

# Advertising content as a socialization agent: potential reinforcement of gender stereotypes

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## Abstract

*The need for investigation of gender images presented by the media has been highlighted by such international organisations as the United Nations and the Council of the European Union. As agents of socialization, advertising and the media generally can play a significant role in changing social attitudes, by reflecting a diversity of potential functions of men and women, varied roles in society, and a more gender-balanced distribution of responsibilities in all areas. This article is an exploratory study of the links between the content of magazine and television advertising in Spain and the process of social change. The main results obtained show that gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles are still present in advertising, especially on television, thus justifying the concerns expressed by the above mentioned organisations.*

**Keywords:** Socialization, gender role, stereotypicals, sexism, content analysis

**JEL Code:** M31, M37.

Sections of this article have been previously presented and discussed, as set out below. The present article incorporates the contributions made over the course of these discussions.

ROYO, M., CAPLLIURE, E.M. AND MIQUEL, M.J. (2001): "Men in Printing advertising in the 1990s". *30<sup>th</sup> EMAC Conference*, Bergen (Norway), 8-11 May. CD-ROM.

ROYO, M., CAPLLIURE, E.M. AND MIQUEL, M.J. (2001): "Men vs. Women's role in print advertising in the 1990's". *AM 2001*, Cardiff (UK), 2-4 July.

ROYO, M., MIQUEL, M.J. AND CAPLLIURE, E.M. (2003): "Género y sexismo: 25 años de revisión". *Tendencias para el futuro: claves para entender cambios en la sociedad y en el consumidor*. 107 Seminario AEDEMO, 27-28 November. Madrid.

## 1. Introduction: Reasons for the study

Determining the factors which influence consumer attitudes and purchasing choices is undoubtedly a crucial element of any marketing strategy. The context in which any organisation operates is increasingly variable and complex. Therefore, it is important to know not only how individuals behave but also how they learn and adopt their behaviour, so that companies can act accordingly.

Many studies have analysed how individual consumers acquire their distinctive types of behaviour and consumption patterns (for example, Keillor et al. 1996, Moschis and Churchill, 1978). According to Social Learning Theory, individuals learn and adopt their attitudes on the basis of past experience. In so far as this experience need not be the direct experience of the individual but instead may have been observed either directly or indirectly, the media wield a powerful social influence for the learning and modelling of individual behaviours, values, attitudes and skills (Bandura, 1977).

Many media professionals systematically dismiss the idea that their institutions and products have such power, pointing to a lack of scientific proof of links between media content and social behaviour patterns; nevertheless, the many claims as to their power, often in research papers, gain credibility in the light of measures taken to control the media's effect and in measures taken by the media themselves (Commission of European Communities, 1988).

If we accept the potential power of the media in the individual's socialization process, then we cannot discard the probable influence of advertising content as part of the same process, since it is widespread throughout the mass media. Advertising is accused of promoting materialism, manipulating consumers into buying unnecessary goods and perpetuating stereotypes (Pollay, 1986); opinions on the value of its contribution tend to be negative (Belch and Belch, 2001).

This article sets out to determine to what point television and magazine advertisements reflect the same image of society in terms of their representation of men and women. As pointed out by Pichardo (2002), the image of men and women provided by the media, is not only a matter of a visual snapshot, but also includes such details as how information is provided about men and women, how space is distributed between the genders, and the representation of their social position.

Bearing in mind that most people spend much more time watching television than reading magazines (89.9% versus 51.4% according to AIMC 2003 data), that the respective audience types differ widely, and that we have assumed advertising to have an influence on individual socialization, then it is important to analyse the male and female stereotype presented by each of these media forms and decide which has a potentially greater influence on consumers.

## 2. Review of the literature

Ideas concerning women and men and how they should behave are determined by culturally structured factors, which vary from society to society, over time and from culture to culture. This *gender identity* has a bearing on relations between individuals, their values, preferences, attitudes and habits (García, 2002). Studies on construction of gender tell us that the process takes place in three stages: assignation of gender –at birth, the development of a gender identity –in the family setting, and acquisition of gender roles through socialization.

Socialization is defined as “the process whereby individuals acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes (including habits, beliefs, and motivations) which permit them to participate, more or less effectively, as members of a group” (Brim, 1966). Although traditionally the concept of socialization has been associated with children and their acquisition of attitudes, skills and behaviours which are appropriate for social life (Heilbrun, 1965; Mathur and Moschis, 1999), at present, the concept tends to be viewed more broadly. Today it is seen as including all the processes through which the individual acquires the various social roles that he or she plays throughout life, i.e., socialization lasts throughout the individual’s life (Brim, 1966; Rosow, 1974). The main and most systematically identifiable agents in this process are parents, peers (individuals with which the individual identifies) and the media (Moore, Raymond, Mittelstaedt and Tañer, 2002), all of which exercise varying degrees of influence in different stages of the individual’s life.

The mass media have received much attention in studies of consumer socialization (Bush and Boller, 1991; Carlson and Grossbart, 1988; Chandler and Heinzerling, 1999; Fox et al., 1988; John, 1999; Martín and Bush, 2000; Moore et al. 2002; Peracchio and Luna, 1998, Rose, Bus and Kahle, 1998). For example, marketing researchers have confirmed that television watching may play a major role in the individual’s consumption patterns and habits, especially in the young (O’Guinn and Shrum, 1997; Prokhorov et al., 1993). More specifically, advertising has also been the subject of studies in this regard, especially concerning products of socially undesirable demand (e.g. Pechmann and Ratneshwar, 1994; Pechmann and Shih, 1999; Pechmann and Knight, 2002; Periacchio and Luna, 1998; Pollay et al. 1996), and has been found to wield influence in this area.

This article concerns a very specific aspect of the role of advertising in socialization: the gender roles it represents. As pointed out previously, advertising is almost systematically accused of perpetuating excessively restrictive, degrading and even false stereotypes (Pollay, 1986). Although, this discussion has been the preserve of mainly feminist interests, in the

context of the wider literature on socialization it could prove much more significant. Indeed, gender stereotypes in advertising and the media are recognised by the European Union itself as one of the factors underlying gender inequality between men and women (Advertising Observatory, 2000).

That advertising exploits stereotypes and transmits different images of social roles for men and women is understandable in that it is the logical outcome of commercial and communicative constraints. There are differences between the sexes, and perhaps this justifies in part those men and women are or should be represented differently. Advertisers are also aware that consumers employ stereotypes in their daily interpersonal interaction, so their use in advertising reduces the risk of ambiguity hindering the advertisement's decoding by the audience (Buttle, 1989).

However, only a minute proportion of the differences between the genders can be explained by purely biological factors (Osborne, 2001). In this context, the socialization literature points to the concept of identification of gender roles as one of the key, fundamental aspects explaining behavioural differences between the sexes (Putrevu, 2001). According to this school of thought, the individual, as a child, identifies with a given gender (usually corresponding to his or her own), and then seeks to validate this initial identification, bringing his or her personal attributes into line with what is perceived as the standard gender behavioural pattern, motivations and feelings, a process which undergoes confirmation or modification at later stages of life. The acquisition, reinforcement and/or modification of these roles may occur through interaction with other individuals or through direct or indirect observation of others (Zigler and Child, 1969). It is here that the media, and consequently advertising, becomes a social element of influence confirming the roles which the individual has acquired over the course of time and which are seen as appropriate to his or her gender.

It was common practice in advertising until recently to depict women as unemployed or employed in traditional women's roles, mothers and

spouses for example, dependent on others and whose place was firmly in the home; a decorative presence enhancing the product in question, and a sexual object (e.g. Gilly, 1988; Pingree, Hawkins, Butler and Paisley, 1976; Courtney and Whipple, 1983). The male on the other hand, has traditionally been presented in independent roles (either worker or celebrity), as an intelligent individual, capable of deciding on important issues and mainly in work-related settings (e.g. Courtney and Whipple, 1974; McArthur and Resko, 1975). In addition, this attribution of roles in advertising is probably what underlies the association of certain products with one gender more than another (Ferguson, Kreshel and Tinkanm, 1990).

However, today's social patterns and structures are evolving and gender roles are less clearly separated: the increasingly significant presence of women in the workplace, lower birth rates, greater numbers of single adults living independently, increasing numbers of couples opting to live together but not get married and increased divorce rates, are some of the trends which have led to a blurring of the traditional gender roles in our society. This upheaval in gender identity, so typical of contemporary society, is characterised by a loss of traditional defining parameters. These have given way to a more permeable gender identity, in which behavioural norms are no longer exclusively attributable to one gender only (García, 2002).

Advertising's power to represent this modification of gender roles has been studied in Spain, although much less so and later than countries such as Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, France and the UK. In addition, published work has mainly focused on "women and the media".

### **3. Research questions**

A review of the literature suggests that the gender identification process is linked to individual socialization process. The media are among the factors contributing to socialization and, consequently, so too advertising messages. Together they contribute to define appropriate behaviour for

men and women (Moschis, 1985; Klassen, Jasper and Schwartz, 1993), not only in terms of themselves, but also in terms of relations with others. We are currently in a phase of continuous social change, part of which involves a change in traditional gender images. Faced with these phenomena, the issues which this paper sets out to explore are as follows:

RQ1.- As a potential socialization agent, (a) what are the actor-linked characteristics of advertising content? and (b) are there differences between actor-linked characteristics in advertising in different mass media?

RQ2.- Given that the media are different, in terms of presentation (written media, radio and television) and audience and coverage, (a) are there differences in the way women and men are represented within a single type of media? and (b) are there differences across different mass media?

To address these questions, this paper will focus exclusively on two types of media: television and magazines. These were chosen, firstly, since both are visual media, thus favouring message communication and clarity with regard to representation of gender roles; secondly, since they are the media with the highest audiences ratings (89.9% for TV and 51.4% for magazines – AIMC, 2003); and thirdly, because major sums of money are spent on advertising in both (around 5,0231# million Euro for TV and 561 million Euro for magazines). All these factors mean that these are two of the media forms which most continuously interact with the individual and are therefore those with the greatest potential influence on socialization.

#### **4. Methodology**

The research methodology employed was content analysis. As a method, content analysis allows an objective, quantitative and systematic measure of advertising content to make inferences to advertising social contexts (see Berelson, 1952; Holsti, 1969; Kassarian, 1977; Krippendorff, 1980).

(1) The main studies establishing the basis for such research are those by Sexton and Haberman (1974), McArthur and Resko (1975), Manstead and McCulloch (1981), Furnham and Schofseld (1986) and Ferguson, Kreshel and Tinkham (1990), all of which are invariably referred to in articles in the field.

(2) For the measure of sexism, the scale employed was that developed by Pingree, Hawkins, Butler and Paisley (1976), which comprises five levels: Level I: degradation or disdain; sexual object; without any capacity to make decisions; Level II: traditional roles for men and women, i.e. in the case of women: "woman's place is in the home or in womanly occupations"; Level III: traditional and non traditional roles dominated, however, by the traditional, i.e. in case of women: "woman may be a professional, but first place is home";

The research variables were selected from a review of the relevant literature<sup>1</sup> on the basis that they provided a description of the representation of men and women in advertising. These variables were: the category of product being advertised, scene location, role, whether the situation in which the actor is presented was more or less traditional, actor credibility (whether he or she is construed as a product user), physical appearance of actor, representation of relationships between main character and other characters in the advertisement, representation of product benefits, and finally, level of sexism.<sup>2</sup>

Given the difficulty of selecting a random sample of advertisements, in the case of television it was decided to analyse a limited population (see Sepstrup, 1985) comprising all the prime-time advertisements broadcast, Monday to Sunday, on the three largest TV channels (in terms of advertising revenue and audience): TVE1, Antena 3 and Tele5, over the course of three consecutive weeks in 1999. The outcome was 370 different advertisements, of which 73 did not use on-screen actors. The final total studied therefore numbered 297 ads involving a total of 392 main characters.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of the magazines, the six highest-selling magazines during the same period, according to data from the "*Estudio General de Medios*" (Media General Report), were selected. The magazines were classified in terms of their content: two were addressed to a male target (*Interviu* and *Man*), two to a female target (*Hola* and *Mi Casa*) and two were more general in target audience (*Muy Interesante* and *Tiempo*). One of each pair was a weekly magazine, the other monthly. In the case of the weekly magazines, the months of January, April, July and October were chosen, for the monthlies, the January, May and September editions. Twenty advertisements were chosen at random from each issue, all taking up at least half a full page. The outcome was a total of 391 advertisements, in 216 of which no characters were depicted; in the remaining 175 there was a total of 210 main characters.

In order to ensure objectivity, the following procedures were applied, based on the work by Kolbe and Burnett (1991) and the research team cri-



teria: coder and judge training for content analysis and categories; pretesting of the analysis categories; ensuring coder and judge independence; using coders and judges of different genders.

To ensure reliability, the judges analysed 15% of the advertisements, chosen at random. It was decided to use Krippendorff's alpha for nominal data, an index that accounts for agreement by chance (Krippendorff, 1980; Kang, Kava, Laskey and Seaton, 1993). The results show (see Table 1) that the index returned values of above 0.8, with the exception of the "level of sexism of magazines" category, which was 0.69. The high level of agreement indicates that results and categories were reliable.

**Table 1. Inter-coder agreement indices**

Analysis categories	TV	Magazines
Role represented	0.85	0.87
Level of sexism	0.84	0.69
Social relation	0.90	0.81

## 5. Results

The results obtained after advertisement analysis, for both television and radio advertisements, are set out in Table 2. The Table shows the percentage for each category in each of the nine variables being studied (the most noteworthy results being highlighted). Table 3 sets out the chi square value for the total sample for each medium, along with the values obtained on comparing (1) advertisements in which the main character is a woman in each of the media (TV and magazine), (2) the advertisements in which the main character is a man in each of the media and (3) how men and women are represented in each medium, in order to determine whether there are significant differences between compared values.

Level IV: "women and men must be equals" (multiple roles); Level V: "Women and men as individuals" (not judged by gender). The original scale was adapted to the cultural context, avoiding literal interpretations, as recommended by Emakunde (1997) and Juaristi (1998). (3) The previous research projects recommend analysing a maximum of two characters per advertisement, of differing gender if possible.

Table 2. Summary of percentage frequencies by variables analysed and media

	Media	Medium total sample*		Woman		Man	
	Total (n=602)	TV (n=392)	Magazines (n=210)	TV (n=213)	Magazines (n=102)	TV (n=179)	Magazines (n=108)
<b>Product category</b>							
Food	13.1	18.9	2.4	18.3	2.9	19.6	1.9
Alcoholic drinks	7.7	4.3	13.9	4.7	16.7	3.9	11.1
Soft drinks	2.5	3.1	1.4	2.8	2.0	3.4	0.9
Home and clothes care	6.6	9.9	0.5	13.6	1.0	5.6	0.0
Cigarettes	3.0	0.0	8.6	0.0	6.9	0.0	11.1
Personal care	7.0	9.4	2.4	13.1	2.0	5.0	2.8
Perfumes	7.2	2.6	15.8	3.8	16.7	1.1	14.8
Clothing and footwear	9.2	3.6	19.6	3.3	14.7	3.9	24.1
Accessories	1.3	0.0	3.8	0.0	2.0	0	5.6
Transport	7.0	8.4	4.3	5.6	2.9	11.7	5.6
Arts and leisure	4.0	3.1	5.7	2.8	4.9	3.4	6.5
Organisations	14.6	18.6	7.2	15.5	11.8	22.3	2.8
Telecommunications	4.7	6.4	1.4	3.3	2.0	10.1	0.9
Others	12.1	11.7	12.9	13.1	13.7	10.1	12.0
<b>Location</b>							
Home	25.4	31.9	13.3	39.4	15.5	22.9	11.1
Outdoors	20.6	18.9	23.8	16.9	27.2	21.2	20.4
Work	12.6	16.6	5.2	10.8	3.9	23.5	6.5
Establishments	10.1	11.7	7.1	10.8	5.8	12.8	8.3
Fictitious settings	5.3	5.6	4.8	5.6	4.9	5.6	4.6
Others	25.9	15.3	45.7	16.4	42.7	14.0	49.1
<b>Role</b>							
Husband/wife	8.1	9.4	5.7	8.0	5.8	11.2	5.6

Table 2. (Continuation)

	Media	Medium total sample*		Woman		Man	
	Total (n=602)	TV (n=392)	Magazines (n=210)	TV (n=213)	Magazines (n=102)	TV (n=179)	Magazines (n=108)
Father/mother	8.3	11.5	2.4	13.1	2.9	9.5	1.9
House-husband/wife	6.8	10.2	0.5	15.0	1.0	4.5	0.0
Employee	5.6	7.4	2.4	4.7	2.9	10.6	1.9
Professional	15.8	14.3	18.6	11.3	15.5	17.9	21.3
Celebrity	4.5	5.1	3.3	4.2	1.9	6.1	4.6
Interviewer	4.3	5.9	1.4	4.7	1.9	7.3	0.9
Boyfriend/girlfriend	8.6	7.9	10.0	7.5	10.7	8.4	9.3
Others	37.9	28.3	55.7	31.5	57.3	24.6	54.6
<b>Situation</b>							
Traditional	36.6	40.8	28.7	41.3	27.2	40.2	29.9
Non-traditional	22.8	25.5	17.7	27.7	15.5	22.9	19.6
Both	2.7	0.8	6.2	0.9	11.7	0.6	0.9
Not specified	37.9	32.9	47.4	30	57.3	36.3	49.5
<b>Credibility</b>							
User	55.6	62.2	43.3	70.0	40.8	53.1	45.4
Decorative	22.9	11.0	45.2	9.9	47.6	12.3	43.5
Non-user	21.4	26.8	11.4	20.2	11.7	34.6	11.1
<b>Appearance</b>							
Seductive	6.8	5.9	8.6	8.9	14.6	2.2	2.8
Other	93.2	94.1	91.4	91.1	85.4	97.8	97.2
<b>Relation with other actors</b>							
Family	20.6	26.3	10.0	26.8	12.6	25.7	7.4
Social	23.8	22.4	26.2	21.6	28.2	23.5	24.1
Business	4.8	7.1	0.5	6.1	0.0	8.4	0.9

Table 2. (Continuation)

	Media	Medium total sample*		Woman		Man	
	Total (n=602)	TV (n=392)	Magazines (n=210)	TV (n=213)	Magazines (n=102)	TV (n=179)	Magazines (n=108)
Impersonal	18.8	23.0	11	18.8	9.7	27.9	12.0
There are no others	32.1	21.2	52.4	26.8	49.5	14.5	55.6
<b>Product benefits or type of reward promised</b>							
Approval of opposite sex	0.7	1.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	0.6	0.0
Approval from family	1.2	1.8	0.0	2.3	0.0	1.1	0.0
Self-benefit	20.3	24.5	12.4	33.8	13.6	13.4	11.1
Practical	19.8	25.3	9.5	24.9	11.7	25.7	7.4
Social approval	1.8	2	1.4	2.3	1.0	1.7	1.9
Approval at work	2.0	1.5	2.9	1.9	4.9	1.1	0.9
Others	37.2	21.4	66.7	17.8	58.3	25.7	75
None	17.1	22.4	7.1	15.5	10.7	30.7	3.7
<b>Sexism</b>							
Level 1	4.8	7.4	0.0	11.7	0.0	2.2	0.0
Level 2	39.0	45.9	26.2	38.5	31.1	54.7	21.5
Level 3	2.3	3.3	0.5	2.8	1.0	3.9	0.0
Level 4	50.3	38.3	72.9	39.0	67.0	37.4	78.5
Level 5	3.5	5.1	0.5	8.0	1.0	1.7	0.0

Table 3. Intra-mass media and inter-mass media chi squares per variable

	Total	Intra-media		Inter-media	
	TV vs. MAG.	W / M MAG	W / M TV.	W TV vs. MAG	M TV vs. MAG
Product category	219.854 gl. 14*	15.459 gl. 13 ns.	30.833 gl. 12*	94.013 gl.14*	134.052 gl.14*
Setting	85.95 gl. 5*	3.477 gl. 5 ns	19.446 gl. 5*	41.183 gl. 5*	48.374 gl. 5*
Role	77.633 gl. 8*	3.552 gl. 8 ns.	23.888 gl. 8*	37.372 gl. 8*	43.429 gl. 8*
Situation	31.854 gl. 3*	10.283 gl. 3*	2.249 gl. 3 ns.	30.886 gl. 3*	5.264 gl. 3*
Credibility	93.891 gl. 2*	0.343 gl. 2 ns.	12.558 gl. 2*	57.263 gl. 2*	42.577 gl. 2*
Appearance	1.575 gl. 1 ns.	10.136 gl. 1*	7.871 gl.1*	2.302 gl. 1 ns.	0.084 gl. 1 ns.
Rel. between characters	83.050 gl. 4*	3.043 gl. 4 ns.	11.325 gl.4*	27.938 gl.4*	64.298 gl. 4*
Rewards	128.326 gl. 7*	11.139 gl. 5*	31.497 gl. 7*	60.767 gl. 7*	75.032 gl. 7*
Sexism	74.810 gl. 4*	4.896 gl. 3 ns.	25.455 gl.4*	31.554 gl. 4*	47.272 gl. 4*

RQ1a and RQ1b aimed to describe the advertising content which is most closely associated with the people appearing in the advertisement and which, therefore, serves as a component of audience socialization, as gender identification mechanisms.

In general, the most frequently advertised products are those of organisations, food, and, clothing and footwear categories, in this order. The Chi-square value enables us to see that certain product advertisers have preferences for one type of media over the other: for example, food and organisation advertisers prefer television, whereas clothing and footwear, perfume and alcoholic<sup>4</sup> drink advertisers opt more for magazines.

In general, the locations shown in advertisements tend to either be the home of the actors (25.4%) or outdoors (20.6%). This pattern is replicated in television advertisements, however in magazine advertisements, the setting can only be determined in 54.3% of the total, outdoor scenes pre-

(4) The Spanish General Law on Advertising prohibits advertising alcoholic drinks of more than 20 proof alcohol on television.

dominating (23.8%). Therefore, as shown by the Chi-square statistic, there are significant differences between both media in this respect.

The predominant role employed by advertisers in the sample is that of professional. The roles played by the actors differ according to medium. Despite the fact that in both television and magazine advertising the predominant role is that of professional, the frequency distribution is significantly different. In fact in television there is a higher proportion of roles related to the family setting (28% of the total) than in the magazines (18%).

In general, the advertisements present traditional situations. The significant differences encountered between television and magazines are due to the fact that in the printed medium it is more difficult to specify the situation than on television, where the «unspecified» option was significantly less frequent.

Credibility was measured in terms of the relationship between the character and the product being advertised, that is, whether he or she was presented as a user of the product or not. Overall, the actors were presented as users of the product and services being advertised both on television and in magazines. It is noteworthy that in television advertising, in approximately 60% of cases the actors are presented as users of the product, whereas in magazines this percentage fell to almost the same level as advertisements in which the actors are merely decorative elements.

The Chi-square results indicate that there are no differences between actor appearance across both media types in general. In addition, in 32.1% of cases the main actor appears alone. In the remainder, the main actor is presented as having a social (23.8%) or family (20.6%) relation with the other actors. A cross-media comparison shows that the proportion of advertisements in which the main actor appears alone is higher in magazines.

In terms of the benefits that the advertised product is presented as offering, the most frequent claim is that it will bring personal benefits for the user and that it is of practical value. The type of benefits promised also differs across media (see Annex 1).

Finally, the degree of sexism was reported in terms of the five-level scale, from more to less sexist, proposed by Pingree et al. (1976). According to the results, advertising cannot be said to be sexist in general, given that 50.3% of cases were accorded level 4, a low level; however, a high percentage of the remaining ads (39%) were given a sexism grading of level 2.

This percentage pattern does not hold when the two media are differentiated. According to our results, television advertising is more sexist in nature than the advertising found in magazines. In television advertising, 53.3% of advertisements were categorised as being traditional or stereotyped in some way; in fact 7.4% were classed as clearly sexist (level 1) while 45.9% were stereotyped in that they presented actors in totally traditional roles (level 2). A total of 43.4% of the television advertisements were classed as non-sexist and as reflecting the developments towards gender equality (levels 4 and 5). In the magazine sample, the trend is the opposite. No truly offensive sexist advertisements were encountered (level 1), although 26.2% were classed as level 2, in that they showed actors in traditional roles. However, a total of 73.4% of the magazine ads were classed as level 4 or 5, the actors being presented as capable of playing roles that traditionally would have been assigned to the opposite gender or else as having no role.

The second issue to explore is the specific description of the gender roles and associated characteristics, both within (RQ2a) and across (RQ2b) both media.

Following the same pattern employed for the first issue above, the main results are set out below:

Regarding the association between the gender of the main actor and the category of product being organised, differences were found from one medium to the other in the case of both men and women. In television advertisements, women actors were used to advertise food products, organisations, clothing, and household and cleaning products. However, in magazines they mainly advertise perfumes, alcoholic drinks, and clothing and footwear. Male actors tend to advertise organisations, and secondly,

food products on television; in magazines they mainly appear in advertisements for clothing and footwear, and perfume products.

Although in general men and women seem to advertise the same products in magazine advertising, this does not hold true in the case of television, where the products tend to be different.

The Chi-square results for the inter-media study indicates that genders differ in terms of location. Women tend to appear at home in TV advertisements, whereas in magazines the setting is more usually outdoors. In television advertising men tend to appear at home, outdoors or at work, while in magazines they are generally pictured outdoors or at home.

Finally, comparative analysis between both genders in the same medium shows that there are no significant differences regarding location in magazine ads, whereas on television there are.

Television ads tend to be more stereotyped presenting the male actor in a professional role, while actresses are generally presented as housewives and mothers, when any role can be determined, and the differences are significant. In magazines ads, less stereotyped, the main role represented for both genders is that of professional, the differences for each gender not being statistically significant.

As mentioned previously, in the magazines, the “unspecified” option for the actor’s social situation was the most frequently employed. Given this, analysis of the social situation was repeated, eliminating the advertisements in which social situation was categorised as “unspecified”. The chi square ( $\chi^2 = 25.989 - \text{g.l.} = 2$ ) for women indicates that there are significant differences for presentation of social situation from one medium to the other: in the printed medium women were more often represented in what could be considered both traditional and non-traditional situations; in the case of men, the difference from one medium to the other was not significant ( $\chi^2 = 0.467 - \text{g.l.} = 2$ ).

Inter-gender comparison of the social situation represented within the same medium indicates that in printed medium women appear more than men in roles that could be described as both traditional and non-traditio-



nal (dual role); significant differences in this respect were not found in television advertising.

In magazine ads, the proportion of women appearing in a merely decorative role is slightly higher than that of women being portrayed as product users; however, this is also true for men. Nor were any differences found for the actor's physical appearance either within or across media in terms of gender. However, significant differences were found in terms of physical appearance within the same medium. Both in television and magazine ads, women are presented as seductive characters more often than men.

When the main actor appears with other characters, the women is represented as having a family relationship with these in 26.8% of cases, and a social relationship in 21.6% of television advertising. In the case of magazines, the percentages are reversed with the larger proportion having a social relationship with the other participants.

In the case of men, the situation differs. In television advertising men are generally presented in impersonal relations, family and social relations occupying second and third place; however in magazines men tend to be presented in a context of social relations.

Indicated product benefits or type of reward promised also differed according to gender and medium.

Finally, regarding the sexism scale, it must be said that television advertising is more sexist with regard to men than women, although it is also true that it was in television ads that we found the highest proportion of level 1 (11.7%) when the main character was a woman.

## 6. Conclusions

As accepted by such authors as Bandura (1977), Mathur and Moschis (1999), the communication media are indeed socialization agents which have a continuous effect on the individual's behaviour, skills and attitudes. As a significant component of the media, advertising also therefore wields an influence within the socialization process, and it is considered to have

unintended consequences on the values and lifestyles adopted by members of society (Pollay, 1986). Implementation of control mechanisms with a view to protecting the individual and organisations, together with limits to advertising activity, are recognition that advertising is seen as capable of wielding influence over society.

Advertising is systematically accused of creating and perpetuating social stereotypes, applying different treatment on the basis of gender, race, culture and religion, among others. Indeed, as revealed by the first issue addressed in this paper, advertisements do use social stereotypes, although less so than members of society in everyday life. Of the eight roles considered in this study, those of professional and housewife are the most frequently encountered. Our results reflect the greater presence of women in the workplace and increased liberalisation (INE, 2003), together with the gradual incorporation of men into roles in the domestic sphere. Overall, this means there is not only less subordination of women to men but also greater equality in terms of roles and responsibilities within and outside the home for both genders; in other words, both genders now serve to complement each other more than before and have been liberated to some extent from their traditional gender roles. It must not be forgotten however, that women continue to be limited to housework and caring for the family more than men. It is not surprising in Spain, given than the traditional family model in which women were responsible for all domestic tasks continues to exist. Men are also portrayed more often as professionals than women. The reality of our society is that the proportion of women in employment is much lower than men (37.59% of women, as opposed to 62.41% of men. INE, 2003). Advertising either responds to or reflects this social reality, although it could be said that this reflection is rather distorted and, in this case the distortion is to the benefit of those working for greater equality between men and women.

However, despite popular perceptions, advertising cannot be said to be generally sexist or stereotyped in nature. The majority of ads do reflect the trend toward equality being promoted by various social and governmen-

tal bodies. The small proportion of advertising found to be sexist in that it portrays men and women as objects or in degrading, demeaning or traditionally limited situations, tends to be similar for each gender.

It is also true that actor treatment according to gender varies across the two media studied (RQ2). With the exception of the situation category, in all the other categories men and women were treated differently in television advertising; whereas in magazine advertisements such differential treatment was only detected in three of the categories: situation, physical appearance and representation of product benefit.

In general, we can say that the traditional roles and stereotypes associated with women and men still apply in advertising, although more so in television. Indeed, we even see that men, like women, are treated differently from one medium to the other. Men in television advertising tend to be presented as professionals, in a working environment, mainly advertising organisations, interacting impersonally with other characters; they are also portrayed as obtaining some practical benefit from the product being advertised. In contrast, in magazines men are presented as professionals in an outdoor setting, associated with perfume, clothing and footwear products, enjoying social relations with other characters in the ad, and the product benefit is not so specifically represented. The ads in which men appear are also more traditional on television than in magazines.

When women are the main characters of television advertisements, they tend to be presented as housewives, in the home and family setting, advertising food products and the product benefit is represented as personal benefit to the actress. In magazines women are mainly presented in a similar way to men, although they are more often portrayed as combining both traditional and non-traditional roles, and in a more persuasive capacity. Despite the fact that the advertisements in which women are the main characters tend not to be traditional in either of the two media, it is of note that the percentage of sexist ads on TV is very similar to that of non-sexist ads, the percentage of non-sexist ads being much higher in the magazines.

Study of these profiles suggests that both men and women are presented differently in each of the two media considered, although in the magazines these differences are minimal. Television advertising reproduces traditional gender stereotypes to a greater extent than magazines.

Bearing in mind that individuals, especially the young, undergo more exposure to television than to magazines, it may be that television advertising is serving to some extent to slow down social change by clinging to traditional gender stereotypes. The opposite would appear to be true of magazine advertising, which seem to have taken a step forward, seeking to reflect the increasing equality between modern men and women.

These results reinforce the Council of the European Union proposal in 1991 to involve the media in the process of social change. This proposal called for advertising agencies and the media to work to foster research, creativity and the introduction of new ideas to reflect the diversity of the various functions of men and women. It also called on them to recognise the possibly negative effects arising from continued presentation of gender, physical or mental health stereotypes on society as a whole and especially on the young. Finally, the need for development and application of voluntary self-regulation measures in the media was pointed out.

In terms of future development, it is proposed that this study be carried out again in the future and in other European Union countries. This would permit comparison of results in a longitudinal and cross-cultural manner which would help to determine to what extent European Union and government directives influence media content.

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Annex 1. Characterisation of television and magazine advertisements

Total sample	WOMEN			MEN		
	Total television	Total magazines	PRODUCT CATEGORIE	Total television	Total magazines	Total magazines
1. Organisations 2. food 3. Clothes and footwear	1. food 2. organisations	1. Clothes & footwear 2. Perfume 3. Alcoholic drinks	1. Food 2. Organisations 3. Household items and care	1. Perfume 2. Alcoholic drinks 3. Clothes and footwear	1. Organisations 2. food	1. Clothes and footwear 2. Perfume
1. House 2. Outdoors	1. House 2. Outdoors	1. Others 2. Outdoors	LOCATION 1. House	1. Outdoors	1. Work 2. House	1. Outdoors 2. House
1. Professional 2. Boyfriend/girlfriend 3. Father/mother 4. Husband/wife	1. Professional 2. Father/mother 3. House-husband/wife	1. Professional 2. Others	ROLE 1. House-husband/wife 2. Father/mother 3. Professional	1. Professional 2. Boyfriend/girlfriend	1. Professional 2. Husband/wife	1. Professional 2. Others
1. Traditional	1. Traditional	1. Unspecified 2. Traditional	SITUATION 1. Traditional	1. Unspecified 2. Traditional	1. Traditional 2. Unspecified	1. Unspecified 2. Traditional
1. User	1. User	1. User/ decorative	CREDIBILITY 1. User	1. Decorative 2. User	1. User	1. User/ decorative
1. Not seductive	1. Not seductive	1. Not seductive	APPEARANCE 1. Not seductive	1. Not seductive	1. Not seductive	1. Not seductive
1. No other actors 2. Social	1. Family 2. Social	1. No other actors 2. Social	RELATION WITH OTHER ACTORS 1. Family 2. Social 3. Impersonal	1. No other actors 2. Social	1. Impersonal 2. Family 3. Social	1. No other actors 2. Social
1. Self- benefit 2. Practic	1. Practical 2. Self- benefit	1. Other benefits 2. Self- benefit	PRODUCT BENEFIT OR TYPE OF REWARD PROMISED 1. Self- benefit 2. Practical	1. Other benefits 2. Self- benefit	1. Practical 2. Self- benefit	1. Other benefits 2. Self- benefit
1. Level 4 2. Level 2	1. Level 2 2. Level 4	1. Level 4 2. Level 2	SEXISM 1. Level 4 2. Level 2	1. Level 4 2. Level 2	1. Level 2 2. Level 4	1. Level 4 2. Level 2