impressionable males may think that it is acceptable to treat women as sexual objects, or as inferior to themselves.</p>
Participant 4	<p>That <i>BMW</i> (figure 46) is extremely offensive. It strips away all but one of the woman's qualities – her sexual appeal.</p>
Participant 5	<p>I am very shocked at that advert. It shouldn't have been allowed go to print.</p>
Participant 2	<p>That <i>BMW</i> ad is an example of women being used to sell things to men. But sexualised images of women are used to sell things to women as well. I think it is to do with the man finding the model desirable, and the woman being envious of her. [the model]</p>
Hazel	<p>Do you think that advertisements treat men and women equally? In what way are consumer goods and services marketed to men in comparison to how they are marketed to women?</p>
Participant 2	<p>Men are shown that they should be strong and women should be beautiful and dependent on a man. I think it's a dated concept.</p>

Participant 3	Women seemed to be used to sell things to men, they're not equal at all.
Participant 4	I don't think they're equal either, but I do still believe men are victims of sexism in advertising. Brands like <i>Diet Coke</i> have had ads exploiting men.
Participant 1	<p>The <i>Diet Coke</i> ad is a good example of how objectification affects males.</p> <p>I don't believe that men and women are treated equally though. I think men's products are marketed for men but women's products are marketed to benefit men. The <i>Arrid</i> (figure 41) ad is an example of this. It's an ad for women's deodorant but it's marketed as if women wear deodorant for the benefit of men.</p>
Participant 4	As well as the advertisers who release these ads, the men they are aimed at are getting blamed when women are sexualised for the sake of making a sale, but men find this offensive too because men are also objectified.
Participant 5	I think men and women are treated equally now, compared to the way it used to be. There aren't as many ads now showing just women in the kitchen. This wasn't always the way.

<p>Participant 6</p>	<p>Well, it is more common for women to be objectified, but the perfect body issue is applied to men as well. Overall though no. Boys are seen as academic and girls are only concerned with looks.</p>
<p>Hazel</p>	<p>Do you think that the advertising industry is failing to keep up with a society that is progressing past negative attitudes towards women, or do you think that advertising accurately reflects traditional Irish values?</p>
<p>Participant 5</p>	<p>I don't think any of these ads (figures 40-47) are highlighting traditional Irish values.</p>
<p>Participant 4</p>	<p>Not necessarily true for either, modern advertisements are not reflecting traditional Irish values. I think a lot of the sexist ads are unintentional and meant to be funny, such as making fun of old Ireland, or 'lad banter' like the <i>Sprite</i> (figure 44) ad.</p>
<p>Participant 6</p>	<p>That may be true, but I think that it is totally unacceptable. Society hasn't surpassed misogyny, there are certain attitudes that exist that are very demeaning to women, such as the idea of placing blame on a rape victim, for example, by questioning her on what</p>

	<p>she was wearing, what she said, or if she was drunk. Having said this, society has still progressed further than advertising has in how women are treated.</p>
<p>Participant 1</p>	<p>I totally agree. Also, did you ever notice that female politicians are often asked about, or it will be mentioned if they are married, how many children they have, or what they are wearing. Couples that are in the public eye are also often referred to as the wife of, or the girlfriend of – their own career is seen as inferior to their relationship status.</p>
<p>Participant 3</p>	<p>I think all of the controversies that these ads cause proves that society doesn't find them acceptable. Some you can tell were meant to be a joke, like the one for <i>Sprite</i> (figure 44). Others take it too far.</p>
<p>Hazel</p>	<p>What has changed since the 1960s in regard to how women are represented in advertising?</p>
<p>Participant 5</p>	<p>The image of the Irish housewife, who stays at home to look after her children, husband and the housework has seemed to disappear – because people find it offensive; but I think that the way women are seen in ads now is much</p>

	more offensive because they are animalistic and unnatural
Participant 3	Yes, women would always have been seen as homemakers. Ireland was not used to sexualised imagery during that time.
Participant 1	Today the household ads aren't always showing just a woman.
Participant 6	I would have expected more changes until I saw the ads (figure 40-47). I'm surprised at how similar some of the concepts in these ads are. I can see similarities between <i>Penneys</i> (figure 43) and <i>Benefit</i> (figure 40), and between <i>Arrid</i> (figure 41) and <i>Calvin Klein</i> (figure 42).
Participant 4	Not a lot has changed, I feel like sexism is a lot subtler and some try to pass it off as art. But in the 60s, I can imagine from these ads that it would be straight out said that for example, 'women belong in the kitchen.' The <i>Denney's</i> (figure 45) does this.
Hazel	<p>Okay, that's all of the questions. I've written down some of the key findings, I'll just read them out to conclude the discussion;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of women has changed in advertising, from primarily

	<p>being cast as a homemaker, to being used as a sexual object.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This role has a damaging effect, with the group agreeing it can cause self-esteem issues, especially amongst young people. • These issues also affect men as they are too objectified, but not to the same extent as women. • Issues of self-esteem are unfortunate, but also mean that the advertisement is successful, depending on the product. These consumers may see the product being advertised as the solution to their issues. • Controversial advertisements are proof that they are not affective or a suitable mirror of people's current attitudes. <p>Thank you again to everyone for your participation, it is greatly appreciated.</p>
	<p>Tape ends.</p>

