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# Bibliometric Analysis of Research on Women and Advertising: Differences in Print and Audiovisual Media

Análisis bibliométrico de la investigación sobre mujer y publicidad: diferencias en medios impresos y audiovisuales

## ABSTRACT

The media in general, and advertising in particular, are considered as important agents of socialization, including gender-related issues. Thus the legislator has focused on the regulation of the images of women and men in advertisements. However, regulations prohibiting sexist advertising in Spain pay specific attention to audiovisual media. The objective of this study is to check whether this unequal interest also takes place in academic research. This paper analyzes the differences in the scientific literature (national and international) on the sexism in advertising depending on the media. Specifically we examine the methodology, techniques and ways to measure concepts. In order to do this, we conducted a systematic review of studies on gender and advertising published in Spanish or English between 1988 and 2010 in seven databases –Spanish (Dialnet, Compludoc, ISOC), or international (Scopus, Sociological Abstracts, PubMed and Eric)–. The main results of the 175 texts analyzed show that, unlike legislative controls, the academy has studied mainly sexism in advertising in print media, although interest by analysis of the treatment of gender in the discourse of advertising audiovisual seems to be increasing.

## RESUMEN

Los medios de comunicación en general, y la publicidad en particular, son considerados importantes agentes de socialización, incluso en temas relacionados con el género. No en vano el legislador se ha preocupado por la regulación de las imágenes de mujeres y hombres transmitidas en los anuncios. Sin embargo, las normativas que prohíben la publicidad sexista en España prestan específica atención a los medios audiovisuales en detrimento del resto. En este escenario, el objetivo del presente trabajo es comprobar si este dispar interés según soporte se reproduce en la investigación. Así, se consideran las diferencias en la producción científica (nacional e internacional) sobre el sexismo publicitario en función del medio de comunicación observando específicamente la metodología, las técnicas y la forma concreta de medir este concepto en los artículos. Para ello se realizó una revisión sistemática de los estudios sobre publicidad y género publicados en español o en inglés entre 1988 y 2010 indexados en siete importantes bases de datos –españolas (Dialnet, Compludoc, Isoc) e internacionales (Scopus, Sociological Abstracts, PubMed y Eric)–. A partir del análisis de los 175 textos seleccionados, los resultados apuntan que, a diferencia de los controles legislativos, la academia ha estudiado mayoritariamente el sexismo publicitario en los medios impresos, aunque el interés por el análisis del tratamiento de género en los discursos publicitarios audiovisuales parece irse acrecentando.

## KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Legislation, public policy, advertising, sexism, audiovisual, television, magazines, press.  
Legislación, política pública, publicidad, sexismo, audiovisual, televisión, revistas, prensa.

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## 1. Introduction

The media are considered to be important agents of socialisation (Dietz, 1998: 428; Messineo, 2008: 752) capable of influencing the ideas, values, attitudes and social and cultural beliefs of their audiences (Ibroscheva, 2007: 409). As such, the «mass media» are deemed to transmit ways of living and patterns of behaviour (Casado, 2005: 2).

In particular, it has been suggested that advertising –also an important agent of socialisation (Tsai, 2010: 423)– can disseminate cultural values (Kalliny & Gentry, 2007: 17) and can come to reinforce certain lifestyles and stereotypes (Royo, Aldás & al., 2005: 114). It is also understood that, within industrialised societies, the influence of commercial communication on men and women is on the rise (Díaz, Muñoz & Cáceres, 2009: 222). More specifically, and bearing in mind that advertisers frequently employ gender stereotypes (Zhang, Srisupandit & Cartwright, 2009: 684), advertisements' portrayals of women and men are perceived by audiences to be the standard images of both sexes (Zhou & Chen, 1997: 485). In effect, masculinity and femininity are conditioned by the cultural environment and not by nature or biology (Feasey, 2009: 358), so that femininity (and also masculinity) is transmitted through the media and varies from culture to culture (Frith, Shaw & Cheng, 2005: 56).

Based on these premises, it is not surprising that, while not all of the gender stereotypes used are sexist<sup>1</sup> (Jones & Reid, 2009: 20), there are nevertheless so many regulations governing the portrayal of men and women in advertising<sup>2</sup>. In Spain, there have been various regulatory changes since the beginning of this century which have been aimed at improving representations of gender in adverts. So it is that, following various amendments (and notably those introduced by Spain's 2004 Law Against Gender-Based Violence [the *Ley Orgánica de Medidas de Protección Integral contra la Violencia de Género*]), the country's General Advertising Act of 1988 (the *Ley General de Publicidad*) deems the discriminatory or degrading representation of women within commercial communication to be against the law when a) their bodies, or parts of their bodies, are used directly or specifically as simple objects with no relation to the product being advertised; b) their image is used in relation to stereotyped behaviours that encourage gender-based violence (*Ley General de Publicidad*, 1988).

In addition, Spain's Equal Opportunities Act of 2007 (the *Ley Orgánica para la Igualdad Efectiva de Mujeres y Hombres*) establishes that advertising which encourages discriminatory conduct as defined within

this Act will be deemed unlawful advertising in accordance with the provisions of general and institutional advertising and communication legislation (2007: 12.619).

But aside from these regulations, which refer to the portrayal of both sexes in advertising generically, Spain's legal framework establishes differences between how sexism in advertising is policed in the various media<sup>3</sup>, with specific regulations for the broadcast media.

In effect, since the so-called Television Without Borders Act in 1994 (the *Ley de televisión sin fronteras* [1994: 22.346] through which the European Council Directive 89/552/CEE on the Coordination of Certain Provisions Laid Down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action in Member States Concerning the Pursuit of Television Broadcasting Activities was incorporated into the Spanish Law) –an Law currently repealed by the General Audiovisual Communication Law (the *Ley General de la Comunicación Audiovisual* [2010: 30.204]– advertising which is broadcast on television and which shows discrimination based, among other things, on gender has been considered unlawful advertising. Law of 2010, due to the General Audiovisual Communication Law (2010: 30.174), this is now valid for all broadcast media: radio and television.

Thus this Act –an incorporation into the Spanish Law of the Audiovisual Communication Services Directive (*Directiva de Servicios de Comunicación Audiovisual*), which modifies the abovementioned 89/552/CEE European Council Directive of 2007– focuses specifically on advertising broadcast through audiovisual media (radio and television) and prohibits advertising which, among other things, offends people's dignity, promotes sexism or uses female images in a discriminatory or degrading way. It also deems it to be a serious offence to broadcast content which clearly encourages gender-related contempt, hatred or discrimination, among other things (General Audiovisual Communication Law, 2010: 30.195). Similarly, it stipulates that subscriber broadcasting services must not incite hatred or discrimination based on gender or any other personal or social circumstance and must respect human dignity and constitutional values, taking special care to eradicate conduct which fosters female inequality (General Audiovisual Communication Law, 2010: 30.167).

In contrast to this reinforced control of sexism on radio and television, the press world is characterised by a lack of regulatory standards within the sector (Salvador, 2008: 189) and must therefore defer to generic laws regarding the portrayal of women within

commercial communication (the 2004 Law Against Gender-Based Violence; the 2007 Equal Opportunities Act; and the 1988 General Advertising Act).

European legislators in general—and Spanish legislators in particular—appear to have paid unequal attention to the various media in which advertisements are run, resulting in prevention within the broadcast media but not within the press. There has traditionally been a process to bring television broadcasting regulations up to a stricter and higher standard than other media such as the press (Ariño, 2007: 13); a situation due, among other things, to the potential influence that the dominant medium—television—can have on individuals (Ariño, 2007: 13).

The lack of equal regulation across all media leads us to wonder whether this imbalance is due to scientific reasons and is reproduced within the research. Our question is whether sexism in advertising, which has been a topic of interest since the 1960s (Eisend, 2010: 418), has been studied differently in the printed press than in television, a medium which has aroused interest as to its effects (Furnham & Paltezer, 2010: 223).

Within such a context, this paper aims to round up the scientific literature on sexism in advertising within the different media, and specifically assess disparities in the following areas:

- The production of articles by year, publication, geographical location, language, gender of main author, authors and institution.
- Objects of study (the people observed and subject analysed).
- The concepts and terms used.
- Methodology, techniques and the precise way of measuring the concept (operationalisation).

## 2. Material and methods

To attain the aforementioned objectives we conducted a systematic review of texts relating to gender and advertising in the print media and television<sup>4</sup>.

The scope of study comprised all the articles relating to the topic of research which were published in English or Spanish between 1988 (year of the General Advertising Law)<sup>5</sup> and 2010 (the data having been gathered in the first quarter of 2011) in scientific journals indexed on multidisciplinary databases in Spain (Dial-

net, Compludoc and Isoc) and abroad (Scopus) and on specialist sociology (Sociological Abstracts), education (Eric) and medical (PubMed) databases<sup>6</sup>.

The main search strategy was to locate the following keywords in the title and/or abstract of the documents: «advertising and woman», «advertising and gender», «sexist advertising», «advertising and sexism», «advertising and stereotypes», «gender stereotypes and advertising», «advertising and gender discrimination», «advertising and sex discrimination», «advertising and discrimination» and «advertising and gender bias» on Sociological Abstracts, PubMed, Eric and Scopus. The same keywords, but in Spanish, were searched

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for on Dialnet, Compludoc and Isoc, resulting in English-language documents from the former group of databases and Spanish-language documents from the latter.

The second search strategy depended on the functionalities available on the various databases. Thus on Dialnet, which took the keywords from any part of the article, it was necessary to locate the keywords in the title and/or abstract individually. On Compludoc two searches were conducted: one to locate the concepts in the title, and the other to locate those in the abstract. On Isoc the subject areas were analysed collectively through a search by field, which meant that, like in the previous case, all the keywords were returned twice. On PubMed, Eric, Sociological Abstracts and Scopus the keywords in the title and the abstract were located directly. Where the database permitted, the searches were refined by date, language and type of document. Otherwise they were sorted manually.

Having located the texts, we selected only those works which met certain criteria for inclusion: empiri-

cal articles published in scientific journals which analysed either the portrayal of men and/or women in advertisements in the print media or on television; the public's perception of gender in advertising messages in the aforementioned media; or the situation of men and women in advertising agencies with reference to the print media or television. Literature reviews were thereby eliminated.

The choice of which works to analyse was made independently by two researchers in accordance with the aforementioned criteria (Deeks, 1998: 703, 708). Of the total documents found on the databases consulted, and based on a reading of the title, abstract or text, 175 articles were deemed to have met the inclusion criteria. Then, to examine these articles, it was necessary to retrieve and analyse the complete texts<sup>7</sup>. Half of these final items were found on Scopus, 22.7% on Sociological Abstracts, 8.3% on Dialnet, 6.4% on Isoc, 5.3% on PubMed, 3.8% on Eric and 3.4% on Compludoc. In terms of overlap (i.e. the same article appearing on different databases), it is worth mentioning that of the 175 documents examined, 97 were found on the same database, 67 were found on two and 11 were found on database.

Once the complete texts had been gathered, they were then classified using a protocol with three categories: a) characteristics of the work, b) authors and organisations, and c) content of the texts. Two people spent three months classifying the selected works, obtaining between them a mean Kappa index of 0.88. To analyse the available information, a database was created in SPSS 15, with use thus made of Pearson's chi-squared tests<sup>8</sup>, contingency tables, multiple response tables, line graphs and frequencies.

### 3. Analysis and results

#### 3.1. Productivity

A quick glance at figure 1, which shows the scientific literature on sexism in advertising broken down by medium, immediately reveals two things: firstly, that throughout the 22 years in question there has been greater interest in analysing the print media than the broadcast media (although the differences are not statistically significant);

and secondly, that while increasing attention has been paid to the print media, there appears to have been a reversal of this trend in recent years (as of 2008), with more academics beginning to analyse the broadcast media and fewer studies being conducted on sexism and the press.

The 175 documents analysed were published across a range of 125 journals, making for a variety of publications featuring texts related to the topic of study and a low concentration of journals specialising in the subject (since the vast majority –102– published just a single article).

The publication with the greatest number of articles is *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, which featured 19 works (11 relating to the print media and 8 to television), followed by the *Journal of Advertising* with 7 (5 on the printed mass media and 2 on the broadcast media) and then *Comunicar* with 4 (all of which focused on television). It should thus be noted that none of the three abovementioned journals featured research which analysed both types of media together.

Of the articles selected, 46.9% were taken from journals indexed on the JCR database in the year in which they published the paper under analysis. However, not one of these texts was written in Spanish or came from a Spanish-language journal (see table 1). In terms of the quartile for these publications, which is available from 2003 and which has been cal-

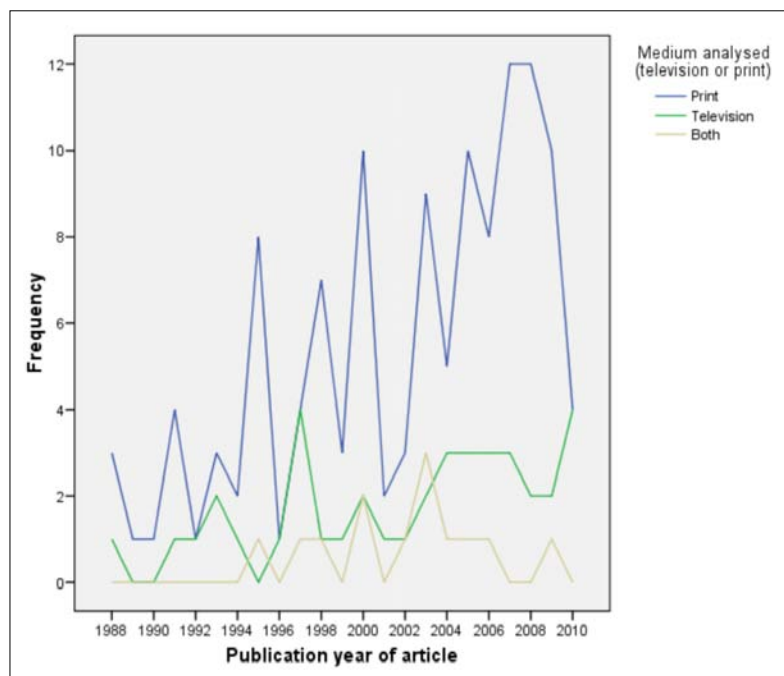


Figure 1: Publication Year of Articles by Medium.

culated for each of the subject categories into which the journal falls, it should be noted that, of the 88 situations it has been possible to examine, only 9.1% form part of Q1, with 28.4% in Q2, 42% in Q3 and 20.5% in Q4.

With regard to the 125 texts which were published in or after 1999, the year in which SCImago Journal & Country Rank (SJR, a portal which analyses the scientific literature retrieved by Scopus) became available, 98 were among the journals considered by SJR in the year in which they published the article under examination. Only 9 of these 125 documents were written in Spanish, with 7 belonging to Spanish journals, as opposed to the 46 from the United States.

In terms of the geographical zone, in general and taking account of total production, differences can be observed in the interest in the various mass media, in that there are more articles focusing on the print media than on television, and these differences in volume are significant in Spain ( $\chi^2=7.407$ ;  $p=0.025$ ) (48% versus 36%) and in the rest of Europe in particular ( $\chi^2=9.813$ ;  $p=0.007$ ) (83.1% versus 8.5%). Looking at the relative attention paid to each medium according to geographical zone, we can see that interest in the print media is greater in Europe (83.1%) and the rest of the world (81.8%) than in the US (66.3%) and Spain, where fewer than half of the published articles focused exclusively on print media (48%). Spain pays relatively more attention to television (36%) than do the US (28.8%), Europe (8.5%) and the rest of the world (18.2%). But Spain also produces relatively more multimedia research (with press and television) into sexism than the other zones analysed (16% versus 8.5% in Europe and 5% in the US) (see table 2).

In all cases the articles are predominantly in English (83.4% of the total) rather than Spanish (16.6% of the total), although this tendency –in keeping with the point made above– is particularly striking for studies of the printed media (87% versus 13%). For the texts written in Spanish, the difference between the media is considerably less marked than the difference for those written in English (24.2 points versus 52.8 points), meaning that when you take the percentage of documents in each language into account, you

**Table 1: Geographical Zone of Publications by Articles Indexed on JCR Database in Year of Article's Publication**

Geographical Zone of the Publication		Journals Indexed on JCR in Year Article was Published			TOTAL
		Yes	No	Unknown	
Spain	Count	0	25	0	25
	% from geographical zone	0	100	0	100
	% of journals on JCR	0	28.1	0	14.3
Rest of Europe	Count	28	29	2	59
	% from geographical zone	47.5	49.2	3.4	100
	% of journals on JCR	34.1	32.6	50	33.7
United States	Count	51	27	2	80
	% from geographical zone	63.8	33.8	2.5	100
	% of journals on JCR	62.2	30.3	50	45.7
Rest of World	Count	3	8	0	11
	% from geographical zone	27.3	72.7	0	100
	% of journals on JCR	3.7	9	0	6.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	Count	82	89	4	175

are more likely to find works based on the medium of television in Spanish than in English (31% versus 20.5%).

Women tend to be credited as the main author more often than men (65.1% of the total versus 33.7%). Women wrote 79 documents on the print media, 27 on television and 8 relating to both media, as opposed to 42, 12 and 5 for men respectively. There are no statistically significant differences by gender in the attention given to the print media and to the broadcast media.

In terms of authorship, 44% of the articles were written by one author, 50.3% by between two and three, and just 5.7% were written by more than three authors, with no statistically significant differences by the medium analysed.

In the Spanish journals, the people who published the most documents –four, to be precise– were Paloma Díaz (studying the print media) and Marcelo Royo. The latter, writing alongside María José Miquel and Eva Caplliure, was part of the most prolific group, which published three works: one focused on analysing the print media and the other two works combining their interest in television and the print media.

With regard to the remaining publications, Elianne Riska has four articles to her name, each co-written and with a focus on magazines. Only one group of authors –Katherine Toland Frith, Hong Cheng and Ping Shaw– appears together on more than one occasion (twice, to be precise), and they also studied magazines.

Inter-institutional works are infrequent among the documents analysed, with most articles (64.6% of the total) written by a single organisation, 22.3% by two organisations and only 5.7% by three or more. These

Table 2: Geographical Zone of Publications by Medium of Communication

Geographical Zone of the Publication <sup>a</sup>		Print	Television	Both	TOTAL
Spain*	Count	12	9	4	25
	% from geographical zone	48	36	16	
	% on medium	9.8	23.1	30.8	
Rest of Europe*	Count	49	5	5	59
	% from geographical zone	83.1	8.5	8.5	
	% on medium	39.8	12.8	38.5	
United States	Count	53	23	4	80
	% from geographical zone	66.3	28.8	5	
	% on medium	43.1	59	30.8	
Rest of World	Count	9	2	0	11
	% from geographical zone	81.8	18.2	0	
	% on medium	7.3	5.1	0	
TOTAL	Count	123	39	13	175

Percentages and totals are based on responses.

a. Dichotomy group. Tabulated at 1. \* With statistically significant differences.

differences are not, however, statistically significant.

The institutions appearing most frequently in the Spanish journals (in precisely four articles) are the Complutense University of Madrid, the University of Valencia, and Rey Juan Carlos University. Within the rest of the publications, meanwhile, the University of California is the most prolific organisation. Between them, these four institutions have published articles on the print media and on television, and have published both individually and alongside other institutions.

### 3.2. Characteristics of the articles

When the articles examine the people portrayed in advertisements and they specify the ages they are looking at, the most studied age group is young people, followed by adults, the elderly, adolescents and children. This remains the order when studying the print media. However, when television is analysed exclusively, children and adolescents are researched on the same percentage of occasions, whereas these two age groups are not considered in any of the articles which focus on the print media and television together. The only statistically significant differences are produced with reference to children ( $\chi^2=7.16$ ;  $p=0.028$ ), in that their presence is greater when television is analysed than when the print media are analysed (66.7% versus 33.3%).

When the articles study people's (or age groups') perception of adverts (principally through discussion groups, interviews or questionnaires), it should be noted that children are never questioned: it is young people who are paid the most attention, followed by adults, adolescents and, finally, the elderly. In effect, young people and adults are the groups of people most

consulted in all situations and, what's more, the documents which focus exclusively on the broadcast media do not consult adolescents or the elderly at any time.

While the main subject of this research is women and advertising, some articles also turn their attention to men. Thus when examining the gender of the people analysed in the discourses, as shown in table 3, men are researched in 41.4% of the documents studying the print media, in 47.3% of those focusing on

television, and in 40% of those looking at both types of media, as opposed to 58.6%, 52.7% and 60% respectively which examine women. Notwithstanding this generality, there are statistically significant differences ( $\chi^2=7.704$ ;  $p=0.021$ ) in the case of men, making it more common for men to be examined in texts based on the print media (66.1%) than in works looking at television (27.6%) or both types of media (6.3%).

When the works refer to the populace, a situation arises very similar to that described above: it is predominantly the female population which is analysed by the articles examining the print media (58.6% versus 41.4%) and television (66.7% versus 33.3%). Yet when the documents examine both media, they do so equitably (50%). On this occasion, the differences shown are not statistically significant.

Bearing in mind that only articles focusing on the printed mass media and/or television were selected for conducting this study, as to be expected, no articles were found analysing men and/or women in advertising agencies that referred specifically to these media. Meanwhile, articles studying the presentation of men and women within commercial communication were more frequent than those studying people's perception of this portrayal for all media: 85.9% versus 14.1% for the press; 85.7% versus 14.3% for television; and 76.9% versus 23.1% for both. These differences are not, however, statistically significant.

### 3.3. Keywords

While all the keywords brought up articles relating to the print media, four of the concepts used –«advertising and gender bias», «advertising and discrimination», «advertising and gender-based discrimination»

and «advertising and sexual discrimination»—returned no results for television or the two media together. «Advertising and women» and «advertising and gender» were the two combinations that returned the most results, without any differences by medium. Only «advertising and stereotypes» returned statistically significant differences by medium ( $\chi^2=15.739$ ;  $p=0.000$ ), reporting a greater number of articles relating to the printed mass media (46.5%).

Gender Analysed in Advertising <sup>a</sup>		Print	Television	Both	TOTAL
Men*	Count	84	35	8	127
	% of gender	66.1	27.6	6.3	
	% of medium	41.4	47.3	40	
Women	Count	119	39	12	170
	% of gender	70	22.9	7.1	
	% of medium	58.6	52.7	60	
<b>TOTAL</b>	Count	203	74	20	297
Gender Surveyed <sup>a</sup>		Print	Television	Both	
Men	Count	12	3	3	18
	% of gender	66.7	16.7	16.7	
	% of medium	41.4	33.3	50	
Women	Count	17	6	3	26
	% of gender	65.4	23.1	11.5	
	% of medium	58.6	66.7	50	
<b>TOTAL</b>	Count	29	9	6	44

Percentages and totals are based on responses. a. Dichotomy group. Tabulated at 1.

\* With statistically significant differences.

### 3.4. Gender Indicators, operationalisation and sexism

While there are no statistically significant differences between them, quantitative methodology is employed more frequently than qualitative methodology within the texts analysing the print media (61% versus 39%) and in works focusing on television (71.4% versus 28.6%). However, when the two are studied together, both methodologies are employed equally (50%).

The majority of articles tend to realise and identify—albeit only partially—the operationalisation effected for analysing sexist advertising. The works on the print media featured this information 85.4% of the time, texts on television 89.7% of the time and those on both 76.9% of the time, with no statistically significant differences. It is worth noting, however, that information on this subject is missing from 12% of the total texts.

The research uses scales to measure sexism in advertising in 67.4% of all the cases (67.5% for the print media, 71.8% for television and 53.8% for both). Subject categories are employed to evaluate the existence of sexist advertising in 24.6% of the articles, with no statistically significant differences according to medium.

Only 8.6% of the documents conclude that the advertising is not sexist or that the representations of gender featured in the advertisements cannot be described as traditional. Nevertheless, not one of these articles deals exclusively with television. In other words, not one of the academic texts selected conclu-

des that television advertising is healthy in terms of gender. There are thus statistically significant differences by medium ( $\chi^2=11.852$ ;  $p=0.003$ ), as 73.3% of these studies focus on the press.

### 4. Discussion and conclusions

The data obtained indicate that, in general, and especially in the international arena, there is more research into sexism and gender-based discrimination by and within advertising in the print media than on television. There is a practical reason for this tendency: it is more difficult to analyse content on television. It could thus be considered that the reason why researchers do not focus their interest on television is related, according to Pérez (2009: 105), to the fact that the ephemeral nature of the broadcast advertising media brings an added difficulty to its analysis. Pérez also states that the broad possibilities in terms of production and the language used in television spots have made it difficult to establish a strict methodology that enables television to be analysed within scientific parameters (Pérez, 2009: 105). Researchers have thus resorted to the print media for ease of study despite the fact that, as this paper shows, there are no relevant differences in the methodologies chosen to analyse biases in the various media.

Considering the works as a whole, meanwhile, it is rather complex to ascertain whether sexism exists within the media under consideration, as academics tend not to adopt a position in this respect. So in the (principally descriptive) articles, one will most fre-

quently find an inventory of the image of women and men, without it being specified whether this image could be deemed discriminatory or not. The lack of delimitation and operationalisation of concepts makes it difficult to assess the validity of these works with regard to the treatment of gender in the media, and difficult to make a comparison with the legal application. In this sense, various authors (Furnham & Paltzer, 2010: 223; Paek, Nelson & Vilela, 2011: 193) all declare that the research on the subject matter lacks a theoretical framework.

The analysis of gender biases in advertising discourse is subtly different in the Spanish case, in terms of medium. In Spain, there is a greater fondness for observing television, either on academic grounds – television is the medium which reaches the highest percentage of individuals (Spanish Association for Media Research, 2012), enjoys the greatest investment in advertising<sup>9</sup> and is the most influential medium in terms of gender socialisation (Espinari, 2006)– or due to the influence of the legal framework.

In effect, over the past 15-plus years in Spain (since the incorporation of European Council Directive 89/552/CEE on the Coordination of Certain Provisions Laid Down by Law, Regulation or Administrative Action in Member States Concerning the Pursuit of Television Broadcasting Activities was incorporated into Spanish Law in 1994), the government regulations which restrict sexual discrimination in advertising generically (the 1988 General Advertising Act, the 2004 Law Against Gender-Based Violence, and the 2007 Equal Opportunities Act) have existed alongside specific legislation which holds television broadcasters jointly responsible for the broadcasting of illegal content.

Specifically, it is our belief that it is the establishment of a series of regulations and controls in various spheres (such as the climate of social awareness of the importance of the media in building up sexual equality) which has paved the way for studies evaluating the application of the regulations in Spain.

Finally, it should be noted that the principal limitation of this study is the selection of only scientific articles for analysis, which has meant the rejection of other important sources of information. Despite this restriction, and with a focus on gender, this paper contributes to broadening scientific knowledge regarding differences in the study of press advertising and television advertising. While the data handled may not have enabled the establishment of a causal relation, future studies might wish to question whether these peculiarities have been favoured by Spain's specific legal

framework and/or vice versa. It would also be interesting to explore whether the same perception of sexism in advertising exists among viewers, academics and the judges responsible for deciding whether or not an advertisement contains sexual discrimination.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sexism is the portrayal of men and women in a manner inferior to their abilities and potential (Plakoyiannaki & Zotos, 2009: 1.411).

<sup>2</sup> A summary of the principal regulations governing this subject at national (constitutions, national legislation, regional law), European (community directives) and international level (Declaration of Athens, Beijing Conference and the Conference of New Delhi) can be found in Balaguer (2008).

<sup>3</sup> The Spanish Law of Information Society Services and Electronic Commerce (*Ley de Servicios de la Sociedad de la Información y de Comercio Electrónico*) (2002: 25.391) has been omitted from this analysis as it only makes one reference to sexual discrimination with regard to the provision of information society services in general and not to advertising in particular, and is closer to the principles of the Spanish Constitution than to the General Advertising Act in its call for respect for personal dignity and for the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, religion, opinion, nationality, disability or any other personal or social circumstance.

<sup>4</sup> The print media have been bundled together as one entity due to the lack of information provided by a large part of the documents analysed. In terms of the broadcast mass media, only television has been taken into account, as only one work was found that dealt with film and three with radio. The Internet, meanwhile, has its own regulations which were not considered in this study.

<sup>5</sup> The passing of this Act was the first time that sexist advertisements were considered illegal in Spain, as the Act ruled that advertising which offends personal dignity or undermines the values and rights recognised in the Constitution, especially with regard to children, young people and women were outlawed (General Advertising Act, 1988: 32.465).

<sup>6</sup> To select the multidisciplinary and international database, exploratory searches were made of the two leading databases: Web Of Science and Scopus. The number of articles retrieved from the former was 936, while the latter returned 1,339 articles from the fields of Medicine (640), Social Sciences (383), Psychology (210), Business, Administration and Accounting (201), Nursing (74), Arts and Humanities (60), Economics, Econometrics and Finance (59), Agriculture and Biological Sciences (56), Healthcare Professions (48), Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology (29), Neuroscience (22), Materials Sciences (21), Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmacy (17), Engineering (16), Computer Sciences (14), Environmental Sciences (10), Immunology and Microbiology (8), Earth and Planetary Sciences (5), Chemical Engineering (4), Decision Sciences (4), Dentistry (2), Physics and Astronomy (2) and Mathematics (2), plus 2 multidisciplinary texts and 101 which were not classified.

The decision was made to use Scopus not only for quantitative reasons but also for its qualitative features. While Web of Science contains leading journals with the highest quality and impact factor, with regard to our topic of study it suffers from biases in terms of geography (focusing on the USA) and subjects (gathering mostly journals relating to the Sciences).

The Social Sciences are modestly represented on Scopus so, to get around this problem, we included the Sociological Abstract database. PubMed was used due to the large number of medical-related articles found on Scopus and we resorted to Eric with the aim of



observing the studies conducted from the field of Education, since the Spanish Equal Opportunities Act (2007) lends great importance to this field. Dialnet, Compludoc and Isoc, meanwhile, were selected to index the academic literature published in Spanish.

<sup>7</sup> When the complete text was not available on a database, it was searched for via the University of Alicante's print and electronic subscriptions (journals, abstracts and databases). If the text was not found using this method, an email requesting the text was sent to the authors themselves, with the final option being inter-library lending.

<sup>8</sup> We consider differences to be statistically significant when  $p < 0.05$ .

<sup>9</sup> Of all the conventional media, television is the mass media with the greatest volume of advertising sales (Sánchez, 2012: 8).

## Support and Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Regional Government of Valencia (Generalitat Valenciana) for the award of the FPI research grant, the authors who have collaborated by providing their articles and the University of Alicante's library user information point (Punto BIU) for its support.

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