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The Role of Women in the Creative Process of Advertising and the Creation of Sexist Ads

by

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Abstract: The aim of this thesis is to focus on the role of women in the creative process of advertising and the creation of sexist ads. The literature reviewed in this thesis covers: the relation between advertising, capitalism and class/gender oppression; the basics of creativity, persuasion and sexism in advertising; and several researches that focus on the lack of women in creative advertising. However, since there is a lack of researches regarding the role of women in the creative process that leads to sexist advertising, this research aims to cover that specific topic by interviewing 29 creatives (female and male) from 20 different agencies in San José, Costa Rica. The research includes comparisons between the opinion of female creatives and male creatives, it also aims to include a general background of the creatives, their experiences during brainstorming sessions, the interactions of creatives with co-workers and clients, and the creatives' take on the use of traditional gender roles and women's image in advertising. The results of the research show that, while including more women in creative advertising is an important factor in eliminating the creation of sexist ads, the power of influencing positively the messages that come out of advertising agencies does not rely only in the gender of the creative, there are basic economic and social factors to consider as well.

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1. Introduction

There is a lack of gender representation in the creative advertising industry. There are few women working in the creative departments in advertising agencies, and even fewer working as creative directors. Research has been done in countries like the United States, Canada, Spain and Perú regarding this topic; it is such an important issue in the industry that there is a conference named The 3% Conference, which refers to the amount of female creative directors around the world. In Costa Rica, little has been researched regarding sexist advertising and its relation with the lack of females in creative advertising. The lack of gender representation is an important factor to consider when talking about the creation of sexist commercials; but, it is also important to consider the female creatives perspective, or role, on the process that leads to the creation of sexist ads.

Therefore, the main question answered in this research was: What is the role of women in the creative process that leads to sexist messages in advertising in San José, Costa Rica during 2016? To answer this question, it was important to understand the creative process in advertising agencies: How are sexist messages created? Who creates them? Are there women involved in the process? If there are women involved in the process, are they trying to influence the messages? Are they failing to do so? Or do they identify with patriarchy?

I have a bachelor's degree in advertising from the Universidad Latina, a private university in Costa Rica. My experience in the classroom, around 15 years ago, showed me that even though there was a higher percentage of women studying advertising, the percentage of men interested in the creative area was higher. When group work was required, women would be more willing to cover the areas of media strategy and accounts (client service), and men would feel more willing to work on the creative or production part. I also remember the lack of gender perspective in most of the courses. The course "Advertising Psychology"

explained to students, in a reflective way, a little bit about stereotyping, the usage of the female body, the psychology of colors and what was considered subliminal advertising. Another course named “Advertising Legislation” briefly explained the laws that protect the image of women and children. But, there wasn’t a holistic approach to gender in these courses, nor any discussion or critical analysis on sexism and the elements that reinforce gender stereotypes in advertising; this was particularly absent in the creative workshops given by the university. When I look back at those university years, I see myself as a student with an enormous lack of awareness regarding gender issues, but with the certainty that something in the industry was not quite right. When I graduated, I decided not to pursue a career in an advertising agency for three reasons: 1. I feared the absurd working hours of creatives, 2. I felt repelled by the egos that existed in the creative industry, and last and most importantly, 3. I didn’t want to contribute to the already out-of-control consumerism in the world.

When it comes to consumerism, advertising is key; one could say that there could not be one without the other. According to a 2015 report made by IBOPE Media (See Appendix A), the following companies are among the 50 biggest advertising investors in Costa Rica: Unilever, Colgate Palmolive, Bayer, Coca Cola, Cervecería CR, SC Johnsons, Nestle Maggi, Walmart, Procter and Gamble, Gollo and Monge. These brands own cleaning products, home appliances and alcoholic beverages, most of them advertise on national television, cable T.V. and print media, and often use traditional gender roles in their commercials. Such are the cases of Ariel and Downy, detergents from Procter and Gamble (See Appendix B); Suavitel, a laundry product from Colgate Palmolive (See Appendix C); Rinso, a laundry product from Unilever (See Appendix D) and SC Johnson’s Mr. Músculo (See Appendix E).

Other big investors in advertising are the retail stores in Costa Rica, such as Gollo and Importadora Monge. The advertising, especially in print media, is often targeted towards women. During Mother’s Day, these brands tend to focus on home appliances. An example of

this is a publicity piece published in 2013 by *Diario Extra*. The piece showed a photo of some home appliances that were on sale at the retail store *Importadora Monge*. The text that accompanied the photo explained that: mothers find life complicated and, in order to make it easier for them, their families should buy them “the complete combo”: blender, rice cooker and slow cooker (*Diario Extra*, 2013).

It is important to consider that some of the advertising for the cleaning products, mentioned above, are produced in México, Chile, Argentina and Colombia. The ads are dubbed and/or distributed to cover the Latin American market, and are often run in cable T.V. channels. This research focused mainly on campaigns that are created and produced locally, by the local creative teams of International and Costa Rican advertising agencies. This includes the advertising that is produced in Costa Rica and distributed to Central America and the Caribbean. The research has a strong focus on discussing cleaning products, home appliances and alcoholic beverages with the interviewees; this due to the fact that “women are more often presented in commercials [for these products] ... They are also more likely portrayed in the home environment, unlike men, who are shown outdoors” (Wolska, 2011).

Advertising in Costa Rica does not differ much from advertising around the world, the same sexist messages are sent every day in our national media by big corporations. Taking under consideration that the Merriam-Webster dictionary describe sexism as:

“1. prejudice or discrimination based on sex; especially, discrimination against women, 2. behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex”.

As referenced earlier, most of the advertising for cleaning products in Costa Rica are directed towards women and portray women in stereotypical situations: a woman cleaning the house, doing the laundry, cooking and taking care of her husband and children; or, alternatively, portray a sexy woman with revealing clothing, seducing the camera and the

men. Correspondingly, most of the marketing strategies directed towards men, in products like cars and alcoholic beverages, include female models to sell their products; these women are placed as objects to attract male audiences in public places. Advertising professor Tom Reichert states that “using sex in advertising has frequently, but not always, increased consumer interest and often aided in the selling products and building strong brand identities” (as cited in O’Barr, 2011), he also explains that, as long as people have the need to look attractive to others or the yearning for romance, love and intimacy, advertising will keep targeting people with products that could help them achieve these goals (Reichert, 2008).

From the perspective of gender theory, the prevalence of sexist messaging and stereotypical gender roles in advertising can be explained by the role of advertising in promoting capitalist patriarchy and increasing corporate profits. As explained by Eisenstein in 1979: “The sexual division of labor and society expresses the most basic hierarchical division in our society between masculine and feminine roles. It is the basic mechanism of control for patriarchal culture” (p. 17). Advertising often portrays an ideal society or an ideal situation, mainly using heterosexual relationships and traditional gender roles as examples of what people should aspire to. A good example is Axe’s advertising, in which a male actor sprays himself with deodorant in order to attract beautiful women. Traditional gender roles and heterosexual interactions are promoted based on the assumption that this is what society finds appropriate. Ensuring that consumers feel represented, or that their desires are being fulfilled by a product, is one of the main responsibilities of advertisers.

It is important to acknowledge that advertising, as stated by Stanton, Etzel and Walker, has the main purpose of selling something and that, in order to achieve that, the company needs to know their target audience, establish goals, set a budget and determined the general theme to be promoted (2000, p. 534). Also, it is important to keep in mind that the

main objective of the creation of that theme or message is to maintain the target audience's attention and to influence them in favor of the objectives set by the company (2000, p.535).

Advertising agencies continue reinforcing the established gender roles in order to achieved their clients' (the advertisers) interests. However, according to the newspaper *La Nación*, 62% of Costa Rican mothers have full time jobs (Ávalos, 2015). Why is it then, that the advertising directed towards women and men is still reinforcing stereotypical gender roles?

In order to understand why the messages are so outdated, the reasons why women haven't been able to change the rules of the game, and if they are even willing to do so; this research sought to analyze the creative process behind the emergence of these sexist commercials.

These companies aren't producing sexist commercials by themselves, they are hiring renown agencies to produce them; in other words, for companies to reach their target audiences, they need creative minds to help them. Creatives look deep into the target audience's interests and search for the right insights, which could help them create commercials that can capture the target's attention and build positive perceptions towards the brand. According to a research made by Vicky Salas in 2007, there are close to 100 advertising agencies in Costa Rica (p. 30), 22 of these belong to the association of communication agencies of Costa Rica: Comunidad, and among these 22 are the most well-known and more traditional ad agencies in the world: McCann, Leo Burnet, Ogilvy, JWT, TBWA, Saatchi & Saatchi, Publimark Lowe, among others. Costa Rica also has national advertising agencies, with international alliances, that compete head to head with the international agencies: Garnier BBDO and Jotabequ Grey.

According to a 2015 IBOPE Media report (See Appendix A), the following agencies (Not counting Media specialized agencies) have the biggest market share: Publimark Lowe,

Tribu DDB, Garnier BBDO, McCann Erickson, Asesores Young & R, Ogilvy, Jotabequ Grey, Química Publicidad, Leo Burnett and TBWA. Meaning, these are the agencies that handle the biggest accounts in the country. Creatives, who identify themselves as male or female, from all of these advertising agencies were interviewed for the purposes of this research.

The creative dynamic of advertising includes not only having to spend long hours in the office, dealing with the egos of clients and colleagues, but also, keeping informed on current events and having the ability to come up with innovative ideas every day. Creatives have the immense responsibility of designing the commercials and campaigns that we see every day, and these ideas come, not only from the things they have learned but, from the things they have lived, their family dynamics and the environment they grew up with. This is why it is important to give creatives the tools to recognize a constructive message from a stereotypically sexist one.

The findings of this research could help improve the college education of advertising and marketing professionals by demonstrating the need for a holistic gender approach in the advertising curricula of the different universities in Costa Rica. It could also help promote updating the bill No 5811 which regulates the use of women's image in advertising. This bill was created in 1975, and in 2013 José María Villalta, former representative of the Frente Amplio party, proposed to modify three articles of the bill, one of these changes included a monetary penalty to the companies that affect women's dignity in their advertising (INAMU).

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Chapter review

In order to frame this research into the world of advertising and the role of women in the production of particular advertising campaigns, it is essential to begin by reviewing literature that provides historical and theoretical insight into the beginnings of the advertising industry, the meaning of propaganda, and the elements of creativity and persuasion that are, in the end, the main goals of every advertising agency in the world.

It is also important to ground this research in existing literature on the use of women's images in the advertising world, the ways that women's bodies are used to sell products (targeted to both men and women), and how these bodies are used to reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypical standards of western beauty. Of particular interest to this study, is literature that shows how women characters are often typecast as femme fatale or housewife, and how this is reflected mainly in the advertising of cleaning products and alcoholic beverages.

Last, it is important to recognize and share the results of previous studies that have focused on the lack of women in the creative departments of advertising agencies, especially the lack of female creative directors. These studies often describe women's struggles in the business, and the obstacles that are necessary to overcome in order to become successful in a demanding and strenuous industry. Overall, this literature helps us to understand what it really means to be a woman in a world dominated by men and masculine perspectives.

2.2. Advertising and the creative process

Through the article "J. Walter Thompson and the Creation of the Modern Advertising Agency" by Stephen Gennaro, one could understand the historical background of today's advertising, and how it came to be what it is today. This article is relevant to the research since it explains the reasons behind creatives' and advertising agencies' behaviors, their

obligations and responsibilities with the companies and the public, but most importantly the relation between advertising and capitalism.

Gennaro explains that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the only job of the advertising worker was to sell space in media, and that it was the company itself who produced the ad (2009); the company was, at the same time, the client and the creative. Later, “by the second half of the nineteenth century mass produced goods needed costumers, advertisers worked to create markets to deal with the increase in mass-produced goods” (2009). Therefore, the quality of advertising started to gain more importance, due to the excess of goods being produced and the increased competition. That’s how consumerism in the United States began to accelerate. As Gennaro states: “The advertising industry’s growth was directly related to the growth of big business” (2009).

An important fact to consider, according to Gennaro, is that during these ongoing changes in the industry of advertising and in the economy, there was an increased focus on images and branding in advertising, and it is during the early twentieth century that brand recognition emerged (2009). Due to the amount of competition, companies started to tailor their advertising and their products “to consumers via gender, class, race, age, and other categories, such as the marketing of household appliances to housewives on the basis that the products would ‘make their lives easier’” (2009). It is extremely important to recognize that not much has changed since the early twentieth century, and that, up until today, advertising of household appliances is directed to women and not to men.

In terms of describing the active role of advertising in capitalism, Gennaro explains in his article that: “The goal of advertising in monopoly capital is to convince people to spend their money instead of saving it, to offset stagnation” (2009). Advertising does this by creating new meanings of what is fashionable, generating new desires and new needs in consumers, and by changing the level of status that costumers can reach by acquiring a

product (2009). Now more than ever, with the use of social media, advertisers can sell status and new desires expeditiously.

When it comes to status, Gennaro mentions in his article the lifestyles of the dominant class, and how these are the lifestyles that are sold to the public (2009). In advertising there is a discourse based on the aspirations of consumers, the lifestyles presented in the ads are a symbol of the ambitions that consumers have in life, and these ambitions are often related to money and, mostly, to physical appearance: “It is advertising that dictates that the legitimate lifestyle of the dominant class is ‘youthful’” (2009).

When talking about advertising and the dominant class, it is essential to recognize Edward Bernays' book *Propaganda* published in 1928. He explains that propaganda can be good or bad depending on the cause it pursues (p. 20). In this book, Bernays also highlights that “truth is mighty and it must prevail” he states that anybody who discovered a valuable truth should disseminate it (p. 22). In the case of modern advertising, the truth is related to the benefits and feelings associated to the product that is being sold. Bernays also states that there is a minority trying to influence a majority, this minority is what Gennaro calls a dominant class.

Bernays describes this powerful minority as the “intelligent minorities which need to make use of propaganda continuously and systematically” (p. 31). Bernays implies that the minorities that have the power and the capital to invest in propaganda are by consequence the most intelligent, or at least more intelligent than the majority. But, defining big transnational corporations as the “intelligent minorities” could be a dangerous thing nowadays, since they are often not the most ecologically or socially conscious. Companies are guided by profit; it would be a stretch to define these entities as “intelligent” based merely on their economic gain. Therefore, society is led by a powerful and privileged small group of people, but not necessarily by the most intelligent group of people as Bernays suggests.

In his book, Bernays also starts to define the role of a creative (copy writer/designer) in advertising agencies, in his book he calls them “the public relations counsel”, and she or he is supposed to interpret the public’s needs to companies and leaders (“intelligent minorities”) and interpreting the companies and leader’s ideas to the public in general (p. 37). In order to do this, Bernays suggests that these creatives or public relations counsels need to study the target audience’s behavior (p.48), he explains that creatives should not easily accept the reasons that the public give for their actions, but to look for those deeper “human desires” that motivate them (p. 52).

Today, the advertising industry refers to human desires as insights. John O'Shaughnessy and Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy also make a contribution regarding this topic in their book *Persuasion in Advertising* published in 2004, where they explain that “values are tied to emotions, so knowing what upsets people is a guide to their values” (p. 9), and they continue with the idea that “to live in a culture is to absorb certain perspectives, certain ways of behaving...” (p. 10). The human desires described by Bernays have a lot to do with the values and emotions described by the O'Shaughnessy, they both describe the importance of discovering what triggers the target audience to react to or act on a propaganda (advertising) message.

Bernays states that understanding human desires could lead to social control (p. 52) and O'Shaughnessy explains that “persuasion motivates people into action through influencing beliefs and desires” (p. 25). Given the insights of these essential advertising/propaganda theories, it is clear that advertising agencies use beliefs, values and desires to persuade target audiences to buy a product.

There is an important difference between persuasion and influence. Persuasion, according to O'Shaughnessy, has an intention, but influence doesn't: “People can influence the beliefs, values, wants or actions of others without making any deliberate attempt to do so”

but “persuasion deliberately aims to mould beliefs, values and actions in a direction favored by the persuader” (p. 6). Therefore, when a company pays for advertising its intention is to persuade their target audience to buy their product. If there is an intention, then it is persuasion. In order to persuade, the creative has to find the insights, the values, the emotions, that trigger the purchase intention in the public.

Bernays and Gennaro mention that there is a ruling group in charge of driving the aspirations and needs of the target audiences, and O'Shaughnessy's view on social stratification enriches this idea: “Social stratification remains as people seek status and visibility and attempt to rise above the masses” (p. 13). Everybody wants to be part of the elite, belong, but at the same time differentiate themselves from the rest, this is what advertising uses to persuade costumers to buy the products.

O'Shaughnessy also explains that the values in societies change with time, especially in westerns societies, for example: the views regarding marriage and community, but there is an important constant on these values, and those are the values related to beauty and health (p. 19). Therefore, advertising around the world is still dependent on beautiful and slim people to sell products of mass consumption. Nevertheless, there is another issue that O'Shaughnessy explains, that is very relevant to this research: “the labeling of a group of people as having something in common” (p. 34), this is especially important because in campaigns that are directed solely to men or solely to women, the division between genders is exaggerated. Men are often portrayed as the ones in power, women are only objects of desire or belong in the kitchen. The world of a man is very different from the world of a woman in advertising. This view certainly influences messages that come out as sexists and reinforce gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles.

Rajeev Batra, on his book *Advertising Management*, makes a reference regarding the segmentation of target audiences and the role of the brand manager, he explains that brand

managers seek to develop profiles for “male buyers versus female buyers” (2006, p. 191) and proceeds by enumerating the different ways in which an advertiser can divide its target audiences: age, gender, income, geographic location and usage (2006, p.193-197).

It is important to understand the responsibilities, of both agents, involved in the segmentation of target audience and the creation of sexist ads. The responsibilities might change depending on the trust and history between the client and the agency. Batra states that: “The advertiser provides the overall managerial direction and financial support” (p. 17) and “is responsible for all marketing aspects of the brand” (p. 25) while the advertising agency “makes the creative and media decisions”, but, also gives input in the marketing plans of the company and supports the client with market research (p.27).

For the purpose of this research, which uses the concept of the “sexist message”, it is important to clarify Batra’s definition of what a message is: “(It) Refers to both the content and execution of the advertisement. It is the totality of what is perceived by the receiver of the message” (p. 60). Taking this under consideration, one could establish that the content of the ad can be developed in a collaborative way between the client’s creative brief and the creative minds of advertising. According to Griffin and Morrison a “creative brief (if well written) offers a summary of important research that then kickstarts the creative process. It also articulates the big problem that advertising needs to solve for the client” (2010, p. 7).

According to Batra, although advertising is very effective at increasing brand recognition among the target audience, it is not necessarily the best way to increase sales, or at least this is not easy to measure (p. 188). Therefore, the advertising agencies and clients need to apply different marketing strategies to achieve their sales objectives. Some advertising strategies, Batra mentions, are campaigns that have elements of warmth, humor, fear and anxiety (p. 316). When it comes to using warmth in advertising, Batra explains that “a viewer might be reminded of a prior warm experience by a commercial and be stimulated

to relive it”; Mary Jane Schlinger's research demonstrate that there is an empathy factor in commercials that include affectionate couples and mother-child interactions (cited in Batra, 2006, p. 316). These kinds of messages can be found in commercials for fabric softeners and food, since they tend to be related to the caring actions of mothers and wives.

Image and message consistency in advertising is key to assure brand recognition. The commercials that, for decades, have shown housewives and mothers in advertisements for products that are genderless (meaning, there is no biological relation between the use of detergent, for example, and being a woman, at least not as there is between using tampons and being a woman), are still being produced for the sake of brand consistency. That is, if we take Batra's approach to consistency in advertising: “To obtain and retain the desired associations, transformational advertising must be consistent over time. The thrust of the campaign cannot be allowed to change frequently. It might be desirable or even necessary to be consistent for decades” (p. 305).

This kind of commercials do not seem to be the most creative of the bunch we watch every day on the internet or mass media, as they tend to tell the same story over and over again. In order to understand what makes advertising people come up with the same stories, repeatedly, one needs to understand the creative process. What really happens in the creatives minds and how do they get to the ideas that we see.

Griffin and Morrison, in their book *The Creative Process Illustrated*, state that: “we’ve convinced ourselves that we’ve seen everything before. That makes advertising a very tough business” (2010, p.3). In a way, the perception that everything has been done before is true; that is if one takes under consideration the serialized documentary by Kirby Ferguson, *Everything is a Remix*; in which Ferguson assures that everything we see, hear or experience today has been inspired by something that already exists. Ferguson also claims that the basic elements of creativity are: Copy, transform and combine (2010). It is key to acknowledge the

statements made by Griffin and Morrison and Ferguson, because one complements the other. Griffin and Morrison state that people perceive they have seen everything, and according to Ferguson this is true. Everything is a copy of something, the ideas have been transformed or combined to create a supposedly new idea.

In their book, Griffin and Morrison give the following definition to creativity: “the generation, development and transformation of ideas that are both novel and useful for solving problems” (2010, p. 6), notice that he uses the word “transformation” one of the elements mentioned by Ferguson in *Everything is a Remix*, he also highlights the utility of creativity as problem solving. This is especially important because it relates to the creative brief mentioned before, which identifies the “big problem” that the company has and that advertising can solve, which leads to Batra’s focus on the relationship that brand managers develop with advertising agencies in their search for increasing sales and brand recognition.

Another important approach to the creative process, mentioned by Griffin and Morrison, is the process of Graham Wallace, which consists of four steps: one is preparation, which refers to the search of information and resources regarding the problem; two is incubation, internalizing the problem until the mind makes subconscious connections; three is illumination, this refers to possible solutions and insights; and four is verification, the solutions are tested (p. 7). Similarly, Ferguson also proposes four steps to getting an idea: One, creating boundaries by picking a specific topic; two, consuming everything one can regarding that specific topic, doing research; three, digesting the research by grouping ideas and mapping; and four, dropping the topic, stop thinking about it until the idea comes out by itself (2016). It is important to highlight that both models recommend research and incubation, reflecting on what one has learned about the topic, and also both models talk about the subconscious, and how by accumulating data the brain is more willing to work subconsciously on a solution to the problem.

Finally, for the purpose of this research, it is vital to mention Griffin and Morrison's view on the creatives specifically. As stated before, this is a strenuous industry and this is widely known by the women who work in it. In their book, Griffin and Morrison talk about "passion", and how this is one of the main reasons why creatives survive through "periods of difficulty and frustration" (2010, p. 10) and continue "this business isn't for everyone. Most ad folks work ridiculous long hours and don't make a lot of money or get a lot of glory" (2010, p. 11). When it comes to frustration in the workplace, Griffin and Morrison highlight that it was important for a creative to be prepared to have their ideas scrutinized: loved, hated, poked at, and changed, all just to gain a client (2010, p. 21).

The conclusions made by Griffin and Morrison are demonstrated in the different researches that have been done in the topic of women in advertising. The frustration, the passion and the long hours of work are all something that men and women in advertising have in common, although there is something that keeps getting in the way of real equality at the workplace, and that is sexism.

2.3. Sexism and the portray of women

In the book *Modern Sexism*, by Nijole V. Benokraitis, sexism (sex discrimination) is described as the "unequal and harmful treatment of individuals or groups because of their gender" (1986, pp. 28-45); for the purpose of this research, it is key to clearly define this term, since it is used very often to either describe the interactions between men and women in the creative advertising industry, or the characteristics of the ads produced by the industry.

In her article, *The Choreography of Everyday Sexism*, Octavia Calder-Dawe states that it is commonly supposed that sexism is over, that it is not a real concern nowadays, and that it is this perception that allows "gender inequalities to thrive" (2015, p. 89). To complement this idea, Benokraitis explains in her book that there are three different kinds of sex

discriminations: overt, subtle and covert; and that there are three different levels of sex discrimination: personal, organizational and institutional (1986, pp. 28-45).

Benokraitis states that overt sex discrimination refers to “an unequal and harmful treatment of women that is readily apparent, visible, and observable and it could be easily documented” (1986, pp. 28-45); for example: sexual harassment or inappropriate comments of sexual content directed towards women in the office, among other violent acts.

According to Benokraitis, subtle sex discrimination is tougher to identify or notice because it comes from an internalized sexism, this refers to sexist behavior that is seen as “normal” or “acceptable” and it can be innocent or manipulative (1986, pp. 28-45); Calder-Dawe explains that “when sexism is routinely presented as harmless, its harms become difficult to see and speak of, even as they accumulate around us” (2015, p. 90). An example of this would be when someone asks a woman: how is she balancing her job with the taking care of her husband and children? Assuming that it is her responsibility alone to take care of the children and her responsibility to take care of another adult. Benokraitis explains that this kind of discrimination comes from a place where “most of us – men and women alike – feel that women are really not as good, capable, competent and intelligent as men, especially in prestigious, competitive, and traditionally male-dominated jobs” (1986, pp. 28-45). This is important to consider, due to the fact that there are very few women working in creative advertising, an area considered to be male dominated around the world.

Before moving on to the next type of sex discrimination, it is important to highlight that sexism does not only come or reside in men, as bell hooks explained in her book *Feminism is for Everybody*, there is internal sexism in women: “we had been socialized as females by patriarchal thinking to see ourselves as inferior to men, to see ourselves as always and only in competition with one another for patriarchal approval, to look upon each other with jealousy, fear and hatred” (2000, p. 14), and it is this internal sexism that lead women to,

as Benokraitis explains, “experience guilt feelings because they are not living up to traditional sex role expectations and they accept as ‘inevitable’ the fact that ‘women bear the main brunt of child care and domestic organization’ because this is ‘what a woman’s supposed to do’” (1986, pp. 28-45).

Benokraitis defines covert sex discrimination as “the unequal and harmful treatment of women that is hidden, clandestine, maliciously motivated and very difficult to document. An example given by the author is “imposing responsibilities that are impossible to meet, like giving women last minute jobs” (1986, pp. 28-45). To complement this, Benokraitis also states that: “Mothers, who are employed outside the home, experience discrimination in many areas: difficulty in locating child care, lack of flexible work schedules, limited opportunities for part-time careers and the expectation that they will assume, in addition to employment, responsibility for child care and housework” (1986, pp. 28-45). As bell hooks explained “work outside the home has been most liberating for women who are single” (2000, p. 50). This is specifically the case of women in creative advertising, as one was able to see in the first part of this literature review, a tough schedule and long hours at the office are common traits among advertising agencies, making it extremely difficult for women who are mothers to keep up with the industry’s standards.

Benokraitis, also mentions different levels of sex discrimination: Level one, individual; level two, organizational; level three, institutional.

By individual, she explains that it “occurs on a one-to-one basis. It may be direct or indirect. It may be motivated by prejudice or operate independently of prejudice” (1986, pp. 28-45). Another way of talking about the individual level is explained by Calder-Dawe. She explains that sexists’ opinions sometimes are defended by the fact that people are simply “being themselves”, it is their right to express how they feel, therefore, under the umbrella of freedom of speech, people can label complaints about sexist comments as oppression or

censorship (2015, p. 95). The individual level of discrimination can also be from one woman towards another woman and, as bell hooks explains, it could also be about ethnicity and class: “They (all white women) know that the only reason nonwhites are absent/invisible is because they are not white [...] Racism and sexism combined create harmful barriers between women” (2000, pp. 45-55).

The organizational level, as explained by Benokraitis, “occurs because of practices, rules, and policies that are different for each sex”. Benokraitis gives the example of women being addressed by their first name during introduction memos and men being referred to as Dr.; another example is women and men in a departmental store, where women are required to sell lamps and sheets, while men are required to sell furniture (1986, pp. 28-45). In the case of creative advertising, when women are forced to work on products that are only targeted to women and are not allowed to work in cars, beers or sports accounts.

Last, by institutional level, Benokraitis states that it is the “unequal behavior established and deeply internalized by participants who share expectations across family, political, economic, educational, military, religious institutions” (1986, pp. 28-45). As hooks states, females have no basis to construct a healthy sense of self, since they are always portrayed as whores or madonnas (2000, p. 85). This portrayal is clearly evident in the institution of advertising, which is obsessed with presenting these traditional and stereotypical gender roles, every day, in mass media, while affecting the perception that women have about themselves.

Sexism is evident in everyday advertising; one can see stereotypical gender roles reinforced in different television, radio or newspaper ads for all kind of products. For the purpose of this research, it is important to clarify the meaning of sexism in advertising:

“Sexism in the context of advertising refers to the assumption that women share certain characteristics with other women and men with other men by virtue of their

biological sex differences. Such essentialized characteristics are typically perceived as negative or degrading in the context of sexist representations of females and males” (O’ Barr, 2011).

As established earlier, one strategy of advertising to reach consumers is differentiating target audiences by gender, which naturally leads to the use of stereotypical roles and characteristics given to males and females.

Historically, advertising and the use of female bodies have been intertwined. In his article *Sex and Advertising*, O’Barr explains that in the nineteenth century, tobacco companies used the image of half-naked women to sell their packages of cigarettes, then in 1930, a soap company was the first company to use a totally naked woman to promote their product, showing that “advertising not merely reflects the social mores of the times, but often challenges them and sets new standards of sexual license and erotic propriety” (2011). In that same line, Ana Blloshmi explains that advertising is a “by-product of popular culture” that reinforces existing ideologies and creates new ones (2013). O’ Barr also highlights that women’s bodies and sexual innuendos are used not only to sell products, but, also to sell us a certain perception of what is sexy, what kind of body is ideal and what should love-making look like (2011).

In the idealized world of advertising, O’Barr explains that male and females have different roles, the male has a more dominant position and role and the female is often portrayed as passive (2011). In that same line, in her book *Feminist Media Studies*, Liesbet Van Zoonen states that “women have been displayed as spectacle to be looked at, subjected to the gaze of male audiences and men have been displayed as strong masculine and active, in the possession of the gaze” (1994).

This stereotypical portray of women can be found in Chilean media as well as Costa Rican media. Karen Ross explains that “the representation of a women in Chilean media

usually relates to one of two aspects: she is either a mother or a sexual object”, she also states that “the mother ideal encompasses the nurturing” part of women, which comes “naturally” and the sexual object role highlights the “normal” need of women to feel attractive (2011). In that line, a study about televised advertising, made by Ana Lucía Villareal, shows that there are repetitive female archetypes: the virgin, the lover, the mother, the muse, among others (2010, p. 140), and there are also repetitive captivities: the wife-mother, the nun, the whore, the dumb, etc. (2010. p. 141). Most of the ads analyzed by Villareal in 2010 were promoting: groceries, cars, beverages, baby products, and detergents, among others (p. 142). The captivity of “the wife-mother” was mostly present in baby products, where mothers are displayed taking care of male babies (p. 143) and men are showed enjoying the meals prepared by the wives, or tasting the food and giving approval. These representations are especially common in food advertising (p. 146).

In terms of the type of woman that advertising promotes, it is very much related to the typical western beauty standards, Ross describes western ideal beauty as: “tall, slender, light-skinned and well-dressed”, she also highlights that “women who are brown, not slim, not fashionable, or not wealthy are usually marginalized” in Chilean advertising and media (2011). On that same approach to western beauty standards, Jean Kilbourne states that “(women of color) are considered beautiful, only and so far, as they resemble the white ideal: light skin, straight hair, Caucasian features, round eyes” (2014).

Another important factor to consider in the portray of women is sexual preference; women are always portrayed in a heterosexual undertone. According to Villareal, when advertising portrays families, the discourse is focused in the monogamous heterosexual relationship between the father and the mother (2010, p. 149). Portraying gay relationships in Latin America is a sensitive topic, as it is around the world, as O’Barr states: “Advertisers are

careful about placement of such ads”, mostly because of the great opposition encountered by religious fundamentalists (2011).

Another element to consider in the portray of women in advertising is humor. Humor is one of the most valued strategies in advertising, and it is often used related to sex. A way to represent humor is often through irony; Blloshmi explains that “ironic sexism is one way in which advertisers achieve ‘credence’ as it insinuates that, while it may contain potentially offensive patriarchal ideologies, it gives the impression that both the advertising and the audiences understand the ‘ironic humor’” (2013). This type of humor allows people to laugh with no remorse, while putting women in a position of inferiority. An example of this could be the BMW print-ad named *The ultimate attraction* (see Appendix F), in which a man and a woman are portrayed in an intimate scene, where the man is on top of the woman and her face is covered with a magazine that has the picture of a BMW car in it.

According to O’Barr, humor used in advertising is often adolescent and reinforces male bragging about power and penises, it is often used from the male point of view “that is nearly always privileged” (2011). This kind of humor might be so common in advertising due to the fact that advertising is a male dominated world, a considerably large “boys club”.

2.4.It’s a man’s world

As stated before, advertising’s main goal is to persuade people to buy, to create awareness about a product, and to reinforce brand recognition. As discussed earlier, this is achieved through the use of images and creative copy and through the manipulation of emotions. Consequently, advertising also has a great influence on the social construction of gender, and in particular, women’s images (Casado, 2012, p. 105). It reinforces stereotypes and simplifies messages and images in order to make them easier to understand for the public (Casado, 2012, p. 107). Advertising helps perpetuate the differences imposed, by society, to men and women.

As stated by Casado, women keep buying products that help them look beautiful and perfect inside the house, but also, products that help them look perfect outside the house as a competitive professional (2012, p.109). Women, in the twenty-first century, keep being forced to fit into western beauty standards and stereotypical gender roles; they keep being pressured to be perfect, which makes them slaves of their work, their family and their bodies (Casado, 2012, p. 110). Much of this pressure is created by advertising, in the way that the industry portrays women, with the sole purpose of selling a product.

Several academic studies have found that there are very few women working in the creative departments of advertising agencies. Most of these articles and researches link the sexist representation of women to the fact that women's voices are not being heard during the creative process that produces the advertising messages. Casado states that an advertising that imprisons women is advertising, perhaps, created by men (2012, p. 114).

The report *Women in Advertising: 10 years on* written by Debbie Klein, shows that women, in the year 2000, remained extremely under-represented in the creative area of advertising. The report shows that only 17% of copywriters were women and "Art Directors have followed the same kind of pattern as copywriters and in 1999 showed the lowest levels ever, with women making up only 14% of the total" (Klein, 2000, p. 16). Additionally, Karen Mallia elaborates on the lack of women in creative advertising in her article *Rare birds: why so few women become ad agency creative directors*:

"Statistics compiled recently using data from the Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies tallied 249 creative executives in U.S. advertising agencies, of which 35 were women: just 14 percent. Even in two agencies owned by and run by women interviewed for this study, the creative departments were all male, but for one female creative director" (2009).

Broyles and Grow (as cited in Grow & Deng, 2015) state that prior studies demonstrate that women are “severely underrepresented” in the creative advertising industry in the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain and Sweden, with less than 35%. This percentage is very low when one takes under consideration that, as Barletta (cited in Grow & Broyles, 2011) states, women make 80-85 percent of all consumption decisions; women are also majority in advertising classes (81,7%), according to a United States based survey conducted by Fullerton and others in 2009 (as cited by Grow et al, 2012). The underrepresentation of women in creative advertising can also be noticed at the award level, as the majority of judges for the creative awards (Cannes Lions and Clio) are men (Grow & Broyles, 2011); and focusing only in Latin America, female creative participation is below 5% and female creative directors are only 6.5% (Grow & Deng, 2015). As Mallia states, the nickname “boys club” for creative departments is an indication of the deep masculine culture that is perpetuated in every agency (2009).

One of the 20 women in creative advertising interviewed by Grow and Broyles describes the culture in creative advertising as a “guy culture, a fraternity culture” (2011). As Ruíz and Llaguno state “in the Spanish sector there are departments that are clearly feminine: accounts services, public relations and finance, while others such as creative, editing and design departments are considered male ghettos” (cited in García & Piñeiro, 2011). One of the reasons why this is such a common phenomenon in Spain is because women tend to choose less stressful careers, they open their own agencies or start working as freelancers (Grow et al., 2012), on the other hand, in the United States, women think that the work/life balance is crucial in this industry, especially when becoming mothers (Grow et al., 2012).

Achieving work/life balance is more difficult for women due to gender stereotypes; there is a societal expectation that “casts a long shadow over women’s professional lives” (Torras & Grow, 2015). Women are expected to not only be successful in their careers and to

work hard in the office, but they are also expected to take on the main responsibilities at home. According to Grow and Broyles' U.S and Canadian interviewees, the dynamics after work are very different for men and women, while women go home with their families after work, men go to socialize between colleagues. The lack of these bonding experiences and the responsibilities of children affect women at the workplace (2011). In another research, U.S women express frustration regarding the use of time and how it was valued in advertising agencies, they highlight the fact that productivity is evaluated by the amount of time that is spent in the office instead of measuring actual productivity. One of the interviewees states: "We work, work, work so that we can get out of work to be with our families... then when they (men) stay late to make up time they look like heroes" (Grow et al., 2012).

The lack of flexible schedules in the creative advertising industry is, definitely, something that women have against them. As Torras and Grow state, unlike creative women, creative men often have stay-at-home wives who give them the luxury to dedicate themselves entirely to their careers (Torras & Grow, 2015). Karen Mallia argues that few women can negotiate or have formal access to flexible work arrangements; these punishing schedules imposed on creatives are one of the reasons why women are driven away from the industry (2009).

Another important fact that needs to be taken under consideration is the client's necessities. These strenuous schedules are imposed by the client's expectations of having instant satisfaction (Mallia, 2009), if an agency is not capable of satisfying the client, the client can simply leave to another agency, where their needs will be met as they are requested. This is why advertising is considered a highly competitive industry, and as Mallia states, a notoriously self-centered and cutthroat industry (2009). In Torras and Grow's research in Perú, the women interviewed have a different range of feelings towards working with male and female clients, they state that when working with female clients they experience both

support and competitiveness from them, and when working with male clients they experience surprise, clients are surprised to have a female creative; gratitude, because they know that purchase decisions are made by women; and sometimes lack of respect, because they tend to listen more to the male creatives (2015). The pressure of dealing with clients should be considered when thinking about becoming a creative woman in an extremely masculine industry.

It is precisely the fact that these creative women work in a “boys’ club” that leads them to develop or highlight their more masculine features to survive and stay ahead, or as Grow and Boyles state: “women are erasing their femaleness in order to succeed as an advertising creative” (2011). It is possible that the extremely masculine environment and the uncomfortable sexist comments push successful women to either “adapt because that’s how you get ahead or throw over the masculine style in a big way” (Broyles & Grow, 2008). Taking under consideration that, as Gregory states, creative departments are dominated by male humor (cited in Torras & Grow, 2015), a woman interviewed for the Torras and Grow research states: “I get tired of their phallic jokes and the comments about women. They see women as sex objects” (2015). Some women adopt the strategy of fitting in with the boys, they present themselves as “tomboys” with good knowledge of sports to keep up with the male dominated conversations (Broyles & Grow, 2008), but, as Grow states, while “being a tomboy mutes one’s femininity, it doesn’t guarantee admittance to the ‘boys club’” (Grow et al., 2012).

In most of the researches and articles, there is a term that appears several times when talking about women targeted products: “pink ghettos”. As Grow and others explain, advertising agencies tend to assign brands based on the gender perception of them, whether they seem masculine or feminine; cars and beer, for example, are considered male accounts (2012) while cleaning products, tampons and house appliances are considered female

accounts. This kind of segregation (leaving women to work only on female perceived products) leads to a reinforcement of traditional gender roles. As Grow and others state, gender bias in creative advertising is important because it impacts people beyond creative women (2012), it impacts consumers and it reinforces gender stereotypes promoting the patriarchal point of view to the public.

Several researches demonstrated that there is a direct link between the lack of female creatives in advertising agencies and the creation of sexist advertising. Grow and Broyles state that “if women are excluded or the environment is inhospitable the work they are assigned to and produce will be impacted” (2011), while García and Piñeiro state that the low presence of women in executive positions and in creative departments in Galician advertising has deprived the industry from having a richer gender representation (2011). Although several researches and articles agree with these two statements, a research made by Ruíz and Llaguno in Spain demonstrate that there is no significant relation between the sex of the creative and the level of sexism in the ads; the research focuses on 1315 ads and the gender of all the creative people involved in the production of each ad. Also, the level of sexism in the pieces is rated by using an evaluation instrument developed by Butler- Pasley in 1974 (2013, p. 149-150). Among the main findings of this research are: the high percentage of men involved in the creative production (66%) and the lack of a significant relation between the sexual composition of creative departments and the level of sexism in the advertising (2013, p. 153).

This information is key to this research since it is focused on exploring the role of women in the creation of sexist advertising.

Last, it is important to highlight some recommendations to increase gender balance in the industry. Grow and Broyles argue that bringing more women to the industry of creative advertising will allow advertisers to increase the range of possibilities for their brands (2011). Also, discussions need to be promoted within the industry and clients need to demand more

female participation in their projects (Grow et al., 2012), especially if their products target women. Finally, the industry needs to make a bigger effort on eliminating gender roles in advertising for children, and it needs to create more messages informed by a critical gender perspective, avoiding reinforcing stereotypes and promoting equal responsibilities in diverse families (Ruíz & Llaguno, 2013).

3. Research methodology

3.1. Chapter overview

The main goal of the research is to explore and understand the way women are involved in the creation of sexist ads, what factors influence their creative work and what are some achievable initiatives that could promote a change in Costa Rican advertising's messaging. The participants, both men and women, are the source of knowledge and the experts in the topic, due to their daily involvement and lived experiences in the advertising industry.

Understanding the role of women in the creative process that leads to the construction of sexist messages (in Costa Rican advertising) is key to develop better strategies that focus on eliminating sexist material from the air and public spaces. In Costa Rica, the National Institute for Women (INAMU in Spanish) is the entity in charge of overseeing women's rights in Costa Rica; they have been doing a great effort on identifying harmful messages and taking them out of the air, by adhering to the bill No. 5811 (regulates the use of women's image in advertising). As stated in the introduction, this bill lacks monetary penalties for companies and agencies that create sexist advertising; this research could help INAMU and the political party Frente Amplio in pushing an update to the current bill. Furthermore, the research also seeks to create awareness regarding the labor conditions of creatives in advertising. Advertising agencies and corporations tend to subject creative departments to extended hours of labor, violating workers' rights, but also generating unfair treatment to female creatives specially those who are pregnant or mothers. Additionally, the results of this research aim to influence education received by advertising and marketing students, with the motivation of creating awareness regarding the capitalist system and its relation to women's oppression and exploitation.

This research has a political motivation, since it is based on the Socialist Feminist theory, which, as stated by the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, focuses on recognizing that capitalism is an institutionalized form of oppression based on profit and domination through sex, race and class (Park, 1972). Therefore, as one cannot separate advertising from capitalism and capitalism from the oppression of women throughout history, it is vital to approach this topic from a socialist feminist perspective.

The use of women's images in advertising reinforces consumerist gender stereotypes given to women by a capitalist society with the sole purpose of generating profit for companies. Women in the advertising industry do have a role in the creation of sexist messages, and therefore it is important to recognize that they are part of this oppressing system. Advertising also reinforces the role of the housewife, not only by portraying women as housewives in commercials, but also by targeting cleaning products, house appliances and food mostly towards women. As stated by Zillah Eisenstein: "within her role in the family woman is a consumer. Consumption is the other side of production. She buys things the family needs and the economy has to sell [...] She is doing what is absolutely necessary for the economy – consuming" (1979, p. 48).

Furthermore, advertising utilizes social segregation strategies to reach their consumers, the main strategy is based on class, dividing target audiences into socio-economic classes. Class is one of the main distinctions of capitalism, and as stated by Hartsock, it defines the way we see the world and our place in it (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 70).

Even though this study does not reflect the reality of all advertising agencies in Costa Rica, it represents the reality of 20 of the biggest agencies in the country. The communication power of these agencies and their market share makes them extremely influential in Costa Rican society. This research could be considered the first step towards a more extensive and deeper research project that could include all advertising agencies in the country.

3.2. Research design

This exploratory research is approached from an Advocacy/Participatory knowledge claim. There is a main focus on women's experiences, their involvement in the creative process, the challenges that they encounter in the job and their relations with clients and colleagues. There is also an important focus on the causes that lead to the creation of sexist ads and the changes that could lead to a more inclusive industry. The research uses mixed methods, with a qualitative component as the primary method of data collection and a quantitative component as complementary. The qualitative component refers primarily to the use of in-depth interviews. Since the goal is to explore the experiences of women (mainly) and men in the creative advertising industry, it is vital to hear their voices and document their perceptions and situations. The quantitative component involves closed-ended questions that reveal how many women are working as creative directors, how many women and men identify themselves as feminists and for how many years they have worked in their current agencies. Statistical data from former researches shows that there is a very low percentage of women working in the creative departments of advertising agencies, these statistics are used as a base to create the hypothesis of how gender exclusion in the industry affects advertising messaging.

3.3. Data sources

This research gathers participants who identify themselves as women, and work in the creative departments of advertising agencies and/or as creative directors in the selected agencies, all located in San José, Costa Rica. It is important to include in this research the point of view from the person with the highest position in the creative department of the agencies, whether they identify themselves as women or men. Therefore, 55% of the sample identifies as a woman, 41% as a man, and 4% as other. Three creative directors, that were

contacted for an interview, refused to be part of the research and recommended instead one of their female creatives.

In total, 29 people are involved in the research, 16 of them identify themselves as women, 12 of them as men and one of them prefer to identify as neither.

3.4.Data collection techniques

By 2007, there were close to 100 advertising agencies in Costa Rica (Salas, 2007, p. 30). Since interviewing women and men from all advertising agencies in Costa Rica would have taken too many resources and time, the sampling of the research was made by cluster: first, defining the agencies by location; second, giving priority to the ones with the biggest market share, according to IBOPE Media; and last, by their involvement in COMUNIDAD (the association of communication agencies of Costa Rica). This sample includes the agencies with the biggest advertising investors in the country, therefore, the companies that had the biggest messaging exposure in 2015.

By following the former method, 20 agencies in San José, Costa Rica were defined as the sample. The 20 agencies were contacted via e-mail and phone calls, and were asked for the creative director's contact information. Once the creative director was contacted, if she was a woman, an appointment was schedule with her and no other interviews for that agency were scheduled; if he was a man, an interview was scheduled with him and he was asked to suggest one of the female creatives in the department as a participant also.

From the 29 interviews, 17 were made in person: 16 at the advertising agency and one in a restaurant; nine of the interviewees identify themselves as women and eight as men. The other 12 interviews were made via telephone: seven of the interviewees identify themselves as women, four of them as men, and one of them as neither. The participants were given the choice of having the interview in person or via telephone, whichever option was better for their schedule.

The interviews were semi-structured and face to face or via telephone, all of them are recorded with the written or oral consent of the participants. Notes were taken. The interviews were made in Spanish and transcribed. Only the quotes that appear in the results are translated to English. The interviewer used three different guides (translated to Spanish) during the interviews, one was used exclusively with female creative directors (See Appendix G), another one was used exclusively with male creative directors (See Appendix H) and a third one was used exclusively with female creatives (See Appendix I). Although most of the questions remain the same, there are a couple of questions that change depending on the gender of the interviewee. For the purposes of answering the question of the research: What is the role of women in the creative process of advertising and the creation of sexist ads? The following topics are approached with different questions:

Creatives' background in numbers:

- ☐ What is your name and position in this agency?
- ☐ Age
- ☐ For how long have you been working in the agency?
- ☐ Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why?
- ☐ How do you identify yourself?

It is very important to acknowledge the creatives background in order to analyze the results from the perspective of their differences. Experiences vary depending on the position of power, gender, years of career or of work in the same agency and whether the creatives understand and identify with feminism.

The female perspective:

When the interviewee is a woman (regardless of her position), the following question is added:

- ☐ How do you feel being the only woman (or one of the few women) working in the creative department?

When the interviewee is a female creative (not a female creative director), the following question is added:

- ☐ Do you feel like your ideas are heard?

The following questions are made to all women:

- ☐ Why do you or don't you consider yourself a feminist?
- ☐ Why do you think there are more men than women working in your department?

Understanding how women feel in the creative advertising industry is key to capture their struggles and obstacles. These obstacles are important when analyzing how they affect, directly or indirectly, the creation of sexist advertising.

The male perspective:

- ☐ Why do you or don't you consider yourself a feminist?
- ☐ Why do you think there are more men than women working in your department?

Acknowledging that males have a different perspective of the problem is also key in order to determine the different perceptions between genders.

Gender:

- ☐ How do you identify yourself?

The open question about gender allow creatives to reflect on why they consider themselves men or women, this permits a certain liberty to define themselves as they wish and to add personal perceptions about themselves and the characteristics they feel belong to different genders. The openness of the creatives when answering the question also allows a deeper understanding on how they feel about gender.

The creatives and the creative process:

- ☐ Tell me about the brainstorming sessions you have as a department when you need to develop ideas for a campaign. How are they structured? Guide me through the process.
- ☐ When you are developing a campaign or ad for a product directed to women, where do you get your inspiration?

When the interviewee was a creative director (regardless of their gender) the following question was added:

- ☐ What are the characteristics that you are looking for in a creative agent for your department?

Learning about how ideas are born is key to understand the dynamic that female creatives have to deal with when participating in brainstorming sessions. It is also important to understand the difference between the ways that male creatives and female creatives get their inspiration or information to develop messages that target women. Lastly, the characteristics that creative directors look for in a creative for their department also influence who ends up getting the jobs in this highly masculine environment.

Ideas:

- ☐ Have you ever participated in a creative session where your colleagues or you (please specify who) are suggesting to use "attractive" women to sell the product? What was the product? What was your position during the session? Were you in favor or against it and why?
- ☐ What do you think about advertising that portrays women as the only one that does the laundry, cooks or take care of the children? Why do you think we keep getting these ads?

- ☐ Have you heard a colleague propose an idea that reinforces the stereotypes of women? What was the idea? Did you say something to him/her? Why did you think it was wrong?
- ☐ How often do you hear this kind of ideas from your colleagues?

Acknowledging the reaction of female and male creatives regarding sexist ideas in advertising is highly important for this research. Understanding how often these ideas are suggested by creatives or clients, and who is willing to say something to stop them from seeing the light, help create a better picture of the process into which sexist ideas are born. The difference between the perceptions of female creatives and male creatives regarding sexist advertising also give a better understanding into how the gender of the creative affect the way these ideas are viewed or accepted.

Knowledge and education:

- ☐ What did your university teach you on creativity and ad's effectiveness?
- ☐ Did your university ever mention something about being gender sensitive and stereotyping in advertising?
- ☐ What would you define as a sexist ad?

The level of education in terms of gender perspective is an important element to analyze among creatives in the advertising industry, having gender perspective when coming up with ideas could make the difference between proposing a sexist idea and proposing a more constructive gender defying idea. The education they obtained in their universities regarding creativity and effectivity is also a key element into the creation of sexist ads.

The client:

- ☐ How much influence does a client have in the final idea for and ad or campaign?

- ☐ Has a client ever asked your department to include a certain type of woman or man in the ad? Tell me about it.
- ☐ Have you ever been involved in the casting of women for an ad? What kind of woman were you looking for? What was the product?

Acknowledging that the client's role in advertising is an important factor on the creation of sexist advertising is key for the research. The clients have a goal or a vision of what they want for their brands and that vision might be influenced by a sexist view of women. Clients also have a responsibility of the messages that are being transmitted in mass and new media.

Discrimination:

- ☐ Have you ever felt discriminated by a client, colleague or supervisor because of your gender? When? How did that affect your work and your personal life?

Discrimination in the workplace is an important factor to consider. When women are excluded from brainstorming sessions or from positions then there is a lack of female voices when creating messages. Discrimination could also influence women's perception of their work and their personal lives.

3.4.1 Interviews

During the interviews, a proper introduction was made by the researcher, the interviewees were thanked for their time and participation and the name of the supervising institution was mentioned. The goal of the research was explained; the anonymity of the research was highlighted. The interviewees were asked for their consent before recording the interviews, some of the consents were signed (when the interview was face to face) other consents were given orally (when the interviews were on the phone). The researcher explained that, to assure their anonymity and safety, brands and names (of agencies and

people) were not going to be mentioned in the report. The length of the interviews was from 20 minutes (the shortest) to one hour and 50 minutes (the longest).

3.5.Ethical considerations

This research engaged human participants to explore their experiences in the creative advertising industry, therefore, it was key to ensure their safety and dignity. One of the main measures taken to assure safety was keeping the anonymity of the participants.

The names of the agencies that participated in the research are not mentioned at all. The names of the interviewees are not mentioned either; they are described as: creatives, female creative (s), female creative director (s), female general creative director (s), male creative director (s), designer (s). In addition, none of the brands named in the interviews are mentioned, they are referred to as categories, example: beer, car, sanitary towels, etc.

Before making the interviews, the sources were informed of the research. They signed a release or gave oral consent to give the information needed. It was also explained, that they could decide not to answer a question if it made them uncomfortable or scared of losing their job. The recordings were deleted once the study was approved and graded by the University for Peace.

3.6.Data analysis

The data analysis is based on the Feminist Research Practice content analysis flowchart (Hesse-Biber, 2013, p.232-233) for both, quantitative and qualitative, models. Questions regarding position, gender, age, years working at the agency and feminism, are taken under consideration for a quantitative analysis, setting the options of questions about age and gender as the main units of analysis; and the options of questions regarding the position in the agency, time working in the agency and feminism as the main categories to analyze. The information, for these questions, was gathered during the interviews and later counted, tabulated and represented through tables and a graph.

For the qualitative analysis, grounded theory was used to identify showing patterns in the data collected. All the open-ended questions from the interview guide were grouped in topical areas. Next, the answers given by creatives to each of the questions were grouped; for example, for the question “What would you define as a sexist ad?” all answers were grouped in one document. They were read and analyzed. Later, common answers and patterns were identified and highlighted generating codes. After that, the answers were arranged into gender groups (woman, men and other) and were analyzed again with a gender view, this helped identifying common themes among females, males and others, leading to a second set of coding. Lastly, to help represent the data, quotes were selected to illustrate the most common or unique answers from creatives.

4. Results

The results presented on this chapter can only reflect the experiences and opinions of the women and men interviewed from July to September 2016, in 20 agencies in San José, Costa Rica.

To facilitate the understanding of the results, I will start by describing the background of the women and men involved in the research, then I will address their perceptions about their own gender. Following those two sub themes, I will go deeper into the creative process and the challenges that creatives face in the industry. Finally, I will share their perceptions on the knowledge and education they acquired at the university; and their relationships with the clients. Since, there are differences between the way men and women think in several of the topics I will make the comparison of perceptions when needed.

4.1.In numbers

The following tables show the quantitative data of the research:

Table 4.1.1**Time working at the agency**

	Female						Male						Other		
	18	24	30	36	41	Total	18	24	30	36	41	Total	24	Total	Total
	-	-	-	-	41		-	-	-	-	41		-		
	23	29	35	41	up	Total	23	29	35	41	up	Total	29	Total	Total
Less than one year	2	3	1	0	0	6	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	8
One year	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	4
Two years	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Three years or more	0	2	2	0	2	6	0	0	3	3	1	7	1	1	13
Total	2	6	4	2	2	16	0	1	4	5	2	12	1	1	29

In Table 4.1.1 is interesting to highlight that, on the female side, there were no women ages 41 up who had less than one year working in an advertising agency. The two women ages 41 up, who have more than three years working in the same advertising agency, explained in the interview that they have been working in the same agency for more than 16 years. On the opposite side, the male side, it is shown that one of the 41 up males have been recently hired in an advertising agency, having only been in the agency for less than a year. This, although not representative of the whole industry, is an interesting data that needs further research.

Table 4.1.2**Position in the agency**

	Female						Male						Other		
	18	24	30	36			18	24	30	36			24		
	-	-	-	-	41		-	-	-	-	41		-		
	23	29	35	41	up	Total	23	29	35	41	up	Total	29	Total	Total
General Creative Director	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	4	3	2	9	0	0	11
Creative Director	0	2	1	0	1	4	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	7
Creative (copywriter)	1	2	1	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Community manager	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Designer	0	2	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5
Total	2	6	4	2	2	16	0	1	4	5	2	12	1	1	29

Table 4.1.2 shows that most women who work in the creative departments of the 20 agencies interviewed work as copywriters and designers, there is a considerable number of women who work as creative directors, and a few who work as general creative directors. On the male side of the table, all men interviewed belonged to the categories of creative director and general creative director; this does not represent the industry, but it is a result of the methodology used. The person who identified as “other” works as a designer. It

is valuable to highlight the significant difference between the number of women who are general creative director and the men who hold this position. This can be better appreciated in graph 4.1.1.

Graph 4.1.1

Position in the agency

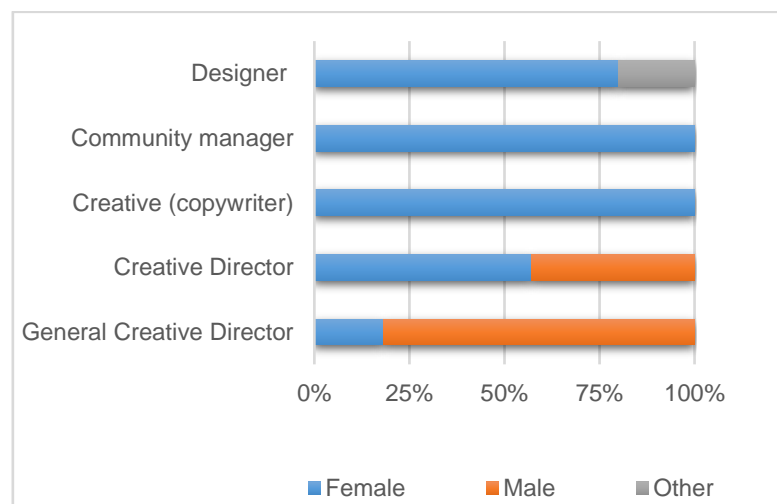


Table 4.1.3**Consider themselves as feminist**

	Female						Male						Other		
	18	24	30	36			18	24	30	36			24		
	-	-	-	-	41		-	-	-	-	41		-		
	23	29	35	41	up	Total	23	29	35	41	up	Total	29	Total	Total
Yes	0	3	3	2	2	10	0	0	1	2	1	4	1	1	15
No	2	2	0	0	0	4	0	1	3	2	1	7	0	0	11
I don't know	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3
Total	2	6	4	2	2	16	0	1	4	5	2	12	1	1	29

Table 4.1.3 shows the number of people who identified themselves as feminist.

Of the 16 women interviewed 10 considered themselves feminist, four don't consider themselves feminist and two don't know whether they consider themselves feminist or not.

The two youngest women of the research don't consider themselves feminists, and four of the eldest female participants considered themselves as feminist. On the male side of the table, there are more men that don't consider themselves feminist (seven in total) than those who do consider themselves feminist (four in total), only one man said he didn't know whether he was or wasn't. The person who identified as "other" consider themselves as feminist.

4.2.The female perspective

4.2.1 How do you feel being the only woman or one of the few women working in the creative department?

When women were asked this question some of them used words like: “comfortable”, “included” and “normal”, they explained that for them it was a privilege to work in such a competitive industry; being part of this small group of women was a motivation to keep working and keep demonstrating their skills. Others started by saying that it didn’t affect them or that they didn’t even thought about it. One women said: “I love it, I feel proud to be one of the few women that are good in creativity.”

Once they started elaborating their answers, they talked about the inconveniences of working in a men’s world, how the industry is full of men, how some of these men turned out to be sexist bosses and how they feel underestimated sometimes. Several women mentioned that for them to be taken seriously they needed to prove themselves, one stated that they needed to prove they were “more than a pretty face.” Women explained that they usually end up with accounts that are directed towards women, but some of them highlighted the fact that they have gotten the chance to work with typical male accounts (beer and cars). The involvement of them in typical male accounts is a way to demonstrate their talent and to get recognition, one woman explained that: “I’ve earned the respect of my co-workers with my work and the awards I’ve won.”

Some women talked about the discrimination they have suffered in the industry, one of them stated that it is common knowledge that women are payed less than men, another one said: “when a woman says something or gives an idea, she needs to say it five times to be heard, or needs the support of a male or her supervisor to be taken seriously,” another one stated that it is harder for a woman to get to the top.

Two women talked about the competitive environment in the creative advertising industry, one of them stated that in this environment it is necessary to block their own femininity, because women need to be tough to survive. The other woman stated that even though women compete with each other, they also support each other when they need to.

4.2.2 Do you feel like your ideas are heard?

Most women feel comfortable with their current bosses; they feel like their boss listens to their ideas and congratulates them when they do a good job. Most of them had stories about bosses in other agencies, who were sexist or competitive. Most of the women also agree on the fact that it depends on the boss and the agency, if the agency is small then they get to have more and better communication with their co-workers and bosses, if the agency is big, it's hard to get recognition and be listen to. Some women attributed the fact that people listen to them to their personality: "I'm good at talking, people listen to me", "they listen to me, sometimes I'm annoying, but yes, they listen", "I'm very persuasive." Lastly, most women stated to have a good relationship with their boss, and being able to talk to them and insist freely about their ideas.

4.2.3 Why do you think there are more men than women working in your department?

Some women attribute this disparity to female or male characteristics. Several women mentioned that to work in creativity women need strong characters, strong personalities, they assure that women that are too emotional or too "soft" don't survive in the industry, one of them assured that: "Women are more sensitive towards criticism than men are." Another woman stated that it is difficult to find women that project authority: "the male creatives have authority, but they don't have to yell. Women don't control themselves." Other women highlighted the fact that creative advertising is an industry where people get paid for thinking, one of these women explained that for her it is related to how women are raised: "girls are

being told to be pretty, while boys are motivated to play with toys that require them to think creatively.”

Several women highlighted the fact that it is easier for men to work in such a demanding industry, since they are not expected to take care of their children or their families, they are not expected to be home at a certain hour, one of the women stated: “If you work until late, then your husband will say that you are abandoning your kids, so, women quit.” Several women stated that it was hard for them to be in a relationship, and another woman stated: “There was a time when I would leave work at 4:00 a.m. twice a week, a woman with kids cannot do that.” Several women talked about the schedule, and how this affected them: “If you get out on time or earlier, you are not considered efficient enough for the agency.”

Women also highlighted the element of sexism in the industry. the perception that women get paid less than men, or that there is a gender bias when hiring male creatives by male creative directors, and the sexist comments from co-workers and clients, are some of women’s main complaints. One woman stated: “If you defend yourself they call you crazy or ask you if you have your period. I once had a co-worker who told me to ‘go wash the dishes’ when I told him to stop interrupting my meeting with another colleague.” Another woman talked about the pressure that women deal with: “If you make a mistake, it’s a big deal, but if a man makes a mistake is not.” Finally, several women mentioned the word “passionate” some of them think that men are more passionate about the creative business than women, that women get tired quicker and that men deal much better with frustration: “Women think about quitting when something goes wrong, while men get over it faster.”

4.2.4 Do you consider yourself a feminist?

Several women that considered themselves feminist talked about defending women, fighting or believing in gender equality and in giving women the same opportunities that men

have. One of these women stated that she felt passionate about feminism and sisterhood, and that she was trying to reflect those beliefs into the ideas she generated for advertising.

Several women tried to distance themselves from “extremist feminism,” one explained that for her it was unhealthy feminism when women protest against commercials that highlight femininity. The person who identified themselves as “other” (not female, not male) stated that: “I don’t like the gender roles that exist, I don’t agree with the patriarchal society I’ve grown up in, I want my son to grow up free of stereotypes.” Finally, the group of women who consider themselves feminist highlighted the importance of unity by supporting each other and working together.

On the other hand, most of the women that don’t consider themselves feminist, stated that they didn’t like feminism because they believed in equality. One woman explained: “I don’t understand the term well enough, but I’m not a feminist because I don’t think that women’s rights are more important than men’s rights.” Another woman stated: “I really dislike feminists, the fact that they focus on gender just creates more inequality. They end up being sexist.” One woman stated that she was against everyone being treated equally, she explained: “I feel like feminism is about gender equality, treating everyone equally and I feel like women are different from men in a lot of ways and that’s ok. I don’t agree with discriminating women, but I don’t feel like we need to be treated the same way, not worst or better, just different.”

Lastly, one woman recognized that she didn’t know what feminism was all about, but she stated that people, regardless of their gender, needed to fight for what they wanted; she highlighted how difficult it was to be a woman and a single mother; she stated: “I don’t know if I consider myself a feminist, because I think we are all the same. Just like feminism, there is machismo and I feel like there should be another level, that’s where I am.”

4.3.The male perspective

4.3.1 Why do you think there are more men than women working in your department?

Several men started answering the question by stating: “I have no idea”. As they were elaborating on their answers, some of them talked about the problem (lack of female in creative departments) as being a historical and global problem. Some of them recognized that the industry was sexist (machista) and that women were discriminated in the industry: “Some people don’t believe that women can have creative jobs;” but, at the same time, they stated that this was slowly changing. One of them held: “If a woman is good, she is in. We are not in 1940.”

Several men highlighted the bias that exist in the industry regarding the positions of creativity and account management: “there is this stereotype that women are account managers and men are creatives.” Another male participant stated that women are more inclined to be account managers because is less frustrating than being creative. Another agreed that women see better benefits and growth potential as account managers, and he also stated that: “Men love to see pretty women in meetings, it is sexist, I know, but it is really hard to find people that don’t think that way. Some women know about this and take advantage of that.”

Another issue that came up was the small pool of creative women that exists in Costa Rica, these male creative directors stated that it is hard for them to find good female creatives, one of them stated: “I can’t find the talent I need, I have received sexist portfolios from women, and I can’t hire them.” Several of them said that for every 10 portfolios they received, one or two were from women. Some male creatives also mentioned the tough schedules and the fact that women are expected to take care of their families: “women leave the agencies when they become mothers. Men don’t care that much about having their

families waiting. It's sexist." Some of the male participants also thought that male and female personalities have a lot to do with the involvement in creativity. They claimed that it is an issue of self-confidence, or that women are not interested in the industry. One of them stated: "Men are less afraid of making a mistake and having crazy ideas. Women feel more pressure to not make mistakes." Another male participant stated that men and women had different intelligences: "Women manage time better and are more organized, sometimes that goes against the creative process. Women say 'let's stop wasting time', and men say 'let's keep going until we get a good idea'; women are too worried about the clock."

4.3.2 Do you consider yourself a feminist?

The majority of male participants don't consider themselves to be feminists, the main reason given by them was that they believe in equality. One of them stated that: "Feminism is the same as being machista, I don't like extreme positions." Another male participant explained that: "I try not to be a feminist or machista. I don't believe in any position or judgement that comes from a gender point of view." Some of the male participants that deny being feminists also admitted having a sexist behavior or a sexist way of thinking because of how society has shaped them. One of them stated: "Society made me a little sexist. (In advertising) it is safe to put a woman in the kitchen, because it reflects most society. I have to do whatever it takes to make advertising work." Several men, whether they described themselves as feminist or not, stated that they don't think men and women are necessarily the same, but that both need to be treated equally and have the same rights.

Most men that don't consider themselves feminist reject the idea of extreme thinking or positions. One of the men that don't described himself as a feminist stated: "I have female feminist friends and to them, everything that men do is wrong. One should be neither feminist or machista... If I want to be feminist then I treat women the same way I treat the rest, but when I raise my voice to tell them they did a bad job, then they call me sexist." Of the few

men that consider themselves feminist, one stated: “I want to say yes, but I don’t think I’m doing enough... Being male or female shouldn’t make a difference on your salary or the way you are treated.” Another male feminist stated: “I am who I am because of the women in my family. I think it is unfair that women have to struggle to get what they want just for being women. I have a daughter and I don’t want her to be valued only because she is pretty or not.” Lastly, one of the male creatives who considered himself a feminist said it was because “I believe in gender equality and both genders having the same conditions.”

4.4.About gender

4.4.1 How do you identify yourself?

When it came to talk about their gender, women were more open to talk about it or elaborate more in their answers. Most women stated that, even though they consider themselves women, they have a masculine personality. Some of them emphasized the difference between working with men and working with women, how it was easier to get along with their male co-workers. One of them stated: “It’s easier to work with men. In my team, I have two women and one man, and my girls are ‘all terrain’, I mean you can be direct to them, sometimes working with women is hard because they tend to be more resentful.” Another woman stated that if she could’ve chosen her gender before she was born, she would have chosen to be a man: “because being a woman is too tough.” One woman stated that she feels like a “weird bug” because she is “all woman, but I like things that men like”, another one stated that she behaves like a woman but sometimes at work she needs to use her more masculine side.

On the other hand, the male participants who decided to elaborate on their answer mentioned the way they interact with their gay co-workers. One of them made the clear distinction between gender and sexual preference and how he didn’t understand this before. The same man stated that: “my masculine side is much stronger because of social

construction, but I identified more with my feminine side.” Another male participant stated that he would never hire a transgender person, because he would not know how their clients would react to that. Another male participant highlighted his interaction with transgender people from an NGO and how he worked with gay people, and that he had no problem with that. Half of the men that elaborated on their answers accepted having a feminine side, one stated to feel like he didn’t fit with the stereotype of the ad man: “I don’t like partying, drinking beer, staying up all night, I don’t smoke, I’m the opposite of the ad man stereotype.” Only one person preferred not to be identified with either gender.

4.5.The creatives and the creative process

4.5.1 Qualities of a good creative

For the female and male creative directors and general creative directors there are certain characteristics that they consider key to employing a creative person in their department. According to the directors, a creative member needs to be a team player, work well with others and get along with all team members. They also need to be curious and have “passion for advertising”, two male creative directors stated that the long hours that are spend in the office are a test, if they are willing to spend their after-work hours immersed in the job, looking for the right idea, this proves passion. All female creative directors and female general creative directors look for good writers and proper grammar.

Both, female and male creative directors talked about the importance of the attitude and personality of the applicant; the female directors stated that they dislike the “rock stars” the stereotypical creative’s attitude and their usual interest in awards; on the other hand, one of the male creative directors stated that the agency is looking for people who are interested in winning or participating in creative festivals and in winning awards, nevertheless, the same director expressed his dislike for the “rock star” attitude of some creatives. Another male director stated that for him to hire someone the person needs to have a great portfolio; the

years of experience are not as important as the ideas they have produced in the past. Other directors described some characteristics of the personality that a creative should have, some of these characteristics can be subjective, depending on who is evaluating them. The directors mentioned the following characteristics: “strong personality”, “cool people”, “interesting”, “talented”, “intuitive”, “good taste in music and clothing”, “thinks different”, among others. Lastly, several directors mentioned that the creative they hire need to like reading, listening to music, appreciate art, watch movies, and have general knowledge.

4.5.2 How ideas and insights are born

When the creatives were asked to describe the brainstorming sessions to develop ideas for campaigns and ads, most of them stated that everything starts when they receive a brief from a client. With the brief, they can understand the client’s product, the problem or objective and the target audience; this document sets the boundaries in which the creatives need to work in. Then, they explained that the quantity of people involved in the sessions depended on how big the campaign, the project or the client, was. When it is a big campaign, some agencies would include other departments, like media, accounts and planning; some other agencies prefer to include only creatives: designers, copywriters and creative directors; the bigger agencies would include only the creative directors. Overall, most of the creatives prefer working in pairs (a copywriter and a designer, ideally) or three people maximum, one of the male creative directors stated that: “when there are more than four people involved in the brainstorming, they tend to get more democratic and they all need to agree on the idea and that’s a problem.”

Most of the creatives interviewed agreed that there is always one person leading the brainstorming session, it is usually the creative director or the person who oversees the account (client). This person guides the conversation and makes sure that all participants stay on the same page. According to most of the creatives it is key to have an objective or a

problem to solve, that way the creative session is guided towards finding the innovative solution for that specific problem. One male creative director stated that looking at all information available on the topic before the sessions was helpful to understand the brand's problem. Another male general creative director stated that: "advertising is going to be influenced by the things you like. It has to do with your ideology in life." Also, a female creative stated that: "I have used personal stories as inspiration."

When it comes to the interaction during the brainstorming sessions, male creative directors stated that everybody is motivated to participate and throw ideas, several of them stated that: "There is no such thing as a stupid idea." On the other hand, several female creatives (mainly on the design area) stated that there is a difference on the way people participate in these sessions, one of them stated that: "Men always talk more in those meetings," another female creative stated that: "when someone doesn't talk much is because they don't have a lot of experience. But, there is a lot of ego, if you are surrounded by award-winning 'rock stars' then anything they say is going to sound great or cool in the ears of the other creatives." Another issue highlighted by a female designer was the bond that men have and how this influence the brainstorming sessions, she stated: "I can feel that there is more communication between men. They go to a bar at 4:00 p.m. to brainstorm, and I can't do that, I have to be at home by 6:00 p.m.," lastly, another female designer stated that: "ideas are not that well accepted if they come from a designer, especially if that designer is a woman... If you know something and say it and a man repeats it, the credit goes to him. If you are strong, you are considered bitchy."

In most of the creatives departments there are few women working as copywriters and designers, this is acknowledged by the male creative directors: "the percentage of women in the agency's creative department is minimal", "We are four men and

a woman”, “We are three men in the department: two copywriters and the director”, “We have approximately 10 to 12 creatives, three of them are women.”

When creatives were asked about their process to develop ideas for products that targeted women, the female creatives stated that their main source of ideas were their own experiences, the insights or the situations they live as women. Secondly, they highlighted the importance of research, asking other women about their experiences and not only guiding themselves by market research, some of them mentioned the experiences of their mothers, aunts, cousins and girlfriends. A couple of female creatives stated that sometimes male creatives try to come up with ideas for women that turn out to be sexist or don’t work at all: “when there are only men on a brainstorming session for a product targeted to women, sometimes they come up with very sexist stuff, and we need to tell them ‘No, that is sexist, it won’t work’.” Another female creative stated that for several years she tried to change the advertising of a beer company: “I thought of presenting more normal situations instead of using attractive models to sell the beer, I didn’t succeed. It was until I left that they started changing the advertising a little.” One of the female general creative directors stated that: “I am very careful when we do ads for women. My father was very sexist and I realized as I grew up that it shouldn’t be like that”, she also gave an example of a time when her agency developed a regional ad of a cleaning product: “we proposed a campaign where both, the man and the woman, were cleaning the house together. It worked fine in Costa Rica, but not in the Dominican Republic. It turns out that men will never clean the house over there, there is always a maid that does that for them. We were forced to change the ad.” Lastly, a person who didn’t want to identify themselves with one specific gender stated that: “I don’t like the stupid gender roles, so I try to innovate. How you think comes from what you have been taught in your home, those are your insights.”

On the other spectrum, the male creative directors stated that their main resource was research, either done by them or done by the client or other research focused companies, next they stated that it was important to put themselves in the shoes of the other, one of them stated that: “Just like I’m not a lawyer but sometimes have to do advertising directed to them, I’m not a woman and I have to develop advertising for them. It is important to understand what is relevant for them, what motivates them, how they talk and how they like to be talked at.”

Another male director confessed to have worn a sanitary pad just to know what it felt like to wear one; he oversaw a sanitary pad company account. Several male creative directors also highlighted how diverse all women were and how different women were depending on the stage they were in their life, and that’s why market research was so important. One male creative director stated that: “the insights of your life depend on your education, what you think the role of women is in society, and these insights could be sexist. We try to break the stereotypes in this agency.” Few creatives (both female and male) assured that an important part of the process to generate ideas came from the brief given by the client, a male creative director explained that: “the client tell us what we need to say, we tell them how it needs to be said.” Also, a couple of creatives (both female and male) stated that for them the fact that the product was directed to men or women didn’t change their process, the female creative stated that: “the process doesn't vary, I base my ideas on experiences, if it is targeted to men, then I’ll ask a man friend what his experience was;” on the other hand, the male creative director stated that: “we don’t differentiate the products by gender. When we get a product that is stereotypically directed to women, we make sure we include both genders equally in the creativity.”

4.6.The ideas: Stereotypical ideas and the creatives reaction to them

4.6.1 Suggesting the use of attractive women

When it comes to the use of attractive women in advertising, overall, there is a standard in the advertising industry that the people included in the ads and promotion of a brand need to be attractive, whether they are men or women. The female creatives agreed that the use of models and attractive people is normal in the industry, whether it is requested by the client or suggested by the agency. One of the female general creative directors stated: “I don’t use ugly people in my campaigns, I want people that are nice to look at to deliver the message. I would never include unpleasant or scruffy people to address my target.” Another female creative stated that: “When you have a good relationship with your client, you know their taste, if they like blondes or brunettes, so you look for models with those characteristics.” Other female creatives stated that sometimes it is not about gender, but about class, one of them stated: “the actor or actress we are going to need for an expensive car ad is not the same we are going to need for a cheap chain supermarket ad.” For several female creatives, the use of women to promote a product in site is very normal, what they oppose is the use of over sexualized women. One of them stated: “I oversee a car account, and we don’t use girls that have cosmetic surgery, we don’t make women wear spandex suits either. We prefer to use girls that look natural and normal, that smile and are pleasant.”

Several female creatives stated that the use of attractive women is mostly promoted by the client or mentioned and joked about by their male colleagues. One of them stated that: “It is the client who has the final word” and another one stated: “Sometimes you don’t know if your colleagues are suggesting it as a joke or that they actually think that way.” On the other hand, some female creatives agreed that their colleagues weren’t the ones suggesting to include attractive women in ads, that this was more something that came from the client. One gave a personal example and stated: “A few years ago I was working for a beer account, their

brand identity was always very ‘macho-cowboy’ like, and the client was very rude, he always suggested things like ‘I want to see boobs and ass’ or ‘women need to wear less cloth.’ My male colleagues just laughed. He didn’t last long as a client in the agency though.”

When it comes to stand up against these ideas or suggestions, five women stated that they always say something or defend their position. One of the female creative directors stated: “I do protest. If I say something then it makes the male creatives think twice about their ideas”, another female creative (senior designer) stated: “I don’t support it, I don’t like that sort of stupidity.” Two female creatives (designers) gave a different answer, one of them stated: “One cannot do anything, this is part of what we do to sell a product”, the other one stated: “Sometimes in the agency, we do things that we don’t necessarily agree with. We must sell products we don’t believe in or brands we don’t like. We can’t say ‘no’.”

On the other hand, most male creatives agree that the suggestion of using attractive women in advertising often comes from the clients, other male creatives leaned more towards justifying the use of attractive women depending on the idea for the campaign. One of the general creative directors stated: “advertising is a result of the client’s commercial and marketing strategy.”

The involvement of attractive people, especially attractive women, is seen by male creatives either as something normal or something that needs to change. On one side, several male creative directors state that the use of attractive people is normal and effective to sell, one of them stated: “Is not a sexist thing, if it’s an ad for men you use pretty women, if it’s an ad for women you use handsome men. It’s about what looks good in the ad. If you are portraying a party, then you are not going to include fat people, unless you want to get closer to reality.” Other male creatives stated that it was an “aspirational thing”, one of the male general creative directors stated that “there are studies that prove that teenagers listen to attractive people more than regular people.” Other male creatives believe that things are

changing and that everyday agencies are looking to involve more natural and normal people in their ads, but it is tough to change the client's perception. One of the male general creative directors stated: "We suggested to include a fat person in an ad before, but the client didn't want their company associated with fat people." Another general creative director stated: "The clients think that if the ad doesn't include a gorgeous woman, their brand is going to depreciate."

In terms of speaking up when the idea (of including attractive women) came up from a client or colleague, two of the male creative directors stated that they would strongly disagree and would let the client and colleagues know their position. One of them stated: "I get offended, my answer to that is always and aggressively 'no'." Several creative directors stated that those ideas were never proposed by their teams, that they come from the client. One of them stated: "Sometimes you can't say no to the client."

Both, male and female, creatives think that these tactics are still being suggested because they increase sales and ratings, and they are also linked to our culture and our sexist society.

4.6.2 Suggesting ideas that reinforce women stereotypes

When it comes to the use women's stereotypes in advertising, some female creatives (11 of them) stated that they hear their colleagues suggest these ideas not so often or never, but they do hear it from clients all the time. Other female creatives (six of them) stated that they hear these ideas all the time or often from their male colleagues. Most of female creatives stated that their male colleagues often tell sexist jokes during the brainstorming sessions. Whenever they hear these jokes or suggestions from their colleagues, they often tell them what they think, one of the female general creative directors shared a story about a young creative suggesting a scene where a mother serves the food to their family, she reacted and told him that it didn't need to be that way, he took back his suggestion. The person who

doesn't identify as either woman or man, stated: "I don't indulge them, I don't laugh at their stupid jokes, I stay serious and tell them that it bothers me. They know I don't like it so they do it more." A female creative stated that the male creatives "always make jokes about crazy women or jealous girlfriends." Another female creative stated that even though she hasn't heard sexist jokes from her co-workers, she felt discrimination against women when a male co-worker said: "that girl was a good for nothing, let's bring a man instead" right after the woman that worked with them quit her job.

When it comes to the client's suggestions, the female creatives stated that it is often the client who includes the usage of stereotypical gender roles in the brief. One of the female creatives stated that: "we (the agency) try to change it, even if it is in the brief", another female creative stated: "Sometimes you can change the client's minds, but sometimes they are too stubborn." A female general creative director stated that "Big brands don't like risking it. They have a lot to lose, that's why they keep doing the same old advertising." Most of the examples, given by the female creatives, of clients suggesting ideas that reinforce traditional gender roles, come from companies in the business of home appliances, food and beer.

On the other side, male creative directors think that these ideas are almost never or not that often suggested by the male creatives, some of them stated that it was suggested by the client. Few of them stated that these stereotypes are used only if it helps explain the idea. One of the general creative directors stated: "The context needs to be familiar for most people", another one stated: "the gender conversation is not present, the discussion always goes around what people like and what people don't like."

Two of the general creative directors stated that they don't hear ideas like that because they don't oversee accounts that tend to be sexist, other two male creatives stated that beer accounts tend to do this more often. One of the general creative directors stated that: "As a

man, I find X beer ads fun. I know some women find them irritating, but there is a certain, politically incorrect, sense of humor that makes us men.”

On the other hand, two of the male general creative directors stated that they try to fight these stereotypes in their teams, either by educating their clients or by pointing out the errors when a male creative suggests the use of stereotypical gender roles. Lastly, one of the male creative directors also stated that “the small brands (accounts) are the ones that are willing to take more risks.”

4.6.3 The housewife stereotype in advertising

In terms of what creatives think about portraying women as the only ones that do the laundry, cook or take care of the children, all female creatives demonstrated a dislike towards these ideas, they also attributed its existence to four factors: the clients, society, the target audience and the agencies. For female creatives, most of the ads where there is an obvious representation of traditional gender roles (women as housewives) come from their clients’ fear, sexism or just because of the results they are getting. Female creatives explained that their clients are afraid to change the tone and approach of their advertising, they are afraid of controversy, some are “old school” and have sexist mindsets, others just focus on the numbers, how much money they are making and if the traditional campaign is working they keep doing the same thing. One of the female creative directors stated that: “clients are afraid of controversy, especially living in such a traditional and conservative country,” on a different perspective, one of the female general creative directors stated that: “most of that advertising is ‘canned advertising’ that comes from other countries, where society is in a different level and we (the agency) are forced to use it,” the issue of international corporations using the same message in different countries was highlighted by three different female creatives. One of them stated: “there are standards to fulfill for international companies” and another one stated: “our clients sometimes have to consult with others, because they are a transnational.”

In terms of how society affect the creation of these ads, creative women feel that advertising is merely a reflection of society, one of the female creatives stated that: “this society has double standards. These ads come from all that Catholicism, from how we are ruled and guided and educated.” Another female creative stated: “We live in a society that refuses to change. It’s a third world country thing. I wouldn’t blame the client or the agency, I blame society.”

Several female creatives also highlighted the importance of the target audience, and the existence of women who still believe in these rigid gender roles. Some female creatives specified that women from a particular age are more willing to identified with this kind of advertising. One of them stated: “this advertising is focused on old ladies. Women that think old.” Two female creatives also mentioned the economic status of the target audience as a reason, one of them stated: “It might sound classist, but these ads are directed to low income women.” Most female creatives explained that as long as there are women who identify with these roles, the clients would continue to be motivated to create these ads. One female creative stated: “there is always going to be that woman that spends her day cooking. They still exist. We cannot ignore them.” Another female creative director also stated: “I don’t like these ads, but, changing the role of women so fast in a country where we still see a lot of housewives, might turn out to be offensive for them.”

In terms of the responsibility of the agency, few women stated that in some cases it was lack of creativity of the agency or the fact that the agency was too comfortable earning money doing an easy job.

Some male creatives think that these ads are outdated, others think that they are what they are because of society, some others feel like they are not as common as they used to be and very few find them awful. In terms of why agencies keep producing this kind of advertising, male creatives attributed this to the target audience and society, then to the client

and finally to the results these ads generate. For male creatives, these ads only represent the reality of the target, the fact that housewives still exist is the reason why they keep producing them. One of the general creative directors stated: “I see nothing wrong with that. That’s how family and society are constructed. Women, psychologically, have a different way of perceiving home. Men see it as a place to relax, women see it as an extension of themselves.” Another general creative director stated: “It is the reality of many women. Just as I feel accomplished at my job, they feel accomplished when they have their houses squeaky clean.”

On the other hand, few male creatives stated that “these ads are awful” or “they are not right and not true”, these creative directors feel that things are changing in society and that even though women keep doing most of the house work that doesn’t mean that advertising does not have a responsibility in breaking the gender stereotypes. One of these directors stated: “Education through advertising needs to exist. We cannot keep reproducing these stereotypes.”

Several male creatives also explained the involvement of the client in the creation of these ads. One of the male creatives stated: “This doesn’t come from people in advertising, it comes from marketing people, the brand managers,” another one stated: “It has been a battle to change our client’s mind. He owns a retail store.”

Lastly, some male creatives explained that the results of the campaigns influenced if these ads kept being produced or not. Some of them attribute the creation of these ads to the results in market research or to the increase or stability of sales. One of the male creatives stated: “I’ll try not to do it. But, it all depends on the results of the campaign,” another one stated: “In Costa Rica women are the ones who buy these products.” Therefore, according to the creatives, as long as there is a niche in the market that feels identified with these gender roles, the advertising and marketing professionals are going to keep using these messages to reach them and maintain or increase their sales.

4.7. Knowledge and education

4.7.1 Creativity and effectivity

When the creatives were asked about the knowledge they acquired on creativity at the university, most of them (both females and males) stated that they didn't learn much about creativity in their respective universities. Female creatives highlighted that they didn't have professors with work experience in creative advertising and few of these female creatives stated that they learned from their creative directors or colleagues. All creatives stated that they have learned more about creativity while working at the agencies than in the classroom. A female general creative director stated that what she learned at the university regarding creativity had nothing to do with voluptuous women, while another female general creative director explained that part of what she learned about effectiveness and creativity in advertising had to do with capturing the target audience's attention using elements like women or men's images. Regarding the use of attractive women in advertising as an element for effectiveness or creativity, one male creative director stated: "that only works in a few cases, if it worked with everything then everybody would do it. It would make my job easier." Another male creative explained: "The university taught us formulas to generate ideas, one of these formulas was the usage of attractive women, and it was promoted by both female and male professors."

In terms of what makes advertising effective, both female and male creatives stated that achieving their commercial or communication goal is a sign of effectiveness. Most female creatives stated that being effective was linked to understanding what the target audience wants and being direct. Male creative director's answers regarding effectiveness varied. One of them stated that "there is a commercial reality that has nothing to do with our position as creatives," another one stated that "you need to have a creative concept aligned to a strategy". Nevertheless, they always focused on highlighting the universities' lack of

creative education. Some male creatives did state that they weren't taught to use just one element (women, dogs, children, etc.) to produce creative ideas.

4.7.2 Gender perspective education

When creatives were asked about what they had learned about gender perspective and stereotypes at the university, several of them answered that they weren't taught about gender perspective or that they don't remember what it was. Female and male creatives that graduated from a public university stated that they did learn about gender perspectives and stereotypes as a transversal topic in their education. While, other female and male creatives who studied in private universities stated that the minimal knowledge they acquired on gender and stereotypes was concentrated in two specific courses: Consumer Psychology and Advertising Law. Two of the male creative directors stated that for them it was not something they learned at the university but from personal interactions and life experience. One of them stated: "I have learned from the strong women that I have worked with."

4.7.3 The definition of a sexist ad

When the creatives were asked to define a sexist ad, most creatives talked about the use and reinforcing of women and men stereotypes. Most of them stated that a sexist ad would tend to reinforce traditional gender roles. A female creative stated: "advertising of cleaning products, food and the caring of children are usually directed towards women. That is sexist." One of the male general creative directors stated: "I hate both sides. I hate that in 2016 women are still seen as housewives and men are the alfa males that drink beer."

Another female creative focused on the way that, sometimes, advertising agencies fail to break the stereotype: "Semi-naked women and men in charge. I see it that way. When advertising is way to forced, then you get a female architect directing the construction site, but they choose a model. They try to help, but they are still using the stereotype, they put Miss Universe. Thanks for trying to help, but make it a little more realistic next time."

Another female creative highlighted the use of stereotypical beauty as an element of sexism:

“A sexist ad is when you objectify men and women and when you idealize beauty. An idealized body, something sexual that has nothing to do with the product. That, to me, is sexist.” More than half of the creatives (both male and female) also focused on the oversexualizing of both women and men in advertising as an element of sexism. One of the female general creative directors stated that “A sexist ad is when women are portrayed as sexual objects, also when women are typecast in certain roles. A ‘booth babe’ in a bikini is equally sexist as a woman showing a stain.” A male creative director highlighted a commercial that uses the body of a man to sell condensed milk: “I don’t get that commercial. I mean, I get that it’s directed to housewives, because ‘typically’ women are the ones that cook, but putting a naked guy in the ad is sexist too.”

Several creatives mentioned the same examples when they were trying to illustrate what a sexist ad looks like to them. They mentioned campaigns from a national Costa Rican bank directed to women only, their campaign was based on financial products just for women, having pink offices that only allow women to get their services. They also mentioned a national Costa Rican beer that is recognized to be directed to men only, when describing the kind of message that the brand send they used words like “cowboy”, “alpha male” and the phrase “macho que se respeta” (which translates as “a real man” or “any self-respecting male”). The creatives also mentioned a United States fast food corporation that includes semi-naked famous women in their ads and shows them eating burgers in very explicit sexual ways.

Lastly, four male creative directors found it hard to qualify some advertising as sexist, instead they talked about what is real or perceived as real and what isn’t. One of them stated: “If you present a sexy woman or a woman with little clothes is not sexist, unless you are degrading her.” Another male general creative director stated that for him it was unrealistic to

show women in places where they don't belong, he stated: "If I'm going to portray a group of friends drinking beer, maybe a non-sexist view would be to always include a woman, even though it is a place for men only. If we do that, we would be falling into the unrealistic... Portraying something that doesn't exist is wrong to me." Two male creative directors also mentioned that what could be a stereotype for some people, for others represented life, they talked about representing the consumers. One of them stated: "it's a reality that it is mostly women who buy detergent. Just as it is a reality that most men will be ok with owning just one shirt. So, based on these things you create an ad in which the woman washes the clothes, the clothes look great, she is happy and that is reality, because it is what works for that kind of woman. Some people might say that you are reinforcing stereotypes, and they are probably right, but you are basing it on research so that you can have people identifying with it." Only one woman stated that "It is what it is. If the product is selling, it is what people like. You know it is wrong, but you have to accept it."

4.8.The client

4.8.1 Influencing the idea

When the creatives were asked about how much influence the client has in the final idea, most of them responded "A lot" or evaluated it with percentages: 100% and 90% being the most common ones. Most of the creatives agreed that a lot of what exists out there as advertising started as one thing and ended up being something entirely different due to the client's intervention. One female creative stated: "It's a challenge because, as a creative you want to see your idea out there, it's like your baby. But, when the client starts to change the legs, the arms, the head, it ends up looking like a monster." Another female creative made a similar statement: "Your idea ends up looking like a Frankenstein."

For most creatives, the client has the power to influence the idea, because clients are paying for it, they own the brand, they know what they want for their product or because

everything the client wants is explained in the brief. One of the male creative directors stated: “You have to decide between losing the account and telling the client ‘no, I won’t do that’, or producing a bad idea and paying for the salaries in the agency.” Several creatives (two males and one female) gave a similar analogy regarding their discomfort with the dynamics between agency and client; one of the female creatives stated: “It is like going to the doctor and saying ‘doctor, it hurts here, I want to take this pill’, and the doctor would say ‘no, you should take this one instead’ but you end up taking the one you wanted to anyway.” A male creative stated: “It’s weird to hire someone to do something, and then you tell them how things need to be done.”

On the other hand, almost half of the creatives (both males and females) highlighted the importance of selling the idea and earning the clients’ trust. One of the female general creative director stated: “The agency needs to know how to defend its idea. But, in the end the client decides. There are clients that are much more respectful because of the years of service and the results we have given them.” A male creative director also stated: “the client approves, but we have total control of the idea we are selling.”

4.8.2 No blacks, no blondes

When creatives were asked about their client’s preferences regarding the women they include in their advertising, most of them talked about ethnicity and beauty.

Half of the creatives (both male and female) talked about their client’s objection to include black people in their advertising. They all stated that the clients prefer to include people that have a more Latino look, they are also against including blonde and Asian people. Some of them think that their clients don’t like including black people because of racism, one of the male creative directors stated: “We once tried to portray a biracial family in a print ad, but the client told us to change the family because they didn’t like it, we changed the people but kept the diversity, they still didn’t like it. In the end, they admitted that they didn’t want a

black person in the family because, according to them, we don't have a lot of black people in Costa Rica." A female creative director also stated: "Something I have been asked several times is 'I don't want to include black people', it sounds racist, but, it's because the client knows that there is a high percentage of their consumers that are not going to like it."

Skin color also plays an important role when portraying people from different social classes. Four creatives (two women and two men) explained that, according to their clients, brown skin is a characteristic of low income people; one of the female creatives stated: "If we include a Latino woman with brown skin, they don't like it because it means that she is a low income woman," while a creative director stated: "when we made a print ad directed to a low income target and we included a young black man with a backpack, the client was ok with including a black person." Another important aspect, regarding ethnicity, highlighted by few creatives, is the need of transnationals to regionalize their brands by portraying people according to the predominant ethnicity of the region. For instance, one of the male creative directors explained: "the ad that has black people in it would go to Panamá and parts of the Caribbean, the ad where you see Mexican looking people would be sent to Central America."

In terms of the standards of beauty, the majority of creatives stated that their clients were always looking for attractive women to include in their advertising. Both male and female creatives explained that the characteristics they look in women are based on how they look. The clients decide if a woman is included or not based on being "pretty" or "ugly" and they also decide how much clothes they are wearing. A female creative (senior designer) stated: "They ask me to make girls thinner. Also, for a promotional event of a cellphone company, the client (who happened to be a woman) asked us to give shorter skirts to the models, 'let's make them look sluttier' she said... The times that we haven't agreed to do what she is asking us to do, she has taken our ideas to other places to implement them the way she has wanted to." A creative director explained that the premium brands would always ask

for attractive men and women, he also stated: “I would be a liar if I said that they ask me to include fat girls in their advertising.”

Few creatives (three female and one male) explained their agencies efforts to include more natural looking people in their advertising, a female creative stated: “I try to include natural, more human, real people, even though some clients still ask for the typical model.” On the opposite side, another female creative stated: “Neither the client nor us like to include ugly people, or unkempt, or disgusting people in our advertising.”

4.8.3 The casting of women

When creatives were asked about their involvement in the casting of women for their advertising, the four female creatives, who work as designers, stated that they are not involved in the process of casting, but they do work selecting images from stock or editing the photos for the ad. The rest of the creatives explained that they look for more natural and real looking actors and models to include in their advertising. Some of them stated that they recommend the client to use real people but sometimes the client wants to keep using the beautiful models. One of the male creative directors stated: “we were looking for a normal woman, we actually needed her to be a little chubbier, we didn’t want to use a super fit girl for an ad about losing weight. The client made us change the model so many times that we ended up with the same fit model.”

Female creatives were more descriptive when it came to specifying the kind of women they were looking for in their castings. Most of them refer to the physical characteristics of the women needed. One of the female general creative directors stated: “We oversee cleaning products and although we are trying to change the traditional gender roles, the one that buys is the woman, so we look for women in our ads. Women between 35 and 45, that don’t look shabby or slave to the house, but cute, that you can believe she has kids, and looks like a real mom.” Another female director stated that: “For sanitary towels we were looking for young

girls, pretty obviously. Why pretty? Because it makes the ad look better. It doesn't mean that she must be thin, but she must be pretty. Even if we are looking for a boy or a man, they have to be pretty." Lastly, another female creative stated: "In general, we look for woman that are not obese, that are young, that look not older than 40 years old."

Few female creatives complained about the clients preference for oversexualized models. One of them explained that when it comes to using models for promotional events the women need to be pretty, she stated: "In the agency we try to dress the girls in a modest way, but I've seen booth girls at events with really tight clothes, this attracts the attention of dirty old men that go and take pictures with the models. I can't image what the women must feel like." Another female creative shared an experience during a casting for an advertising of bottled water: "We (the agency) chose a black woman that danced incredibly, she was perfect for the part, but the client wanted to use a blonde 17-year-old girl with big breasts. During the shooting of the ad, he sat down and stared at the girl dancing, like a pervert. It was disgusting."

In terms of the brands that tend to use attractive women in their advertising, again the industry of alcoholic beverages, beer specifically, was mentioned by several creatives. A female creative stated: "the beer industry always use young, skinny, pretty girls. In the world of beer there are no fat people" while a male creative director stated: "I was part of the casting crew for a beer ad, they were looking for female models. I was also part of a casting for a banking product directed to women, they included a black woman, a disabled woman and women in their fifties and sixties. In the case of the beer the client was a man, in the case of the banking product the client was a woman."

The creatives explained that often the agency is not in charge of the actual process of casting, but they hire a casting company that helps them find the top 5 or 10 actors that could

work for their advertising. They explained that casting companies have trouble finding regular people that can act, they are mostly good at finding attractive people for advertising.

Male creatives tended to highlight the use of regular/normal/natural people in their advertising. Both female and male creatives refer to the use of stereotypes when looking for the cast of an ad. They mentioned several times the following descriptions: “real mom” and “normal family.” When describing what, a normal family looked like, they mentioned the mother, the father, the son and the daughter. Some creatives (both male and female) mentioned other stereotypes: “fashion girl/rich girl”, “the girl next door”, “the angelic bride-to-be”, “the hipster”, “the funny guy”, among others.

Lastly, two female general creative directors highlighted that since women make most of the consumption decisions, women tended to be included in the ads for products of mass consumption, one of them stated: “There is a bigger chance to fall into stereotypes with mass consumption products, because the women are the ones buying the products.”

4.9.Discrimination

Most female creatives have suffered from subtle, covert and overt sexual discrimination in their workplace, 11 female creatives confirmed being discriminated either by clients or by their bosses and co-workers, only five female creatives confirmed not suffering from any discrimination and one woman stated that she felt more-or-less discriminated. On the other hand, ten male creatives stated that they have never felt discriminated at their workplace, only two have felt some kind of discrimination, one due to his skin color and the other in terms of gender related characteristics.

Female creatives shared the experiences they have been through with different bosses and clients; these experiences go from being sexually harassed at the workplace to feeling ignored at work. In terms of experiencing overt sexual discrimination, the person who

preferred to be identified as neither woman or man stated: “An old boss in another agency hit on me and I rejected him, so he started being horrible to me. He didn’t approve my designs or he would make me do three different designs for one project. He ended up firing me. He alleged it was due to an ‘organizational restructuring’.” A female general creative director also shared her experience of covert sexual discrimination while she was pregnant several years ago: “When I was pregnant, and still waiting for my residence paperwork in Costa Rica, my boss tried to pay me half the salary during the breast feeding period.” Another woman also stated: “I had a boss that didn’t let women speak, he will have conversations of an hour but it was just him talking. With the guys he would get along pretty well, but he didn’t like working with women, and he would exclude women from big projects.”

More subtle sexism was also experienced by female creatives, one female creative (designer) stated that one of her former bosses made a sexist comment regarding her work: “I had a boss that told me he liked my designs because I designed ‘like a man’. I told him that he shouldn’t say that, and he said that he was only highlighting that I don’t add butterflies and flowers to everything I do.” Another female creative explained feeling uncomfortable when listening to comments from her co-workers: “when I hear them say ‘what a drag working with women’ is, I feel very offended.” A female creative director also stated: “There is always the weekly joke that your co-workers make: ‘are you on your period?’ If a man is angry about something or is not in a good mood, it’s ok, it’s normal, but if the woman is not in a good mood then she is on her period.”

The interactions with certain clients also evidenced discrimination towards female creatives. Five female creatives stated having felt discrimination coming from a client. A female creative stated: “I had a client that was super sexist, when women talked he would not listen, he will wait for the male creatives to repeat what we said. He didn’t take our opinion in consideration at all.” Another female creative director also stated: “I had a client, a woman,

who had a crush on the male creative director of the agency, so she often ignored what I had to say and only listened to him.” Few female creatives also explained the discrimination they have felt when it comes to assigning accounts or dealing with certain accounts, especially with cars, sports and beer accounts. One of the female creatives (designer) stated: “There are brands that all their brand managers are men, like beer brands, and in the meetings with the agency only men attend, they don’t take the opinion of women under consideration”, another female creative also stated: “A female co-worker and I were involved in a brainstorming for a car account, and the client asked us: ‘But, do you know what you are talking about? Do you know about cars? He said it with a horrible tone.”

Few male creative directors stated that they haven’t experienced sexual discrimination in the workplace because they are not women, one of them stated: “No, probably because I’m a man. There is a lot of mansplaining going on.” Another creative director highlighted the fact that women need to work harder to get the same recognition men get: “I think there is an issue of not trusting the capacity of a woman, until they become famous or well-recognized.”

Two male creatives stated that, even though they haven’t felt discrimination they have felt a little underestimated when they have been overseeing a women’s account. One of them stated: “they (the client) don’t think that a man can oversee a campaign directed to women only.” One male creative also stated feeling discriminated but because of the color of his skin: “Maybe my skin is not as dark as to be considered a black man, but I am biracial, and I have heard comments about black people that are totally out of context, from both clients and colleagues. When it comes to my colleagues I usually tell them that it makes me uncomfortable, but with the clients I just stay quiet.”

4.10 Summary

Perspectives: Female and male creatives had different perspectives regarding the involvement of women in creative advertising, feminism and gender. Female creatives were

more conscious of the difficulties they face every day in the industry. Even though most of them expressed being happy and proud of being part of the creative advertising industry, they admit having trouble dealing with sexism, the demanding schedules and the life/work balance. On the other hand, male creatives are not as aware of the difficulties that women face in the industry. For male creatives, the lack of involvement of female creatives is due to the small pool of female creatives existing in the market today, lack of confidence and their proclivity towards other careers with less demanding tasks, such as account managers.

Feminism: Most female creatives identify themselves with feminism, there are few that don't. On the contrary, most male creatives don't identify with feminism, and those who identify with the movement do it openly. For those female and male creatives who don't identify with the movement, feminism is equally damaging as sexism (machismo).

Gender: When asked about their gender, women were more open to discuss their gender than men. Female creatives defined themselves as having masculine personalities. On the other hand, men didn't elaborate much about it, and those who did focused on their tolerance towards sexual diversity.

A good creative: When it came to describing the qualities that they look for in a creative for their agency, both male and female directors gave subjective characteristics as examples, such as: passionate, cool person, good taste in music and clothing, interesting person, etc. Meanwhile, some of the objective characteristics mentioned by women were: excellent writing abilities and use of proper grammar, while the objective characteristics looked for by male creative directors were the quality of the portfolio and the awards received.

Ideas: According to most creatives, ideas are based or guided by the client's brief and it is key to have an objective or a problem to solve in order to facilitate the brainstorm of ideas. During the brainstorm, creatives prefer to work in small groups. Although, everybody's

ideas are supposedly valued, often designers don't feel very comfortable sharing their ideas or they feel like their ideas are not as valued as copy-writer's ideas; when sexist ideas are suggested by their co-workers, women tend to be more willing to say something against it than men are, but when it comes to say something when the clients suggest it, only two male creative director admitted saying something to clients. In terms of getting inspiration when creating a campaign or an ad directed towards women, female creatives recounted getting their inspiration mainly out of their personal experiences, or the experiences of their female relatives and friends. On the other hand, male creatives base their inspiration mainly on market researches and research they make themselves by talking to women.

In terms of stereotypical ideas and the use of attractive women in advertising, both female and male creatives agreed that there is a beauty standard in advertising that they are asked to meet or that they feel they must meet. Both find it normal to use "booth babes" or attractive women and men to promote a product during an event. Even though creatives find this marketing technique normal, they report trying to fight against the oversexualizing of these women, and they suggest the involvement of more natural-looking women and dressed in more conservative clothing, but the client's tendency is to ask for the oversexualized prototype.

In terms of why advertising is still focused on traditional gender roles, female creatives assign primary responsibility to the clients and society in general, while male creatives give responsibility for this to the target audience (the women that buy the products and feel identified with the messaging). Both, male and female creatives believe that these messages are still alive because they help companies increase their profits, and because there is still a market out there that relate to these traditional ideas.

Education: All creatives agreed that they didn't learn much about creativity during their time in university. On the other hand, those who attended a public university did receive

courses with a heavy focus on gender, while those who attended private universities didn't. Most creatives defined sexist ads as those that objectified women and men or reinforced traditional gender roles.

The clients: Most creatives agreed that the client had the power to influence the final idea. The client owns the brand and they are the ones paying for the advertising. Some creatives also highlighted the responsibility of the agency on knowing how to sell the idea to the client and the importance of earning the trust of the client.

In terms of deciding who appears in the ads, the casting of people is very much influenced by the client, the agency makes suggestions, but in the end, it's the client's decision. There is an evident conflict regarding the ethnicity portrayed in advertising, there is a resistance in the industry to involve black or blonde people in the advertising. There is also an important relation between the color of the skin and the social class that it represents, few creatives mentioned that brown and black people symbolized a lower class, and some clients don't want their brand associated with it/them.

Even though there is a tendency in advertising agencies to create ads that include more natural/normal looking people, the client is afraid to include people that don't comply with the western stereotype of beauty (as described before by Ross and Kilbourne: tall, slender, light-skinned, Caucasian features and well-dressed), because they feel it could damage their brand.

Discrimination: In terms of discrimination it is evident that women suffer from discrimination more often than men do. Most men reported not experiencing sexual discrimination while working in the advertising industry.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The lack of women in the creative advertising industry in Costa Rica is just a reflection of a worldwide phenomenon. The sexist work environment, demanding industry and its draining schedule, while considered normal by creatives, are not only the main obstacles for women to get ahead in the creative advertising industry, but a result of the oppression and labor exploitation from the capitalist misogynist system, in which advertising has been a key player. The disguising of draining schedules and poor benefits as passion and dedication for the industry has convinced creatives working in advertising that it's ok to be exploited. They have been convinced that to be successful in the industry they must make huge sacrifices in their personal lives. These sacrifices, as it happens in all industries, are not the same for men and women. In the advertising industry, women's work is judged differently and they are expected to comply with the traditional gender role when they become mothers. These pressures add to their frustration when their ideas are rejected, their work is criticized and when they are excluded from accounts, just for being women. This frustration is later judged by their colleagues (both female and male) and superiors and attributed to their sensitivity, a characteristic that is perceived as a weakness in a hyper masculine industry.

Society's expectation of what the role of women should be, contributes to the many obstacles that female creatives have to overcome in order to achieve higher positions. It is a reality that, in Costa Rica, traditional gender roles are still expected from men and women; women are still expected to be the ones in charge of the house work and children, while men are expected to be successful professionally. When creatives are expected to stay at work late every day, there is an incredible pressure to achieve excellence and demonstrating they are passionate enough for the industry; for women, it is double the pressure. Women need to think about achieving excellence at work, while being responsible for their family's

wellbeing. This combination of obstacles leads them to either abandon the career once and for all or become their own bosses and start their own business. On the other hand, both female and male creatives believe that women, in general, lack passion or get frustrated easily. Passion, according to the industry, is what makes them stay and struggle, is what makes them overcome frustration and the overload of work. Passion, in advertising, is defined by the hours of family and personal time you are willing to sacrifice in order to satisfy your client's needs. Family time should also come second when colleagues want to brainstorm at the bar, after a long day at work. Some female creatives stated not having time or wanting to spend time at bars with their co-workers, some of them because they need to get back to their homes and take care of their children or simply spend time with their partners. This dynamic, of creative departments in Costa Rica, is only a reflection of the dynamics worldwide; male creatives tend to have more free time to spend at the bar bonding with their colleagues and coming up with ideas for campaigns, than women have. The lack of interaction, after work, between male and female creatives affect the influence that women can have in the creation of messages and ideas, because it is in places like bars where some of the brainstorms happen and where some female voices are missed.

Female voices are important in every industry, but they are essential in an industry with a history of reproducing sexism, and in which the main business is portraying an ideal world full of ideal bodies; when female voices are missing, that means that a female perspective on life and female experiences are being left out of the loop. Few women in the creative advertising industry means fewer women involved in brainstorming sessions and in the decision making over ideas and campaigns that are created. Even though women can be sexist too, and not all women are feminist or educated on gender perspective, the results of this research show that, from the agencies involved, there are significantly more women than men who considered themselves feminists, and more women than men that admit to speaking

their minds against sexist ideas (or jokes) when they hear them. This suggests that having more feminist female voices involved during brainstorming sessions could lead to a change in the right direction, away from sexism in advertising.

There is a big confusion of what feminism is, but, the lack of understanding of feminism was more common on the men interviewed than on the women interviewed, which shows that in these agencies women are more aware of what the movement is all about and the importance of achieving gender equality and defying the traditional gender roles. On the other hand, the normalization of stereotypical beauty as a standard to cast the characters in ads is an obstacle in the mission of eliminating sexism from advertising. Both female and male creatives consider it normal to use attractive people to promote products. Although most of them admitted feeling uncomfortable using oversexualized women to promote products in a venue, they did not oppose completely to the use of attractive people (mostly women) in general, because it helps sell, and if it gets results then the clients will continue asking for it.

One of the biggest obstacles to changing sexist messaging in advertising identified in this research, is the client's involvement and influence on the final idea. The traditional gender roles and the same old advertising, where you see the woman cooking while her husband waits for the meal, are based on market researches that show that women are the ones buying food and detergent. These researches are the weapon of choice for the clients to base their decision making on. Clients decide to portray women as housewives, because it is the woman who goes to the supermarket and buys the groceries. But perhaps, the biggest excuse for the client to keep requesting for these ads, is their fear to do something different, to make a statement outside the box. Most creatives agreed that their clients are fearful of the public's reaction if they change the plot of their ads. This fear is also reflected on a bigger scale on international and bigger brands. Society has a big role in influencing the creation of sexist advertising and, according to the creatives interviewed, advertising cannot change

completely if society is still promoting traditional gender roles. Creatives believe that if there are women out there who do consider themselves as the ones that should be in charge of the kitchen, or men that consider themselves “real men” “alpha males” and objectify women, then advertising is still going to be promoting these stereotypes. Few creatives assumed their responsibility as opinion shapers or their responsibility as communication professionals to educate the public and contribute to a better society.

It is not just society’s or the client’s fault that these ads keep being reproduced. There is a responsibility of the agency when producing this kind of advertising, this responsibility relies on the fact that a good creative should be able to hold up and sell their idea to the client. If their idea is bold, outside the box and defies the traditional gender roles and the usual sexism, then they should push harder to sell it to the client. If advertising has the power to create “new meanings of what is fashionable”, as Gennaro stated in 2009, couldn’t advertising make feminism a fashionable way to communicate with target audiences? Unfortunately, for some agencies it is easier to go with the flow, and to accept sexist ideas when they come backed-up by market research that allegedly reflects the target audience’s insights and values; it is easier to follow their client’s orders, because the client pays. No matter the gender, both female and male creatives agreed that whatever the client asks for should be given to them. Yes, there are suggestions and recommendations that come from the agency, but, if in the end the client wants to go with an idea that seems sexist, old or boring, the agency must make sure to comply with the client, because there is a matter of profit that cannot be denied, there is the need of paying salaries, but most importantly the need to keep the account, to gain the trust of the client and to keep them coming back for more.

The blame for the production of sexist advertising is often given to advertising agencies, but there is also a lot of sexism that comes from the companies paying for the advertising. Companies guide their decisions based on researches, their expectations and

beliefs about their brand and sales. Even though it is very difficult, perhaps impossible, to directly relate the use of merely advertising with an increase in sales, this keeps being an excuse for companies and advertisers to keep reproducing traditional gender roles in their commercials, according to the companies and advertisers these ads work and keep selling, but there is no precise method to prove this. Then, why is this excuse still given by companies and advertisers?

Creatives also explained that the main element that guides creative ideas comes from the creative brief, given by the client. A creative brief contains the objective of the brand, their communication or sales problem and their target audience. This is why, sexism is so common in beer, car, food, home appliances and cleaning products, because these products are associated with stereotypical target audiences. In the case of beer ads, and one national beer specifically, the target is a “macho man” or “alpha male”, their advertising is always linked to voluptuous blonde women and messages that highlight what it means to be a “real men”. Therefore, it’s key to acknowledge that the lack of education in terms of gender perspective is not only a problem in the industry of advertising, but also with marketing professionals or business owners. The clients are usually represented by marketing managers or brand managers. These professionals tend to have little education regarding gender perspective or feminism, unless they study in a public university; where all students are forced to take courses where they learn more about sexism, gender and feminism.

Clients and advertising professionals require a higher knowledge in terms of gender perspectives, but they also require a better sense of social inclusion. Clients, in particular, feel more open to discriminate black people and brown people from their advertising. The client’s excuse that Costa Rica does not have a significant African descendant population, ends up being a discriminative practice, showing black and brown people only when they need to portray poverty or low income families, or simply by not showing them at all. The

passiveness of the advertising industry, in terms of suggesting and recommending their clients to be ethnically and socially inclusive, turns them into allies in the discrimination that these populations suffer. There was no difference between the answers of male creatives and female creatives when they explained their reaction when the client refuses to include a brown woman or men in an ad; simply because it will relate their brand to low income individuals. Some creatives even support the idea of using different people when a product is directed to a higher-class sector. The color of the skin is related directly with the income/class of an individual, and this is normalized in the advertising industry.

Even if several women interviewed in this research admitted trying to change the sexist and stereotypical messaging in advertising, there is still a lack of willingness to change the stereotypical western beauty standards by which actors and models are still measured. There is also a lack of willingness, from the majority of female creatives, to challenge and eliminate the use of attractive people to promote products in venues and events. Furthermore, most creatives interviewed in this research assured that there is a tendency to look for more “natural looking” people, but, there is still a lack of disposition from the clients to assume this trend for their brands.

The women, more so than the men, interviewed in this research understand the importance of eliminating sexism from advertising, several of them are feminist committed to change the portrayal of traditional gender roles and diminish the objectification of women and men. Nevertheless, they still need to defy more intensively their clients and colleagues, if they want to also challenge the perception of beauty in the country and its covert relation with skin color and class.

5.2 Recommendations

There are two levels of action that should be taken under consideration in order to have an impact on the advertising industry. On a large scale, we should focus on improving the work conditions for women in the industry and in a lower scale, we should focus on creating awareness in the industry.

5.2.1 Large scale actions

- Better working conditions for women could help ease the overload of responsibilities and frustration. Flexible hours for single mothers and both parents would help retain more women in the creative advertising industry, and would assure agencies the involvement and participation of female voices in the development of ideas and campaigns. In addition, the inclusion of daycare services in the agency for parents with small children could help balance the responsibility of parenthood.
- Better laws in terms of paternity and maternity leave would promote the shared responsibility of raising the children. In Costa Rica, only maternity leave is protected by law (article 95 of the labor code). Women get four months in total of maternity leave, one month before they give birth and three months after. In terms of paternity leave, it is not protected by law, fathers can get paternity leave if the private company is willing to give it to them, but they are not obliged by law to do so. This law is sexist, due to the fact that it assumes that it is only the responsibility of the women to be with the newborn. The creation of a law that protects fathers and gives them the time to spend with their newborn, helps close the gender gap in society, which could potentially be reflected in the messages that advertising companies create.

- The labour exploitation of men and women in the advertising industry should be penalized by the State. Private entities, like advertising agencies, are not complying with the Labour Code and should be forced to pay for extra hours when their employees work more than ten hours a day or when they exceed the 48 hours a week. Also, an easier, more efficient and anonymous system to denounce companies' abuses should be promoted by the Ministry of Labour. These illegal practices shouldn't be normalized by the employees. Furthermore, employees should be evaluated by results and not by hours spend in the office.
- Creating safe environments, free of accusations and judgment, for girls in high school and universities could help motivate women to be more creative, bold and express themselves freely. Promoting creative workshops, given by creative women to women, in schools could help teenagers explore their creative side before they decide to pick their careers, or even their area or expertise in advertising.
- The Ministry of Education should promote gender perspective courses throughout private schools and universities, in order to raise awareness regarding gender violence and gender discrimination.
- The INAMU (National Institute of Women) should create awareness and educate public in general regarding feminism, to eliminate the confusion and rejection that the movement have in some sectors of the population.

5.2.2 Smaller scale actions

- Sharing the results of this research with the Advertising and Business Faculties of private and public universities could help raise awareness, not only among professors, but among students. Advertising professors might be more

conscious about promoting creative work among their female students, and students could feel more motivated to defy the stereotypes of the industry.

While Business and Marketing professors might become more aware of the repercussions that market researches have in society, business students can also be more aware of gender perspective when making business decisions to increase sales.

- Sharing the results of the research with Comunidad (Association of Communication Agencies of Costa Rica) could help distribute the results among communications professionals, creating awareness in the employed creatives and agencies in general. Furthermore, sharing the results with the people interviewed could help them get a wider look at the problem behind the lack of women in creative advertising and the role of women (and men) in the creation of sexist advertising.
- Developing workshops with Advertising and Communication students, focusing on intersectionality and feminism could help these students incorporate these ideas into their brainstorm, during class or once they are already incorporated in an advertising agency.
- Follow up researches need to be done regarding the following topics:
 - A quantitative study regarding the number of women and men that choose, or are thinking about choosing, the creative path or the account management path in advertising, right before graduating from the university. Having some data in terms of the pool of professionals that are available, might help in discovering if the lack of women in creative advertising is a matter of less women applying for the positions or not.

- The causes of more women choosing the account manager career rather than the creative career in advertising. Talking to female advertising employees and students at public and private universities about their reasons to work as account managers instead of creatives could give some perspective into what needs to be done to achieve the goal of increasing the number of women applying for creatives positions.
- A research focusing on racism and classism in the advertising industry is vital. The lack of representation of Afro descendants and indigenous people in Costa Rican reinforces the stereotypical western beauty standards, and discriminates an important percentage of the population.
- Understanding the motives that lead women to work as booth babes. Their experiences with clients and public in general and their life and education background could be an interesting research. The results could help understand why women feel the need to do this kind of job instead of something else that would not require to sell their image.
- Most creatives talked about advertising as “aspirational” (the theory about advertising backs this up). Therefore, a social study with a sample that could represent Costa Rica’s actual population, could be conducted in order to prove if advertising is more efficient when it involves stereotypical models (western beauty standards) or when it involves people that look like the majority of the country. The results could help promote the involvement of more natural looking people and people from different ethnicities and economic backgrounds. It could also motivate casting agencies to start incorporating a wider range of ethnicities, body types and facial features in their catalogs.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Datos de 2015

TOP 50 ANUNCIANTES

AGENCIAS DE MEDIOS

Anunciantes	Share		Agencia de Medios	Share
UNILEVER	2,5		PUBLIMARK LOWE	11,4
COLGATE PALMOLIVE	2,4		TRIBU DDB	9,7
ICE	1,8		CAMEDIA	8,0
BAYER	1,7		STARCOM	6,8
BANCO NACIONAL DE COSTA RICA	1,7		GARNIER BBDO	6,3
THE COCA-COLA COMP	1,6		OMD	6,2
CERVECERIA CR	1,6		MCCANN ERICKSON	5,1
CAJA CR SEGURO SOC	1,5		ASESORES YOUNG & R	5,1
SC JOHNSONS	1,4		OGILVY	3,4
TELEFONICA	1,3		HWP MEDIA	3,1
AMERICA MOVIL	1,3		JOTABEQU GREY	2,7
ABBOTT LABORATORIE	1,3		QUIMICA PUBLICIDAD	2,1
BANCO POPULAR	1,2		LEO BURNETT	2,1
MC DONALDS	1,2		TBWA	1,9
NESTLE MAGGI	1,0		MEDIAVEST	1,9
WALMART	1,0		PHD	1,8
RECKIT BENCKISER	1,0		LA TRES PUBLICIDAD	1,7
PROCTER & GAMBLE	1,0		LA CUATRO	1,6
COSEVI	1,0		ALTAMIRA	1,5
GOLLO	0,9		MULTIMEDIOS GYG	1,2

IMPORTADORA MONGE	0,9	HOUSERAPP	1,2
BANCO DE CR	0,9	HOUSE	1,1
GENOMMA LABORATORI	0,8	INTERPROM	1,0
JPS	0,8	CREA DRAFT	1,0
TSE	0,8	J WALTER THOMPSON	1,0
CORP MASXMENOS	0,8	TOTEM PUBLICIDAD	0,9
DEMASA	0,8		
PURDY MOTOR	0,8	AVANCE WWP	
DOS PINOS	0,7	BUSHA360	
PINTURAS SUR	0,7	Ideas MCW Comunicación	
CINEPOLIS	0,7		
TALAMANCA	0,7		
VEINSA	0,7		
EPA	0,7		
GLAXO SMITH KLINE	0,6		
BANCO SJ	0,6		
AUTO ENSAMBLADORA	0,6		
TIGO	0,6		
KRAFT FOODS INT	0,6		
SCOTIABANK	0,6		
LETERAGO S.A.	0,6		
KENTUCKY	0,6		
CREDOMATIC	0,5		
MAXI PALI	0,5		
SARDIMAR	0,5		
-PALI	0,5		
TACO BELL	0,5		
PANI	0,5		
TELE CABLE	0,5		

GRUPO Q	0,5
*** OTROS ***	52,1

Appendix B



Appendix C



Appendix D

YouTube

rinso comercial



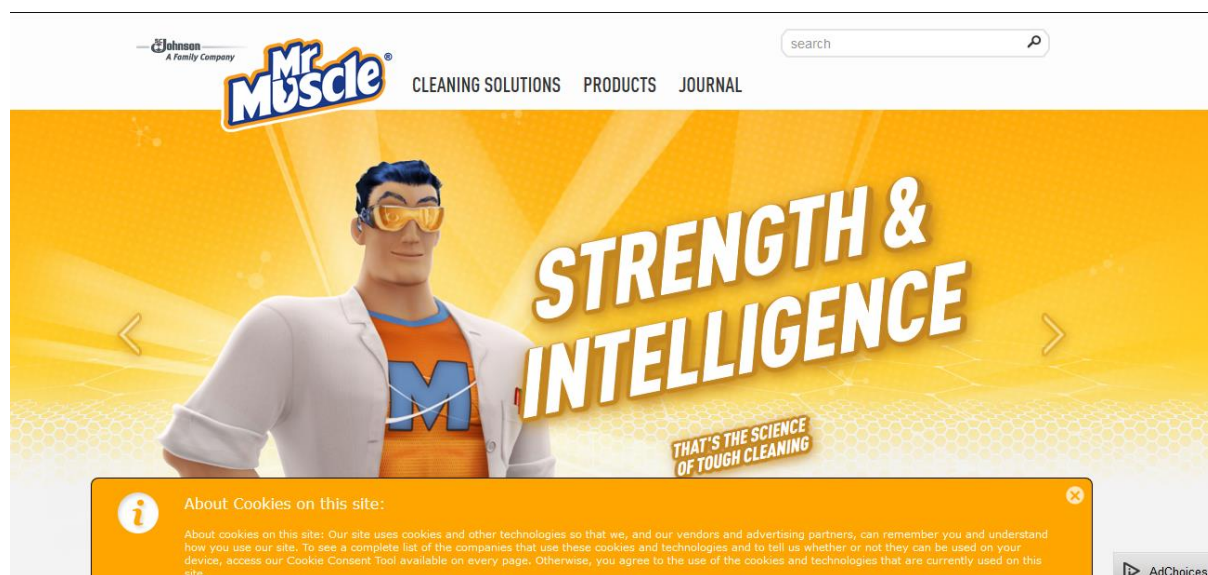
Nuevo Rinso con Cápsulas de Perfume

Rinso Chile

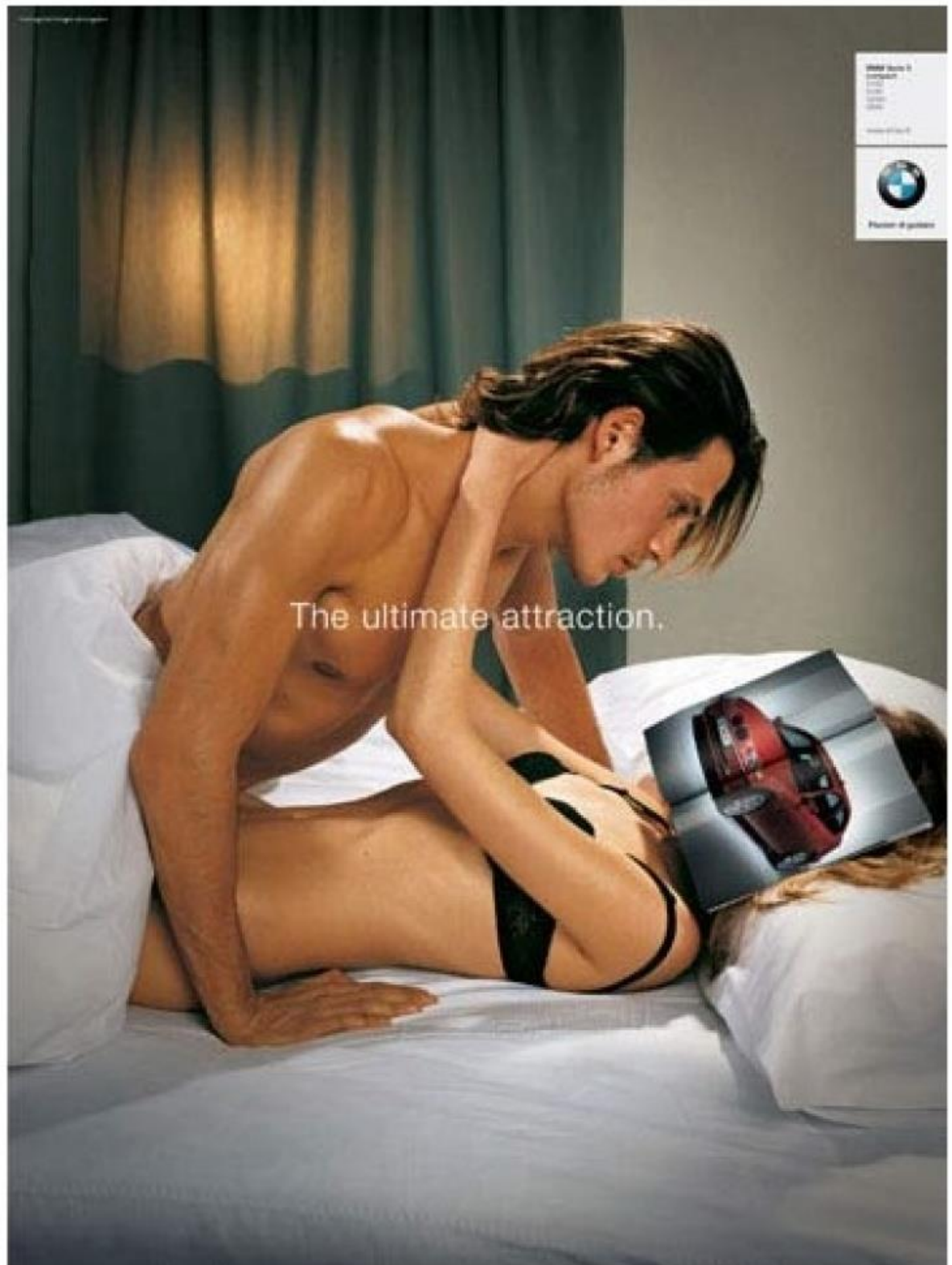
Suscribirse 368

1,288,153 vistas

Appendix E



Appendix F



Appendix G

Thank you for your time and collaboration to this study. The interview that you are going to be a part of will help me complete the research for my thesis as a Media, Peace and Conflict Studies Programme student at the University for Peace. The research focuses on the role of women in the creative process that lead to the creation of sexist advertising. The answers that you will be giving today will have complete anonymity, your name will not be shared in the final report of this thesis and the name of your agency will be changed to ensure confidentiality. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and it will only be used by Diana Rodríguez during the process of transcription, translation and analysis, it will not be shared with anybody else. If you do not feel comfortable answering some of the questions you have the right to skip it and/or decline to answer.

1. What is your name and position in this agency?
 Name _____
 Position _____
2. Age
 - a. 18 – 23
 - b. 24- 29
 - c. 30- 35
 - d. 36 – 41
 - e. 41 or more
3. For how long have you been working in the agency?
 - a. Less than a year
 - b. A year
 - c. Two years
 - d. Three years or more
4. What are the characteristics that you are looking for in a creative agent for your department?
5. How do you feel being the only woman (or one of the few women) working in the creative department?
6. Tell me about the brainstorming sessions you have as a department when you need to develop ideas for a campaign? How are they structured? Guide me through the process.
7. When you are developing a campaign or ad for a product directed to women, where do you get your inspiration?
8. Have you ever participated in a creative session where your colleagues or you (please specify who) are suggesting to use "attractive" women to sell the product? What was the product? What was your position during the session? Were you in favor or against it and why?
9. What did your University teach you on creativity and ads effectiveness?
10. Did your university ever mention something about being gender sensitive and stereotyping in advertising?

11. What would you define as a sexist ad?
12. What do you think about advertising that portrays women as the only one that does the laundry, cooks or take care of the children? Why do you think we keep getting these ads?
13. Have you heard a colleague of yours propose an idea that reinforces the stereotypes of women? What was the idea? Did you say something to him/her? Why did you think it was wrong?
14. How often do you hear these kind of ideas from your colleagues?
 - a. All the time
 - b. Often
 - c. Not very often
 - d. Never
15. How much influence does a client have in the final idea for an ad or campaign?
16. Has a client ever asked your department to include a certain type of woman or man in the ad? Tell me about it.
17. Have you ever been involved in the casting of women for an ad? What kind of woman were you looking for? What was the product?
18. Have you ever felt discriminated by a client, colleague or supervisor for your gender? When? How did that affect your work and your personal life?
19. Why do you think there are more men than women working in your department?
20. Do you consider yourself a feminist?
 - a. Yes__ Why?
 - b. No__ Why?
21. How do you identify yourself?
 - a. Woman
 - b. Man
 - c. Other _____

Appendix H

Thank you for your time and collaboration to this study. The interview that you are going to be a part of will help me complete the research for my thesis as a Media, Peace and Conflict Studies Programme student at the University for Peace. The research focuses on the role of women in the creative process that lead to the creation of sexist advertising. The answers that you will be giving today will have complete anonymity, your name will not be shared in the final report of this thesis and the name of your agency will be changed to ensure confidentiality. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and it will only be used by Diana Rodríguez during the process of transcription, translation and analysis, it will not be shared with anybody else. If you do not feel comfortable answering some of the questions you have the right to skip it and/or decline to answer.

1. What is your name and position in this agency?

Name _____

Position _____

2. Age

a. 18 – 23

b. 24- 29

c. 30- 35

d. 36 - 41

e. 41 or more

3. For how long have you been working in the agency?

a. Less than a year

b. A year

c. Two years

d. Three years or more

4. What are the characteristics that you are looking for in a creative agent for your department?

5. Tell me about the brainstorming sessions you have as a department when you need to develop ideas for a campaign? How are they structured? Guide me through the process.

6. When you are developing a campaign or ad for a product directed to women, where do you get your inspiration?

7. Have you ever participated in a creative session where your colleagues or you (please specify who) are suggesting to use "attractive" women to sell the product? What was

the product? What was your position during the session? Were you in favor or against it and why?

8. What did your University teach you on creativity and ads effectiveness?
9. Did your university ever mention something about being gender sensitive and stereotyping in advertising?
10. What would you define as a sexist ad?
11. What do you think about advertising that portrays women as the only one that does the laundry, cooks or take care of the children?
12. Have you heard a colleague of yours propose an idea that reinforces the stereotypes of women? What was the idea? Did you say something to him/her? Why did you think it was wrong?
13. How often do you hear these kind of ideas from your colleagues?
 - a. All the time
 - b. Often
 - c. Not very often
 - d. Never
14. How much influence does a client have in the final idea for an ad or campaign?
15. Has a client ever asked your department to include a certain type of woman or man in the ad? Tell me about it.
16. Have you ever been involved in the casting of women for an ad? What kind of woman were you looking for? What was the product?
17. Have you ever felt discriminated by a client, colleague or supervisor for your gender? When? How did that affect your work and your personal life?
18. Why do you think there are more men than women working in your department?
19. Do you consider yourself a feminist?

Yes__Why?

No__ Why?

20. How do you identify yourself?

☐ Woman

☐ Man

☐ Other_____

Appendix I

Thank you for your time and collaboration to this study. The interview that you are going to be a part of will help me complete the research for my thesis as a Media, Peace and Conflict Studies Programme student at the University for Peace. The research focuses on the role of women in the creative process that lead to the creation of sexist advertising. The answers that you will be giving today will have complete anonymity, your name will not be shared in the final report of this thesis and the name of your agency will be changed to ensure confidentiality. This interview will be recorded, with your permission, and it will only be used by Diana Rodríguez during the process of transcription, translation and analysis, it will not be shared with anybody else. If you do not feel comfortable answering some of the questions you have the right to skip it and/or decline to answer.

1. What is your name and position in this agency?

Name _____

Position _____

2. Age

a. 18 – 23

b. 24- 29

c. 30- 35

d. 36 - 41

e. 41 or more

3. For how long have you been working in the agency?

e. Less than a year

f. A year

g. Two years

h. Three years or more

4. How do you feel being the only woman or one of the few women working in the creative department?

5. Tell me about the brainstorming sessions you have as a department when you need to develop ideas for a campaign. How are they structured? Guide me through the process.

6. When you are developing a campaign or ad for a product directed to women, where do you get your inspiration for ideas?

7. Have you ever participated in a creative session where your colleagues or you (please specify who) are suggesting to use "attractive" women to sell the product? What was

the product? What was your position during the session? in favor or against it and why?

8. What did your University teach you on creativity and ads effectiveness?
9. Did your university ever mention something about being gender sensitive and stereotyping in advertising? If yes, how was it mentioned, in what class?
10. What would you define as a sexist ad?
11. What do you think about advertising that portrays women as the only one that does the laundry, cooks or take care of the children? Why do you think we keep getting these ads?
12. Have you heard a colleague of yours propose an idea that reinforces the stereotypes of women? What was the idea? Did you say something to him/her? Why did you think it was wrong?
13. How often do you hear these kind of ideas from your colleagues?
 - a. All the time
 - b. Often
 - c. Not very often
 - d. Never
14. How much influence does a client have in the final idea for an ad or campaign?
15. Has a client ever asked your department to include a certain type of woman or man in the ad? Tell me about it.
16. Have you ever been involved in the casting of women for an ad? What kind of woman were you looking for? What was the product?
17. Do you feel like your ideas are heard?
18. Have you ever felt discriminated by a client, colleague or supervisor for your gender? When? How did that affect your work and your personal life?
19. Do you consider yourself a feminist?

Yes ____ why?

No ____ why?

20. How do you identify yourself?

☐ Woman

☐ Man

☐ Other _____